

4-H Youth Development Advisor Colusa, Sutter, and Yuba Counties

Position Description: General disciplinary focus of the 4-H Youth Development Advisor will be on delivery of a statewide 4-H Youth Development Program at the local level that assists youth in achieving their fullest potential. Primary emphasis will be on developing research based youth programs that combine non-formal education with hands-on, inquiry-based learning in a positive youth development context to engage youth in improving their skills and abilities in citizenship and civic engagement. In addition, the Advisor will provide support and leadership to the 4-H Youth Development Program Representatives serving the 4-H Club Programs and associated 4-H Youth Development Programs in the three counties. The Advisor will be responsible for conducting ongoing program needs assessments that will direct program development, implementation, and expansion. Program evaluation to document and measure outcomes and impacts will be essential. A minimum of a Master's Degree is required, though other advanced degrees are encouraged, in Youth Development, Human Development, Child Development, Education or a related field. Expertise in curriculum development, large scale youth program development, volunteer development and management, and program evaluation is highly desirable. Strong leadership skills and experience in program and personnel management are required. Excellent written and oral communication skills are required. Experience in effectively managing and resolving conflict is highly desirable. Extension experience is desirable. UCCE Sutter/Yuba and Colusa are the proposed supporting units for this position. These units are currently moving towards a multi-county partnership.

Justification: “We know that far too many California youth currently fail to reach their full potential. Each year, approximately 80,000 California youth do not graduate high school and approximately one of every six 16-24 year olds in the state is out of school and out of work. California needs effective strategies that reduce risky youth behaviors and promote the developmental assets that support youth development. The goal is not just youth who are problem free, but youth who are fully prepared and fully engaged. Promoting healthy pathways to college and work are urgent concerns, not only for the individual youth and their immediate families and communities, but for the state as it seeks to replace an aging workforce and remain economically competitive in the global economy.” [UC ANR Healthy Families & Communities Strategic Plan]

The counties of Colusa, Sutter and Yuba have a critical need to prepare youth to enter adulthood equipped to thrive and to contribute to society through work, civic engagement, and nurturing of others. March 2012 unemployment rates for Colusa, Sutter and Yuba Counties were 26.2%, 21%, and 18.3% respectively (California Employment Development Department). High school dropout rates for the 2009-10 graduating class for the three counties ranged from 17.5-25.8% (California Department of Education). These counties have a critical need for positive youth development opportunities.

The 4-H Youth Development Advisor will directly address the Healthy Families and Communities Strategic Initiative Area of Inquiry 3: Promoting Positive Youth Development. The Advisor will provide essential local leadership and linkage to other university research and

education units in order to facilitate collaborative teamwork that results in the development and delivery of effective local research and extension programs that address critical needs, have statewide impact, and inform policy decisions. The Advisor will identify and consider the needs of all relevant major clientele groups in the planning, development and execution of applied research and education programs. In this capacity, the Advisor will consult with university academics, community groups, civic organizations, policy makers, and public agencies to prioritize and address critical issues related to youth development.

There has been no academic leadership (i.e. Advisor) for the 4-H Youth Development Programs in any of the three counties for over five years. Academic leadership is essential to expansion of 4-H community club programs, implementation of new youth development programs, enhancement of volunteer development, leveraging UC's contributions to the community through collaborative efforts, filling a void in research-based programs, and providing program evaluation to measure success. UCCE is currently only scratching the surface of youth development needs in this three county region. The opportunity for UCCE to make a significant impact in this area is great.

Extension: The Advisor will be responsible generating new and creative approaches to develop, strengthen and expand local 4-H programming that benefits youth and families. The Advisor will promote positive youth development, and in turn improve important outcomes such as competency, connection, character, caring, confidence, contribution and resiliency in our youth. The Advisor will establish, facilitate and participate in community networks and coalitions that promote education, training, coordination of resources, and policy improvements rooted in positive youth development theory. The Advisor will work with 4-H Youth Development Program Representatives providing support and leadership to the 4-H Club Programs and associated 4-H Youth Development (4-H YD) programs. The advisor will also be responsible for providing leadership to build and maintain a strong volunteer management system for the delivery of the 4-H YD Program. The Advisor will develop a variety of delivery approaches for expanding the program and reaching new, diverse audiences. Outreach methods will include individual consultations, trainings/workshops, meetings, web conferences, ANR publications, peer-reviewed journals, and an appropriate mix of contemporary and emerging electronic tools such as online learning, web content systems and repositories, social media, impact and evaluation tools, along with specialized and public media outlets. The academic in this position will be expected to interact with UC ANR Program Teams and Workgroups, Specialists and others within the research/extension continuum to develop, strengthen and expand the local delivery of statewide programs.

Key clientele include youth, parents, 4-H program staff and volunteer leaders, teachers, community leaders, youth organizations, civic organizations, public agencies and others involved in youth development and education.

Research: The Advisor will collaborate with appropriate UC ANR Program Teams, faculty, Specialists and Advisors to develop new curricula, educational resources, and/or creative activities that promote citizenship and civic engagement through youth development programs that are aligned with statewide focus and local community needs. Substantial research efforts will also include evaluating the effectiveness of 4-H and other youth development programs in

impacting positive youth development. The goal will be to assess whether and how existing programs promote positive youth development, and in turn, to improve important outcomes for participating youth, families, youth-serving organizations, and communities. Questions to be addressed by the evaluation process may include inquiries such as:

- Which approaches or strategies have done the most to impact short-term and long-term important life outcomes (e.g., grades, graduation rates, employment or higher education, healthy relationships)? Why?
- Which strategies have done the most to impact short-and long term community vitality (levels of civic engagement, youth involvement in community service, and young people in leadership roles)? Why?

Research results will be published through local extension publications, state and national 4-H programs, technical reports to funding agencies, newspapers, trade magazines, California Agriculture, ANR peer-reviewed publications, Professional Society Proceedings, and appropriate peer-reviewed scientific journals.

ANR Continuum: The 4-H Youth Development Advisor position will be supported by numerous UC assets that currently conduct youth and community development related research and education programs in California. The Advisor will be expected to work as an integral team member with others to address critical research and outreach priorities that have statewide impact. Collaborations will be formed with other Advisors, UC faculty and CE Specialists in adolescent development, family development, and community studies; Youth, Families, and Communities Statewide Program; Statewide 4-H Youth Development Program, 4-H Center for Youth Development, California 4-H Foundation, UC Davis Center for Regional Change, as well as others. In addition, the Advisor will be expected to form collaborative interdisciplinary connections beyond the Healthy Families and Communities area.

The generally acknowledged gap in this network of research and extension efforts is a dwindling capacity to meet the needs of youth development clientele and a complete lack of academic effort in the area of youth development in the three counties. This lack of commitment has led to lost opportunities in research, curriculum development, and program evaluation. There is an urgent need to build capacity and seize these rich academic opportunities to establish, refine and share effective youth development practices and to inform both policy and program implementation.

Support: UCCE Sutter/Yuba and Colusa will provide office space, administrative support, office supplies, transportation, IT support services, internet access, and telephone access.

Other support: The Advisor will be in a position to compete for research and extension support grants from UC ANR Competitive Grants, California 4-H Foundation, National 4-H Council, Thrive Foundation for Youth, USDA/NIFA, community organizations, National Science Foundation, National Institute for Health, and various state and national based foundations.

Location: UCCE Sutter/Yuba and Colusa are the proposed supporting units and are currently moving towards a multi-county partnership and headquarters location for the proposed position is to be determined.