

UC CalFresh Youth Engagement Recommendations Report

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BACKGROUND

The Public Health Institute (PHI) Center for Wellness and Nutrition (the Center) and The University of California CalFresh Nutrition Education Program (UC CalFresh) are partnering on a Youth Engagement Pilot Project funded through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) in federal fiscal year 2016 (with possible extension into FFY 17 and beyond based on the findings from the pilot and availability of funding).

In collaboration with UC CalFresh and selected UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) advisors and staff, the Center will assess, identify and recommend youth engagement strategies that can enhance UC CalFresh programs - especially in the relatively new area of policy, systems and environmental change per the United States Department of Agriculture SNAP-Ed Guidance. The Center will also work to foster strategic partnerships that can broaden positive youth development impacts and principles that many 4-H clubs are already establishing and explore potential opportunities to link UC CalFresh SNAP-Ed with 4-H through Youth-led Participatory Action Research (Y-PAR) projects. There will also be a specific focus on exploring intentional linkages with 4-H programming, Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, physical activity integration, community and school gardens and other policy, systems and environmental changes that are identified through this process.

Through a "Healthy Youth Continuum" framework, the Center will also explore how UC CalFresh programs can systematically connect education, and engagement from upper elementary school to high school to increase youth decision making and leadership throughout the program statewide. Linkages to college readiness and careers through curriculum and/or pathways will also be explored as a long term goal of the project.

This year the pilot project will work primarily with six UC CalFresh pilot sites to explore and document existing, scalable and innovative strategies. The Center will also assess the current readiness and engagement level where these projects are at and suggest additional strategies to increase youth decision making and leadership. The Center will look at supportable ways to build capacity and foster adult/youth partnerships that can potentially increase youth leadership throughout UC CalFresh and across California.

KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Historically, SNAP-Ed's primary focus has been on nutrition education, but now there is a broader emphasis on obesity prevention inclusive of physical activity and policy, systems and environmental changes. This has expanded the focus of the work and

youth have been involved in these changes at various levels. Below are some of the key project activities that were part of the formative exploration for the project's successful implementation.

As a first step to the project it was recommended by the UC CalFresh state office to create a UC Advisory committee to help guide and support this project and also act as ambassadors to the youth engagement work. It was decided to invite advisors that were responsible for both the UC CalFresh program and 4-H in their respective counties or county clusters. Staff that already had a strong background in youth development were identified and invited to participate on a statewide advisory group for the Youth Engagement Pilot Project.

The advisory group consists of the following members: Virginia Bolshakova, Kelley Brian, Amy DeLisio, David Ginsburg, Paula Hamilton, Marcel Horowitz, Metria Munyan, Barbara Mknelly, Lloyd Nadal and Katherine Soule. The first advisory meeting took place on November 30, 2016 in Oakland, CA at the PHI Central Office. Statewide Survey results were discussed and a vision for the project started to form. Activities, such as exploring Roger Hart's *Ladder of Youth Participation* with the group occurred. The *Ladder of Participation* diagram is designed to serve as a way of thinking about youth's participation in projects and how to maximize the opportunity for any child to choose to participate at the highest level of his/her ability. Everyone left excited to see the project implemented and the advisors around the table were open to being a pilot site for the project.

Based on an activity that was explored at the advisory meeting, the Center team was invited to the UC CalFresh Statewide meeting on January 15, 2016 in Sacramento, CA at the Doubletree Hotel. Amy DeLisio and Metria Munyan provided a training exercise that explored connecting nutrition education curriculum and activities to policy, systems and environmental changes with partnership and community engagement. Feedback from this session will be incorporated into a finalized chart that will serve as a tool for UC CalFresh staff across the state.

