

Nutrition and Healthy Adult Development Specialist (100% CE)
Departments of Nutrition (75%); Human and Community Development and Design 25%)

Position Description: The successful candidate will play a leadership role in promoting healthy aging in families, communities and programs through activities to design, deliver and evaluate nutrition interventions that result in sustained good nutritional practices and environmental changes. The successful candidate for this position will have a doctoral degree and expertise in: (a) nutrition and chronic disease; (b) adulthood and aging; (c) program design and evaluation; and (d) public policy, epidemiology, and/or behavior-change theory. Desirable qualifications include Registered Dietitian (RD) status and experience working with diverse ethnic groups. The successful candidate would be expected to carry out extension and applied research activities in adult populations (including the elderly/frail) on nutrition, health promotion, and chronic disease risk reduction. This position would be housed within the UC Davis Department of Nutrition (75%) and have a split appointment with the Department of Human and Community Development and Design (25%).

Relevance to the ANR Strategic Vision: The *ANR Strategic Vision* identified obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, cancer, and bone disease among the list of serious health threats related to poor nutrition. Related to the current obesity epidemic, prevalence of diabetes is expected to more than double by 2025; by 2050, nearly a third of the population will have diabetes. At the same time, the state's population will be significantly older, with the proportion of seniors, 60 years and older, increasing from 1 in 7 to 1 in 5. Older Californians and those with chronic diseases are also at heightened risk of food-borne illness. These health demographic trends will increase consumer demand for credible nutrition and health information, tailored to individual needs and available through the web, at the point-of purchase, and from health care system(s). *Prevention of nutrition-related chronic disease and their associated health complications requires both assurance of access to a safe and healthy food supply and opportunities for physical activity available across the life span.* With projected increases of 22% in the state's population, ethnic/cultural diversity, and urbanization, ensuring access to healthy foods and physical activity, especially geared to meet the needs of older adults with chronic disease, will emerge as a critical issue and significant challenge. Addressing these challenges, especially in low-income, ethnically diverse communities, will help to demonstrate UC's commitment to maintaining a high quality of life and healthy environments for all Californians.

Initiatives to be addressed: Three of the initiatives --Enhance the Health of Californians; Healthy Families and Communities; Ensure Safe and Secure Food Supplies—refer to a continuing, critical role for ANR related to Californians and healthy adulthood and aging. Specific ANR activities include identification of effective strategies for prevention of obesity, nutrition-related chronic diseases, and other health issues in the aging population (often beginning in early-to-middle adulthood), including poor food choices, unsafe food handling, misuse of supplements. Strategies are also needed to increase food security in the aging population.

Extension: The candidate will provide leadership for program development and evaluation with counties and community partners, statewide nutrition education programs, agency staff and

policy-makers, to reduce chronic disease risk and promote nutrition and health messages, targeting the adult and aging population throughout California. Special emphasis will be placed on high-risk groups such as low-income and immigrant populations, and those with nutrition-related chronic disease health risks.

Research: Health disparities have profound impacts on nutritional health and wellbeing. There is a pressing need to evaluate effectiveness of culturally appropriate community-based interventions for nutrition and health messages and to focus efforts to reduce health disparities. Controlled clinical interventions involving lifestyle modifications have been successful for the prevention and management of diabetes and other nutrition-related chronic diseases. However, there is an urgent need for applied research related to translation and evaluation of intensive approaches utilized in research studies into effective strategies for community-based health care, education and behavior change. While there is strong evidence of the positive effects of physical activity on cognition, there is a need to explore the relationships between nutrition, memory, and cognitive decline in older populations. Given the increasing number of older adults, and the major roles and positions of influence and/or authority held by older adults in the workplace and community, it is important to understand how to manage cognitive and memory changes associated with aging, and the role that nutrition may play in day-to-day functioning and well-being in a variety of contexts.

ANR Continuum: AES faculty (R. MacDonald, Steinberg, Haj, Keen, Clifford, Stern) within the Nutrition Department are actively investigating interrelationships between the health components of foods, epigenetic role of nutrients, and the development of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other chronic health conditions in adulthood. Among AES faculty in Human Development (Ober, and Miller), there is a strong interest in aging, cognitive changes, and information processing, as related to nutrition and health decision-making. At the county level, there are several Nutrition Family and Consumer (NFCS) advisors who engage in extension and applied research activities related to nutrition and aging. For many years, the ANR-supported Aging workgroup has actively engaged AES faculty and CE advisors in extension activities related to older populations. *However, the specialist link to develop programming and expand the applied research agenda has been missing.* This position is proposed as *part of a cluster hire with Human and Community Development and Design (HCD)*, and will interact with the Landscape Design Specialist to focus on the planning and creation of healthy, physical environments. The Nutrition and Healthy Adult Specialist, with expertise in health disparities and nutrition-related chronic disease, will collaborate with multiple parties across the continuum to improve the health of Californians.

Support: Office space in Meyer Hall, administrative support, office supplies, computing, Internet access, telephone access, are to be provided by the supporting unit(s).

Other support: The candidate would be expected to obtain grant funds through USDA and private foundations such as California Endowment and others

Location: Placing this position on the UC Davis campus would build on the unique strengths of the Nutrition and Human and Community Development and Design Departments, as well as promote valuable extension linkages with the School of Medicine and School of Nursing.