

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Research Fellowship in Population Genetics and Microbiomes of Invasive Ants

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-SEA-2026-0312

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-SEA-2026-0312

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 10/9/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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

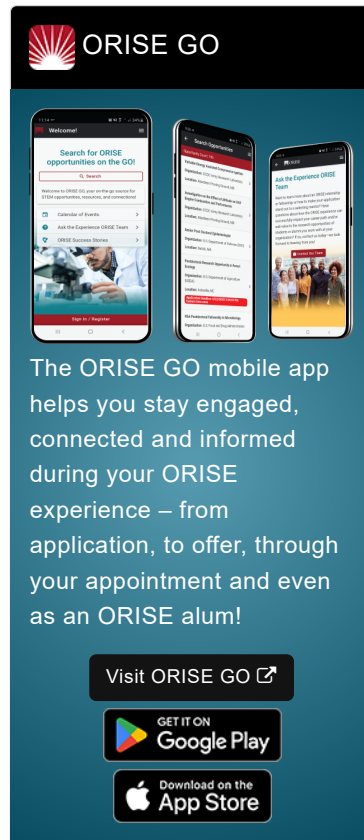
ARS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), located in Gainesville, Florida.

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: Under the guidance of your mentor, you will engage in laboratory studies using genetic and microbiological tools, perform field collections of invasive ants and whole nests, and participate in rearing fire ant colonies.

Learning Objectives: You will:

- Gain experience in experimental design, logistical planning for field and lab research, data collection, statistical analyses, and summarizing results for technical reports.



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- Learn how to conduct both basic and applied research and develop expertise in insect identification, insect rearing, behavior, and genetic and microbiological techniques, as well as fundamentals of statistics and bioinformatics.
- You will also have opportunities to develop your skills in preparing scientific presentations.

While hands-on experience in techniques and approaches used in entomological research will be gained, the general scientific methodologies learned will provide a foundation of research skills and aptitude applicable to a career in science.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Marina Ascunce (marina.ascunce@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: September 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 part time.

Participant Stipend: The anticipated monthly stipend is \$1,547.51. The exact monthly stipend will be commensurate with educational level and experience.

Citizenship Requirements: This opportunity is available to U.S. Citizens.

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.Southeast@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate is a U.S. Citizen who has received a master's or doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields (e.g. Entomology, Ecology, Molecular Biology, Microbiology, Plant Medicine, or a closely related STEM discipline). Degree must have been received within the past five years.

Preferred skills:

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- Coursework or experience in genetics, molecular diagnostics (e.g., PCR, sequencing preparation), insect identification, or microbial screening.
- Fieldwork experience.
- Basic statistics or bioinformatics skills.
- Familiarity with experimental design.

Stipend \$1,547.51 – \$1,547.52 Monthly

Point of Contact [Sara Beth](#)

- Eligibility**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
- Requirements**
- **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree received within the last 60 month(s).
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([10](#) )
 - **Veteran Status:** Veterans Preference, degree received within the last 120 month(s).