

The Vital Role of Registered Veterinary Technicians in Colorado



Here are a few of the jobs the **3400** registered veterinary technicians in Colorado hold!



ANIMAL WELFARE

- Animal Control Officer
- Animal Shelter Manager
- Shelter Wellness Technician



EDUCATION

- Student Success Manager
- Instructor
- Internship Coordinator



VETERINARY INDUSTRY

- Veterinary Information Specialist
- Accreditation Specialist
- Sales Rep
- Insurance Claims Analyst
- CACVT Board Member



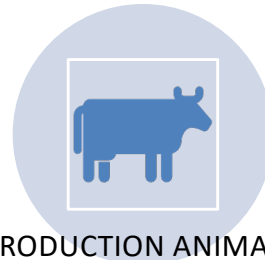
CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Lead Tech
- Hospital Director
- Pharmacy Technician
- Supervisor
- Relief Technician
- Inventory Manager



RESEARCH/LAB

- Hematologist
- Histologist
- Biological Science Technician



PRODUCTION ANIMAL MEDICINE

- Breeding Core Specialist
- Barn Manager



PARKS AND WILDLIFE

- Wildlife Rehabilitator
- Qualified Sample Collector for CPW



Historical overview of registered veterinary technicians in Colorado

RVTs have been an essential part of animal care in Colorado for decades.

1970s-2023: CVTs

Voluntary certification

No title protection

Fun facts!

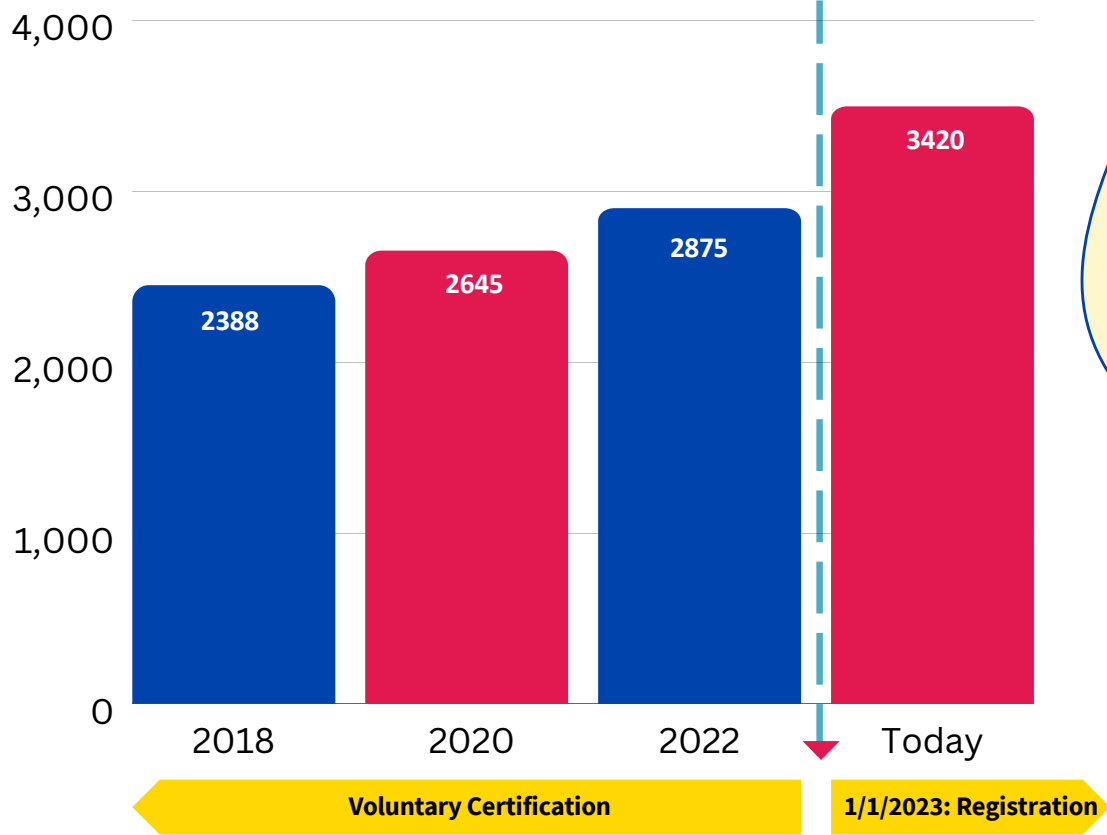
Colorado is in the top 5 for numbers
75% of employers pay for registration



