Application Tutorial Webinar - Transcript

September 27, 2017

Speaker 1 – Slide 1 (Dr. Ericka Boone): Good Afternoon

I'm Dr. Ericka Boone, the Director NIH Division of Loan Repayment and I am joined by several members of my staff, including Dr. Marguerite Matthews, Ms. Jigna Gohil, Mr. Omar McCrimmon and Ms. Tatiana Barabadze. The focus of today's webinar will be to provide you with information on the extramural NIH Loan Repayment Program online application itself, as well as important components within the application. While I hope that most of you are already in the process of applying for an LRP, even if you are not, today's discussion should give you a more in-depth look at this process. Please be advised that this presentation, as well, this webinar will be made available on our website for your viewing at a later date. Thank you all for joining us today. Let's get started!

Speaker 1 – Slide 2: This slide is just to give you all an indication of the topics we will discuss for the next 45 mins. We will start off with a description of the loan repayment programs, followed by eligibility, then we will dive into the application components.

Speaker 1 – Slide 3: Now I'm sure I don't have to tell anyone attending this webinar today that many investigators have amassed significant amounts of student loan debt by the time they complete their education and training. Recent data indicates that 88% of MD graduates borrowed a median amount of $135,000 and 54% of PhD graduates borrowed a median amount of $55,000 to finance their education. Significant amounts of loan debt can be a major deterrent to beginning and sustaining a research career……

Speaker 1 – Slide 4: but…the NIH LRPs can indeed help!

Speaker 1 – Slide 5: The main purpose of the LRPs is to help keep promising investigators in biomedical and biobehavioral research careers by helping them repay their educational loans. Each year there is a significant loss of research discovery and innovation because some researchers have to make the decision leave a research career that they are passionate about to pursue alternative career options in order to pay back student loan debt. Thus, 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.

This is how the program works. In exchange for performing 2 years of research at a non-profit organization in turn, NIH will commit to repaying up to $35,000 per year for two years in qualifying educational debt. Of course, the amount of repayment will depend on an individuals debt level. Initial LRP awards are for 2 years, and awardees may apply for a competitive renewal award, that may be for 1 or 2 years. Because LRP awards are taxable, we will also make

a tax payment to the IRS equal to 39% of the annual LRP payment, which should cover most of the federal taxes associated with getting the award.

Speaker 1 – Slide 6: The extramural Loan Repayment programs are grouped under five broad research areas as seen in this slide.

- The **Clinical Research LRP** is for investigators that are conducting patient-oriented research, which means they generally work with human subjects or utilize materials of human origin in their research, this includes use of blood, tissues, or cognitive phenomenon from human subjects
- The **Pediatric Research LRP** is for investigators conducting research related to conditions or disorders that impact individuals 21 years of age or younger; please note that use of animal models is allowed under the pediatric LRP
- The **Health Disparities Research LRP** is for individuals conducting research on minority and other health disparity populations; these applications are reviewed only by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, or NIMHD
- Next, the **Contraception and Infertility LRP** is for researchers conducting research on conditions that impact an individuals ability to conceive or bear offspring; please note that these applications are reviewed only by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development, or NICHD
- Lastly, the **Clinical Research LRP for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds** is the same as the Clinical Research LRP, except that it is available to researchers that are from verifiable financially-disadvantaged backgrounds; these applications are also reviewed only by the NIMHD

While we have provided a brief description of the programs on this slide, for a more in-depth description of the programs, please visit our website at www.lrp.nih.gov.

Speaker 1 – Slide 7: Let's talk a little about program eligibility. To be eligible to apply for and receive an LRP, you must:

- Have a doctoral or other terminal-level degree (exception of the contraception & infertility research LRP)
- Be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or permanent resident not at the time of application, but by the time your LRP contract starts (which is July 1st)
- Conduct at least 20 hours of research/week for the entire LRP contract period (which is 2 years for a new contract)
- You must have educational loan debt ≥20 percent of your annual base salary on your LRP contract start date (please note this is a requirement for new applicants only)
- And lastly, you must be employed by and your research must be supported by a domestic nonprofit entity, this includes, for example, funding from a private foundation, professional organization and NIH (although having an NIH grant is not required)

Speaker 2 – Slide 7: I'd like to make a note about some of the eligibility requirements. Researchers who do not currently hold a doctorate but will receive it by the time a new contract

starts on July 1 of next year may apply during this application cycle if they meet the other eligibility requirements.

