**4-H Community Youth Development Specialist**

**Position:** This Specialist will work at the intersection of the fields of youth development and community development. The specialist will have a Ph.D. in a relevant social science discipline (community psychology, sociology, community development, etc.). Successful expertise related to building and sustaining engagement with diverse youth and underserved communities is a key expectation. This position will be responsible for conducting, facilitating and disseminating community youth development research and evaluation to multiple audiences, including youth development practitioners, policy-makers, community change agents, and researchers in California and beyond. The Specialist will be responsible for translating research and evaluation into practical use and capacity building among county-based Advisors and staff. The position will be housed in the Department of Human Ecology at UC Davis while maintaining close programmatic ties to the UC ANR Statewide 4-H Program, the Positive Youth Development and Youth Science Literacy Program Teams, the Diversity Workgroup, and county-based 4-H Youth Development Advisors.

**Justification:** This Specialist will advance three broad objectives, cultivating opportunities for 1) youth and young adult workforce development and entrepreneurship, 2) youth and community civic engagement and activism, and 3) youth and community health and well-being. These priorities closely align with national and state strategic plans for 4-H and with the strategic plan of ANR’s Healthy Families and Communities Strategic Initiative. Youth are increasingly recognized as an integral component of all of UCCE’s work, from supporting the next generation of agricultural and rural leaders and innovators to promoting health and well-being among our most vulnerable populations. Presently, ANR supports only one full-time Youth Development Specialist, despite a programmatic footprint that serves nearly 245,000 youth and includes 24 county advisors, and nearly 15,500 adult volunteer extenders. Furthermore, there are over 8 million youth ages 5 to 18 in California. ANR investment will 1) help meet needs and goals to increase college and career readiness, 2) contribute to local economic development, 3) foster increased civic participation; and 4) create effective linkages between 4-H youth development and ANR programs. Research shows that investing in positive youth development in communities can save the state millions of dollars annually by decreasing tax burdens for social services and juvenile justice systems, increasing well-being and productivity, and tapping the energy and creativity of young Californians (Benner et al. 2010; Campbell et. al 2013, London & Erbstein 2011).

**Extension:** This Specialist will serve both internal and external clientele. They will support 4-H YD advisors and staff, especially in developing strategies for engaging with underserved youth, families, and communities. They will inform, facilitate, and/or build partnerships with key community decision makers to create local civic cultures that value youth as community assets. They will inform, facilitate and/or build networks of youth development organizations and initiatives in California and beyond. The expected results include: 1) youth prepared to enter the workforce, reducing the number of youth who are out-of-school and out-of-work; 2) increased youth participation in public affairs; 3) communities recognize the key role youth can play in community development; and 4) school and community policies are in place to sustain healthy environments.

**Research**: The Specialist will conduct applied research focused on fostering more equitable youth development opportunities and outcomes through place-sensitive community youth development practices. Among other possibilities, the research will include: 1) identification of strategies to align youth and community development programs with culturally sustaining pedagogies; 2) comparative evaluation of community youth development programs to identify promising practices to increase civic engagement and workforce development; and 3) development of culturally appropriate measures for evaluating/documenting youth/community health and well-being. Expected publication outlets include journals such as *Children, Youth, and Environments; Community Development; Applied Developmental Science; California Agriculture;* and *Journal of Extension;* as well aspolicy reports and briefs*.*

**ANR Network:** We currently have no Specialist trained to work at the critical interface of youth and community development, which research indicates is essential to developing both fields. The need is particularly acute in California given our diverse youth populations and culturally diverse family and community structures. This Specialist contributes to the stated ANR goal, articulated in the December 2016 Healthy Families and Communities strategic plan, of better integrating our youth and community development programs and partnering with nutrition programs that work with underserved youth The Specialist will provide intellectual leadership to ANR workgroups (Diversity) and program teams (Positive Youth Development, Youth Science Literacy, Healthy Lifestyles) and collaborate with other campus specialists, county-based staff and academics, AES scientists, and other faculty, including more than 120 individuals at UC Davis who do youth-related research. The Specialist will build relationships with other UC programs working with diverse populations, such as UC Puente Project, UC Links, and UC Mexus, actively strengthening the connection between the work of these groups and ANR academics and county-based advisors.

**Network External to ANR:** The Specialist will collaborate with a wide range of experts and decision makers focused on youth and community development, including USDA staff; state officials in agencies such as the Employment Development Department, Public Health, Social Services, and Education; local school boards; elected officials; institutions of higher education; leaders of community coalitions to address youth issues; and existing youth-serving community organizations, especially those serving marginalized youth and communities. The specialist will supply these stakeholders with data, data maps, and tools for using data; provide applied research and input on topics of identified need and interest; pursue collaborative applied research projects; and facilitate access to other campus resources.

**Support:** The UC Davis Department of Human Ecology will provide office space, supplies, and equipment for the position.

**Other support:** Work in this area is supported by a variety of government agencies and private foundations, including USDA, the California Workforce Development Board and local workforce boards, city and county school boards and departments of education, The California Endowment, Sierra Health Foundation, W.T. Grant Foundation, Spencer Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

**Location:** The Human Ecology department on the UC Davis campus whose three units (human development, community development, landscape architecture and environmental design) have research agendas that comprehensively promote young people’s development and productive community participation.

**Developed and proposed by:** The development of this position was supported by current Specialists in the Department of Human Ecology (Campbell, Gupta, Koundinya, Ontai, Smith, Taylor, Trzesniewski), by the Statewide 4-H Director (Horrillo), and by leaders of the Positive Youth Development and Youth Science Literacy Program Teams (Moncloa, Worker).