

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) for the number of nominations permitted for your state or insular area.

Location of Veterinary Shortage Area for this Nomination

Location of Veterinary Shortage: University of Alaska – Fairbanks (UAF)
(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): University of Alaska Fairbanks
 PO Box 757500; Fairbanks, AK 99775
(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 III: Public Practice (awardee obligation at least 49% FTE or 19 hr/week)

For Type I or II Private Practice:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Must cover(check at least one)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Swine</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poultry</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> | <p>May cover</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Swine</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poultry</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Equine, camelids</u></p> |
|---|--|

For Type III Public Practice:

Employer: University of Alaska Veterinary School Position Title: Veterinary Diagnostic Pathologist

Please select **one or more** specialty/disciplinary areas:

- Food Safety
- Public Health
- Epidemiology
- Other: Pathology

(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).

This position (Veterinary Pathologist) fills a critical gap in the state's disease surveillance focusing on zoonotic disease issues, at the companion animal/wildlife/domesticated livestock/human interface. In that the state lacks a veterinary diagnostic laboratory, so a veterinary pathologist housed at the university to receive carcasses and samples will provide rapid, accurate disease diagnoses and consultations during disease outbreak investigations.

This person will also work in conjunction with wildlife biologists and veterinarians at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide necropsy and histopathology services, to identify diseases of importance to subsistence species (waterfowl, terrestrial and marine mammals), as well as wildlife diseases transmittable to humans. The veterinary pathologist will work closely with livestock herders, veterinarians, wildlife biologists and hunters to provide education in the gross appearance of lesions, so that these individuals can assist in disease surveillance, reporting of disease outbreaks, as well as make prudent decisions concerning carcass handling and consumption.

Housing this position at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has several advantages, including, central location in the state, access to a state-of-the-art necropsy facility and histopathology laboratory, proximity to the Alaska State Virology Laboratory, and access to equipment and resources at the UAF DNA Core Laboratory (for sequencing pathogen genomes).

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).

The "One Health" focus of the this position will have the Veterinary Pathologist working closely with the State and Public Health Veterinarians and food animal/livestock veterinarians, providing pathology diagnostic services for the investigations of morbidity/mortality events in livestock, zoonotic diseases in companion animals, timely reporting of disease events in wildlife that may commingle with farm animals, as well as assisting in the development of disease surveillance programs.

This person will also work in conjunction with wildlife biologists and wildlife veterinarians to provide necropsy and histopathology services, to identify diseases of importance to subsistence species, disease interchanged between livestock and wildlife, as well as wildlife diseases (brucellosis, rabies, tularemia, etc) transmittable to humans.

Not only will the veterinary pathologist work with veterinarians throughout the state to assist in the diagnosis of diseases in companion animals and livestock, but will provide ongoing continuing education to Alaska veterinarians in the form of illustrated and annotated necropsy reports, presentations at veterinary meetings, reviewing the current understanding of a particular disease process. Furthermore, the veterinary pathologist will provide education in the veterinary medicine curriculum at University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF).

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).

Previous recruiting efforts for a Veterinary Pathologist at UAF were well advertised through typical pathology networks (job listing on the ACVP website, word of mouth). The high cost of living in Alaska, as well as the state's economic crisis necessitating a lower-than-average starting salary (along with severe climate and remote location) are believed to be deterrents to applicants. The VMLRP nomination can assist in supporting the veterinarian working in this position. It is noteworthy, that the UAF Veterinary Medicine program has lost 3 faculty members in the last two years in part due to stressors such as, economics and from being distant from family in the "Lower 48".

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 relative isolation of the state and many of the small communities put an emphasis and need on food security and local production of agricultural products and livestock. Most of the development is in the form of small family farms with farm gate sale of animals and animal products so there are not only animal health but also impact on wildlife health and public health risks. Most livestock operations in the state must rely on extremely limited veterinary support and the local veterinarians do require assistance during investigations of morbidity and mortalities on the farm. Accurate and timely diagnosis are critical to managing animal disease issues in Alaska, having to rely on out of state services can delay confirming a diagnosis several days.

Many Alaskans live in rural locations also own indoor/outdoor pets, rapid identification of diseases transmitted between wildlife, pets and humans (including tularemia, rabies, and others) is critical. In the absence of a veterinary pathology service, many mortality events in companion animals and livestock simply go undiagnosed and unreported, putting animals and humans at risk.

Board-certified veterinary pathologists are frequently attracted to high-salary positions in industry or private diagnostic companies. These opportunities exist in a variety of desirable locations, including urban and peri-urban areas. Furthermore, pathologists frequently choose to focus on subsets of species (e.g. companion animals, livestock or wildlife). By providing veterinary loan forgiveness, it will be easier to recruit and retain a pathologist in the challenging climate of Alaska, to work with a variety of animal species, and the people who rely on Alaskan animals for food, fiber, transportation, employment, and companionship.

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 Gerlach, VMD

Title: Alaska State Veterinarian

Organization: Dept. of Environmental Conservation

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Public reporting for OMB control number 0524-0050 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 9th St. SW, Washington, DC 20024, Attention Policy Section. Do not return the completed form to this address.