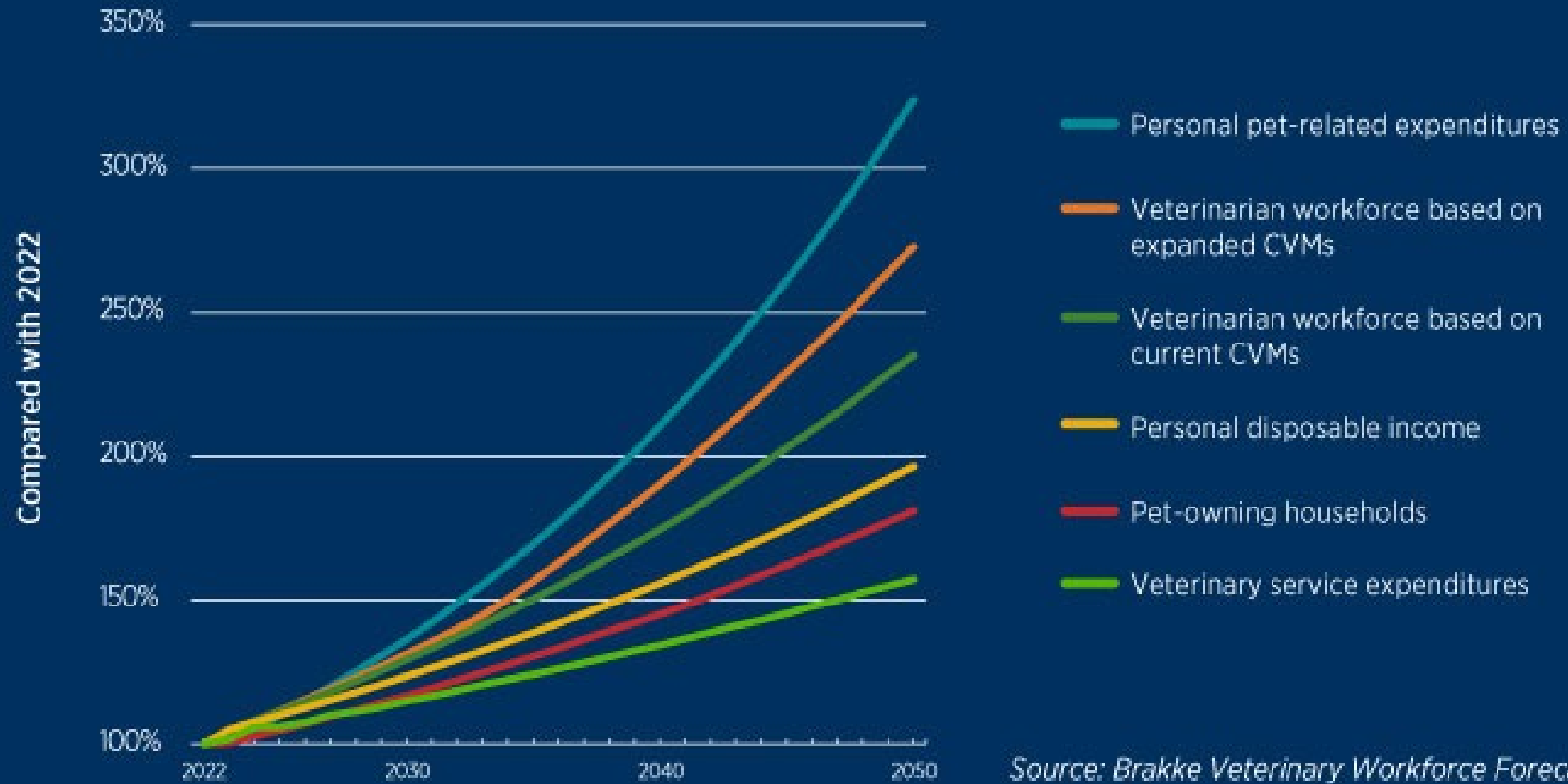




Increasing the Rural Veterinary Workforce

R. Douglas Meckes, DVM
NC State Veterinarian Retired
November 15, 2024

Veterinary workforce: Projected growth for supply/demand factors

