

2021 UC ANR CE Sustainable Nutrition Specialist Position

Position Title: Sustainable Nutrition Specialist

Position: The Specialist will develop a research and extension program that will address the sustainability of diets of individuals, families and communities by focusing on approaches that reduce burden to the environment. This position will expand the traditional emphasis/collaborations to the intersection of food production, climate change, the environment and nutrition. Specific emphasis will be placed on populations at highest risk of food insecurity and disease burden, with a focus on increasing equity and reducing health disparities. This position will be part of an Indigenous Communities cluster hire being proposed to ANR, and have a special focus on Indigenous populations, who experience high rates of food insecurity and diet-related diseases and are actively restoring cultural foodways to achieve greater food sovereignty, environmental and community health. The Specialist will have expertise in sustainable nutrition science to support UCCE ANR statewide programs (e.g. EFNEP, 4-H) and county-based Advisors (e.g. NFCS, YFC, food systems) to improve nutrition and health among Californians, with an emphasis on approaches that reduce environmental footprint (e.g. whole food, plant-based diet), increase food systems efficiency (e.g. food waste reduction, food redistribution) and sustainability (e.g. climate resilient foods, Indigenous stewardship practices). Minimal requirements include a PhD in nutrition or related field, and post-doctoral experience; experience or training in nutrition education, Indigenous science, science communication, community health, food systems, environmental sustainability, and/or the connection between nutrition and health is preferred. Desirable qualifications include registered dietitian credential, experience working with Indigenous communities and/or in multi-cultural community-based settings, competency implementing a diversity, equity, inclusivity and justice (DEIJ) approach, and proficiency in a second language (e.g. Spanish, Mandarin, or an Indigenous language).

Justification: The current human diet places a strain on the environment, water resources, biodiversity and other measures of planetary health. The field of sustainable nutrition has emerged in response to these urgent issues and encompasses both the need to meet population nutritional requirements and achieve environmental sustainability. The alignment between human health and sustainability, or more specifically, the intersection of food production, climate, environment, and nutrition represents the nexus of some of the most pressing threats to public and planetary health. The proposed position will support individuals, families and communities' abilities to improve their nutrition, health and well-being, while also contributing to a more sustainable food system and planetary health. A focus on Indigenous populations and their cultural foodways will bring attention to and build evidence on the nutritional, physical, mental, and environmental health benefits of revitalizing native foodways. Integrating [*Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge*](#) into sustainable nutrition science research and extension will advance our understanding and the impact of Indigenous stewardship practices on food security, food sovereignty, and environmental health for all our California communities. Research and extension in this intersection is urgently needed and could provide and advance solutions addressing multiple priorities synergistically, such as building climate resilient communities, increasing food and nutrition security, improving community health, and increasing diversity, inclusiveness and equity in California, and at the national level.

Extension: The Specialist will build and lead an innovative extension program that integrates Nutrition Science and Indigenous science, incorporating traditional and new approaches/technologies and opportunities to improve food access, nutrition and health outcomes in high-risk groups, including Native Americans and other low-income and underserved populations experiencing significant health challenges. They will provide statewide leadership in support of UC ANR NFCS and YFC Programs, with partners including NPI, the federal nutrition education programs (EFNEP and Cal Fresh Healthy Living), and the Master Gardeners and Master Food Preservers programs. Community engagement in partnership with Tribes, tribal-serving organizations, stakeholders in the California Departments of Public Health, and Food and Agriculture will facilitate novel intersectoral statewide discussion and dissemination of programs to improve human and planetary health. The Specialist will provide sustained impact to promote the nutritional health of all Californians through multiple channels and educational models to improve implementation and effectiveness of community nutrition programs and policy.

Research: The Specialist will develop a robust applied research program employing community-based participatory research, policy, systems and environments, and evaluation approaches to provide relevant and evidence-based solutions for food-related human and planetary health challenges. Possible research questions are: 1) How can nutrition-related health challenges, food insecurity and food waste be addressed using an environmental sustainability focus? 2) How can nutrition education (federal and community-based) programs best incorporate a planetary health focus? 3) What are the nutritional, health and environmental benefits of stewarding and consuming California Indigenous foods? 4) What are the nutritional and health impacts of consuming novel food products developed to reduce dairy and meat consumption (e.g. plant-based “milks” and “meats”). The Specialist will disseminate scholarship in peer-reviewed journals (e.g. Current Developments in Nutrition) and ANR publications, and present at scientific/professional meetings.

ANR Network: The Sustainable Nutrition Specialist will bridge campus faculty and county academics interests, drawing on cross-disciplinary expertise from multiple departments/schools and programs to deliver and evaluate sustainable nutrition/food education to California’s population to achieve UC ANR’s Strategic Vision. The Specialist will work with SAREP (e.g. farm to school) and NPI researchers (e.g. food waste research program), AES scientists (e.g. UCD Food Science, UCB ESPM) and advisors to enhance the linkages between agriculture, nutrition and environment to create a more dynamic approach to address the complex aspects of food access, food consumption and food waste in local, national and/or global food systems. Collaborations with other ANR Specialists, Program Teams and Workgroups in nutrition, urban agriculture, policy, community/rural development and evaluation will allow for interdisciplinary research and integration of applied research and extension that will build upon the strengths of programs while adapting them to climate change and emergency challenges that California faces. This Specialist position will increase the capacity for research and extension collaborations with NFCS and YFC Advisors, filling a critical need for multiplicative and statewide impact.

Network External to ANR: The Sustainable Nutrition Specialist will collaborate with community health agencies throughout California (e.g. Head Start, WIC, First 5), the California Departments of Public Health, Education, Food and Agriculture, and Social Services, Tribes, Tribal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and other tribal-serving organizations (e.g. California Consortium for Urban Indian Health, Indian Health Service, California Indian Environmental Alliance). These collaborations may include co-production of research questions and programs, dissemination of scientific evidence, consultation on evidence-based recommendations, program development, evaluation, and/or research projects. Additional collaborations would be expected within the Rauser College of Natural Resources (RCNR), the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, Goldman School of Public Policy, Berkeley Food Institute, and California Initiative for Health Equity and Action.

Support: The Department of Nutritional Sciences and Toxicology (NST) enthusiastically supports this position and will provide office space in Morgan Hall, administrative support, IT, and Internet and phone access.

Other support: The Specialist would be expected to obtain extramural grant funds through NSF, USDA and foundation funding such as Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, California Endowment, and 11th hour foundation.

Headquarters and Coverage Area: The Specialist will be based at the UC Berkeley NST Department in Morgan Hall. This will facilitate collaborative relationships with other faculty and colleagues and provide access to students interested in future careers in nutrition, dietetics, public health, applied research, and food systems. The Specialist will be well positioned to work closely with another Nutrition Specialist in the Department, and with faculty in ESPM focused on Indigenous and sustainable food systems, School of Public Health and Berkeley Food Institute. Proximity to the NPI would be advantageous in establishing and continuing collaborative research and extension efforts. The Specialist’s programmatic area will cover the state through continuous collaboration with county-based ANR academics, and affiliation with ANR Program Teams and/or Workgroups.

Developed and proposed by: This proposal was developed by the NST Faculty with input and endorsement from the Food Literacy and Healthy Lifestyles Program Team and the Consumer Climate Change Literacy and Native American Community Partnerships Workgroups. It is also supported by the DEIJ and California Communities and Food Systems Program Teams and SAREP.