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United States
Department
of Agriculture

Research,
Education, and
Economics

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program State Animal Health Official Shortage Situation Area Nomination Guide

September 2024

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I. VETERINARY SHORTAGE SITUATION AREA OVERVIEW

The following information is a step-by-step guide for [State Animal Health Officials](#) (SAHOs) and their staff to prepare and submit nominations to fill identified needs for food supply veterinarians in specific areas within their state. SAHOs nominate these areas to be designated as “veterinary shortage situations.” These nominations support two United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) competitive programs:

- 1) the [Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program](#) (VMLRP) and,
- 2) the [Veterinary Services Grant Program](#) (VSGP).

The goal of the VMLRP is to encourage food animal veterinarians to serve in serious veterinary shortage situations in exchange for veterinary education loan repayment assistance. The goals of the VSGP are to fund accredited schools and organizations in education, extension, and training (EET) for food animal veterinary medicine and for rural practice enhancement (RPE) for veterinary clinics that provide services in veterinary shortage situations. VSGP applicants do not need to have a veterinary educational loan to apply. A short-term objective for both programs is to match the specific area needs with the knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, goals, and aspirations of applicants. The long-term objective of the programs is to provide funds to veterinarians and veterinary clinics to sustain clinical practice in shortage situation areas.

We anticipate that approximately 90 percent of available VMLRP funds will be awarded to veterinarians for private or specialty practices providing food animal medicine services in shortage areas. Approximately 10 percent of the available VMLRP funds will be awarded to veterinarians in public service, in disciplines determined to have a shortage of veterinarians such as, but not limited to, public health, epidemiology, and food safety. The VSGP distributes two-thirds of available funds for EET awards and one-third of available funds for RPE awards.

Although nominations support both programs, the focus of this document will be on the VMLRP.

II. NOMINATION & DESIGNATION PROCESS

A. Nomination Process

Veterinary shortage nominations assist in attracting potential participants to serve the areas and guide applicants’ responses. Reviewers use the shortage nominations to determine the best matches of applicants with nominated areas. The program uses the information provided in the nomination to assess compliance of awardees throughout the terms of their service agreement.

You may identify and submit a veterinary shortage situation for recruiting or retaining a qualified veterinarian to serve an area where there is a shortage of existing services or a great risk of losing an established food animal veterinarian. It is important to avoid placing an awardee where sufficient veterinary coverage already exists and/or where competition could lead to insufficient clientele to support either the awardee or the veterinary practice originally serving the area. Your expertise is critical to the success of awardees.

B. Gathering Data for Veterinary Shortage Situations

We recommend that you consult with food animal producer groups or associations, local food animal veterinarians and veterinary clinics, licensing boards, State and/or local veterinary medical associations,

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other officials, and stakeholders to verify a genuine need for additional veterinary services in an area or county, especially if the area will be carried over in a shortage area nomination from a previous year. In responding to questions, you must cite both verifiable quantitative data, such as number of farms or animals, and qualitative data, such as stakeholder remarks on the need to recruit or retain a veterinarian. The most current agricultural animal census, production and/or sales data may be obtained from the [USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service \(USDA NASS\)](#), State Departments of Agriculture, and state colleges and universities.

C. New and Retained Nominations

During each nomination period for the program cycle fiscal year (FY), all eligible submitting officials may:

- (1) request to retain the designated status for any shortage situation successfully designated in the previous year, “carry-over”, and/or
- (2) submit new nominations.

Both new and retained nominations must be submitted on the [Veterinary Shortage Situation Nomination form](#). You should review the map of designated veterinary shortage situations from the previous year at the [Veterinary Shortage Situations Map](#) website and download a PDF copy of any nomination form you wish to renew. If you choose to carry-over one or more designated nominations, you may copy and paste the prior year’s information into the current year’s nomination form for submission. We recommend reviewing the content of the previously designated nomination form for any updates in veterinary services or producer needs in the area.

