

**Department of Transformation and Shared Services**

Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Secretary Joseph Wood

Director Kay Barnhill

August 23, 2023

The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chairperson
 The Honorable Mark Berry, Co-Chairperson
 Uniform Personnel Classification and
 Compensation Plan Subcommittee
 Arkansas Legislative Council
 State Capitol Building, Room 315
 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Senator Davis and Representative Berry:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) submits a request from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture for your review. First, the department requests to retain four (4) positions identified on the Act 796 list as vacant for over two years: an Agri Lab Coordinator (22169290), a Veterinary Specialist (22179494), an Engineer, P.E. (22087691), and a Microbiologist (22179521). The Agri Lab Coordinator was left vacant as the director of the Laboratory Services Division was absorbing those duties with his own, but as he retired on July 1st there is a need to fill this position. The Veterinary Specialist is requested to fill a need to address animal health issues in the state. The Engineer, P.E. position is requested in order to surrender within this request to offset the cost of a requested Surrender Pool position and the Microbiologist is needed within the Seed Laboratory to maintain the analysis and certification services for the state.

The Department of Agriculture is also requesting four (4) positions from the OPM surrender pool established by Arkansas Code Annotated § 21-5-225(a)(1), two (2) growth pool positions established by Arkansas Code Annotated § 21-5-225(b)(1), along with four (4) new titles. The classifications requested and positions being surrendered are listed below:

Department of Agriculture - Agriculture Division**CLASSIFICATIONS REQUESTED**

<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u># REQUESTED</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>
NEW	Senior Laboratory Scientist	GS11	1	\$62,531 - \$90,669
B080C	Forester	GS07	1	\$40,340 - \$58,493

Office of Personnel Management

501 Woodlane Street, Suite 205 * Little Rock, AR 72201 * 501.682.1753

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POSITIONS SURRENDERED

<u>POSITION NUMBER</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>	<u>LAST DATE VACATED</u>
22094709	Agri Inspector II	X146C	GS05	\$32,405 - \$46,987	12/29/2022
22077889	Agri Inspector II	X146C	GS05	\$32,405 - \$46,987	12/30/2022
22088394	Forest Ranger II	B098C	GS05	\$32,405 - \$46,987	7/29/2022
22158500	Forest Ranger II	B098C	GS05	\$32,405 - \$46,987	10/14/2022

Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Division

CLASSIFICATIONS REQUESTED

<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u># REQUESTED</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>
NEW	Agri Water Resources Div Manager	GS13	1	\$77,862 - \$112,899
X054C	Environmental Program Coordinator	GS07	1	\$40,340 - \$58,493

POSITIONS SURRENDERED

<u>POSITION NUMBER</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>	<u>LAST DATE VACATED</u>
22087691	Engineer, P.E.*	B023C	GS11	\$62,531 - \$90,669	2/19/2021
22087657	Administrative Specialist III	C056C	GS04	\$29,046 - \$42,116	6/26/2021
22087686	Agri Program Specialist	B147C	GS06	\$26,155 - \$52,424	8/21/2021

*This position is on the Act 796 list. The department requested to retain the position to surrender it as part of this request.

Department of Agriculture - Shared Services Division

CLASSIFICATIONS REQUESTED

<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u># REQUESTED</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>
NEW	CFO of Agriculture	GS14	1	\$86,887 - \$125,986
NEW	Agri General Counsel	GS14	1	\$86,887 - \$125,986

Although these positions are Growth Pool requests, the department voluntarily agrees to leave the following positions vacant until the next biennium, when they will be given up, in a show of good faith and to bring down the cost.

