

Loan Repayment Assistance Program Policies & Process

Purpose of the LRAP Program

The Loan Repayment Assistance Program (“LRAP”) facilitates the employment of talented University of Oregon School of Law graduates in legal institutions serving the public interest. The LRAP seeks to ease the debt burdens incurred during law school for those who choose to work in qualifying public interest law jobs. The University of Oregon School of Law (“Oregon Law”) recognizes that entering public interest service is often impossible for graduates repaying large educational debts and adhering to standard loan repayment schedules. Support from LRAP makes public interest law a more viable career option for law graduates.

Eligibility

For a graduate to qualify for LRAP support, the applicant must meet the eligibility threshold:

- Graduated from Oregon Law no more than five years prior to application for LRAP support. Students who will graduate in December of the application year are eligible to apply.
- Works in a qualified public interest law job.
- Have an *adjusted gross income* of \$75,000 or less annually. Applicants should review IRS additions and deductions used to determine AGI, as an applicant’s AGI may be less than salary.
- Have outstanding law school loan obligations.

Process Overview

The LRAP Selection Committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and alumni will evaluate the applications and choose the LRAP recipients. The Committee will look at several financial factors to make its decisions, such as income levels, debt obligations, undergraduate and other graduate debt, debt/income of partner or spouse, as well as the applicant’s prior commitment to public interest activities and public interest career objective. Those graduates receiving LRAP assistance will be given short-term LRAP loans not to exceed \$5,000 per year. A recipient’s LRAP loan is forgiven after completing a year of work in a qualified public interest law job.

Applicants who are not selected are welcome to reapply the following year if they meet the eligibility requirements.

A recipient may apply for two additional years of support if the original successful application is within the timeframe stated in the above *Eligibility* section. If the renewal application years fall beyond this timeframe, the renewal years must be immediately after the year of the original successful application.

Loan Forgiveness

The LRAP forgives a loan when an LRAP recipient works in a qualified public interest law position during the calendar year for which the loan was made. If a loan recipient

leaves qualified work, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify the LRAP administration immediately and make arrangements to repay Oregon Law for the outstanding balance of his or her LRAP loan.

Maximum Benefits under the LRAP

The program places two caps on the maximum level of benefits an individual may receive under the program. The maximum annual amount that a graduate may receive is \$5,000 per year. A graduate may apply for three years of support, capping the total support for an individual at \$15,000.

Selection Process

The LRAP Selection Committee will consider the following criteria, with Tier 1 factors weighted more heavily, followed by Tier 2:

Tier 1: Commitment to Public Service/Ability to Make an Impact

- The applicant's prior commitment to public service as demonstrated by jobs, internships, public service student group involvement, or pro bono work
- The applicant's stated public service career objectives
- The applicant's ability to make an impact with the applicant's target population, cause, or organization
- Those reapplying for LRAP assistance after successfully receiving an LRAP award are asked to provide less information about this criterion when reapplying, given that these recipients have previously demonstrated a commitment to public service and an ability to make an impact

Tier 2: Financial Situation & Fiscal Management Considerations

- Whether the applicant is eligible for and enrolled in an income-based repayment plan. The Committee will look more favorably upon applicants who are eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) if they are enrolled in a payment plan for any federal student loans, as enrollment is indicative of a long-term commitment to public service
- Whether the applicant has private loans that are not eligible for PSLF or a repayment plan; the Committee has the discretion to award funds in excess of federal repayment plan payment amounts if the candidate also has private loans not eligible for PSLF or a repayment plan
- Whether the applicant is enrolled in any other LRAP Program; the Committee will not fund an applicant whose loan payments are covered by a different LRAP
- Applicant's income level
- Law school debt
- Undergraduate and other debt
- Debt/income of partner or spouse
- Any steps the applicant has taken to limit indebtedness/reduce debt; the Committee will favorably consider debt-limiting actions such as part-time work during school, living within a budget, etc.

LRAP Awards and Federal Loan Repayment Plans

The LRAP Committee prefers that applicants who are eligible enroll in a federal loan repayment plan if applicants are eligible for PSLF. The Committee will not require applicants to enroll in a repayment plan, but will usually limit LRAP awards to the amount applicants would pay if enrolled in the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan. The SAVE plan is a new plan that the Department of Education put in place in fall 2023 and provides the most economical options for federal student loan borrowers. [The U.S. Department of Education's webpage](#) regarding repayment of student loans includes information about repayment plans, as well as calculators to use to estimate payments under different plans.

Definitions

The following definitions have been created for the LRAP:

Qualified Public Interest Law Job

- Employment in an organization that qualifies for tax exempt status under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3), (4), or (5); or in a federal, state, tribal or local government unit.
- The Committee will view more favorably work that focuses on providing legal aid, legal services, or criminal justice services to or on behalf of persons or organizations that could not otherwise obtain like services.
- Judicial clerkships serve as qualifying employment, but the Committee will closely scrutinize applications from judicial clerks for long term commitment to and plans for pursuing careers in public interest work.

Partner

"Partner" is, for LRAP purposes, includes the following:

- A spouse to whom the applicant is legally married;
- An individual who is registered as the applicant's domestic partner; or
- An unmarried partner of the applicant who provides, or is eligible to provide, health benefits to, or receives, or is eligible to receive, health benefits from, the applicant.

Assets

The definition of "assets" includes the following:

- All stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or any other instruments, aside from individual retirement accounts and college investment plans;
- Any beneficial interest in a trust;
- Any interest in an annuity or life insurance policy, but being named as a beneficiary in a life insurance policy shall not be considered an asset;
- Capital assets, including any real property. The Committee will evaluate real property based on its net value (market value minus mortgage liability); and
- Net value of automobiles owned (market value minus remaining loan balance).

