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Postdoctoral Program Resource Guide

Photo courtesy of http://philip.greenspun.com

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Welcome

Your academic achievements and outstanding research capabilities have placed you within a select group of individuals participating in the Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL's) Postdoctoral (Postdoc) Program. It is our intention that your tenure here be as productive and rewarding as possible. Everyone associated with the Postdoc Program will work with you to ensure your success.

The spirit of the program provides the opportunity for you, as a LANL Postdoc, to perform work that broadens your education, training, and individual scientific research experience, including the freedom to publish.

The Postdoc Program and its participants are governed by specific LANL policies and guidelines, summarized below. Postdoc notices and updated information will be posted on the Postdoc Bulletin Board web page (http://www.lanl.gov/science/postdocs/bulletin.shtml) and communicated through the e-mail list-serve of postdocs@lanl.gov. You will be subscribed to this e-mail listing once you complete the hiring process and are assigned a LANL e-mail address.

For more information, please see the Postdoc Program web page at http://www.lanl.gov/science/postdocs. Please note that some of the addresses in this handbook can only be accessed internally once you are at LANL.

General Information

POSTDOCTORAL APPOINTMENT CATEGORIES:

A Laboratory committee comprised of technical staff representing a broad base of LANL scientific disciplines reviews sponsored Postdoctoral candidates. Based on the strength of the candidate's overall qualifications and funding availability, the committee recommends one of four appointment categories: Postdoctoral Research Associate, Director's Postdoctoral Fellow, or Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellow, or Agnew National Security Postdoctoral Fellow. The Intelligence Community Postdoctoral Fellow appointment is chosen in coordination with the Intelligence Community.

Postdoctoral Research Associates pursue research as part of ongoing LANL science and engineering programs. Candidates are reviewed and selected by the Postdoc Committee throughout the year.

Director's Postdoctoral Fellows collaborate with LANL scientists and engineers on staff initiated research. Director's Postdoctoral Fellow candidates are reviewed by the Postdoc Committee and selected four times annually. Candidates are selected by the strengths of their academic and research excellence, as well as their proposed research.

Agnew National Security Postdoctoral Fellows, named after the Laboratory's third director, pursue research aligned with programs in the Threat Reduction (TR), Weapons Engineering and Manufacturing (WEM), and Weapons Physics (WP) Directorates. Restricted to U.S. citizens.

Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellows are selected at the November meeting of the Postdoc Committee. Candidates must display extraordinary ability in scientific research and show clear and definite promise of becoming outstanding leaders in the research they pursue.

- ***J. Robert Oppenheimer Fellowship*** **(JRO)–** Named after the Laboratory's first Director, this fellowship provides the opportunity for recipients to collaborate with LANL scientists and engineers on staff initiated research. Open to all nationalities.
- ***Richard P. Feynman Fellowship in Theory and Computing*** **(RPF)–** Named after the famed theoretical physicist and winner of the 1965 Nobel Prize in Physics, this fellowship provides the opportunity for recipients to collaborate with LANL scientists and engineers on staff initiated research in the areas of theory and computation. Restricted to U.S. citizens.
- ***Frederick Reines Fellowship in Experimental Sciences*** **(FR)** – Named after the former LANL researcher who won the 1995 Nobel Prize in Physics, this fellowship provides the opportunity for recipients to collaborate with LANL scientists and engineers on staff initiated research in experimental sciences. This fellowship will be awarded to outstanding experimentalists, regardless of their field of study. Restricted to U.S. citizens.

DCI Postdoctoral Fellows, in coordination with the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) and the Department of Energy, collaborate with LANL scientists and engineers regarding staff initiated research in areas that have the basis for future technological developments important to the Intelligence Community. Restricted to U.S. citizens.

INFORMATION:

A great source for information before coming to Los Alamos is LANL Visitor's page. You can find maps, transportation information, and other information about the area.
http://www.lanl.gov/worklife/visitors/

DURATION OF APPOINTMENT:

Appointments are two year, limited-term, except for the distinguished Postdoctoral Fellow appointments, which are three year, limited-term.

EXTENSIONS:

Approximately 3-6 months prior to the expiration of your appointment, your sponsoring organization can request an extension for a third year. Postdoctoral Fellow appointments (other than JRO/RPF/FR Fellows) may be extended for a third year only as Postdoctoral Research Associates if programmatic funding is available.

The Postdoc Committee may grant an extension beyond the third year only in extenuating circumstances. Requests for such extensions must be submitted for review and approval at least 6 months in advance of the third year's expiration date. Refer to the Postdoc Program home page at http://www.lanl.gov/science/postdocs/length.shtml for further details regarding information required for requesting an extension of the original appointment.

FUNDING:

***Postdoctoral Research Associates*:** All financing for Postdoctoral Research Associates is provided through organizational programmatic funds.

***Director's Postdoctoral Fellows and JRO Distinguished Fellows*:** Financing, including salary, benefits, travel*, and an allocation for materials and supplies (M&S), is provided by LDRD (Laboratory Directed Research and Development) funds. Funding is only available for the initial two-year appointment (three years for JROs).

***RPF/FR Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellows*:** Financing, including salary, benefits, travel*, and an allocation for materials and supplies (M&S), is provided through funds from the Weapons Physics Directorate in coordination with the sponsoring postdoc's organization. Funding is available for the entire three-year appointment.

***Agnew National Security Postdoctoral Fellows*:** Financing, including salary, benefits, travel*, and an allocation for materials and supplies (M&S), is provided through funds from the sponsoring Associate Directorates offices in coordination with the postdoc's organization. Funding is available for the initial two-year appointment.

***DCI Postdoctoral Fellows*:** Financing, including salary, benefits, travel*, and an allocation for materials and supplies (M&S), is provided through the DCI sponsored funds. Funding is available for the initial two-year appointment with the possibility of third year funding under extenuating circumstances.

The M&S allocation provides a small level of discretionary funds, which enables the Postdoctoral Fellow to effectively perform their research. This funding may not be sufficient to cover all anticipated expenditures. It is important that a Postdoctoral Fellow discuss anticipated needs/expenditures with the sponsor prior to his/her arrival at the Laboratory. Costs associated with purchasing office computer equipment are not to be charged to their M&S allocation but to the postdoc's organization. Also, M&S funds will be prorated for employment less than a full fiscal year.

