

Opportunity Title: EPA: Research Opportunity on the Aquatic Toxicity, Uptake, and Partitioning of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

Opportunity Reference Code: EPA-OCSP-OPP-2026-0007

Organization U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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How to Apply *To submit your application, scroll to the bottom of this opportunity and click APPLY.*

A complete application consists of:

- An application
- Transcripts – [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. Your application will be considered incomplete, and will not be reviewed until one recommendation is submitted.

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

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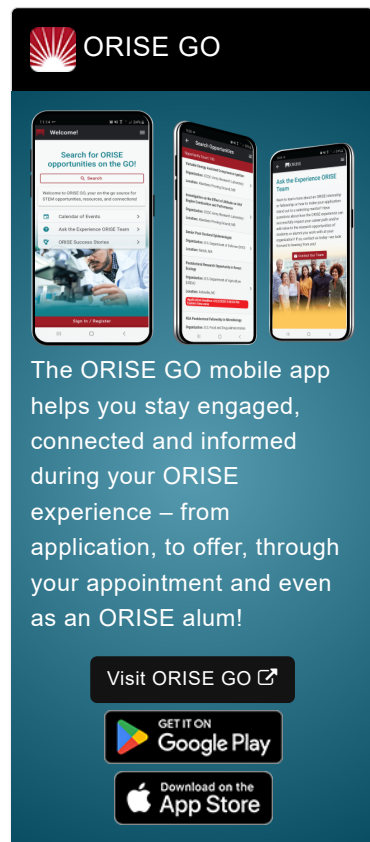
Application Deadline 11/23/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description ***Applications may be reviewed on a rolling-basis and this posting could close before the deadline.**

EPA Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), located in Duluth, Minnesota.

The mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment. EPA works to ensure that: Americans have clean air, land and water; National efforts to reduce environmental risks are based on the best available scientific information; Federal laws protecting human health and the environment are administered and enforced fairly, effectively and as Congress intended; Environmental stewardship is integral to U.S. policies concerning natural resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture, industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in establishing environmental policy; All parts of society have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks; Contaminated lands and toxic sites are cleaned up; and chemicals in the marketplace are reviewed for safety.

Research Project: Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are synthetic contaminants found ubiquitously in the environment and biota due to their broad commercial uses and unique chemical properties that render them recalcitrant to degradation. While some PFAS like PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) have received considerable attention in environmental and toxicological research, there remains a paucity of data on the distribution and effects of other PFAS. For example, within the past two and a half decades thousands of new PFAS have been



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identified with little to no information on their environmental occurrence or biological effects. Research is currently underway to test the effects of broad classes of PFAS on aquatic organisms, determine their uptake into those biota, determine metabolism where appropriate, and assess their partitioning behavior. The overall goal of this research is to inform the development of risk-based guidelines and to work with collaborators to develop models that predict ecotoxicity. With guidance from your mentor, you may be involved in any of the following training activities:

- Designing, planning, and executing sampling strategies to ensure accurate and representative analysis of complex aquatic toxicity experiments.
- Designing and implementing experiments to determine the accumulation of PFAS into aquatic biota.
- Exploring the partitioning behavior of PFAS in biphasic systems including octanol/water.
- Following established QA/QC procedures associated with toxicological and chemical research while also considering, designing, and implementing new QA/QC as part of continuing quality improvement.
- Using advanced instrumentation (GC, HPLC, MS, MS/MS, and Orbitrap) to quantify PFAS in exposure systems, determine purity of chemical stocks, assess uptake into biota, and establish partitioning behaviors.
- Participating in the setup, implementation, and takedown of aquatic toxicity assays, including test maintenance, tissue collection, and data collection for water quality and biological performance.
- Analyzing instrument data, employing statistical analyses, and distilling the results into reports of experimental results for group members, collaborators, and other interested parties.
- Presenting research findings at conferences and/or workshops at local, national, and international levels.
- Participating in preparing manuscripts for peer-reviewed publication or other reports or papers.

Learning Objectives:

- You will gain skills relating to laboratory techniques and best practices which will provide the practical foundation for future employment in research, contract, or production laboratories.
- You will have opportunities for honing skills related to public speaking and technical writing by means of disseminating the results of high-quality research.
- You will be integrated into a diverse and multi-disciplinary team of scientists who make up our research group. These researchers include chemists, biologists, and toxicologists covering a variety of technical backgrounds and expertise, including biological culture methods, toxicological assessments, and advanced instrumental analysis. Participation in this group will facilitate opportunities to engage with highly regarded scientists within and outside of the EPA, which will provide opportunities for you to grow your professional network while

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developing a strong base of technical skills and knowledge.

- This training opportunity will provide you with a solid springboard for advancing your career in the scientific field or pursuing advanced education.

Mentor(s): The co-mentors for this opportunity are Will Backe (back.will@epa.gov) and Ian Mundy (mundy.ian@epa.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: November 1, 2026. All start dates are flexible and vary depending on numerous factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year and may be renewed three to four additional years upon EPA recommendation and subject to availability of funding.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience.

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. citizens only.

EPA Security Clearance: Completion of a successful background investigation by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is required for an applicant to be on-boarded at EPA.

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 EPA. Participants do not become employees of EPA, 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.

ORISE offers all ORISE EPA graduate students and Postdocs a free 5 year membership to the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA).

The successful applicant(s) will be required to comply with Environmental, Safety and Health (ES&H) requirements of the hosting facility.

Questions: Please see the [FAQ section](#) of our website. If you have additional questions about the application process please email ORISE.EPA.Other@ornl.gov and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications A qualified candidate has obtained, or is currently pursuing, a master's degree in one of the relevant fields. Master's degree must have been received within past 5 years, or is within four months of completion. Candidates who have obtained a bachelor's degree in one of the relevant fields and has research experience equivalent to a Master's will also be considered. Bachelor's

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Preferred Skills:

- Laboratory research experience that extends beyond that encountered during a college courses.
- Experience with acquiring and processing water, sediment, and biota samples for chemical analysis.
- Experience using analytical instrumentation including liquid and gas chromatographs; and mass analyzers such as single quadrupole, triple quadrupole, and Orbitrap mass spectrometers.
- Familiarity with different instrumentation vendors and their software (Thermo, Agilent, SCIEX, Waters, etc.)
- Statistical skills relating to data analysis and data comparison.
- Experience with aquatic organisms as part of ecotoxicology research.
- Familiarity using Microsoft Excel and the R programming language.
- Skills in record keeping, quality assurance, quality control, and good laboratory practices.

Stipend \$50,460.00 – \$61,722.00 Yearly

Point of Contact [Rachel](#)

- Eligibility**

Requirements
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
 - **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree received within the last 60 months or anticipated to be received by 12/31/2026 11:59:00 PM.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Chemistry and Materials Sciences** ([4](#) )
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([2](#) )
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([1](#) )