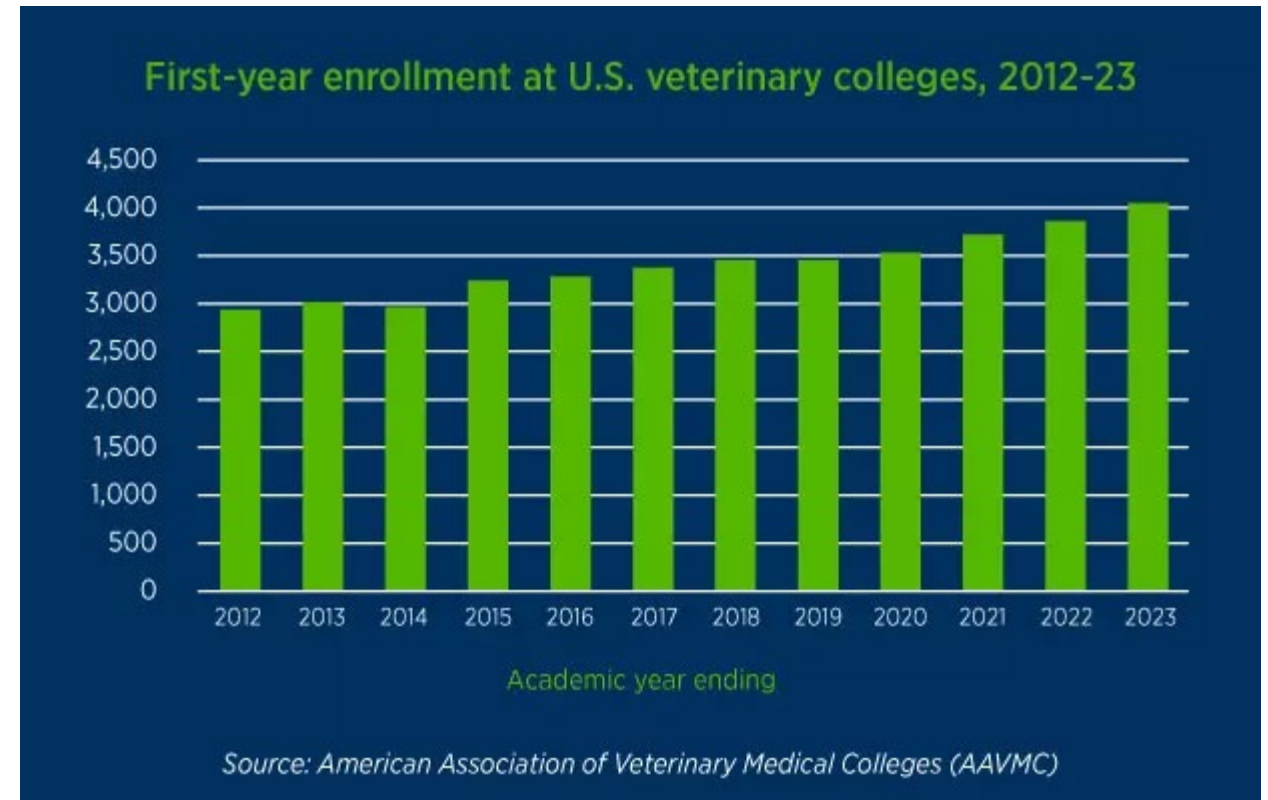


Source: Brakke Veterinary Workforce Forecast

Future Veterinary Workforce Needs

Growth in graduate numbers

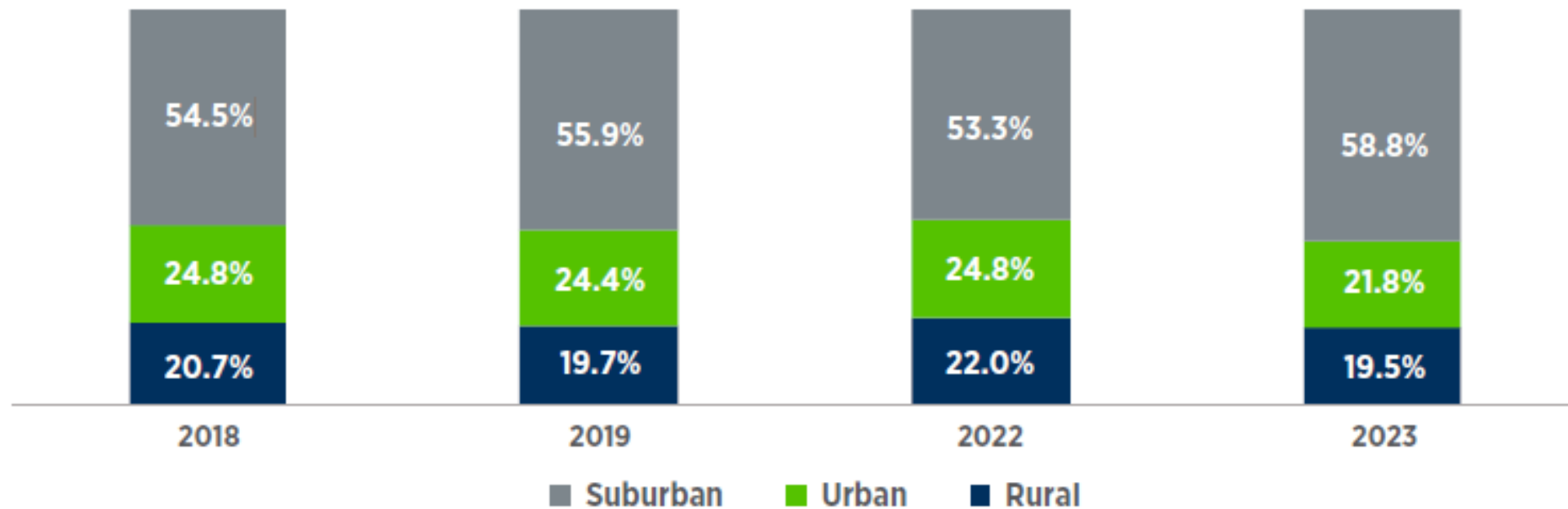
- Three new colleges graduating veterinarians in 2023, 2024, and 2025
- 12 plus new veterinary colleges at various stages of development
- Projected class sizes at existing colleges are increasing



Rural Veterinary Medicine

- In 2023, 19.5% of veterinarians worked in a rural community.

