


Department of Shared Administrative Services

Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Secretary Leslie Fisk

December 17, 2025

The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chairperson
 The Honorable Les Warren, 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 Warren:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) submits a request from the Arkansas Department Agriculture (AGRI), Division of Agriculture, and the Shared Services Division, for your review.

AGRI is requesting two (2) positions from the OPM growth pool established by Arkansas Code Annotated § 21-5-225(b). The classification requested is listed below:

CLASSIFICATIONS REQUESTED

<u>BA</u>	<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u># REQUESTED</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>
9901	EEX02A	Agriculture Division Director	EXE01	1	\$141,125 - \$191,930
9901	IDN01P	Data Analyst	IST07	1	\$73,104 - \$119,274

CLASSIFICATIONS FROZEN

<u>POS #</u>	<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>POSITION NO.</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE</u>
0400	PAS03P	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	22150691	\$35,610 - \$52,703
0400	PAS03P	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	22087823	\$35,610 - \$52,703
0455	PAS03P	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	22087635	\$35,610 - \$52,703

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JUSTIFICATION

The Department of Agriculture is requesting the above positions due to the transition of the Department of Education's (ADE) Nutrition Services program and positions to AGRI, which occurred in October 2025. This transfer is pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between The Department of Agriculture and ADE and will require AGRI to oversee the federal nutrition programs. These positions are critical to ensuring program compliance and continuity of service.

The Agriculture Division Director position is needed to unify several program areas with work across multiple units with fragmented oversight. The Data Analyst position is required to handle the extensive and critical federal reporting requirements and analytics which the department does not currently have the staff to handle. AGRI agrees to freeze the above-listed positions from other business areas to offset the cost of the requested positions. The requested positions will be paid out of both Federal and General Revenue, while the frozen positions are paid from Special Revenue. Approval of this request will result in an anticipated cost of approximately \$299,921. However, the cost offset of \$23,760 will bring that down to a total anticipated cost of \$276,161, of which \$102,346 is General Revenue.

OPM has reviewed the request and **recommends** the approval of two (2) growth pool positions.

Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Kay Barnhill, Director
Office of Personnel Management

KB/sd:1-2



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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



DEC 01

Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

November 24, 2025

Kay Barnhill
Administrator, Office of Personnel Management
Department of Shared Administrative Services
501 Woodlane, Suite 105
Little Rock, AR 72201

Ms. Barnhill:

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture respectfully submits this request to establish two essential positions, an EXE01 Agriculture Division Director and an IST07 Data Analyst, while surrendering four currently vacant positions within the Department.

This restructuring reflects our commitment to operating more efficiently, strengthening oversight, and reducing long-term costs while supporting the Governor's priorities to better serve Arkansans through improved implementation of statewide food and nutrition programs. This includes advancing the Arkansas Plate and Rice in Schools initiatives, which will directly impact student health, support Arkansas agriculture, and increase access to high-quality meals.

The EXE01 Agriculture Division Director position is needed to unify and streamline several interconnected program areas that currently operate across multiple units with fragmented oversight. Consolidating these responsibilities under a single, highly qualified leader will provide centralized executive direction over the following mission-aligned programs:

- USDA food and nutrition programs
- Agricultural trade and export development
- The six research and promotion boards administered by the Department
- Arkansas Grown, Arkansas Made, and Homegrown by Heroes branding programs
- The Farm to School Program, including the Arkansas Plate and Arkansas Rice in Schools initiatives

The IST07 Data Analyst position is equally essential. The Department's reporting, analytics, and data-management needs have expanded significantly, particularly with the transition of nutrition-related programs, increased federal reporting requirements, and internal performance tracking. These responsibilities are currently dispersed across staff who are not dedicated analysts, resulting in incomplete or inconsistent data. A single, skilled data analyst will centralize and modernize data processes, reduce manual work, and prevent costly compliance errors.

