

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Veterinary Student Recruitment and Retention Pilot Program

Terms and Conditions

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Veterinary Student Recruitment and Retention Pilot Program (VSRPP) (the “**Program**”) is to support the attraction and retention of veterinary students and ultimately veterinary graduates to rural Alberta veterinary clinics to address labour shortages, enhance the overall sustainability of the animal agriculture industry and ensure animal health and welfare.

The Program provides a wage incentive via a grant to eligible veterinary clinics to support the hiring and training of veterinary students with the goal of encouraging them to return for future placements and ultimately join the clinic as full-time veterinary practitioners upon graduation. The Program is designed to support recruitment and retention of the student by immersing the student in practical Food Production Animal veterinary services within a rural clinic setting.

To be eligible, a veterinary clinic must have a food production animal practice.

Eligible clinics will receive up to \$10,000, as a wage incentive, for one veterinary student that works at the clinic between May 1 and August 31, 2026.

There is limited funding in the Program. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis, will be assessed against program eligibility criteria and are subject to program funding constraints.

Successful applicants must enter into a grant agreement to receive Program funding. Terms of the agreement can be viewed at: <https://www.alberta.ca/veterinary-student-recruitment-and-retention-pilot-program>

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Definitions - In these Program Terms and Conditions:

ABVMA: means the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association.

Applicant: means a person who submits an Application.

Application: means an application for funding under the Program.

Eligible Applicant: means an Applicant that is approved under the Program as described in Section 3.1.

Eligible Student: means a student that is approved under the Program as described in Section 3.2.

Final Report: means the final report required under a Grant Agreement, and includes documentation required to be submitted with the report.

Food Production Animals: means animals raised to produce food or fiber, and includes cattle, swine, sheep, goats, poultry, cervids and bison.

Grant: means funds payable to an Eligible Applicant under this Program.

Grant Agreement: means a grant agreement between the Minister and the Eligible Applicant.

Minister: means the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation and his authorized representative(s).

Municipality: means a city, town, village, summer village, municipal district or specialized municipality.

Post-Secondary Institution: means Banff Centre, a university, a comprehensive community college, a polytechnic institution or any other institution established under the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (Alberta) and designated by regulation as a public post-secondary institution.

Program: means the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Veterinary Student Recruitment and Retention Pilot Program (VSRPP).

Program Application Form: means the application form for the Program, as posted on the Program Website.

Program Terms and Conditions: means these terms and conditions.

Program Website: means the Minister's website for this Program at: <https://www.alberta.ca/veterinary-student-recruitment-and-retention-pilot-program>

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP): means the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

Veterinary Clinic: means a veterinary clinic (incorporated or unincorporated) that provides veterinary services to the public for a fee.

Veterinary Profession Act: means the *Veterinary Profession Act* (Alberta), and as applicable, the Veterinary Profession General Regulation.

Veterinary School: means a school of veterinary medicine that is accredited by the Council of Education of the American and Canadian Veterinary Medical Associations.

Work Term: means a period between May 1, 2026 and August 31, 2026 during which an Eligible Student is employed at an Eligible Applicant's Veterinary Clinic.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Eligible Applicants

3.1.1 To be an Eligible Applicant, an Applicant must:

- a) be either a registered veterinarian or a permit holder, as defined in the *Veterinary Profession Act*,
- b) own and operate a Veterinary Clinic in Alberta that is located outside Edmonton and Calgary,
- c) have a Food Production Animal veterinary practice at the Veterinary Clinic, meaning the clinic provides veterinary services involving Food Production Animals, and
- d) be experiencing one or more of the following at the Veterinary Clinic:
 - i) have an unfilled **veterinary practitioner** vacancy that the Eligible Applicant has been unable to fill despite significant recruitment efforts,
 - ii) be seeking to fill a **veterinary practitioner** position that will become vacant within the next two years due to retirement, transfer, or other anticipated staffing changes, or
 - iii) be planning to fill a future **veterinary practitioner** position that will be created by the expansion of the Veterinary Clinic.

