

Position Title: Community Health & Nutrition Older Adult Area Advisor, UCCE Marin, Napa, and Sonoma Counties

Position: This position's disciplinary focus is on older adults with an emphasis on older adults (60+) who are low-income or people of color. Educational requirements include a minimum of a master's degree in nutrition, human development, public health, nursing, geriatrics, or a related field. A professional certification as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), or Registered Nurse (RN) will be considered. Based in Marin County, the position will serve a multi-county area including Napa and Sonoma and will take part in the statewide ANR Nutrition, Family, and Consumer Sciences (NFCS) Program.

Justification: This position will address key issues for older adults in the San Francisco North Bay with a particular emphasis on older adults of color and low-income older adults including: community health and nutrition; the social determinants of health; chronic disease management; health equity; and policy, systems, and environmental change strategies. The intended outcomes and impact of this work is to improve community health and nutrition outcomes for older adults in the region. The position will contribute to ANR's condition changes and public values by promoting healthy people and communities including improved food security, financial stability, and community health and wellness.

The position is needed because of the scale of the challenge, with older adults representing a significant percentage and a rapidly growing demographic group in the North Bay and California. There are nearly 250,000 older adults in Marin, Napa, and Sonoma, with older adults representing 29%, 25%, and 27% of the population, respectively (2019 American Community Survey). Noteworthy trends across the three counties include the growth, longevity, and changing racial, ethnic, and gender characteristics of the older adult population, as well as persistent inequities in food access and disparities in health outcomes. Furthermore, older adults experience unique barriers to maintaining proper nutrition and health compared to their younger counterparts. Recent changes in public policy including the expansion of CalFresh (SNAP) to SSI/SSP recipients, the development of California's Master Plan on Aging, and the integration of medically tailored meal benefits within MediCal means that there are a growing number of opportunities to address food and nutrition insecurity among older adults—yet older adults consistently under-utilize these important programs. Much of the body of work locally and statewide focuses on implementing projects and programs that serve older adults, but there is little research-based information designed specifically for the unique needs of this vulnerable demographic group.

Extension: Clientele the academic will serve include older adults in particular low-income, people of color, and rural older adults; agencies serving older adults including three county Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Adult Services within Health and Human Services Departments, Commissions on Aging, as well as the California Department of Aging, California State AARP Office, the National Council on Aging, and the Social Security Administration; organizations serving older adults including affordable housing sites, federally qualified health centers, senior centers, and community centers; service providers including food banks, congregant dining, home delivered meal, and medically tailored meal programs; and SNAPed and Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) initiatives across the region. The Advisor, in collaboration with these partners, will develop, implement, and evaluate programming for older adults related to nutrition and cooking, food resource management, financial security, independent living, physical activity and fall prevention, and emotional well-being.

Research: This position represents a unique opportunity to design, implement, and evaluate community health and nutrition interventions that reach older adults directly in communities across the North Bay. Specifically, research is needed on the unique aspects of nutrition and diet within the process of aging, both biophysically and with the

compounding effects of a lifetime of poverty and marginalization, and on the impact of improved nutrition on preventing, managing and treating chronic disease including heart disease, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cancer. Research is also needed around specific sub-populations of older adults including people of color, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ individuals, and those living with HIV. Research is needed on community health and nutrition impacts within the context of historical events that have transpired over the lifecourse of the aging population, as well as research that takes into account current events including COVID-19 that disproportionately impact the aging population. Development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions that provide complementary co-benefits for multi-generational, equity-focused, and policy, systems, and environmental change strategies is also needed.

ANR Network: The position's disciplinary focus on older adults will serve as an important resource across the ANR network to develop model programs, policies, and practices with statewide relevance, thereby expanding ANR's capacity to deliver NFCS research and extension programs for older adults since existing EFNEP and CalFresh Healthy Living programs do not focus on this demographic group. The position's geographic focus is well situated at the epicenter of California's aging population and will fill a longstanding gap in coverage for the Statewide NFCS Program. This position is included in the Community Health Resilience and Nutrition cohort proposal, and it complements the Bay Area proposed positions focused on BIPOC youth development.

The position will collaborate with Dr. Mary Blackburn in the San Francisco East Bay, the ANR Food Literacy and Healthy Lifestyles Program Team, the ANR Aging Californians in Rural and Urban Settings Workgroup, and campus-based specialists in the Department of Human Development at UC Davis and UC Berkeley.

Network External to ANR: The position will serve as an important colleague providing science-based information to county-based, regional, and statewide networks. It builds off of UCCE Marin's work with community gardens at senior residential facilities and strong relationships with a network of partners that serve older adults in Marin, including the Marin Community Foundation with a strategic funding priority related to healthy eating, active living, and economic security for older adults. There are long standing partnerships in the region supporting HEAL, CalFresh outreach and application assistance, Community Health Workers/Promotores de Salud, Food Policy Councils, Food is Medicine, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and Farm to Senior initiatives.

Support: Support for this position, including office space, travel, communication (telephone, internet) and clerical support, is available from the three counties. ANR start-up funds are anticipated and will be used to purchase a computer.

Other support: It is expected that research support will come from competitive grants and various community groups, including community foundations in each county that prioritize thriving older adult communities. Additional collaboration and external funding and support are anticipated through participation in ANR Program Team statewide collaborations.

Headquarters and Coverage Area: This position will be headquartered at UCCE Marin, providing research and extension programs across Marin, Napa, and Sonoma.

Developed and proposed by: David Lewis, *Marin and Napa County Director* and Julia Van Soelen Kim, *North Bay Food Systems Advisor* with contributions from Dr. Mary Blackburn, *NFCS Advisor, Alameda County* and Shirin Vakharia, *Director for Health & Aging, Marin Community Foundation*. This proposal is included in the Community Health Resilience & Nutrition cohort proposal and is supported by the ANR Food Literacy and Healthy Lifestyles Program Team and the ANR Aging Californians in Rural and Urban Settings Workgroup.