

IN THE SENATE

SENATE BILL NO. 1380

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 AN
5 ADVISORY COMMITTEE, TO ESTABLISH PROVISIONS REGARDING GRANT AWARDS,
6 TO ESTABLISH PROVISIONS REGARDING GRANT APPLICATIONS, TO PROVIDE A
7 GRANT AWARD SCHEDULE AND TO PROVIDE FOR AN ACTIVITY REPORT, TO ESTABLISH
8 PROVISIONS REGARDING FRAUDULENT INFORMATION ON A GRANT APPLICATION,
9 TO PROVIDE AUTHORITY TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND TO
10 PROVIDE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND PRO-
11 VIDING AN 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 applicant will be
25 awarded funding through the rural veterinarians loan repayment program.

26 (4) "Committee" means the rural veterinary shortages advisory commit-
27 tee established by section 25-4103, Idaho Code.

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) "Recipient" means an individual who receives a grant pursuant to
36 this chapter.

37 (10) "Rural veterinarian" means an individual who:

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

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

4 (11) "Rural veterinarians loan repayment grant" or "grant" means a
 5 grant awarded pursuant to this chapter.

6 (12) "Rural veterinarians loan repayment program" or "program" means
 7 the rural veterinarians loan repayment program established by this chapter.

8 (13) "Rural veterinarians loan repayment fund" or "fund" means the fund
 9 in the state treasury established in section 25-4102, Idaho Code.

10 25-4102. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT FUND. There is hereby es-
 11 tablished in the state treasury a rural veterinarians loan repayment fund to
 12 be administered by the department. Moneys in the fund shall:

13 (1) Be continuously appropriated to pay for:

14 (a) The qualified veterinary education debt of rural veterinarians;
 15 and

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

19 (2) Consist of:

20 (a) Legislative appropriations;

21 (b) Agricultural industry contributions, private donations, and fed-
 22 eral funds as available; and

23 (c) Interest earned on idle moneys in the fund.

24 25-4103. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (1) The director shall appoint five (5)
 25 members of a committee to be known as the rural veterinary shortages advisory
 26 committee. Members of the committee:

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

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

30 (c) Shall not be compensated but shall be reimbursed for travel ex-
 31 penses incurred for attendance at committee meetings.

32 (2) The committee shall meet at least annually for the purposes de-
 33 scribed in this chapter.

34 (3) Appointments to the committee shall be made by the director.

35 (4) A majority of the committee members constitutes a quorum for the
 36 transaction of business. A majority vote is required by the quorum in final-
 37 izing decisions.

38 25-4104. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT AWARDS. (1) The
 39 committee may award grants in accordance with the procedures and criteria in
 40 this chapter to rural veterinarians for qualified veterinary education debt
 41 repayments.

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

44 (a) Are rural veterinarians;

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

1 (c) Sign a contract with the department, for at least four (4) years, to
2 dedicate no less than fifty percent (50%) of the individual's practice
3 to providing veterinary care to production animals in a rural area, as
4 determined by the department; and

5 (d) Meet other eligibility criteria as determined by the department.

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

10 (4) Award amounts shall be determined annually by the department based
11 on recommendations from the committee. Factors in the determination shall
12 include:

13 (a) Availability of funding; and

14 (b) The number of new applicants.

15 (5) The award shall not exceed the qualified veterinary education debt
16 incurred by the recipient, and the amount of educational debt repayments
17 that a recipient may receive shall be up to twenty-five thousand dollars
18 (\$25,000) in one (1) year and up to seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000)
19 over a three (3) year period. If a recipient fails to abide by the contract
20 described in subsection (2) (c) of this section, then the recipient shall pay
21 to the department an amount equal to the grant award made to the recipient in
22 the last year of the recipient's participation in the program.

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

25 (7) In determining the awards to be made in any given year, the commit-
26 tee and the department shall consider the value of retaining an appropriate
27 balance in the fund for use in future years.

28 (8) An award payment to a recipient in a single year is not guaranteed
29 or assured in subsequent years and may be increased or reduced. Award pay-
30 ments shall not continue to be made to a recipient who accepts another loan
31 repayment award or who fails to abide by the contract described in subsection
32 (2) (c) of this section.

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

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

38 25-4105. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS RE-
39 QUIRED. (1) A completed grant application must be submitted by the applicant
40 to the committee for the purpose of requesting a grant on or before the con-
41 clusion of the application period specified for the appropriate grant cycle.
42 All applications must include the required information.

43 (2) The grant application and any attachments submitted by the appli-
44 cant shall be the primary source of information for awarding a grant. Addi-
45 tionally, the committee may request or use other information known to it in
46 making its decision.

47 (3) All grant applications shall be on a form prescribed by the commit-
48 tee.

1 25-4106. RURAL VETERINARIANS LOAN REPAYMENT GRANT AWARD SCHEDULE --
2 ACTIVITY REPORT. (1) The committee shall conduct the grant process in accor-
3 dance with the schedule provided in this section.

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

8 (3) The completed application shall be submitted no later than November
9 30 of the application period.

10 (4) The committee shall notify applicants of the disposition of their
11 grant request by February 15 prior to the grant period.

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

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

16 25-4107. FRAUDULENT INFORMATION ON GRANT APPLICATION. Providing
17 false information on any application or document submitted under this chap-
18 ter is a misdemeanor and grounds for declaring the applicant ineligible. Any
19 and all funds determined to have been acquired on the basis of fraudulent
20 information must be returned to the rural veterinarians loan repayment grant
21 program. This section shall not limit other remedies that may be available
22 for the filing of false or fraudulent applications.

23 25-4108. DEPARTMENT AUTHORITY. The department is authorized to take
24 all actions necessary to implement and enforce the provisions of this chap-
25 ter, including the promulgation of any necessary rules.

26 25-4109. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS. Applicants aggrieved by the award or
27 failure to award a grant pursuant to this chapter shall be afforded the reme-
28 dies provided in chapter 52, title 67, Idaho Code.

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