Additionally, new applicants who only have one year of guaranteed research time and funding support should not apply for this award. New applicants need at least two years of **BOTH** at the start of their contract. **So…**if an individual applies for an LRP in November 2017, their start date will July 1, 2018 and their end date will be June 30, 2020. Research conducted **BEFORE** the start of your contract will NOT count toward your two-year service obligation.

Speaker 3 – Slide 8: Ok, let's now jump into the online application and discuss it's general navigation.

Speaker 3 – Slide 9: You can access the application and the application guide via the LRP website. Be sure to utilize the application guide as a resource as you complete your application.

You can access the application system two ways. You can click on the main webpages carousel or apply tab on the LRP website.

Speaker 3 – Slide 10: Applicants will have to use one of the three methods shown here to get into the application. You can utilize the eRA Commons ID option, as well as the open ID using your Google account. If you have an NIH ID, you can use the NIH ID option.

Speaker 3 - Slide 11: The system will then lead users to the Roles page. Here individuals can enter different portals of the application based on their role in the application process. Most of you will choose the Applicant role.

 Speaker 1 – Slide 12: Now that you are aware that there different roles involved in the application process, let's take a quick side bar and quickly discuss a few of them.

We'll briefly discuss the role of the Primary Mentor, Research Supervisor, and Institutional Business Official. So in your application – if you are applying as a mentored applicant, you will list the name of a primary mentor. This individual will supervise your career development and research activities during your LRP award period. They will also provide a letter of recommendation for you as well as a biosketch – and if you have a mentoring team, they have the ability to be able to provide one additional biosketch on your behalf within the application. They are expected to work collaboratively with you - the applicant during the development of your LRP application. Now if you are applying as an independent applicant, you will appoint a primary mentor in your application.

Now let's talk about the research supervisor. This person doesn't really have a significant role in the application process itself, however, if you are awarded an LRP, this person will be very important to you. So in the application, an individual - whether you are mentored or independent, will be providing the name of a research supervisor. This individual will be required to submit a quarterly verification of your research service during your LRP award period. So every three months they are going to receive an email and you'll receive an email.

Where they will have to verify that you are still conducting research at that University. The funds for your LRP, the money that will be paid toward your LRP award or your loans – will not be paid until those verifications are received.

Lastly is the Institutional Business Official. This person is very important to your application process because they are required to certify that you have protected research time, funding, they are also going to certify citizenship status as well. In your application or for your application all of their materials as well as other supporting documentation - as well as your application are all due on or before …. preferably before – November 15th.

Speaker 2 – Slide 13: Once logged into the applicant portal, all new applicants must enter their basic personal information. If you are returning user to the system, you will not see this screen.

Speaker 2 – Slide 14: This is a snapshot of the Applicant Dashboard, which is the default screen when you log into the LRP applicant portal. You can start a new application by clicking on the 'start new application' button. If you are returning applicant you will see the previous application in the dashboard. Be sure to pay attention to the cohort year so that you are working on the correct application.

Speaker 3 – Slide 15: Completing the online application can take some time, so here are some pointers you should do BEFORE starting:

1. Read the notices published for the LRP that you are interested in. The notices are listed on the LRP website
2. Review the mission and priorities for the NIH Institutes and Centers (or ICs) that you are interested in reviewing your application and we strongly encourage you to reach out to the appropriate NIH Program Officer/ LRP Liaison to talk with them about your research and to ask questions about their IC's research and funding priorities.
3. Talk to your mentors and recommenders about your interest in the LRPs and ask them to provide supporting information on your behalf (we will touch more on this later).
4. Make sure you have an eRA Commons ID, as you'll need one to submit an LRP application. While you can start your application without a Commons ID, you CANNOT submit your application until you have one. If you have trouble accessing it, contact the eRA Commons Helpdesk right away.
5. Contact your lender to get information on your loan amounts.

Speaker 2 – Slide 16: This is a screenshot of the application pre-selection page. The selections on this screen will provide the appropriate application and requirements. Please note you want to be certain of the selection you make on this screen and not make changes later. If you exit this screen you may not see an application for this year and will need to restart the application selection. On the next couple of slides we'll go into a little more detail about making these selections.