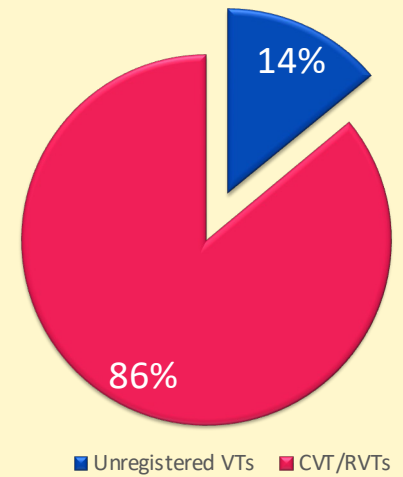
Education Opportunities: By the numbers!



Registered Veterinary Technicians: By the numbers!



**US Bureau of Labor Statistics:
Veterinary Technicians and Technologist
3950 total**





Challenges facing the veterinary profession in Colorado

Critical workforce shortages
Animals not receiving care
How to utilize RVTs?

Current state of veterinary technicians in Colorado



Licensing:

2022: Modernized Veterinary Practice Act

Licensing requirements to ensure veterinary technicians are properly trained and qualified were enacted **January 1, 2023**.

What does this mean?

- **Title Protection:** Public assurance of minimum competency for those with the titles Registered Veterinary Technician, Veterinary Technician, RVT, and VT.
- **Accountability:** governance by the SBVM and VPA/Rules & Regulations

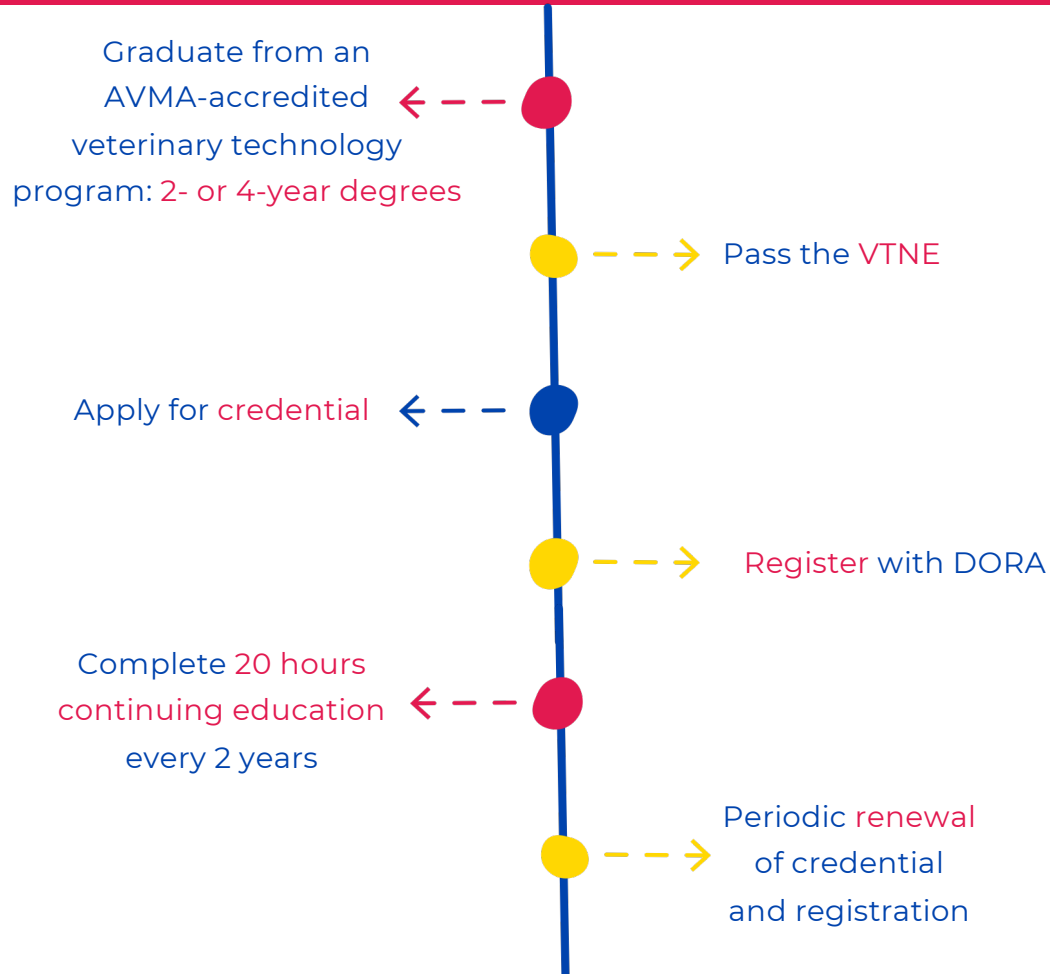


A photograph of a female veterinary technician with long brown hair, wearing blue scrubs and blue gloves, smiling as she examines the paw of a black and white dog. The dog is lying down and has its tongue out. The background is a blurred clinical setting.