A new awardee will have a three-year agreement with NIFA, and the SAHO will be informed that an agreement has been established in the designated shortage area. As a SAHO, you do not need to re-submit a previous awarded situation nomination area as at the end of the three-year agreement, an awardee may apply to continue service in the area if they are eligible. This will be via a renewal application in either the third year of their service agreement or the year following the expiration of their service agreement. Renewal applicants will use their original awarded veterinary shortage situation to reapply to the program. The renewal process is competitive.

D. Maximum Nomination Allocation Tables

All SAHOs and appropriate Federal Animal Health Officials (FAHOs; for federal lands allocation) are encouraged to submit up to the [maximum number of nominations allocated](#) for their jurisdiction. We will accept up to the maximum number of allocated veterinary shortage situations for each state, each fiscal year. Carry-over nominations count toward the maximum allowable number of nominations. There are no exceptions to exceeding the maximum allocation per state. We determine the maximum number of allocated veterinary shortage situations for each state based on data from the latest Agricultural Census conducted by the USDA NASS.

Both SAHOs and the U.S. Chief Veterinary Officer (Deputy Administrator of Veterinary Services, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, USDA, or designee) may submit nominations to address shortage situations on or related to federal lands. Nominations related to federal lands submitted by a state official will count toward the maximum number of nominations for their state. Federal officials have a separate maximum number of allocations allowed to be nominated.

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E. Joint State Nomination Process

There are instances where bordering counties in adjacent states may wish to submit a joint shortage situation area based on mutual needs in closely aligned geographic areas on either side of a state border. The process for submitting joint nominations changed for FY2023 so that the joint nomination will only count as one allocation from the state that submits the form to NIFA. The state can combine counties per shortage area and each SAHO must affirm the nomination at the time it is submitted. The steps for this process are outlined below.

1. Each state collaborates to identify, develop, and review the nomination.
2. The “Location of Veterinary Shortage” box on page 1 of the nomination form should indicate the separate counties for each state, so it is specific to where services will be required.
3. The SAHO’s will determine which state will submit the joint shortage nomination.
 - a. The submitting SAHO will sign the affirmation on page 4.
 - b. The collaborating SAHO(s) will provide an email verification affirming that the information presented in the location, species, and responses on the form align with the purpose of the program. This email will be included with the joint shortage nomination when it is submitted to NIFA.

4. Designation Review Process

After a nomination form is submitted to NIFA, the first step in designation of a shortage area is an internal administrative review of the submitted nomination to ensure all fields are complete. Any nomination form requiring completion, correction or clarification will be returned to the submitting official with specific instructions for corrections.

After the internal review, NIFA convenes a noncompetitive merit review panel of animal health experts, most external to NIFA, to review nominations. All new nominations will be reviewed. Nominations carried over will be accepted without review unless major changes in content are identified during administrative processing. Carried over nominations with major changes in content such as species, response to questions, or location, and shortages already retained for a second three-year period, will be treated as new submissions, and undergo a noncompetitive merit review.

NIFA intends to accept all nominations submitted. Each new nomination is reviewed by the panel to designate a rating of either "Recommended" or "Recommended with Resolution". For those rated as “Recommended with Resolution” the nomination is returned to the SAHO with feedback including specific instructions for correcting, completing, or clarifying any components. SAHOs have one week to make corrections. Once the nomination form is resubmitted, we will review the form for approval.

Criteria used by the review panel and NIFA for designating a veterinary shortage situation are consistent with the information requested in the nomination form. We understand the process for defining the risk landscape associated with veterinary service shortages within a state may require consideration of many qualitative and quantitative factors. For best outcomes and matches, you should use these factors to develop a convincing case to identify, characterize, and justify the geographic or disciplinary area as deficient in veterinary service. To assist you, the nomination form provides opportunities to present a case using both supportive metrics and narrative explanations to define and explain the proposed need.

