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## Archived News Release--Caution: information may be out of date.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Office of Public Affairs

### OPA Press Release: Los Alamos Laboratory Reaches \$625,000 Settlement to Remedy Discrimination Against Hispanic Workers [05/13/1998]

For more information call: (202) 219-8211

The Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) today announced it has reached a \$625,000 settlement with the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) resulting from an investigation of discrimination against Hispanic workers in a 1995 layoff at the Los Alamos, New Mexico facility.

The settlement is part of a consent decree which requires Los Alamos to pay \$625,000 in back pay to 98 Hispanic employees terminated during a November 1995 reduction in force (RIF). The employees involved can expect to receive between \$3,841 and \$15,521 each. In addition, the lab reinstated 24 employees to comparable positions held prior to the RIF.

"I am pleased that we are able to provide this relief to the Hispanic workers involved," said Shirley J. Wilcher, OFCCP Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor. "Equal employment opportunity is the law and we intend to enforce that law fully, fairly and firmly."

The consent decree resolves a complaint of discrimination filed by Hispanic workers based on national origin that was identified in an OFCCP investigation that began shortly after the Los Alamos RIF in November 1995. OFCCP enforces Executive Order 11246 and other federal laws requiring federal contractors and subcontractors to guarantee equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability or veteran status and to meet affirmative action obligations.

OFCCP made an initial finding that Los Alamos failed to follow its own layoff criteria, which resulted in Hispanic employees being terminated at a statistically significant higher rate. Rather than pursue this claim through litigation, the parties have agreed to resolve the matter by consent decree. Los Alamos is managed for the U. S. Department of Energy by the University of California and is the major employer in North Central New Mexico. The Laboratory has approximately 6,000 employees and a total operating budget of more than \$1 billion dollars. Los Alamos administers the science and engineering of reducing the nation's stockpile of weapons of mass destruction.

"This case reflects OFCCP's ongoing commitment to protect our nation's workers at all levels of the workforce and to ensure that federal contractors comply with equal employment and affirmative action requirements," said Albert Padilla, regional director of the OFCCP office in Dallas. "When we determine that workers are let go on the basis of race, gender, Hispanic origin, or any other unlawful discriminatory criteria, OFCCP will step in to rectify it."

The investigation at the Los Alamos Laboratory was conducted by the OFCCP Albuquerque Area Office. The consent decree was negotiated by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office

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