Students and Graduates

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USDA Pathways Programs

We offer several career “pathways” for students and recent graduates in various fields through the USDA Pathways Programs. These pathways include paid internships for current students, a training and development program for recent graduates of any qualifying educational institution, and a fellowship program for recent graduates with an advanced or professional degree. (Students interested in the fellowship program may also apply in the fall of their final year of graduate school.) Pathways Programs may lead to a permanent position at USDA, without further competition, after completing the requirements.

Current Pathways Opportunities

To find and apply for current Pathways opportunities, go to USAJOBS (search “USDA Pathways”).

Go to USAJOBS

In addition, several Pathways internships available with APHIS include tuition assistance. These opportunities are for undergraduate and graduate students in nonveterinary fields of study, veterinary medicine (focused on animal health or animal welfare), and plant health science. To learn more, check out the program information below.

Expand All

APHIS Career Experience Program

The APHIS Career Experience (ACE) program is a unique student internship opportunity that combines on-the-job technical training with leadership and professional development. ACE interns form a cohort of peers across academic and career tracks, learning and collaborating together throughout the year-long program. ACE is specifically designed to prepare successful interns for permanent positions within the agency after graduation.

ACE is open to rising college sophomore and junior students who are in good academic standing. Interns will work full time through the summer and continue working at least 16 hours a week through graduation.

Applicants will need current transcripts and proof of enrollment, a USAJOBS account, resume, and any veterans' documents.

Have questions about the ACE Program? Contact hrdhires@usda.gov

Chester A. Gipson Internship Program

Chester A. Gipson Internship Program (2.42 MB)

- Open to undergraduate and graduate students in veterinary medicine and related fields
- Up to $25,000 per year for undergraduate studies; up to $50,000 per year for graduate studies

- Paid employment during summer and school breaks as a Veterinary Student Trainee with APHIS Animal Care
- Possibility of conversion, without further competition, to a permanent position with APHIS after completing a D.V.M. degree and meeting all Pathways Program requirements
- Apply online via USAJOBS; announcement opens in the spring each year for approximately 1–2 weeks
- Questions? Email us at gipsonscholarship@usda.gov.

Daniel E. Salmon Internship Program

Daniel E. Salmon Internship Program (752.86 KB)

- Open to undergraduate and graduate students in nonveterinary fields of study
- Up to $7,500 per year for undergraduate studies; up to $15,000 per year for graduate studies
- Paid employment during summer and school breaks with APHIS Veterinary Services
- Possibility of conversion, without further competition, to a permanent position with APHIS after completing a degree and meeting all Pathways Program requirements
- Apply online via USAJOBS; announcements open in the spring each year for approximately 2 weeks
- Questions? Email us at vs.recruitment.pathways@usda.gov.

Saul T. Wilson, Jr., Internship Program

Saul T. Wilson, Jr., Internship Program (1.42 MB)

- Open to undergraduate and graduate students in veterinary medicine and biomedical sciences
- Up to $20,000 per year for undergraduate studies; up to $40,000 per year for graduate studies

- Paid employment during summer and school breaks as a Veterinary Student Trainee with APHIS Veterinary Services
- Possibility of conversion, without further competition, to a permanent position with APHIS upon completing a D.V.M degree and meeting all Pathways Program requirements
- Apply online via USAJOBS; announcement opens in the spring each year for approximately 2 weeks
- Questions? Email us at vs.recruitment.pathways@usda.gov.

William F. Helms Internship Program

William F. Helms Internship Program (234.1 KB)

- Undergraduate students in plant health science and related fields
- Up to $5,000 per year for studies in your Junior and Senior years ($10,000 maximum)
- Paid employment during summer and school breaks with APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine
- Possibility of conversion, without further competition, to a permanent position with APHIS upon completing a degree and meeting all Pathways Program requirements
- Apply online via USAJOBS; announcement opens in the spring each year for approximately 2 weeks
- Questions? Email us at ppqhelmsscholarship@usda.gov.

Internships, Fellowships, and Externships

We partner with colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and others to create internships and other student work experiences at APHIS. Read on to explore the many ways you can find your future with us.

Expand All

1890 National Scholars Program

1890 National Scholars Program

- Open to high school seniors entering their freshman year of college and rising college sophomores and juniors in agriculture-related fields of study at participating universities
- Full scholarship (tuition, fees, books, and room and board) and paid employment each year for up to 4 years
- Application deadline: March 1, 2025

APHIS Animal Care Externship Program

APHIS Animal Care Externship Program (909.45 KB)

- Open to undergraduate and graduate students in any field of study
- Unpaid work experience with APHIS Animal Care nationwide
- Application deadlines: June 1 for fall, November 2 for spring, March 1 for summer

APHIS and Navajo Technical University—Veterinary Technology Program Internship

APHIS and Navajo Technical University—Veterinary Technology Program Internship

- Open to students in the Veterinary Technology program at Navajo Technical University
- Paid, 8–10-week internship (including housing and travel) with APHIS
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis for summer and fall internships

APHIS Veterinary Services Externship Program

APHIS Veterinary Services Externship Program (1.19 MB)

- Open to undergraduate and graduate students in any field of study
- Unpaid work experience with APHIS Veterinary Services
- Externships usually last 2–6 weeks, depending on the student's schedule and availability of APHIS Veterinary Services personnel
- Applications accepted year-round
- To apply, email us at vs.recruitment.pathways@usda.gov with a statement or cover letter describing your interest, background, and dates of availability; your resume; and your unofficial transcript.

Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL) Internship Program

Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL) Internship Program

- Open to undergraduate and graduate students in any field of study
- Summer internship in public service at APHIS or another Federal agency
- $3,000 stipend and reimbursement for travel expenses

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program

- Open to students in any degree-seeking program at an accredited higher education institution
- Paid internship (including housing and travel), academic credit, and professional development
- Applications are accepted year-round for spring, summer, and fall session internships

National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Internship Program

National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Internship Program

- Open to NSF Graduate Fellows
- Research internship with USDA or other partnering agencies across the Federal Government
- Application details available on the NSF website

Native American-Serving Institutions Internship Program

Native American-Serving Institutions Internship Program

- Open to undergraduate students in any field of study
- Paid, 8-week summer position at one of APHIS' offices around the country
- Applications are accepted through participating schools on a rolling basis

Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF)/USDA Summer Internship

Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF)/USDA Summer Internship

- Open to current students (sophomores and up) and recent graduates in any field of study at a TMCF member school
- Paid, 10-week internship at USDA, with roundtrip airfare, housing, local travel allowance, and stipend included
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis

Volunteer Services Program

- Open to all interested individuals, including both students (345.05 KB) and non-students ages 14 and up
- Unpaid work experience with APHIS at locations nationwide
- Volunteer assignments are usually short-term, ranging from 1 month to 1 year.
- Applications accepted year-round
- Questions? Email our Volunteer Service Coordinator at mrp.volunteer.program@usda.gov.

Youth Programs

We offer summer youth outreach programs at colleges and universities nationwide for middle and high school students. These programs are a great opportunity to explore careers in agriculture.

AgDiscovery

In 2026, USDA, in partnership with 10 universities, will offer a 5-day summer day camp outreach program for middle and high school students to explore career paths in agricultural sciences.

Safeguarding Natural Heritage

Are you 13–17 years old? Explore the many careers in agriculture through this 2-week summer program, held at Tribal Colleges and Universities and Native American-Serving Institutions nationwide each year.

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