

**House File 2688 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2688

BY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(SUCCESSOR TO HF 2428)

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

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

28    Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 159.31E **Rural veterinary practice  
29 innovation and revitalization program.**

30    1. The department shall establish and administer the rural  
31 veterinary practice innovation and revitalization program  
32 for the purpose of awarding financial assistance to eligible  
33 veterinary practices to expand and improve veterinary services  
34 provided to agricultural animals in those counties with a  
35 population of thirty thousand or less according to the latest

1 preceding federal decennial census or the latest applicable  
2 population estimate issued by the United States census bureau,  
3 whichever is most recent.

4 2. The department shall award financial assistance to  
5 pay for project costs incurred by doing one or more of the  
6 following:

7 a. Improve or expand existing facilities.

8 b. Acquire existing equipment, devices, tools, or  
9 instruments.

10 c. Incorporate new methods and technologies, including  
11 computerized systems.

12 3. The department shall establish eligibility criteria for  
13 the program by rule. The eligibility criteria must include all  
14 of the following:

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

16 b. A licensed veterinarian associated with the veterinary  
17 practice as a solo practitioner, partner, limited partner,  
18 member, or shareholder must not have been subject to  
19 disciplinary action by the Iowa board of veterinary medicine  
20 within the last five years.

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

23 d. The veterinary practice must not currently be in  
24 bankruptcy.

25 e. The veterinary practice must employ less than fifty  
26 individuals.

27 4. A veterinary practice seeking financial assistance under  
28 this section must make application to the department in the  
29 manner prescribed by the department by rule.

30 5. Applications shall be accepted during one or more annual  
31 application periods to be determined by the department. Upon  
32 reviewing and scoring all applications that are received during  
33 an application period, and subject to funding, the department  
34 may award financial assistance to eligible veterinary  
35 practices. A financial assistance award shall not exceed the

1 amount of eligible project costs included in the eligible  
2 application.

3 Sec. 5. RURAL VETERINARY PRACTICE INNOVATION AND  
4 REVITALIZATION FUND AND PROGRAM.

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

10 For deposit in the rural veterinary practice innovation and  
11 revitalization fund as provided in section 159.31D:  
12 ..... \$ 750,000

13 2. Of the moneys appropriated in this section, a veterinary  
14 practice shall not receive more than \$10,000 in any fiscal  
15 year under the rural veterinary practice innovation and  
16 revitalization program established in section 159.31E.

17 EXPLANATION

18 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
19 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

20 GENERAL. This bill establishes a rural veterinary practice  
21 innovation and revitalization fund (fund) and rural veterinary  
22 practice innovation and revitalization program (program)  
23 administered by the department of agriculture and land  
24 stewardship (DALs) acting in consultation with the Iowa board  
25 of veterinary medicine (board). The purpose of the fund and  
26 program is to award financial assistance to eligible veterinary  
27 practices to expand and improve veterinary services provided to  
28 agricultural animals in counties with a population of 30,000  
29 or less. Moneys awarded in financial assistance support the  
30 use of facilities, the acquisition of existing equipment,  
31 devices, tools, or instruments, and the incorporation of new  
32 methods and technologies, including computerized systems. DALs  
33 is required to adopt eligibility requirements. The veterinary  
34 practice must be located in this state, must not have been  
35 subject to any disciplinary action by the board, must only

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1 employ individuals legally authorized to work in this state,  
2 must not currently be in bankruptcy, and must employ less than  
3 50 individuals.

4     APPROPRIATION. The bill appropriates \$750,000 to the  
5 fund in support of the program. DALs cannot award financial  
6 assistance of more than \$10,000 to any one eligible veterinary  
7 practice from the fund in any fiscal year.