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G. Period Covered

Each veterinary shortage situation is designated for one fiscal year. Carry-over shortage nominations (those not filled in the previous FY) without any revisions will be automatically approved for up to three years before requiring another noncompetitive merit review. By resubmitting a carry-over nomination, the nominating official is affirming that the original case made for shortage status, and the original description of needs, remain current and accurate. Veterinary shortage situations where an award was made, if still considered deficient of services and economically viable, may be resubmitted as new nominations.

H. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the noncompetitive merit review process care is taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review and evaluation of veterinary shortage situation nominations. Academic and administrative autonomy of an institution will be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory for any conflicts of interest, which is published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Blvd., Suite 658, Falls Church, VA 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: www.hepinc.com.

III. NOMINATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS

You must use the VMLRP Shortage Nomination Form to nominate veterinarian shortage situations. Information provided should be consistent among all sections of the form. Nominations from any jurisdiction (state or federal) should be distinguishable from one another. This means that justifications and statistics supporting one nomination should be specific to the area nominated. Only one form can be submitted for each allocated veterinary shortage situation and type.

Navigate to and download the Veterinary Shortage Situation Nomination Form from [Veterinary Shortage Situation Nomination form](#). Save the form to your computer before completing it. The red boxes on the fillable form must be visible on screen for the pdf-fillable form to work correctly. The form will not save your responses if you attempt to complete it with a web browser.

The image below is what you should initially see when you open the nomination form. The shaded areas are the fields to type text into or to select from a drop-down menu. All items with a red outline are mandatory. Items with black outline are optional and items without an outline need one section or the other to be filled out. The Shortage Identification (ID) is outlined in blue and is for “VMLRP Use Only”.



Shortage ID: **VMLRP USE ONLY**

**NIFA Veterinary Medicine
Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)**

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
US Department of Agriculture
Form NIFA 2009-0001
OMB No. 0524-0050
Form Approved For Use Through 12/31/2026

VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE SITUATION NOMINATION FORM

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). This form must be submitted under the authority of the Chief State or Insular Area Animal Health Official.

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A. Location of Veterinary Shortage Area

1. Location of Veterinary Shortage Area for this Nomination

a. Must Service Location(s):

(e.g., County, State/Insular Area; must be a logistically feasible veterinary practice service area)

b. May Service Location(s):

(e.g., County, State/Insular Area; must be a logistically feasible veterinary practice service area)

In the “Location of Veterinary Shortage” field, there are two entries to identify the Must Service location(s) and the May Service location(s). Here you will enter the names of one or more contiguous counties that the veterinarian must be willing and able to service. A contiguous county is one that is sharing a common border or touching another listed county. The area must constitute a logistically plausible service area that a single veterinarian would be expected to cover and serve effectively. If your intent is for the veterinarian to provide most of their services in one county, but they can provide services in neighboring contiguous counties, you can list the primary county and then list those surrounding counties. For example, “Stearns and the surrounding counties of Steel and Meeker”. May Service locations must be contiguous with the Must Service locations and must list all counties.

Do not include the following in the description of the Location:

- An area that is too large for a single veterinarian to cover.
- Modifiers such as “district 3”, “entire state” (unless Type III), or interpretive statements with a numeric mile radius.
 - Examples to avoid include:
 - 40-mile radius within counties X, Y, and Z.
 - District 9
 - Anywhere in State X

For Type III positions, the state can be listed if the services are to be provided for the whole state. If listing a district or regional position within the state, a list of the contiguous counties must follow to easily identify such counties.

In either private practice or public service, the location must include geographically relevant text. It must be easily identifiable when reviewing a map of the counties of that state. All location information must be accurate.

B. Approximate Center of Shortage Area

c. Approximate Center of Shortage Area (or Location of Position if Type III):

(e.g., Address or Cross Street, Town/City, and Zip Code)

For the “Approximate Center of Shortage Area”, enter an address, town, cross streets, or combination of geocoordinates that approximates the center of the service area for Type I or Type II shortage

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nominations. For Type III nominations, enter the business address of the primary office where the position would be located. Do not repeat the list of counties from “Location of Veterinary Shortage” in this section.