Agriculture remains Arkansas's largest industry, and producers continue to face economic pressures, uncertain markets, and rising operational costs. Without appropriate Division

level leadership, the Department will continue to lack the structural capacity to fully leverage USDA programs, promotion boards, branding efforts, data, and market-development tools to protect and grow Arkansas's largest industry. These two positions are therefore essential for long-term economic stability, improved program effectiveness, and stronger statewide outcomes.

To support these positions, the Department will surrender four vacant roles:

Title	Position Number	Grade
Administrative Specialist	22150691	SGS02
Administrative Specialist	22087823	SGS02
Administrative Coordinator	22082834	SGS04
Administrative Specialist	22087635	SGS02

This results in an immediate net reduction in authorized positions and a more efficient organizational structure. Replacing four administrative-level positions with two highly targeted roles enables the Department to operate with fewer employees while increasing the technical capacity necessary for modern program administration.

This restructuring will save the state money not only by reducing salary and benefits obligations, but also by placing experienced, highly capable staff into positions where their expertise can meaningfully strengthen program outcomes. Consolidation allows the Department to eliminate lower-level roles that provide limited impact and often create duplicated or inefficient administrative tasks. With the right expertise concentrated in the right positions, the Department will be better equipped to meet state and federal requirements, manage taxpayer resources responsibly, and deliver high-quality services to Arkansas producers, schools, and the public.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please let us know if any additional information is needed.

Respectfully,



Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture
State of Arkansas

Positions Requested							
Business Area	# of Positions	Class Code	Title	Grade	Salary Range	*Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s) %
9901	1	EEX02A	Agriculture Division Director	EXE01	\$141,125-191,930	197,575.00	100% Federal
9901	1	IDN01P	Data Analyst	IST07	\$73,104-119,274	102,345.60	100% General
Total Estimated Cost of the New Positions including 40% match						\$	299,920.60
Total Cost to General Revenue						\$	102,345.60

