

FEDERAL RESEARCH

# »» Recover and Rebuild the Federal Research Enterprise

[aavmc.org/programs/advocacy](http://aavmc.org/programs/advocacy)



**AAVMC**  
Association of American  
Veterinary Medical Colleges

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- *We support the Research Investment to Spark the Economy Act (RISE) (H.R. 869) which would authorize \$25 billion to restore research lost during the pandemic.*
- *We support a return to regular order for appropriations bills each fiscal year.*



The federal research enterprise plays a crucial role in our economy. In both agricultural and biomedical research, the United States should lead the world. It is how we feed our citizens and improve the lives and health of people around the world. To accomplish these goals, AAVMC supports the following appropriations levels:

#### **NIH AND THE RISE ACT (H.R. 869)**

The biomedical research conducted at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) saves lives and reduces suffering. The extraordinary value of the NIH was visible in the way multiple COVID-19 vaccines were developed in record time to combat the global pandemic. NIH is now working hard to develop more treatments for the virus.

NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins recently said “We must not lose this opportunity. Even as we hope we’re going to get past the worst of SARS-CoV-2, we’ve got to keep this momentum going. There will be other pandemics. And some of them may well be coronaviruses.” We agree, and that is why we support a final funding level of \$46.1 billion for FY 2022, an increase of \$3.2 billion over FY 2021.

We also ask that you co-sponsor the RISE Act.

#### **FUNDING FOR THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

Earth’s population is expected to reach almost 10 billion people by 2050, which will severely challenge our ability to provide adequate food and water.

The Agriculture and Food Research Institute (AFRI) can deliver the discoveries in animal disease, food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and other areas that are so critically needed, but it needs funding to get the job done. AFRI will also be leading the charge in the Department of Agriculture to discover new ways to mitigate and stop climate change, a priority for the Biden Administration.

To meet these needs, we support a final funding level of \$470 million for FY 2022, an increase of \$145 million over FY 2021.

## STUDENT AID

# »» Support the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) and the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP)

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- *These two programs are found in 7 USC 3101, Section 1415A and 1415B of the Code of Federal Regulations.*
- *Together, these programs help insure that the profession of veterinary medicine is able to provide modern animal health, public health and disease control services throughout rural areas of the United States.*



### VMLRP

[nifa.usda.gov/program/veterinary-medicine-loan-repayment-program](https://nifa.usda.gov/program/veterinary-medicine-loan-repayment-program)

The VMLRP recruits critically needed livestock and public health veterinarians to practice in areas of the country with specific needs or shortage situations, as designated by USDA and state animal health officials. It awards loan repayment of \$25,000 per year for up to three years.

- Received its first funding in 2010, for \$4.8 million.
- Was funded in FY 2020 at \$8 million and FY 2021 at \$8.5 million.

#### Our Request

- An increase for VMLRP to \$10 million.

#### Justification for VMLRP Support

- Average student debt has risen from \$75,000 to nearly \$180,000 since the inception of the program.
- With an increase, USDA could expand contracts to four years, give additional awards, increase the annual award to \$35,000, or support a combination of these.
- Currently there are nearly three applicants for every position that is filled.

### VSGP

[nifa.usda.gov/program/veterinary-services-grant-program](https://nifa.usda.gov/program/veterinary-services-grant-program)

The VSGP is designed to address gaps in shortage situations by preparing and assisting veterinarians for practice in rural areas, facilitating private veterinary practices engaged in public health activities, and specifically aiding the practices of veterinarians who have completed service under the VMLRP.

#### VSGP

- Authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill.
- Received initial funding of \$2.5 million in the FY 2016 Omnibus.
- Was funded at \$3 million for FY 2021.

#### Our Request

- An increase for the VSGP to \$3.5 million.

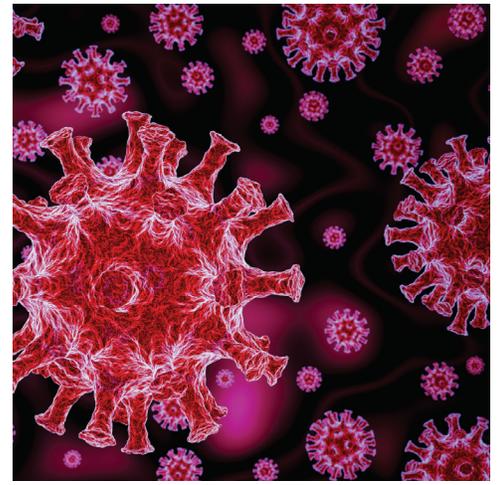
#### Justification for VSGP Support

- The two programs are designed to work together. VSGP is forbidden from funding any type of construction, but can otherwise be used in any way to help veterinarians stay, and succeed, in rural areas that likely would have a pronounced shortage of primarily food animal veterinarians.

COVID-19

# Support for Ongoing Pandemic Relief and Recovery Efforts

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*We appreciate all that Congress has done for the country, and higher education, since the start of the pandemic.*

*However, students, faculty and researchers will continue to need assistance during the coming months.*



As Congress debates additional COVID-19 relief and recovery packages, we encourage their support for several key programs:

- Oversight of the student loan portfolio at the Department of Education, to ensure that students who have taken advantage of forbearance programs do not lose their rights or benefits to loan forgiveness or other loan repayment programs.
- Additional support and funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), which is playing a vital role in battling the pandemic. The FY 2021 Omnibus and COVID-19 Relief Package contained \$20 million in extra funding for the NAHLN.

Our institutions have spent billions of dollars in resources to enact testing programs, ensure social distancing, clean and sterilize facilities, and enhance online learning.

This has come at a cost for both students and faculty, at a time when state revenues, and therefore, state institutional support, have been decreasing.

Without additional funds, the labs and their network will not be able to continue the same level of high quality testing of both animals and humans.

This is woefully inadequate.

Animal testing labs, many located on or near our campuses and often staffed by veterinary medical faculty, have stepped up during the pandemic. Many of the labs are running at maximum capacity, conducting human testing for COVID-19 in order to alleviate testing shortages. These labs also continue to do their "day job", conducting animal testing and surveillance for zoonotic diseases such as avian influenza.

Without additional funds, the labs and their network will not be able to continue the same level of high quality testing of both animals and humans.