C. Overall Priority of Shortage

2. Overall Priority of Shortage:

Congressional intent for the VMLRP is to incentivize applicants to serve in veterinary shortage situation areas with the greatest needs. There is a presumption that all areas nominated as shortage situations should be classified as at least Moderate Priority shortages. Nominations are prioritized to facilitate the process and assist panelists in their review of shortage nominations and ranking of applicants. In the evaluation review process for applicants, the prioritization of the overall severity of the shortage situation among the applications is used in the final ranking process. See question 8 on the form to provide a justification related to the consequences if it not filled or retained on why this is nominated.

For all priority classifications, you must make a unique case based on situation-specific risk criteria to justify the prioritization. Characterize each shortage as “Moderate Priority”, “High Priority”, or “Critical Priority” as defined below:

1. **“MODERATE PRIORITY:** An area lacking in some aspect of food supply veterinary services. Justified by the absence of, or insufficient access to, veterinary services needed for basic animal health, animal well-being, production profitability, food safety, or public health.”
 - a. A Moderate Priority is a shortage situation that is lacking in availability in some aspect of food supply veterinary services. There is no major threat to food supply or public health related veterinary services, however the unavailability of services could negatively impact food supply and public health.
2. **“HIGH PRIORITY:** An area lacking sufficient access to food supply veterinary services. Justified by meeting the criteria for Moderate Priority status plus any additional concerns relating to food supply veterinary medicine and/or public health. Examples include areas with especially large census of food animals in comparison to available veterinary services or special animal or public health threats unique to the area e.g., recent, or ongoing disease outbreak of high consequence, or reportable, endemic animal and zoonotic diseases.”
 - a. A High Priority is a shortage situation where veterinary services are delayed and/or
3. **“CRITICAL PRIORITY:** An area severely lacking in some aspect of food supply or public health-related veterinary services. Justified by meeting the criteria for moderate and/or high priority status plus any additional serious concerns relating to the roles food supply veterinarians play in protecting animal and public health. Examples include areas with especially high potential for natural disasters or incursion of foreign animal disease e.g., high through-put international animal importation sites or proximity to international borders where wildlife and food animal

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species readily cross.”

- a. A Critical Priority is a shortage situation that does not have access to food supply or public health-related veterinary services. The lack of veterinary services creates detrimental consequences by not protecting animal and public health.

D. Type of Shortage Situation

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

Only one shortage type can be designated per nomination. For all shortage types, the personal residence of the veterinarian and the address of the practice employing the veterinarian are not required to fall within the geographic bounds of the veterinary shortage situation. Shortage types are classified based on percentage of [Full Time Equivalent \(FTE\)](#), location and practice type. The FTE is the number of working hours that represents one full-time (100% FTE) employee during a fixed time; for this program this a 40-hour work week.

It is expected that a veterinarian may provide veterinary services to other veterinary sectors (e.g., companion animals) as a means of achieving financial viability. However, service hours designated within the service agreement must be met by food supply veterinary medicine only and, no other veterinary services outside of listed food supply services will be allocated to meet the agreement obligations.

1. TYPE I - AT LEAST 80% FTE PRIVATE PRACTICE FOOD SUPPLY VETERINARY MEDICINE:

A Type I shortage area may be classified as rural, urban, or other type, if the veterinary service shortage to be mitigated is consistent with the definition of "[practice of food supply veterinary medicine](#)". A minimum of an 80% FTE (32 hours per week) commitment, in part, recognizes the fact that occasionally food animal veterinary practitioners are expected to meet the needs of other veterinary service sectors. These nominations are intended for shortage situations where the veterinarian can operate profitably by committing 80-100% time to food animal medicine activities, based on the client base and other socio-economic factors impacting viability of veterinary practices in the area.

