

Position Title: Community Adaptation and Resilience Advisor (CARA). This position will focus on the critical and growing need for meaningful, equitable, and systematic public engagement in local climate adaptation and resilience efforts. Specifically, the Advisor will address methods for broad-based community resilience assessment, adaptation strategies related to climate impacts particularly extreme heat events, and the capacity building needs of extension personnel and the community partners and clientele they serve. This position will have a multi-county focus.

Position: Relevant disciplines for this position are primarily in the social sciences. Relevant academic fields include sociology, geography, and human ecology. Professional experience might include community development, emergency management, community/participatory science, urban and regional planning, adaption planning, public health, or social vulnerability assessment. The Advisor would work initially in a multi-county region in collaboration with statewide programs such as the UC California Naturalist program and its Climate Stewards course. The Advisor would also have strong interactions with health resilience, disaster and community resilience, and community development programs.

Justification: This position addresses the following problems:

1. **Broad nature of resilience.** As outlined in the UC ANR Concept Note: [Building Resilience Across California's Communities](#), “Building true resilience in communities requires attention to a broad array of basic needs and services from environmental systems and infrastructure to community capacity. Instead of pursuing aspects of resilience in isolation and based on the last crisis, a more proactive and an integrated approach is needed.” The interdisciplinary approach of the Community Adaptation and Resilience Advisor provides a framework for integrating resilience across a range of UC ANR programmatic areas such fire, health, water, heat, and food systems and connecting them to county and regional adaptation plans.
2. **Amplified threats and exacerbated vulnerability.** Climate change is a threat multiplier; it exacerbates almost every aspect of community resilience (both the hazards and the vulnerability to them) and introduces challenges that have not historically been experienced. In addition to its influence on fire, extreme heat has the highest mortality rate of any climate impact and is generally one of the most significant and under-reported consequences of climate change with a direct impact on the primary clientele of cooperative extension.
3. **Low and inequitable public engagement.** Local Governments use established planning frameworks for advancing adaptation and resilience plans across the state with limited levels of meaningful, equitable, and systematic public engagement. While public engagement is low in absolute terms, systemic and historical barriers require intentional efforts to redress the situation among Latinx, Black, and Native American populations. The capacity (self-efficacy and agency) of community partners, community members, and UC ANR personnel to integrate productively with such planning efforts is limited by the need for additional education, training, support, and institutional barriers.
4. **Opportunities.** On top of record state funding for climate change broadly, \$3.7 Billion (over 3 years) has been budgeted specifically for community climate resilience and adaption efforts. Just as UC ANR is on the margin of disaster response efforts, it will remain on the margin of the growing federal, state, and local community resilience and adaptation initiatives unless it embraces established systems for community adaptation and resilience work.

The Advisor’s role is unique in that it directly addresses UC ANR’s established public value of “Building climate-resilient communities and ecosystems.” It does this primarily by advancing efforts that will move the needle on two of UC ANR’s condition changes: “Increased preparedness and resilience to extreme weather and climate change” and “Increased civic engagement.” The proposed position supplements the single Climate Change Advisor in all of Southern California (excluding Imperial County) to address this public value.

Based on the 2017 survey of UC ANR personnel conducted by the UC ANR Climate Change Program Team, 88% believe it is important to incorporate information about climate change impacts, adaptation approaches and mitigation strategies into extension programs.” However, only 43% have currently integrated climate change into their extension programming. The report concludes, “To further increase the capacity of UC ANR staff to support the needs of their clientele and the broader public, professional development around climate science fundamentals, communication, and adaptation strategies is critical.” In 2020, the UC California Naturalist program launched the Climate Stewards course, which addresses some of these issues. However, it does not directly address the question of building capacity in UC ANR staff and academics. In addition, there remains a significant gap in the ability to integrate the Climate Stewards community adaptation and resilience efforts into those of local governments and in some cases efforts of other ANR programs.

In summary, the impact of the Advisor on adaptation and resilience will be measured in four areas: 1) increased coordination and continuity around adaptation strategies related to extreme heat; 2) increased standardization in methods for assessing community vulnerability and measuring resilience; and 3) increased equity in the engagement of populations disproportionately affected by climate change across a wide range UC ANR programs; and 4) increased capacity of UC ANR personnel and partners to effectively implement their work and integrate it into larger county, regional and state adaptation efforts.

Extension: This Advisor will connect UC ANR clientele and personnel in relevant programs with broader community resilience and adaptation planning methods and efforts. This includes:

1. Collaborate with the UC California Naturalist Program's Climate Stewards course partners to integrate their community/participatory science projects, capstone projects, and resilience monitoring efforts (using the Community Resilience Assessment Tool) into broader county or regional adaptation planning efforts.
2. Work with all UC ANR personnel engaged in local community development efforts to conduct training on community resilience assessment and adaptation planning building on the state's Adaptation Planning Guide 2.0.
3. Work with UC California Naturalist's Climate Stewards course to deliver portions of a climate change in-service training for UC ANR personnel.
4. Work with other UC ANR programs with climate-related initiatives (e.g., Climate Smart Agriculture, Environmental Horticulture, Urban Forestry) to support adaptation efforts related to extreme heat.

Research: The Advisor would focus research on 1) the effectiveness of community/participatory science as a method for increasing public engagement in community adaptation planning and resilience; 2) the development of standardized tools, metrics and systems for measuring community and ecosystem resilience; and 3) the analysis of natural resource management strategies that generate significant co-benefits and produce more equitable outcomes across communities.

UC ANR Network: The Advisor would work with the UC California Naturalist statewide program and its network of community level partners and the UC ANR Climate Change Program Team. Specifically, the Advisor will work directly with ongoing efforts to test, refine, and validate the Community Resilience Assessment Tool used as part of the UC California Naturalist program's Climate Stewards course. Similarly, the Advisor would network with Environmental Horticulture advisors on adaptation practices related to enhancing tree canopy cover to address the priority focus on resilience to extreme heat.

Network External to UC ANR: The Advisor would collaborate with the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, The Transformative Climate Communities program of the Strategic Growth Council, UC Davis Center for Community and Citizen Science, The UC Center for Climate Justice, The California Climate Hub, and the California Climate Action Corps and potentially the federal Climate Corps.

Support: This Advisor would have a multi-county assignment and be based in a county with significant levels of climate change impact and social vulnerability, an active climate action or adaptation plan, and one or more active UC ANR programs engaging clientele in community adaptation and resilience efforts. Counties that have indicated a need and interest include Ventura, Mariposa, and Los Angeles County.

Other support: The Advisor would receive support and potentially co-funding from the UC California Naturalist Climate Stewards initiative. This support may come in the form of existing and potential gifts, grants, contracts, and program support. There is a strong chance that this position could be co-funded through ongoing private funding.

Headquarters and Coverage Area: The location and coverage area of the advisor should take into consideration three factors: 1) areas with large populations with a high degree of social vulnerability, 2) areas with significant exposure to impacts, and 3) areas with relevant UC ANR programming. While exposure to impacts include a wide range of conditions, this position focuses heavily on high heat events. These conditions generally include the San Joaquin Valley, Los Angeles and surrounding counties.

Developed and proposed by: This position proposal was developed and submitted by the UC California Naturalist Statewide Program with input and consultation with the Climate Change Program Team and Environmental Horticulture Program Team.