**CED12: Broadband Deployment/Utilization Area Advisor**

**DESCRIPTION**

Provide leadership, information transfer, and technical help to address needs around rural broadband internet access and its utilization, telemedicine health networks, distance learning, and other economic development opportunities in the Eastern Sierra region. The successful candidate should have minimum master’s degree in community and economic development, business, public health, public administration, GIS, or information sciences; and understand issues of broadband access in rural areas and technologies used for last-mile connectivity.

This position will report to Inyo-Mono UCCE’ county director and work with many supporting units including UC ANR statewide programs such as IGIS and specialists at UC campuses.

**JUSTIFICATION**

Eastern California’s remote location and unique land tenure situation creates challenges for economic growth and access to services; however, as more services and opportunities move to online delivery the granite wall that separates us from the rest of California can become less of a barrier. A major fiber line (Digital 395 Project) runs directly through our region. The network has been leveraged; however, there is a need to continue to grow connections and expand service offerings - especially in some of the more rural parts of the region.

This position will primarily address these issues: (1) coordinate with local entities to understand existing and develop further strategies to develop and deploy affordable, last-mile broadband access, (2) distance delivery of services such as telemedicine, remote surgery, and education, (3) interfacing local entrepreneurs, agencies, and non-profits with online opportunities created by improved internet access (movie scouting, agritourism, training, direct marketing, etc.) that promote economic opportunities and improved quality of life for residents by creating synergistic relationships with local and non-governmental partners. In addition to the main focus, a close connection to the larger network of other UC community development advisors and specialists will create a conduit for unplanned opportunities that develop which will be pursued collaboratively by UC ANR and our partners.

Four UC ANR public value statements apply to this position: Promoting Economic Prosperity in California: (C.C.s 1,2,5); Promoting Healthy People and Communities (C.C.s 1, 2); Developing a Qualified Workforce for California (C.C.s 1-4); and Developing an Inclusive and Equitable Society (C.C. 2).

This position brings substantial extension capacity to our region. At the local level, broader access to technology and the information it helps bring to users will improve our ability to reach a larger audience in our vast, sparsely populated area. Another expectation is an expansion of ANR’s local network of collaborators and volunteers. New connections, possibly in remote locations, potentially allow us to attract/reach a more diverse audience with our programming. Finally, our volunteers struggle to participate in quality continuing education opportunities. This position should facilitate better training for our local volunteers and long-term sustainability in terms of program management by facilitating regional efforts online.

**EXTENSION**

This position will be interfacing with companies, non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, special districts, and key local leaders to educate and make connections to achieve the goals of increased broadband access and utilization of bandwidth. It is expected that work will need to be highly collaborative in nature. Public outreach and collection of stakeholder input will be essential in forming a functioning professional network, and for extending to the public awareness and understanding of new tools abilities broadband brings. The position will be expected to take the lead in developing collaborations, grants, contracts, and proposals that span efforts of multiple groups. As part of a cohort of community development advisors to be hired, it is expected that they will also work collaboratively on broader community development efforts with reach across California. The advisor will collaborate with UCCE advisors and specialists, as well as other UC and CSU system academics.

**RESEARCH**

This position should have clear research opportunities that encompass measurement of economic, health, and learning objectives related to projects undertaken. The candidate would address key questions in areas such as the following: (1) How does broadband access affect community resiliency? (2) What kinds of additional actions might be taken to increase community resiliency when it comes to access to educational and workforce development opportunities? (3) What are the co-benefits of telemedicine and other efforts to increase health system resiliency? (4) What new economic activity is generated because of more pervasive broadband utilization in a rural area? Baseline data is available and can be used to compare results and to develop a needs assessment.

**ANR NETWORK**

ANR’s Informatics and GIS Program; the California Communities, Climate Change, and Youth Science Literacy program teams, as well as Career/College Readiness & Workforce Development, Agriculture and Nature Tourism and Aging Californians in Rural and Urban Settings workgroups; Healthy Families and Communities strategic initiative; and specialists at UC campuses working in community development. It is expected that this position will be part of a cohort of CED advisors across California.

**EXTERNAL NETWORK**

USDA Rural Development, county/city governments (Inyo, Mono, Kern, Ridgecrest, Bishop, and Mammoth Lakes), Sierra Business Council, California Broadband Cooperative, Chambers of Commerce, local JPAs, health care providers, and educational entities such as Cerro Coso Community College, school districts, and libraries.

**SUPPORT**

UCCE Inyo-Mono is a department of the County of Inyo (Farm Advisor). Expenses to support the position would be in Inyo’s annual budget from General Funds. Mono County, via a MOU, reimburses Inyo 1/3 of actual expenses of the department. We are provided office space, motor pool, utilities, and other services by the county. For many years our program has had among the highest proportion of support for UCCE in the state from our county partners.

**OTHER SUPPORT**

Both counties are highly committed to resources devoted to small business development, and due to already budgeted support in last-mile broadband efforts, Inyo County is immediately ready to support the position and have funds ready, especially if the position is filled soon. Sierra Business Council, USDA, EDA, ANR competitive grants and local community groups.

**HEADQUARTERS AND COVERAGE AREA**

The position would cover Inyo and Mono counties as well as Ridgecrest and Inyokern in northeastern Kern County. The advisor would be part of UCCE Inyo-Mono with an office located in the small business incubator center being constructed in Bishop.

**DEVELOPED AND PROPOSED BY**

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