Employer of Choice

Bring your passion, commitment, and talent to Yanbu and find out how to make our success your own.
Parsons’ history in Saudi Arabia dates back to the 1950s; our first project was Dhahran Airport, completed in 1959. Parsons was the design-build architect and engineer for this award-winning terminal. Our team featured sophisticated themes of Arabic designs throughout the terminal.

Parsons has been active in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the name of Saudi Arabian Parsons Ltd. (SAPL) since the 1970s. SAPL has successfully delivered programs in a wide range of industry fields: defense and security, roads, bridges, utilities, water systems, sewer systems, waste management facilities, education facilities, government buildings, housing, and other facilities multibillion-dollar mixed-use projects. Our detailed knowledge and experience is critical to rapidly implement projects in compliance with local culture, regulations, standards, and practices.

One of Parsons’ most notable projects in Saudi Arabia is the Industrial City of Yanbu. As managing contractor since 1976, Parsons has been providing services to the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, finalizing the master plan and managing all infrastructure design and development for the new Industrial City.
Basic information on Yanbu

POPULATION STATISTICS | LOCAL GEOGRAPHY
SAPL employs between 55 to 70 western expatriates at the Yanbu Project. Some of our employees have been living there for the last 30 years. Per the latest official census, total population is around 51,500. An additional 270,000 people, predominantly Saudi and Mid-East/Asian, commute from the surrounding areas to work in the city.

HOUSING
Employees live in client–furnished housing in a mixed community environment—neighbors may be of any nationality. Almost all western expatriate positions are “family status”, however, unaccompanied westerners are single status and are assigned “bachelor” quarters.

TRANSPORTATION
Ride-sharing usually sees the new arrival through until he makes a decision on how best to handle his own transportation needs. Women are not permitted to operate vehicles of any kind; however, a decision on how best to handle his own transportation needs. Ride-sharing usually sees the new arrival through until he makes a decision on how best to handle his own transportation needs. Ride-sharing usually sees the new arrival through until he makes a decision on how best to handle his own transportation needs.

LEISURE / RECREATION
With the city located on the Red Sea coast, many recreational activities are centered on the water. Fishing, snorkeling diving (great coral reefs), sailing, and boating are very popular. Overnight camping and barbeques at the beach, in the surrounding mountains, or in the desert are popular weekend activities for the more adventurous. Yanbu is very close to other interesting places. Spain, Italy Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt and Kenya are popular short-haul destinations and the major cities of Europe are not far away. The two long holiday periods each calendar year afford excellent opportunities to visit these popular tourist destinations.

Yanbu Project Compensation and Benefits

COMPENSATION AND ALLOWANCES
• Base salary
• + Area Incentive
• + Completion bonus/Saudi Arabian Service Award
• Pay disbursed in US$ or Saudi Riyal cheque (or combination of the two) up to a maximum of four separate disbursements:
  • Furnished housing and utilities provided by the Client for allocation at no cost to employee.
  • Unaccompanied Airfreight Shipment/Storage Allowances
  • Upon initial relocation to Saudi Arabia and upon satisfactory completion of assignment and demobilization from Saudi Arabia, a relocation allowance will be paid to employee.
• Education for authorized dependent children in US Grades K through 10 is provided at employment location at no cost to the employee. Education allowance for grades 11–12 will be paid to employee.
• Education allowance for non-degreed expatriates for up to 2 children (grades 11–12 inclusive) for children attending public school, two site visits or 20 days per year school year, either at winter or spring and summer break, is authorized for dependent children attending grades 11–12 out-of-Kingdom. Eligibility for any education allowance commences on the date of the spouse’s mobilization (arrival in Kingdom) and terminates on the date of spouse’s demobilization.

INSURANCE
• The Benefits Program at Parsons reflects the Corporation’s commitment to provide a choice of benefits that respond to the changing needs of employees and their families. The Benefits Program, which started on the “yanbu year” basis, i.e., January 1 to December 31. Newly hired employees may enroll in insurance plans for which they are eligible at the time of hire, regardless of the month of the plan year. The insurance plans offered to SAPL employees are:
  • Medical
  • Dental
  • Vision
  • Basic Life Insurance (Company-provided)
  • Supplemental Employee Life Insurance
  • Dependent Life Insurance
  • Personal Accident Insurance
  • Disability Income Plan
  • Premiums for applicable Insurance Plans are made on a post-tax basis by monthly payroll deductions.
• SAPL carries Worker’s Compensation Insurance on all employees.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS (LIMITATIONS OF U.S. CONTRACT)
• Family status: Maximum three dependents (wife + 2 children not over 18 years).
• U.S. or Canadian citizens.
• Western University degree or non-degree with significant professional experience.
• Married status employees must bring with them original copies of the following documents for processing residency visas for family members:
  • College degree
  • If non-degree, provide high school diploma
  • Marriage certificate
  • Birth certificates of children
• Employee assignment to Yanbu in an engineering classification must submit:
  • Copy of degree from a recognized and accredited college or university
  • Client acceptance of candidate
• Mobilization will be authorized only after the employee’s medical report has been reviewed and accepted by the Royal Commission Medical Center.
GROCERY SHOPPING
Markets (commissionaires) are located throughout the city, are adequately stocked and provide a somewhat limited variety. Prices for imported foodstuffs are predictably more costly than their local counterparts. Additional markets that tend to cater to Arab tastes can be found in old Yanbu. Fruits, vegetables, meats, poultry, breads, and milk products are plentiful and available from a variety of sources.