POSITIONS VOLUNTARILY LEFT VACANT

<u>POSITION NUMBER</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>	<u>LAST DATE VACATED</u>
22120295	Agri Program Specialist	B147C	GS06	\$26,155 - \$52,424	8/21/2021
22094681	Agri Inspector II	X146C	GS05	\$32,405 - \$46,987	9/30/2021
22088551	County Forest Ranger	B088C	GS06	\$36,155 - \$52,424	5/19/2023
22088520	Forest Ranger II	B098C	GS05	\$32,405 - \$46,987	6/30/2022

JUSTIFICATION

The Division of Agriculture is requesting to surrender two (2) Agri Inspector II's for the new title of a Senior Laboratory Scientist, grade GS11. This position is needed due to the recent absorption of the University of Arkansas's Tollett Laboratory and will ensure that the new laboratory, as well as all current laboratories, are fully integrated and accredited. Approval of this request will result in an anticipated cost of approximately \$63,713, including matching, and will be paid from a combination of special and general revenue. This amount is calculated based upon a new hire, although the department believes there may be a strong internal candidate to lower the cost.

The Division of Agriculture is requesting to surrender two (2) Forest Ranger II's for one (1) Forester, grade GS07. This position is requested to provide technical assistance

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across district boundaries to landowners so they may access cost share funding, as well as to assist districts with forest management planning and other needs. Approval of this request will result in an anticipated cost of approximately \$36,418, including matching, and will be paid from special revenue. This amount is calculated based upon a new hire, although the department believes there may be a strong internal candidate to lower the cost.

The Division of Natural Resources is requesting to surrender one (1) Engineer, P.E. and one (1) Administrative Specialist III for the new title of Agri Water Resources Division Manager, grade GS13. This position will be responsible for supervising the Water Resources Management Section which includes Dam Safety/Floodplain Management, Groundwater Protection and Management, Nonpoint Source Pollution, and State Water Planning. This will establish an equitable structure similar to the two (2) other sections that are also supervised by GS13 positions. Approval of this request will result in an anticipated cost of approximately \$82,570, including matching, and will be paid from special revenue.

The Division of Natural Resources is requesting to surrender one (1) Agri Program Specialist for one (1) Environmental Program Coordinator, grade GS07. This position is needed to assist with the Regulation 5 Program that was recently transferred from the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment. It will oversee nutrient management planning and permitting processes for animal agricultural operations throughout the state. Approval of this request will result in an anticipated cost of approximately \$43,018, including matching and will be paid from special revenue.

The Division of Shared Services is requesting two (2) Growth Pool positions for a CFO of Agriculture and an Agri General Counsel due to a significant increase in duties and responsibilities from the recent addition of several new program, grants, agency transfers, and changes in the industry. These positions would be utilized to promote the existing Chief Fiscal Officer and Managing Attorney and would be paid from both special and general revenue. As this would be a standard 10% promotion, approval of this request will result in an anticipated cost of approximately \$25,109, including matching.

The Office of Personnel Management has reviewed the request and **recommends** the retention of four (4) positions identified by Act 796, as well as the approval of four (4) Surrender Pool positions, two (2) Growth Pool positions, and four (4) new titles. The maximum cost for all pool positions would be approximately \$254,000 depending on whether positions are filled by external or internal applicants.

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Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.


STATE PERSONNEL DIRECTOR


DATE

KB/sd:15



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
—Governor

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205
agriculture.arkansas.gov
(501) 225-1598

Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

August 10, 2023

Ms. Kay Barnhill
Administrator, Office of Personnel Management
Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services
501 Woodlane
Little Rock, AR 72202

Dear Ms. Barnhill:

Due to the addition of new programs and expansion of several existing programs over the past several years, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture needs to restructure several sections to accomplish the Department's responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. The Department is proposing to retain four positions from the Act 796 list and obtain four new positions while surrendering seven positions. We respectfully submit the following personnel requests:

Act 796 positions

The Department has 13 positions impacted by Act 796 requirements. We are requesting to retain the following four positions:

