2021 CE Advisor Position-Community Health & Nutrition Advisor

**Position Title:** Community Health and Nutrition Advisor in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced counties.

**Position Description:** The Community Health, Nutrition, and Food Security Advisor will serve the diverse populations of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced counties, focusing on chronic disease prevention and health promotion. The Advisor will examine the intersection of health, food, and nutrition security across food systems as they relate to and impact human health. The Advisor will develop an extension education and applied problem-solving research program based on priority community needs and assets to address food, nutrition, and drinking water security; with access to physical activity opportunities and health equity. The position will require a minimum of a Master’s degree in Public or Community Health, Nutrition or other closely related field. Priority will be given to candidates with expertise in community nutrition, health equity and health education; community-based program experience, and interest in food systems and food security work. The Advisor will work with CE Specialists and Advisors, Nutrition Community Education Specialists, Master Food Preserver staff, and Community Health and Nutrition statewide program personnel. The Advisor will collaborate with colleagues in the Food Literacy and Healthy Lifestyles and California Communities Program Teams in support of the UC ANR Healthy Families and Communities and Sustainable Food Systems Strategic Initiatives. This position is proposed as a member of the Community Health Resilience & Nutrition Cohort.

**Justification:** Families living in the Northern San Joaquin Valley experience food insecurity, obesity, and chronic disease at rates higher than state averages. In San Joaquin County, 11.5% of people and 20.3% of youth are food insecure, meaning they experience limited or uncertain access to adequate food; 72% of adults are overweight or obese (BMI 25+), and 32% of SNAP/CalFresh eligible adults have been diagnosed with high blood pressure while 10% of residents are diabetic. Stanislaus and Merced counties have almost identical data, signaling an expansive public health crisis, impacting the quality of life for adults and youth of all socioeconomic backgrounds; with those in poverty hit hardest. The Community Health and Nutrition Advisor in the Northern San Joaquin Valley will provide transformational leadership to nutrition and community education extension programs and will promote the adoption of healthy eating, safe food-handling practices, food resource management strategies, and physical activity for individuals and families to address and positively influence health outcomes.

This position contributes to three of UC ANR’s public values: Safeguarding abundant and healthy food for all Californians; Promoting healthy people and communities; and Developing an inclusive and equitable society. The expected condition changes will be in the areas of improved food security; improved access to positive built and natural environments; improved community health and wellness; and improved living and working conditions for California’s food system and farm workers.

**Extension:** The Advisor will provide an essential link between stakeholder groups and non-profit and community organizations, UC resources and personnel, farmers’ markets and local decision makers. They will be expected to provide leadership and information via multiple channels that include individuals, groups, in-person presentations, web-based resources, active social media presence, and print publications targeted to broad audiences such as local media, county-based publications and UC blogs. The Advisor will work with external partners and stakeholders to address local and regional needs and document outcomes in order to inform broader policy efforts. Activities could involve providing guidance and expertise, coordinating efforts to build local collaborations, and building the evidence-base for policy, systems or environmental changes.

**Research:** The Advisor will develop an applied program in community health, nutrition and food security that aims to 1) Understand barriers to accessing healthy food and safe drinking water and impacts on individual and community health, 2) Develop intervention programs and conduct research to evaluate the community health impacts of addressing barriers to access related to food, drinking water and/or physical activity opportunities, and 3) Co-develop applied research projects with vulnerable and underserved communities to address community health priorities related to chronic disease prevention and overall community health. The Advisor will develop
research and education programming that includes cultural awareness of the Latino and Hmong communities living in the three counties. The Advisor is expected to publish in external publications intended for all stakeholders, in peer-reviewed scientific journals such as: American Journal of Public Health; Journal of Extension; Health Education & Behavior; Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, California Agriculture, Community Development, and publications available to local service providers.

**ANR Network:** Building capacity for Health Resilience and Food System Networks is of high priority to ANR. This position will work with these networks to address community health issues related to food, physical activity and drinking water access to build a stronger and more resilient population. Communities struggling with poverty, structural racism, food and water insecurity, and diet-related chronic disease were the most vulnerable to COVID-19. Working with local communities to address upstream factors and prevent chronic disease will be essential moving forward as we emerge from the pandemic and prepare to face ongoing and emerging health issues. This position will collaborate with our network of NFCS, YFC, 4-H Youth development, and Nutrition and Health Equity advisors and the other proposed cohort hires.

**Network External to ANR:** The Advisor will engage with government and non-governmental organizations at local, regional and state level, to provide technical assistance and expertise in community assessment and program planning, identifying and modifying evidence-based resources, evaluation and data analysis and dissemination. Examples of potential local partners include schools, community colleges and local universities, public health and social services agencies, groups serving diverse populations, food banks, local policymakers, and food policy councils. Examples of partners at the state and national levels include CA Health and Human Services, CA Department of Social Services, CA Department of Public Health, USDA and the GUSNIP National Nutrition Incentive Hub.

**Support:** The position will be housed in the San Joaquin County (SJC) Agriculture Center, which has excellent facilities, individual office space, laboratory, a vehicle with travel support into assigned counties, clerical support, a field technician, telephone, internet, and large equipment storage. The SJC Ag Center also has state-of-the-art meeting facilities with Wi-Fi that can accommodate small and large groups of up to 1,000 attendees. UCCE in SJC enjoys strong support from the County Board of Supervisors and Chief Administrative Officer.

**Other support:** The Advisor will be expected to obtain external funding for their applied research program from various sources: federal agencies such as USDA NIFA and NIH Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, CDFA, and non-governmental organizations such as Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and local foundations.

**Headquarters and Coverage Area:** This position will be headquartered in San Joaquin County and serve high-priority Latino and Hmong communities in all three counties. The advisor would have community health advisors to collaborate with in the Capital Corridor MCP to the north and the Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings MCP to the south, along with the other proposed Community Health Resilience & Nutrition Cohort advisors. The Advisor will work with our CalFresh and EFNEP educators in the three counties, as well as the Master Food Preserver Programs in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties, perhaps helping this program expand into Merced County.

**Developed and proposed by:** This position proposal was developed by CD Brent Holtz (SJC) and Shyra Murrey, EFNEP Coordinator and Interim State Office Supervisor. Shyra will also co-sponsor this position. This Northern San Joaquin Valley Community Health and Nutrition Advisor is a key component of providing statewide health and nutrition coverage, part of the proposed **Community Health Resilience & Nutrition Cohort** proposed positions.