

2021 UC ANR CE Position Template (Advisor)

Position Title: Community Health, Nutrition, and Food Security Advisor in Kern, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties

Position: The Community Health, Nutrition, and Food Security Advisor will serve the diverse populations across the counties of Kern, San Luis Obispo (SLO), and Santa Barbara (SB) focusing on chronic disease prevention and health promotion. Scope will include addressing the intersection of health, food/nutrition security and access, and the food system as they directly 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 the broad areas of food, nutrition, and drinking water security; access to physical activity opportunities; and health equity. The Advisor requires 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: Diet and physical activity-related chronic disease remain a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in CA (as well as Kern, SLO, & SB counties) with poverty and food insecurity substantially contributing to the burden of disease. Kern County has the highest rate of diabetes mortality of any county in California and 13.6% of Kern residents (25% of children) are food insecure. In SLO and SB Counties, where the cost of living is high, wages are low and participation in the food safety net (CalFresh/SNAP) is low, SLO ranks 55th and SB ranks 38th out of 58 CA counties on the CalFresh Program Reach Index meaning only 41%-60% of potentially eligible community members actually receive CalFresh. The top issues that the Advisor will address are 1) Access to safe and nutritious food and drinking water across the lifespan for vulnerable communities in Kern, SLO and SB counties, 2) Chronic disease risk reduction through nutrition and physical activity education and policy, systems and environmental change, and 3) Building capacity to design, implement and evaluate strategies to improve community systems and structures for equitable access to health-promotive resources. This position contributes to three of UC ANRs 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 community organizations, UC resources and personnel, and local decision makers. They will be expected to provide leadership via multiple channels including providing information to individuals and groups through 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 capacity 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 is expected to publish in external publications intended for all stakeholders, and in peer-reviewed scientific journals such as: *American Journal of Public Health*; *Journal of Extension*; *Health Education & Behavior*; *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* and others.

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. COVID-19 revealed existing vulnerabilities in both our food and healthcare systems. Indeed, 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 also work with the network of NFCS, YFC, 4-H Youth development, and the proposed Community Health Resilience & Nutrition cohort hires. With additional potential to collaborate with Community Development and Small Farms Advisors on issues related to transportation to local food outlets, outdoor recreation access, and support for farmers who want to offer CalFresh or WIC as a form of payment at point of purchase.

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 adapting evidence-based resources, evaluation and data analysis and dissemination. Examples of potential local partners include schools, community colleges and local universities, public health, medical centers, other health providers, 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, and USDA and the GUSNIP National Nutrition Incentive Hub.

Support: UCCE in Kern County and SLO County are equipped to provide support for transportation, office space, administrative and IT support, supplies and equipment. UCCE in SB County will provide mileage support.

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 UCCE Kern or SLO Counties. The position will serve high-priority communities (to be defined during community assessment) in Kern, SLO, & SB Counties. The Advisor will have potential collaboration opportunities with the Health Equity and 4-H Advisors in SLO and SB counties, and the 4-H Advisor in Kern County. There is currently no Advisor in Kern County focused on nutrition or community health. This position would replace an Academic Coordinator position in SLO/SB Counties, which is locally funded through temporary grant funding, including CalFresh Healthy Living-UC program funds. All counties have 4-H and CalFresh Healthy Living-UC programs for potential collaborations. Kern also has an EFNEP program and SLO and SB Counties have Master Food Preserver programs.

Developed and proposed by: This position was developed and jointly submitted by Kamaljeet Khaira on behalf of the CalFresh Healthy Living-UC Program, Brian Marsh on behalf of UCCE in Kern County, and Katherine Soule on behalf of UCCE in SLO and SB Counties with support from Lorrene Ritchie, Director of Nutrition Policy Institute; Francene Steinberg, Chair of the Department of Nutrition at UC Davis; Karina Díaz Rios, CE Specialist, UC Merced ;and the Food Literacy and Healthy Lifestyles Program Team. This position is included in the Community Health Resilience & Nutrition Cohort proposal.