

Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals



PROGRAM GUIDE 2025/26

The Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals (VET) Program supports organizations and veterinary practices to increase the availability of veterinary services for food-producing animals in underserviced communities and regions.

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The Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals (VET) Program is funded under the Agriculture and Food Workforce Development Initiative (AWDI). AWDI is funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement. The initiative is a \$15M fund designed to support BC's agriculture industry to provide a stable and increasing food supply through targeted efforts to recruit and retain a sufficient workforce to meet the labour needs of the industry. AWDI is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF).

If there is a discrepancy between this document and the information found on iafbc.ca, the website takes precedence.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Background

The Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service (VET) Program supports organizations and veterinary practices to increase the availability of veterinary services for food-producing animals in underserved communities and regions. The program supports the recruitment and retention of new veterinarians and registered veterinary technologists (RVT) to practices that deliver veterinary services for food-producing animals. For this program, food-producing animals are defined as animals raised to produce food or fiber and include cattle, swine, sheep, goats, poultry, bison, and fish. The VET program also supports community capacity building and strategic planning to support the delivery of veterinary services to food-producing animals.

Funding for this program is provided by the [Province of BC](#) through the Agriculture and Food Workforce Development Initiative. This initiative supports BC's agriculture, food, and seafood industry to provide a stable and increasing food supply to feed a growing BC and global population through targeted efforts to recruit and retain a sufficient workforce to meet the labour needs of the industry.

Program Goals

- Increase recruitment and retention of new veterinarians and RVTs to BC Veterinary practices that provide services for **food-producing** animals, especially in regions of BC outside of the lower mainland.
- Expand the provision of telemedicine and/or other innovative mechanisms identified by community veterinary practices and partners to facilitate delivery of veterinary services in rural communities and for **food-producing** animals.
- Build partnerships, capacity, and improved mutual understanding between stakeholders on the challenges and solutions for delivery of veterinary services for **food-producing** animals at the community level, including producer organizations, other community organizations, First Nations, and veterinary practices. Partnerships may include other agencies, such as local governments.
- Support community-level strategic planning to address the challenge of delivery of veterinary services in rural communities and for **food-producing** animals.

Program Objectives

The objectives of this program are to:

- pilot new and innovative recruitment and retention practices for delivery of veterinary services, particularly services for food-producing animals in rural BC.
- develop partnerships to improve the attraction and retention of veterinarians and registered veterinary technologists to veterinary practices that provide veterinary services for food-producing animals, particularly outside of the lower mainland.



APPROACH

Program Structure

Funding is available through two funding streams.

- Stream 1: Regional Strategic Planning and Partnerships
- Stream 2: Recruitment and Service Expansion

Note: Applicants are restricted to a single application per stream and cannot apply for multiple projects in the same stream. An exception can be made if the applicant operates multiple clinics servicing different geographic areas at least 40km apart.

| VET Funding Streams | Max. Funding Amount per Project | Cost-Share Ratio |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Stream 1: Regional Strategic Planning and Partnerships | \$10,000.00 | 100% |
| Stream 2: Recruitment and Service Expansion | \$40,000.00 | 80% |



STREAM 1 OVERVIEW

Stream 1 of the Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals (VET) supports activities to empower local partnerships for strategic planning for sustainable delivery of food animal veterinary services in underserved communities and regions. For this program, food animals are defined as animals raised to produce food or fiber and include cattle, swine, sheep, goats, poultry, bison, and fish.

Eligible Participants

To be considered eligible for Stream 1, applicants must be:

- Veterinary practices accredited by the College of Veterinarians of BC (CVBC) to provide food animal services.
- Practices that provide services to clients at any production scale (e.g., large-scale, small lot) are eligible.

Partnership applications (including with Agriculture Industry Associations, Farmers Institutes, non-profit agriculture/community/rural regional organizations, and local or First Nations governments) are encouraged and will be prioritized (**see Appendix 1**). In communities with more than one veterinary practice that offers services for food-producing animals, inclusion of all veterinary practices in one application is preferred.

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

All eligible activities may be completed through the subcontracting of specialized consultant(s) with the required skill set and/or accreditation (e.g., business planning, strategic planning, facilitation services, consultants).

