

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Postdoctoral Fellowship in Plant Pathology

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-NEA-2026-0163

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-NEA-2026-0163

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 copy of an abstract or reprint of an article

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

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Application Deadline 6/5/2026 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), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), located in Frederick, Maryland.

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.

Research Project:

This fellowship is part of a project using integrative genomic and biological approaches to detect and manage emerging foreign fungal plant pathogens. Under the guidance of a mentor, you will participate in the discovery of virulence factors and mechanisms of pathogenicity. Specifically, you will engage in research aimed at characterizing high-consequence agricultural threats such as the fungal pathogen that causes

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wheat blast and the Select Agent plant pathogen that causes soybean red leaf blotch. You will help collect and analyze whole genome sequence data, develop fungal transformation protocols, and utilize other molecular tools to identify and characterize key factors of virulence. Due to the nature of the biological systems under investigation, you will receive instruction on the safe handling of regulated plant pathogens required for conducting research under strict biocontainment parameters.

Learning Objectives:

During the appointment, you will;

- Develop knowledge of integrative genomic and biological approaches used to detect and manage emerging foreign fungal plant pathogens.
- Gain understanding of fungal virulence factors and mechanisms of pathogenicity through mentored research.
- Learn methods for characterizing high-consequence agricultural pathogens, such as those causing wheat blast and soybean red leaf blotch.
- Acquire skills in collecting, processing, and analyzing whole-genome sequence data.
- Learn to design, develop, and optimize fungal transformation protocols.
- Build proficiency in molecular biology techniques used to identify and characterize determinants of virulence.
- Develop competency in safe handling and regulatory compliance practices for research involving regulated plant pathogens in biocontainment settings.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Kerry Pedley (kerry.pedley@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: 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 ARS 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 is \$85,447 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

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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 through ORISE.

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

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

Preferred skills:

- Favorable candidates will ideally possess:
 - A strong sense of motivation, accountability, and a willingness to learn and engage
 - Strong written and oral communication skills.
 - Experience with plants and/or plant pathogens.
 - Experience in molecular biology, high-throughput sequencing, and/or bioinformatics.
 - Experience using advanced scientific technologies to creatively solve agricultural challenges is beneficial.
 - Experience with fungal transformation is especially favorable.

Stipend \$85,447.00 Yearly

Point of Contact [Janeen](#)

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

Requirements • **Degree:** Doctoral Degree.

- **Discipline(s):**
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([12](#) )