

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Fellowship in Biological Soil Health for Farmers

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-MWA-2026-0170

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-MWA-2026-0170

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 6/19/2026 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 Columbia, Missouri.

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: Maintaining soil health is essential to optimizing the productivity of America's farmland. Soil samples collected from across the U.S. will be analyzed for a suite of soil health properties. The fellow will have the opportunity to be part of a nationwide, farmer-facing project to improve the Soil Health Assessment Protocol and Evaluation (SHAPE) tool. SHAPE was created to provide a systematic framework for evaluating soil health using measurable indicators and linking them to soil functions and management practices. This opportunity will provide experience handling soils from across the U.S., with an emphasis on biological soil health measurements, including soil respiration and soil enzyme activities, and provide experience using the SHAPE tool to report

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soil health results back to participating farmers.

Learning Objectives: Under the guidance of a mentor, the fellow will gain hands-on experience with laboratory methods for soil health assessment, learn how to handle and analyze different soils from across the U.S., and have the opportunity to learn how to generate user-friendly soil health reports for farmers.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Kristen Veum (kristen.veum@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: May 2026. Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for 9 months, 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 range is \$3,500 - \$3,700 monthly.**

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 through ORISE.

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

Qualifications The qualified candidate should have received a bachelor's degree in one of the relevant fields (agriculture, environmental science, soil science, life science, or related discipline). Degree must have been received within the past five years.

Preferred skills:

- Experience in a laboratory setting with soil samples preferred.

Stipend \$3,500.00 – \$3,700.00 Monthly

Point of Contact [Sara Beth](#)

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- Eligibility**
- Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
 - **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree received within the last 60 month(s).
 - **Minimum Overall GPA:** 2.50
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Earth and Geosciences** ([21](#) 👁)
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([14](#) 👁)
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([51](#) 👁)
 - **Age:** Must be 18 years of age
 - **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).