Veterinary practices may apply for up to 100% of eligible costs for one or more of the following activities to a maximum funding amount of \$10,000:

- Organizing and hosting community/stakeholder engagement meetings and needs assessments.
- Outreach, relationship building, and hosting forums for improved communications between community veterinary clinics and community members in need of food animal veterinary services.
- Enhanced partnership development and establishment of community governance to lead strategic planning and support solutions for delivery of veterinary services for food animals and in rural areas.
- Development of a regional community-based strategic and business plan for improved food animal veterinary services adequately supported by and meeting the needs of regional clients and service providers (practices).

- Development of a strategic business plan for a veterinary practice based on the regional engagement and planning (i.e., development of a business plan for a vet practice to meet the regional/client service needs identified and vetted by engagement sessions).
- Advertising and recruitment campaigns.
- Community-identified and led initiatives in support of recruitment of veterinarians and RVTs to an established partner Veterinary Practice.

Ineligible Participants, Activities and Expenditures

The following participants, activities, and expenses are not eligible to be funded under VET. This list is not exhaustive and is meant to be used as a guide.

Ineligible Participants

Any entity that is not a BC veterinary practice accredited to offer food animal services.

Ineligible Activities and Expenditures

- Activities that occur as part of externships/rotations or supported veterinary or veterinary technologist education curriculum.
- Costs incurred prior to funding approval. No retroactive costs will be considered for Stream 1: Regional Strategic Planning and Partnerships.



STREAM 2 OVERVIEW

Stream 2 of the Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals (VET) supports the recruitment, retention, and expansion of services for veterinary practices to provide services for food-producing animals. For this program, food animals are defined as animals raised to produce food or fiber and include cattle, swine, sheep, goats, poultry, bison, and fish.

Eligible Participants

To be considered eligible for Stream 2, applicants must be:

- Veterinary practices accredited by the College of Veterinarians of BC (CVBC) to provide food animal services.
- Actively offering or will begin to offer (upon successful recruitment), food animal services to clients during the project period.
- Practices that provide services to clients at any production scale (e.g., large-scale, small lot) are eligible.

Partnership applications (including with Agriculture Industry Associations, Farmers Institutes, non-profit agriculture/community/rural regional organizations, and local or First Nations governments) are encouraged and will be prioritized (**see Appendix 1**).

Eligible Activities and Expenditures

Veterinary practices may apply for 80% cost-share reimbursements for one or more of the following activities to a maximum funding amount of \$40,000:

- Recruitment services to fill veterinarian or RVT vacancies or new positions to support delivery of veterinary services for food-producing animals (to a maximum of \$5,000).
- Veterinarian and RVT expenses for visiting the community to participate in job interviews (to a maximum of \$5,000).
- Hiring bonuses for newly recruited vets and RVTs that sign contracts (minimum 1-year full-time equivalent) with community veterinary practices that provide services for food-producing animals (can be split between multiple members).
- Funding for contracts and agreements (with a minimum duration of 1 year) between community veterinary practices and partners to expand high-demand veterinary services for food-producing animals.
- Establishing or enhancing the delivery of telemedicine for food-producing animals by community veterinary practices (to a maximum of \$3,000).
- Other expenses identified by community veterinary practices and partners to facilitate the provision of high-demand veterinary services for food-producing animals may be considered.

Funding for Stream 2 is provided on a cost-shared basis with the program providing up to 80% of project cash costs, and the remaining 20% of funding provided by the applicant and/or project partners. Some ways this cost-sharing requirement could be met include:

- The community could give the new hire(s) a place to stay during interviews or for the first month or two as they become established.
- The veterinary practice could pay staff salary time for telemedicine training.
- New salary costs incurred by the veterinary practice for the new hire.

Retroactive Costs:

Eligible expenses that have already been incurred can be included in your application and will be considered retroactively for costs (applies only to costs incurred from September 1, 2024, onwards).

Note: Any costs incurred prior to a funding decision by IAF are entirely at the risk of the applicant (should funding not be awarded), and application to the program does not guarantee funding.

Ineligible Participants, Activities and Expenditures

The following participants, activities, and expenses are not eligible to be funded under VET. This list is not exhaustive and is meant to be used as a guideline.

Ineligible Participants

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Ineligible Activities and Expenditures

Activities that occur as part of externships/rotations or supported veterinary or veterinary technologist education curriculum.



APPLICATIONS

Important Program Dates

Applications will be accepted through the [IAF Client Portal](#) from **February 18, 2025, to March 19, 2025**.

