

**Opportunity Title:** USDA-ARS Research Opportunity in Mycotoxin Biology

**Opportunity Reference Code:** USDA-ARS-SEA-2026-0272

**Organization** U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**Reference Code** USDA-ARS-SEA-2026-0272

**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** 9/11/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

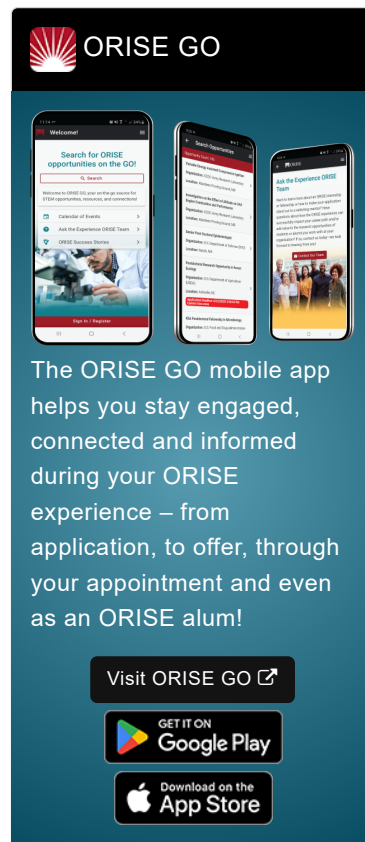
**Description** **\*Applications are reviewed on a rolling-basis.**

**ARS Office/Lab and Location:** A research opportunity is available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), in the Food and Feed Safety Research Unit at the Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, Louisiana.

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 mission of the Food and Feed Safety Research Unit is to safeguard U.S. agricultural commodities (e.g., corn, cottonseed, peanut, and tree nuts) from aflatoxin contamination using a multidisciplinary approach.

**Research Project:** The participant will be a part of research pertaining to USDA-ARS project 6054-42000-025-00D entitled "Development of Aflatoxin Resistant Corn Lines Using Omic Technologies." You will gain experience in plant physiology, plant biochemistry, and molecular biology experiments



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using diverse corn hybrids and fungal strains. This includes learning about a variety of laboratory and greenhouse techniques and helping in the development and implementation of novel methods to study interactions between corn hybrids and *Aspergillus flavus*, supporting efforts to improve control of mycotoxigenic fungi.

The fellowship may include basic laboratory maintenance, chemical analyses, and molecular biology procedures. You will also learn how to complete the following: collect, prepare, evaluate, and store corn and fungal samples; maintain accurate records; compile and tabulate data; analyze and summarize experimental results using computer software; prepare solutions and reagents; and ensure the safe disposal of waste materials.

This opportunity supports an initiative aimed at improving the future of U.S. agriculture by addressing one of its most persistent threats: mycotoxin contamination in corn.

**Learning Objectives:** Under the guidance of a mentor, you will gain skills in the following:

- Analysis and testing of fungal toxins in corn seeds
- Greenhouse experiments and care of corn plants
- Genotyping of corn
- Seed quality testing using sophisticated machines called NIR
- Care and growth of fungi using microbiology techniques
- Ample opportunity to use advanced molecular biology techniques
- General laboratory housekeeping

**Mentor(s):** The mentor for this opportunity is Lina Castano-Duque ([Lina.Castano.Duque@usda.gov](mailto:Lina.Castano.Duque@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 \$4,205 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

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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.Southeast@orau.org](mailto:ORISE.ARS.Southeast@orau.org) and include the reference code for this opportunity.

**Qualifications** The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a bachelor's or master's degree in the one of the relevant fields.

**Stipend** \$4,205.00 Monthly

**Point of Contact** [Sara Beth](#)

- Eligibility**
- Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
  - **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree.
  - **Discipline(s):**
    - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([13](#) )