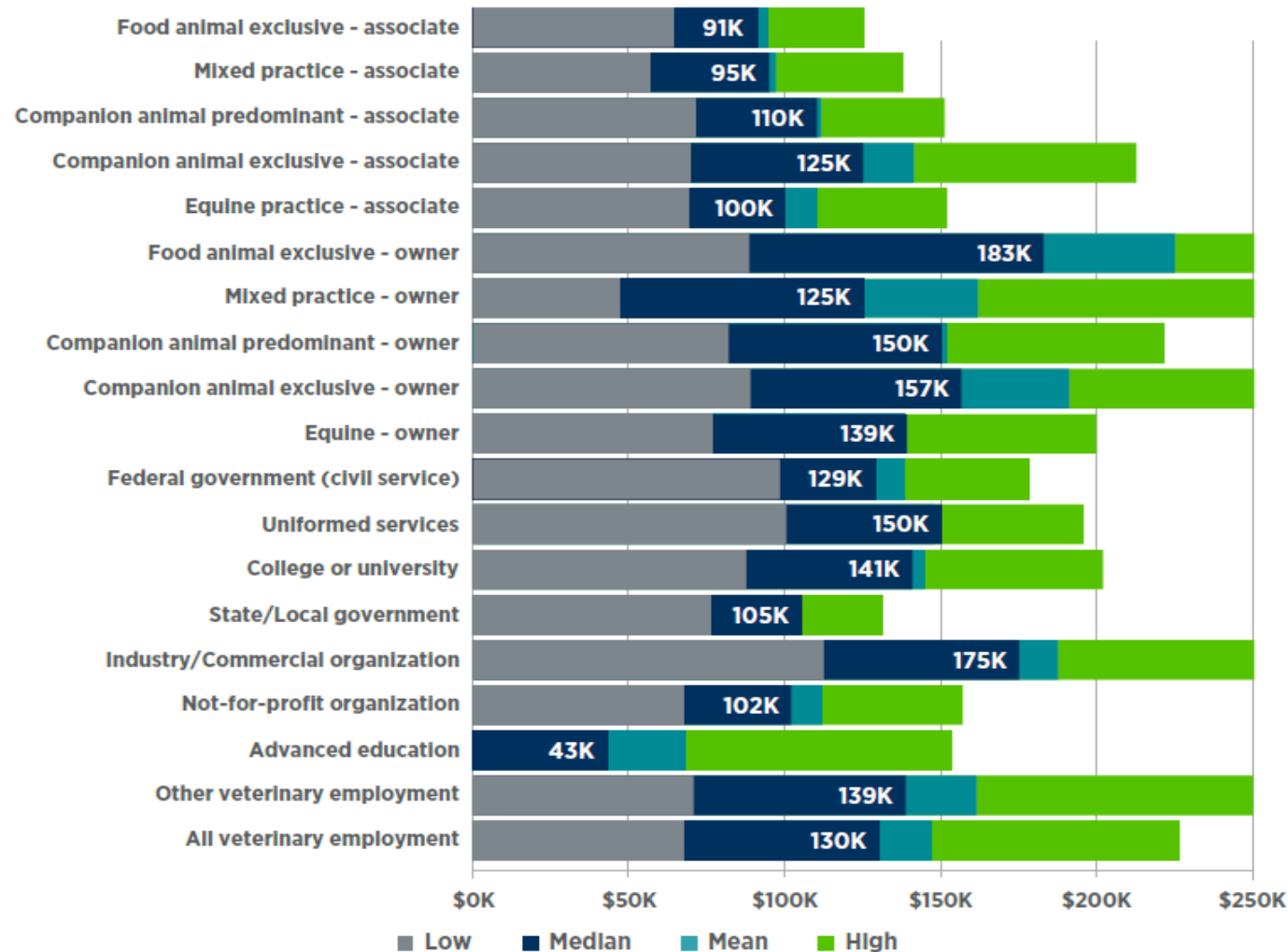
DISTRIBUTION OF VETERINARIANS BY WORKPLACE COMMUNITY TYPE



Data on workplace community type were not collected in 2020 or 2021. Those years are therefore excluded from the graph.

Rural Veterinary Medicine Income

PROFESSIONAL INCOME REPORTED IN 2023 FOR 2022, BY EMPLOYMENT TYPE



The average food animal associate reported an income of an average of \$91k

The average companion animal associate reported income of an average of \$125K

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TOPICS

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The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

- The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) provides educational loan assistance in exchange for food animal or public health veterinary service in USDA-designated shortage areas.
- VMLRP is administered through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Veterinary shortage designations are nominated annually by state animal health officials and certified by USDA NIFA.
- Participants in VMLRP receive up to **\$75,000 toward student loan debt in exchange for three years of service** in any USDA-designated shortage area.
- In 2024, USDA designated 240 shortage areas across 47 states (the most ever).

