
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
38th Annual Regulatory Information Conference
RIC2026
Regulation, Innovation and
Collaboration for a Safer Tomorrow
March 10-12, 2026
Bethesda North Marriott Hotel
and Conference Center
Rockville, MD
#NRCRIC2026
NRC.gov

Fueling Minds, Powering Reactors (W10)

Wednesday, March 11th, 2026

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Session Chair: Louis Caponi

Fueling Minds, Powering Reactors (W10):

- Nuclear regulators from around the world will discuss how their organizations are recruiting and retaining the next generation of nuclear safety and security talent
- Presentations in this technical session will highlight:
  - Perspectives on knowledge transfer, educational opportunities and grants, training, benefits, and more.
- Follow-on from:
  - "Youth Panel" discussions held during the IAEA's "International Conference on Effective Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Systems: Preparing for the Future in a Rapidly Changing Environment" in 2023
  - "Nuke Kids on the Block" panel at the NRC's 2024 RIC
- Conclude with open discussion and audience Q&A

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#NRCRIC2026 NRC.gov

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Regulation, Innovation and Collaboration for a Safer Tomorrow

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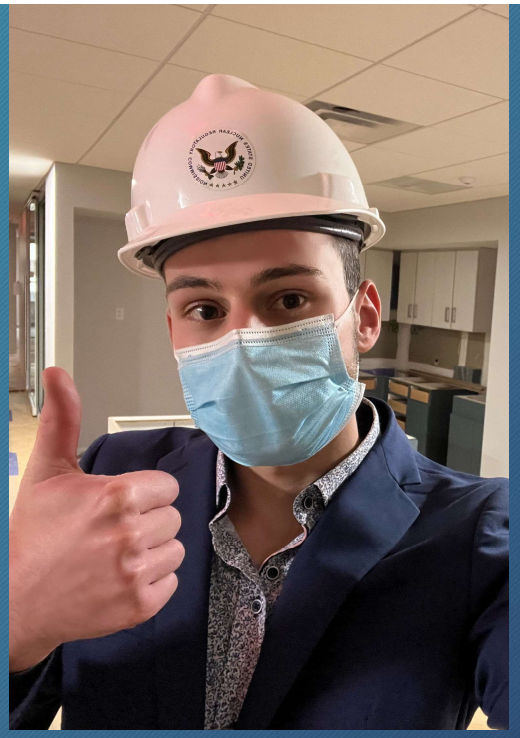


Fulfilling the NRC Mission Today and Tomorrow

Louis Caponi, Risk Analyst

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NRC's Recruitment Pipeline

- Recruitment Pathways and Outreach
- Benefits of these Initiatives
- Early Engagement with a STEM focus
- Support and Involvement during Educational Studies
- Early Career, Full-Time Employment Opportunities

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Recruitment Pathways and Outreach

- Engaging early and making connections
- Summer internships and entry-level job offers
- Career fair events
- Public job postings for all NRC locations

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Recruitment Pathways and Outreach

1. Early Engagement with a STEM focus
2. Support and Involvement during Educational Studies
3. Early Career, Full-Time Employment Opportunities

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Benefits of these Initiatives

- Strong and wide-reaching network 
- Extensive knowledge transfer 
- Sustains a highly technical work force 
- Improves retention rates 

Early Engagement with a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) focus