- Submissions Open: February 18, 2025, at 9:00 AM PT
- Application Deadline: March 19, 2025, at 4:00 PM PT
- Project Start Date: Upon approval

Project Length

Projects can be up to 4 months (Stream 1) or 12 months (Stream 2) in duration and must be completed no later than **January 31, 2026**.

Application Process

Applicants will apply through the [IAF Client Portal](#). The application process will consist of:

Create an Account

- Create a personal profile (name and email)

Organization Registration

Note: It can take up to two business days for IAF Staff to verify your Organization Registration

- Organization information, including:
 - Name
 - Contact details
 - Type of organization
 - BC ID / CRA numbers
 - Primary contact
 - And more

Apply to the VET Program for Project Funding

Select Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals (VET) Program and provide:

- Project start & end dates
- Information about your veterinary practice
- Description of key activities, who will undertake work, and timeline
- Project Partner(s) (if applicable)
- Performance measurement information
- Funding request/project budget

Applicants may provide relevant documents in support of their application (e.g., letters of support, CVs, quotes). These appendices can be uploaded through the IAF Client Portal as attachments to the application.

During the application window, IAF staff are available to answer questions regarding eligible activities, costs, and/or the application process. IAF may also contact applicants for additional information or clarification to assess their application.

Applicants can contact vet@iafbc.ca with any questions about the program or to receive support in developing their application.

Applicants are encouraged to include only activities they are confident will be completed on time and within budget limits.

Review and Adjudication

IAF will review all applications for organization eligibility, project eligibility, and completeness. If any required information is not submitted with the application, it will be returned to the applicant requesting missing information and can slow down funding decision timelines. IAF may also seek technical/subject matter/policy input from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) on project proposals.

Complete applications that meet program eligibility requirements will be prioritized based on the pre-set priorities and evaluation criteria for the application intake (**see Appendix 1**).

Applications for funding should be complete at the time of submission. Applicants will be notified by email of funding decisions via the [IAF Client Portal](#) within 8 weeks of submitting a complete application. All adjudication decisions are final.



NOTIFICATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

Funding notifications and contracts

Notification will be provided via email and on the IAF Client Portal. Applicants will be notified about the status of their application within 8 weeks of submitting a complete application.

If the project is approved, IAF will inform the applicant of the details of the decision and any associated terms and conditions. The applicant then enters into an agreement with IAF that outlines the obligations of each party.

Funding is application- and project-specific and must be used for the approved project and related expenses. Funds are non-transferable. Payment of the program funding may only be made to the applicant (Project Proponent) as outlined in their Funding Decision Letter. All funding payments will be issued via EFT to the project proponent.

Funding Acknowledgements

This program is funded by the Government of BC; therefore, acknowledgment of funding is required when publicly communicating about a project and/or funding. To ensure appropriate acknowledgments, all communications and marketing materials, including public announcements or social media posts, must be pre-approved by the IAF Communications Team. Materials can be submitted via the [IAF Client Portal](#).

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants must complete an interim and/or final report prior to receiving funds from the program. This report must be filled out and submitted to IAF along with all invoices for the project to be considered for funding reimbursement. It is important that reporting is submitted on time and with all required information. Expenses will be reimbursed based on the submitted receipts, the approved project budget, and the corresponding cost-share ratio. All reporting will be completed via the [IAF Client Portal](#).


Changes to Contracted Projects

If you are not able to complete your project according to the approved workplan, please inform the IAF Team as soon as possible using the [IAF Client Portal](#).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Prioritization

Applications to Stream 1: Regional Strategic Planning and Partnerships and Stream 2: Recruitment and Service Expansion will be prioritized based on the following criteria:

| Prioritization Criteria | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Highest priority</p>  <p>Lowest priority</p> | <p>Regional prioritization</p> | <p>Priority area 1: Northern BC</p> | <p>Partnership applications: Applications that include other veterinary practices and/or other partners* will rank higher in the priority area they are located in. *including with Agriculture Industry Associations, Farmers Institutes, non-profit agriculture/community/rural regional organizations, local or First Nations governments</p> |
| | | <p>Priority area 2: Southeast (Kootenay) Okanagan Thompson Southern Cariboo Vancouver Island Pemberton Lillooet</p> | |
| | | <p>Priority area 3: Lower Mainland (excluding Pemberton and Lillooet)</p> | |

February 2025.

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