After the advisory meeting, Dr. Katherine Soule contacted Lloyd Nadal and invited PHI to join the San Luis Obispo/Santa Barbara cluster local training on January 22, 2016. Katherine was interested in expanding youth concepts and strategies with her programs and staff and invited PHI staff to participate in these activities. Planning calls took place and an agenda was developed to address core youth engagement strategies with Katherine's UC CalFresh and 4-H staff and local health department and food bank partners. The training kicked off with an activity led by Dr. Soule followed by additional content and activities led by the PHI team. Evaluation results were all positive and the training was perceived as a success. It is likely that this cluster will participate in the

pilot project exploring ways to engage the newly formed Student Nutrition Action Committee (SNAC) for 5th and 6th graders.

A kick-off meeting with Brown Miller Communications (BMC), a subcontractor on the project, occurred on February 3, 2016 in Martinez, CA at the BMC office that included Amy DeLisio and David Ginsburg. The meeting was to get BMC staff, Mike Miller and Paula Hamilton up-to-date on the project and discussed the vision for the success stories and opportunities for press coverage. It was established that BMC would support two additional items including a portion of the statewide training for pilot sites focused on environmental messaging and that they would facilitate the state level partnership meeting. All final edits were agreed upon for the sub-contract which has been executed.

An initial partnership meeting with the state level programs of UC CalFresh, 4-H and EFNEP occurred on February 17, 2016 in Davis, CA at the ANR Building. Attendees include: Amy DeLisio, David Ginsburg, Shannon Horrillo, Lloyd Nadal and Katherine Panarella. The meeting's intention was to update 4-H and EFNEP on the Youth Engagement pilot project, share preliminary data, and explore potential partnership opportunities. 4-H also shared information about a new Diversity Pilot project that would be happening in 8 counties across the state that would target Latinos, primarily low income families and youth. The 4-H office saw this as optimal place to start with partnership opportunities. The collaborative effort happening with the Healthy Living Ambassador program in San Mateo, CA. There was strong willingness to partner with UC CalFresh by the 4-H office and a willingness to figure out issues around the different funding streams regulation to support stronger local collaboration. There was recognition of how the differences in funding could be a barrier, but also a consensus that the state agencies should work this out to allow the local programs to focus on implementing the programs with guidance from the state. This issue will need to be further explored in future meetings. Also, 4-H leadership was invited to participate in future advisory meetings and other training opportunities to further support the joint effort for collaboration, also recognizing the strong background and skills that 4-H brings in youth development and youth leadership programs.

The second advisory meeting took place on March 14, 2016 in Sacramento, CA at the PHI Bell St. Offices. Key Informant Interview summary information, the state level UC CalFresh and 4-H meeting and the success story project were discussed. Feedback on the pilot site commitment and criteria was provided and all 4 advisors committed to being pilot sites. Two other potential pilot sites were identified by the group (Imperial and Calaveras) and a plan was established to follow up with these sites which occurred on March 15, 2016. Both of these sites have also committed to participate.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

In order to get a better picture of the current youth engagement, PSE and partnership activities already happening around the state both a statewide survey with UC CalFresh county/county clusters was administered and key informant interviews were conducted with UC CalFresh and 4-H leaders from across the state.

Statewide Survey:

In November 2015, the Center conducted a statewide survey to gather data related to UC CalFresh current youth projects and to assess the current level of existing youth partnerships including with 4-H clubs. There were 15 unique respondents representing different UC CalFresh counties/county clusters from across the state. 40% of respondents indicated that they had at least some training or experience with youth led projects, but the survey did not assess respondents skill level or comfort in leading these types of projects. 50% of respondents said that they currently partner with 4-H on nutrition education/health projects. This assessment provides opportunities to better understand and build upon these existing successful partnerships to support youth in these programs across the state.

Elementary Schools

The majority of the respondents (87%) are working with youth in elementary schools and reach the greatest number of youth in this age category.

