

Opportunity Title: EPA Fellowship in the Science of Composting Food Waste and Organics

Opportunity Reference Code: EPA-OLEM-ORCR-2024-04

Organization U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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A complete application consists of:

- An application
- Transcript(s) – For this opportunity, an unofficial transcript or copy of the student academic records printed by the applicant or by academic advisors from internal institution systems may be submitted. All transcripts must be in English or include an official English translation. Click [here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV, including academic history, employment history, relevant experiences, and publication list
- Two educational or professional recommendations

All documents must be in English or include an official English translation.

Application Deadline 8/30/2024 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description ***Applications may be reviewed on a rolling-basis** and this posting could close before the deadline. Click [here](#) for information about the selection process.

EPA Office/Lab and Location: Two research training opportunities are currently available at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA), Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM), Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR) located in Washington, DC.

Research Project: Over one-third of the food produced in the U.S. is never eaten, resulting in a "waste" of resources—including agricultural land, water, pesticides, fertilizers, and energy—and the generation of environmental impacts—including greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, consumption and degradation of freshwater resources, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and degradation of soil quality and air quality. To address these issues, the U.S. has set ambitious goals to halve food waste and recycle half of all waste by 2030. The participant will conduct research to help the U.S. meet the National Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal and the National Recycling Goal, implement the National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics, and to support actions in the U.S. Methane Emissions Reduction Plan.

Under the guidance of a mentor, the participant will research composting of food waste and to the application of compost and other soil amendments made from food waste. The participant will have the opportunity to collaborate with peers at EPA, as well as other federal agencies and non-profit and academic institutions. They will collaborate with scientists in environmental and social sciences. This appointment is at EPA Headquarters and is not in a laboratory.

Learning Objectives: The participant may be involved in one or more of the following areas:



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- Quantifying the environmental and economic value of compost when used for green infrastructure (erosion and stormwater control), soil quality improvement, remediation of contaminated properties, climate adaptation (water retention and savings), and/or climate mitigation (carbon sequestration) on a variety of soil and land types, including rural, urban, and communities with environmental justice concerns.
- Building a user-friendly tool to calculate the environmental and economic value of applying compost (relative to alternatives), based upon the type of soil to which it is applied, for use by external stakeholders who could increase use of compost, such as farms, developers and other businesses, and state and local governments (e.g., transportation departments).
- Contributing to a decision tool to help food waste generators and policymakers determine whether to manage food waste by composting, anaerobic digestion, or other methods (e.g., incineration or landfill) depending on the environmental impacts and their individual circumstances (e.g., availability of infrastructure).
- Comparing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances PFAS and plastic contamination types and levels in compost and other soil amendments.
- Assessing air pollutant emissions from composting operations.
- Understanding the role of compostable products in increased adoption of composting.
- Assessing the barriers to increased composting of food waste in the United States and recommending potential solutions.
- Advising on the implementation and measuring outputs and outcomes related to the National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Lana Suarez (Suarez.Lana@epa.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor directly.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: August 26, 2024. All start dates are flexible and vary depending on numerous factors. Click [here](#) for detailed information about start dates.

Appointment Length: The appointment initially may be for one year and may be renewed up to three additional years upon EPA recommendation and subject to availability of funding.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full-time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. At this time stipends levels for Master's ~\$68,405; PhD ~\$82,764. Click [here](#) for detailed information about full-time stipends.

EPA Security Clearance: Completion of a successful background investigation by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is required for an applicant to be on-boarded at EPA.

ORISE Information: This program, administered by ORAU through its contract with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to manage the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), was established through an interagency agreement between DOE and EPA. Participants do not become employees of EPA, DOE or the program administrator, and there are no employment-related benefits. Proof of health insurance is required for participation in this program. Health insurance can be obtained

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through ORISE.

ORISE offers all ORISE EPA graduate students and Postdocs a free 5-year membership to the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA).

The successful applicant(s) will be required to comply with Environmental, Safety and Health (ES&H) requirements of the hosting facility.

Questions: Please see the [FAQ section](#) of our website. After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process, please email ORISE.EPA.REG@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should have received a master's or doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields, or currently be pursuing one of the degrees with anticipated completion before December 31, 2024. Degree must have been received within the past five years.

Preferred skills/experience:

- Knowledge of science related to food systems, composting, and/or use of compost and soil amendments.
- Knowledge of environmental science and policy, soil health, agricultural sciences, or interdisciplinary science policy.
- Strong analytical skills and oral and written communication skills.

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** LPR or U.S. Citizen
 - **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 months or anticipated to be received by 12/30/2024 11:59:00 PM.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Chemistry and Materials Sciences** ([12](#) )
 - **Communications and Graphics Design** ([1](#) )
 - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** ([7](#) )
 - **Earth and Geosciences** ([21](#) )
 - **Engineering** ([27](#) )
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([14](#) )
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([51](#) )
 - **Mathematics and Statistics** ([11](#) )
 - **Other Non-Science & Engineering** ([1](#) )
 - **Physics** ([1](#) )
 - **Social and Behavioral Sciences** ([8](#) )

Affirmation I have lived in the United States for at least 36 out of the past 60 months. (36 months do not have to be consecutive.)