



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

Veterinary Services Grant Program

www.nifa.usda.gov/vsgp

Listening Sessions

February 17 & 25, 2016



BIOENERGY, CLIMATE,
AND ENVIRONMENT



FOOD PRODUCTION
AND SUSTAINABILITY



YOUTH, FAMILY,
AND COMMUNITY



FOOD SAFETY
AND NUTRITION



INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMS



USDA NIFA

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Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) Legislative Background

- Authorized in 2014 Farm Bill
- Funding first appropriated in FY 2016
 - \$2.5 million
 - Indirect costs limited to 30% of total Federal funds provided
- Overall goal is to help mitigate food supply and public health veterinary shortage situations in the U.S.



Timeline: 2016

- Late April: Request for applications (RFA) published
- Mid-June: Applications due
- August: Peer review panels meet
- Sept. 15: Award funds obligated



Grant Proposal Evaluation

- Competitive peer review
 - Merit review of applications by external experts
- Ranking Criteria
 - Tactical and strategic merit
 - Applicant capabilities (knowledge, skills, abilities & experience of individuals/team)
 - Potential to enhance veterinary services in highest priority shortage situations



Purpose of VSGP

- Generally, to develop, implement, and sustain veterinary services and relieve veterinarian shortage situations
- Two competitively awarded program areas authorized
 - **Education Grants**
 - **Equipment Grants**



Purpose of VSGP (cont'd)

- Specific objective of **Education Grants** is to substantially relieve veterinarian shortage situations through education, extension, and training programs



Purpose of VSGP (cont'd)

- Specific objective of **Equipment Grants** is to establish or expand veterinary practices in shortage situations designated by the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) and in rural areas.*

* As defined by Consolidated Farm & Rural Development Act (Section 343(a) 7 U.S.C. 1991 (a)).



Key Question

Of the \$2.5 million available for VSGP, how much should be devoted to **education** vs. **equipment** grants?



Qualified Applicants

Seven broad categories:

1. US-based entities (for-profit or nonprofit) and individuals operating a veterinary clinic that provides veterinary services in a
 - VMLRP-designated shortage situation **AND**
 - rural area
2. State, national, allied, or regional veterinary organizations or specialty boards recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)



Qualified Applicants (cont'd)

3. Colleges or schools of veterinary medicine accredited by AVMA
4. University research or veterinary medical foundations
5. Departments of veterinary science or comparative medicine accredited by the Department of Education
6. State agricultural experiment stations
7. State, local, or tribal government agency



Other Considerations

Preference will be given to qualified applicants who provide documentation of coordination with other qualified applicants.



Eligibility Requirements

- Qualified applicants may receive grants to carry out programs or activities that will:
 - substantially relieve veterinarian shortage situations; or
 - support or facilitate private veterinary practices engaged in public health activities.



Key Questions

- How should veterinary public health activities be defined?
- What proportion of the practice needs to be engaged in public health activities?



Education Grants

Five broad areas to help relieve veterinarian shortage situations:

1. Recruitment, placement and retention
 - Veterinarians, veterinary technicians, students of veterinary medicine or veterinary technology, students in secondary education (grades 6-12)
2. Expenses for food safety or food animal medicine training programs
 - Veterinary students, interns, externs, fellows, and residents, and veterinary technician students



Education Grants (cont'd)

3. Establish or expand accredited veterinary education, residency, fellowship, internship and externship programs
 - includes faculty recruitment and retention
4. Provide continuing education and extension, including veterinary telemedicine and other distance-based education
5. Provide technical assistance for developing shortage area nominations



Key Questions

- Given the expedited timeline and limited funding, how should NIFA prioritize **education** projects?
- Should the focus be on:
 - recruitment, continuing education, technical assistance, etc.?
 - strengthening the academic pipeline, or emphasize projects for current practitioners (including veterinary technicians and other health professionals)?
 - other?



Equipment Grants

For-profit or nonprofit entities or individuals operating veterinary clinics may only use funds to establish or expand veterinary practices by:

- equipping veterinary offices;
- sharing in the reasonable overhead costs of such veterinary practices, or
- establishing mobile veterinary facilities in which a portion of the facilities will address education or extension needs.



Equipment Grants

Special Requirement

Equipment grants shall be subject to an agreement that includes a required term of service for the awardee.



Key Questions

- What types of equipment should be eligible? Should any be excluded?
- What are “reasonable” overhead costs?
- What portion of the equipment grants awarded should address education or extension needs?



Key Questions (cont'd)

- How long should the term of service be?
- What should the minimum award amount be?
- Should there be a minimum term of service regardless of the award amount?



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Questions, Comments and Feedback

Please submit to VSGP@NIFA.USDA.GOV
before 5:00 pm on February 29, 2016.

Transcripts and additional information will be
available at

www.nifa.usda.gov/vsgp

**Next Listening Session:
February 25, 1:00-2:30 pm, ET**