



RURAL VETERINARIAN INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The purpose of the Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program (RVIP) is to encourage veterinary practices in qualifying rural Texas counties and provide a veterinarian in those counties. This program provides educational loan repayment assistance or payment of tuition and fees to eligible veterinarians and veterinary medicine students in return for commitment to work in a designated rural area in Texas.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for this program, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- be a currently enrolled student or graduate of a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine program at Texas Tech University's School of Veterinary Medicine or Texas A&M University's School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences;
 - Graduates must have graduated within four years of the application date and be a licensed veterinarian.
 - Students currently enrolled in an out-of-state accredited college of veterinary medicine may apply if they graduated from a Texas high school or undergraduate institution.
- be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident;
- not be currently fulfilling another obligation to provide veterinary medical services as part of a scholarship agreement, an educational loan agreement, or another educational loan repayment agreement;
- have received an eligible education loan for at least 50 percent of the funds for tuition and fees for one or more academic years while enrolled in an accredited school of veterinary medicine;
- agree to practice veterinary medicine full-time in an eligible rural county in Texas for at least one calendar year; and
- be otherwise eligible to receive payment from the funding source.

Participants are only eligible to receive assistance for qualified educational loan debt incurred after March 3, 2021 and can only receive assistance for service obligation periods that will be completed before December 31, 2024, due to the source of funding under Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Subtitle M of Title IX of Pub. L. 117-2).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

For each year of full-time veterinary service in a qualifying rural Texas county, a participant may receive educational loan repayment assistance or payment of tuition and fees of up to \$45,000 for a total of up to \$180,000 over four years.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

- A selected applicant must agree to provide full-time veterinary services in a qualifying rural county for at least one year. The Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program Committee may allow a selected applicant to use prior service in a qualifying rural county to satisfy program requirements.
- The participant must sign a promissory note acknowledging the conditional nature of the assistance awarded and promise to repay the amount if the participant does not satisfy the conditions of the agreement.

HOW TO APPLY

- Applicants should submit the completed Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program Application Form and all required attachments by email to rvip@tahc.texas.gov or by mail to Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program; Texas Animal Health Commission; P.O. Box 12966; Austin, Texas 78711.
- Applications are submitted to the Committee through a process facilitated by the TAHC. The TAHC will screen applicants for eligibility and completeness before submitting the application for the RVIP Committee's evaluation. The Committee will evaluate and score each application using the Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program Scoring Rubric.

RESOURCES

- For additional information about the RVIP, please visit www.tahc.texas.gov/vets/rvip
- If you have questions about this program, please email rvip@tahc.texas.gov and provide a detailed description of your question.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program

June 2024

1. Are there restrictions on who I work for?

No. You may be self-employed, practice as part of a clinic or practice group, or work for an entity.

2. Can I get paid for veterinary services in the rural county?

Yes. This program is designed to eliminate education loan debt or tuition obligations. You may offer services to the community at the market rate for those services or receive a salary from your employer.

3. What is considered full-time veterinary medical service?

Full-time veterinary medical service is an average of at least 32 hours of veterinary care per week.

4. Can I provide volunteer work to satisfy the full-time requirement?

Yes, you may offer voluntary veterinary services in a qualifying rural county. All veterinary services, whether paid or unpaid can count towards your full-time service requirement.

5. I received a scholarship; do I still qualify?

Applicants who are recipients of scholarships are not disqualified from the program as long as the scholarship did not require the applicant to provide veterinary medical services as part of a scholarship agreement.

6. If I received assistance from the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, am I eligible for this program?

No. If you received financial assistance to repay loans or tuition in exchange for providing veterinary medical services you are not eligible for this program.

7. Who will hold the promissory note?

Participants are required to enter a promissory note with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

8. What if I want to work in a different county than I put in my application?

You may work in any rural county to fulfill obligations under the agreement. Change of job or address are required to be reported as part of the promissory note.

9. Do I have to live in the rural county that I practice veterinary medicine in?

The program does not require that you live in the county in which you practice, but you are required to provide full-time veterinary services in a rural county.

10. Can I receive an award if I provide part-time veterinary medical services in a qualifying rural county?

No. A requirement of the program is the provision of full-time veterinary medical services to a rural county.

11. If I stop working in a rural county, do I have to pay back the assistance I received?

As you complete each obligated period, the amount of money received for that obligation period will be forgiven. If you stop providing full-time veterinary services in an eligible rural county and you still have remaining obligations, you will have to repay the assistance received for the remaining obligation periods under the terms of the promissory note.

12. Do research programs or post-graduate work count towards service obligations?

If the research programs or post-graduate work entails full-time veterinary medical services while licensed as a veterinarian in a qualifying rural county it will count towards service obligations.

13. I have been working full-time as a veterinarian in a rural county, does that service count towards my service obligations?

The committee can consider prior service if it meets the requirement of the program. If the service obligation has been met for assistance received for prior service, the conditional nature of the assistance will be fulfilled for each approved prior service period.