* Excluding relocation and incoming travel. Expenses associated with relocation and incoming travel will be paid by the postdoc's organization.

Director's and JRO Distiniguished Postdoctoral Fellows LDRD Reporting Requirements:

The sponsors of Director's and JRO Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellows are required to provide three documents relating to the postdoctoral research. In many instances, the postdoc will be expected to help produce the documents.

1. Datasheet – a project, abstract and statement of work completed annually to gain DOE concurrence.
2. Annual Progress Report – completed at the end of each year the research project is funded.
3. Full Final Report – completed at the end of the research project.

These reports are completed on-line at http://montecarlo.lanl.gov. Please call the LDRD office at (505) 667-1235 if you need instructions or assistance with the on-line system or content. You will need a CRYPTOcard to do this (see page 6).

Salary:

Your salary is based on the date your Ph.D. requirements were completed. Documentation of this date must be provided to the Postdoc Program Office prior to the hire date. Salary increases are automatically processed on the anniversary of this date, and again when the Postdoc Salary Guidelines are adjusted at the beginning of the fiscal year. For more information on salaries and salary negotiations, see http://www.lanl.gov/science/postdocs/salary.shtml.

Benefits:

All postdocs are eligible for a complete and comprehensive benefits plan, which includes holiday pay, sick leave, vacation, and full health benefits (health, dental, vision, legal, employee paid life, accidental death and dismemberment, and employee paid disability).

In addition to the benefits information provided with your offer letter, you will have a comprehensive benefits orientation on your hire date. At this time, you are given the option of signing up for the various benefits plans. All new employees have 31 days from date of hire to sign up for or make changes to any benefit options. http://www.lanl.gov/worklife/benefits/index.shtml.

Travel Expenses:

You will be reimbursed for incoming travel expenses and for shipment of your household goods from your current residence, or for some foreign nationals, from your port of entry. More details on this are included in your offer letter. Be sure to save all of your receipts and documentation, including boarding passes if you are flying. This makes reimbursement much easier! More information can be viewed at: http://businternal.lanl.gov/cfo1/travel/default.htm.

Fiscal Year:

The U.S. government fiscal year begins on October 1st. This means that all allocated monies for the year must be used up by September 30th. Be aware that the budget is run on the fiscal year. You might be asked for a progress report around this time of the year. There can be a purchasing freeze in October (if congress has not yet approved the budget). This might be an issue to discuss with your sponsor if you are thinking about arriving at LANL around September or October.

Z Numbers

LANL does not use Social Security Numbers for most identification purposes. You will be assigned your own Z number, which will be used for LANL purposes. You normally will receive your Z number on your first day. You might request to get it assigned early to expedite the clearance process and to help with travel arrangements. If you need your Z Number before you arrive, e-mail Debbie Brown (d_brown@lanl.gov).

SECURITY CLEARANCES:

Some postdocs who are U.S. citizens will need to get a security clearance. Ask your sponsor if you need a clearance and if you can start the process early. You can do most of the paperwork before you arrive, therefore possibly saving significant amounts of time needed for processing. You will need to get a Pinkerton background check completed, get fingerprints, complete your clearance packet, and return it to the Clearance Processing Office. If you have questions or problems completing the packet or getting anything else done for your clearance, do not hesitate to contact the Clearance Processing Office at clearances@lanl.gov.

Your Arrival in Los Alamos

HOW TO GET TO LOS ALAMOS:

If you are planning to drive to Los Alamos, you can easily get here through Española or Santa Fe.

If you are going to fly here, the closest major airport is in Albuquerque (ABQ). You will then need to determine how to get to Los Alamos (90 miles away). Talk to your sponsor about a taxi or you can rent a car at the airport and return it in Los Alamos.

Budget Car Rental has a drop off point in Los Alamos. https://rent.drivebudget.com/Home.jsp

For maps of Los Alamos and the area, see http://www.lanl.gov/worldview/tools/maps/maps.shtml

HOUSING:

Please see the Housing section in Living in Los Alamos, on page 12 of this handbook. If you do not have housing arranged, or would like to look around for a few days when you get here, LANL can arrange 30 days worth of housing for you at a local hotel. Contact your hiring group for more information.

Your First Week at LANL

TAXI SERVICE:

LANL taxi service cannot pick anyone up at a residence, but they can pick up at hotels and all LANL designated sites. If you need a ride to any of the training sites, call 667-TAXI and arrange to have them pick you up. The Bradbury Science Museum is a convenient downtown location to meet your taxi.

Day One:

Your first day (a Monday or Tuesday), you will report to the Bradbury Science Museum at 8:00 am, for new hire processing, a LANL orientation, and a computer information overview. The Bradbury Science Museum is located on the corner of 15th and Central in Los Alamos. You will be able to easily walk to a number of places for lunch. In the afternoon you will report to the Canyon Complex for your benefits processing. The Canyon Complex is about 10 blocks east from the museum on the corner of 4th and Central.

U.S. citizens will be required to sign an oath to the State of California as LANL is run by the University of California. More information about this can be found in your hiring packet. Foreign Nationals are not required to sign this oath.

On this day, you will need to bring your original documents for verification of eligibility (please see the list of documents that came with your hire packet), a voided check from your new bank account in New Mexico if you choose to sign up for your paycheck to be direct deposited, your social security number (and those of dependent family members). You can also bring any receipts for your travel expenses that have been pre-approved.

Day Two:

You will need to get to White Rock, a small town 10 miles from Los Alamos (call for a taxi), to attend General Employee Training (GET). You will learn about general LANL rules and regulations and be required to pass a multiple choice test about the information you have learned. Employees who have taken LANL GET within the last 5 years are exempt from taking it again.

Days Three – Five:

Most of you can go directly to the Badge Office (take a taxi, as there is limited parking). Bring a photo ID to get your badge. If you have an active "L" or "Q" clearance that is being transfered from another company, you will need to see Melissa Abeyta (abeytam@lanl.gov, 505-667-0588) in the S-6 Clearance Processing Office (Otowi Building, south side) before receiving a badge. Once you have your badge, you can contact your sponsor or group office to see your new work place.

