

Mini Supporting Statement A

The NIH Extramural Loan Repayment Programs (LRP) Outcome Study

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Mini Supporting Statement A

A.1 Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

No major outcome study has been conducted on the five extramural Loan Repayment Programs (LRPs) to determine if they are achieving the main programmatic goal of keeping clinical researchers in research careers.

Background:

The NIH Loan Repayment Programs (LRPs) are a set of programs established by Congress and designed to recruit and retain highly qualified health professionals into biomedical or biobehavioral research careers. The escalating costs of advanced education and training in medicine and clinical specialties are forcing some scientists to abandon their research careers for higher-paying private industry or private practice careers.

The LRPs counteract that financial pressure by repaying up to \$35,000 annually of a researcher's qualified educational debt in return for a commitment to engage in NIH mission-relevant research. Since tomorrow's medical breakthroughs will be made by investigators starting in their research careers today, the LRPs represent an important investment by NIH in the future of health discovery and the wellbeing of the Nation.

There five extramural NIH LRPs, and LRP awardees may apply for subsequent, competitive renewal awards as long as they meet Program eligibility. Although organized around broad research areas, the LRPs were never intended to fund research projects. Rather, LRP awards are based on an applicant's potential to build and sustain a research career.

The first extramural LRP, Contraception and Infertility Research, was authorized in 1993. The second, Pediatric Research, was authorized in 2000. In 2001, the last three were authorized – Clinical Research, Minority Health and Health Disparities Research, and Clinical Researchers from Disadvantaged Backgrounds. The full complement of Programs have been accepting applications since FY 2002 and have been fully operational for approximately 13 years. During that time, approximately 6,500 clinical researchers have received loan repayment awards through the extramural LRPs.

Current Need for this Project:

Recommendations from the Advisory Council to the Director of NIH, Physician-Scientist Workforce (PSW) Working Group recommended that the LRPs be expanded to address the predicted future shortage of biomedical researchers. The PSW suggested that the LRPs be expanded in two ways – 1) Add LRPs to include non-clinical scientists, and 2) Increase the annual repayment limit or cap that currently exists in the program in order to keep pace with the escalating costs of medical school and clinical training. By keeping more researchers in the pipeline, which is the major programmatic goal of the LRPs, NIH can make capital investments today in tomorrow's biomedical research workforce. So the current need to conduct this investigation comes from two sources:

- 1) Before allocating greater budget resources towards expanding the LRPs, NIH would like to gather data to determine if the LRPs are achieving the major programmatic goal of keeping clinical researchers in research careers.
- 2) While pursuing legislative changes necessary to implementing the recommended changes from the PSW, NIH was asked by Congress to provide outcome data regarding the success of the program, i.e., do the LRPs facilitate researchers staying in their research careers?

A.2 Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The primary users of results from this proposed study will be the Division of Loan Repayment (DLR) and all NIH LRP Program Officers and their respective IC leadership. Essentially, this will be a comprehensive outcome investigation of the LRPs, in both design and scope, and a step in the ongoing longitudinal assessment of program goal attainment.

OEP also will be a primary user of information from this project: Biomedical workforce diversity and the physician-scientist workforce are two important issues that OEP addresses through other mechanisms, and information from this LRP outcome investigation will be used by these groups addressing these issues. Finally, the LRPs have already had questions from Congressional staffers about the purpose and impact of the program.

Ultimately, results from this study will be used to guide program administrative improvements and provide preliminary data to questioners, including Congress, regarding the impact of the program.

A.3 Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

This survey will be administered online. See Attachment 1 for screenshots of the survey. The contractor who will execute the study, Abt. Associates, has great experience in this area and has even performed this service for DLR in the past. This electronic methodology was adopted to reduce the time burden on respondents. A PIA assessment was conducted by Abt, and only aggregate data and results are to be provided to NIH by Abt.

A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication

Since this is the first study of its kind since the LRPs began in 1989, there is no duplication of information.

A.5 Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

N/A

A.6 Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

N/A

A.7 Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

This survey will be implemented in a manner that fully complies with 5 C.F.R. 1320.5.

A.8 Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside Agency

N/A

A.9 Explanation of Any Payment of Gift to Respondents

There will be no payments or gifts to respondents.

A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

Invited participants will be assured in the invitation email that the NIH contracted with Abt. Associates to implement the study as a way to safeguard respondent information, and their responses will remain private to the extent permitted by law. Invited participants will be told that only aggregate data will be provided to NIH. The protocol has already been reviewed and approved by Abt. Associates' IRB. See Attachment 2.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will not be collected.

A.11 Justification for Sensitive Questions

The survey asks one question regarding current salary. This is to investigate if there are compensation differences among respondents, an effect well known in the literature. This may drive programmatic change. Respondents are free to skip the question if they do not wish to provide such information.

A.12.1 Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

Burden hours estimates for this survey were based on a similar survey conducted two years ago.

A.12-1 Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

Form Name	Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses per Respondent	Average Burden Per Response (in hours)	Total Annual Burden Hour
Online Survey	Adults	1,440	1	20/60	480
Total:		1,440	1,440		480

A.12-2 ANNUALIZED COST TO RESPONDENTS

Source is the Chronicle of Higher Education (hyperlink - <http://data.chronicle.com/category/sector/1/faculty-salaries/>)

The mean annual salary for an assistant professor is \$71,130, and the mean hourly wage is \$66.

A.12-2 Annualized Cost to the Respondents

Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Average Burden Per Response (in minutes)	Hourly Wage Rate	Cost Per Response	Total Respondent Cost
Adult	1,440	20/60	\$66	\$22	\$31,680.00

A.13 Estimate of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

None.

A.14 Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The federal government cost will be \$75,400.

Staff	Grade/Step	Salary	% of Effort	Fringe (if applicable)	Total Cost to Gov't
Federal Oversight					
Sc Program Eval Specialist	14-3	118,000	30		35,400
Contractor Cost					
Senior Associate	n/a	200,000	10	n/a	20,000
Associate	n/a	180,000	5	n/a	9,000
Research Assistant	n/a	110,000	10	n/a	11,000
Travel					
Other Cost					
Total					75,400

A.15 Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

N/A

A.16 Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

There are no plans to publish at this time.

A.17 Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate

We are not requesting an exemption to the display of the OMB Expiration date.

A.18 Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

This survey will comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

Mini Supporting Statement B

B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

One thousand and two hundred LRP applicants (who never received an LRP award) and 1,200 LRP awardees will be emailed an invitation to participate in this online survey. Based on prior studies of a similar nature, we anticipate an approximately 60% response rate from LRP awardees. We have no prior experience with surveying LRP applicants, so we anticipate a maximum ceiling response rate of 60%. In all likelihood, their response rate will be lower.

B.2 Procedures for the Collection of Information

Based on contact information in the LRP online application system, LRP applicants and awardees will be contacted via email and invited to participate in an LRP outcome investigation. Contained in the email will be a link that individuals interested in participating can click and go directly to the survey on the Abt. Associates website.

B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

There will be two participation invitation emails. See attachments 3 and 4.

B.4 Test of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

N/A

B.5 Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design:

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and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

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