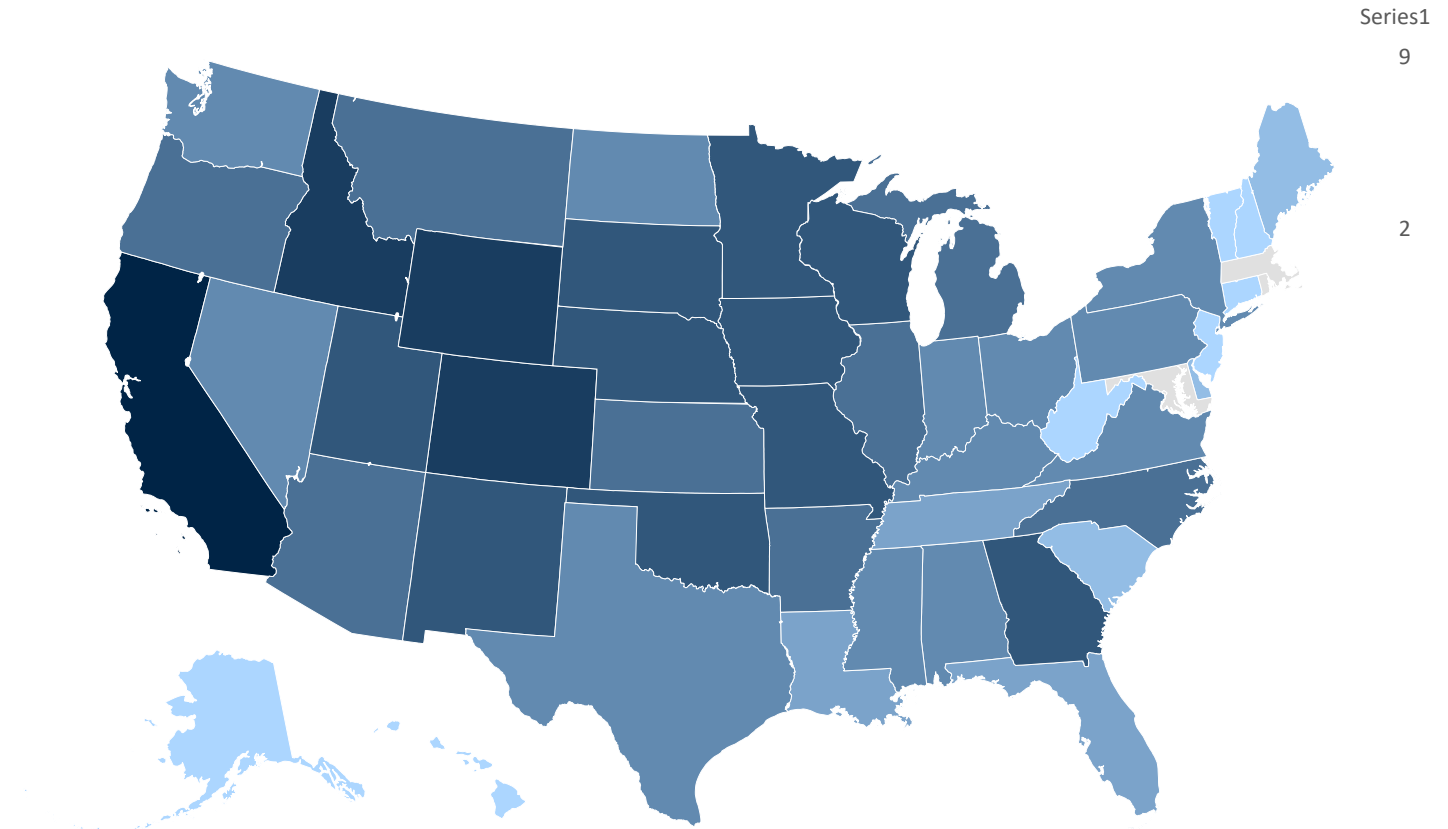
Why is VMLRP important to the profession

- In 2024, new graduates saw debt figures climb to an average of \$202,647 for those with debt. 38.5% of new graduates graduated with balances over \$200k.
- This has a major impact on attracting veterinarians to rural communities, and food animal or public health careers, which typically pay less than companion animal practices.
- VMLRP is one of the important tools we have to recruit and retain veterinarians in high-need areas by assisting them with the student loan burden.

2024 USDA-designated Shortage Areas

- USDA designated 240 shortage areas across 47 states
- 3 states with no shortage areas: MD, MA, and RI
- Interactive shortages map: nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp-map

