# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Undersecretary for science and energy, Department of energy

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Energy and Natural Resources |
| Agency Mission | To ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions |
| Position Overview | The undersecretary for science and energy serves as the department's principal advisor on clean energy technologies and science and energy research initiatives.  |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Energy and Deputy Secretary of Energy[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2015, the undersecretary managed a budget of $8.769 billion.[[3]](#endnote-3) The undersecretary’s key staff includes the director of the Office of Science, an associate undersecretary, a senior advisor, a senior advisor for congressional and intergovernmental affairs, a senior policy advisor, a policy advisor and a special assistant.[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Manages fundamental research programs in basic energy sciences, biological and environmental sciences, and computational science
* Oversees the funding of material and chemical sciences
* Advises the secretary on all cross-departmental scientific matters (acting as the department’s chief scientist)
* Manages the national laboratory system
* Works closely with the Office of Science and Technology Policy, National Academies, the National Science Foundation and the State Department on proliferation/nonproliferation matters and international scientific collaboration[[5]](#endnote-5)
* Serves as the department's principal advisor on clean energy technologies, and science and energy research initiatives
* Drives transformative science and technology solutions through the coordinated planning and management of Department of Energy’s basic science, applied research, technology development and deployment efforts, and energy programs
* Oversees the department’s offices of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Fossil Energy, Indian Energy Policy and Programs, Nuclear Energy, and Science, as well as 13 of the department’s 17 National Laboratories[[6]](#endnote-6)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Impeccable scientific background in a relevant field
* Well-versed in nuclear policy as he or she plays an important role in interfacing on nuclear weapons issues
* Familiar with the laboratory complex[[7]](#endnote-7)
* Extensive management experience
* Familiarity with the legislative and federal budgeting process
* Strong relationships with relevant stakeholders, or ability to form them
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| Competencies | * Strong communication and public-speaking skills
* Ability to communicate the science to high-level stakeholders across the government
* Ability to work under high pressure and handle sensitive matters
* Ability to manage a large matrixed organization
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Franklin M. Orr, Jr. (2014 to 2017): Keleen and Carlton Beal Professor Emeritus, Department of Energy Resources Engineering, Stanford University; Founding Director, Precourt Institute for Energy, Stanford University; Founding Director, Global Climate and Energy Project, Stanford University[[8]](#endnote-8) |
| Steven Elliot Koonin (2009 to 2011): Member, Trilateral Commission; Member, Council on Foreign Relations; Chief Scientist, BP p.l.c.[[9]](#endnote-9) |
| Raymond L. Orbach (2006 to 2009): Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy; Chancellor, University of California, Riverside; Distinguished Professor of Physics, University of California, Riverside[[10]](#endnote-10) |

1. 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-1)
2. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Leadership Directories: https://lo.bvdep.com/OrgDocument.asp?OrgId=-1&LDIBookId=19&LDIOrgId=246551&LDISecId=180&FromRecent=1&Save=0#O246551 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.energy.gov/under-secretary-science-and-energy/contributors/franklin-lynn-orr [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Leadership Directories: https://lo.bvdep.com/PeopleDocument.asp?PersonId=-1&LDIPeopleId=187386&Save=1 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. https://www.morehouse.edu/about/pdf/ROrbachBio.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-10)