

VMLRP FY 2020 Applicant Webinar Questions and Answers:

Q: What is the exact application due date?

A: Applications for the VMLRP FY 2020 cycle are due on April 2, 2020. Recommendation Letters are due two weeks later on April 16, 2020. As a reminder you must have 3 recommendation letters.

Q: I am graduating this year, and I don't yet have my APHIS accreditation certification date, what should I put on my application where it asks for this information. I completed the course, but am not licensed yet in any state

A: If you are graduating this year and are waiting on a state license and APHIS accreditation you can put pending in those areas of the form. You must show proof of graduation from a U.S. AVMA-accredited College or School of Veterinary Medicine, offering either a DVM or VMD degree, by July 1, 2020. It is understood that if you are graduating in the same year that you are applying to the VMLRP, you may not have your degree yet. Therefore, the VMLRP provides that additional time needed to finish your final semester. If this is the case you must submit transcripts by July 1, 2020 showing the completion of your veterinary degree.

Q: How often do new graduate applicants receive this award?

A: In the FY 2017 cycle, 11.5% of applicants who had their DVM for less than one year were offered awards. In reference, for 2017 the total percentage of applicants who were offered awards was 35.5%. The peer review panel will assess each application based on the applicant's ability to fulfill the needs of the shortage as described on. The panel uses the documents provided by the applicant to determine this; e.g. personal statement, recommendation letters, Resume/CV, etc.

Q: On the Shortage nomination form, there is a 'must cover' and 'may cover' species list. For type I/II shortages, does this mean that the FTE service requirement can include any of those species.? Vs. only the 'must cover' category?

A: Must serve species or species type are those animals a veterinarian **MUST** be prepared, willing, and committed to provide services for in order to mitigate the shortage situation.

May serve species or species type are those animals a veterinarian **MAY** provide services for in order to meet the required percent FTE. This recognizes that not all food animal species require the same level of services year round and a veterinarian may need the flexibility to provide services to other species during the "off season" to meet their percent FTE. Only a minor percentage of time can be devoted to these species.

Q: How many people can get awarded in a shortage situation area?

A: Each shortage situation area can only be awarded to one applicant. It is possible that applicants who are ranked higher than the funding cutoff are not awarded. If multiple applicants apply to the same shortage situation area, the highest ranked applicant will be offered an award for that specific shortage situation area. If for some reason they do not accept the award, the next highest applicant for that shortage situation area will be offered the award.

Q: Will the VMLRP shortage situation areas for this year, be available next year?

A: Shortage situation areas are nominated by the State Animal Health Officials (SAHO) each year. SAHO's are limited to a specific number of shortage nominations they can submit for their respective states. It is possible for a SAHO to carry-over nominations from a previous year to the next, but the SAHO would have to nominate it as such.

Q: Is an electronic signature on the application form acceptable or does it need to be printed and signed?

A: Both electronic signatures and paper signatures (ink) are acceptable.

Q: If you get awarded the VMLRP one year, how does it work getting it the following two years? What if your shortage area does not qualify as a shortage area the following year?

A: The award for new applicants lasts for 3 years. If you accept an award with the VMLRP as a new applicant, you are required to serve 3 years in the shortage situation area in which you were awarded.

Q: Is it best to have recommenders send their forms directly to you or for us to include it into our entire application?

A: You can include your recommendation letters in your application, or you can have your recommenders send their recommendation letters directly to us; whichever is more convenient to you. As we understand that this might take some additional time there is a separate deadline for recommendation letters; April 16, 2020 for the FY 2020 application cycle. You must have 3 recommendation letters by the deadline to be considered for the program.

Q: Can recommenders be farmers, or do they have to be employers or veterinarians?

A: We do not make requirements on who a recommender may be, it is up to the applicant to choose who they think will be the best recommenders for their application. We do encourage applicants to choose their recommenders based on the case they made in their personal statement and represent their ability to serve the specific requirements that are listed in the shortage nomination form. The recommenders should be able to speak to your ability to serve that shortage area. These Recommendation letters will be used by the panel to assess your application and your ability to fulfill the

shortage situation area in which you applied to. We encourage applicants to reach out as early as possible to their recommenders, to ensure that recommendation letters get submitted by the deadline.

Q: Will you be available by email for questions if things come up as we continue the application process?

A: Yes, we encourage applicants to reach out to us if you have any questions about the application process or the program in general.

For Program and application questions please email: VMLRP.Applications@usda.gov

For Loan and Financial questions please email: VMLRP@usda.gov

Q: Who should be contacted if a person is interested in serving as a reviewer on the panel?

A: If you are interested in learning more about serving on the reviewer panel, please see our [VMLRP Panelists](#) webpage.

Q: Does each individual loan need to be over \$15K or the total of all loans combined?

A: The total of all loans for a veterinary degree must be over \$15k.

Q: Does interest accrued on veterinary degree loan debt count towards the VMLRP?

A: Interest accrued on a veterinary degree loan debt does count towards the VMLRP. However, interest accrued during the program does not count towards the VMLRP, as this is classified as new veterinary degree loan debt; it can be applied if an applicant chooses to renew and reapply after their contract has been completed. The total awarded amount and payment schedule for each applicant is determined by the veterinary degree loan debt in the year you applied.