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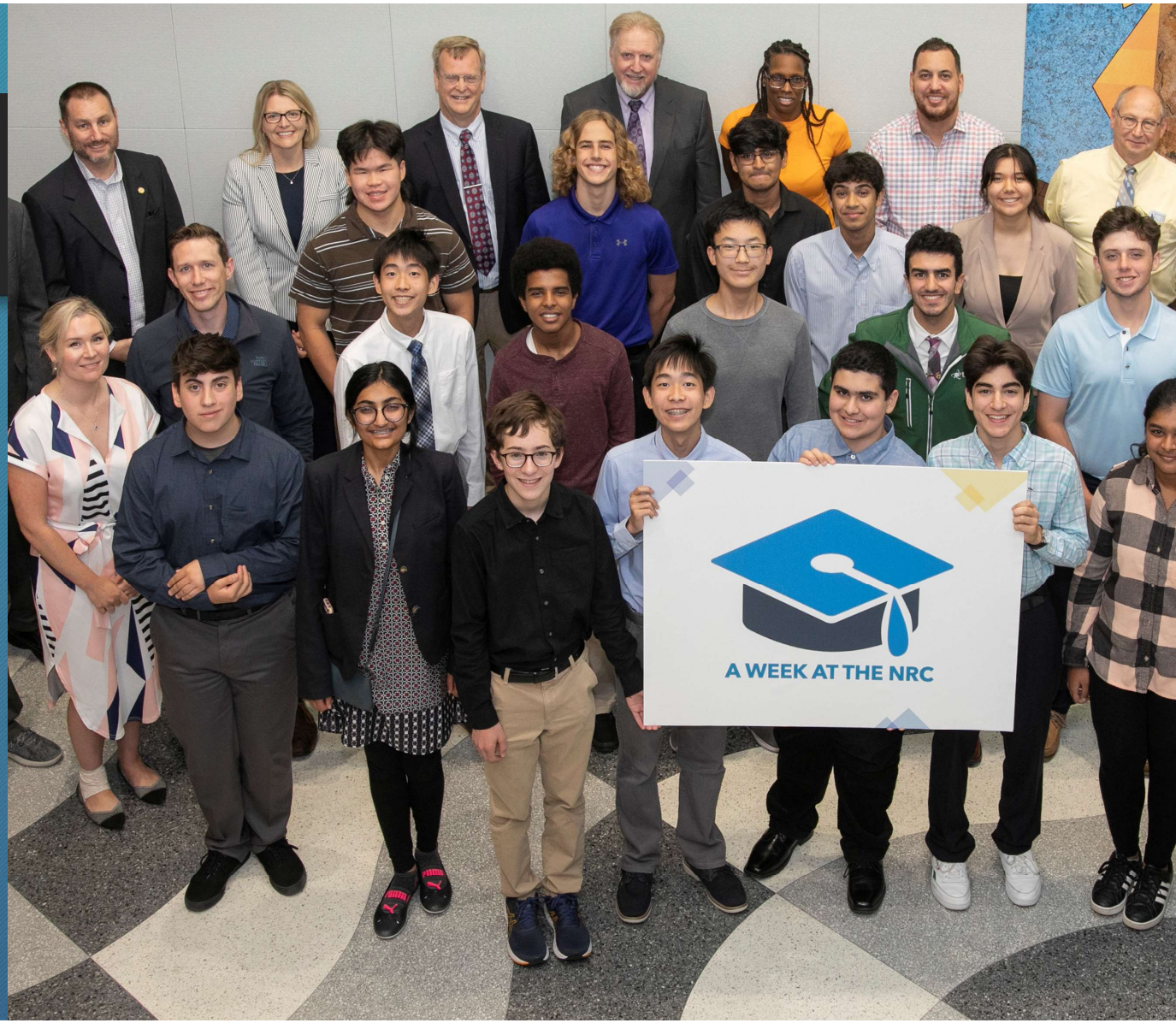
Engaging High School Students

"A Week at the NRC"

- Started in 2017
- A Week's mission is to enhance and increase the capability, diversity and size of the nation's future STEM workforce.
- Grassroots program was inspired by volunteers participating in the Montgomery Science Fair.



