Opportunity Title: USDA-APHIS Zoonotic Diseases Postdoctoral Fellowship
Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-APHIS-2026-0101

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-APHIS-2026-0101

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

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.**

APHIS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), located in Ames, Iowa.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is a multi-faceted Agency with a broad mission area that includes protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health, regulating genetically engineered organisms, administering the Animal Welfare Act and carrying out wildlife damage management activities. These efforts support the overall mission of USDA, which is to protect and promote food, agriculture, natural resources and related issues. APHIS' mission also includes addressing issues such as wildlife damage and disease management; regulation of genetically engineered crops and animal welfare; and protection of public health and safety as well as natural resources that are vulnerable to invasive pests and pathogens.

The Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL) is one of four National Veterinary Service Laboratories (NVSL) within Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). FADDL is tasked with providing protection to United States agriculture by providing 24/7 diagnostic support for high-consequence, transboundary animal diseases, such as African Swine Fever and Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

Research Project: The Serology section is part of the Diagnostic Bioanalytical Reagent

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Laboratory at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames IA. As part of the U.S Department of Agriculture, NVSL provides diagnostic services to federal, state, and private veterinarians in the US. The selected fellow will collaborate with microbiologists, veterinarians and biotechnicians to help identify the zoonotic species from mycobateria and brucella families in various species of animals using serological tests as part of the eradication program.

Learning Objectives: The participant will have the opportunity to learn about zoonotic diseases and their impact on interstate and international trade and community health. They will learn surveillance procedures, diagnostic testing methodologies and algorithms, serological diagnostic methods. The participant will learn how to develop serological diagnostic assays to decrease the cross reactivity and false positivity on the current assays. The participant will also learn the process of assay validation and incorporation into a clinical diagnostic lab under ISO-1705 procedures. The fellow will learn and contribute to the experimental design, data analysis and troubleshooting. The fellow will present their data at national and international meetings involving researchers, regulatory officials, stake holders. Fellows will have the opportunity to publish in the scientific literature, present and travel to scientific meetings.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Vijaya B. Nareddy (vijaya.nareddy@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: Spring/Summer 2026. 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 APHIS and is contingent on the availability of funds.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. **The anticipated stipend range is $61,000 - $81,000 annually.**

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 APHIS. Participants do not become employees of USDA, APHIS, 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 through ORISE.

Questions: Please visit our Program Website. After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process, please email USDA-APHIS@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a doctoral degree in the one of the relevant fields.

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- Background investigations will occur for the selected candidate so the individual can participate in with pathogens in biocontainment without an escort. Adjudication of a Special Agency Check (SAC) will occur before the selected candidate can start.
- An advanced BI security clearance will be conducted/adjudicated after start date, allowing for unescorted access to biocontainment. Paperwork for all of these clearances will be sent to the selected candidate after acceptance of the official offer from ORAU.
- Participation is performed in a BSL-2 laboratory, in office and field settings. Handling unknown pathogenic agents mandates the use of personal protective gear.

Preferred skills

- Knowledge of general laboratory practices including use of common laboratory equipment (centrifuge, micropipettes, biosafety cabinets etc)
- Functional knowledge of serological techniques such as: ELISA, neutralization assays, immunoassays
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills as well as critical thinking skills to develop experimental approaches and interpret data.
- A background in microbiology and diseases
- Ability to participate independently as well as collaboratively in a team environment.
- Demonstrate flexibility and self motivation
- Experience developing and validating serological assays
- Familiarity with quality control, assay standardization, or diagnostic test development
- Experience with animal or zoonotic diseases

Stipend $61,000.00 – $81,000.00 Yearly

Point of Contact Michele

Eligibility Requirements

- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
- **Degree:** Doctoral Degree.
- **Discipline(s):**
  - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** (14 👁)