2. TYPE II - AT LEAST 30% FTE PRIVATE PRACTICE FOOD SUPPLY VETERINARY MEDICINE IN A RURAL AREA:

A Type II shortage area must satisfy the definition of a "[rural area](#)". A minimum of a 30% FTE commitment (12 hours per week) in a rural shortage situation recognizes that some remote or economically depressed rural areas need food animal veterinary services, but they may be unable to support a practitioner predominantly serving the food animal sector. These nominations are intended for shortage situations where the veterinarian can operate profitably committing at least 30% time to food animal medicine activities, based on the client base and other socio-economic factors impacting viability of veterinary practices in the area.

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3. TYPE III - AT LEAST 49% FTE PUBLIC SERVICE

Type III is a broad nomination category comprised of many types of public service veterinary training and employment. These positions are typically found in city, county, state or federal governments and institutions of higher education. Examples are university faculty, staff, or resident; veterinary laboratory diagnostician; State Veterinarian or Epidemiologist; County Public Health Official; USDA meat inspector or Area Veterinarian in Charge; and Federal Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO). A minimum of a 49% FTE (19.6 hours per week) commitment recognizes that some public service employment opportunities are part-time.

E. Must/May Cover Species Designations – Private Practice

a. For Type I or II Private Practice, select species and/or production types to serve:

Must serve (must check at least one)	May serve
<input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle	<input type="checkbox"/> Beef Cattle
<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle	<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Cattle
<input type="checkbox"/> Swine	<input type="checkbox"/> Swine
<input type="checkbox"/> Poultry	<input type="checkbox"/> Poultry
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Ruminant
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

The indication of Must-Cover or May-Cover [food animal](#) species are only for Types I and II nominations. May-Cover species will be optional to complete in Fiscal Year 2024 and forward. If May Cover species is left blank the awarded veterinarian has the ability to serve any and all large and food animal species and to have them be valid for services completed on their service log. Any single species type may be indicated under either Must- or May-Cover, but not both. The Other category is an opportunity to add food animal agricultural species that are not listed. For example, 'Other' species not listed could be farm animals for services that support agricultural activities, animals in preparation of crops, equine supporting beef operations or other farm-related activities; however, this does not include companion animals.

Must-Cover species are those animals a veterinarian must be prepared, willing, and committed to provide services for to mitigate the shortage situation. The priority and majority of the service time is intended to service the Must-Cover species. The selection of more than one Must-Cover species will indicate during the application review panel that a veterinarian is required to have experience with all species selected. The recommendation is that one species must be selected as Must-cover and no more than two. The activities and services for those selected Must-Cover species must be described on page 2 of the form.

Optional

If you opt to select species in May-Cover, those are animals a veterinarian may provide services for to meet the required percent FTE. This recognizes that not all food animal species require the same level of services year-round, and a veterinarian may need to provide services for them, giving them the flexibility

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to meet their service agreement. When a veterinarian is unable to fulfill the service obligation with Must-Cover species, then it is appropriate to focus on May-Cover species to fulfill the service obligation. For example, to support beef operations during the “off season”, equine may be listed in Other as a May-Cover species.

If a species is listed, then there is a shortage for this type of work and the applicant can claim that service time. The justification for such species will be made on page 2 of the form. Further instructions on justification are found in the section of Short Answer Questions within this document.

F. Discipline/Specialty Area Designations – Public Practices

b. For Type III Public Practice:

Employer: _____

Position Title: _____

Please select one or more specialty/disciplinary areas:

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

The employer, position title and specialty/discipline are required for Type III shortage areas. Only one position title can be listed per Type III nomination. Food Safety, Public Health, and Epidemiology are listed as the primary disciplines. If the position requires a specialty/discipline that is not listed, then select “Other” and write in the specialty/disciplinary area required. Only one specialty/disciplinary area can be listed in “Other”. Select as many specialties/disciplines that apply to the position. The position description should be concisely addressed in the activities and objectives on page 2 of the form. For example, at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an epidemiologist position can often be filled by a health scientist, medical officer, or veterinary officer. In this case, the position description of the agency or institution designates the position title, but the duties of the position may be accomplished by a range of expertise.

