

# National Lab/Research Scientist Career Timeline

## ↘ Years 1 – 2

### Align skills with mission

Identify 2–3 labs/centers aligned with your methods and application space.
Build “team science” evidence: shared datasets, cross-group work, reproducible workflows.
Strengthen applied/transferable skills: instrumentation, modeling, data pipelines, safety culture.

## ↘ Year 3

### Network intentionally + translate your research

Attend at least one lab seminar/webinar/recruiting event; do 2 informational interviews.
Draft a mission-aligned research summary (what you can deliver in 6–18 months).
Develop a portfolio of outputs (papers, software, protocols, datasets, prototypes, patents).

## ↘ Years 4 – 5

### Apply strategically

Prepare materials emphasizing impact, reliability, and collaboration: CV, research statement, selected works, references.
Practice interviews focused on: problem framing, execution, teamwork, and measurable outcomes.
Track hiring mechanisms: postdoc-to-staff pathways, term positions, fellowships, contractor roles.
When you apply: target institutions by mission fit (teaching load, advising expectations, student population).