The most common curriculum and activities that are being implemented in UC CalFresh Programs across the state in elementary schools are:

Curriculum:

- It's My Choice...Eat Right Be Active!
- Nutrition to Grow On
- Good For Me and You
- Happy Healthy Me...
- CATCH

Activities:

- Smarter Lunchrooms Movement
- Harvest of the Month (food tasting)
- Structured PA (CATCH)
- Youth Gardens

Youth Engagement opportunities in elementary schools included:

- 53% of respondents said youth had opportunities to lead activities
- 33% of respondents said youth had opportunities to initiate action
- 42% of respondents said youth had opportunities for shared decision making

Some of the examples that sites shared of ways that they are engaging elementary youth included: started a Student Nutrition Action Committees (SNAC), role models to other students, Farmers Market volunteer staff, make decisions on what to plant, youth led field day, youth leading nutrition education/or physical activity lessons.

The top challenges that respondents reported were time limitations, balancing competing priorities, and funding and resources. These challenges are common in programming and could be barriers that contribute to sites not implementing more youth engagement strategies.

Middle Schools

The majority of respondents (67%) reported working with youth in middle schools. Most of the middle school students do come from elementary schools that had a UC CalFresh program however these middle school students do not connect back to UC CalFresh elementary programs. The chart below captures how UC CalFresh counties are engaged in middle schools.

County/Cluster	How many Middle Schools	Grade Levels	How many of these Middle Schools enroll students coming from Elementary Schools with whom your UC CalFresh Programs also works?	Do youth from UC CalFresh Middle School level programs Interact with or teach back to UC CalFresh Elementary School Programs?
Central Sierra	1-4	6 th -8 th	Most	No
Fresno/Madera	5-10	missing	All	No
Imperial	1-4	6 th -8 th	Most	No
Kings/Tulare	5-10	6 th -8 th	All	No
Placer/Nevada	1-4	6 th -8 th	Most	No
Riverside	5-10	6 th -8 th	None	No
San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara	1-4	6 th -8 th	None	No
Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF	1-4	6 th -8 th	Some	No
Stanislaus/Merced	5-10	6 th -8 th	All	No
Yolo	1-4	6 th -8 th	All	No

The most common curriculum and activities that are being implementing in UC CalFresh Programs across the state in middle schools are:

Curriculum:

- Eat Fit
- CATCH
- Harvest of the Month
- TWIGS

Activities:

- Youth Gardens
- Food Tastings
- Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

Youth Engagement opportunities were limited in middle school:

- Only 10% said youth had opportunities to lead activities
- Only 10% of respondents had opportunities for shared decision making

Some of the examples that sites shared of ways that they are engaging middle school youth included: youth led peer tastings and youth decided what to prepare for tasting from school garden.

The top challenges that respondents reported were time limitations, balancing competing priorities, and funding and resources. These challenges are common in programming and could be barriers that contribute to sites not implementing more youth engagement strategies.

High Schools

Less than half of the respondents (40%) work with youth in high schools. Some of these high school students come from middle schools that have a UC CalFresh program. 50% of High School youth connect back to elementary or middle school grades to teach back nutrition, garden or physical activity lessons to younger students. The chart below captures how UC CalFresh counties are engaged in middle schools.

County/Cluster	How many High Schools	Grade Levels	How many of these High Schools enroll students coming from Middle Schools with whom your UC CalFresh Programs also works?	Do youth from UC CalFresh High School level programs interact with or teach back to those at Elementary or Middle School Programs?
Kings/Tulare	1-4	9th	None	No
Placer/Nevada	missing ¹	9th-12th	Most	Yes ¹
Riverside	5-10	9th-12th	Some	No
San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara	1-4	12th	None	Yes ²
Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF	5-10	9-12th	Some	Yes ³
Yolo	1-4	9th-12th	All	No

The most common curriculum and activities that are being implementing in UC CalFresh Programs across the state in high schools are:

Curriculum:

- Hunger Attacks/Money Talks
- CATCH
- Harvest of the Month

Activities:

- Smarter Lunchrooms Movement
- Gardens
- Food Tastings

Youth Engagement opportunities in high schools included:

- 67% of respondents said youth had opportunities to lead activities
- 33% of respondents said youth had opportunities to initiate action
- 17% of respondents said youth had opportunities for shared decision making

Some of the examples that sites shared of ways that they are engaging high school youth included: youth leading nutrition education/or physical activity lessons, youth teaching back to elementary students, youth leading Smarter Lunchrooms Movement activities which included working closely the food service director.