Chances are you will have other training courses to attend. If you do not have training classes, you will probably need to do some on-line training activities. Your down time during the first week or so is a great time to complete these courses. The courses you need will be listed on your personal training schedule that you will receive from your sponsor or group training coordinator.

TRAINING:

For the first week or two, all employees to LANL have to attend General Employee Training (GET) and other training or safety courses that are applicable to the work to be performed. Talk to your mentor to get a copy of your individual training plan. Some of the training is on-line, ask your group office or mentor what you need to complete. It is encouraged to take as much training as possible.

LANL also offers regular training courses. Employees are encouraged to sign up for these classes as they enhance the employee's knowledge and work performance.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION:

During your first few weeks here, you will have a complete physical examination at the Occupational Medicine Office. Beyond that you can use the Occupational Medicine Office for any work-related medical concerns you have. Bring your vaccination record with you to this appointment. You will also be asked about your medical history, so it might be advantageous to bring a copy of your medical file. http://int.lanl.gov/worklife/health/occmed/

Appointments – 667-7848 Nurses' Station – 667-7839

Life at LANL

WORKING HOURS:

LANL currently uses the traditional 40 hour per week schedule. This typically means that you will start work at 8am, have one hour for lunch, and leave work at 5pm, Monday through Friday. Some groups allow for flexible hours, with approval from group management. For more information contact your sponsor or group administrator.

On days when there is new snow on the roads, there might be a snow delay. Please watch the local television stations (channels 4, 7, and 13 are best) or call the LANL information line at 667-6622. They will announce when the Lab will open, please DO NOT show up at work before that time for safety and security reasons.

PERSONAL PROPERTY:

Non-LANL property is any property other than that supplied to or bought by the University of California (UC) under its contract with DOE. Be sure to check the Prohibited and Controlled Articles List on the next page. Property owned by employees or affiliates and used at LANL is considered on-site use of non-LANL property. There are strict requirements regarding personal property use on LANL grounds, this includes cell phones, pagers, cameras, PDAs, and laptops.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY:

You are expected to adhere to the Laboratory's official use only policies regarding appropriate use of computers, LANL telephones, government vehicles, offices and LANL space. For additional information, please see the Policy Manual http://int.lanl.gov/source/policies/manual/ under Business Asset Management, Property, Government Resources and Property Accountability Discipline. If you need to take government property off site, talk to your assigned Property Representative, as you will need a Property Removal Pass.

PROHIBITED AND CONTROLLED ARTICLES:

Prohibited articles are those not permitted at LANL unless you have prior approval from the Security Inquiries Office, 665-3505. The following articles are prohibited: any dangerous weapons, explosives or other dangerous instrument or material likely to cause substantial injury to persons or property; alcoholic beverages; controlled substances (e.g., illegal drugs and associated paraphernalia, but not prescription medicine); other items prohibited by law.

Controlled articles are those not permitted in a LANL security area. Controlled articles include personal electronic devices capable of transmitting information and/or data. Examples of controlled articles are: Recording equipment (audio, video, optical, or data); cameras (video or still); electronic equipment with a data exchange port cable being connected to automatic information system equipment; radio frequency transmitting equipment; computers and associated media (including laptops and PDAs); cellular telephones.

PARKING:

Parking at LANL is an adventure! Parking tickets are given for exceeding time limit postings, parking in "government vehicle only" or handicapped parking spaces, etc. Parking fines are assessed at $20 per ticket. If a ticket is not paid, your division management will receive written notifications from Security. While at work, it is best to use the taxi, 667-TAXI, to get to the various official LANL sites and avoid parking issues.

E-MAIL:

Once you have been assigned a Z Number (your identification number at LANL), your group administrator can arrange to have your e-mail set up. This can happen before you arrive, if you request it. LANL will automatically give you an e-mail address. If you have a preference for your e-mail address, please inform your group administrator or computer support personnel when you request to have the account set up.

CRYPTOCARD:

CRYPTOcards, also called smart cards or token cards, can be very helpful for routine tasks around LANL. They are necessary to access LANL network when away from LANL in the USA. CRYPTOcards are also necessary to access many of the computer services such as Just-In-Time (JIT) purchasing, the Electronic Software Delivery (ESD) web pages, and the Enterprise Information Applications (EIA). The EIA page is routinely used to update your Employee Information System (EIS) data (such as office location and phone number, e-mail address, pager number, etc. EIA is also used to enter changes to personnel databases (addresses), track purchases, enter your weekly Time and Effort (T&E) and other tasks.

There are two CRYPTOcard classifications, one for Unclassified computing, and one for classified computing. To utilize most of the above functions, an unclassified card with Administrative Access is required. Generally, you have to request the CRYPTOcard, and then a brief background check is performed. Once the background check is completed, you attend a short course at the LA Research Building (Motorola building), which is offered Monday mornings. You must complete and submit Form 1834 (http://int.lanl.gov/source/policies/manual/) or call the ICN Accounts office (665-4444 extension 854). If you have questions, see http://int.lanl.gov/orgs/ccn/computingatlanl/.

How to Purchase Items:

This process varies widely from group to group. In some groups the group administrator will place the orders for all purchases and in others, the group members purchase their own supplies. In either case, you should be aware that LANL has negotiated contracts with certain vendors and the procurement process is much simpler and faster if one of these vendors is selected. The current list of Just-in-time (JIT) vendors can be found at: http://jit.lanl.gov/. If you purchase items for yourself you will first of all need to be assigned purchasing authority by your group office administrator and the JIT link under services on the left side of the Lab's internal Home Page will be useful for purchasing routine items. For additional links on purchasing, see http://int.lanl.gov/admins/.

Publications and Presentations:

Prior to anything being published or presented outside of LANL, it must be cleared by security. Please allow at least a week for this process. For more details and links to all the paperwork needed, please check http://int.lanl.gov/security/classification/publicationrelease.shtml – you can only access this web page if you are already at LANL and are working on a LANL computer.