Speaker 2 – Slide 17: First selection is Award Type: New VS. Renewal. You would apply as a renewal applicant if you had a LRP award within last 37 months and are applying to the same LRP. Otherwise, please choose New award.

You will also select if you want to apply for the intramural or extramural LRPs. Only NIH employees would select the intramural option (AKA you receive a W2 from NIH) all others please choose Extramural. All new awards are for two years. If you are a renewal applicant, you must also select whether you would like to apply for 1 or 2 years of funding. Please be aware that for renewal awards, NIH ICs have discretion over the number of years they will fund an award.

Speaker 3 – Slide 18: You will also have to select which of the 5 extramural LRPs to which you would like to apply, and which ICs you would like to review and fund your application.

Please note, if you're applying to the Health Disparities Research LRP or the Clinical Research for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds LRP, your application will be forwarded only to the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and you will not be able to select the option to have a primary and secondary IC to review your application. Similarly, if you're applying to the Contraception and Infertility Research LRP, your application will be forwarded only to the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute on Child Health and Human Development**.**

Speaker 3 – Slide 19: You will also need to select if you're applying as an independent or mentored researcher.

In general, an independent researcher holds their own research funding over $100K and is listed as the PD/PI on a research project. A mentored researcher, however, generally has a research mentor, is supported by grants held by another PI, or is receiving support from a fellowship or career development award. Further, a mentored researcher conducts their research in another investigator's assigned space and generally will not submit an NIH research project grant application as the PD/PI. We encourage you to consult with the appropriate NIH program officer/IC Liaison about which designation is best for your LRP application.

Speaker 2 – Slide 20: This a continuation of the pre-selection screen. I'd like to point out that on this screen you will also be asked to answer a set of simple eligibility questions. Once answered, you must check the certification statement boxes notated by #2 and click submit to continue notated by #3.

Speaker 2 – Slide 21: Please note, once you have completed the preselection screen, changing any of components below will cause data loss as well as colleague support documentation deletion. This is because changing these elements in essence changes the type of application that you will be submitting. Please, please, please be aware that you may have to re-do certain sections of your application if you make changes to these components.

Speaker 2 – Slide 22: Next you'll proceed to the personal information tab as shown here. Some of the information will auto-populate based on the information enter in the basic information screen as well as any past application. Please double check all the fields and correct information if necessary. There are several features I'd like to point out on this screen. **First,** all sections of

the application are displayed in tabbed form at the top of the page and applicants can access each of these **10 sections** just by clicking on the tab itself.

Next, I'd like to point out that the status of each section indicated by either a red exclamation point (incomplete) or a green check (complete).

Lastly, there is a collapsible grey filter menu where you can choose the award type, whether you are applying to the Intramural or Extramural program, as well as to which one of the five LRPs you are applying. This filter is displayed on all sections of the application and can be updated at any time. Again, I want to caution that you should be careful if considering making changes to this information, as this may result in data loss.

Speaker 2- Slide 23: This slide is a continuation of the Personal Information Tab. Here I want to stress again that an eRA Commons ID is required to submit an LRP application. You can, however, start working on your LRP application without the eRA commons ID, just remember to save each section and continue through the application by clicking on the tabs at the top of the page.

Speaker 3 – Slide 24: This is the Employment and Affiliation Tab. Here you can complete information about your place of employment and any academic affiliation you anticipated having during an LRP contract period starting in July.

For many of you, your place of employment and academic affiliation will be the same. However, if you are a researcher working at a hospital or clinic, you may also be affiliated with a different academic institution. For example, you may work at McLean Hospital or Mass General Hospital and be affiliated with Harvard University. In that case, you would select "Hospital, Clinic, or Other Type of Organization" in the Employment Organization section, and then provide information for the academic institution with which you are affiliated.

Speaker 3 – Slide 25: Here is a look at the Education and Training Tab. Here, you will add information about your education, training and postdoctoral experience using the 'add new entry' button. Applicants can also enter residency information in this section.

Speaker 1 – Slide 26: This is a screenshot of the Research Information tab for a mentored applicant. In the research activities section you will need to provide your research project title and abstract as well as upload the research project document. Mentored applicants will also need to submit a training and mentoring plan. If you are an independent researcher, you will not see the training and mentoring plan, however, you will see what is termed a career development plan.