3.1.2 The following are ineligible to apply to the Program:

- a) A person looking to hire a student for summer help with no intention of hiring the student for full-time permanent employment following graduation.
- b) Municipalities,
- c) Post Secondary Institutions,
- d) Industry organizations,
- e) federal and provincial governments, agencies and institutions, and similar organizations funded in whole or in part by the government, and
- f) any other person deemed by the Minister to be ineligible.

3.2 Eligible Students

3.2.1 To be an Eligible Student, a student must:

- a) be either:
 - i. a person enrolled in a professional degree program in veterinary medicine at a Veterinary School in Canada, or
 - ii. a Canadian citizen or permanent resident enrolled in a professional degree program in veterinary medicine at a Veterinary School outside Canada,
- b) be eligible to work in Alberta,
- c) have completed, or be completing, at least their first year of Veterinary School training by April 30, 2026,

- d) be enrolled in, and be eligible to attend, the next level of Veterinary School training in Fall/Winter 2026, and
- e) be the subject of consent by the ABVMA for the employment of the student by the Applicant, if required under s. 7 of the Veterinary Profession General Regulation.

4.0 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 The Eligible Student must work at the Eligible Applicant's Veterinary Clinic during the Work Term.
- 4.2 The Eligible Applicant must comply with the requirements of the *Veterinary Profession Act*, including the requirements concerning the employment of "students" (as defined in the Act). The Eligible Applicant must comply with ABVMA policies.
- 4.3 The Eligible Applicant must provide the Eligible Student with training, development, and hands-on experience in the day-to-day work of a veterinary practitioner. The Eligible Applicant must not allow the Eligible Student to practice veterinary medicine except in accordance with the *Veterinary Profession Act*.
- 4.4 Both the Eligible Applicant and the Eligible Student must submit reporting documents, as required by the Program.

5.0 FUNDING AND PAYMENT

- 5.1 The Program provides wage incentives to Eligible Applicants for employing Eligible Students at Veterinary Clinics.
- 5.2 The maximum Grant that may be awarded to an Eligible Applicant under a single Grant Agreement is \$10,000.
- 5.3 The conditions for payment of the Grant shall be set out in the Grant Agreement and shall include the following.
 - a) No amount of the Grant is payable unless the working hours of the Eligible Student includes some training, development and hands-on experience in the day-to-day work in Food Production Animal practice or related duties at the Veterinary Clinic. If this condition is not met, the Grant will not be paid.
 - b) No amount of the Grant is payable if the Eligible Applicant does not submit a satisfactory Final Report, which must include report(s) to be completed by the Eligible Student.
- 5.4 The amount of the Grant payable will be calculated based on the number of hours worked by the Eligible Student during the Work Term. The amount of the Grant will be calculated at \$15.625/hour to a maximum of 640 hours.
- 5.5 The Grant will be paid after submission of a satisfactory Final Report.

- 5.6** No Grant is payable for any period during the Work Term in which the Eligible Applicant received funding from other federal, provincial, or municipal government sources for wages or benefits paid to the Eligible Student.

6.0 GRANT AGREEMENT

- 6.1** The Minister shall pay a Grant to the Eligible Applicant subject to the terms and conditions in the Grant Agreement, which shall provide for, among other things:

- a) the maximum amount of the Grant,
- b) calculation of the amount of Grant payable, and terms of payment,
- c) reporting by the Eligible Student and Eligible Applicant,
- d) the ability for the Minister to audit, evaluate or inspect compliance with the Grant Agreement, and
- e) default by the Eligible Applicant and repayment of the Grant.

- 6.2** If there is a conflict or inconsistency between a provision of these Program Terms and Conditions and the Grant Agreement, the latter shall take precedence.