How to Change Your Address:

When you arrive at LANL, you will be entered into the on-line LANL phone directory. This is only your work information (telephone, fax, e-mail, building, mailstop…). If you need to change any of this information, you can do it yourself in the EIS system under Personnel Directory. Use your CRYPTOcard. http://eiprod.lanl.gov/

If your personal mailing address changes, you will need to change it in the EIS system by going into Personal Information, use your CRYPTOcard, and change your home address and other personal information. If you have trouble with any of this, your group administrator can help.

Performance Appraisals:

Your sponsor should complete a performance appraisal annually per LANL policy. This occurs in the early to mid-summer time frame. There is a wide variability of group participation in this process.

Research Proposals:

LANL does not allow postdocs to be the identified principal investigators for writing funding proposals, both internal and external to the Laboratory. An exception to this is the Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellows who can be the identified principal investigators only on LDRD funded proposals. Work with your management to determine what your role can be in writing funding proposals as long as you are not the identified principal investigator.

Work and Research Experience:

The quality of your research experience, as well as the effect of this research on future career prospects, is the main focus of the Laboratory's Postdoc Program. We are strongly committed to maintaining the high standards of the program! You are encouraged to contact the STB-Postdoc Program Office (665-5306) or assigned Postdoc Committee Representative (http://www.lanl.gov/science/postdocs/committee.shtml) to provide suggestions or express concerns to help LANL further the goals of the program.

SAFETY:

The following web site offers phone numbers to contact if you have questions about any safety issue, chemicals, dosimetry, environmental, training, hazards, spills and more: http://www.hsr.lanl.gov/services.shtml.

VISITORS:

LANL visitors are required to have identification from the Badge Office before entering LANL property. All foreign nationals are required to have prior DOE (Department of Energy) approval and appropriate visitor badges while on LANL property. To obtain approval for visitors, please contact your group office to obtain the required approvals and complete the appropriate paperwork. Individuals without approval may drive around in open areas, but they may not enter any buildings. If you do not follow these rules, you may commit a serious security infraction. If this occurs, your badge may be confiscated by Security, and depending upon the nature of the infraction, your appointment with LANL may be terminated. For a list of those who do not need a badge, see http://int.lanl.gov/security/badge//require.shtml - this page is only accessible to those already at LANL.

Visitors and members of the public are allowed at the Otowi Cafeteria, and at LANL Study Center during designated hours.

TRANSPORTATION:

If you do not have a vehicle, you can get around town and to LANL via the Los Alamos Bus Service. Schedules can be obtained at the New Hire Office in the Otowi Building. Many people walk or ride bicycles to work and around town. However, most people have a car and to get out of Los Alamos it is a must.

LANL also provides a free taxi service between all LANL sites. This service is available to Lab employees during work hours, 667-TAXI. Carpool information can be found on LANL Newsbulletin: http://www.lanl.gov/newsbulletin.

POSTDOC BROWN BAG/SEMINAR SERIES:

These gatherings provide the venue for postdocs to:

- Socialize
- Network
- Give presentations on their work
- Have career development presentations,
- Have management give organizational overviews of their organizations

Announcements on the topics to be covered and location of the gatherings are sent via the postdoc list serve, postdocs@lanl.gov.

POSTDOCTORAL PUBLICATION PRIZES:

The Postdoctoral Publication Prize is awarded every year to a postdoc who has published an exceptional journal article about his/her research. On even numbered years, the Postdoc Publication Prize is awarded for an article in theoretical physics (broadly defined to include most theoretical disciplines), and on odd numbered years, it is given for an article in experimental science. Postdocs need to have their publication nominated to be eligible for this award. Award recipients are given a monetary award and the opportunity to present his/her work at a LANL colloquium. These prizes are privately funded.

DISTINGUISHED PERFORMANCE AWARDS:

Each year, sponsors have the opportunity to nominate postdocs for the Distinguished Performance Award. It is used to recognize outstanding talent in the postdocs at the Laboratory. Award recipients are given a monetary award and are given the opportunity to present their work at a LANL colloquium.

POSTDOC SOCIALS:

Three or four times a year, the Postdoc Program Office hosts a social event, allowing you and your family to meet and interact with other postdocs, their families, the Postdoc Committee, the Postdoc Program Office staff, and some staff members.

TRAVEL POLICY:

It is important that you be provided the opportunity to showcase your research. One venue is to travel to conferences or other organizations to present your work. Communicate with your mentor to discuss the various opportunities available. All travel, both domestic and foreign, requires that the appropriate documentation be completed prior to the trip and upon return. For more information regarding the procedures, see http://cfo.lanl.gov/Accounting/travel/default.shtml.

PAYROLL:

The CFO division can provide assistance with questions about payroll http://cfo.lanl.gov/accounting/payroll/default.shtml.

DIVERSITY:

LANL has diversity working groups for those who are interested in getting involved. For more information, access http://www.lanl.gov/orgs/dvo/Teams/Index.html.

Discrimination is not tolerated at the Laboratory. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Ombuds Office at 665-2837.

WELLNESS CENTER:

LANL promotes healthy lifestyles in its employees. There are small exercise facilities scattered throughout LANL, and there is a complete wellness center that offers various classes and activities to all UC employees. You will need to watch a video before starting any exercise. Before joining an upper level class, you will need to take a physical test. The Wellness Center is located at TA-3, just off of West Jemez Road. http://www.wellness.lanl.gov/.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT LANL:

Well in advance of the end of the postdoctoral appointment, you and your sponsor should discuss career opportunities available to you at the completion of your appointment. Specifically, it is the sponsor's responsibility to make you aware of opportunities for continued employment at LANL beyond the postdoctoral appointment. However, it is often beneficial for you to express your interest and actively inquire about possible opportunities within the group and throughout LANL. You are also encouraged to visit the LANL job openings website at http://www.hr.lanl.gov/FindJob/Index.stm to make yourself aware of advertised job opportunities available at the Laboratory.

If you have been a LANL postdoc for less than one year of LANL service, you are considered an external applicant for advertised (Open to All) staff positions. If you are planning to apply for a position at LANL, you may find some of the career planning classes helpful such as the Winning Resume (including cover letter) Workshop (course #18499) or Behavioral Interviewing (course # 24058) as they cover the formats preferred by LANL hiring organizations. For more information regarding career development courses/workshops offered, access the web at http://www.hr.lanl.gov/TD/Learning/llcareerbuild.stm.

