



Volume II | Issue 1
Winter 2025

SANDIA SYNERGY

*A Newsletter Empowering Postdoctoral Associates
to Advance Science & Technology at Sandia National Labs*

Dear Readers,

Seasons Greetings! This issue is the start of our second volume of newsletters designed just for you. Thank you to those who provided feedback on how the newsletter can best support your research and professional development, and it's not too late if you missed that chance.

In this issue, learn about where postdoc alumni have moved on to advance their careers; winners and details of the past and coming National Labs Regional SLAMs; highlights of Sandia's Postdoc Appreciation Week, including the Alumni Industry Career Panel, and other October & November postdoc workshops.

Finally, see the newsletter's standing pages on events that are open to you at the **National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine** (live virtual webinars and conferences) and resources offered by the **National Postdoc Association**.

Happy Reading!

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Sandia's Postdoctoral Alumni Trends

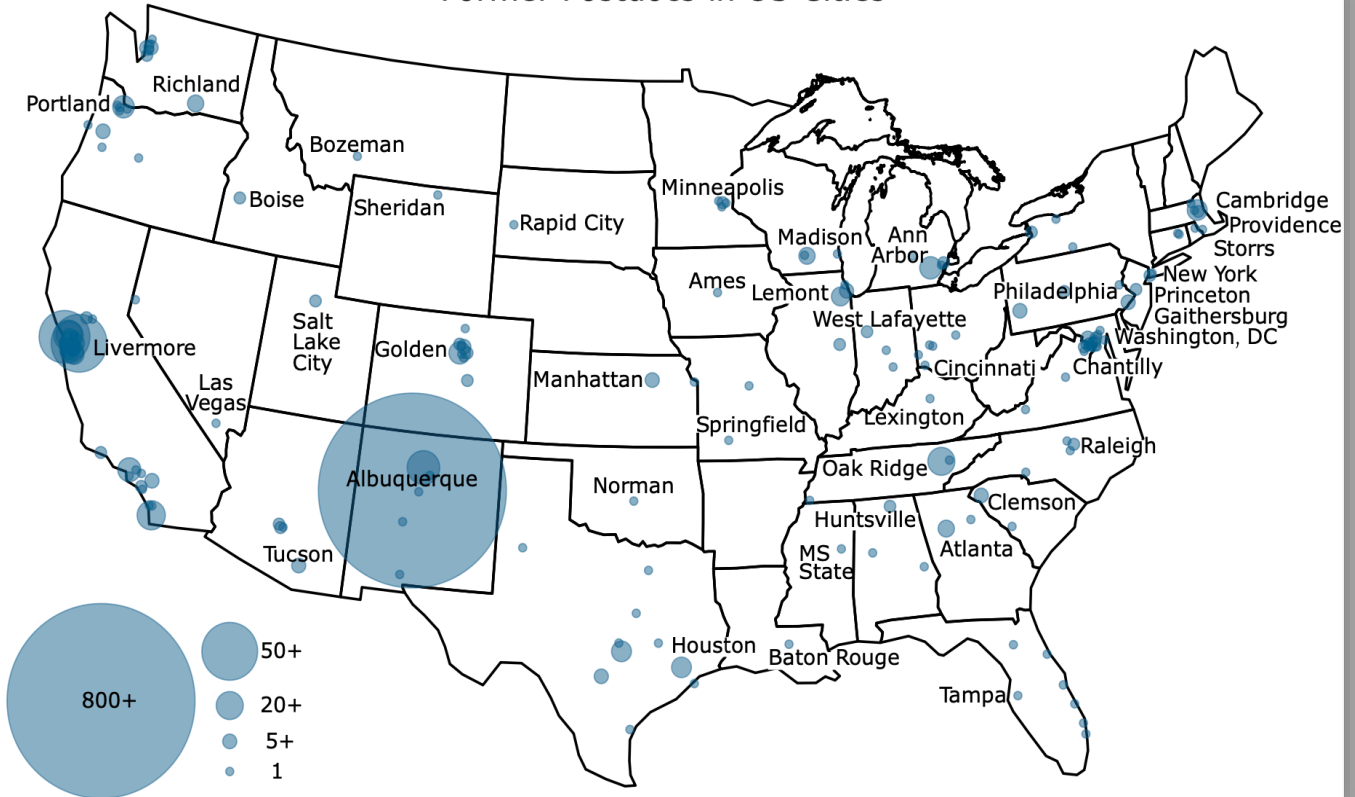
Where are they now?

