

IN THE SENATE

SENATE BILL NO. 1344

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

AN ACT

1 RELATING TO THE RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM; AMENDING TITLE
2 25, IDAHO CODE, BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW CHAPTER 41, TITLE 25, IDAHO
3 CODE, TO DEFINE TERMS, TO ESTABLISH PROVISIONS REGARDING A RURAL VET-
4 ERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT FUND, TO ESTABLISH PROVISIONS REGARDING A
5 REVIEW BOARD, TO ESTABLISH PROVISIONS REGARDING GRANT AWARDS, TO ESTAB-
6 LISH PROVISIONS REGARDING GRANT APPLICATIONS, TO PROVIDE A GRANT AWARD
7 SCHEDULE AND TO PROVIDE FOR AN ACTIVITY REPORT, TO ESTABLISH PROVISIONS
8 REGARDING FRAUDULENT INFORMATION ON A GRANT APPLICATION, TO PROVIDE
9 AUTHORITY TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND TO PROVIDE FOR
10 ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND PROVIDING AN
11 EFFECTIVE DATE.
12

13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

14 SECTION 1. That Title 25, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended
15 by the addition thereto of a NEW CHAPTER, to be known and designated as Chap-
16 ter 41, Title 25, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

17 CHAPTER 41

18 RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

19 25-4101. DEFINITIONS. As used in this chapter:

20 (1) "Applicant" means an individual requesting a grant from the rural
21 veterinarians loan repayment program.

22 (2) "Application period" means the time period from October 1 to Novem-
23 ber 30 of the state fiscal year for which funding is requested.

24 (3) "Approval" means written notification that the application will be
25 awarded funding through the rural veterinarians loan repayment program.

26 (4) "Board" means the rural veterinarians loan repayment grant review
27 board.

28 (5) "Department" means the state department of agriculture.

29 (6) "Director" means the director of the department.

30 (7) "Grant period" means the time immediately following the applica-
31 tion period from December 1 through June 30 for which funding is granted.

32 (8) "Qualified veterinary education debt" means a debt with a financial
33 aid program or financial institution incurred to meet the educational costs
34 of attending an accredited veterinary school.

35 (9) "Rural veterinarian" means an individual who:

36 (a) Is licensed to practice veterinary medicine pursuant to chapter 21,
37 title 54, Idaho Code; and

38 (b) Dedicates no less than fifty percent (50%) of the individual's
39 practice to providing veterinary care to food and production animals in
40 a rural area, as determined by the department.

1 (10) "Rural veterinarians loan repayment grant" or "grant" means a
2 grant awarded pursuant to this chapter.

3 (11) "Rural veterinarians loan repayment program" or "program" means
4 the rural veterinarians loan repayment program established by this chapter.

5 (12) "Rural veterinarians loan repayment fund" or "fund" means the fund
6 in the state treasury established in section 25-4102, Idaho Code.

7 25-4102. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT FUND. There is hereby es-
8 tablished in the state treasury a rural veterinarians loan repayment fund to
9 be administered by the department. Moneys in the fund shall:

10 (1) Be continuously appropriated to pay for:

11 (a) The qualified veterinary education debt of rural veterinarians;
12 and

13 (b) The expenses of administering the rural veterinarians loan repay-
14 ment program, which expenses shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the
15 annual appropriation by the legislature; and

16 (2) Consist of:

17 (a) Legislative appropriations;

18 (b) Eligible federal funds, if any;

19 (c) Donations; and

20 (d) Interest earned on idle moneys in the fund.

21 25-4103. REVIEW BOARD. (1) The director shall appoint seven (7) mem-
22 bers of a board to be known as the rural veterinarians loan repayment grant
23 review board. Members of the board:

24 (a) Shall consist of the Idaho state veterinarian, production agricul-
25 ture representatives, and veterinarians;

26 (b) Shall serve at the pleasure of the director; and

27 (c) Shall not be compensated but shall be reimbursed for travel ex-
28 penses incurred for attendance at board meetings.

29 (2) The board shall meet at least annually for the purposes described in
30 this chapter.

31 (3) Appointments to the board shall be for three (3) years, except for
32 initial appointments to the board, which shall be staggered such that two
33 (2) board members are appointed for one (1) year, two (2) board members are
34 appointed for two (2) years, and three (3) board members are appointed for
35 three (3) years. Board members may be reappointed at the end of their terms.