The following options in seeking employment at LANL are available:

- Postdocs may apply for specific advertised staff positions. Available positions may be accessed at http://www.hr.lanl.gov/FindJob/Index.stm.
- Postdocs may be converted to any regular or limited-term employment in your own division after the first year of their appointment without the position being advertised, if an opening exists. **Note:** some divisions require that all positions be advertised.

Typically, the following documentation is required for converting to LANL technical staff:

- A one-page memo justifying the conversion
- A personnel action reflecting management's approval of the conversion

The division into which you are converting may require additional documentation. Early in the conversion process, it is important for you to discuss if there is any additional required documentation.

You should also be made aware of the probationary period requirements per LANL policy. There is a two-year probationary period for new staff members. If you convert to staff within the same group that you were a postdoc in, the probationary period is waived. If you have been a postdoc less than two years or are converting to staff in another group, the probationary period still applies. For more information, see the Administrative Manual – New Employee Evaluation Period (**AM103.03**) at int.lanl.gov/source/policies/manual/admin/am103.pdf.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT:

If you are going to terminate, you must contact the New Hires and Termination Office, 7-8622, to initiate the termination process. You are required to notify the Postdoc Office of this action to provide information regarding future employment plans, and to schedule an exit interview with the Postdoc Program Administrator. A Postdoc Exit Interview Questionnaire must be completed prior to the exit interview and departure from the Laboratory. This form is available at the New Hires and Termination Office or the Postdoc Office.

People at LANL to Help You

POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM OFFICE:

The Postdoc Program Office is part of STB (Science and Technology Based Programs) at the Canyon Complex on Central Avenue and 4th Street. They are available to respond to questions about or concerns with your general assignment. They also provide assistance with any problems that you or your sponsor may encounter during your appointment. The office staff includes Mary Anne With, the Postdoc Program Coordinator; Barbara Roybal, the Postdoc Program Administrator; and Rita Shawn, the Postdoc Program Computer Information Specialist. They can all be reached at (505) 665-5306 or by email at PostdocProgram@lanl.gov.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

The HR Staffing role is to respond to questions about or concerns regarding the application, selection, hiring, and relocation processes. This role also includes providing assistance with salary issues and personnel actions reflecting leaves of absence, extensions, transfers, and terminations. The HR Staffing Office can be reached at (505) 667-0872, or e-mail Debbie Brown at d_brown@lanl.gov.

POSTDOC COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE:

A Postdoc Committee Representative is assigned to each division to provide guidance and assistance to you that may not be available from your sponsor. The representative may be someone with whom you wish to discuss technical issues. Conversations are held in confidence. A list of the Postdoc Committee members and the organizations they represent is available at the Postdoc Program home page http://www.lanl.gov/science/postdocs/committee.shtml

HR GENERALISTS FOR EACH DIVISION:

If you have personnel issues such as questions about Personnel Actions (PAs), termination, or hiring, each division has an HR representative (HR generalist). You can contact the HR generalist, the Postdoc Program office, or the HR Staffing group for questions relating to PAs. For more information about the generalists, see http://int.lanl.gov/orgs/hr/contacts/hr-generalists.shtml.

OMBUDS OFFICE:

The Ombuds Office is a neutral place that can assist you in resolving work-related concerns in an informal, confidential, and impartial manner. If you are not sure about where to go for help at LANL, the Ombuds Program is the first choice for assistance or for information about other resources. http://www.lanl.gov/orgs/ombuds/ or 665-2837

STAFF RELATIONS:

Staff Relations (HR-SR) has the overall goal of helping employees and supervisors resolve work-related concerns in an equitable, positive, and expeditious manner. Staff Relations investigates employee complaints of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, and works with employees and supervisors to resolve a wide variety of work-related issues that may detract from LANL's mission. Postdocs with concerns in any of these areas should call 667-8730 or see http://int.lanl.gov/source/orgs/hr/contacts/hr-sr.shtml

Living in Los Alamos

HISTORY

Created by a volcano that erupted 1.2 million years ago, the Jemez Mountains stand as a beautiful backdrop for Los Alamos. Remains from this volcano include not only the mountains, but the 95,000 acre Valles Caldera National Preserve, a variety of hot springs, and a layer of tuff ash where the Prehistoric Tewa and Keresan peoples lived from the 1100s to the 1500s.

In 1917, the Los Alamos Ranch School was founded by Ashely Pond to establish an environment in which "privileged eastern boys might become robust, learned men." University of California Physicist and Manhattan Project leader J. Robert Oppenheimer knew the remote location and existing infrastructure. In 1943, the Ranch School closed when the Army acquired Los Alamos as a place to gather some of the world's greatest scientific minds to work intensively on the top-secret project to develop the first atomic weapons.

During the Manhattan Project, Los Alamos was a secret town given the nickname "the Hill". There were guard gates on the roads coming into town that checked all who entered, and all mail was inconspicuously sent to PO Box 1663, Santa Fe. With the end WWII, Los Alamos was forced into recognition by the media and was no longer cloaked in secrecy. In 1945, Los Alamos began the transition of becoming a town. The military left in 1947, when the Atomic Energy Commission took over to build the town and support the Laboratory.

The modern culture of Los Alamos cannot be separated from the science and technology introduced with the early 1940's wartime mission. The collegiate, yet military atmosphere, driven by a national mission to protect the free world, contributed to the competitive spirit among the scientists to be the best in their field. After the war, federally funded scientific research continued and LANL was established. Operated by the University of California for the U.S. Department of Energy, LANL now covers 43 square miles and employs over 10,000 people.

In May 2000, the Cerro Grande Fire devastated the Los Alamos area. 48,000 acres burned along with the homes of over 400 families. The scarred landscape will take years to recover, although the conifer and aspen-covered mountains are showing signs of new growth.

For more information on the history of Los Alamos, please go to www.lanl.gov/worldview/welcome/history.html or www.losalamos.com/Historicalsociety/.