In our ongoing analyses of Sandia's postdoc alumni, the map below illustrates cities and states across the United States, where postdoc alumni are currently employed.

Notable findings of areas of employment over the last decade:

- A large majority remained in NM (> 60%)
- High populations occur in the vicinity of several other US DOE national labs, e.g. NM: LANL; Livermore, CA: Sandia, LLNL, LBNL, SLAC; Golden, CO: NREL; Oak Ridge, TN: ORNL; VA: TJNAF; Richland, WA: PNNL; Northeast US: BNL, PPPL, NETL; IL: FNAL, Argonne.

Former Postdocs in US Cities



The chart above shows the distribution of alumni of the Sandia Postdoctoral Associate program who served at Sandia National Laboratories between 2013 – 2024; n=1167.

Data source: SNL Postdoctoral Office.

Sandia Wins Big at 5th Annual Bay Area Research SLAM!



The Bay Area Research SLAM showcased the incredible communication skills of researchers across the region's National Laboratories (Berkeley, Livermore, Sandia, and SLAC) as they faced the challenge of presenting complex science in just three minutes to a non-specialist audience. The 5th annual competition was held on Thursday, October 23rd, at the Brower Center in Berkeley, CA, with a strong showing from Sandia National Laboratories.

SLAM Success for Sandia's Team!

Sandia was proudly represented by three talented scientists: Kruttika Phadke (8623), Chris Wentland (8734), and Prasaad Milner (8626). Presentation topics included:

- ❖ "S.H.I.E.L.D: Shared Human Interactions Enabled for Lethal Diseases", Kruttika Phadke
- ❖ "Pinatubo Probabilities: Statistics for Modern Climate Security" by Chris Wentland
- ❖ "Our Cells Are Sealed: Protecting living cells against CRISPR-based tampering" by Prasaad Milner

And the Winner Is...

We are thrilled to announce that Prasaad Milner (Sandia National Laboratories) captured the 1st place prize for his engaging and accessible presentation!

The other top finishers were:

- 2nd Place: Keegan Orr (Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory)
- 3rd Place & People's Choice: Louisa Barama (Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory)

Congratulations to Prasaad and all the Sandia presenters for their excellent work in translating groundbreaking research for the broader community!



Rio Grande Research SLAM

Witness the Southwest's top scientific minds compete in a fast-paced research showdown! Three researchers from Air Force Research Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratory, and National Renewable Energy Laboratory will each deliver a compelling, three-minute presentation on their research, tailored for a non-specialist audience.

Come support the Sandia team!

- ❖ **Samantha Kruse:** Berry Diverse: Uncovering the Compositional Differences of Microplastics
- ❖ **Ryan Tumminello:** Froze in Time: Revolutionizing Virus Sampling and Preservation
- ❖ **Leo Diaz III:** The Mystery of the Missing Defect

Thursday, December 11; 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM MST

