

**Opportunity Title:** EPA Safe and Sustainable Water Resources Research Assistant

**Opportunity Reference Code:** EPA-SSP-0009-6

**Organization** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

**Reference Code** EPA-SSP-0009-6

**How to Apply** Submit application and supporting documents by clicking on Apply Now button.

*For more information, contact [EPAjobs@orau.org](mailto:EPAjobs@orau.org). Do not contact EPA directly.*


**Description Background:**


The EPA Environmental Research and Business Support Program has an immediate opening for an EPA Safe and Sustainable Water Resources Research Assistant with the Office of Research and Development at the EPA's facility in Duluth, Minnesota.

The Office of Research and Development at the EPA supports high-quality research to improve the scientific basis for decisions on national environmental issues and help EPA achieve its environmental goals. Research is conducted in a broad range of environmental areas by scientists in EPA laboratories and at universities across the country.

The National Health Effects and Environmental Research Laboratory (NHEERL) is responsible for scientific research on the effects of contaminants and environmental stressors on human health and ecosystem integrity. The impact of the Laboratory's efforts can be felt far beyond the EPA as our research enables state and local governments to implement effective environmental programs. NHEERL also collaborates with governments and organizations on issues of environmental importance. NHEERL's Mid-Continent Ecology Division (MED) in Duluth MN conducts research through the Sustainable and Healthy Communities (SHC) Program to help communities make decisions that lead to a more sustainable society and environment.



The selected candidate will assist with a project aimed at developing methods for effectively and efficiently characterizing composition of aquatic communities (e.g., zooplankton, benthic invertebrates, fish) in support of biological monitoring in general and aquatic invasive species early detection in particular. He/she will work as part of a larger research team, with responsibilities that include but are not limited to assisting with field sampling, laboratory analyses, electronic data processing, and general research support. He/she can expect to become familiar with environmental issues and research in the Great Lakes area, and develop skills in planning, conducting, and communicating this research.


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**Tasks include but are not limited to:**

- Assisting with field sampling (largely boat-based) directed at collecting aquatic organisms and associated environmental information with a variety of equipment and techniques,
- Working with computers to conduct data entry and quality assurance, and manage data files arising from this sampling,
- Working in a taxonomy laboratory to pick, sort, and identify organisms collected in samples (e.g., aquatic invertebrates, fish larvae),
- Compiling biodiversity information and DNA barcode or genetic marker information for Great Lakes fauna, possible in collaboration with a database development effort, and
- Conducting statistical, numerical, and geospatial analysis in support of scientific presentations and publications.

**Location:** This job will be located at EPA's facility in Duluth, Minnesota.

**Salary:** Selected applicants will become temporary employees of ORAU and will receive an hourly wage of \$26.51 for hours worked.

**Travel:** Travel for purposes of conducting field work is anticipated to be a regular part of this position. Field work is expected to be primarily day trips within a few hours of the city of Duluth, MN (travel by government owned vehicle or small boats), however multi-day sampling trips aboard a large research vessel are also possible. Travel is also possible for the purposes of meetings with collaborators or attending scientific conferences, although the extent of such travel is not yet known. Meetings with collaborators and attendance at conferences could involve multi-day trips, with hotel accommodation and travel by air or other commercial means.

**Expected Start Date:** The position is full time and expected to begin May 2016. The selected applicant will be a temporary employee of ORAU working as a contractor to EPA. The initial contract period is through May 14, 2017. EPA may elect to renew the contract for an additional four 12-month optional periods.

**Working Conditions:** This position will involve work in outdoor, laboratory, and administrative settings. Field work takes place primarily in late spring, summer, and early fall, whereas laboratory and desk work fills the rest of the year. While most of the field work will be day trips, some work is anticipated to fall outside ordinary business hours (e.g., evenings or weekends), and multi-day trips (with berthing on a research vessel) are possible. Field work typically involves physical exertion and travel in boats and motor vehicles, and can include exposure to water, heat, cold, and inclement weather. Laboratory work will include use of dissecting microscope, and handling of samples

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preserved in formalin or ethanol. The student will be provided with desk space and a computer, with training in various aspects of their job, and with appropriate safety equipment (life vests, waders, foul-weather gear, safety glasses, lab coat, etc.).

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**Qualifications    Eligible applicants must:**

- Be at least 18 years of age and
- Have earned a Master of Science (or equivalent) degree, in biology, ecology, chemistry, environmental sciences, limnology, marine sciences, or a related field of study within the last 24 months and
- Be a citizen of the United States of America or a Legal Permanent Resident.

*EPA ORD employees, their spouses, and children are not eligible to participate in this program.*

**Required Knowledge, Skills, Work Experience, and Education**

The applicant shall:

- Have education and/or experience in ecological field research and/or laboratory analysis of environmental samples.
- Have a working knowledge of laboratory taxonomic identification of organisms with dichotomous or matrix keys, and/or DNA-based identification of organisms.
- Have experience compiling and managing ecological data via spreadsheet or database software.
- Have demonstrated organizational skills and ability to work independently as well as in teams.
- Have strong written, oral and electronic communication skills.
- Have physical capability to work in the field, including travelling in research boats, lifting or pulling sampling equipment weighing up to 50 lbs, and tolerating a variety of weather conditions.

**Desired Knowledge, Skills, Work Experience, and Education**

It is desirable for the applicant to have experience with:





- Boat-based research,
- Freshwater aquatic fauna, and
- Microsoft Access.

**Eligibility    • Citizenship:** LPR or U.S. Citizen

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**Requirements**

- **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree received within the last 24 month(s).
- **Discipline(s):**
  - **Chemistry and Materials Sciences** (12 )
  - **Earth and Geosciences** (21 )
  - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** (14 )
  - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** (45 )

**Affirmation**

I certify that I am at least 18 years of age; a recent graduate with a Master of Science (or equivalent) degree, in biology, ecology, chemistry, environmental sciences, limnology, marine sciences, or a related field of study from an accredited university or college within the last 24 months; a citizen or a Legal Permanent Resident of the United States of America; and not a current employee of EPA ORD or the spouse or child of an EPA ORD employee.

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