



**Request for Proposals (RFP) – Due 9:00 am, May 26, 2026:
Plutonium Workforce Development Institutional (PWDI)
Partnership Program:
Phase IIIB Call**

1. Background and Statement of Need

Los Alamos National Laboratory is a multidisciplinary research institution engaged in strategic science on behalf of national security. The Laboratory strives to enhance national security and make the world safer through research and advances in innovative science and technology. The Lab leverages the talent of its workforce and the region to solve problems related to defense, energy, environment, infrastructure, health, and global security concerns.

The LANL mission is critical to meeting military requirements to ensure the U.S. nuclear deterrent is modern, responsive, and resilient. LANL is designated by NNSA as the nation's Plutonium Center of Excellence. LANL has an experienced and skilled workforce, high-hazard nuclear facilities and associated infrastructure, and unique plutonium processing, fabrication, and experimental capabilities. To achieve national goals, LANL will recruit, hire, train, and retain a workforce to perform and support the following:

- Produce plutonium pits for the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile
- Evaluate pits returned from the nuclear weapons stockpile to support annual stockpile assessments and to inform future pit designs
- Produce plutonium components for assembly into devices used in subcritical experiments
- Perform fundamental science on the material properties and aging of plutonium
- Process plutonium into forms suitable for disposition to support nonproliferation goals
- Produce Pu-238 heat and power sources for use by NASA in planetary exploration, national security, and defense
- Recover americium for the DOE Office of Science
- Maintain nuclear and hazardous facilities and the associated utilities and infrastructure



- Manage environmental protection, safety, quality, and security programs and requirements
- Manage the disposition of actinide waste onsite and its shipment offsite
- Provide business, Information Technology, and other support services to the plutonium missions

The Laboratory recognizes regional colleges and universities as valuable resources to the state and its future workforce. These institutions are important catalysts in the delivery of education to our state and regional students.

The Los Alamos National Laboratory is the site of the nation's premier plutonium manufacturing and science facility supporting pit manufacturing. LANL, along with Savannah River Site in South Carolina and under the administration of the National Nuclear Security Administration, have produced plans for production equipment (technologies, quantities, and facility layout) and personnel requirements (skills and quantities) needed to establish a reliable pit production capability and to succeed in meeting production requirements. This future work will be performed by a new, larger, and relatively inexperienced workforce. The availability of key technical, scientific, and production disciplines required for plutonium pit manufacturing is becoming critical at a time when its core competence is crucial for our nation's defense and energy security. It is therefore essential for the production facilities to expand regional college and university partnerships and pipeline programs that will modernize our approach to education and training of a regional workforce in support of pit manufacturing in New Mexico.

Top Ten In-Demand Positions/Skills Required for LANL Mission

The Laboratory seeks well-rounded applicants who demonstrate the mastery of fundamental skills in specific disciplines as well as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation. The Laboratory has identified the list below as the most urgent skills needed. In addition to the list below, the provided attachment provides a broader list of competencies and occupations required for the support of Pu missions. The bulk of these needs (~90%) are at the Associate Degree to Bachelor Degree Level with the balance needed from advanced degrees.

- Scientist/Engineer
- Technician/Technologist
- Project Controls/Estimating

- Program/Project Management
- Quality
- Production/Operations Support
- Industrial Health/Safety
- Training
- Procurement
- Machinist
- Skilled Technical Trades

Requirements

- The proposing school must be a NM institution of higher education or a specifically designated PwDI potential partner (currently, this only includes University of Texas – El Paso and Montana State University).
- Proposal must support stated LANL high demand workforce needs (there is a preference to indicate LANL staff where partnerships already exist)
- All funded students and PwDI funding beneficiaries (e.g. scholarships and internships) MUST be LANL employable perspective employees that are able to obtain a security clearance (e.g., with no noticeable items that would disqualify – typically non-citizenship, drug use, or encumbered by legal consequences such as felonies)

2. Additional Requirements and Details Regarding Available Funding

Approximately \$8,000,000 is available for distributions among NM institutions in this PwDI Phase IIIB call. Funds are available to all higher education institutions within New Mexico. In Phase IIIB, additional funds may also be made available to start to incorporate other key regional institutions (above and beyond the \$8,000,000 funds). Specifically, Phase IIIB may allow for submissions from University of Texas – El Paso and Montana State University (approvals and exact funding levels are still being determined and are subject to funding levels over the \$8,000,000 currently allocated).

As in previous phases, target award levels are based upon the classification of the higher education institution. As discussed at the most recent PwDI Annual Meeting held in Los



Alamos in October of 2025, there is an additional high priority category that is being added to target **multi-institutional awards** that focus upon developing the future workforce through partnerships across institutions.