Our reviewers seek to match the best applicant with the position. If the position is written too broadly, e.g., with more than one position description, reviewers cannot readily evaluate or match a position with a candidate. This could lead to two people being the best match for two different positions but only one shortage. There are situations where the job position is split equally between federal and state or agriculture and health departments. If this situation occurs, please contact Program Staff at vmrlp.applications@usda.gov.

G. Determining Percentage of Full Time Equivalent

- c. (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.

%

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The shortage Type (I, II, or III) will determine the minimum %FTE requirement. The box at c. of page 2 on the form allows you to require a higher percentage than the minimum %FTE. If the minimum %FTE as specified by the program will satisfy the needs of a shortage area there is no need to enter a greater percentage in the optional box. If a greater %FTE is required, you must indicate this value in the box. You must address the need for the increase in the narrative. The FTE can be as high as 80% if the requirements are realistic and economically feasible to meet the service needs.

For a private practice, windshield/drive time from the awardee's home to the primary place of business and back does not count toward agreement time. Eligible travel time is calculated from the time the veterinarian leaves the practice location until they arrive at the service site. If a mobile practice is home-based, then the travel time from the home base to the location of service does count. No more than 25% of agreement hours can be used as travel.

The Program requires that an awardee fulfill their obligation for the number of hours agreed within each quarter. This means that, although an awardee may take leave, and a veterinarian's employer may provide paid leave, the Program still expects an awardee to fully execute all required hours per quarter.

When determining the %FTE consider the following based on the objectives and services you described on page 2 and 3 of the form:

1. In reviewing the targeted species and service area, how long will it take to drive to services if the practice was situated in the center?
2. What is the square mileage of the area and number of animals to be served?
3. How many farms, ranches, or other facilities related to food animal production are available for the practitioner to service?
4. How much time will be allocated to cover this area?
5. What is the level of priority? Would it be a concern if there was a disease outbreak or a large morbidity/mortality event within a large population of food animal species?
6. For Type III positions, %FTE can vary based on the work schedule of the position. For example, if the position requires a 30 hour per week maximum, then a 80% FTE would not be accurate, as 100% FTE is defined as a 40-hour work week. A 30-hour work week would equate to a 75% FTE.
7. Estimate vacation, sick, and/or holiday time when determining the %FTE. Many positions in private and public practice are granted paid leave, such as for holidays, annual or sick leave. Calculations of FTE should allow for this leave. For example, for a recommended 85% FTE, this would translate to a 34-hour week, and with drive time, 25.5 hours as on-farm time.
8. Diversity of business needs may vary for each practitioner. A higher %FTE will be dependent on a consistent source of income from producers within a shortage area. This could be burdensome for a practitioner who may struggle with meeting service hours based on just food supply animal work.

Table 1 is an example of a 50% FTE (20 hours/week) service time obligation with quarterly requirements for a three-year agreement. This would account for 5 hours of windshield/drive time and 15 hours of animal service.

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Table 1: Example of a 50% FTE Agreement Hours Required

Time Frame	CY2025	CY2026	CY2027
January 1-March 31	256 (64)	256 (64)	260 (65)
April 1-June 30	260 (65)	260 (65)	260 (65)
July 1-September 30	264 (66)	264 (66)	260 (65)
October 1-December 31	264 (66)	260 (65)	260 (65)

*FTE% is based on a 40-hour work week. Example: 50% FTE is 20 hours per week.

Calendar year hours (CY) for each quarter and year are based on approximately 13 weeks per quarter. Parentheses note the maximum calculated windshield/drive time.

