

# 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: Connecticut, USA  
(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): Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science, University of Connecticut, 61 N. Eagleville  
(e.g., Address or Cross Street, Town/City, and Zip Code)

**Overall Priority of Shortage:** High Priority

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

Type III: Public Practice (awardee obligation at least 49% FTE or 19 hr/week)

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**For Type I or II Private Practice:**

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|---|--|
| <p><b>Must cover</b>(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><b>May cover</b></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> |
|---|--|

**For Type III Public Practice:**

Employer: University of Connecticut Position Title: Veterinary Pathology Resident

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

- Food Safety
- Public Health
- Epidemiology
- Other: Veterinary Diagnostician

(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 objective is to train more veterinarians in veterinary pathology, via the combined veterinary pathology residency program currently established at the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (CVMDL), University of Connecticut (UCONN), while concurrently meeting the veterinary diagnostic needs of the state. There is a documented workforce shortage of veterinary pathologists in both the pharmaceutical industry (critical to Connecticut) and in veterinary diagnostic laboratories (in Connecticut and nationwide). Veterinary pathologists play several critical roles in human and animal health. Veterinary pathologists are key evaluators of drug safety for human and veterinary pharmaceuticals. In the veterinary diagnostic laboratory, pathologists conduct constant surveillance for diseases of all animal species. These diseases include zoonotic diseases and newly emerging diseases, directly impacting public health and food safety. The post-DVM residency training takes 3 years minimum and additional years if combined with a PhD program. The salary for veterinary pathology residents is far below salaries offered in private practice. Candidates with an interest in pathology often are unable to pursue this advanced training due to excessive debt load from veterinary school. The CVMDL would be able to attract more top quality pathology residents to our training program if some loan debt was relieved, providing direct benefit to Connecticut citizens and industry.

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 veterinary pathology residents at the CVMDL also pursue an advanced degree (MS or PhD) at the University of Connecticut. All residents spend the first three years working in the CVMDL diagnostic pathology laboratory; if the resident is pursuing the PhD degree, 2-3 additional years of research training follow. Daily activities involve animal autopsies on a variety of species, including farm animals, wildlife, laboratory animals and aquatic species. This breadth of experience is critical for the training of a veterinary pathologist, and also paramount in providing the skills necessary to detect diseases that may impact public health and food safety. The residents are critical to the daily functioning of the diagnostic laboratory, and are essentially the "first responders" on the necropsy room floor. Residents conduct the gross necropsy (autopsy), examine tissues microscopically, and often determine which additional tests are needed to determine the cause of death. A senior faculty pathologist carefully supervises each resident, with one-on-one training conducted daily. Coursework relevant to veterinary pathology is taken. Residents also assist faculty in teaching of laboratory sections of anatomy and histology courses, enhancing their teaching skills while providing unmatched depth of experience and expertise to the undergraduate students in these laboratory sections.

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).

Each year we (CVMDL, Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science, University of Connecticut) recruit veterinary pathology resident candidates via advertising, specific recruitment at veterinary meetings, and word of mouth. We sometimes have difficulty filling the positions with the highest quality candidates due to the fiscal restraints imposed by their high debt load and the limited salary offered in the pathology residency training program. We feel that VMLRP assistance may serve as an additional recruiting tool, allowing more top quality candidates to consider veterinary pathology as a career path.

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 CVMDL at UCONN needs top quality veterinary pathology residents to work in the laboratory, conducting animal autopsy and disease surveillance activities. This provides direct service to the citizens of Connecticut and the region, and directly impacts food animal health, public health and food safety. The state, region and country need more veterinary pathologists to fill openings in veterinary diagnostic laboratories and the pharmaceutical industry. Without relief from veterinary school debt, we are unable to attract the best candidates for this program, particularly those who wish to remain in Connecticut and the region. CVMDL is the last remaining full service state veterinary diagnostic laboratory in New England, providing a critical local service. Failure to meet this pathology resident need could result in delay in (or failure of) detection of emerging diseases that impact animal and public health. Additionally, fewer pharmaceutical veterinary pathologists could delay new drug availability for human and veterinary medicine.

The American College of Veterinary Pathologists states: [veterinary pathologists] "fill vital roles directed at improving the knowledge base of the veterinary task force, increasing their diagnostic capabilities, and serving as key members and leaders of disease diagnostic and research teams that directly support the health of food animals in various capacities... [They] are actively engaged in disease policy development and education of livestock producers and other animal health professionals.... Veterinary pathologists working in federal, state, and university diagnostic and research laboratories are significantly involved in all of these focus areas; however their numbers are critically insufficient relative to the need for their expertise. "

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: Mary Jane Lis, MS, DVM, PhD

Title: State Veterinarian

Organization: Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Email: Mary.Lis@ct.gov

Telephone Number: (860)713-2505 (clerical); (860)713-2546 (direct)  
(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.