COMMUNICATIONS
Residential telephone service is reliable and readily available. At the employee’s option, service can be requested in either one of three classes: Class A (call anywhere in the world), Class B (call anywhere within Saudi Arabia), and Class D (local service area only). Service deposits are required by SAPL during an employee’s first contract period after which they are refunded. “Call-Back” and similar low-cost long-distance plans do operate but are officially illegal. It has been announced that use of these plans will result in the cancellation of telephone service; however, we know of no instances of enforcement.

Mobile (cell) phone service has become increasingly popular over the past several years as subscriber costs have decreased and the service area has expanded to cover the entire country. The Saudi Telecom system is close to if not at par with the most modern of mobile phone technology. System reliability is high and user options include features such as text messaging and international roaming (requires a three-system mobile phone unit). Subscriptions for dial-up internet service—and thus access to web-based e-mail accounts (Hotmail, Yahoo, and the like)—are readily available from numerous Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the Yanbu area. Users may find an annual, unlimited use subscription (SR 900) advantageous while less intensive users can purchase pre-paid internet access cards from a variety of local retail shops. These cards are available in an assortment of pre-paid hour denominations. High-speed access (DSL) is also available, but significantly higher costs have kept this service out of favor with personal internet users.

Regular letter mail service is reliable and reasonably prompt. Parcel post is not recommended. DHL, FedEx, and UPS among others are primitive, few, and far between; weather and current patterns of the Red Sea is not without its potential dangers. Navigational aids are uncharted. Although these measures may seem restrictive, they can contribute to a safe recreational experience in that the destinations and probable whereabouts of people are known—critical information in an emergency. Off-roading in the desert with its seamless, unending expanses of sand, large dunes and the absence of signs and roads can confuse and disorient even the most experienced “old desert hands” and it is very easy to become lost.

MONEY AND BANKING
The Yanbu Project operates its own payroll department. Salaries are paid monthly and each employee is offered a variety of pay distribution options. These options include allocations to accounts at the Parsons Federal Credit Union, check distributions to individuals or financial institutions outside the country, as well as local currency checks. Checks destined for out-of-country locations are dispatched by courier service to Parsons offices in either Pasadena or London to be mailed to final destinations. The distribution options can be changed as often as desired.

FUN ACTIVITIES
Although our city is developing its own marina and recreational beach area, many of the above activities take place outside the confines of our community and there are aspects of governmental control and regulation that are required. Access to certain areas is restricted and may require special permission from local and/or national authorities. All watercraft must be registered, operational licenses must be obtained, and trips coordinated with the Saudi Coast Guard, Frontier Forces, or other military or police units having jurisdiction over the area of planned activity. People neglecting to observe the required formalities have been questioned, detained, and, in rare cases, arrested.

Although all of these measures may seem restrictive, they can contribute to a safe recreational experience in that the destinations and probable whereabouts of people are known—critical information in an emergency. Off-roading in the desert with its seamless, unending expanses of sand, large dunes and the absence of signs and roads can confuse and disorient even the most experienced “old desert hands” and it is very easy to become lost. The mountain areas contain their own array of hazards, and even the Red Sea is not without its potential dangers. Navigational aids are primitive, few, and far between; weather and current patterns are erratic and unpredictable, and many submerged reefs are uncharted.
The community has tennis, squash, and handball courts; gyms; and swimming pools; however, only a limited number of these facilities are available for "family" use. There is even a "golf course" — a really primitive affair scratched out of the sand but the avid golfers love it.

Boy and Cub Scout Troops, officially sanctioned by the Boy Scouts of America, are at Yanbu, but membership is very small and activities are limited.

One positive and often overlooked feature of an assignment at Yanbu is the proximity of Saudi Arabia to other interesting places. To name a few, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt, and Kenya are popular short-haul destinations and the major cities of Europe are not too much farther away. Our two long holiday periods each calendar year afford excellent opportunities to visit these popular tourist destinations, and many families include them as stopovers in conjunction with Home Leave trips.

