

2026 UC ANR Cooperative Extension Position (Advisor)

Developed and proposed by: This proposal was developed collaboratively by Nathaniel W. Caeton, co-lead of the Positive Youth Development and 4-H Program Team; Karen Warburton, Capitol Corridor Area Director; Dr. Kimberly Holmes, Director of the UC ANR 4-H Youth Development Program; and county-based 4-H leadership in Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Counties with input from the Sacramento City Unified School District and the local farm bureaus. The proposal addresses the need to restore academic leadership and strengthen research-based youth development programming in the Capitol Corridor region following the loss of dedicated advisor coverage.

Position title: 4-H Youth Development Advisor – Urban Agriculture and Community Youth Development (UCCE Advisor)

Headquarter location and coverage area: The position would be headquartered in the UCCE Sacramento County office, with multicounty responsibilities in Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Counties. Sacramento County is the recommended headquarters because of its central location, strong expanded learning infrastructure, youth-serving partnerships, and proximity to state agencies, school systems, and regional initiatives.

Position overview, briefly describe: The position will focus on Positive Youth Development (PYD), emphasizing urban agriculture and food systems education to advance youth leadership, science literacy, and equitable access to educational opportunities.

Minimum qualifications include a master's degree in youth development, education, human development, community development, agricultural education, or a related field. Experience in applied research, program evaluation, community-based programming, and partnership development is highly desirable.

The advisor will report through UCCE county leadership and work closely with the statewide 4-H Youth Development Program and the Positive Youth Development and 4-H Program Team. The advisor will also engage in transdisciplinary collaboration with UC ANR academics and statewide programs aligned with Youth, Family and Communities priorities.

Justification: A 4-H Youth Development Advisor is needed in the Capitol Corridor to restore academic leadership and expand research-based positive youth development programming across Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Counties. Together, these counties include more than 2.2 million residents and a large, youth-serving infrastructure, creating a substantial opportunity for UC ANR impact at scale. Compared with California overall, the tri-county area shows greater need on several indicators aligned with youth development outcomes. Sacramento and Solano both exceed the statewide share of households with children headed by a single parent; California's statewide rate is 17.4%, compared with 25.31% in Sacramento and 24.83% in Solano. Solano also lags statewide patterns of college access and attainment, while Sacramento faces elevated barriers related to teen births and child poverty. These conditions underscore the need for research-based youth development strategies that strengthen belonging, supportive adult relationships, leadership, and pathways to postsecondary education and workforce success.

The retirement of Sacramento County 4-H Youth Development Advisor Marianne Bird created substantial gaps in academic leadership, applied research, program coordination, and partnership development. Although county staff and partners sustain programming, the absence of dedicated academic leadership limits innovation, evaluation, revenue generation, and multicounty coordination. This position would maintain strong Sacramento County relationships and expanded learning programming while extending science-based youth development leadership across the region.

The Positive Youth Development and 4-H Program Team identified this position as a top statewide priority, and the Capitol Corridor team ranked it as its first priority. The region faces growing inequities in access to enrichment, leadership development, workforce preparation, and science-based programming for historically underserved youth. At the same time, schools and community organizations are expanding after-school and expanded learning systems and seeking research-based youth development partnerships.

This position advances UC ANR's Strategic Vision 2040 priorities for Thriving People and Communities and Systemic Inequities by expanding equitable access to high-quality youth development and civic engagement opportunities. The advisor will address knowledge gaps in positive youth development, equitable access to youth programming, and effective educational and workforce pathways.

This position will contribute to UC ANR's public value framework by improving readiness for post-secondary education and careers, strengthening civic engagement and public confidence in science, and enhancing equitable access, workforce development, and community leadership. Over the next 20 years, the advisor will help build more resilient youth-serving systems by expanding access to high-quality programs, strengthening pathways into higher education and workforce sectors, and deepening youth leadership and civic participation.

Extension: Extension efforts will focus on Positive Youth Development through 4-H and community-based programs across Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Counties. Primary clientele will include youth in 4-H clubs, expanded learning, and other youth programs; 4-H volunteers; school districts and county offices of education; community-based organizations; and youth-serving professionals.

The advisor will engage these audiences through volunteer and professional development, curriculum adaptation, partnership-based design, program evaluation, and multicounty initiatives that strengthen program quality, youth leadership, STEM literacy, urban agriculture and food systems education, belonging, and college- and career-readiness. This emphasis is especially important in the Capitol Corridor, where higher rates of single-parent households and child poverty point to a need for structured learning environments, supportive adult relationships, and accessible pathways to opportunity.

The advisor will also contribute leadership within statewide 4-H and UC ANR networks focused on positive youth development, urban agriculture and food systems education, and community-engaged educational programming.

Research: Research will focus on applied positive youth development, urban agriculture and food systems education, and community-based youth systems across diverse communities. Key research

themes will include youth development outcomes, urban agriculture and food systems education, equitable access and participation, and the design and evaluation of program models and pathways into higher education and the workforce.

Research and extension activities will involve transdisciplinary collaboration with UC ANR academics and external partners in youth development, education, nutrition, agriculture, public health, and community development. Over the next 20 years, the advisor will build a program of applied scholarship and disseminate findings through peer-reviewed journals, UC ANR publications, conference presentations, and statewide youth development networks.

UC ANR network: This position will restore dedicated academic youth development leadership in the Capitol Corridor and strengthen UC ANR's capacity to conduct integrated research and extension across Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Counties. The advisor will connect county-based 4-H infrastructure, the statewide 4-H Youth Development Program, the Positive Youth Development and 4-H Program Team, and relevant UC ANR academics working in community nutrition and health, urban agriculture, science literacy, systemic inequities, and community and economic development. This position fills a clear geographic and programmatic gap in advisor-level youth development expertise and creates a platform for coordinated work on youth development and leadership, urban agriculture and food systems education, STEM literacy, equitable access, and postsecondary pathways. The advisor will also strengthen collaboration with county-based 4-H personnel, Cooperative Extension Specialists, statewide 4-H leadership, and campus-based faculty. Without this position, UC ANR's ability to coordinate multicounty youth development strategy, and compete for larger externally funded initiatives will remain limited.

Support: The Sacramento County UCCE office will serve as headquarters and provide office and meeting space, administrative support, supplies, and access to a cohesive local team environment. Solano and Yolo County offices will also provide office and meeting space, administrative support, and supplies for effective multicounty programming and collaboration. Additional support will be available through UC ANR and the statewide 4-H Youth Development Program, including established networks, statewide infrastructure, and professional collaboration.

Other support: This position is well positioned to leverage support through the California Department of Education Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P), the U.S. Department of Labor Career Pathways Exploration Grant Program, USDA youth development and agriculture education grants, and related funding opportunities. The advisor will also pursue collaborative grants and contracts with school districts, local agencies, community-based organizations, and food systems partners to expand research-based youth development programming across the Capitol Corridor.