FACTS AND FIGURES:

Population: 18,400

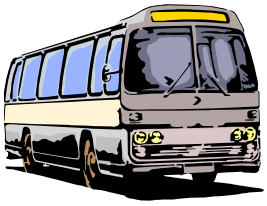
Elevation: 7, 335feet

Location: 93 miles north of Albuquerque
35 miles northwest of Santa Fe
63 miles southwest of Taos

Climate and Temperature: Dry and mild climate with an average low of 17° F in January, to an average high of 81°F in July is the norm. There are four distinct seasons in Los Alamos. Spring is cool and windy, with occasional light snow. Summer is hot and dry in June, though in July there are frequent afternoon thundershowers. Fall is beautiful with warm days and cold nights. And in winter there is typically a layer of snow in the mountains and often in town as well.

Precipitation: Average annual precipitation is 19 inches. From December through March, snowfall averages 10–12 inches per month. From July through September, rainfall averages 2–3 inches per month.

TRANSPORTATION:



There is no public transportation in Los Alamos. In order to get around town, it is most convenient to have a car. Although you may get by temporarily without one, most postdocs eventually get a car. The town and LANL are spread out over a number of miles, which makes walking and biking challenging. There is no public transportation between Los Alamos and the surrounding communities. If you intend to walk or bicycle around town, please see the bicycle-pedestrian safety information on page 17.

If you decide to live off of 'the Hill' and would like to carpool or use the Park & Ride bus system to commute to work, check out http://www.allaboardamerica.com/santafe/parkandride/index.html

Two bus systems are available in Los Alamos:

- The LA Bus takes people to work or school and home within normal working hours. For more information, please see http://www.labus.org/.
- Also, the free JCI Taxi is available for all LANL employees between Lab sites during work hours. To request a pick up, please call 667-TAXI (8294).

How to Buy a Car

In the process of buying a car, you will need a valid driver's license. Buying a new car from a dealer is relatively simple, but there are no dealers in Los Alamos. In Los Alamos, a good place to look for a used car is the Lemon Lot, a parking lot on the west side of Diamond Drive between Trinity Drive and Canyon Road.

In New Mexico, used cars are sold by giving the car's title (a paper) to the buyer and the car's current license plate to the seller. You and the seller must each fill in and sign a form printed on the back of the title. The seller is everyone named on the title; if the title names two persons, both must sign. If the seller or you make a mistake on the title, then you both must fill out another form, a Bill of Sale, available from the New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division (MVD). The seller then takes the license plate off the car. You may not drive a car without a plate on a public road, so you should ask the seller to (1) leave the plate on the car for a few hours or (2) sell you the car in the parking lot of the insurance agent that you have chosen. This is because, before you can register the car and get its new plate, you must buy insurance on the car; to sell you insurance, the agent must see the car.

Useful websites: http://www.lanl.gov/worklife/international/living.shtml, http://www.state.nm.us/tax/mvd/mvd_home.htm, and http://www.consumer.gov/transportation.htm

HOUSING:

Los Alamos lies on five mesa tops, which means that land is limited and housing is expensive. For temporary housing, there are a number of apartment complexes around town. They range from studios to one, two, and three bedroom apartments. Housing can be difficult to find and can be expensive. Due to an influx of students in the summer months, it is even more difficult to find housing in late spring and early summer. If you will be arriving in Los Alamos still needing to look for housing, you may need short-term accommodations. Your mentor or group office should be able to assist you with short-term accommodation. For more permanent housing, please contact the real estate agents in Los Alamos. Many people also rent rooms, which is typically less expensive than renting your own apartment. Average cost of all homes sold in 2000: $200,000.

A list of what is currently available and who to call for just about any housing needs is available at the website below. Be sure to look through all the links to view the options, http://www.losalamos.com/housing/. For more housing information in or out of Los Alamos, you can check the regional newspapers for housing listings.

Albuquerque Journal - http://www.abqjournal.com/

Albuquerque Journal North - http://www.abqjournal.com/north/

Los Alamos Monitor - http://www.lamonitor.com/

Rio Grande Sun - http://www.riograndesun.com/

Santa Fe New Mexican - http://www.sfnewmexican.com/

Rental agreements – rent, security deposit

When you sign a rental agreement or a lease, you will have to pay some money immediately. This usually includes one or two months' rent, and a security deposit. Be prepared to put down what seems like a large amount of money when you move in. Before signing a lease, read it carefully and understand all of its obligations. If you have questions about the lease, check with LANL Housing Office before you sign it - http://financial.lanl.gov/housing/default.shtml or call 661-2626. Obtain a signed copy for your own records. Do not rely on verbal agreement. Make sure you have everything in writing. Contracts may be required for some types of purchases-automobiles, large appliances, etc. Always be sure you understand fully what the contract says before you sign it. Once you have signed it, you are responsible for all its terms.

Utilities

When you first arrive at your apartment or house, there may not be any electricity or gas. Talk to your landlord to see if they can turn on the utilities the day you arrive. If your landlord cannot help with utilities, you will need to call the Los Alamos Utilities Department at 663-8333. If you would like more than the local 6 channels on television, you can get cable or satellite services. Some apartment complexes provide basic cable with the apartments. You can also get DSL and cable modem services in some areas of Los Alamos and surrounding areas. For more information, see the local phone book.

Telephone Services:

Your telephone line might not be connected either. You will need to call 1-800-244-1111 to get a line set up. All local calls are charged on a flat monthly fee. You will need to sign up for a long-distance carrier, or you can use the pre-paid phone cards that you can buy at many of the gas stations, grocery stores, Wal-mart, Sam's Club (in Santa Fe), or other stores.

SHOPPING:

Although Los Alamos is a small town, there are a number of places to shop. You can get just about everything you are looking for without going 'off of the hill'. For a complete list of shops in Los Alamos and their specialties, check http://shop.losalamos.com/. Many people also go to Española or Santa Fe for a larger selection. Go to http://www.visitsantafe.com/ and scroll down until you see the shopping icon.

DINING:

There are a number of restaurants in town, but for more selection and variety locals often go to Santa Fe, Española, or other towns in the area.

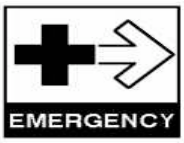
- Los Alamos dining http://visit.losalamos.com/dining/
- Santa Fe dining http://www.collectorsguide.com/sf/sfdid.html, http://www.santaferestaurants.net/, http://www.sfreporter.com/
- Española dining http://chefmoz.org/United_States/NM/Espanola/

Side note: When asked the question "red or green?" people are referring to the kind of chili you would like on your meal. You may want to ask which is hotter that day, or you could have both and ask for "Christmas." You can also ask for the chili on the side if you are not sure you want your meal smothered in chili sauce. Specify if you are vegetarian, and ask if the chili is vegetarian or not. It is often made with beef or chicken stock, though most restaurants now also make chili with a vegetable stock.

