

# Veterinarian Shortage Situation Nomination Form

To be submitted under the authority of the chief State or Insular Area Animal Health Official

## Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)

This form must be used for Nomination of Veterinarian Shortage Situations to the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP), Authorized Under the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA)

Note: Please submit one separate nomination form for each shortage situation. See the State Animal Health Official (SAHO) section of the VMLRP web site ([www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp)) for the number of nominations permitted for your state or insular area.

### Location of Veterinary Shortage Area for this Nomination

Location of Veterinary Shortage: Kenai Peninsula, Alaska  
(e.g., County, State/Insular Area; must be a logistically feasible veterinary practice service area)

Approximate Center of Shortage Area (or Location of Position if Type III): Kenai or Soldotna: area extends from Portage (just south of Anchorage down to Homer at the tip of the Kenai Peninsula)  
(e.g., Address or Cross Street, Town/City, and Zip Code)

Overall Priority of Shortage: Critical Priority

### Type of Veterinary Practice Area/Discipline/Specialty (select one) :

Type II: Private Practice - Rural Area, Food Animal Medicine (awardee obligation: at least 30% FTE or 12hr/week)

### For Type I or II Private Practice:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Must cover</b> (check at least one)  | <b>May cover</b>  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Swine                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Swine  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poultry                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant                                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>reindeer, llama, yak, bison</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>elk, captive wildlife</u> |

### For Type III Public Practice:

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please select **one or more** specialty/disciplinary areas:  
 Food Safety  
 Public Health  
 Epidemiology  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) If the nominator wishes to specify a service time for this shortage situation that is higher than the minimum required for the shortage type checked above, please specify the percent time in the box below (based on a 40-hour work week). Leave the box blank if the service time for this shortage situation is for the minimum percent time of the shortage type indicated.

%

Please describe the **importance and objectives** of a veterinarian filling this shortage situation as well as being located in the community, area, state/insular area, or position requested above (limit your response to 1500 characters).

The objectives of this position will be to develop herd health management to an expanding number of beef cattle and small ruminant operations as well as to 4-H groups located on the Kenai Peninsula (area ranging from Portage, 40 miles south of Anchorage to south of Ninilchik, some 140 miles). The issue with most areas of Alaska is the large distances between livestock operations; average farm size is 1,300 acres. The Kenai Peninsula has over 35 cattle, 9 hog and 53 small ruminant farms (NASS). The poultry operations are mostly small backyard flocks ranging in size from 10 to the largest of 800 birds. There are numerous family dairies that participate in "cow and goat share operations". Due to the distribution of the farms this position would involve significant travel, reliance on digital or telemedicine and need to support a practice with small animal work to sustain an economically successful business.

There have been past efforts by the cattle operators to develop a local slaughter facility. The state has encouraged the producers to consider a mobile slaughter plant to serve the Kenai Peninsula as this would seem to fit the unique needs of this area. An entrepreneur has approached this office for requirements to build a mobile facility. If this endeavor is successful there is the possibility that this veterinary position could act as a consultant to the operation to provide guidance regarding animal handling and food safety issues.

Please describe the **activities** of a veterinarian meeting this shortage situation in the community, area, state/insular area, or position requested above (limit your response to 1500 characters or less).

Activities will be directed to support the larger established beef and hog operations, some small sheep and goat herds and the one captive wildlife facility (Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center - exhibiting a number of wild animal species: elk, deer, bear, reindeer, bison) on the Kenai Peninsula. Secondary activities will be to support the numerous backyard or homestead farming operations that raise a number of species (poultry, ducks, pigs, small ruminants, few dairy goats or cows). Since several cattle operations use horses to manage their herds this practitioner would also need to be able to provide equine services.

This position would also support emergency response to morbidity/mortality investigations and emergency response to any hazards that would impact animal health. (This area has experienced natural disasters in the past: earthquake, forest fire, and tsunami). Most of these premises produce meat and poultry products for small communities (10 to 20 households) off the main thoroughfares and 25 to 50 miles from the nearest town.

Please describe any past efforts to recruit and retain a veterinarian in the shortage situation identified above (limit your response to 750 characters or less).

There are only 2 veterinary clinics offering livestock services in this entire area. These practices offer food animal services and one is actively recruiting for an associate that they hope to hire this year. One of the practitioners is actively searching for a new graduate to join the practice and has moved the practice facility closer to the local communities of Kenai and Soldotna in anticipation of a new associate. The Fox River Cattleman's Association, as well as 4H organizers, have requested assistance from the Office of the State Veterinarian for veterinary support. No previous efforts to recruit veterinary services have been made from this office other than the position nomination through this program.

Please describe the risk of this veterinarian position not being secured or retained. Include the risk(s) to the production of a safe and wholesome food supply and to animal, human, and environmental health not only in the community but in the region, state/insular area, nation, and/or international community (limit your response to 2000 characters or less).

The primary risk to not retaining this position involves the lack of support to local communities to produce safe and sustainable local food production. Local farm markets have increased across the Kenai Peninsula and most of the livestock operations market animals and animal products as farm gate sales. The need for consultation regarding animal production, animal care, food safety and food borne disease is desperately needed. Over the last two years there have been several food borne outbreaks in several communities traced back to "cow share" operations and others linked to farm market sales. In addition, one of the food animal practitioners is considering retiring in the near future and is looking to take on an associate to make this transition. If this practice closes there will be a great loss to the area.

Due to climatic changes the state has noted an increase in invasive species (insect vectors, parasites), as well as, an increase in certain animal and food borne diseases. Without support from veterinary practitioners in the field the state and agricultural industry will be ill prepared to identify and diagnose morbidity and mortality events that can have impact on animal and public health. In addition, without this position the state may not be able to effectively manage emergency response to a hazard that impacts domestic animals and animal health.

SAHO nominator must check both boxes below in order for NIFA to consider this nomination for official designation

- By checking this box, I affirm that this form represents a nomination and is subject to NIFA review and approval.
- By checking this box, I affirm that it is my professional opinion that this is a bona fide food supply or public health-related veterinary shortage situation. I affirm due diligence has been invested to identify this area as a shortage situation of at least moderate priority (severity).

Authorized State or Insular Area Animal Health Official or designee:

Name: Robert F Gerlach

Title: Alaska State Veterinarian

Organization: Alaska Dept of Environmental Conservation

Email: bob.gerlach@alaska.gov

Telephone Number: (907) 375-8214  
(Area code required)

Public reporting for OMB control number 0524-0046 is estimated to average two hours, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information, unless it displays a current valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to NIFA, OGF, 800 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW, Washington, DC 20024, Attention Policy Section. Do not return the completed form to this address.