The top challenges that respondents reported were time limitations, youth retention, SNAP-Ed allowable, competing priorities, and teacher support. These challenges are common in programming with older youth and could be barriers that contribute to sites not implementing more youth engagement strategies.

Afterschool / Community Programs

The majority of respondents (73%) reported working with youth in afterschool/community programs.

The afterschool/community settings were identified as:

- 90% afterschool programs
- 60% boys and girls clubs
- 30% 4-H clubs
- 30% YMCA

The afterschool/community programs target primarily elementary schools students and older youth in some cases:

- 100% target elementary school students
- 50% target middle school students
- 10% target high school students

The most common curriculum and activities that are being implementing in UC CalFresh Programs across the state in afterschool/community programs are:

Curriculum:

- CATCH
- Nutrition to Grow On
- TWIGS

Activities:

- Physical Activity
- Youth Garden Programs
- Cooking Classes

Youth Engagement opportunities were limited in Afterschool/Community Settings:

- 20% of respondents reported youth had opportunities to lead activities
- 20% of respondents reported youth had opportunities for shared decision making

Some of the examples that sites shared of ways that they are engaging youth in afterschool/community settings included: youth leading nutrition education/or physical activity lessons and a cooking academy.

The top challenges that respondents reported for afterschool/community settings were time limitations, balancing competing priorities, funding and staff turnover. These challenges are common in programming with older youth and could be barriers that contribute to sites not implementing more youth engagement strategies.

Policy System and Environmental (PSE) Change

The survey also asked general questions about key priority areas for UC CalFresh including PSE change work, the implementation of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement and physical activity interventions.

The top three statewide PSE Change Initiative interventions that counties/clusters are working on are:

- Smarter Lunchrooms Movement
- Community and School Gardens project
- Farm to School

Since Smarter Lunchrooms Movement is the top PSE strategy amongst UC CalFresh counties/clusters and also a state level priority, the survey explored how youth were being engaged in this process. With 43% of respondents are currently not engaging youth in the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. This provides a unique opportunities for greater enhancement and incorporation of youth engagement activities in SLM activities across UC CalFresh programs.

When youth are engaged the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (SLM):

- 29% are developing in creative and descriptive names for menu items
- 29% are creating artwork to promote new menu items
- 21% are involved in modeling healthful eating behaviors to others (i.e. – mentors, high school students eating in the middle or elementary school lunchroom occasionally, etc.)
- 14% inform menu development, dining space décor, murals and promotional ideas in the lunchroom
- 7% are involved in serving food or other duties during school meal periods

Physical Activity

Interventions were expanding physical activity (PA) opportunities work, but still had opportunities to grow in this area. Top areas across the state that county/county clusters:

- Implementing structured PA programs especially CATCH
- PA standards in School Wellness policies
- Building partnerships for increased access to PA opportunities

The chart below provides a more comprehensive look at UC CalFresh PA programs across the state:

	Plan physical activity interventions		Evaluate physical activity interventions		Train and build capacity of administration, staff, students and teachers for physical activity at interventions sites		Ensure that administration, staff and teachers support and promote physical activity through ongoing activities and special events	
Yet to work in this area	15%	Imperial Kern	46%	Imperial Kern Riverside San Joaquin Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF Fresno/Madera MCP	31%	Kern Riverside San Joaquin Kings/Tulare	38%	Kern Riverside Alameda Stanislaus/Merced San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara
Just beginning to work in this area	15%	Alameda Riverside	46%	Alameda Central Sierra Placer/Nevada Stanislaus/Merced Kings/Tulare San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara	46%	Imperial Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF Alameda Placer/Nevada Stanislaus/Merced San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara	31%	San Joaquin Kings/Tulare Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF Fresno/Madera MCP
Have done some work in this area	31%	Central Sierra Placer/Nevada San Joaquin Stanislaus/Merced	0%		15%	Central Sierra Yolo	23%	Imperial Placer/Nevada Yolo
Have successes and made progress with work in this area	23%	Kings/Tulare San Luis Obispo/ Santa Barbara Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF	0%		8%	Fresno/Madera MCP	8%	Central Sierra
Proficient in this practice	15%	Fresno/Madera MCP Yolo	8%	Yolo	0%		0%	

