

The American Phytopathological Society



In Focus: Building out the Plant Pathology & Microbe Workforce

About APS

The American Phytopathological Society (APS), a non-profit, professional scientific organization representing over 3,600 scientists and practitioners of plant pathology, is dedicated to the study and management of plant diseases, especially as it relates to promoting plant health and providing food, feed, fiber, energy, and ecosystem services for an increasing world population. APS is the premier society dedicated to high quality, innovative science for crop and forest management of plant pathogens, pests, and diseases.

APS is committed to strengthening the future of plant pathology by supporting workforce expansion policies. Our society works closely with the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research and the private industry on finding sector-wide solutions to expanding the workforce pipeline.

Growing our Workforce

Healthy plants are essential for ensuring the quality and affordability of the nation's food, fuel, and fiber supply. Addressing plant health challenges and safeguarding agricultural productivity require a robust, skilled, and well-trained workforce. As the threats to plant health become more complex due to natural/environmental hazards, globalization, and emerging pathogens, APS recognizes the urgency of investing in initiatives that grow and sustain the next generation of plant health professionals. Expanding workforce capacity ensures that we have the expertise to advance scientific research, protect ecosystems, and bolster the nation's agricultural and economic resilience.



Policy Asks

- In the FY 26 spending bill, we encourage the increased funding levels:
 - Increase funding levels for NIFA Research & Education Activities.
 - Increase funding levels for scholarships and education grants within NIFA.
- Incorporate plant health into more comprehensive bills, such as pre-disaster mitigation, agriculture, environment, national and international food security, human health, and defense. As agencies and the private sector increase their need for skilled plant pathologists, investments in training will need to increase from academia, agencies and the private sector as a united effort.
- Encourage federal agencies to continue inclusive hiring practices that broaden the workforce and to increase practical training and skill development opportunities.