

Position Title: Area Community Resilience and Planning Advisor for Sutter and Yuba Counties

Position: The Area Community Resilience and Planning Advisor will be responsible for developing a problem-solving and educational program for community resilience for natural disasters, including the main issues in these counties, which are fires and floods. Educational topics would include food preservation, residential and community gardening, home disaster preparation, and backyard poultry. This position would target populations not currently reached by our current cooperative extension academics, including the Nisenan and Konkow people of California, Sikh, and Hmong communities, farmworkers, low-income, and houseless populations. The position would require: (1) A minimum of a master's degree in community or rural development, geography, land use planning, public policy, food systems policy and planning, rural planning, emergency, disaster or risk management, or related fields is required. (2) Experience working with marginalized communities, in rural communities and natural resource-based economies is highly desirable. (3) This position will work with the Disaster Workgroup, Fire Advisor network, Climate Resilience network, UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP), California Department of Water Resources (CIWR), and other relevant UC ANR Program Teams and statewide programs including but not limited to Master Gardener, Master Food Preserver, and CalFresh Healthy Living.

Justification:

Achieving community resilience requires an equity lens to ensure that all members of the community are included. California communities are learning to adapt to the increased threat of climate change, wildfires and associated smoke and air quality, drought, floods, heatwaves, water insecurity, infectious diseases, and associated food supply chain disruptions. This position will focus on three programmatic themes: (1) facilitate community-engaged disaster risk assessment, planning and preparedness ensuring the inclusion of marginalized voices (2) enhance individual, household, community, and regional ability to better prepare for, respond to and recover from the state's increasing fire, water, power, and food system challenges and (3) implement policy, systems, and environmental changes to strengthen Californians' food, energy, and water security, housing and transportation equity for all Californians.

Sutter and Yuba counties have unique marginalized populations in California. The Punjabi population residing in the Yuba-Sutter Area is one of the largest Sikh populations in the country. In Yuba County, 13.2% of the population speaks Spanish and 4.7% speaks Hmong as their first language. In Sutter County, 17.9% of the population speaks Spanish and 9.3% speaks Punjabi as their first language. The Latinx/Hispanic populations of both counties are between 25-28%. Seasonal farmworker populations are estimated to be between 1,000 per month on average in Yuba County to about 6,000 per month in Sutter County and are primarily employed in the tree and nut sectors. Marysville (Yuba County) hosts one of the three California migrant-family housing centers north of Sacramento.

Furthermore, due to a combination of socioeconomic, environmental, and structural issues, Sutter and Yuba counties have a higher rate of unhoused persons per 100,000 people (411.0) than both California (378.9) and US averages (173.0). Both counties consider these populations high-priority and have extensive resources and personnel devoted to working on issues such as shelters, transitional housing, permanent housing, education, and employment.

Across these two counties, UC ANR currently hosts one Master Gardener Program representing 70 certified volunteers with great opportunities for growth and development. These programs offer impactful public education, especially in county-priority areas such as food safety and security, endemic and invasive species, and water quality and quantity. The Advisor is expected to utilize the volunteer network, empowering them to amplify the Advisor's research and messaging, and thereby engage the over 175,000 residents, including many communities of color, across the two counties. The Master Food Preserver Program in these counties will be launching in 2022, with enthusiastic community support, and volunteers will complement the efforts of the Master Gardener Program in outreach to the underserved communities.

Extension: Extension activities may include, for example, (1) working with communities, fire-safe councils, land management agencies and UC ANR's fire advisor network including the soon-to-be-hired Yuba-Butte-Nevada Forestry Advisor, to develop and implement fire response and recovery plans (2) assessing the resilience of the regional food supply chain and emergency food response infrastructure to prepare for and respond to food system vulnerabilities including, for example, advancing mutual aid and neighborhood-scale planning; (3) developing strategies to increase food system resilience and self-sufficiency by cultivating individual, local and regional capacity to grow, process, distribute, and store locally grown, tended and gathered, healthy nutritious food; (4) collaborating with water management and housing agencies to assess and mitigate risk of drought affecting both water quantity and quality; and/or (5) assessing and co-designing resilient local and regional power infrastructure to ensure equitable and secure access to power such as neighborhood-level micro-grids. The advisor can also collaborate with the other agriculture and natural resource advisors in the area to assist in implementing training and other outreach related to food production.

Research: It is crucial to understand how climate change and disaster events amplify existing inequalities, such as food insecurity, homelessness, poverty, and disease, and develop strategies to lessen the resulting harms. Research will include a holistic and applied research approach that bridges understanding of social and natural factors, leveraging subject-matter expertise from across ANR to assess and mitigate the vulnerability of specific sectors (e.g. water, housing, food) and populations to climate and disaster risk. It will focus on understanding and developing culturally responsive disaster preparedness and post-disaster recovery efforts. The advisor will contribute to regional and statewide policy dialogue on building a more resilient California landscape.

ANR Network: This position will significantly augment ANR's capacity to network with and serve California's marginalized communities. It will address critical gaps in ANR's capacity to help our California communities prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster in both applied and research to policy realms. It will leverage the expertise of and contribute to ANR's Fire, Water, Food System and Health Resilience networks. It will work with and through ANR statewide programs including Master Gardener and Master Food Preserver. It will collaborate closely with and receive support from UCB's Water Justice, Planning and Policy Specialist and Food System Specialists (Sowerwine and Getz), UC SAREP, UC IGIS, CIWR, the Research to Policy, Climate Change, California Communities, & DEI PTs, and Disaster Workgroup.

Location and Support: The Sutter/Yuba Counties office in Yuba City would serve as the home office for this four-county advisor position, providing office and lab space, a vehicle, secretarial support, telephone, internet, and a supply storage area. There are newer advisors to interact with in the office. The Supervisors in both counties have been consistent and strong supporters of the UCCE office.

Other support: Additional research support will come from competitive grants such as USDA (NIFA, WSARE), and local community groups. Additional support will be provided by the Master Food Preserver Program Statewide Coordinator.

Developed and proposed by: The position proposal was developed by the current Sutter-Yuba county director and the Master Gardener Statewide Program Director.