What does it take to be a registered veterinary technician?

Education, experience, compassion!

Standard Pathway: Registered Veterinary Technicians



Experience-based Pathways

Goal: Retain all those working in veterinary medicine while still ensuring minimum competence!

Create an on-ramp for individuals performing duties of a veterinary technician who do not qualify for the standard registration process.

Provisional Registrations

- Available throughout 2023
- Through 2027: obtain experience and skills





What do RVTs do?

Registered Veterinary Technicians are extensively trained in over 200 essential skills and provide care to a variety of species:

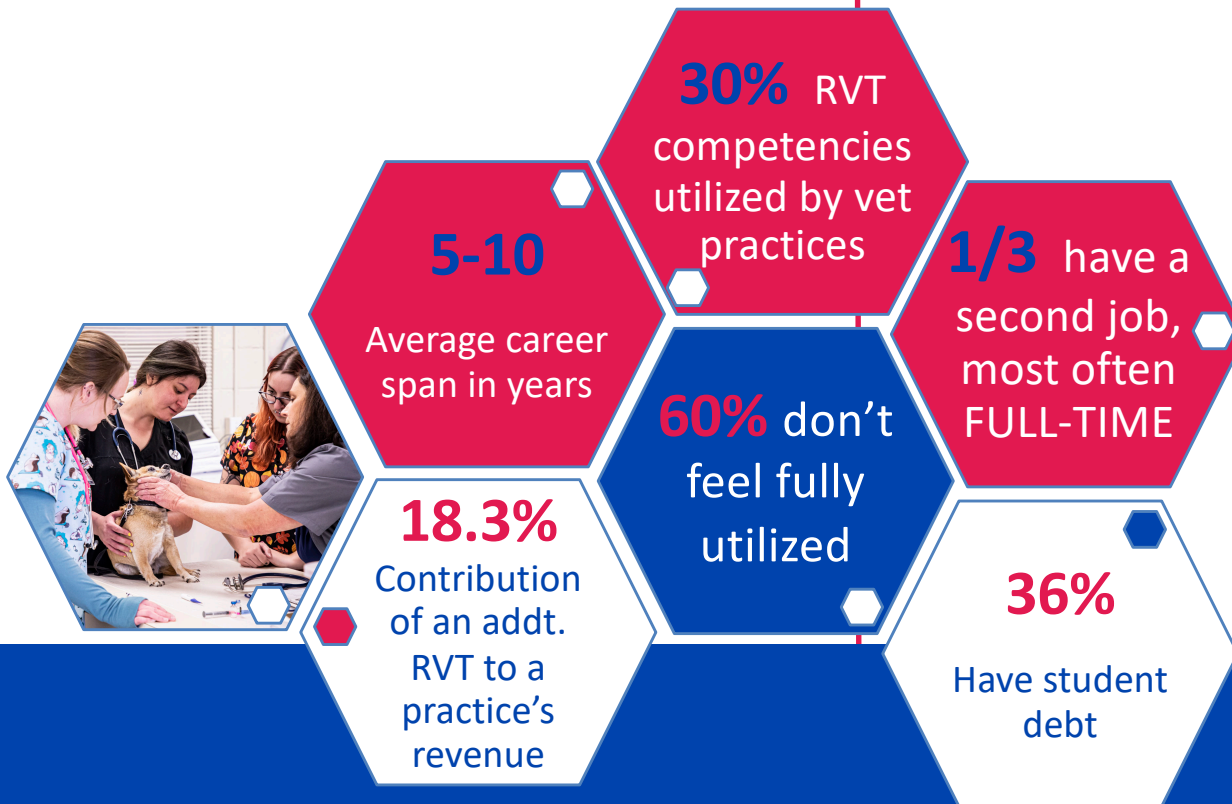
- Wellness and disease prevention
- Anesthesia and analgesia
- Emergency and critical care
- Nutrition education
- Imaging techniques
- Reproduction and neonatal care
- Biosecurity and animal welfare
- Pharmacology
- Dentistry
- Small and large animal nursing