H. Short Answer Questions

The VMLRP is open to all veterinarians who meet the eligibility requirements. A shortage nomination should not be written or directed in such a manner to indicate or select a specific applicant, individual or practice. Your shortage nomination should be general in nature for the recruitment or retention of a veterinarian to meet the overall need of the nominated area.

The following questions are found on page 2 and 3 of the nomination form. There are character limits for each section that must be followed.

- 1. (Question 4 on form) Referring to the characteristics identified in response to question 3 above (on form) and the location to be served, describe in detail the need for a veterinarian in this shortage situation area. Include state, national, or local data to support the description of the need, such as numbers of animals, farms/ranches, markets, etc. (Limit your response to 2000 characters).**

Clearly describe specific objectives you hope to achieve by incentivizing a veterinarian to serve in a veterinary shortage situation and the measure(s) awardees and NIFA can use to assess the service agreement. Include quantitative data such as the number of animals versus veterinarians available, and size of the location in square miles, and qualitative data such as, economic importance, and stakeholder testimonials. Emphasis should be on **Must Cover** species but could also mention **May Cover** species.

- 2. (Question 5 on form) Referring to the characteristics identified in response to question 3 above, describe the services that a veterinarian must be willing to provide to meet this shortage situation's needs in the community, area, state/insular area, or position requested above (limit your response to 2000 characters).**

These activities and services listed assist the applicant in understanding what is expected of them to serve the area and is critical information in developing their application materials. If there is a need for the applicant to work at a Sale Barn or other market for a portion of their time, it should be stated here. The same applies for addressing specific health programs (e.g., Trich Testing Program), biosecurity, artificial insemination or embryo transfer, telephone consultations, continuing education, producer groups or cooperating with a university's extension program. Community outreach and communicating educational opportunities for producer groups or local organizations such as 4H or FFA can be broad enough for the awardee

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to decide how to execute the form of materials. These include meetings, presentations, podcasts, brochures, blogs, vlogs, or other forms of outreach. Also, consider seasonality and slow times of the production season with specific species to list activities awardees can do during these times. It is essential the information on the nomination be clear and consistent when describing the activities and services for the species to be served. Include descriptions of implementation methods such as haul-in facilities, ambulatory, and mobile practices.

- 3. (Question 6 on form) To help you promote your shortage nomination, what aspects of the community (outdoor activities, community strengths, etc.) would attract a veterinarian to the service area or state? What would be the major attractions for the veterinarian to join the community? (limit your response to 2000 characters.)**

Here you can describe what aspects of the community would attract or retain a food animal veterinarian and potentially their family to the service area. Include any major attractions for a veterinarian to join or remain in the community such as benefits of the area, abilities to obtain further education, outdoor activities, attractions to the state or region and any other information that may be appealing.

- 4. (Question 7 on form) Describe any past efforts to recruit and retain a veterinarian in the shortage situation identified above (limit your response to 1000 characters).**

Although they may have been unsuccessful, explain any prior efforts to mitigate this veterinary service shortage and prospects for recruiting or retaining veterinarian(s) in the future. Describe the number of years the position has been vacant and where recruitment or retainment efforts have been made.

- 5. (Question 8 on form) Describe the consequences of this veterinary 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. Describe why this shortage is a critical, high, or moderate priority. (limit your response to 2500 characters.)**

In support of your priority that you have determined on the first page, this is the section to justify the nomination form. This section supports the priority level indicated on the first page of the nomination form. Explain the consequences of not addressing this veterinary shortage situation as it pertains to a safe food supply and to animal, human, and environmental health both locally and beyond if a veterinarian is not secured or retained.

I. Affirmation Check Boxes

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

- a. By checking this box, I affirm that this form represents a nomination and is subject to NIFA review and approval.
- b. 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).

You must check both affirmation boxes for us to consider the nomination for official designation. It will be returned to the submitting official if either box is left unchecked. The first affirmation provides assurance that you understand the process while the second provides assurance that the shortage situation is legitimate.