Funding decisions will be made by the LANL Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) within the 6 weeks following the deadline submission. Award amounts will be shared in the summer of 2026 with contracts being initiated between the New Mexico Consortium and the recipient institution in the remaining months of 2026. The period of performance for this award will begin on January 1, 2027, and will terminate on December 31, 2028 (two calendar years). The anticipation is that Phase IV of PwDI will initiate on January 1, 2029, as part of the continuation efforts – Phase IV will be discussed in approximately two years or earlier as directed by the federal customer. Funding targets provided are for the full award over two years (e.g. if the target is \$200,000, the budget profile could provide \$100,000 in calendar year 2027 and \$100,000 in calendar year 2028).

While the earlier phases of the PwDI effort focused upon curriculum development and needed equipment purchases, Phase IIIB and future phases will prioritize workforce development efforts. While targeted research and equipment purchases are still allowed as part of proposals, the goal of the program is workforce development efforts. The new prioritization also results in changes to the proposed funding levels.

Institutions in categories II, III, and IV (Category I proposals should not include these additions – please contact the executive team if there are any questions) are being provided guidance that the following additional items are to be examined for inclusion in your proposal:

Mandatory for successful institutional proposals:

- Budgeted travel funds to attend the yearly (2027 and 2028) PwDI October Meetings for all PIs in Los Alamos or the region.
- Budgeted travel funds to have 6 undergraduate students maximum (Sophomore to Junior – and graduating Seniors entering graduate studies) and one advisor attend the annual Student Internship Showcase visit to LANL each year (2027 and 2028) (current plans are for this to occur in November of each year).

Encouraged for successful institutional proposals:

- Outreach activities – Building pipelines and highlighting opportunities to Middle School and High School students is of high importance for the future required

workforce. Outreach opportunities can also occur with different institutions especially with consideration for ‘laddering’ students (e.g. how to encourage associate degree students to transition for a Bachelor’s degree program). Proposals are encouraged to have this as part of their consideration.

- Targeted Scholarships to help keep students enrolled and engaged – The PWDI leadership recognizes that scholarships may be the difference between some students being able to remain in school versus dropping out. Proposals can include university-led scholarships to help build pipelines of students as there is a recognition that scholarships may also be critical in this effort. Any student who receives a scholarship should be LANL-employable and able to obtain a security clearance (which normally requires US Citizenship without drug or felony encumbrances). If there are any questions, please contact the PWDI leadership team.
- Research Internships/Employment at each institution: Building pipelines for the plutonium needed current and future workforce benefits greatly from having students more familiar with research capabilities. Where appropriate, proposals can include student employment options. Any student who receives an employment based upon PWDI funding should be LANL-employable and able to obtain a security clearance (which normally requires US Citizenship without drug or felony encumbrances). If there are any questions, please contact the PWDI leadership team.

Proposal Categories:

I. Multi-Institutional Proposals:

- There is a strong desire from the PWDI leadership team to see increased partnerships among the PWDI schools.
- The targeted overall funding for this category is \$3,000,000 with each proposal targeting funding between \$250,000 to \$500,000. Maximum award in this category will be \$500,000 with appropriate balanced funding between the proposed institutional teams.
- Each multi-institutional proposal should be separately submitted with the identified overall lead institution, the key leads at each of the institutions, and should have a signature from leadership at each institution agreeing to supporting the proposal. The proposals should be balanced in funding across the participating institutions.
- Proposals can include any higher education institution within New Mexico. Prioritization currently will focus on laddering capabilities (how to encourage

- AS degree students to pursue BS degrees and how to encourage BS degree students to pursue graduate degrees).
- There is no limit on how many multi-institutional proposals any one institution may be included in these proposals (e.g. one institution may be part of 1, 2, 3 or more multi-institutional proposals).
- II. Research & Development Institutions (R1 and R2) – Current targeted Institutions include University of New Mexico, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, and New Mexico State University. New additions to this category may include University of Texas – El Paso and Montana State University if approvals are received with additional funds.
- Institutions with advanced degree options that are engaged in research activities.
 - The targeted overall funding for this category is \$1,800,000 with each institution having a target of \$600,000 for the NM schools. Planned maximum award in this category will be \$900,000.
 - If additional funding is approved by NNSA, the target for the newly added UTEP and MSU are \$400,000 each with a maximum of \$600,000.
- III. Four-Year Degree Institutions (including institutions with some graduate degrees):
- Institutions where the terminal degree offered is a four-year bachelor's degrees (or with an institution that have some graduate school options). Current targeted institutions include Northern New Mexico College, New Mexico Highlands University, and Navajo Technical University.
 - The targeted overall funding for this category is \$1,600,000 with each current institution having a target of \$400,000. Planned maximum award in this category will be \$700,000.
- IV. Community Colleges:
- Institutions where the terminal degree offered is at the Associates level. Current targeted institutions include Santa Fe Community College, Luna Community College, Central New Mexico Community College, and San Juan College. Additional schools within New Mexico may also apply.
 - The targeted overall funding for this category is \$1,600,000 with each current institution having a target of \$400,000. Planned maximum award in this category will be \$600,000.

