

**Indian Health Service
Office of Environmental Health & Engineering
Division of Environmental Health Services
Loan Repayment Program Methodology**

Background

In 1993, in cooperation with the Indian Health Service (IHS) Loan Repayment Program (LRP), the IHS Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) developed a methodology to be used by the IHS LRP to rank Environmental Health staff who apply for loan repayment.

Because adequate funding is not available to fund all those who apply for loan reimbursement, the LRP must utilize a ranking system to prioritize applications received. The various disciplines developed ranking systems to prioritize applicants within their respective professions. Although all of the categories incorporated an isolation factor, other variables were allowed to be incorporated to meet the needs of the specific program. At the time, the DEHS determined that the primary needs of the program, as related to the intent of the LRP, were to fill management level positions in hard-to-fill locations and then to fill positions located in isolated locations. Hard-to-fill management positions are also usually at isolated locations. As an example, when more than one position (billet) was located in the same location, more weight was given to the higher billet(s).

Methodology

Up until 2011, the Environmental Health Loan Repayment Program Methodology incorporated two weighted factors: an isolation factor for each duty location (75%), and a point score for each DEHS billet (25%). In 2011, because of changes in DEHS staff in Headquarters and difficulty in calculating individual position scores, the DEHS removed the billet factor, leaving isolation as the only factor that is considered in assigning points for each position. The isolation factor is described in more detail below.

Isolation Factor: At 100 percent, the isolation factor comprises the total score and is based on the population of the location (village/town/city), the population density of the County in which the duty station resides, and the total miles to the nearest Basic Trade Center. These factors are similar to the Dental and Engineer professions criteria used for the isolation factor.

If there are multiple LRP applications from the same Environmental Health office, with the same Environmental Health LRP score, the national DEHS Director will ask the Area DEHS Director to make a recommendation for assigning priority based on Area needs.