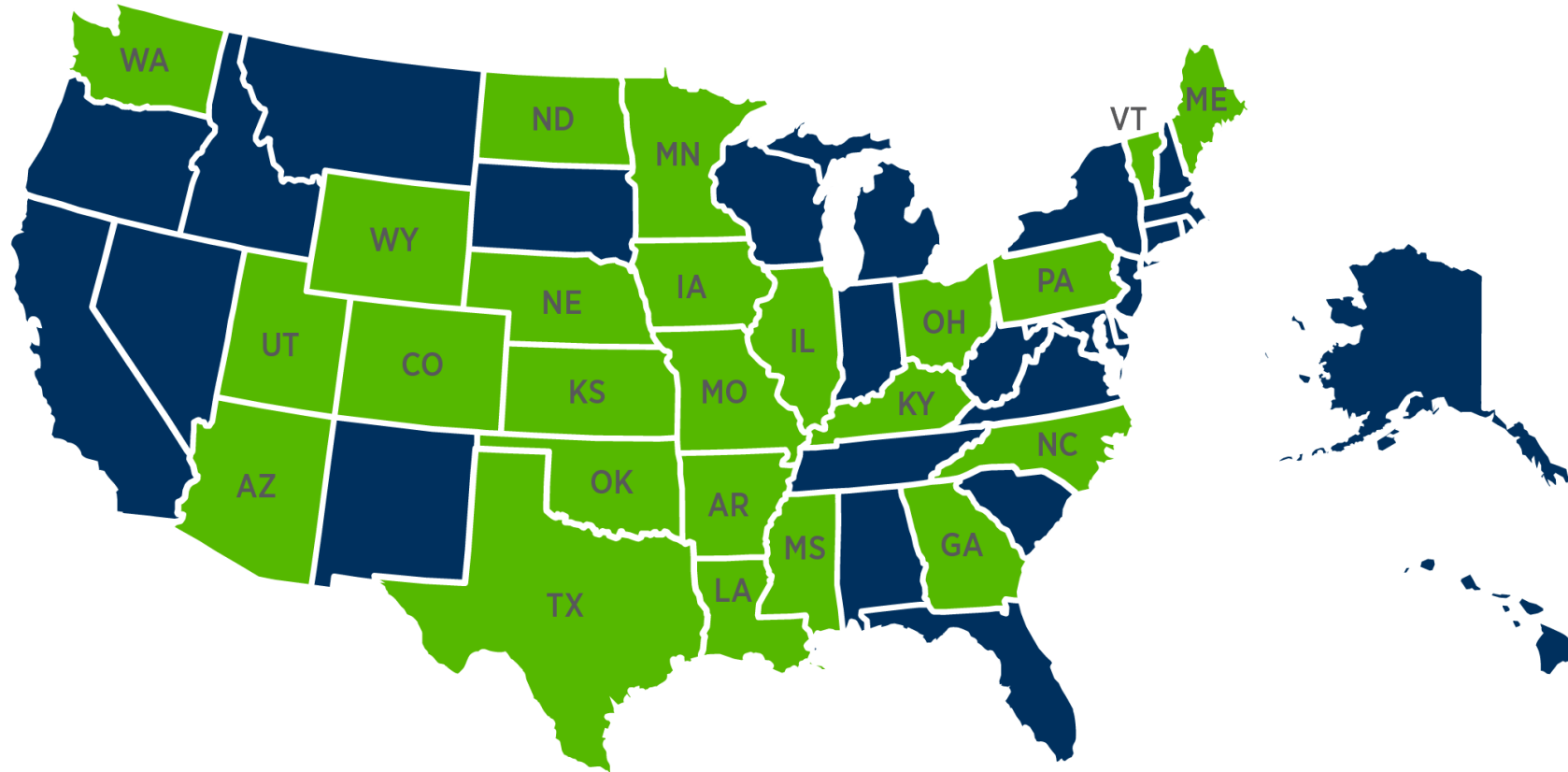
2024 USDA Veterinary Shortage Areas



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State Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Scholarship Programs

Require practice in rural, shortage and/or large animal practice:



Awards vary from as low as \$10,000 to as high as \$100,000

State Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Scholarship Programs

North Carolina

- A large animal veterinarian in a designated county – up to \$25,000 annually.
- “Designated county” means a county in this State with a population of less than 100,000, according to the latest decennial census.
- Uses of Grant Funds - The grant recipient may use the funds to support the recipient's large animal veterinary practice, including any of the following:
 1. The repayment of educational loans related to the recipient's veterinary degree.
 2. The purchase of equipment or technology for use in the recipient's large animal veterinary practice.
 3. Any additional uses the Advisory Committee determines are appropriate to promote and develop large animal veterinarians to practice in designated counties.

QUESTIONS?