Next, whether mentored or independent, all applicants will need to submit a statement on the research environment, an NIH biosketch, and a personal statement.

Lastly, and not shown on this screenshot, if you are a renewal applicant, you will need to submit the research accomplishment document.

Speaker 1- Slide 27: Let's take a detour from discussing the sections of the application and talk about building your research documents.

I have a quick question for you. If you were going to build your dream home, what would you need besides money…and land.

You will also need a blueprint, but you'll also need a contractor to help you because you are probably not going to be an expert in all things home building. So you'll probably need an electrician, a plumber, an architect, you'll need all kinds of people to help you or assist you in accomplishing your dream home or working toward your dream home. An inspector would be the individual that would use this blueprint in order to make sure you are a building this house to correct specifications and timelines. Now let's equate the building of this home to the building of your research career…

What would you need? Well if you are going to be doing research you're going to need funding. So your blueprint would be considered your application or your funding application. But who is this application for?

A different kind of inspector – this would be an application reviewer. Now who will be your helpers? Your mentors and other supporters. They're going to serve as individuals that are going to help fill in the gaps and fill in holes for you, teach you news things, and help you toward building your research career.

Speaker 1 – Slide 28:

Now let's talk about the major documents that goes into the Research Tab.

- **Proposed Research Plans** – Describe planned research activities, specific roles/responsibilities over next 2 years – *include timelines and tables…it helps reviewers to have your plan listed in a consolidated manner*

- **Training and Mentoring (for mentored applicants)/Career Development Plan (for independent applicants)** – What skills, etc do you need to acquire along your path to independent researcher (e.g., training and professional development opportunities; grantmanship workshops, conference attendance, etc) – *include timelines*
- **Research Environment** – here applicants should describe your institution's scientific environment and how it will contribute to the probability of your success during the course of an LRP award
- **Personal Statement** – include previous research training experience, how you developed your scientific interests, background and accomplishments; short and long-term career goals

If you're a Renewal Applicant, you will also include a statement about your **Research Accomplishments**. Describe your research accomplishments and emphasize the progress made toward the achievement of your specific aims as described in your research plan. Explain any

significant changes to the specific aims and any new directions including changes to the specific aims that may have occurred during the LRP Award(s) period.

Speaker 2 – Slide 28: I would like to add that DLR has changed the requirement of the documents from character limit to page limit which can be found in the LRP guide notice as well as the LRP application guide located on our website.

Speaker 1 – Slide 29: Now we talked about in the last slide about reviewers serving as an inspector for your blueprint or application. What exactly are they looking for? Reviewers will use the components of your application to evaluate your potential to succeed in a research career as an independent investigator. They are going to look at your research goals – coupled with your commitment to research as demonstrated by your activities and environment – will provide the experience, knowledge, and skills necessary to achieve the objectives that you've outlined in your application. So like I said a description of your training and research experience will be important for a reviewers evaluation as well as your documentation of your commitment to a research career.

Next is the Strength and quality of your letter of recommendation. Some of the most uncomfortable conversations I've had to have with applicants in the past is when I've had to describe to them that their recommender really didn't think they would be successful as an independent investigator. So you want to make sure you are picking people who are very knowledgeable about your skills, your abilities, and you as an individual so that they can put that in their letter of recommendation. As a matter of fact, offer them something when they are writing your letter of recommendation. So that they are able to pinpoint certain areas of your research or career development that kind of speaks to you. What you don't want them to do is submit a letter of recommendation that basically says you came to lab every day. That would be the Kiss of death.

Next is Quality and Appropriateness of your research environment. We kind of talked about that. I am a substance abuse researcher in my former life so all of my examples are about Substance abuse. So if I'm saying in my application that I would like to be an independent researcher in the area of substance abuse and addiction but I'm not conducting research with anyone who is conducting that type of research - and I've never done that before there's going to be a mismatch in my application and the reviewer will see that right away.

Next for renewal applicants is the research progress area or research progress document and we've talked about that in a previous slide so we won't spend a lot of time with it now.

Speaker 2 – Slide 30: This is a screenshot of the colleague information tab. If you're applying as a mentored researcher, you will need to provide the name of your research supervisor, primary mentor, and institutional business official in appropriate sections shown. If you are applying as an independent applicant, you will not see the section requesting information for Primary Mentors.

