



Orange County Water District Postdoctoral Research Associate - One Year Limited-Term Contract (LTC)

SALARY	\$36.05 - \$40.86 Hourly	LOCATION	Anaheim, CA
JOB TYPE	Limited Term Contract	JOB NUMBER	2025-00009
DEPARTMENT	Research & Development	OPENING DATE	02/18/2025
CLOSING DATE	3/11/2025 4:00 PM Pacific	FLSA	Determined by Position
BARGAINING UNIT	Non-Represented		

Description

**Postdoctoral Research Associate (One Year Limited-Term Contract)
Research & Development (R&D) Department,
Anaheim and Fountain Valley**

A Postdoctoral Research Associate position is available in the Research and Development (R&D) Department of the Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District). The mission of the R&D Department is to conduct applied research that supports the District's operational, regulatory, and water quality objectives.

With oversight from the R&D Department Director, the Postdoctoral Research Associate will carry out studies related to primarily per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), with an emphasis on treatment and destruction across multiple environmental and engineered matrices. Additional projects may be identified not related to PFAS such as groundwater recharge optimization and potable reuse treatment technology evaluation. The Postdoctoral Research Associate will be responsible for field, laboratory, and office work, designing and implementing experiments, and managing project/task timelines and deliverables including necessary for awarded grants. Additional responsibilities include identification and pursuit of grant funding such as proposal writing under the direction of R&D scientists and Director; assigning and coordinating tasks completed by interns; preparation of project reports; and presenting at conferences and internal meetings.

The District's R&D scientists focus primarily on the evaluation of new technologies and approaches that the District could consider implementing, including for PFAS, ranging from pilot-scale testing to laboratory-scale investigations, often in collaboration with technology providers and academic collaborators. This position will report to *both* office locations of the R&D Department as needed depending on the project and location that day or week. These offices are the Field Research Laboratory (FRL) located in Anaheim, CA near OCWD's groundwater recharge operations, or main OCWD office at District headquarters in Fountain Valley, CA co-located with the District's Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF). At FRL, R&D scientists carry out applied research largely in two domains: addressing

PFAS contamination in the region's primary drinking water supply (groundwater), and separately, optimization of groundwater recharge (e.g., monitoring advances; soil column studies). At Fountain Valley related to the GWRS AWPf, R&D scientists evaluate strategies for optimizing water purification for potable reuse (e.g., alternative chemical additions and disinfection methods) and monitoring methods, often at pilot-scale (or full-scale, such as in the case of trialing new sensors or data processing approaches). FRL is currently staffed by one full-time R&D scientist and two student interns. Fountain Valley is currently staffed by seven R&D scientists/other positions and three student interns.

In general, R&D work requires a willingness to maintain a range of fast-paced projects and work in sometimes challenging and laborious field conditions. A typical week could include troubleshooting a malfunctioning pump, clogged columns, and/or leaky test systems with assistance from District maintenance staff or R&D Department personnel; coordination with OCWD main laboratory for the collection and analysis of water samples; maintaining outdoor test systems impacted by heavy wind, rains and nuisance vegetation and algae; meetings with other District staff to make project decisions and review findings; data analysis and manuscript writing. The Postdoctoral Research Associate will take ownership of their own work such as managing their task timelines and deliverables, while working under the oversight and mentorship of the R&D Director as well as key R&D personnel that lead each research project that the incumbent will support.

Examples of PFAS projects that the Postdoctoral Research Associate may support include: media adsorbent column pilot skid monitoring and operation; second phase of study to evaluate PFAS removal in-situ during managed aquifer recharge using adsorbents; lab-scale method trials to assess IX media performance; external partner-led pilots of supercritical water oxidation (SCWO) or UV-based destruction of PFAS. Non-PFAS related project support will depend on the qualifications and interests of the candidate along with the project needs of the GWRS AWPf such as related to potable reuse treatment, monitoring, digitalization, and aquifer recharge.

Application Deadline: March 11, 2025

Estimated Start Date: April 2025, pending approval by the Board of Directors.

Applicants must provide a résumé, a 1–2-page research statement/cover letter (highlighting research accomplishments, current research interests and goals, research experience relevant to OCWD and this job description, and long-term career aspirations), and the names, emails, and phone numbers of three references.

Typical Qualifications

Applicants should have a strong interest in applied scientific research; excellent communication skills (presenting and writing) and organizational skills; strong quantitative skills; the ability to work both independently and within collaborative teams; experience designing and conducting scientific studies and experiments in laboratory and/or field work; knowledge of safe field and laboratory practices and procedures; the ability to prepare clear and concise presentations, reports, and publications.

Ideally, the applicant will have experience with PFAS or other trace-level organic contaminants in the field of water, wastewater, and/or water reuse. However, more important is demonstrated experience in designing, executing, and reporting field-, pilot-, and/or laboratory-scale studies at the PhD level, especially field or pilot experience.

A PhD in a scientific or engineering discipline (or pending conferral of degree) related to the field of water is required, with research experience in topics such as water quality, water treatment, chemistry, hydrology/hydrogeology, data science, related instrumentation and monitoring, etc.

License: Valid California Class "C" Driver's License and proof of automobile insurance is required.

Note: OCWD does not sponsor work visas.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The conditions herein are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential job functions.

Physical: Positions in this class typically require reaching, lifting, grasping, talking, hearing, seeing, and repetitive motion. Light Work: Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, and/or negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. If the use of arm and/or leg controls requires exertion of forces greater than that for Sedentary Work and the worker sits most of the time, the job is rated for Light Work. Incumbents may be subjected to moving mechanical parts, fumes, odors, chemicals, extreme temperatures, workspace restrictions, intense noise, and travel. [Process Specialist] – May require Medium Work: Exerting up to 50 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 20 pounds of force frequently, and/or up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects. Incumbents require sufficient physical ability to work in office and field settings; stand or sit for prolonged periods of time; operate office equipment including use of a computer keyboard; push, pull, lift, and/or carry light amounts of weight; verbally communicate to exchange information.

Vision: See in the normal visual range with or without correction; vision sufficient to read computer screens and printed documents; and to operate assigned equipment.

Hearing: Hear in the normal audio range with or without correction.

Supplemental Information

TERM:

The term of the Postdoctoral Research Associate position will be a one-year appointment via a limited-term (at will) contract, with the possibility of up to two annual renewals contingent on satisfactory performance, availability of funds, and project life.

Schedule:

M-F 8:00am – 5:00pm (40 hours/week)

Locations:

This position will report to both office locations of the R&D Department as needed, depending on the project and location for that day or week:

- OCWD Field Research Laboratory, 4060 E. La Palma Ave, CA 92807
- OCWD Main Office, 18700 Ward St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Hourly Range: \$36.05 - \$40.86 per hour (Non-exempt)

You must submit an OCWD online employment application to be considered. Please visit www.ocwd.com to complete an application. A valid California driver's license and proof of automobile insurance is required.

Applications will be accepted until a sufficient number apply. EOE

Employer

Orange County Water District

Address

18700 Ward Street

Fountain Valley, California, 92708

Phone

714-378-3200

Website

<http://www.ocwd.com>