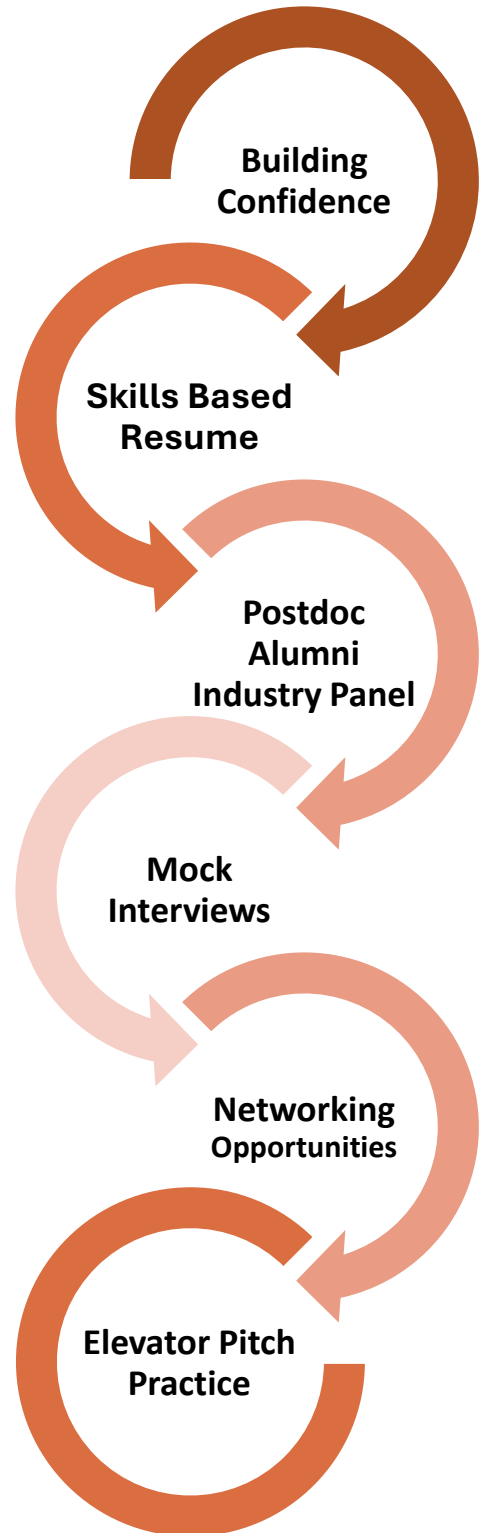
Location (In-Person): NewSpace Nexus, Albuquerque, NM

In Recognition of Postdoctoral Appreciation Week

Postdoctoral Appreciation Week kicked off with a well-attended event that included mentor recognition and eight technical talks, fostering a sense of community among 87 postdocs.

Several Professional Development Sessions were hosted throughout the week:

- **Building Confidence:** This session focused on interview preparation through skits and expert advice, attracting 64 attendees. Presented by: Kristen Paule, Jessica Vattioni, and Sarah Allendorf.
- **Resume Tips: Postdocs learned about functional skills-based resumes,** with 55 attendees. Presented by: Abi Lewis and Stephanie Mora-Solano.
- **Alumni Industry Career Panel:** Former Sandia postdocs shared their experiences with 130 attendees. Highlights of the panel discussion on the next page. Moderated by Mary Monson.
- **Mock Interviews:** Conducted with 11 managers, these provided 21 postdocs with valuable practice and feedback.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Organized by the Sandia Postdoc Development Association, in-person events facilitated connections among postdocs.
- **Elevator Pitch Practice:** A session dedicated to refining elevator pitches enhanced postdocs' communication skills. Presented by: Cindy Achat-Mendes.



MAXIMIZING YOUR SANDIA POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE: **INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY**

In Recognition of National Postdoc Appreciation Week,
Learn About Industry Careers From Former SNL Postdocs



Moderated by Mary Monson
Senior Manager, 01980 CRO Tech Partnerships/Bus Dev

Panelists

- ❖ **Laura Achola**
Hardware Engineer, **Google**
Santa Clara, CA
- ❖ **Iris (Archer) Jones**
Staff Scientist, Genomics, **Labcorp**
Indianapolis, IN
- ❖ **Kelsey DiPietro**
HPC Applications Engineer, **NextSilicon**
Boston, MA
- ❖ **Teeraton (Meen) Kadeethum**
Machine Learning Engineer, **Microsoft**
Seattle, WA
- ❖ **Elizabeth (Bette) Webster**
Associate Director, Delivery Technologies
Nutcracker Therapeutics
San Bruno, CA
- ❖ **Matt Wolak**
Manger, Physical Vapor Deposition
Group, **Northrop Grumman**
Baltimore, MD



THURSDAY
18TH,
SEPTEMBER
2025

2:00 -3:30
PM MT

MAXIMIZING YOUR SANDIA POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE: *INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY*

Advice for postdocs considering industry careers ranged from crucial networking tips and maintaining positive relationships, to learning how to market and tailor your skills to industry needs, reflecting on personal lifestyle choices, e.g. fast-paced vs. stable, salary vs. satisfaction, and on understanding customer-driven goals. The main themes emerging from the industry career panel are described below.