	Assist in getting physical activity standards (before/after school, during school or combined) written into school wellness policies.		Build partnerships with the community that support access to safe physical activity opportunities (Shared Use, Safe Routes to School, Walk to School programs, etc.)		Introduce structured physical activity programs, such as CATCH or SPARK, at intervention sites	
Yet to work in this area	46%	Kern Riverside Alameda San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara San Joaquin Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF	54%	Kern Riverside Alameda San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF Stanislaus/Merced Yolo	8%	Kern
Just beginning to work in this area	38%	Stanislaus/Merced Kings/Tulare Imperial Placer/Nevada Yolo	15%	Kings/Tulare Central Sierra	46%	Riverside Alameda San Luis Obispo / Santa Barbara San Joaquin Imperial Placer/Nevada
Have done some work in this area	15%	Central Sierra Fresno/Madera MCP	31%	San Joaquin Imperial Placer/Nevada Fresno/Madera MCP	23%	Santa Clara/San Mateo/SF Stanislaus/Merced Fresno/Madera MCP
Have successes and made progress with work in this area	0%		0%		23%	Yolo Kings/Tulare Central Sierra
Proficient in this practice	0%		0%		0%	

Key Informant Interviews:

Following the statewide survey results Key Informant Interviews were conducted with UC CalFresh and 4-H stakeholders from across the state to get a better understanding of youth engagement practices, capture successful practices and look for opportunities for collaboration across the UC CalFresh and 4-H programs. Six advisors were interviewed related to UC CalFresh Youth work, five of which oversaw both UC CalFresh and 4-H in their county/county cluster. One advisor that was interviewed only oversaw UC CalFresh and one advisor was brand new to her current position. Two of the UC CalFresh interviews included the UC CalFresh program supervisor. We also interview three 4-H advisors, two of which included their program supervisors, from counties that have both a UC CalFresh and 4-H program and that will participate in the 4-H Diversity Pilot project targeting Latinos. The majority of the interviewees were not in positions that directly worked with the youth in their programs with a few exceptions.

For the UC CalFresh projects, overall elementary school interventions were still the primary method of reaching youth with nutrition education. Middle school and high School program were limited or relied heavily on partnerships and alternative funding sources including 4-H. Youth engagement and leadership is the norm in 4-H, but less common in UC CalFresh programs. Nutrition education and curriculum are still major focuses of the UC Calfresh as they should be, however, the expansion into PSE change and youth engagement was limited. Some saw the opportunity to have youth as “change agents” in their community and were looking at ways to expand these opportunities.

Partnerships

Partnerships varied across the interviewees, however local health departments, schools, food service workers, county offices of education and 4-H were most identified as key partners to their local youth work. Other UCCE programs including the Master Gardeners and Food Preservers programs were also highlighted as partners and were often used in particular programs (such as school and community gardens and food preservation projects). Food Corps was also identified as a major partner for youth engagement at one site and for more information about the programs they implement please visit: <https://foodcorps.org>

Youth and PSE

When asked how respondents were defining PSE changes for youth or discussing this topic, universally no one was talking about this explicitly. In some groups youth were involved in PSE changes, but conversations related to PSE were not happening. Another group was providing information and some linkages between the environment and health. All felt this was an area that would be beneficial to grow and build capacity in across the UC CalFresh program statewide.

