

2021 UC ANR CE Position (Advisor)

Position Title: Community Health, Nutrition, and Food Security Advisor in San Diego County

Position: The Community Health, Nutrition, and Food Security Advisor will serve diverse populations in the county of San Diego, focusing on chronic disease prevention and health equity. Scope will include addressing the intersection of health, food and nutrition security, and the food system as it directly relates to and influences 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 areas of food, nutrition, food preservation, and water security (access); 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 be located in the San Diego County office working with the County Director and CE Advisors, nutrition community education specialists, Master Food Preserver (MFP) statewide staff, and Community Health and Nutrition statewide program personnel. The Advisor will collaborate with colleagues in the Food Literacy and Healthy Lifestyles, California Communities, and Research to Policy Program Teams, and NPI in support of ANR's Healthy Families and Communities and Sustainable Food Systems Strategic Initiatives. The Advisor also will start a local MFP Volunteer Program. This position is part of the Community Health Resilience & Nutrition Cohort proposal with the CE Specialist in Nutrition and Health Equity at UC Davis and seven other Advisor positions (in Butte/Glen/Colusa/ Sutter/Yuba, Shasta/Trinity/Tehama, Marin/Napa/Sonoma, San Joaquin/Stanslaus/Merced, Inyo/Mono/Alpine, Kern/San Luis Obispo/Santa Barbara, and Riverside/San Bernardino counties).

Justification: Diet and physical activity-related chronic diseases remain a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in California and San Diego, with poverty and food insecurity substantially contributing to this disease burden. Notably, San Diego has one of the nation's highest geographically adjusted poverty rate. This is a particular concern because of the high cost of living and pockets of persistent poverty. For example, the county ranks fourth in the state in the number of food insecure children and households, ranks fifth in the nation in terms of cities dealing with homelessness, and has the additional challenge of being home to a large refugee population. Many county and food alliance organizations and policy makers in San Diego address food processing, access and security, but many of these local networks lack information, guidance and coordination. In fact, San Diego is the third most requested county in the state to start a new UC Master Food Preserver Program. The top issues the Advisor will address are: 1) access to safe and nutritious food and drinking water across the lifespan for vulnerable communities, 2) chronic disease risk reduction through nutrition and physical activity education and policy, systems and environmental change advocacy and resources, and 3) building capacity to design, implement and evaluate strategies to improve equitable community health outcomes.

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 UC ANR 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 provide leadership via multiple channels including providing information to individuals and groups through in-person and virtual presentations and trainings, web-based resources, active social media presence, a local MFP Volunteer Program, and print publications such as local media, county-based publications and UC blogs. The Advisor will work with external partners and stakeholders to address county needs and document outcomes in order to inform broader local, state and national policy efforts. Activities could involve providing guidance and expertise, coordinating efforts to build local collaborations, and building the evidence-base for policy, systems and 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*; *California Agriculture*; *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*; *Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior*.

ANR Network: Building capacity for Health Resilience and Food System Networks is a 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 communities that are more resilient. COVID-19 revealed vulnerabilities in our food and healthcare systems and disparities in health. Indeed, the economic and health effects of the pandemic have disproportionately impacted communities struggling with poverty, structural racism, food and water insecurity, and diet-related chronic disease. Working with local communities to address upstream factors and prevent chronic disease will be essential as we emerge from the pandemic and address health equity. This position will work with NFCS, YFC, 4-H Youth development, and the Community Health Resilience and Nutrition Cohort hires, as well as Nutrition and Food Science CE Specialists, the MFP program, and NPI. This Advisor also has the potential to collaborate with UCCE San Diego Advisors and Academic Coordinators working with food production programs, the Master Gardener Program, Community Development and Small Farms Advisors and SAREP, for example, on issues related to transportation to local food outlets, outdoor recreation access, and support for farmers to offer CalFresh or WIC as a form of payment at direct-to-consumer outlets.

Network External to ANR: The Advisor will engage with government and non-governmental organizations at local, regional and state levels, 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 and state policymakers, and food policy councils. San Diego is unique in having a committed Board of Directors (who recently released an ambitious 10-year plan, Food Vision 2030), along with multiple coalitions actively engaged in health equity and food justice, such as the San Diego Food System Alliance and County of San Diego Departments of Environmental Health and of Agriculture, Weights and Measures. State and national partners can include the California Alliance for Healthy Farms, California Health Improvement Partners, California Health and Human Services, and California Departments of Social Services, of Food and Agriculture, of Education, and of Public Health, as well as the USDA and the GUSNIP National Nutrition Incentive Hub.

Support: The San Diego County office will provide support for transportation, office space, administration and IT, supplies and equipment. The San Diego/Imperial County Director, EFNEP, CalFresh Healthy Living, UC, and the Food Literacy and Healthy Lifestyles Program Team are in full support of this position.

Other support: The Advisor will be expected to obtain external funding for their applied research from various sources: federal agencies including the USDA and National Institutes of Health, California state departments, and non-governmental organizations such as Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and local foundations. The county government also has a long history of supporting CE program positions to work with CE Advisors.

Headquarters and Coverage Area: This position will be headquartered in the San Diego Cooperative Extension Office. The position will serve high-priority communities within the county to be defined during community assessments. The Advisor will have potential collaboration with local agriculture Advisors. There is currently no Advisor in San Diego County focused on nutrition or community health and no UC MFP Program. However, the County Director is very interested in developing one to compliment and collaborate with 4-H, EFNEP, and CalFresh Healthy Living programs in San Diego and nearby counties.

Developed and proposed by: Nutrition Policy Institute, UC Master Food Preserver Program.