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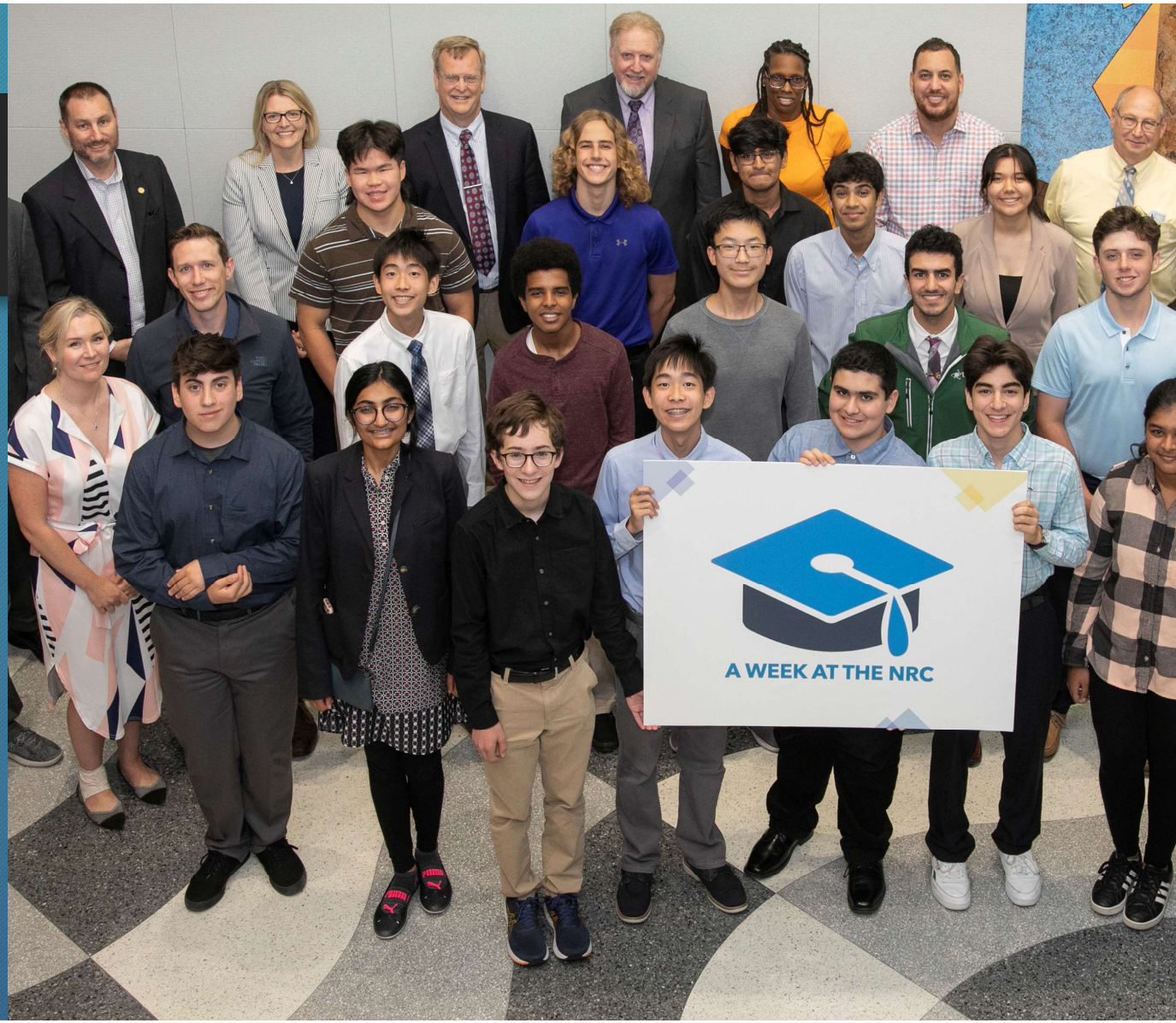
Engaging High School Students

"A Week at the NRC"

- Four-day educational experience for high school students
- Activities and seminars designed for students to deepen their knowledge of nuclear technology, federal nuclear regulation, and gain insights into the diverse range of work conducted at the NRC



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Support and Involvement during Educational Studies

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Financial Support through Student Grants & Scholarships

Nuclear Education Program - Scholarship and Fellowship

- Supports degrees in nuclear science and engineering, to develop a workforce capable of supporting the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials. Grants awarded to accredited U.S. institutions of higher education.

Nuclear Education Program - Trade School and Community College Scholarship

- Supports education in nuclear science and engineering, to develop a workforce capable of supporting the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials.

Student Internships

- **Paid temporary positions for college students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in science, engineering, and other disciplines related to the NRC Mission**
- **89 days or less, perfect for a summer break**
- **Gain valuable experience working in a professional environment**
- **EmbraceNRC: volunteer-run networking, training, and engagement program**

Student Co-Ops

- **Paid positions for college students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in science, engineering, and other disciplines related to the NRC Mission**
- **Participants integrate alternating periods of academic study and work experience, or parallel periods of academic study and work experience.**
- **Full-time or part-time employment**

Resident Inspector Development Program

Honor Law Graduate Program

Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network

Early Career, Full-Time Employment Opportunities

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Resident Inspector Development Program (RIDP)

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Develop competencies, including:

(1) legal basis and regulatory processes

(2) technical expertise

(3) regulatory practices

(4) personal and interpersonal effectiveness

https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/oversight/rop-description/resident-insp-program

Resident Inspector Development Program (RIDP)

Focused training to develop qualified inspectors that can adequately assess licensee compliance, identify deficiencies, and respond to emergent situations:

- Inspection Manual Chapter (IMC) 1245 "Qualification Program for Reactor Inspectors"

1. Fundamental Level Training Program
2. Basic Level Program
3. Apprentice Level Program:
   a) General Proficiency
   b) Technical Proficiency
4. Final Qualification Practical Assessment

