

## SSWR Pre Conference Workshop Abstract

**Title:** Unlocking the Secrets and Benefits of Winning a NIH Loan Repayment Program Award

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**Abstract:** Are student loans hindering your path to financial independence? Do aspirations of debt freedom, an impressive FICO score, and home ownership appear unattainable? If this resonates with you, our workshop is tailor-made for you! Learn the most effective strategies to successfully navigate the application process for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Loan Repayment Program (LRP). By securing these awards, you can achieve both your financial and academic aspirations. Join two current NIH LRP recipients for an insightful and timely workshop that marks a crucial step in managing your educational debts while progressing in your research career. This workshop is meticulously crafted for researchers, particularly early-career faculty, and postdoctoral fellows, providing essential tips, tools, and strategies to secure a competitive NIH Loan Repayment Award. We will draw from our personal experiences and engage interactively, offering up-to-date information that you can immediately apply to your efforts.

### Workshop Objectives:

1. **Identify the Benefits of being an NIH LRP awardee:** Learn about the benefits, i.e., increased FICO score, reduced burden of student loan debt, and access to a national and global network of top notch LRP scholars. Participants will understand the financial, including tax benefits that come with the NIH LRP and its overall impact on your financial portfolio, including features of current and former awardees and their paths to success.
2. **Understanding the NIH Loan Repayment Program:** Gain a comprehensive overview of the NIH LRP, including its purpose, eligibility criteria, and application process. Learn about the various types of LRPs available, including the Clinical Research LRP, Pediatric Research LRP, and the Health Disparities LRP.
3. **Crafting a Strong Application:** Discover the key components of a compelling application. We will break down the critical elements, including the research plan, career development plan, and personal statement. Participants will learn how to effectively articulate their research goals, demonstrate the significance of their work, and align their career objectives with the program's mission. Also, the key to the strongest applications is securing strong recommendation letters, so participants will learn strategies for selecting appropriate referees and providing them with the information needed to write strong endorsements.
4. **Navigating the Review Process:** Get insights into the NIH review process, including what reviewers look for and how to address common pitfalls. Learn strategies to enhance your application's competitiveness and increase your chances of success.
5. **Q&A and Networking:** Engage in an interactive Q&A session to address specific questions and challenges faced by attendees. Network with peers and experts to gain additional insights and build connections that may support your application process.

**Target Audience:** This workshop is ideal for early-career researchers and postdoctoral fellows, as well as tenured faculty in social and behavioral health research who are considering applying for the NIH LRP.

**Benefits:** By participating in this workshop, attendees will acquire practical knowledge and actionable strategies that will enhance their understanding of the benefits and application requirements needed to increase their chances of obtaining an NIH LRP Award. This support can greatly improve their financial stability by alleviating educational debt, allowing them to devote more attention to their research endeavors and advance their career trajectory.