- **Agri Lab Coordinator – MP04 - 22169290**
The Department is requesting permission to fill the MP04 Agri Lab Coordinator position. The position had not been filled for two years because the director of the Department's Laboratory Services Division has previously been in this position and continued performing its duties while also serving as director of the entire division. With his retirement on July 1, the hiring of a new director who does not have extensive previous experience within the Lab Services Division, and the growth of several programs within the lab over the past year, it is necessary to fill the position as soon as possible. This position will be used to accomplish necessary restructuring within the lab, enhance training to build resiliency, and to ensure the successful continuation of the Department's aquaculture testing program that is critical to the aquaculture industry's ability to market their fish. Arkansas leads the nation in the production of baitfish at \$22.1 million and sport fish at \$13.7 million, and the Department's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory is the only laboratory in Arkansas that can provide the required testing for Arkansas's aquaculture industry.
- **Veterinary Specialist – MP04 - 22179494**
The Department is requesting permission to fill the MP04 Veterinary Specialist position which has been unbudgeted and not incurring any costs. The position has remained unfilled in large part because the State Meat Inspection Program that was enacted during the 2021 session has not received as much participation as originally anticipated. However, the Department also planned to use this position to address broader animal health issues that have a tremendous impact on Arkansas's animal agriculture industry, the largest sector of the state's agriculture industry. Poultry, livestock, and catfish related agricultural products combined provide more than \$5.8 billion in revenue to the state each year. As animal disease outbreaks increase around the world, the Department needs adequate personnel to continue surveillance, training, education, and prevention activities to keep Arkansas's animal agriculture sector healthy and marketable.
- **Engineer, PE – GS11 - 22087691**
This position has been advertised since February 2021 without success due to intense competition from the private sector. There have been 23 applicants, 12 did not meet minimum qualifications, and two were interviewed but accepted other positions before an offer could be made. Because of these challenges, the

Natural Resources Division would like to surrender this position to obtain a GS13 Agri Water Resources Division Manager position to manage the Water Resources section and oversee the planning, development, and implementation of the State Water Plan. This position is further described below.

- **Microbiologist – GS07 -**
The Department is requesting to fill this Microbiologist GS07 position which has been unbudgeted and not incurring any costs. The position was created in 2021 as part of the State Meat Inspection Program that was enacted during the 2021 legislative session. Because the program has not received as much participation as previously anticipated, there has not been a need to fill the microbiologist position. However, because a GS07 position is needed within the Department's Seed Lab to maintain the analysis and certification services vital to Arkansas's producers and seed industry, the Department would like to use this position for the seed lab.

New positions

The Department requests to surrender 7 positions in exchange for the following four new positions:

Agri Water Resources Division Manager – GS13

- This position is being requested to supervise the Water Resources Management Section consisting of four separate sections to include Dam Safety/Floodplain Management, Groundwater Protection and Management, Nonpoint Source Pollution, and State Water Planning of the Department's Natural Resources Division (0455). This will also provide a similar supervisory structure to the rest of the agency as the Conservation and Water Resources Development Sections are both supervised by GS13 positions. In addition to supervisory duties, this position will directly oversee the creation and implementation of a new state water plan by directing staff activities, managing contracts, engaging stakeholders and reporting progress to superiors. The position is paid through special revenue.
 - The Department anticipates an external candidate at a cost of \$64,662.
 - The Department proposes to surrender 2 vacant positions in business area 0455 for a cost savings of \$13,200:
 - GS11 – Engineer, PE 22087691
 - GS04 – Administrative Specialist III 22087657
 - The Department projects a net cost of \$51,462

Senior Laboratory Scientist – GS11

- This position is needed for the administration and management of a broad range of services within the Laboratory Services Division, including its quality management system. The Department recently brought the University of Arkansas's Tollett laboratory under the Department's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory's National Animal Health Laboratory Network certification as a branch lab. This expansion enables the Department to provide enhanced response and other benefits to Arkansas's poultry industry, especially during animal disease outbreaks such as avian influenza which caused the death of more than 52 million birds in 2022. This position will ensure that the branch lab as well as all labs within the Department are fully integrated into the division's quality management system and are under the scope of all accreditations. This position will also provide extensive training that will build resiliency throughout the laboratory. This position is paid through a combination of special and general revenue.
 - The Department anticipates a strong internal candidate and estimates a salary increase of 10 percent.
 - The Department proposes to surrender 2 vacant positions for a cost savings of \$13,200:
 - GS05 Agri Inspector II 22094709
 - GS05 Agri Inspector II 22077889
 - The Department projects a net cost savings of \$5,590.