- Refresher, Specialized and Advanced Training Activities

https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/oversight/rop-description/resident-insp-program

Office of the General Counsel: Honor Law Graduate (HLG) Program

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- Established in 1972, the HLG Program is the primary mechanism for hiring entry-level attorneys at the NRC.
- Two-year program with rotational assignments to three different OGC divisions, with a broad range of assignments during each rotation.

https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/employment/honor-law

MD1

Office of the General Counsels's Honor Law Graduate (HLG) Program

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- Two-year program with rotational assignments to three different OGC divisions, with a broad range of assignments during each rotation.
- Designed to provide maximum exposure to the work of the Office of the General Counsel. You will experience the office's diverse legal practice:
  - administrative litigation involving nuclear power plants
  - review environmental impact statements
  - draft proposed regulations for new or revised safety standards
  - review and litigation of personnel actions, equal employment opportunity cases, and government contract matters
  - work with the Solicitor in researching and preparing briefs for submission to the federal courts of appeals

https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/employment/honor-law

Slide 22

MD1 [@Louis Caponi] I noticed that slides 22 and 23 contain mostly the same information, with the only difference being the additional details on the right side of this slide. Was that intentional?

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Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network (NRAN) Program

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- 18-month training and development program for recently-graduated professionals in the fields of engineering and science.
- ADVANCE Act directed NRC to solicit for the program annually
- Member of the 2020 cohort
- Program Manager from 2024-2025

https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/employment/nran-faq

Conclusion

NRC has initiatives from high school to recent college graduates that support the Agency's needs for today and the future.

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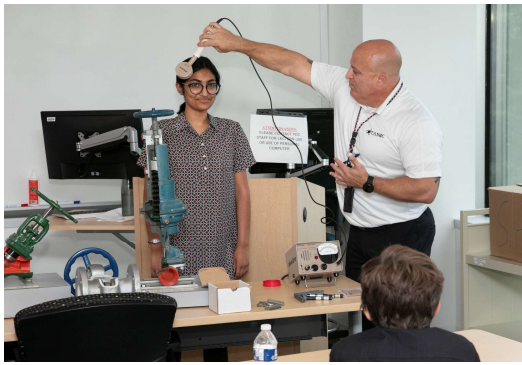

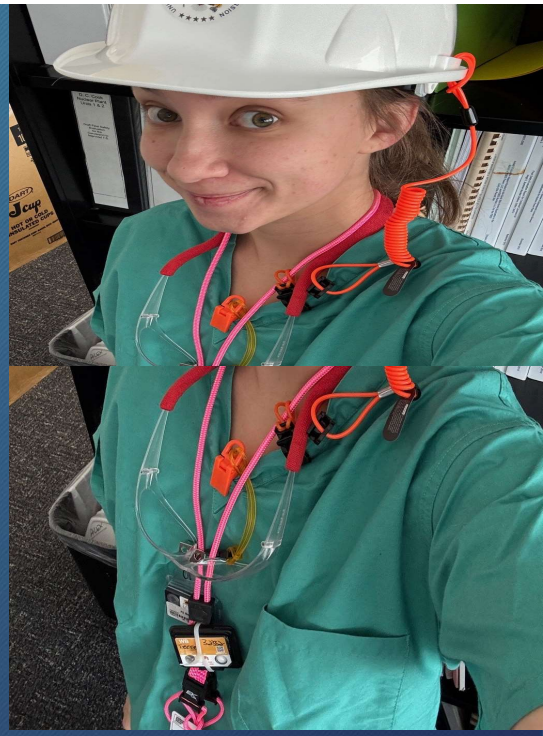

NRC Programs in Practice:
Alexandra Terres, Reactor Systems Engineer

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Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network (NRAN)

- Training program for recently graduated engineers and scientists
  - Recruits from various sources, e.g. universities and existing student development programs
- Develops well-rounded regulators in technical areas of agency need
- Advances technical and professional skills through direct project contributions and mission critical activities

Program Objectives

Publicly-available NRAN information can be found here

Training

Orientation to agency structure, mission, and public service.

Begin technical training, formal qualifications, and leadership competencies.

Apprenticeships

(3) five-month apprenticeships offered by Technical Offices and Regions.

(1) regional and (1) headquarters apprenticeship for breadth of experience.

Final Placement

Transition into permanent roles in Technical Offices and Regions following completion of the program.