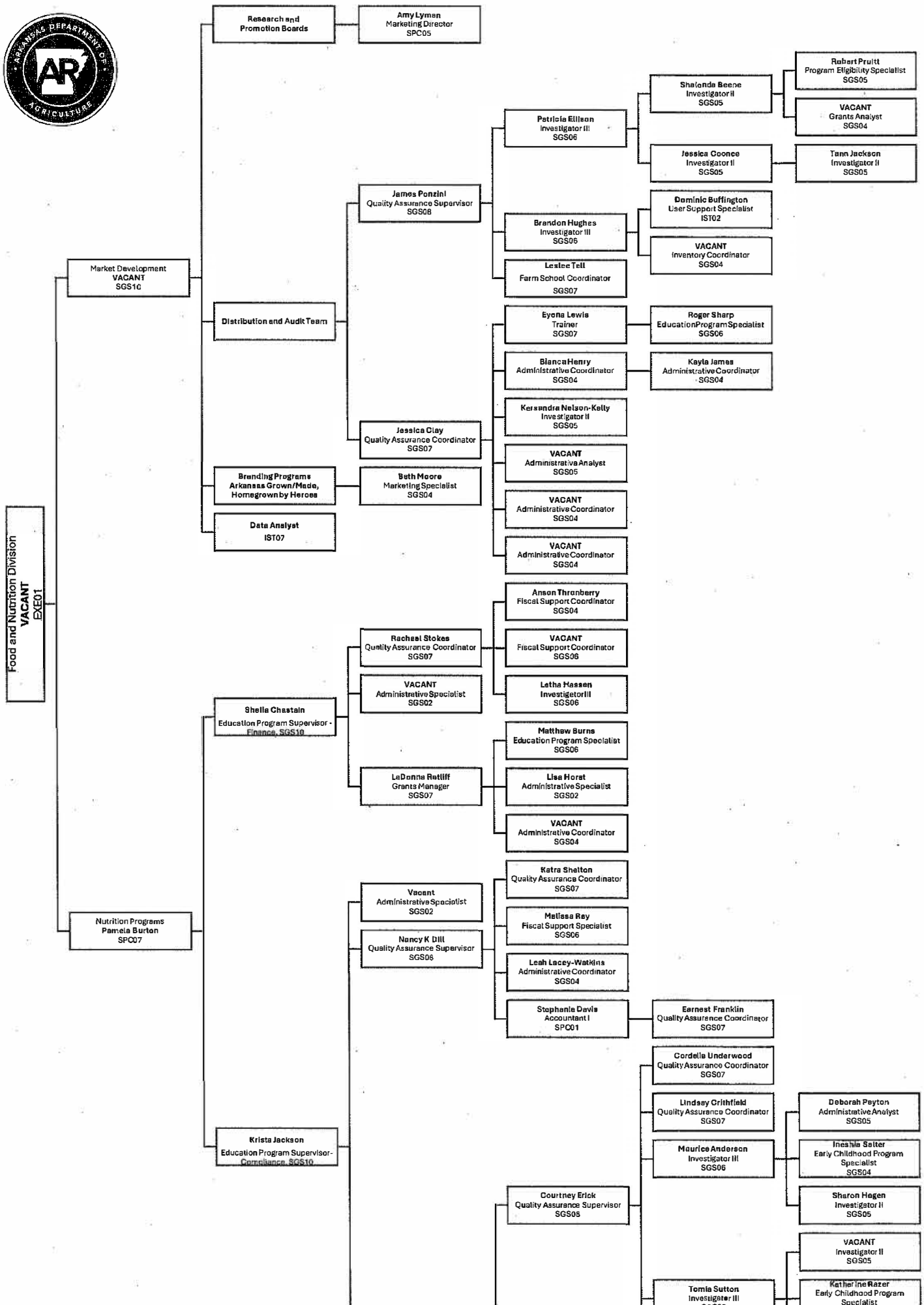
Positions to be frozen								
Business Area	Position Number	Class Code	Title	Grade	Date Vacated	Position Budgeted Y/N	**Estimated Savings	Funding Source(s) %
0400	22150691	PAS03P	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	8/26/2022	yes	\$ 7,920.00	100% Special
0400	22087823	PAS03P	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	11/11/2023	yes	\$ 7,920.00	100% Special
0455	22087635	PAS03P	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	1/5/2024	yes	\$ 7,920.00	100% Special
Total Estimated Savings							\$	23,760.00
Estimated Savings to General Revenue							\$	-

Total Estimated Cost to the Agency	\$	276,160.60
Total Estimated Cost to General Revenue	\$	102,345.60
Total Authorized Position Adjustment		-1

* The Estimated Cost calculation is based upon the Entry of the salary range, plus 40% matching.

** The Estimated Savings calculation is based upon the exit salary plus 40% match, only if a position has been vacant less than 1 year from the date of the request. Otherwise, savings is solely based on \$7,920 provided to EBD for all budgeted positions.

*** If it is expected that the salary provided to the employee hired into a new position will be higher than the entry rate, then the expected salary shall be used in lieu of the entry rate of the grade.





Department of Shared Administrative Services
Office of Personnel Management
Request for Pool Position

Business Area
9901

Department Name / Agency Name
Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Date
11/24/2025

Position(s) to be Surrendered

Position/Item Number	Classification Title	Pay Grade	Class Code
22150691	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	PAS03P
22087823	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	PAS03P
22087635	Administrative Specialist	SGS02	PAS03P

Classification(s) Requested

Classification Title	Pay Grade	Class Code
Agriculture Division Director	EXE01	EEX02A
Data Analyst	IST07	IDN01P

I hereby certify that:

- A. The position requested is critical to the operation of this Agency and a detailed justification for this request is attached. (Justification should be detailed and not less than one typed page in length.)
- B. Sufficient funds are available to fund this position at the requested grade.
- C. This is a full-time position that will not be used for any other purpose than that which is outlined in the attached narrative.
- D. The position to be surrendered is the highest grade position available and the loss of this position will not adversely affect the operation of this Agency.
- E. No current employee will be displaced by this action.

Paula Jones

HR Administrator's Signature

11/24/2025

Date

Department Secretary's Signature

12/4/2025

Date