Public social and cultural activities in the "Western" sense are non-existent in the country: such arrangements are contrary to Saudi custom and tradition. Consequently there are no movie theaters, concert halls, bars, cabarets or discos. Restaurants have segregated seating where families dine apart from single men. This segregation extends even to hotels and restaurants in the larger cities but is less onerous in those locations than in Yanbu.

**CLIMATE, CLOTHING, AND DRESS CODE**

Summer and winter are the two discernible seasons at Yanbu. During the summer, midday outdoor temperatures frequently exceed 100°F with the mornings and evenings being less hot, but not necessarily cool. Lightweight, loose-fitting clothing is essential. Sunlight is strong and bright; therefore, people with sensitive skin should take appropriate precautions (sunblock, caps, and hats).

During our winter season (December through mid-March), the days can be chilly and the early mornings and evenings quite cold. Winter also brings strong, gusty winds and sometimes rain. Jackets / windbreakers as well as sweaters are useful in winter.

Female attire while in public must always be loose (no leotards, Spandex, tight jeans, T-shirts, or other body-hugging items), unrevealing, and present a modest appearance (no tank tops, mini or short skirts, sleeveless or low-cut blouses; basically, the less bare skin exposed, the better). At present most, but not all, women wear the "abaya" — a black robe-like outer garment of relatively thin material that covers everything but the head — when venturing out in public.

Although there is no official dress code for men, shirtless-ness and shorts of any kind are not considered acceptable public attire. A shirt- or long-sleeved shirt [tie optional] worn with slacks has become the norm for work.

Wardrobe planning for an assignment to Yanbu should take into account the occasional dinner party / special event where a light weight suit for men and a cocktail dress for women might be appropriate. It is also wise to consider likely vacation destinations when planning what clothing to bring.

**QUALITY OF LIFE FOR WESTERN WOMEN**

The quality of life experienced by Western (non-Muslim) women residing in Saudi Arabia will be a function of their individual ability to adjust to certain realities: 1) the male-dominated / -oriented nature of Saudi society, 2) the traditional position of women in that society, and 3) the fact that western women are present in Arabia as an accommodation to their spouses who are here to work.

Dependent spouses do not have a "work visa" and are, therefore, not officially permitted to work. Nevertheless, some spouses have found unofficial full- and part-time employment at the HIC Medical Center and at the Yanbu International School (both Contractor-operated facilities). Nursing aides, teaching assistants, secretaries, and administrative assistants are typical categories of employment. Such positions are extremely limited in number and in no way represent an active job market for dependent wives.

In addition, the specifics of one's location play a part in the quality of life. Inside the gates of exclusive western housing compounds, daily life can closely approximate that in the US. However, compounds facilities do not provide everything, and sooner or later necessity will demand exposure to the reality outside the gates.
As mentioned previously, the living environment in our city is that of an integrated, mixed nature with none of the freedoms afforded by a housing compound. Religious Police (Mutaawa) are present in our community and are active in enforcing the compliance by non-Muslims with what are termed Islamic/Saudi Customs and Traditions. Enforcement is very subjective, erratic, and capricious: what is deemed offensive today may or may not be found offensive tomorrow.

With respect to women specifically, the most common problems arise over the issue of appropriate dress. Without a doubt, a western woman who ventures out in public dressed in a manner identical to her Saudi counterpart (jilbab and full veil) will experience no problems whatsoever (unless she’s behind the wheel of a car). However, the potential for dress-related problems increases in direct proportion to the degree to which her attire differs. Experience over the long term shows that non-Muslim women are not infrequently extended more latitude than that given Muslim women. It’s probably true that the Mutaawa would be happiest if there were no western women here to contend with.

The living experience of an accompanying spouse will thus depend on her attitude, adaptability, and tolerance levels. To risk overgeneralization, women with an active, “career-oriented” outlook may experience some frustration with the slow pace of life, constraints on acceptable public attire and conduct, and the limited range of outside-the-home activities. A women’s social group does exist (the Women’s Activities Coordinating Committee or WACC) with a goal of providing a range of organized activities, charitable and volunteer endeavors, and social functions.

**PETS**

The keeping of household pets is not a part of Saudi culture, however, the authorities do allow pets to be brought in and taken out of the country. This is accomplished with some difficulty and the vague rules and regulations that exist will vary with the type of pet involved, among other things.

Full-time veterinary services do not exist in Yanbu (a vet from Dhahran visits once a month). A full-time clinic operates in Jeddah, but that is a 3.5-hour drive (one way), and Saudia Airlines will not carry pets on its domestic routes.