

SEASONAL RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Job Description

Position Summary:

Under the direction of the Scientific Program Director and Entomologist, the Seasonal Research Assistant provides support with laboratory and field activities, performs field inspections and mosquito control operations, and assists with related operational duties of the Kern Mosquito and Vector Control District (District).

The incumbent exercises sound judgment in organizing, scheduling, and completing assignments independently. The primary responsibility of this position is to deploy and collect mosquito surveillance traps as part of the District's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. Responsibilities may also include identifying and evaluating mosquito breeding sources and determining the most effective and appropriate control procedures, including source reduction, biological control agents, and other methods consistent with the District's IPM program and applicable California laws and regulations.

This position requires the regular operation of District-owned fleet vehicles to travel throughout the District's service area.

This is a temporary, seasonal, non-exempt position.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The Seasonal Research Assistant will perform a variety of laboratory and field work to support the District's mosquito and vector surveillance and control programs. The duties listed below are intended as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment within this position. Duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Operate District fleet vehicles safely and in compliance with California Vehicle Code and District policies.
- Travel throughout an assigned area within the District's service area to conduct inspections and control activities.
- Utilize a variety of traps and methods to collect adult mosquitoes.
- Identify mosquito species and all developmental stages of mosquitoes.
- Identify other insects and arthropods.
- Maintain accurate records of surveillance activities and other data, both in handwritten and electronic formats.
- Assist with mosquito identification, enumeration, and data entry.

- Collect immature mosquitoes from aquatic habitats.
- Collect dead birds for arbovirus testing.
- Perform general maintenance activities (repairing/maintaining traps and collecting equipment, cleaning Quonset hut, District vehicles, lab equipment, etc.)
- Survey assigned areas to identify mosquito breeding sources and implement appropriate corrective measures.
- Apply pesticides and herbicides in accordance with product labeling, California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), County Agricultural Commissioner regulations, and District policies.
- Identify mosquito species and larval development stages and select appropriate control measures.
- Maintain accurate field records of inspections, pesticide applications, mileage logs, and operational activities, both in hand-written and electronic format, as required by County Agricultural Commissioner regulations and District policy.
- Assist with providing mosquitofish to the public.
Communicate professionally with property owners, residents, and members of the public to identify surveillance trap locations, and regarding mosquito problems and control methods.
- Attend required safety meetings and training sessions.
- Notify supervisors of operational issues, safety hazards, public concerns, or unusual field conditions.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Knowledge of safe vehicle operation and defensive driving practices.
- Knowledge of vector control equipment, pesticide use, handling, and regulatory compliance.
- Ability to operate a dissecting microscope.
- Ability to interpret pesticide labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
- Ability to read and navigate maps and GPS coordinates, including section, township, and range maps in rural areas.
- Knowledge of mosquito biology, ecology, and habitat identification.
- Ability to work independently in outdoor field environments.
- Ability to maintain accurate and legally compliant records.
- Ability to interact effectively and courteously with the public.

Minimum Qualifications

- High school diploma or equivalent.
- Ability to read, write, and communicate effectively in English.
- Ability to perform basic arithmetic.

- Ability and willingness to perform strenuous outdoor physical labor.
- Ability to work independently without direct supervision.
- Must be able and willing to operate District fleet vehicles as an essential function of the position.
- Possession of a valid California Class “C” Driver’s License at the time of appointment.
- Must have and maintain an acceptable driving record that meets the standards of the District and its insurance carrier.
- A DMV driving record (printout) is required upon conditional offer of employment and may be periodically reviewed during employment.
- Successful completion of a pre-employment physical examination and drug screening.

Physical Requirements

The position requires prolonged standing, walking over uneven terrain, lifting and carrying equipment and materials up to 50 pounds regularly and up to 100 pounds occasionally with assistance, bending, kneeling, climbing, and operating motorized equipment and District vehicles.

Incumbent must have:

- Full mobility and use of both arms;
- The ability for full extension above the head to lift or remove equipment during normal daily activity;
- Full range of motion to climb and hike into trapping, inspection, and treatment areas that may include use of hands, arms, feet, and legs;
- The ability and range of flexibility to reach over their heads, below their knees, and to bend over or squat down; and
- Possess the ability to move quickly within field work areas known to be infested with hazardous vectors, plants, or animals.

Environmental Conditions

Work is performed primarily outdoors and may involve exposure to:

- Extreme heat and weather conditions
- Pesticides and chemical agents
- Loud mechanical equipment
- Rough terrain
- Animals, insects, and poisonous plants
- Communicable diseases

The District provides required personal protective equipment (PPE). Employees must comply with all Cal/OSHA regulations, California Vehicle Code requirements, pesticide safety laws, and District safety policies.

Employment Provisions (Public Agency Requirements)

- At-will employment: Employment is at-will and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the District, with or without cause.
- Workers' Compensation: Employees are covered under the District's workers' compensation insurance program as required by California law.
- Disaster Service Worker: Pursuant to California Government Code §3100, all public employees are deemed Disaster Service Workers and may be required to serve in the event of an emergency.
- Political Activity: Employees are subject to applicable provisions of the California Government Code regarding political activities of public employees.
- Equal Employment Opportunity: The District is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and complies with all applicable federal and California laws, including the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals in accordance with the law.
- Public Records: Applications and employment records may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Gov. Code §7920 et seq.), except as otherwise protected by law.

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