Opportunity Title: USDA-APHIS Chronic Wasting Disease Postdoctoral Fellowship
Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-APHIS-2026-0201

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-APHIS-2026-0201

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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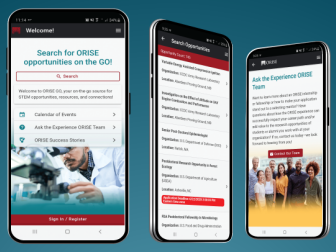
Application Deadline 7/3/2026 1:09:31 PM Eastern Time Zone

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.

Research Project: This opportunity focuses on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE), in particular chronic wasting disease, and is located at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa. As part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, NVSL provides diagnostic services to federal, state, and private veterinarians in the U.S. The Methods Development Section (MDS) has the responsibility of developing, optimizing and validating diagnostic assays for NVSL. The selected fellow will research within MDS and collaborate with

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microbiologists, veterinarians, and bio-technicians to support the development and deployment of assays for CWD detection. They will have the opportunity to learn about USDA program diseases and their impact on interstate trade and community health, as well as be in the field to collect samples. The fellow will present their data at national and international meetings involving researchers, regulatory officials, and producer groups.

Learning Objectives: The fellow will learn surveillance procedures, diagnostic testing methodologies and algorithms, and molecular epidemiology. In addition to learning how to develop and optimize assays, the fellow will learn process of assay validation and incorporation into a clinical diagnostic lab under ISO-1705 procedures. Additional learning opportunities in the lab include development of bioinformatics approaches to detect TSE resistant animals, molecular epidemiology, and development of bioinformatics approaches to aid animal identification and tracing during an outbreak.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Paola Boggiatto (paola.boggiatto@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: June 1, 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 $65,000 and $85,000 annually.**

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) 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 have received or be currently pursuing a doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields (Microbiology, Immunology, Infectious Diseases, Virology, Biochemistry). Degree must have been received within the past five years or received by June 30, 2026.

This opportunity is in a BSL-2 laboratory and occasionally with animal samples and carcasses. Handling unknown pathogenic agents mandates

the use of biocontainment hoods and wearing personal protective gear, which is strenuous on the individual.

Preferred Skills:

- Knowledge of general laboratory practices including aseptic technique and the use of common laboratory equipment (centrifuge, micropipettes, biosafety cabinets, microscope, etc)
- Functional knowledge of techniques such as: Enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), Real-Time Quaking-Induced Conversion (RT-QuIC), processing of biological samples, protein isolation, and recombinant proteins.
- Knowledge of molecular techniques such as: PCR; real-time PCR; PCR primer/probe design and validation; DNA/RNA isolation.
- Proficiency in technical writing, oral communication, interpersonal and organizational skills, as well as critical thinking skills to develop experimental approaches and interpret data. Experience with assay data interpretation and evaluation
- Experience with animal tissues in the diagnostic or research setting
- Experience with nucleic acid sequencing and analysis

Stipend $65,000.00 – $85,000.00 Yearly

Eligibility Requirements

- **Citizenship:** LPR or U.S. Citizen
- **Degree:** Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 months or anticipated to be received by 6/30/2026 11:59:00 PM.
- **Discipline(s):**
  - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** (1 👁)
  - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** (14 👁)
- **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).