Identifying the Right Industry Position

- Research companies and roles that match personal skills/interests, using LinkedIn and networking to find suitable opportunities.
- Consider work environment, career growth, work/life balance, and whether you want to deepen or broaden your technical expertise.
- Reflect on skills/experiences that bring most satisfaction to guide industry focus.

Challenges in Transitioning to Industry

- Adapting to industry jargon, faster pace, and hierarchical work structures.
- Regulated environments (e.g. in biomedical fields) require new compliance skills.
- Proving oneself with smaller tasks before gaining trust for larger responsibilities is typical.

Valuable Skills from Postdoctoral Work

- Ownership of projects and problem-solving abilities are highly valued.
- Technical skills and hands-on experience with equipment are transferable.
- Broad exposure to different research areas helps bridge gaps and understand customer needs.

Building a Professional Network

- Aggressively connect with professionals in target companies; referrals are key.
- Attend industry-specific conferences and engage with professional organizations.
- Personalized outreach and follow-up are effective; use LinkedIn and job alerts.

Professional Development & Growth

- Opportunities include company-sponsored training, certifications, mentorship.
- Career growth requires proactive pursuit and support from management.
- Frequent job changes are common early in industry careers, but avoid rapid succession.

Resume/CV & Interview Preparation

- Keep resumes concise (1–2 pages), tailored to job postings, and focused on relevant skills and technologies.
- Use industry buzzwords and highlight problem-solving and teamwork abilities.
- Practice interview questions (technical and behavioral) with peers or AI tools
- Research company culture and prepare to discuss conflict resolution

AI/ML in Research & Future Plans

- Some panelists use AI/ML for defect analysis, documentation, and automation.
- Plans include developing chatbots and integrating AI into documentation and customer support.
- Caution advised in biomedical applications due to data reliability and ethical concerns.

Past PDO Workshops

Postdoc Professional Development Workshops in Q1

This past quarter, the Postdoc Professional Development series offered three highly informative workshops designed to enhance your understanding of Sandia's operational landscape and provide critical career skills. If you missed them, links to the recordings are provided below!

❖ Sandia and the Federal Budget Process

Presented By: Jason Jarvis (00163), Government Relations Team

Date: Wednesday, November 12

Jason Jarvis provided an essential overview of how the federal budget process works and illuminated Sandia's unique role as a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC). The presentation was particularly timely, offering valuable information on how government shutdowns affect Sandia as an FFRDC. This session was a great opportunity to enhance your institutional understanding.



❖ Authorship Disputes and R&D Onboarding – Input Needed

Presented By: Andy Nelson (1912)

Date: Wednesday, October 15

Andy Nelson's workshop addressed two critical aspects of the R&D career path. He discussed common issues surrounding authorship disputes at Sandia, highlighting resources available to prevent them and new tools informed by Sandia Postdoc (SPD) input. Additionally, Andy shared findings from collaborative efforts between D3K and ORDE focused on improving the onboarding experience for R&D Staff, actively seeking input from the postdoc community. This meeting was not recorded.

Alumni to Allies Watch Party

The Postdoc Community is Invited to the
Alumni to Allies Watch Party

Join us for an exciting watch party as we celebrate the launch of our podcast, dedicated to empowering postdoctoral researchers by exploring diverse career opportunities within and beyond traditional academic and research settings!

Together, we'll dive into insightful conversations with former Sandia postdocs who have successfully transitioned into non-traditional roles to become industry leaders.



Episode #3
December 11, 2025
2-3 MT
Look out for email invitations!



PODCAST WATCH PARTY



Why join us?

This watch party is more than just a gathering—it's an opportunity to connect, learn, and be inspired. **By highlighting stories of resilience and success we aim to celebrate triumphs and provide practical advice for navigating career paths.**

Whether you're a postdoc, researcher, or simply curious about career diversification, this event is for you!

Upcoming PDO Workshops

Data Literacy for Your Career: Finding Jobs and Understanding Salaries with Census Data



Enhance your career planning skills in this interactive session focused on practical data literacy. Amy Brombos of the U.S. Census Bureau will guide attendees on how to find, evaluate, and effectively use reliable data sources (like Census data) for informed decision-making about your future career and salary expectations.