Speaker 3 – Slide 30: Once an applicant saves information from this page, an email will automatically be sent to the institutional business official and primary mentor that you indicated

here, letting them know that they will be asked for information in support of the application. We'll discuss in further detail later how your recommenders will submit their letters on your behalf.

Speaker 2 – Slide 31: Now let's discuss the loans tab. Everything needed to complete this tab can be found on your lender statement and/or online account. If you have multiple loans that are the same type with the same lender and servicer you can add them together. The screenshot here shows the example of multiple Stafford loan with Navient.

Speaker 1 – Slide 32: Now, let's review the types of loans that **DO** and **DO NOT** qualify for NIH loan repayment.

NIH **WILL** repay --

- Educational loans guaranteed by the US Government
- Educational loans from accredited US academic institutions and commercial lenders, including PLUS loans – but only those made to the applicant. PLUS loans made to your parents for your education are not eligible.

Speaker 2 – Slide 32: I often get asked whether the LRPs will repay undergraduate loans, and the answer is yes. The programs cover all educational loans from undergraduate to your last degree. Please note that all payments go directly to your lenders. The order, in which loans are paid, is listed on our website.

Speaker 1 – Slide 32: Now that we've covered eligible loans, let's take a look at loans NIH will **NOT** repay. These include

- Non-educational loans (for example car or mortgage loans)
- Loans that have been converted to a service obligation
- Loans that are delinquent or in default
- Loans from non-US governments or institutions; Last, and VERY IMPORTANT to note…
- Loans consolidated with a spouse or child **WILL NOT** be considered under any circumstances for repayment

Speaker 2 – Slide 33: Now we will have a look at the Funding Tab. Here, you can enter information about your research funding – this may include funding from NIH and other non-profit source - by using the 'add new entry' button. Please also note that if you choose your funding support to be salary and/or start up funds, no additional information is required. Therefore, you will not see the second half of the screen regarding grants and awards information.

Speaker 2 – Slide 34: The 'Certify and Submit' tab has new exciting features this year! Applicants no longer have to mail in their application certifications or signed LRP contracts because it can all be done electronically within the application **(YAY!!!!)**

Please note since these are legal documents, you are required to enter your legal name and confirm your identity by entering the last 4 digits of your SSN before you can click sign.

The 'Sign' tab will turn green if all the requirements are complete. Now that you have entered all the required information let talk about submitting your LRP application.

Speaker 2 – Slide 35: To submit your LRP application, you must logged in via the eRA Commons option.

If you have completed your application using the OpenID or NIH ID options, when you attempt to submit your application, you will see a red box like the one pictured in the middle of this slide.

First, ensure that your eRA Commons ID is entered in the personal information tab. Next, you will need to log out of the application and log back in using the eRA Commons ID option. The application should appear in your dashboard and the submit button will be enabled as shown at the bottom of this slide.

Speaker 2- Slide 36: Congratulations…we're done discussing how to successfully submit an LRP application!

Speaker 3 – Slide 37: Now, let's discuss COMPLETING your application. On this Application Status Page, which is the default page you will see when you log into your online application. Though this status page, you can view the status of the supporting documentation for your application, and whether your recommenders or Institutional Business Official have submitted their forms.

Note that a red circle indicates that an item has not been submitted, and a green circle indicates that items have been submitted. Please remember that even if you have submitted your application, **IS NOT** considered to be complete, and thus eligible for review, until all portions of it, including recommendations and certifications have been submitted on your behalf. So make sure your supporters submit their documents!

Speaker 1- Slide 38: Lets discuss the reference letter submission process via the new public facing reference letter submission page. As opposed to previous years, your recommenders will not be contacted by DLR…YOU, the applicant, will need to contact your recommenders with all the information they will need to submit a letter on your behalf. So how do you do this??

Speaker 1- Slide 39: Once you start your application, you will be sent a welcome email, which includes all information that you will need to provide to your references…this includes (1) your LRP application tracking code and (2) the link to the reference letter submission page (this is a screenshot of the reference letter submission page). Once your referees click on the green submission box.

Speaker 1- Slide 40: They will be asked to choose whether they want to submit a new reference letter or preview an already submitted reference letter.

