# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of energy

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services |
| 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 deputy administrator for defense programs aims to achieve national security objectives for nuclear weapons established by the president, and assist in reducing the global nuclear danger, by planning for and maintaining a safe, secure and reliable stockpile of nuclear weapons and associated materials, capabilities and technologies in a safe, environmentally sound and cost-effective manner. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary for Nuclear Security[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The deputy administrator for defense programs oversees the Defense Programs Science Council; the Office of Strategic Partnership Programs; the Office of Decision Support; the Office of Major Modernization Programs; the Office of Research, Development, Test and Evaluation; the Office of Secure Transportation; and the Office of Stockpile Management.[[3]](#endnote-3) The Stockpile Stewardship Program employs more than 25,000 people around the country.[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Manages the Stockpile Stewardship Program, which encompasses:
	+ Operations associated with manufacturing, maintaining, refurbishing, surveilling and dismantling the nuclear weapons stockpile
	+ Activities associated with the research, design, development, simulation, modeling and nonnuclear testing of nuclear weapons
	+ Planning, assessment and certification of safety and reliability
* Manages the development, direction and maintenance of, and oversees the research, development and computer simulation activities to help maintain the safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile in the absence of underground testing
* Ensures capability for maintaining the readiness to test and develop new warheads, if required
* Manages the establishment and maintenance of appropriate partnerships with other National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and Department of Energy elements; external scientific, research and development agencies; industry; and academia
* Assures the integration of all aspects of operations at program-dedicated facilities from the standpoint of production, safety and efficiency
* Ensures, through close coordination with the Department of Defense, the materials, capabilities and technologies to support the production of certified components necessary to extend the life of the nuclear weapons stockpile in an environmentally sound and cost-effective manner
* Manages the activities for the production of tritium to ensure its availability for the nuclear weapons stockpile, as required[[5]](#endnote-5)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Usually held by a scientist, engineer or physicist who has intimate knowledge of the U.S. nuclear deterrent and the science, engineering and R&D required to ensure the safety, security and effectiveness of the weapons
* Previous government experience (helpful)
* Strong management experience
* Strong relationships with relevant stakeholders, or ability to form them
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| Competencies | * Ability to manage a multibillion-dollar program in coordination with the NNSA’s national security laboratories (Los Alamos, Sandia and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories)
* Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Ability to work under high pressure and handle sensitive matters
* Ability to work in a matrixed environment and manage multiple high-level stakeholders
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Donald L. Cook (2009 to 2017): Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Atomic Weapons Establishment; Program Director, Infrastructure Program and Safeguards and Security Technologies Program, Sandia National Laboratories; Director, MESA Program Center, Sandia National Laboratories[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Robert L. Smolen (2007 to 2009): Commander, Air Force District of Washington; Director for Strategic Policy and Arms Control, National Security Council; Special Advisor to the Strategic Advisory Group, USSTRATCOM[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Thomas P. D’Agostino (2006 to 2007): Assistant Deputy Administrator for Program Integration, Department of Energy; Deputy Director for the Nuclear Weapons Research, Development and Simulation Program, Department of Energy; Program Manager, SEAWOLF Submarine Propulsion System, Naval Sea Systems Command[[8]](#endnote-8) |

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. https://energy.gov/leadership/organization-chart [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://lo.bvdep.com/OrgChart.asp?curp=1&LDIBookId=19&LDISectionId=180&LDIOrgId=152861> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://energy.gov/contributors/thomas-p-d-agostino [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://energy.gov/contributors/donald-cook [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/smolen.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://energy.gov/contributors/thomas-p-d-agostino [↑](#endnote-ref-8)