Program Pillars

Publicly-Available NRAN Information Can Be Found here

Mentorship & Community

- Formally established SES, Peer, and Technical mentors,
- Introductions to Commissioners and executive leadership, and a
- Strong bond created between cohort members.

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- Periodic apprenticeship reports to cohort members, and
- Training to emphasize regulatory & technical competencies.

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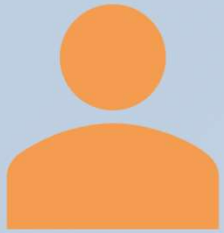


Involvement & Engagement

- Project management, technical reviews, and inspection work,
- High visibility projects outside of normal job responsibilities, and a
- Group project to develop tools for knowledge management.

All Roads Lead to the Mission

The NRC protects public health and safety and advances the nation's common defense and security by enabling the safe and secure use and deployment of civilian nuclear energy technologies and radioactive materials through efficient and reliable licensing, oversight, and regulation for the benefit of society and the environment.

My NRC Experience So Far…

Materials Rulemaking

Emergency Preparedness

Resident Inspection

Technical Review

Materials Rulemaking (NMSS – Student Co-Op)

- Independent Spent Fuel Storage Casks,
- Medical Events,
- NRC/DOT Regulation Harmonization,
- Agreement States,
- Financial Assurances for Decommissioning.

This introduced me to the regulatory process - **how the NRC staff goes from problem identification to solution implementation**. I also learned how we, as an agency, interact with other governmental organizations and the public to deliver our mission.

Emergency Preparedness (NSIR)

- Emergency Preparedness Exercises,
- NRC/FEMA Coordination,
- Integrated Public Alert and Warning System,
- Headquarters Operations Officers, and
- Community Outreach.

Here, I experienced how licensees execute the regulations and requirements the NRC sets for emergency preparedness. I saw how **coordination between the private and public sectors can build public trust** and assures safety.

Resident Inspection (Palisades, RIII)

- Reactor Oversight Process,
- Inspection and Enforcement,
- Licensing Operating vs. Decommissioning Plants,
- Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, and
- The Allegations Process.

With the Palisades Restart Team, I supported **a first-of-a-kind effort** to restart a previously decommissioned plant. I gained an in-depth knowledge of the **crossties between licensing, oversight, and inspection**. I also learned the importance of in-person community presence.

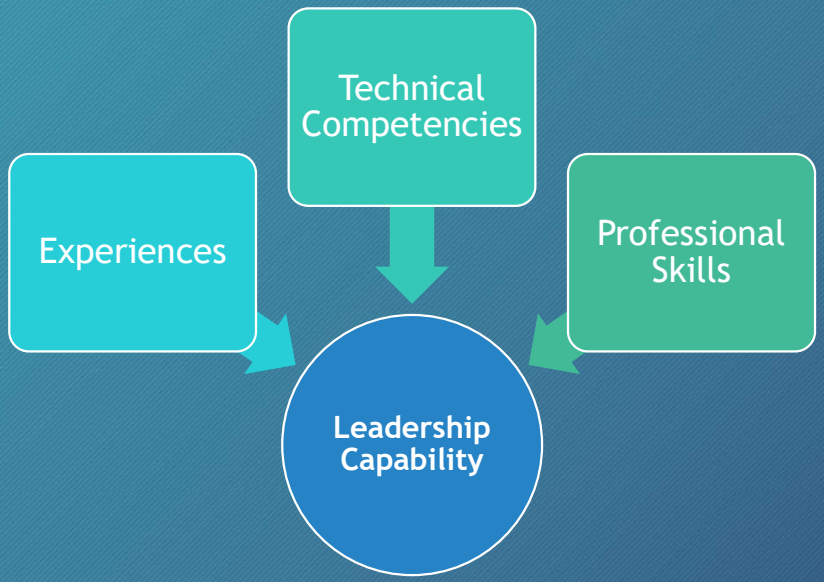
Technical Review (NRR)

- Reactor Vessels and Internals,
- In-Vessel Inspections,
- ASME Codes and Standards,
- License Amendments, and
- Regional Support.

I learned the workflow of safety evaluations **and the extensive effort that supports the NRC's decision-making process**. I enjoyed this style of work and decided to pursue a permanent position as an advanced reactor technical reviewer.

What makes this program so valuable?

Leadership Development



The NRAN Program fast-tracks young professionals to become the agency leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you to everyone who supports this program.

Stand up!!!

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Thank you