Key Topics

- Data Storytelling and Critical Thinking
- Finding Reliable Data
- Practical Applications for career and salary research



Amy Brombos
U.S. Census Bureau
Tuesday, January 20

Elevate Your Career: Mentoring Up Workshop

In honor of National Mentoring Month, take charge of your professional growth by joining our special two-hour workshop: **Mentoring Up!**

What is Mentoring Up?

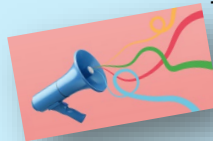
Adapted from the business concept of "managing up," Mentoring Up is a proactive, powerful approach where mentees take ownership of their mentoring relationships. This workshop will teach you how to move from being a passive recipient to an active driver of mutual benefit and desired outcomes.

It's about learning to:

- Actively engage with your mentor.
- Contribute valuable input to the relationship.
- Guide the direction of your professional development.

Workshop Details

We've condensed our popular 5-hour series into one comprehensive 2-hour session to give you the best tips and tricks for effectively managing your mentoring relationships. Don't miss this opportunity to revolutionize your mentoring relationships!



**Enhancing your mentoring skills
and taking an active role in your
professional development.**

Tuesday, January 27
@1:00 PM – 3:00 PM MT

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine

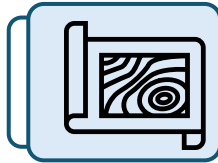
ATTEND A NATIONAL ACADEMIES MEETING VIRTUALLY

Convenings are held in person at the Washington DC location as well as virtually. Click on the events below, which are accessible to online audiences.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine provides expert insights through rigorous studies and reports, addressing critical issues in science, engineering, and health. Its main role is to inform the Government on science policy, spark innovation, and confront challenging issues for the benefit of society.

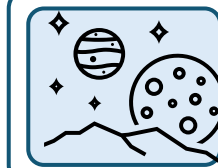
Subject matter experts from all sectors - academia, industry, government, and philanthropy convene from across the spectrum of the S&T enterprise.

Dec 3, 2025
1- 5 PM ET



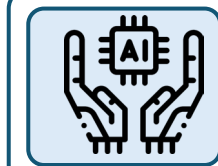
[Emerging Quantitative Methods in Geophysics: Committee on Solid Earth Geophysics Fall 2025 Meeting](#)

Dec 4 and 5
Check website
for times



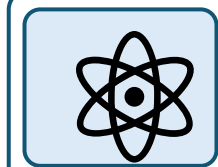
[Space Weather Roundtable Livestream](#)

Dec 4
1:30 - 3PM ET



[Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board: AI Data Centre Initiative](#)

Dec 10
1 - 2:45 PM ET



[Why Indoor Chemistry Matters Webinar: Past as prologue while looking to the future of indoor chemistry research](#)

Jan 13-14
Check website
for times



[Accelerating Climate Progress with AI: From Science to Action Workshop](#)

JOIN THE NATIONAL POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION

Membership is offered to you under Sandia's organizational membership; [Sign up](#) as an Affiliate with your Sandia email address.

The National Postdoctoral Association represents the national voice of the postdoctoral community. Engage with the community to help improve the postdoctoral experience. At the individual, organizational, and national levels, NPA facilitates professional growth, raises awareness, and collaborates with stakeholders in the postdoctoral community. See opportunities below.

March
12-14
2026

[2026 National Postdoctoral Association Annual Conference](#), Hyatt Regency, San Francisco



[Participate in Committee Planning](#); Offer support to convene teams on scholarship awards; develop agenda and programming for Annual Conference; coordinate fun networking and social events to connect attendees.



[Webinars on a variety of topics](#) including financial literacy, immigration policy, and cultivating equity



[The POSTDOCKET Article Library](#); offering insights, advice, and best practices from experienced researchers and professionals in academia and industry.

OPPORTUNITIES

Searching for full-time permanent positions at Sandia National Laboratories?



Search by the term “**Early Career**” to find postings that might be more relevant.

<https://sandia.jobs/jobs/>

Published a paper recently, received a funding award, or have celebratory career news to share?

Send us the details at this link so that we can highlight your success.