Youth Leadership Opportunities

There were limited youth leadership and decision making opportunities in the UC CalFresh programs currently. In most cases they were aligned to peer-to-peer education. One program was implementing a blended project using both UC CalFresh funds and 4-H, which should be reviewed and considered as a replicable model for other county/county clusters.

Current youth engagement efforts that were highlighted related solely to UC CalFresh projects include:

- High school youth leading nutrition education and activities with their peers
- Youth are garden leaders
- Youth actively involved in Smarter Lunchrooms Movement decisions and lunchroom changes
- Youth are Physical Activity Leaders, many specifically identifying CATCH
- Student Nutrition Action Committees
 - Related to the Shaping Healthy Choices Programs
- Healthy Living Ambassador Program
 - High school students lead activities with elementary students

4-H serves youth from age 5-19 and has a systematic and clear path to youth leadership opportunities typically commencing at age twelve. These opportunities expand through the teen age years with increased responsibilities. Youth that have been in the program are already prepared to take on these opportunities by the age of twelve since they have participated in developmentally appropriate activities with increased decision making and leadership skills from the beginning of the program.

Many projects that did indicate that they were engaging youth in leadership opportunities, were more likely to be doing so through 4-H or special funding sources, not through UC CalFresh. Special funding through Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Sustainable Community Projects, foundation funding, and special 4-H grants

were all noted as other funding sources working on youth engagement projects that had relatable components to health and nutrition.

Placer and San Mateo County both had an external Youth Commission at the county level supported through general funds that provided opportunities for youth to hold leadership roles and work on policy issues in their communities’.

College Readiness and Career Pathways

There was strong interest and some connections happening in the college readiness area already. These activities were primarily happening with partners, FFA and 4-H were both noted as providing opportunities. 4-H noted a curriculum they used for college readiness and also felt that many of their volunteers who helped with projects offered youth unique prospective into new careers and opportunities. Some programs took youth to college fairs. Many noted that they felt there could be connections as they are already based within a strong university system in California.

Resources and Training

Interviewees were very appreciative of the current trainings the UC CalFresh provides on curriculum and felt that they were very useful. Counties/ county clusters that were implementing the Shaping Healthy Choices curriculum felt that this curriculum had supported youth engagement approaches. Staff also provided positive feedback related to the Monthly Town Hall meetings, Smarter Lunchrooms Movement and CATCH trainings. Some additional trainings that would be very helpful for UC Calfresh specifically for expanding PSE and youth engagement work include:

- Cultural and diversity trainings
- Differences between youth learners and adult learners
- How to work effectively with teens
- Ways to support youth leadership
- How to incorporate PSE strategies

4-H also shared some of the resources and curriculum that have been beneficial to their programs including Health Rocks, Deliberate Dialogue, Mikva Challenge for social justice and a Career Readiness curriculum. Science, Technology, Education and Math (STEM) education connections is also a very important component for 4-H.

Statewide Vision

Interviewees felt that the two state offices needed to provide guidance, stronger vision and allowable activities that UC CalFresh and 4-H programs could collaborate on locally. There was also a need to streamline resources and materials that could be used with middle and high school students that were approved for both 4-H and UC CalFresh. 4-H programs were excited to see that UC CalFresh was looking at expanding youth engagement programs and felt that they could be a resource locally.

CONCLUSIONS

Although, sites are very excited to expand and implement new youth engagement strategies within their programs, many voiced concern related to staff capacity and competing priorities. Some staff understood that embedding these strategies required additional skills and also increased staff time and commitment on a project. A system that provided on-going technical support and opportunities for flexibility would be beneficial. Some examples of flexibility in implementation of expanding and incorporation of youth engagement and youth development strategies include: building YE into existing activities instead of building out new programming, utilizing YE resources and strategies, and coordination with existing programs and training that are offered by 4H locally and statewide. PHI will also look at ways to offer training and technical assistance in a manner that enables deeper participation such as calendaring trainings well in advance for planning purposes, providing regional and local trainings when feasible and incorporating YE trainings onto existing UC CalFresh meetings.

