The USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Genetic Improvement of Fruits and Vegetables Laboratory in Beltsville, MD, is accepting applications for temporary Agricultural Science Aid positions for two research projects. Part-time work during the school year can transition to full-time during the summer. US citizenship is required. Selective Service Registration is required for males 18 years old. Applicants must be capable of following directions, keeping detailed and accurate records, using a computer, willing and able to undertake some strenuous tasks in outdoor and greenhouse work environments, able to lift a minimum of 25 lbs, and have a valid US-issued driver’s license. Freshmen can be hired at a GS2 level ($14.30/hr) with 3 or more months of general work experience. Those with at least 6 semester hours in any combination of scientific or technical courses such as biology, chemistry, statistics, entomology, animal husbandry, botany, physics, agriculture, or mathematics, can be hired at a GS3 level ($15.60/hr). The projects are about plant breeding (strawberries, tomato, pepper) with opportunities to learn basic skills and safety protocols in the field, greenhouse, and lab, working with experienced technicians and scientists. We’re looking for students who want practical experience to support their careers in agriculture. E-mail Dr. Kim Lewers (Kim.Lewers@usda.gov) with your available dates, hours and resume; include contact information for listed references.

Pay table web site: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2022/general-schedule/>

Field work includes planting, maintaining, weeding, and harvesting crop plantings, packaging fruit for further evaluation, flagging desirable plants, and maintaining plant identity through labeling. Greenhouse work includes transplanting seedlings, potting and propagating, fertilizing plants and managing pests with predator insects. Lab work can include changing desiccant for collected dried leaves (DNA), seed extraction, and mixing solutions.

In addition to on-the-job experience, volunteers can have access to Ag-Learn, a USDA on-line training site that provides excellent on-line training in many diverse areas important for all jobs: internet security awareness, environmentally friendly waste management, diversity in the workplace, MS Office proficiency, lab safety, and many others.