

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Aquatic Entomology and Ecology Graduate Student Fellowship

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-PA-2026-0099

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-PA-2026-0099

How to Apply *To submit your application, scroll to the bottom of this opportunity and click APPLY.*

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. 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
- A letter of support from the university professor who will act as your university mentor. The "University Mentor Letter" should provide a summary of the research project and detail the mentor's plan for supporting and guiding the candidate throughout the research.

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

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Application Deadline 5/22/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description *Applications are reviewed on a rolling-basis.

ARS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agriculture Research Service (ARS), within the Foreign Arthropod-Borne Animal Disease Research Unit (FABADRU). The research site will be determined based on the candidate's approved graduate school location.

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific in-house research agency with a mission to find solutions to agricultural problems that affect Americans every day from field to table. ARS will deliver cutting-edge, scientific tools and innovative solutions for American farmers, producers, industry, and communities to support the nourishment and well-being of all people; sustain our nation's agroecosystems and natural resources; and ensure the economic competitiveness and excellence of our agriculture. The vision of the agency is to provide global leadership in agricultural discoveries through scientific excellence.

The Foreign Arthropod-Borne Animal Disease Research Unit (FABADRU) house at the National Bio- and Agro-defense Facility in Manhattan, KS uses multifaceted and interdisciplinary techniques to understand the interactions of insects (vector and pest), hosts, and the environment on the



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transmission of viruses or the impact of pest species affecting livestock.

Research Project: Black flies develop in flowing water and can be pests of vertebrates through their blood-feeding behavior. Current evidence indicates that these flies are important vectors of Vesicular Stomatitis virus (VSV) in the western United States. This opportunity will allow the fellow to pursue an M.S. or Ph.D. at a collaborating institution of their choice to study the biology of black flies and their role in VSV transmission. The fellow will be responsible for securing a graduate mentor at the institution and a letter of support will be required as part of the application submission.

Under the guidance of the USDA mentor(s), selected graduate mentor, and graduate committee, the fellow will conduct research related to black flies in the Rio Grande in New Mexico. The fellow will have the opportunity to contribute to the design, implementation, and analyses of studies on the biology and ecology of larval black flies and how the results of their research relate to transmission dynamics of VSV and integrated pest management strategies.

Learning Objectives: The fellow will have the opportunity to gain experience in entomological and aquatic field studies and techniques, insect identification, and statistical analysis of ecological data. Opportunities to learn insect rearing and testing of vector competence for VSV will be available. The fellow will have the opportunity to be involved in the development of manuscripts and present at professional conferences. Additionally, opportunities to develop soft skills pertinent to future career success will be provided.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Dr. Dustin Swanson (Dustin.Swanson@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: August 2026 or January 2027. Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year but may be renewed upon recommendation of ARS and is contingent on the availability of funds.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive an annual stipend of \$28,000, a \$10,000 tuition assistance award, and a travel training award for on-appointment travel.

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens only.

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 ARS. Participants do not become employees of USDA, ARS, 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.

Questions: Please visit our [Program Website](#). After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process, please email ORISE.ARS.Plains@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing a master's or doctoral degree in the one of the relevant fields (e.g., biology, entomology, animal science, wildlife ecology, or closely related field). The candidate may also be pursuing a bachelor's degree, provided they will graduate in 2026 and have already been accepted into a graduate program in one of the relevant fields.

Preferred skills:

- Experience with field-based research
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Previous experience in team and collaborative scientific environments

Stipend \$28,000.00 Yearly

Point of Contact [Janeen](#)

Eligibility • **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only

Requirements • **Degree:** Currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, or Doctoral Degree.

- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Chemistry and Materials Sciences** ([12](#))
 - **Communications and Graphics Design** ([2](#))
 - **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** ([17](#))
 - **Earth and Geosciences** ([21](#))
 - **Engineering** ([29](#))
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([14](#))
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([51](#))
 - **Mathematics and Statistics** ([11](#))
 - **Physics** ([16](#))
 - **Science & Engineering-related** ([2](#))
 - **Social and Behavioral Sciences** ([29](#))