There are definitely opportunities to engage youth more across the upper elementary level through high school and there are existing successful programs to learn from. Opportunities also exist when building and expanding upon successful partnerships between UC CalFresh and 4-H. Another positive factor is that most of the advisors were highly motivated and already sought additional funding for special projects to maintain or implement innovative youth projects.

A limitation of this process was that feedback from the nutrition educators, the staff that deliver the curriculums and work most directly with the youth in the UC CalFresh program was not able to be captured. However, they will be engaged in the pilot project.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Below are a listing of immediate next steps recommended for the success of the pilot project. For the remainder of FFY 2016 these areas will be explored and documented with the six pilot sites and include customized technical assistance and training for each site. A variety of sites have been selected and a wide range of strategies will be developed from upper elementary to high school students. These strategies will be replicable to other sites and can be expanded upon during FFY 2017.

Document Existing Successes and Build Staff Capacity:

- Build Staff capacity and confidence in authentic adult/youth partnerships at all levels (advisors, supervisors, educators)
- Document existing successful models for replication
- Create a systematic approach that incorporates developmentally appropriate youth engagement strategies across upper elementary grades through high school
 - Increasing opportunities for leadership and decision-making
 - Y-PAR projects in High School
 - Connections to careers
- Expanding dialogue about policy, system and environmental change
 - Connecting health to the environment
 - Health equity and cultural considerations
- Build strong partnerships and support for youth leadership statewide

Maximize UC Cooperative Extension Partnerships:

A core area that will need to be expanded is maximizing existing resources and expertise that exists within the UC Cooperative (UCCE) system. Based on the formative evaluation findings and the expansion of advisors statewide that oversee both 4-H and UC CalFresh, the Center will explore opportunities to expand the partnership between UC CalFresh and 4-H in a meaningful way. UC CalFresh brings expertise in evidence-based nutrition education curriculum and strategies, strong local partnerships with schools and youth serving organizations, and experience working with diverse youth from low resource school districts. 4-H has a long history of helping youth "learn by doing" and is known for its positive youth development programs, but is also looking to

expand its appeal to more diverse audiences. Through this pilot project, (both at the state level and locally), the Center will look at ways to build upon both program's strengths to collectively support and impact youth in a positive and impactful way through collaborations with local 4-H Health Clubs, Youth Participatory Research Projects (YPAR) and Healthy Living Ambassador programs. Also, locally both UC CalFresh and 4-H staff see an advantage of working across programs and the mutually beneficial partnerships that would result by combining each programs' expertise. Other UCCE programs that should continue to be engaged are the master gardeners and food preservation programs as they can both be beneficial to county/county clusters that have large school or community garden projects.

A Long-term Goal of this project is to identify opportunities and connections to college readiness and career pathways. This is a top priority of the university and is also something that some UC CalFresh and 4-H programs are already exploring. This provides a pathway for youth that may not otherwise consider going to college or understand what careers, besides acute care, can also prevent disease and benefit health.

In the remainder of FFY 2016, the Center will spend intensive time with each pilot site to map out a strategic plan for each youth project. This will include providing tools, site visits, building staff capacity through local training and TA calls, and identifying the most viable opportunities to expand upon in FFY 2017. The sites will engage a variety of age groups (5th-12th graders) incorporating a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies that will advance youth leadership. A training for all pilot sites will be hosted in the summer and will focus on youth/adult partnerships and will include a segment on environmental messaging and PSE.

A statewide partnership meeting will be hosted to further identify potential partnerships and look at how organizations can support youth leadership collectively across California and opportunities for college readiness and career pathways specifically targeting low income youth. BMC will also create success story vignettes highlighting existing programs that are already engaging youth in their projects. These successes will also be highlighted at the partnership meeting.

