

Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Frequently Asked Questions

Service Obligation

Under what circumstances will NIFA allow an award recipient to be released from the service obligation before the end of the contract?

Early termination of a service obligation will not be considered a breach of contract in cases where such termination is beyond the control of the award recipient. For instance, a state may determine that funding for a Type-III position (Public Practice shortage) is no longer available. However, an award recipient who voluntarily terminates his/her veterinary service, for reasons not determined by NIFA to be sufficiently compelling to dissolve the VMLRP agreement, is in breach of the VMLRP contract.

How does NIFA know whether an award recipient is fulfilling his or her agreement in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract?

NIFA requires your employer to complete and submit a service obligation verification form on a quarterly basis to confirm that you are meeting the terms of your contract. If you are self-employed, you will be asked to provide self-certification. NIFA will also be authorized to perform audits and site visits. Your quarterly loan repayment disbursement will not be released until this verification is provided to NIFA.

Do I have to stay and serve the same area for the entire three years of the VMLRP contract?

Yes. However, in the event of extenuating circumstances a transfer may be considered by VMLRP. Transfers will only be considered if proper documentation and a compelling justification are received by VMLRP. If such a situation arises contact VMLRP at vmlrp@nifa.usda.gov as soon as a situation arises. Transfers from one VMLRP designated shortage situation to another will not be authorized to obtain a better job opportunity.

I have a prior service obligation where the service obligation terms state that I must practice medicine in the state of (insert name of state) for a certain period or pay the state the amount of the loan they have previously given me.

An individual who owes a service obligation for veterinary service to an entity (e.g., Federal government, State government, or institution) is ineligible for the VMLRP unless the obligation will be completely satisfied prior to the beginning of service under the VMLRP. If you are still interested in the VMLRP after you complete your service obligation and continue to meet our eligibility criteria, you may apply for a VMLRP award in a future application cycle.

How do I find out if I have an outstanding service obligation?

You need to contact the institution that awarded you a grant, award, or scholarship with an associated service obligation to ascertain if there is any remaining obligation.