

## Community Health Resilience & Nutrition Cohort

**Overview:** This cohort provides a network of colleagues with shared purpose, complimentary expertise, and ability to collaborate on research and extension programs for great depth and impact. This cohort, including a specialist position, will strengthen and build upon the existing expertise of UC ANR Advisors, CE Specialists, statewide programs, and wider networks, directly addressing grand challenges, critical needs and current gaps as identified by the SI and Program Team panels: food access equity, emergency preparedness and response, and improved related health outcomes. The cohort will provide expertise to build capacity in critical programmatic areas not currently addressed, accomplished in partnership with statewide leadership and existing AES Scientists, CE Specialists, and Advisors as crucial partners.

**Success Built Around Partnerships:** CE Specialists operating at the state level will work with Advisors at the community level in collaboration with ANR educators and volunteers to actively engage multiple partners at the local, county and state levels. Hiring as a new academic cohort increases peer-support and potential for retention and program success over time.

**Focus on Health Resilience & Nutrition:** Public health and natural disaster emergencies have highlighted how our current systems often fail to provide necessary information and resources to minimize health impacts to communities already at risk of poor health, as well as to improve community health and food security. Consequently, throughout the state there is a new urgency to strengthen the systems that support communities' physical and mental health. Policy, environmental and systemic changes, from simple to complex, allow people to make individual changes to live healthier and more rewarding lives. Coordinated multilevel capacity is paramount to tackle ongoing challenges. Despite the enormity of the challenges, there are solutions. A community health resilience and nutrition focused program can create the synergy and institutional connections needed to engage communities to build on strengths, address needs and create meaningful impacts across our state. Practical programs designed for and with communities will improve mental and emotional health, food preparation, resource management, food security and nutrition, physical activity, access to green spaces, greater educational success (e.g., healthy kids learn better), reduce preventable diseases, and mitigate the impact of emerging threats to health. A concerted health effort now – during a time of growing recognition in our state and nationally of the dire consequences of poor health - will result in healthy people with greater capacity for self-sufficiency and more productive lives, leading to more resilient and productive California communities.

**Opportunity and the Outcomes:** This network of academics will engage with multiple organizations and agencies for widespread adoption of beneficial practices throughout California building on existing school activities (implemented through Nutrition Education and the 4-H Youth Development programs) as well as broader community efforts (implemented through Advisors, UC Master Gardeners, UC Master Food Preservers, and Cal Naturalists) and research to inform policy (through collaboration with NPI). The cohort will establish a strong academic footprint throughout the state, adding an additional CE Specialist at UC Davis and 8 advisors, working across 18 counties, including:

- CE Specialist – UC Davis (Sponsored by Steinberg)
- Advisor – Butte Cluster (Sponsored by Blakely)
- Advisor – Inyo, Mono, & Alpine (Sponsored by Blakely)
- Advisor – Kern, San Luis Obispo, & Santa Barbara (Joint submission by CFHL-UC, & Soule)
- Advisor – Marin, Napa, & Sonoma (Sponsored by Lewis & Larson)
- Advisor – Riverside & San Bernardino (Joint submission by Clemons, McDonald, Hartin, & Barrett)
- Advisor – San Diego (Joint submission by MFP & NPI)
- Advisor – San Joaquin, Stanislaus, & Merced (Joint submission by EFNEP & Holtz)
- Advisor – Shasta, Trinity, & Tehama (Joint submission by FLHF PT & Forero)

**Anticipated Impacts:** The cohort approach addresses multiple aspects of health, prioritizing the greatest local needs and impacts paired with the resources and shared expertise of UC and local communities. Associated long-term condition changes will focus on improved community health and wellness, improved access to positive built and natural environments, improved workforce retention and competency, increased preparedness and resilience to extreme weather and climate change, improved individual and household financial sustainability, improved food security and food safety, and overall improved well-being for all throughout California. A cohort of experts bringing unique skills and community assets to collaborate statewide is the innovative and concerted approach needed to achieve and sustain community health.