Environmental Program Coordinator – GS07

- The Department is requesting an Environmental Program Coordinator position to assist with the coordination of the Regulation 5 program that was recently legislatively transferred to the Department from the Department of Energy and Environment. This position would oversee the nutrient management planning and permitting processes for certain categories of animal agricultural operations across the state. This position would also work in conjunction with the Department of Energy and Environment and other partners. This position would be paid through special revenue.
 - The Department anticipates an external candidate at a cost of \$40,340.
 - The Department proposes to surrender 1 vacant position.
 - GS05 Agri Program Specialist 22087686
 - The Department projects a cost of \$4,185.

Forester – GS07

- The Department is requesting a GS07 Forester position to provide technical assistance to Arkansas landowners statewide. Unlike the Department's current foresters who have multiple duties within a defined district, this position will work across district boundaries under the direction of the Forestry Division's management team and specialize in the delivery of forestry practice plans that enable landowners to access cost share funding, such as the federal NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This position will also assist personnel within the Forestry Division's districts with forest management planning and other needs. This position is paid through special revenue.
 - The Department anticipates a strong internal candidate and estimates a salary increase of 10 percent.
 - The Department proposes to surrender 2 vacant positions for a cost savings at \$13,200:
 - GS05 Forest Ranger II 22088394
 - GS05 Forest Ranger II 22158500
 - The Department projects a cost of \$8,771.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests. Please let me know if additional information is needed.

Respectfully,



Cynthia Edwards
Deputy Secretary of Agriculture
State of Arkansas



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205
agriculture.arkansas.gov
(501) 225-1598



Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

August 10, 2023

Ms. Kay Barnhill
Administrator, Office of Personnel Management
Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services
501 Woodlane
Little Rock, AR 72202

Dear Ms. Barnhill:

Due to the addition of new programs and expansion of several existing programs over the past several years, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture needs to restructure several sections to accomplish responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. The Department is seeking to obtain two new positions from the growth pool and will withhold filling four positions. We respectfully submit the following personnel requests:

Growth Pool Positions

CFO of Agri – GS14

- The Department originally requested this new position, title, and grade in 2021 to address the substantial increase in fiscal responsibilities over the past several years. These responsibilities have increased again with the recent addition of new programs and several new state and federal grants that have extensive fiscal tracking and reporting requirements. The Agri Chief Financial Officer would assume the majority of these duties in addition to fulfilling other management and supervisory duties for the 21 employees within the fiscal section. This position is paid through a combination of special and general revenue.
 - We anticipate a strong internal candidate for this position and estimate a salary increase of 10 percent.
 - The Department proposes to refrain from filling the following vacant positions:
 - GS06 22120295 Agri Program Specialist
 - GS05 22094681 Agri Inspector II

Agri General Counsel – GS14

- The Department originally requested this new Agri General Counsel position and grade in 2021 due to the increased oversight and management of new and expanded responsibilities of the Department's legal section due to new programs, industry changes, and increased industry demands. These responsibilities increased again recently with the addition of new programs and several new state and federal grants that bring additional legal oversight and analysis of a broad array of legal issues. This GS14 position would also provide career path progression within the section and assist with recruiting and retention. This position would be paid through general revenue.
 - We anticipate a strong internal candidate and estimate a salary increase of 10 percent.
 - The Department proposes to refrain from filling the following vacant positions:
 - GS06 22088551 County Ranger
 - GS05 22088520 Ranger II

We appreciate your consideration. Please let us know if additional information is needed.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cynthia Edwards', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cynthia Edwards
Deputy Secretary of Agriculture
State of Arkansas