CRIME:

There is very little crime in Los Alamos. People often leave cars and houses unlocked. There is little to worry about (except for wild animals) walking around town during the day or at night. While this is a wonderful thing, it also implies that the police don't have much to do and are always on the lookout for any violation. It is recommended that you do not speed in Los Alamos, that you come to a full stop at all stop signs, that you do not jaywalk, etc. The local police are also on the lookout for drivers and passengers of vehicles who are not using seat belts. Save your $50 and perhaps your life by wearing your seat belt.

HEALTH SERVICES:



All postdocs will receive a full and complete benefits package. It allows you to insure yourself and your family members. Upon arrival, you will be briefed on your benefits and how to get medical services. If you have questions while you are here, please see http://int.lanl.gov/worklife/benefits/, or http://www.ucop.edu/bencom/.

Los Alamos has a full service hospital. For more complex illnesses/injuries, people are often transported to larger hospitals in Santa Fe or Albuquerque.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS:

With the diversity of people who come to Los Alamos, there are a wide variety of religious organizations in town. For a list please see http://www.losalamos.com/religion/. The local newspaper, the Los Alamos Monitor, also has a weekly listing of religious services and activities. Most religious organizations in Los Alamos are very active and offer a wonderful opportunity to meet people in the community.

SCHOOLING:

Los Alamos schools are known for being some of the best in the region. Within the public school system, there are five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. To view an article about the school system, please see http://www.lanl.gov/worklife/visitors/schools.shtml. All of the public and some private schools have websites. To view the curriculum and activities of each school, please check http://www.losalamos.com/education/.

If you do have school aged children (6 to 16 years old), New Mexico state law requires that they attend school. Please contact the Los Alamos Public Schools for more information about how to register your children, http://laps.losalamos.k12.nm.us/. If you plan to live in Santa Fe, the web address of their public schools is http://www.sfps.k12.nm.us/.

The public school year here is from mid-August to late-May. The schools have off all LANL holidays as well as 2 weeks at the end of December to the beginning of January, and one week at the end of March. The school day is between approximately 8:00am and 3:15pm, depending on the school. All the elementary schools get out of class at 12:10pm on Wednesdays.

For a list of all private schools in New Mexico, see http://www.sde.state.nm.us/districts/alphanonpublic.html

If you would like to apply to home school your children, please see the website below for requirements and procedures. http://members.tripod.com/~HomeschoolingPACT/index-3.html

The University of New Mexico also has a branch located in Los Alamos, where people can take classes to pursue a degree or just for enjoyment. For more information, see http://www.la.unm.edu/.

Banking:

There are a number of banks and credit unions in Los Alamos. You can either bring your money with you, or have it transferred to the bank. You do have to have an account to transfer the money into here before you do the transfer. To learn the difference between a bank and a credit union, check http://www.icul.org/cu_vs_bank.asp.

Community Bank – http://www.communitybank.bz/ Del Norte Credit Union – phone (505) 455-5228

First National Bank of Santa Fe – http://www.fnb-sf.com/Los Alamos National Bank – http://www.lanb.com/

Wells Fargo Bank New Mexico – phone (505) 662-1655 Zia Credit Union – phone (505) 662-4671

Local Services:

The Post Office is located on Central Avenue, across from Starbucks. Its hours are weekdays 7:30am-5:00pm, and Saturday 8:00am-12:30pm. Phone: 505-662-2153

The Mesa Public Library is at 2400 Central Avenue, across from Ashley Pond. Hours are Monday-Thursday: 10:00 am to 9:00 pm, Friday: 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, Saturday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sunday: 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Phone: 662-8240

Laundry – there is no laundry service, but there is a Laundromat located at 157 Central Park Square, across the parking lot from Pizza Hut.

Enjoying Los Alamos

There are many things to do around Los Alamos, especially if you are into outdoor activities or want to get involved in a club or organization.

Popular outdoor activities include hiking, mountaineering, camping, mountain biking, road biking, downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing, ice skating, rock climbing, swimming, running, horseback riding, golf, ultimate frisbee, volleyball, baseball, softball, walking…

http://www.losalamos.com/recreation/

http://visit.losalamos.com/recreation/

Please note that although you may exercise regularly, you probably will not be performing at your usual level if you are not acclimated to the 7,000+ feet. Drinking abundant amounts of water while exercising is extremely important, as the dry desert air can quickly lead to dehydration.

Bandelier National Monument is within 10 miles of Los Alamos or White Rock and provides exceptional opportunities to camp, hike, and explore ancient cave dwellings. http://www.nps.gov/band/

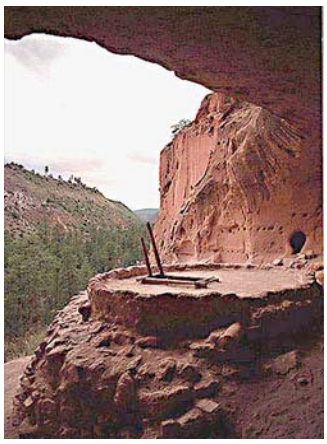


Photo Courtesy of the National Park Service

Clubs and Organizations:

Many groups, clubs, and organizations offer a variety of activities to get involved with in Los Alamos.

http://www.losalamos.com/Organizations/

Libraries and Museums:

Los Alamos has three libraries: one at LANL, the Mesa Public Library, and a branch of the Mesa Public Library in White Rock. There are also some museums and galleries in Los Alamos worth visiting.

LANL Library	http://lib-www.lanl.gov/
Community Culture	http://visit.losalamos.com/culture/
Bradbury Science Museum	http://www.lanl.gov/museum/

Night Life?

Los Alamos is a small town; there is not much nightlife. However, there are concerts, theater performances, and other special events that occur on a regular basis.
http://visit.losalamos.com/events/, or http://shop.losalamos.com/entertainment/

There is an event calendar posted on http://www.pmkelly.com/cgi-bin/events.cgi where users can sign up to receive e-mail messages about upcoming events.

