<u>Georgia Veterinary Education Loan Repayment Program Overview</u>

The Georgia Veterinary Education Loan Repayment Program (GVELRP or Program) is administered by the State Veterinary Education Board (Board) and in partnership with the Georgia Student Finance Authority (GSFA). The Board also receives administrative support from the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

Members of the Board were appointed as authorized by O.C.G.A 20-3-518.1 et seq. The Board and GVELRP were established by the Georgia General Assembly for the purpose of providing financial relief, by way of student loan purchases, for veterinarians willing to provide food animal veterinary services in shortage areas around the state.

A. <u>Funding and Awards</u>

The Georgia General Assembly appropriated state funds to GSFA for the Board to carry out its purpose. These funds originally became available to the Board effective July 1, 2016, and will remain with GSFA until the terms of the first contracts awarded have been met, at which time the Board will instruct GSFA to make payments on the outstanding student loan debt of the contracted veterinarian. GVELRP awards are subject to appropriation each year by the legislature.

B. <u>Eligibility</u>

Applicants must be a citizen of the United States or have a lawful presence in the country. Only veterinarians who are Georgia residents will be considered. Eligible candidates can be either practicing veterinarians or veterinary students in their final year of study.

O.C.G.A 20-3-518.1 et seq. stipulates that only candidates who practice or intend to practice in Board approved rural counties with populations of 50,000 or less may be considered for awards. Prior service in these areas will not be considered services rendered for contracts entered into.

C. <u>Application Process</u>

The application period for 2026 will be open starting **September 5, 2025**. The application and supporting documents can be found [here](). Each applicant is required to submit a completed application form and the appropriate reference documents to the Board by no later than **October 15, 2025.** Completed applications must be accompanied by three (3) completed reference forms, one of which must be from a DVM/VMD and one from a current or former employer. If an applicant has no employment history, they are asked to include a reference from a professor directly involved in the completion of their veterinary degree program.

Once the application period closes, Board Members will review the completed applications and narrow the candidate pool based on the quality of the candidate and the severity of the shortage situation the candidate intends to serve. Candidates should expect to be interviewed by one or more Board Members, either in-person or over the phone. Participants who receive the awards will be required to enter into a contract with the Board in order to receive their awards at the <u>completion</u> of the year of service. If chosen to participate in the Program, applicants will also be required to submit a lender verification form.

D. <u>Contract Term and Service Obligation</u>

Each contract between the Board and the participant will be for a period to be defined by the contract. During this time, the participant is expected to devote at least 20 hours per week to providing food animal or veterinary services in the area of need that they applied for. If, during the service period, the applicant wishes to move services to another area of need in the state, they may do so with the approval of the Board. If the terms of

the contract are breached by the participant at any time, the contract will become void and the participant will not receive the award at the end of the service period.

E.   Additional Information

Completed applications and inquiries about the program can be made via email to: statevetedboard@agr.georgia.gov.

If you need an accommodation or additional assistance, please contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Policy Office at 404-295-8301.

Copies of this document and others are available at: https://agr.georgia.gov/vet-education-loan-repayment-program.