Speaker 1 – Slide 41: If they choose to start a new reference letter, they will need to complete all the required fields, including the applicant tracking code, their name and email address and type in (or copy and paste in) their letter of reference. Next they click on the reference assurances and press SUBMIT…and VOILA….they are DONE!! It should only take a few minutes for the entire process!

And once the letter is submitted, the referee will see a confirmation code on the next screen…AND they (as well as you) will receive an email notification within 48 hours after they submit their letters.

All applicants are required to have 3 (and no more than 5) letters of recommendation. I'd like to stress that if you are a mentored applicant, one of your required recommendations must be from your mentor…the process that they will use to submit their letter of recommendation is slightly different than the process that I have just described…but don't panic! They will receive an email DIRECTLY from DLR will clear instructions on how to provide their letter of recommendation for your application.

Regardless of the process, once a letter is submitted you can track it via your application status page.

Speaker 1 – Slide 42: Now that you have completed your application, let's talk about what happens next!

So you already know on the top left of the screen in the dark blue box that the LRP application cycle is open between September 1 to November 15. All of your application components – your application and supporting documentation must be submitted on or before November 15. After that, between February and May, your application will undergo application assisted review. Once your information is received by DLR, we then take that information and we send it on to the Center for Scientific Review. And then they farm out your application and your supporting documentation to the Institute and Center that you indicated within your application. Those ICs send that information out to reviewers to conduct a review via internet assisted review. They are scored then sent back to the institute from which they came. Then the institutes let us know at the Division of Loan Repayment which individuals they would like to take a look at for funding. That is when some of you lucky duckies will receive an email from us asking you to confirm your loan information. Please be honest within your application and with us about your loan information. Congress already knows that you owe a lot of money because of your education and training. They started this program in order to help with that. Just because you owe a lot of money, does not make you look worst for this application. As a matter of fact, reviewers have no idea of what your debt level is when they review your application. Now during the financial vetting period, that information is very important to us and very important to NIH ICs because they divvy up the pot to figure out how many applications they can fund. Final funding decisions will be made mid-late August and the first lender payments, you don't get the money but lenders do - will be received in November. Please remember quarterly verification are required for future payments.

Speaker 1 – Slide 43: Now, let's take a look at this unofficial application checklist, which contains helpful tips and reminders for what you should do before and after you submit your application. So…before you submit your application,

- Read all important notices regarding the LRPs and Take a look at our 'Tips for writing a competitive LRP application' document on our website
- Reach out to an NIH LRP program officer to learn more IC priorities and discuss your status as an independent or mentored applicant. They will be able to provide Institute-specific feedback on what is considered mentored vs independent.
- Also, reach out to your application supporters, including your mentor, recommenders and Institutional business official.
- Make sure you have an eRA Commons ID and that you know your password
- Develop your own application timeline, so that you can stay on track. Start early to develop your application (I'd say at least several weeks before the deadline)

After submitting the online application:

- Ensure all online forms are complete -- including forms from your mentor, recommenders and institutional business official
- Keep track of your application status via your 'Application Status' page in the applicant portal
- Keep your e-mail address current. This is the primary way we will contact you, so don't set your security filters too high and ensure you respond to our e-mails Also, please pay attention to emails from us at the Division of Loan Repayment
- Contact the LRP Information Center if you need to make major updates (e.g. change your institution or research project) as soon as possible

And then sit back, relax and wait to receive information about your application funding status!

Speaker 4 – Slide 44: Now I am going to go over some handy resources to ensure that you have a positive experience when applying for an LRP award.

Speaker 4 – Slide 45: We encourage all applicants to visit our newly updated website www.lrp.nih.gov. On this slide, we highlighted important areas that applicants should visit before submitting an application.

The Contact & Engage Tab is always a great place to start when visiting the website. This tab houses the name, email, and phone number of each NIH LRP program officer and NIH mission and priorities for each NIH institute.

Other helpful information on our website includes Application and documentation deadlines, and the newly revised downloadable Online Application Instruction guide.

Speaker 4 – Slide 46: Now, let's discuss the LRP Ambassador Program! LRP Ambassadors serve as a personalized link/connection between the NIH LRPs and potential applicants at their home institutions by providing advice and encouragement regarding the LRP application

process, their experiences, and more. Ambassador Program participants can include current or former LRP awardees, research mentors or supervisors as well as institutional business officials.