3. Phase IIIB Proposal Submission Requirement – Category I

As described at the 2025 PwDI Annual Meeting, one of the priorities in future RFPs was to see how to help drive increased partnerships between the PwDI higher education institutions.

In Phase IIIB, this priority is reflected by the largest total amount of funding falling within this category. The PwDI leadership team has created a new category of funding to highlight the importance of these efforts.

For each multi-institutional proposal, there should be a separate submission. In these submissions, there should be an overall designated Principal Investigator (who will work with the New Mexico Consortium on the award designation). For all institutions involved, there should also be an institutional PI identified. There is no limit to how many multi-institutional proposals that an institution may participate.

Each proposal should be a maximum of seven pages, including referential technical appendices not associated with the 1-page budget and schedule requirement, with 1” margins, 11-point font and may include figures. A title page is NOT considered part of the page limit. A successful proposal must include the following components:

- Cover Page – Category of funding (i.e., Category I), Project title, Overall PI, institution(s), Institutional PI(s), and the funding level requested. Not included in the page count.
- Executive Summary – up to a 1-page summary of objectives, relevance, and expected outcomes from each institution and with overall expected outcomes
- Proposal – (approximately 4-5 pages) Addresses how the request will assist in current workforce development efforts that support the plutonium mission; Specific importance should highlight how the multi-institutional partnership will increase workforce pipelines.
- Budget – (up to 1 page) Detailed proposed total budget, budget justification, and a notional schedule. Note this budget and justification are like what one might propose in a letter of intent; if funded, an official budget and justification will be required on an NMC template and must be crafted in cooperation with the PI and the grants office at the institution.
- Technical Appendices – Supporting materials for proposal technical content. (included in page limitation)
- Budget Appendix – Budget detail if required (not included in page limitation).

4. Phase IIIB Proposal Submission Requirements – Categories II, III and IV

Each institution should submit only one (1) proposal for their institution-only proposals. Institutions are expected to coordinate internally with the overall PwDI institutional PI (please contact NMC if you are uncertain on your institutional PI). The institutional PI will need to coordinate all the sub-proposals from a particular institution into 1 single proposal.

Each Category II, III, or IV institutional proposal should be a maximum of seven pages, including referential technical appendices not associated with the 1-page budget and schedule requirement, with 1” margins, 11-point font and may include figures. A title page is NOT considered part of the page limit. Proposal must include the following components:

- Cover Page – Category of funding (i.e., Category II, III or IV), Project title, institution(s), sub-project PI(s), and the level of funding requested. Not included in the page count.
- Executive Summary – up to a 1-page summary of objectives, relevance, and with overall expected outcomes
- Proposal – (approximately 4-5 pages) Addresses how the request will assist in current workforce development efforts that support the plutonium mission
- Budget – (up to 1 page) Detailed proposed total budget, budget justification, and a notional schedule. Note this budget and justification are like what one might propose in a letter of intent; if funded, an official budget and justification will be required on an NMC template and must be crafted in cooperation with the PI and the grants office at the institution.
- Technical Appendices – Supporting materials for proposal technical content. (included in page limitation)
- Budget Appendix – Budget detail if required (not included in page limitation).

5. Evaluation Criteria

The LANL Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will evaluate all proposals and will provide a decision to each institution on the proposals by a target date of July 3, 2026. The NMC will work with the PwDI partner institutions after these decisions are made.

The TAC will review these proposals on the following criterion:

- Adherence to proposal guidelines
- Potential for Impact and participant outcomes.

- New or additional academic and workforce opportunities for potential LANL workforce needs.
- Allocation of budget for requested events, such as LANL student visits
- Budget realism and alignment with requirements of expenditures and invoice submissions by December 31, 2028.
- Strength of current and future LANL partnerships.
- Strength of proposal and how it augments current Phase III activities
- Continued relevance to current Phase III projects, support of PWDI goals, and current pit manufacturing workforce needs.

6. Anticipated Award Dates

As part of this proposal, here are the current dates for required participation:

- Tuesday, May 26, 2026 – 9:00 am: Proposals DUE by email to pwdi@newmexicoconsortium.org
- Target: July 3, 2026: LANL TAC completes review; Notifications made on awards
- July 6, 2026 – Dec. 31, 2026: NMC executes agreements for awards with all institutions
- January 1, 2027 – PWDI Phase IIIB begins
- December 31, 2028 – PWDI Phase IIIB ends

7. Submission Details

All submissions must be submitted to pwdi@newmexicoconsortium.org by 9:00 am, Tuesday, May 26, 2026.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out:

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