



New Mexico: America's Nuclear Colony

Money doesn't talk, it swears. (Bob Dylan)

Quick Facts

Nuclear New Mexico

- DOE FY 2024 budget in NM is \$10 billion (double next state).
 - 75% core nuclear weapons research and production programs
 - 28% life extended and new-design nuclear warheads (\$2.65B)
 - 20% expanded nuclear weapons production (\$2 billion)
 - \$1.75B expanded plutonium "pit" bomb core production
 - 5% for dumping radioactive bomb wastes (WIPP \$484 million)
 - Expanding nuclear weapons programs sold as jobs, jobs, jobs
 - Los Alamos County (LAC) 70.6% non-Hispanic Caucasian
 - LAC is 11th richest county in USA, most millionaires per capita
 - Los Alamos County median household income \$123,677
 - Los Alamos County per capita income \$64,521
 - Los Alamos County persons in poverty 3.7%
 - Los Alamos County has least children living in poverty in USA
 - Los Alamos County rated best county to live in in USA
 - Historically LAC schools subsidized added \$8 million/yr from DOE
 - LAC receives >\$50 million in annual state gross receipts taxes
 - Dept of Energy renewable spending in NM is 0.5% of \$10B budget
 - Indigenous and Hispanic lands unjustly seized for LANL
 - World's first atomic bomb detonated at Trinity Test
 - 75 years still no govt tally of sick Navajo/Laguna uranium miners
 - At least 8,280 sick Los Alamos and Sandia Labs workers
 - Major hexavalent chromium groundwater contamination at LANL
 - LANL plans to "cap and cover" and leave >200,000 yd³ of waste
 - USA's largest repository of warheads 2 miles south of ABQ airport
 - Nation's only plutonium "pit" bomb core production site at LANL
 - Nation's only dump for bomb wastes at Waste Isolation Pilot Plant
 - NM targeted for all of nation's lethal radioactive high-level wastes

New Mexico

- NM's entire FY24 state operating budget is 6% less (\$9.4 billion).
 - 54% public education K-12 and higher
 - 34% public health and safety
- NM per capita income falls from 32nd (1959) to 47th (2022)
- New Mexico 50% Hispanic, 11.2% Native American
- New Mexico 4th poorest state
- Median household income \$54,020
- Average per capita income \$29,624
- New Mexicans in poverty 18.4% (3rd highest in USA)
- 30% of New Mexican children live in poverty (highest rate in USA).
- New Mexico rated worst in well-being of children
- New Mexico is dead last in quality of public education
- Six surrounding county govts suffer net economic loss from LANL
- New Mexico has very abundant renewable energy resources
- DOE transfers excess land to white, wealthy Los Alamos County
- Generational cancers, Downwinders never compensated
- Chronically delayed remediation of 260 uranium mines and 7 mills
- NM facing decreasing water resources and increasing wildfires
- Lab commonly hires away senior NM Environment Dept officials
- >\$5B for plutonium facilities, more than all NM schools & hospitals
- DOE threatens to sue NM over new WIPP state permit conditions
- Federal Nuclear Reg. Comm. grants license despite state opposition

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New Mexico is the birthplace place of nuclear weapons. The “Land of Enchantment” has always been the single most important state within the U.S. nuclear weapons complex. The Department of Energy (DOE) will spend \$10 billion in NM in FY 2024, 6% more than the operating budget of the entire state government.

Seventy-five percent of DOE funding in New Mexico will be for the nuclear weapons programs of the semi-autonomous National Nuclear Security Administration. Another 5% of DOE funding will be for dumping the radioactive wastes of NNSA's bomb production programs. Forty percent of the NNSA's nation-wide nuclear weapons budget of \$18.8 billion will be spent in New Mexico alone. With two of the nation's three nuclear weapons laboratories, New Mexico is the American epicenter of the new, more dangerous global nuclear arms race.

Nuclear New Mexico has:

- The Trinity Test site of the world's first atomic explosion. Trinity Test downwinders have never been compensated for generations of cancer victims, unlike those in Nevada, Utah and other states.
- The largest release ever in the U.S. of radioactive materials. The 1979 Church Rock spill sent 94 million gallons of liquid uranium tailings and 1,100 tons of solids down the Puerco River in west central New Mexico, through the Navajo Nation and into Arizona.
- The Jackpile uranium mine. It was the largest open-pit uranium mine in the world from the 1950's to 1980 and is now a Superfund site contaminating the Laguna Pueblo.
- The Gasbuggy site near Dulce, NM, that detonated an underground nuclear explosion to frack natural gas (never commercialized because consumers did not want radioactive natural gas).
- The Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories, which are increasingly becoming production sites.
- The nation's only current production site for plutonium “pit” bomb cores at LANL. The Pentagon has said that pit production is the #1 issue in the planned \$2 trillion “modernization” of nuclear forces.
- The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, the nation's only deep geologic dump for radioactive bomb wastes, which NNSA plans to use for expanded plutonium pit production until ~2080.
- The U.S.' (and perhaps the world's) largest repository of nuclear weapons, less than two miles south of the Albuquerque International Airport, estimated to hold up to 2,500 nuclear warheads in active reserve.
- A historically complacent New Mexico Environment Department where senior officials regularly leave to work for the Labs or the Department of Energy.
- A congressional delegation which historically has always prioritized greater funding for the Los Alamos and Sandia Labs than for New Mexicans.
- Some of the lowest socioeconomic indicators of all states, such as poverty, per capita income, quality of health and education, etc., while the privileged nuclear elite is highly paid and receives generous benefits.

Sources: Department of Energy FY 2024 Congressional Budget Request, Volume 1, Lab Tables and State Tables; *Quick Facts Los Alamos County, New Mexico*, US Census Bureau; *Quick Facts New Mexico*, US Census Bureau; *The Economic and Fiscal Impact of LANL*, UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research, 2020, <https://nukewatch.org/bber-lanl-economic-impact-presentation-08-17-20/>; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/release/tables?rid=110&eid=257197#snid=257229>; <https://nmeducation.org/new-mexico-ranks-dead-last-nationally-on-naep-test-results/>; *2022 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, Annie E. Casey Foundation; <https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/search/best-counties/>; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/PPU18NM35028A156NCEN>; <https://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Fiscal-Year-2024-Executive-Budget-Recommendation.pdf>; *Los Alamos County Citizens Guide, 2023*; <https://www.roadsnacks.net/poorest-states-in-america/>; DoL Worker Compensation Program; <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/best-states-for-education>; <https://www.nmvoices.org/archives/9631>; <https://www.wisebread.com/10-small-towns-with-the-most-millionaires-per-capita>; https://kids.kiddle.co/Los_Alamos_County,_New_Mexico; DOE WIPP Permit Comments, April 2023.

This fact sheet is available at <https://nukewatch.org/new-mexico-americas-nuclear-colony/>

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