For more information about Los Alamos and the surrounding area, please check these links.

http://www.lanl.gov	LANL home page
http://www.lac-nm.us/	Los Alamos County
http://www.losalamos.com/	Virtual Los Alamos
http://www.lamonitor.com/	The Los Alamos Monitor (local newspaper)
http://www.losalamos.org/	Los Alamos Community pages

Los Alamos Safety Tips:

Drivers

- Joggers and bicyclists frequent the local roads. Watch for them, especially at night.
- Deer and elk are common, especially on lower Pajarito Road. Drive cautiously, and if one is in sight, use low beams.
- Cattle occasionally cross highways on open rangeland. Again, use caution and lower your beams.
- Seatbelts are mandatory under state law. The driver is responsible for ensuring that children wear seatbelts or are in proper child safety seats. Fines for violations are high.
- Snow, ice and sleet are common weather during winter months. Plan to take extra time to get to your destination. Use caution and extra care.
- A New Mexico driver's license is necessary if you plan to reside in the state.

Weather

- Los Alamos weather can be unpredictable and deceptive. Wear layered clothing and watch for changing conditions.
- Lightning is a common occurrence. Afternoon thunderstorms are frequent in the summer. Stay inside during a lightning storm. If you are in a car, keep the windows closed.
- Rain can come suddenly. Bring appropriate gear for rain or snow. Watch for flooding in gullies, washes, and canyons.

- The air here is very dry. Drink plenty of fluids. Use skin lotions and lip balms to combat dryness or chapping. Be prepared for nosebleeds as you are acclimating.
- The sun is intense in this area. Wear sunscreen in all seasons.

Environment

- Los Alamos is at an altitude of approximately 7,400 feet. Your body may need time and extra rest to adjust. Use caution when exercising. Also, higher altitudes magnify the effects of alcohol. If you plan to drink, make sure you have a designated driver.
- Do not approach sick or dead animals. This area is filled with wildlife that may carry contagious diseases. Fleas and ticks are common in this area. Be sure to dust your pets with flea and tick powder. In the event of a snake bite, seek medical attention immediately. Do not extract the poison yourself!
- Don't touch articles you might find in the area. Some might be explosive test artifacts. Contact the police if you find any suspicious items. Also, do not disturb historical or archeological artifacts. Take memories and photographs, leave only footprints.
- Before going out in the wilderness, please check http://drambuie.lanl.gov/esh/WildLifeSafetyTips.pdf
- RRES-ECO has contact information for people who need to report wildlife problems (if they are injured or in town, etc.) http://int.lanl.gov/memos/MasterManagement/MM1296_ADS1432.PDF

Hiking

- Topographic maps of the area are available at local stores. Buying a map or heading out with someone who knows the area is highly recommended.
- Never hike alone, and always tell someone else about the planned destination and return time.
- Always take water and snacks, even on short hikes.
- Take rain gear and layered clothing, including hats and gloves. The temperature drops quickly after sundown.
- Respect private property and federal property. Obey "No Trespassing" signs.
- Respect fire and smoking restrictions.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety in Los Alamos County

(Written by Wayne Slattery for LANL Bicycle-Pedestrian Safety Committee, John Bradley, Chair)

Most of the bicycle-pedestrian safety concerns in Los Alamos aren't very different from those in the rest of the U.S. There are, however, a number of areas where extreme caution is warranted.

Crosswalks

In Los Alamos, cars ARE REQUIRED to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. The police do watch this and some of us have been stopped because we ignored a pedestrian who was merely looking at a crosswalk. From a pedestrian viewpoint this means that while walking across a crosswalk, you can expect cars to stop for you. BUT DO NOT take this for granted. Watch the cars and make sure that they stop; they may not see you.

The Los Alamos Canyon Bridge (Diamond Drive)

The Los Alamos Canyon Bridge walkway is often very congested. Both pedestrians and bicyclists use this walkway. For walkers, it is a good idea to walk on either one side or the other of the walkway. When a bicycle passes a person walking, the courteous thing to do is to slow down (there are signs at either end of the bridge stating a county ordinance that bicyclists must not be going faster than 5mph near pedestrians) and SAY SOMETHING LIKE "Passing on your left (or right)" and then pass slowly. Remember that is a request, not a demand.

Why do all of this? Bicycles are extremely quiet and most pedestrians have no idea that they are coming. This just lets them know that you will be passing without scaring them. Is this enforced? Not really, but the walker that you scare may be interested in scaring you the next time they pass you in a car. The pedestrians on this walkway are REALLY sensitive about being scared or possibly injured. In the past, because of a few inconsiderate bicyclists who didn't bother to slow down around pedestrians, ALL bicyclists were required to WALK across the bridge for a time.

Or course, bicycles are allowed to be on the roadway on the bridge, and if you feel comfortable with this, we only recommend going downhill i.e., northbound, where you can more or less keep up with traffic. Going uphill is not at all recommended because car drivers frequently become irritated and pass by driving fully in the same lane as the bicyclists.

The 5-Foot Rule

In Los Alamos cars are required to stay at least 5 feet from bicyclists. This law also works the other way: bicyclists must stay at least 5 feet from cars. This usually precludes passing a bunch of cars by sneaking along on the right of stopped cars waiting for a light to change. In this situation the best thing to do is to wait your turn in the MIDDLE of the lane. Drivers who are unaware of the 5-foot rule will invariably crowd you over to the right at a stop light if you are only just a LITTLE bit in the lane.

Night-time Safety Laws

Every bicycle when in use at nighttime has to be equipped with a lamp on the front which emits a frontal white light visible from a distance of at least five hundred feet and with a red reflector on the rear which has to be visible from all distances from fifty feet to three hundred feet to the rear when directly in front of lawful upper beams of head lights on a motor vehicle. A lamp emitting a red light visible from a distance of five hundred feet to the rear may be used in addition to the red reflector. This is a law in New Mexico, and the police can give you a ticket for not obeying this law.

Special thanks goes to the Postdoc Review Committee and all the invaluable input from LANL resource experts who verified data for this resource guide.

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