

Opportunity Title: USDA-ARS Postdoctoral Research Opportunity in Plant Pathology

Opportunity Reference Code: USDA-ARS-PWA-2026-0366

Organization U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Reference Code USDA-ARS-PWA-2026-0366

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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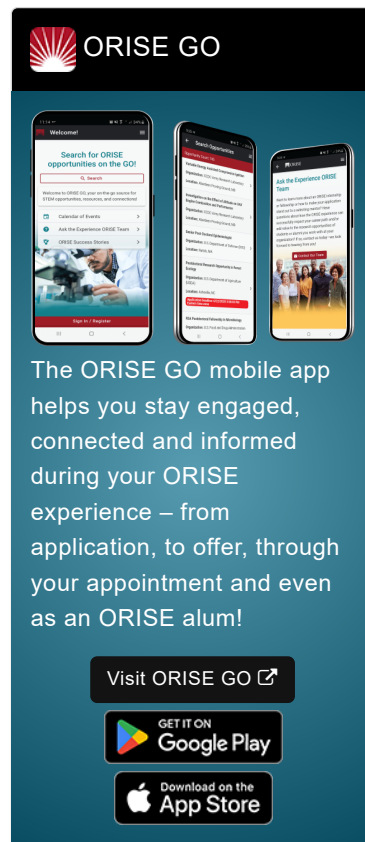
Application Deadline 11/20/2026 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

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), Pacific West Area (PWA) located in Salinas, California.

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: Soilborne diseases caused by the fungal plant pathogens *Verticillium dahliae* and *Fusarium oxysporum* are a primary constraint on production of high value specialty crops in California. Synthetic chemical soil fumigants can partially control these diseases. However, the negative impacts of fumigants on human health and increased restrictions on their use indicate non-fumigant methods for disease control are needed. The goal of this opportunity is to conduct research on the ecology, evolution, and management of soilborne



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pathogens, such as *V. dahliae* and *F. oxysporum*, impacting production of strawberry and vegetables grown in the Salinas Valley region of CA.

By collaborating with the mentor, you will investigate evolutionary changes in pathogen populations, assess the role of microbes and host physiology in disease resistance and susceptibility, and evaluate non-fumigant methods for disease control. Methods employed will provide training opportunities in the disciplines of plant pathology, microbial ecology, and plant physiology. Outcomes from research are expected to improve knowledge of interactions among soilborne pathogens, beneficial microbes, and crops as well as inform non-fumigant methods for sustainable disease management in strawberry and vegetable production.

Learning Objectives: Under the guidance of a mentor, you will have opportunities to:

- Advance science communication skills through preparation of scientific manuscripts and presentation of research results at research conferences and seminars.
- Develop statistical and bioinformatic skills through analysis of experimental data and population genetic and genomic data from plant pathogens and beneficial microbes.
- Learn new laboratory procedures, including but not limited to the following: microscopy, nucleic acid extraction, quantitative and RT-PCR, measurement of plant physiological characteristics.
- Expand personal professional network with federal, university, and industry scientists through collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Nicholas LeBlanc (nicholas.leblanc@usda.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research, please contact the mentor(s).

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: January 2027. 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.

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.

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Questions: Please visit our [Program Website](#). After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process, please email ORISE.ARS.PacificWest@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a doctoral degree in the one of the relevant fields. Degree must have been received within the past three years, or anticipated to be received by 12/31/2026.

Stipend \$80,000.00 – \$87,000.00 Yearly

Point of Contact [Janeen](#)

- Eligibility**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
- Requirements**
- **Degree:** Doctoral Degree received within the last 36 months or anticipated to be received by 12/31/2026 12:00:00 AM.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([6](#) )