7.0 APPLICATION REVIEW

- 7.1** Applications that meet minimum eligibility requirements (Eligible Applicant and Eligible Student) will be assessed on the following criteria:

- a) the distance of the Veterinary Clinic from a major urban centre,
- b) the nature and degree of the labour shortage that the Applicant is experiencing:
 - i. if there is an unfilled **veterinary practitioner** vacancy,
 - ii. if a **veterinary practitioner** position will become vacant within the next two years, the reason for that vacancy,
 - iii. if a future **veterinary practitioner** position will be created by the expansion of the Veterinary Clinic, its job description,
- c) the Applicant's efforts undertaken to date to fill the **veterinary practitioner** vacancy or position identified in paragraph (b),
- d) the amount of the Applicant's client base that is Food Production Animals,
- e) the type and amount of work that the student will do during the Work Term, including:
 - i. the number of hours that the Applicant has committed to give the student during the Work Term,
 - ii. the estimated percentage of the student's working hours that will be spent on Food Production Animal practice or related duties (which may include direct animal care as well as associated activities supporting food animal health and management),

- iii. the kind of training, development and hands-on experience that the student will receive in the day-to-day work of a veterinary practitioner,
- f) compensation, benefits, and supports that the Applicant will give the student during the Work Term, such as:
 - i. pay and benefits,
 - ii. training and mentorship,
 - iii. non-employment supports, such as housing.
- g) plans by the Applicant to introduce the student to the community, and efforts to encourage the student to return to the Veterinary Clinic for employment in the future,
- h) the quality and extent of the student's veterinary education, including the number of years of veterinary education completed by the student (Preference may be given to students attending Canadian institutions),
- i) whether there is a non-arm's length relationship between the student and the Applicant or any employee of the Veterinary Clinic ("Arm's length" means two parties are not related by blood, marriage, common-law partnership, or adoption, and do not have a close personal, financial, or business relationship), and
- j) any other information the Applicant deems relevant to support their Application.

8.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 8.1** An Applicant may apply more than once to the Program. An Application may be in respect of only one student per Veterinary Clinic location.
- 8.2** Applications will be accepted and processed on a continuous basis throughout the Program.
- 8.3** There is limited funding in the Program. Applications will be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis, not "first come, first served". Applications will be evaluated and recommended for approval according to the eligibility criteria, assessment criteria and funding constraints.
- 8.4** Because the Program aims to benefit as many communities and Veterinary Clinics as possible, an Application submitted by an Applicant that has already been awarded a Grant may receive lower priority than Applications from Applicants that have not received any awards.
- 8.5** Applications must include:
- a) a completed Program Application Form, and all documents required to be submitted pursuant to that form, and
 - b) any additional supplementary documentation requested by the Minister.
- 8.6** Applications must be signed by a properly authorized representative.
- 8.7** Applications must be delivered to the Minister at: s-cap.vetstudentprogram@gov.ab.ca

8.8 The Minister may reject an Application that the Minister deems to be inaccurate, incomplete, or ineligible.

8.9 Submission of an Application does not entitle an Applicant to funding under the Program.

9.0 FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION

9.1 An Applicant who provides false or misleading information under this Program forgoes all rights to benefits from this Program.

10.0 MINISTERIAL GRANTS REGULATION

10.1 Payments under this Program are grants subject to the *Ministerial Grants Regulation* (AR 215/2022), as may be amended, or replaced from time to time. In addition to complying with the Grant Agreement, an Eligible Applicant must comply with the Regulation.

11.0 CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM

11.1 The Minister may change or terminate the Program at any time without notice. Any revisions to the Program, the Program Application Form, or the Program Terms and Conditions will be posted on the Program Website.

11.2 Applications are subject to the Program Terms and Conditions as posted on the Program Website as of the date that the Application was received by the Minister.

12.0 MINISTERIAL DISCRETION

12.1 The Minister has the absolute discretion to determine the eligibility of any Applicant and any student under the Program. Notwithstanding anything in these Program Terms and Conditions, the Minister has the absolute discretion to not approve any Application. The decision of the Minister is final.