36 (4) A majority of the board members constitutes a quorum for the trans-
37 action of business. A majority vote is required by the quorum in finalizing
38 decisions.

39 25-4104. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT AWARDS. (1) The
40 board may award grants in accordance with the procedures and criteria in
41 this chapter to rural veterinarians for qualified veterinary education debt
42 repayments.

43 (2) Subject to available funding, rural veterinarian loan repayment
44 grant awards shall be made to applicants who:

45 (a) Are rural veterinarians;

46 (b) Are not receiving another loan repayment award at the time of appli-
47 cation; and

1 (c) Meet other eligibility criteria as determined by the department.

2 (3) A rural veterinarian selected to receive a rural veterinarians loan
3 repayment grant award shall be entitled to receive qualified veterinary ed-
4 ucation debt repayments for a period not to exceed three (3) years in such
5 amount as is determined annually.

6 (4) Award amounts shall be determined annually by the department based
7 on recommendations from the board. Factors in the determination shall in-
8 clude:

9 (a) Availability of funding; and

10 (b) The number of new applicants.

11 (5) The award shall not exceed the qualified veterinary education
12 debt incurred by the recipient, and the maximum amount of educational debt
13 repayments that a rural veterinarian may receive shall be twenty-five thou-
14 sand dollars (\$25,000) in one (1) year and seventy-five thousand dollars
15 (\$75,000) over a three (3) year period.

16 (6) All grant awards shall be paid directly from the rural veterinari-
17 ans loan repayment fund to the rural veterinarian receiving the award.

18 (7) In determining the awards to be made in any given year, the board and
19 the department shall consider the value of retaining an appropriate balance
20 in the fund for use in future years.

21 (8) An award payment to a recipient in a single year is not guaranteed or
22 assured in subsequent years and may be increased or reduced. Award payments
23 shall not continue to be made to a recipient who accepts another loan repay-
24 ment award.

25 (9) Any unused grant funds shall be returned to the rural veterinarians
26 loan repayment fund by the recipient no later than February 28 of the grant
27 period.

28 (10) Grant awards are limited to qualified veterinary education debt
29 repayments for rural veterinarians.

30 25-4105. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS RE-
31 QUIRED. (1) A completed grant application must be submitted by the applicant
32 to the board for the purpose of requesting a grant on or before the conclusion
33 of the application period specified for the appropriate grant cycle. All
34 applications must include the required information.

35 (2) The grant application and any attachments submitted by the appli-
36 cant shall be the primary source of information for awarding a grant. Addi-
37 tionally, the board may request or use other information known to it in mak-
38 ing its decision.

39 (3) All grant applications shall be on a form prescribed by the board.

40 25-4106. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT AWARD SCHEDULE --
41 ACTIVITY REPORT. (1) The board shall conduct the grant process in accordance
42 with the schedule provided in this section.

43 (2) The director or the director's designee shall develop an applica-
44 tion form and make guidance, including any eligibility criteria, available
45 no later than October 1, which shall initiate the application period prior to
46 the grant period.

47 (3) The completed application shall be submitted no later than November
48 30 of the application period.

1 (4) The board shall notify applicants of the disposition of their grant
2 request by February 15 prior to the grant period.

3 (5) Funds for approved rural veterinarians loan repayment grants shall
4 be disbursed according to a schedule adopted by the department.

5 (6) Grant recipients shall submit activity reports on a form and sched-
6 ule adopted by the department.

7 25-4107. FRAUDULENT INFORMATION ON GRANT APPLICATION. Providing
8 false information on any application or document submitted under this chap-
9 ter is a misdemeanor and grounds for declaring the applicant ineligible. Any
10 and all funds determined to have been acquired on the basis of fraudulent
11 information must be returned to the rural veterinarians loan repayment grant
12 program. This section shall not limit other remedies that may be available
13 for the filing of false or fraudulent applications.

14 25-4108. DEPARTMENT AUTHORITY. The department is authorized to take
15 all actions necessary to implement and enforce the provisions of this chap-
16 ter, including the promulgation of any necessary rules.

17 25-4109. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS. Applicants aggrieved by the award or
18 failure to award a grant pursuant to this chapter shall be afforded the reme-
19 dies provided in chapter 52, title 67, Idaho Code.

20 SECTION 2. An emergency existing therefor, which emergency is hereby
21 declared to exist, this act shall be in full force and effect on and after
22 July 1, 2022.