

Rural Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program Guidelines

Program Purpose

The purpose of Minnesota's Rural Veterinarian Loan Repayment program is to recruit and retain large animal/food animal veterinarians to needed areas and facilities within Minnesota. Loan forgiveness is an important benefit for veterinarians as well as rural communities experiencing a shortage of access to large animal/food animal veterinarians.

Program Administration and Funding

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) administers this program. It is funded by the State of Minnesota. Program eligibility requirements and benefits are established by state statute, §136A.1795 authorizing the rural veterinarian loan forgiveness program.

Eligibility and Application

This program is offered to students enrolled in the veterinarian degree/DVM program and making satisfactory progress in the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Minnesota; or veterinarians who have been awarded a veterinary medicine degree/DVM within three years of submitting an application, from the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Minnesota.

To be eligible, a prospective participant must submit an application during the open application cycle. Preference is given to applicants closest to completing their training, including students and practicing veterinarians.

Loan Eligibility

The Loan Repayment Program provides funds for repayment of qualified educational loans for rural veterinarians. Applicants are responsible for securing their own educational loans. Qualified loans include government, commercial and foundation loans for actual costs paid for tuition, reasonable education, and living expenses related to the graduate or undergraduate education of a veterinarian.

Selection

This is a competitive selection process. Selections are made based on suitability for practice as indicated by personal and professional experience and training as noted on an application. The selection committee is made up of faculty and administrators from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine. A maximum of five awards will be made.

Service Obligation and Funding

Currently practicing providers are eligible to apply but no credit can be given for service prior to the service obligation begin date.

Participants must, for 5 consecutive years, work at least (1) 30 hours per week for (2) at least 45 weeks per year (3) in a Designated Rural Area (4) for a practice that is at least 50 percent involved with the care of food animals.

Food animals are defined as Cattle (Beef and Dairy), Goats, Pigs, Poultry, and Sheep. A designated rural area in Minnesota is defined in Minnesota Statutes §136A.1795 as an area outside the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington, excluding the cities of Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead, Rochester, and St. Cloud.

Participants who had not completed the DVM program at the time of application must complete it as stated in their application.

Participants must obtain a qualifying job and begin meeting service obligation requirements **no later than 6/30/2026**.

OHE will pay annual loan repayment disbursements directly to Participant in the amount of \$15,000. The total amount of loan repayment disbursements must not exceed \$75,000 or the principal balance and accrued interest of the Participant's qualified educational loans.

Annual Reporting

Annually, the OHE requires participants to verify their continued employment and submit documentation that they have applied the loan forgiveness funds to their designated educational loan(s). This information will be verified prior to each annual disbursement. It is at the discretion of the participant to pay their loan servicer(s) with an annual lump sum payment or make monthly payments that total the annual disbursement.

Income Tax Reporting

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the University of Minnesota do not provide legal advice on possible tax obligations resulting from receipt of a loan repayment program award. Recipients of loan repayment program awards are responsible for and should consult with their tax advisors for advice on any tax obligations resulting from awards.

Temporary Suspension of Service

Service obligations may be suspended as a result of an illness, disability, or temporary job transfer lasting less than a total of 12 months during the five-year commitment. All requests for temporary suspension of service must be in writing and substantiated by documentation deemed acceptable by the state on a case-by-case basis. The agreement end date will be extended by the amount of time a participant is in suspension status. Suspensions cannot exceed twelve months.

Penalty for Non-fulfillment

If a participant does not fulfill the minimum obligation of five years of practice in a designated rural area in Minnesota, the participant will be required to repay the total amount OHE paid plus interest, at a rate established according to Minnesota Statutes §270C.40.