Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Engineering Fellowship
Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-HQ-2026-0353

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-HQ-2026-0353

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 1/8/2027 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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

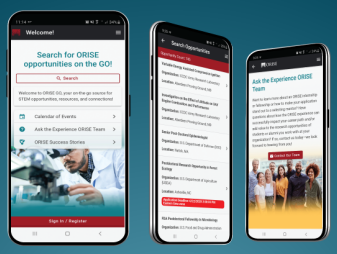
ARS Office/Lab and Location: A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS). **This opportunity is remote.**

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.

This specific opportunity is part of the ARS's Crop Improvement and Protection Research Unit in Salinas, California and the focus is on biology and management of insect vectors and viruses of vegetables.

Research Project: You will engage in research activities that explore automated approaches for cold-chain seed distribution within biological resource systems. By participating in these activities, you will gain hands-on experience that aligns with your educational background in biological systems, engineering, plant sciences, or operations research. Activities are structured to support learning, leading engineering designs under ARS mentorship, skill

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development, and exposure to USDA-ARS mission areas without functioning as a federal employee or representative.

You will study and examine how seed system workflows function in real-world settings and may collect and analyze information on biological materials, environmental conditions, and process flows within an automated distribution center. These activities are designed to deepen understanding of how biological materials move through storage, processing, and distribution pipelines. As part of this educational experience, you may engage with GRIN-Global's improvements, the biological and logistics system of record for accession, inventory, regulatory, and distribution data. You may learn to use GRIN-Global's software environment, including data entry, data quality evaluation, information retrieval, workflow standardization, and understanding GRIN's relationships between accessions, inventories, locations, and regulatory metadata. These activities provide hands-on exposure to core genebank information systems used across the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) and other USDA-ARS biological collections.

Learning Objectives: Under the guidance of your mentor, you will:

- Gain hands-on research experience exploring automated cold-chain seed distribution systems within biological resource and genebank operations.
- Apply knowledge in biological systems, engineering, plant science, or operations research to real-world seed-storage, processing, and distribution workflows.
- Develop engineering-design skills under USDA-ARS mentorship, with exposure to USDA-ARS mission areas and biological resource-management systems.
- Study how biological materials move through automated distribution centers, including storage conditions, process flows, and logistics operations.
- Collect, organize, and analyze information related to biological materials, environmental conditions, inventory movement, and workflow performance.
- Gain experience using GRIN-Global, the information system used to manage accession, inventory, regulatory, and distribution data for biological collections.
- Build skills in data entry, data-quality evaluation, information retrieval, workflow standardization, and interpretation of biological-resource metadata.
- Learn how accessions, inventories, storage locations, and regulatory records are connected within the National Plant Germplasm System and other USDA-ARS collections.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Nora Laptian (Nora.Lapitan@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: 2026/2027. Start date is flexible and will depend on a variety of factors.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year.

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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.

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

Qualifications The qualified candidate should have received or be currently pursuing a master's or doctoral degree in one of the relevant fields (Biological Systems Engineering / Agricultural Engineering; Industrial Engineering / Systems Engineering; Supply Chain / Operations Research in Plant Science, Agronomy, or related field with specialization in cold-chain robotics and automation).

Preferred skills:

- Experience with logistics, supply chain systems, or workflow optimization;
- Familiarity with biological materials in pharmaceuticals, seed systems, plant genetic resources;
- Experience with data analysis and decision-support tools (R, Python, or similar);
- Ability to integrate biological and operational systems thinking;
- Strong system-thinking and analytical skills with respect to workflows, storage and distribution of biologicals;
- Ability to evaluate and improve complex workflows;
- Effective communication across technical and operational teams;
- Adaptability in multidisciplinary environments.

Stipend $10,149.00 Monthly

Point of Contact Janeen

Eligibility Requirements

- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
- **Degree:** Master's Degree or Doctoral Degree.
- **Minimum Overall GPA:** 3.00
- **Discipline(s):**

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- **Computer, Information, and Data Sciences** (1 👁)
- **Engineering** (5 👁)