J. SAHO Contact Information

c. Authorized State or Insular Area Animal Health Official or designee:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Email: _____

Telephone Number: _____

(Area code required)

Please ensure that the email and telephone number are accurate. This information is available on the Veterinary Shortages Situations Map webpage, and potential applicants and awardees may use this contact information to seek further information regarding the details of the nomination.

K. Preparing & Submitting the Form

Once the form is completed, perform a final review of the form to ensure all fields are filled out properly and with the correct information. There have been situations in the past where those submitting multiple shortage nominations have mixed information pertaining to different shortage nomination areas. After you have confirmed that all necessary fields are filled out, you will need to save the completed form as a PDF.

All completed forms must be received by the nomination deadline to be considered for designation. Please send the nomination(s) as a pdf attachment in one email to vmlrp.applications@usda.gov. You do not need to send each nomination in individual email.

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IV. CONFIDENTIAL ASPECTS OF APPLICATIONS AND AWARDS

Privacy and security are high priorities. Names of applicants, as well as application content and peer evaluations, are kept confidential except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process, to the extent permitted by law. The names of the reviewers will not be released.

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of our transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. The identity of an individual receiving an award is confidential. Self-identification as an award recipient has potential advantages and disadvantages. For example, self-identification to the individual community and/or SAHO might lead to increased access to information and resources that could help meet the needs of the shortage situation more effectively and efficiently. Some may view receipt of this award as an issue of financial privacy that they wish to keep confidential.-It is up to awardees if they wish to be self-identified. Personal Identifiable Information, such as financial data, will not be revealed to third party individuals or organizations other than payment information with lending institutions.

V. VOLUNTEER AS A PEER REVIEW PANELIST

We are always looking for volunteer peer-review panelists to serve our programs. This is an opportunity to support the veterinary profession and its support to food animal medicine, develop a better understanding of the application and competitive review process, and to network with colleagues. An honorarium may be provided at a rate of \$265 per day for panel meetings. Panelists are selected based on their subject matter expertise, experience, willingness to serve and our panel needs. If you would like to volunteer to serve as a peer review panelist for our programs, please provide your information through the [Peer Review System](#). For more information, contact the program staff listed in the [Request for Applications](#) for the program you are interested in serving.

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APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Below are the definitions used throughout this document as a quick reference. A complete list of terms pertaining to the VMLRP with their description can be found at [CFR 3431.3](#).

Food animal means the following species: Bovine, porcine, ovine/camelid, cervid, poultry, caprine, and any other species as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE): the number of working hours that represents one full-time employee during a fixed time period. For VMLRP this equates to a 40-hour work week.

Practice of food supply veterinary medicine: Includes corporate/private practices devoted to food animal medicine, mixed animal medicine located in a rural area (at least 30 percent of practice devoted to food animal medicine), food safety, epidemiology, public health, animal health, and other public and private practices that contribute to the production of a safe and wholesome food supply.

Practice of veterinary medicine: To diagnose, treat, correct, change, alleviate, or prevent animal disease, illness, pain, deformity, defect, injury, or other physical, dental, or mental conditions by any method or mode; including:

1. The prescription, dispensing, administration, or application of any drug, medicine, biologic, apparatus, anesthetic, or other therapeutic or diagnostic substance or medical or surgical technique, or
2. The use of complementary, alternative, and integrative therapies, or
3. The use of any manual or mechanical procedure for reproductive management, or
4. The rendering of advice or recommendation by any means including telephonic and other electronic communications with regard to any of paragraphs (1), (2), (3), or (4) of this definition.

Rural area: Any area other than a city or town that has a population of 50,000 inhabitants and the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town.

State: means any one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the insular areas of the United States. Also included are total "Federal Lands", defined for convenience as a single entity.

State Animal Health Official (SAHO): The state veterinarian, or equivalent, who will be responsible for nominating and certifying veterinarian shortage situations within the state.