

ANR CE Position - Community Nutrition and Innovative Technologies Specialist

Position Title: Community Nutrition and Innovative Technologies Specialist

Position: The Specialist will develop a nutrition research and extension program with a focus on innovative technologies in research and communication to support individuals, families and communities' abilities to improve their health and well-being. Specific emphasis will be placed on those at highest risk of food insecurity, diet-related chronic diseases and malnutrition, including obesity. The Specialist will provide leadership to improve food literacy; a collection of inter-related knowledge, skills, and behaviors that is founded on evidence-based recommendations. The Specialist will have expertise in community nutrition research to support UCCE ANR statewide programs to meet the food and nutrition-related health challenges facing Californians, with an emphasis on exploring the feasibility of adopting innovative approaches and technologies to address such challenges. This position will build capacity in a critical programmatic area not currently addressed in UCCE. Minimal requirements include a PhD in nutrition or related field, and post-doctoral experience; experience or training in nutrition education methods including innovative approaches and use of technology to improve and assess health behavior, and other experience in community health is preferred. Desirable qualifications include epidemiology and cultural competency, experience working in community-based settings, and creating and providing professional development programs.

Justification: The economic impact of poor diet and associated health problems is huge. In California alone, 42% of all health care costs totaling nearly \$100B each year are spent treating chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease – all of which are preventable. Nearly one in four teens already has diabetes or pre-diabetes and one in four children is overweight before starting kindergarten. Technology is increasingly being used to disseminate nutrition information in innovative ways to reach larger and diverse audiences, including low-income and non-English speaking populations in the U.S. Unfortunately, misinformation and access to it also abounds as never before. UCCE is ideally positioned as a trusted expert to lead in developing, rigorously evaluating and disseminating sound evidence-based nutrition information using 21st century technology-based communication tools such as web-based platforms, social media, cellular and wearable tracking devices, and individualized apps to facilitate changes in lifestyles and adoption of healthy eating behaviors.

This position is critical to support 17 advisors and over 180 staff and educators through which the ANR EFNEP and UC CalFresh programs serve 200,000 California citizens. Greater capacity is needed to comprehensively address critical existing and emerging nutrition issues across the state and to facilitate ANR collaborations with key community organizations more effectively. The essential partnership between department-based Specialists, NFCS and YFC advisors will be enhanced by this position's focus and expertise, and is critical for advancing research and application of research findings to California's communities. To reinforce the policy aspect of this work, partnerships with the UC ANR Nutrition Policy Institute (NPI) will be strengthened through this position. The UC ANR Nutrition department-based CE Specialist will provide direct support to statewide UC ANR programs through development and revision of nutrition and health curricula, use of community-based interventions, training of personnel and train-the trainer models to assist with implementation of curriculum and interventions through technology, development and validation of evaluation tools, strengthening collaborations for promoting policy, systems and environmental changes, application of new education and communication tools and techniques, and providing evidence-based nutrition science resources.

Extension: The Specialist will play a leadership role to build on traditional extension delivery and capitalize on new approaches/technologies and opportunities which will contribute to achieving optimal health outcomes in high-risk groups such as low-income and underserved populations. The focus will be on the UC ANR statewide NFCS Programs, with key partners including the ANR evaluation specialist, NPI specialists, and the NIFA and USDA Nutrition and Extension Programs including EFNEP and UC CalFresh. Community engagement in health promotion efforts in partnership with key stakeholders in the California Departments of Public Health, Education and Food and Agriculture will enhance the dissemination of programs to improve food literacy.

Research: The Specialist's research agenda will be directly tied to the needs of the people and communities of California, through work supporting NFCS programs and connections among UC ANR advisors, researchers,

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students and communities. Examples of key issues to be addressed: 1) How nutrition-related health challenges, food insecurity, food waste, and food literacy can be addressed using technology; and 2) A continuing need to combat nutrition and health misinformation held by the public, and to promote effective public policy decision-making. The Specialist will develop a research program focused on applied community-based research approaches, systems, environment and policy, and population-level evaluation to provide relevant and state-of-the-art solutions for food-related health challenges that affect Californians. The position will provide sustained positive impact to promote the nutritional health and resilience of California's population through multiple channels and educational models to continually improve outreach, delivery and effectiveness of community nutrition programs and policy. The specialist will publish through ANR channels such as ANR publications and UC Delivers, and peer-reviewed journals, and present at scholarly meetings.

ANR Network: The Community Nutrition and Innovative Technologies Specialist will bridge county and campus faculty interests, drawing on cross-disciplinary expertise from multiple departments/schools and programs to deliver tested and successful nutrition/food education to California's population to achieve UC ANR's Strategic Vision 2025. In addition, the Specialist will work with AES scientists and advisors to enhance the linkages between agriculture and nutrition to create a more dynamic approach to address the complex aspects of food literacy. Collaborations with other Specialists in nutrition, policy, community development, human ecology and evaluation will allow for multidisciplinary research and integration of recommendations that will capitalize upon the strengths of flagship programs. This Specialist position will augment the ability to respond to requests from NFCS and YFC County Advisors for academic partners and research collaborations, thereby filling a critical gap. A specific example of an existing project that the new Specialist would contribute to is the adaptation of a multi-component, school-based approach to supporting regional agriculture, promoting healthy behaviors, and reducing childhood obesity. This program has evolved to incorporate novel health messaging technologies and methods of assessment.

Network External to ANR: Community health agencies throughout California rely upon the expertise of nutrition scientists and educators in the UC Davis Department of Nutrition to provide research-based information for their programs. Agencies such as Head Start, and the California Departments of Public Health, and Education have a history of collaborations with Specialists from the Department of Nutrition at UC Davis; these include the sharing of information, participation in continuing education programs, and research projects. Additional collaborations would be expected with the School of Education, Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, School of Medicine, Chicano Studies, Center for Regional Change, and the UC Davis Center for Poverty Research.

Support: The Department of Nutrition enthusiastically supports this position and will provide office space in Meyer Hall, administrative support for business activities, IT, cyber safety, and Internet and phone access.

Other support: The Specialist would be expected to obtain extramural grant funds through USDA and foundation grants such as The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Robert Wood Johnson, and others.

Location: The Specialist will be housed in the UC Davis Department of Nutrition. This will facilitate collaborative relationships among faculty and campus colleagues and allow the Specialist to be affiliated with students interested in future careers in applied research, food systems and innovative strategies for communicating evidence-based nutrition research findings to the public. The Specialist will be well positioned to work closely with the UC CalFresh Program and the NFCS Program. The proximity of the campus to the UC Davis Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing, Medical School and the Department of Public Health in Sacramento would be advantageous in establishing and continuing collaborative arrangements with key external stakeholders.

Developed and proposed by: The UC Davis Department of Nutrition Chair (Steinberg) and CE Specialist (Zidenberg-Cherr) developed this position description with input from the Director of NPI (Ritchie), the Statewide Director of the NFCS Program (Panarella), the UC ANR Healthy Behaviors Program Team, The California Department of Public Health (Kurtz) and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing Dean (Young).

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