One of the new features that we provide on the LRP Ambassador website is the Ambassador Directory, which helps support networking by sharing Ambassadors contact information. Applicants can use the directory to find Ambassadors in their own institution or by geographic region. We encourage applicants to utilize the directory and contact the nearest Ambassador to gain insight about their LRP experience.

The directory is organized by state and institution and you can also find information such as Ambassador research interests.

Speaker 1 – Slide 47: Alright, we are almost finished. It is Q&A time! You all have been submitting questions during the chat and before the chat and now we will take some time to answer them.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: Do figures, graphs, legends etc count toward the character count?

Speaker 2 – Slide 47: Yes, but a quick reminder about the word character limit - we do not have that anymore. We have page limits. Figures, graphs and legends all do count within the application, but no character limits just page limits as we stated earlier you can find that in the application guide, you can find that in the guide notices, so there are all kinds of resources out there so you can get the correct limits right now.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: Do renewal applicants have to meet the 20% debt to income ratio?

Speaker 3 – Slide 47: NO! Renewal applicants are not required to meet the 20% debt to income ratio.

Speaker 4 - Slide 47: Who should be listed as the Institutional Business Official?

Speaker 2 – Slide 47: The Institutional Business Official, also known as an IBO, must be someone who is authorized to speak on behalf of the institution, such as a Dean or an administrative official in HR. Be sure to check the drop-down menu in the application to see if your organization is listed before you input the individual's name and email address.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: How many projects should an applicant focus on in the Research Activities section?

Speaker 1 – Slide 47: You want to offer the most streamlined proposal that you can in regard to your LRP application. While I understand that many of you may have your hands in about 5 or 6 different research projects in some sort of capacity, you only want to explain the projects that you will be majorly involved in during the two-year award period. Maybe 2 to 3 projects would probably be a good number. Anything above that might trigger a reviewer to say that this person isn't as focused as he or she should be.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: Eligibility based on having 2 years of planned research- what does that mean/include?

Speaker 2 – Slide 47: All initial contracts are for 2 years. So, the applicant must have 2 years of research lined up from July 1 of the contract start year. If you cannot guarantee this commitment, we advise you wait to apply until you can. Renewal applicants, however, can apply for a 1 or 2 year contract. However, applying for a two-year renewal does not guarantee that funding will be for two years.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: How do an applicant find out more information about their application if it isn't selected for funding?

Speaker 1 – Slide 47: Applicants can reach out to the NIH LRP Program Officer from the NIH IC that reviewed their applicant in order to receive feedback on their unfunded application. You can find this information under the Contact and Engage page of the website. Also, unfunded applicants receive an email regarding their funding status in September. This email also contains the name and contact information for the NIH LRP program official from the IC that reviewed their application.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: If someone has a gap between their first LRP award and their current application, do they need to submit as a new or renewal applicant?

Speaker 2 – Slide 47: Applicants may apply as a renewal even if there has been a gap since your last contract as long as they are applying to the same LRP, and the end date of the prior contract is within 37 months.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: Can you identify more than one mentor in the application?

Speaker 2 – Slide 47: You can only list one mentor in the colleague tab. However, here's a few things to remember

      1.) Your mentor can upload one additional biosketch.

      2.) You can request your other mentors to submit a letter of recommendation for you (5 maximum allowed).

      3.) You can discuss you mentoring team and support throughout various research documents.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: If my student loans are currently not in repayment are they qualified for NIH LRP?

Speaker 3 – Slide 47: Yes, as long as there is no default or delinquency on the account the educational loan qualifies and is eligible to be repaid.

Speaker 4 – Slide 47: I am on a T32 and I have a service obligation – what should I do?

Speaker 2 – Slide 47: Indicate the service obligation in the eligibility question section when you start your LRP application. If you have received an LRP award, you will need to defer the service obligation by contacting NRSA.

Speaker 1 – Slide 48: Well alright, we are going to wrap up today – if we didn't get to your questions we are going to try as much as possible to answer all of the questions that were submitted in the chat and send those questions and responses out to you all who participated in today's webinar. We are also going to send out the webinar and the slides themselves. Thank you all for attending today's webinar. If you have any additional questions regarding the LRPs or the application process, please reach out to us at lrp@nih.gov or call us at Monday-Friday, EST at (866) 849-4047. Have a wonderful day.