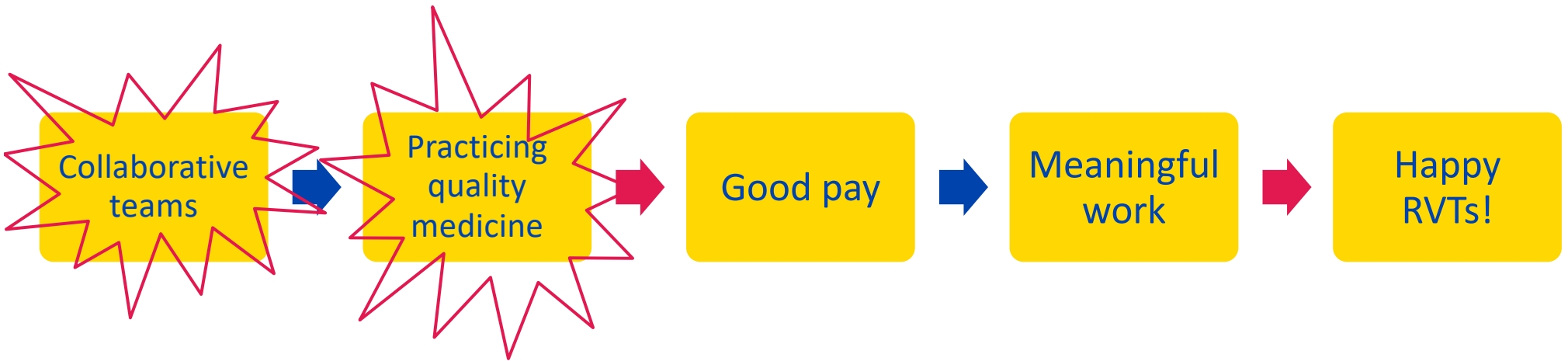
Challenges faced by RVTs

Low wages and underutilization remain as a major contributor to the veterinary workforce shortage and lack of access to care.

RVT Challenges: By the numbers!



What keeps RVTs in the field?



Elevate every role!

Clinical Practice Career Ladder





Next level RVT: Veterinary Technician Specialists

- ✓ Credentialed Veterinary Technicians
- ✓ Worked a minimum of 3 years in their specialty
- ✓ Provided evidence of more than average CE
- ✓ Mastered advanced skills, signed off by a veterinary specialist, another VTS, or a DVM
- ✓ Demonstrated experience in vast types of cases
- ✓ Written detailed, scientific case reports demonstrating their depth of knowledge
- ✓ Passed a validated competency exam, many with *wet-lab portions*
- ✓ Letters of recommendation from qualified individuals - VTSs, Diplomates, DVMs working in the specialty area

Problem: Undifferentiated roles = underutilization

59% of veterinary technicians report sometime or frequently being asked to perform tasks that a lower-level person could do

57% report there are medical tasks they are qualified or trained to do but are sometimes or frequently not asked to perform by their supervisor

Barriers to better utilization:

- Lack of trust/confidence from DVM
- Training uncredentialed staff to do VT tasks
- Not allowing RVTs to handles tasks which they are educated to perform
- No statutory guidance



Resources:

<https://www.avma.org/javma-news/2021-12-15/survey-finds-underuse-related-retention-veterinary-technicians>

NAVTA 2022 Demographic Survey

Fanning J, Shepherd AJ. Contribution of veterinary technicians to veterinary business revenue, 2007. J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2010;236(8):846.



Colorado: Where we are today

**New RVT regulation
No title protection until 1.1.2024
No recognition of VTSs
Considering another professional?**

Solution: USEFUL Scope of practice

Formally recognize & utilize:

- VA
- RVT
- VTS

Clearly defined levels of supervision to reflect the education and competencies of supervisees

Helpful task lists and duties delineated by competency; **especially dentistry**

Tools for better utilization:

- AAVSB Model VT Scope of Practice
 - Kentucky: in rulemaking process
- AR Veterinary Technician Specialist Bill



MODEL REGULATIONS –
SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR VETERINARY
TECHNICIANS AND VETERINARY
TECHNOLOGISTS



Veterinary Assistant

- Support DVM & RVT
- Animal handling & restraint
- Husbandry & exercise
- Charting
- Equipment maintenance
- Running automated lab tests



