

House File 2688 - Reprinted

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BY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(SUCCESSOR TO HF 2428)

(As Amended and Passed by the House April 15, 2024)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act providing for a rural veterinary practice innovation
2 and revitalization fund and program to assist veterinary
3 practices in certain counties, and making appropriations.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 159.31B Definitions.

2 As used in this part, unless the context otherwise requires:

3 1. "*Agricultural animal*" means an animal belonging to
4 the bovine, caprine, equine, ovine, or porcine species; farm
5 deer as defined in section 170.1; ostriches, rheas, and emus;
6 turkeys, chickens, domestic geese or ducks, or other domestic
7 fowl; fish or other aquatic organisms confined in private
8 waters for human consumption; or honey bees.

9 2. "*Financial assistance*" means assistance provided only
10 from the moneys and assets legally available to the department
11 pursuant to this part and includes assistance in the form of
12 grants, low-interest loans, and forgivable loans.

13 3. "*Fund*" means the rural veterinary practice innovation and
14 revitalization fund established in section 159.31D.

15 4. "*Licensed veterinarian*" means an individual who is
16 validly and currently licensed to practice veterinary medicine
17 in the state under chapter 169.

18 5. "*Program*" means the rural veterinary practice innovation
19 and revitalization program established in section 159.31E.

20 6. "*Veterinary practice*" means a business engaged in the
21 practice of veterinary medicine as defined in section 169.3,
22 as any of the following:

23 a. An individual acting as solo veterinary practitioner.

24 b. A partnership or a limited liability partnership formed
25 under chapter 486A in which all partnership interests are held
26 by licensed veterinarians.

27 c. A limited partnership formed under chapter 488 in which
28 all interests are held by licensed veterinarians.

29 d. A professional limited liability company formed under
30 chapter 489 in which all membership interests are held by
31 licensed veterinarians.

32 e. A professional corporation formed under chapter 496C in
33 which all shares are held by licensed veterinarians.

34 f. A corporation formed under chapter 504 in which all
35 shares are held by licensed veterinarians.

1 **Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. 159.31C Administration.**

2 1. The department shall administer the provisions of this
3 part, including by adopting rules pursuant to chapter 17A as it
4 determines are necessary or desirable.

5 2. In administering the rural veterinary practice
6 innovation and revitalization program, the department shall
7 consult with the Iowa board of veterinary medicine as provided
8 in section 169.5 and organizations interested in animal
9 agriculture and the health of agricultural animals.

10 **Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. 159.31D Rural veterinary practice
11 innovation and revitalization fund.**

12 1. A rural veterinary practice innovation and
13 revitalization fund is established in the state treasury under
14 the management and control of the department.

15 2. The fund shall include moneys appropriated by the general
16 assembly and other moneys available to and obtained or accepted
17 by the department, including moneys from public or private
18 sources.

19 3. *a.* Moneys in the fund are appropriated to the department
20 for the purpose of supporting the rural veterinary practice
21 innovation and revitalization program established in section
22 159.31E.

23 *b.* The department may use not more than five percent of
24 the balance of the unencumbered and unobligated moneys in the
25 fund at the beginning of a fiscal year to pay for the costs of
26 administering the program.

27 4. *a.* Notwithstanding section 12C.7, interest or earnings
28 on moneys in the fund shall be credited to the fund.

29 *b.* Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys in the fund that
30 remain unencumbered or unobligated at the end of a fiscal year
31 shall not revert.

32 **Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 159.31E Rural veterinary practice
33 innovation and revitalization program.**

34 1. The department shall establish and administer the rural
35 veterinary practice innovation and revitalization program

1 for the purpose of awarding financial assistance to eligible
2 veterinary practices to expand and improve veterinary services
3 provided to agricultural animals in those counties with a
4 population of thirty thousand or less according to the latest
5 preceding federal decennial census or the latest applicable
6 population estimate issued by the United States census bureau,
7 whichever is most recent.

8 2. The department shall award financial assistance to
9 pay for project costs incurred by doing one or more of the
10 following:

11 a. Improve or expand existing facilities.

12 b. Acquire existing equipment, devices, tools, or
13 instruments.

14 c. Incorporate new methods and technologies, including
15 computerized systems.

16 3. The department shall establish eligibility criteria for
17 the program by rule. The eligibility criteria must include all
18 of the following:

19 a. The veterinary practice must be located in this state.

20 b. A licensed veterinarian associated with the veterinary
21 practice as a solo practitioner, partner, limited partner,
22 member, or shareholder must not have been subject to
23 disciplinary action in this state or another state within the
24 last five years.

25 c. The veterinary practice must only employ individuals
26 legally authorized to work in this state.

27 d. The veterinary practice must not currently be in
28 bankruptcy.

29 e. The veterinary practice must employ less than fifty
30 individuals.

31 4. A veterinary practice seeking financial assistance under
32 this section must make application to the department in the
33 manner prescribed by the department by rule.

34 5. Applications shall be accepted during one or more annual
35 application periods to be determined by the department. Upon

1 reviewing and scoring all applications that are received during
2 an application period, and subject to funding, the department
3 may award financial assistance to eligible veterinary
4 practices. A financial assistance award shall not exceed the
5 amount of eligible project costs included in the eligible
6 application.

7 Sec. 5. RURAL VETERINARY PRACTICE INNOVATION AND
8 REVITALIZATION FUND AND PROGRAM.

9 1. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state
10 to the department of agriculture and land stewardship for the
11 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025,
12 the following amount, or so much thereof as is necessary, to be
13 used for the purposes designated:

14 For deposit in the rural veterinary practice innovation and
15 revitalization fund as provided in section 159.31D:
16 \$ 750,000

17 2. Of the moneys appropriated in this section, a veterinary
18 practice shall not receive more than \$25,000 in any fiscal
19 year under the rural veterinary practice innovation and
20 revitalization program established in section 159.31E.