Veterinary Services Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

The Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) was authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. The overall goal is to help mitigate food supply and public health veterinary shortage situations in the U.S.

Who can apply?

There are seven broad categories:

1. A US-based for-profit, nonprofit, or individual operating a veterinary clinic and providing services in a designated veterinarian shortage situation and in a rural area (as defined in 7 U.S.C. 1991 (a)(13));
2. State, national, allied, or regional veterinary organizations or specialty boards recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association;
3. American Veterinary Medical Association accredited colleges or schools of veterinary medicine;
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; or
7. State, local, or tribal government agencies.

What types of projects/activities can be supported?

Broadly speaking, there are two types of competitive grants supported, “education” and “rural practice enhancement”. To qualify for a grant, eligible entities must substantially relieve veterinarian shortage situations or support or relieve private veterinary practices engaged in public health activities.

“Education grants” can support recruitment; training programs in food safety or food animal medicine; establishing or expanding veterinary residency, fellowship, internship or externship programs; continuing education and extension including telemedicine and other distance-based education to strengthen veterinary programs and enhance food safety; or technical assistance for preparing shortage situation nominations.

“Rural practice enhancement grants” are for establishing or expanding veterinary practices by equipping veterinary offices; sharing in overhead costs; or establishing mobile veterinary facilities in which a portion of the facilities will address education or extension needs.

Will these be renewable grants?

Rural practice enhancement grants will not be renewable. However, education grants may be subject to competitive renewal in future fiscal years depending on congressional appropriations. Our current funds are for one year and thus all funds must be obligated by NIFA to awardees prior to the end of the federal fiscal year.

How will NIFA encourage applicants to collaborate with each other?

It is a legislative requirement that the request for application (RFA) specify that preference will be given to applications proposing collaboration among qualified entities.
Are both the educational and rural practice enhancement grants limited to the shortage areas or are just the rural practice enhancement grants limited to shortage areas?

Applicants for equipment grants must be practicing in shortage situations. Applicants for educational grants need not be located in a shortage situation, but the program proposed must be designed to alleviate veterinarian shortage situations.

Are applications available? If not when and where will they be available?

Applications will be available through grants.gov once the application period opens. We anticipate opening the application period in late April 2016. Please check our website www.nifa.usda.gov/vsgp for access to application materials and application instructions. You can also sign up to receive notifications from Grants.gov when NIFA publishes the request for applications here http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/manage-subscriptions.html.

Can VSGP funds be used for building new facilities and adding to existing facilities (e.g., stocks)?

The legislation specifically prohibits using the funds to build a new building or facility or to acquire, expand, remodel, or alter an existing building or facility, including site grading and improvement and architect fees.