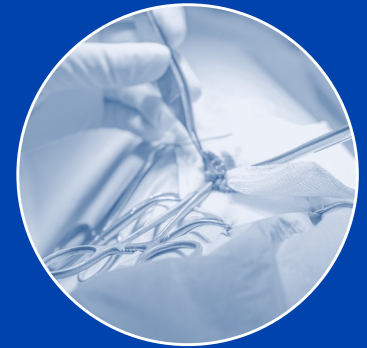
RVT

- Perform lab tests
- Vaccines and prep prescriptions
- Client education
- Obtain tissue & blood samples
- Induce and monitor anesthesia
- Provide patient care
- Obtain x-rays
- Dentistry



VTS

- Manage specialized patient care
- High risk anesthesia
- Clinical practice: routine exams, client education, lifestyle counseling
- Higher level tasks within specialty area
- Work with DVM to create and modify treatment plans
- Follow-up care in specialty area

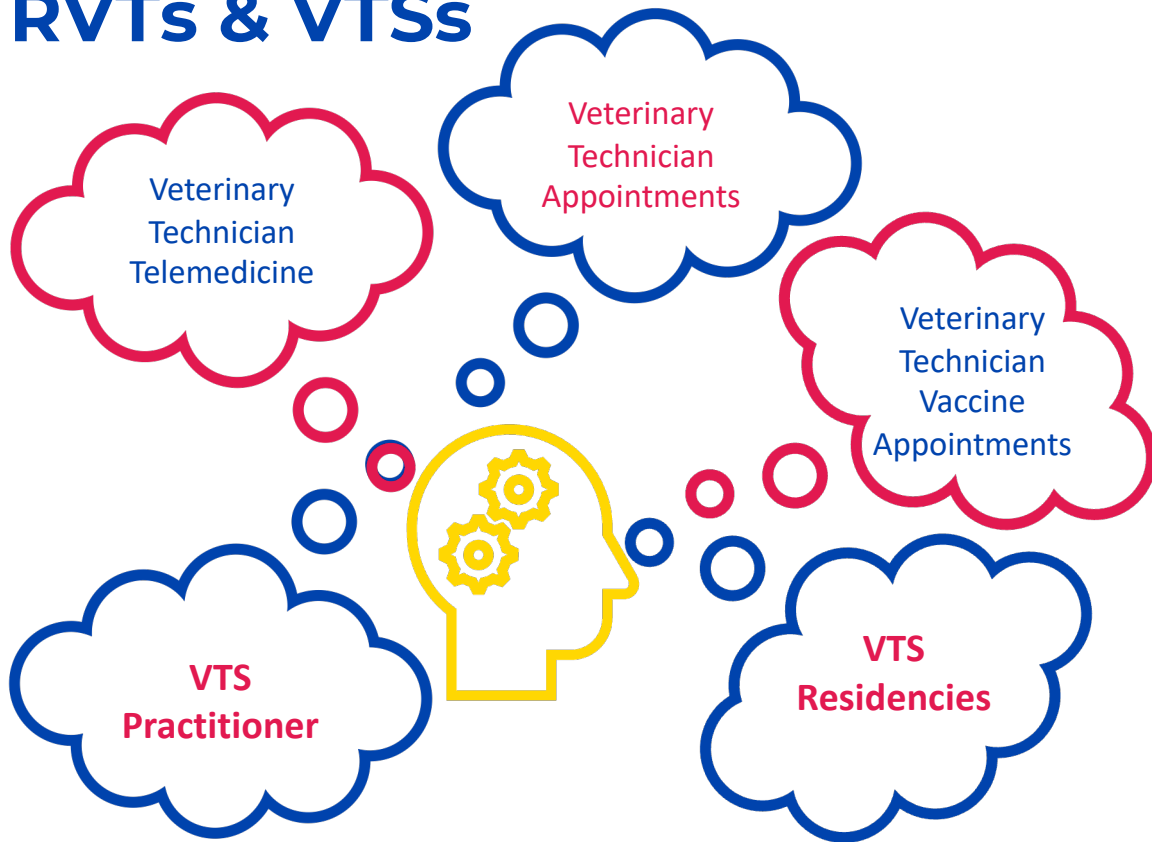


Veterinarian

- Diagnose
- Prescribe
- Initiate treatment
- Surgery



Filling the Gap: RVTs & VTSSs





Call to Action!

**Useful Scope of Practice
Define VTS**