# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency–Energy (ARPA-E), Department of energy

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Energy and Natural Resources[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Agency Mission | To ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Position Overview | The director oversees Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy. He or she also advises the secretary on long-term and high-risk technological barriers to the development of energy technologies, while managing research programs that address these matters. (42 U.S.C. § 16538) |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Energy (42 U.S.C. § 16538) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The director oversees three deputy directors and 16 program directors in the department.[[4]](#endnote-4) In fiscal 2016, the Department of Energy had a research budget of $291 million.[[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Approves all of ARPA-E’s new programs
* Develops funding criteria for programs and establishes technical milestones to assess their success
* Administers the Energy Transformation Acceleration Fund, which grants awards to higher education institutions, companies and research foundations as well as individual and consortia of trade and industry research collaborations (42 U.S.C. § 16538)
* Leads a team of technical experts that assesses and selects transformative technology projects for federal funding
* Formulates and defends the ARPA-E annual budget request
* Publishes an annual report to Congress of ARPA-E accomplishments
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Professional background and experience enabling the director hired to advise the secretary on, and manage, research programs that address long-term and high-risk technological barriers to energy technology development (42 U.S.C. § 16538)
* Ph.D. in science or engineering
* Fifteen or more years of experience in science or technology research and development (commercial, laboratory or academic)
* Seven or more years of experience leading and managing a team or teams of scientific or technology researchers
* Fifteen or more years of experience providing, leveraging and/or managing research grants
* Past science or technology leadership experience in a government or FFRDC role (a plus)
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| Competencies | * Expertise managing a diversified portfolio of multiyear, multimillion dollar technology projects
* Expert project management and leadership skills
* Deep understanding of technology research funding processes, including public, private and combined public-private streams
* Ability to build partnerships and coalitions with stakeholders in academia, industry, Congress and around the world to accomplish challenging science and engineering outcomes
* Exceptional communication and public speaking skills
* Ability to facilitate difficult conversations and arbitrate between parties, as necessary, following funding decisions as well as decisions not to fund
* Willingness to travel within the continental U.S. and internationally
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Ellen Williams (2014 to 2017) - Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Energy, Department of Energy; Chief Scientist, BP[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Arun Majumdar (2009 to 2012) - Almy and Agnes Maynard Chair Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science and Engineering, University of California, Berkeley; Associate Laboratory Director for Energy and Environment, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory[[7]](#endnote-7) |

1. Plum book [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Partnership for Public Service position description [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://arpa-e.energy.gov/?q=about/arpa-e-team/senior-leadership> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://arpa-e.energy.gov/sites/default/files/ARPA-E%20FY17%20Budget%20Request.pdf> pg 397 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://arpa-e.energy.gov/?q=about/profiles/dr-ellen-williams> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://energy.gov/seab/contributors/arun-majumdar> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)