In FFY, 2017 the Center staff plans to expand the number of pilot sites through an easy application process that will target sites that are already working in middle and high school settings, but are not currently engaged in the pilot project. This will allow for the expansion of developmentally appropriate youth engagement strategies for older youth and increase the likelihood of additional YPAR and PSE projects. The following sites will be contacted to gauge their interest and be provided with the application based on their

current work with older youth: Kings/Tulare, Riverside, Fresno/Madera and Stanislaus/Merced.

In addition to providing targeted TA and training to all of the pilot sites, the Center plans to offer up to four regional in-person trainings and deliver a Town Hall webinar for all UC CalFresh sites, topics may include Introduction to YE strategies, Incorporating YE into SLM, Expanding PSE strategies through YE, and Incorporating YE into PA interventions.

The Center staff will also look to extend youth partnerships across the state through 4H and other youth serving organizations to expand opportunities. Some of these partnerships will look at ways to continue to connect college readiness and career opportunities for youth participation in UC CalFresh programs and continue to highlight ways that UC CalFresh and 4H can partner both locally and at the state level.

The Center is poised to continue to provide this support using real world examples of best practices based on its long SNAP-Ed history and as a recognized expert in this field. Our expertise aligns with key areas identified by counties/county clusters as most important for success. The priority areas in which the Center can support the UC CalFresh Youth Engagement Expansion are:

- Youth Engagement Strategies across a wide spectrum including Y-PAR projects
- PSE discussions and expansions connecting health with where you live and how PSE can making lasting changes towards health for an entire population
- Partnership expansion with 4-H and other youth serving organizations across the state

Potential challenges to accomplishing the goals of this project may include:

- Scheduling conflicts to continue meeting and planning
- Curriculum appropriate for older youth
- UC CalFresh's heavy focus on younger students
- Funds to continue this project with sufficient time to build capacity

The Center staff will work closely with the state office to alleviate these challenges and also will look for other funding sources that may provide opportunities to expand youth work as well as continue on-going support as SNAP-Ed funds decline statewide over the upcoming years.

FFY 2016 Pilot Sites:

UCCE Imperial County

Advisor: Araceli Saucedo Villanueva

Staff: Mary Welch-Bezemek, Martha Lopez, (new staff recruitment)

Target Audience: Middle School age (6-8th grade) located at a K-8 site

Project: YPAR

Program Focus Areas: Community Gardens, CATCH, SLM

Imperial County UC CalFresh program is co-located with the Desert Research Center, 4H, and the Farm Smart program. This uniquely positions UC CalFresh with a variety of resources and partnerships right at their fingertips. Imperial County UC CalFresh is currently recruiting a new position that will ultimately take over the Youth Engagement and related PSE functions. The team already has established relationships in the community with the school districts, housing authority sites, local health department and elected officials.

As part of this pilot, Imperial County UC CalFresh is interested in starting a YPAR garden project over the summer at the housing authority to engage students and build trusting relationships that can continue into the school year. There is also potential to start collaborating with the food service director at the school site on SLM, and to train students on the CATCH curriculum during the summer program. PHI and UC CalFresh also felt that there was an opportunity to engage students in a research project related to why crops grown in Imperial County are not actually available or sold in Imperial County. PHI staff will attend the UCCE Summer Sustainability Camp in June, UC CalFresh will attend the Youth training in Sacramento in July, and regular communication will occur between the teams over the summer to support the development of the Youth projects.

Opportunities: Advisor oversees UC CalFresh and 4H, co-located with 4H, Potential to fuse aspects of UC CalFresh YPAR project with 4H, expand services offered in Spanish, recruit more Latino volunteers. Opportunities for students to teach back to younger grades.

Potential Challenges: Deep class and race issues in the community. Traditional 4H programs may not want to change. Transportation challenges for students.

UCCE San Luis Obispo/Santa Barbara County Cluster

Advisor: Katherine Soule

Staff: Shannon Klisch, Lisa Paniagua

Target Audience: Upper Elementary (4-6th grade), Middle School (7th-8th grade)

Project: Youth Leadership Project

Program Focus Areas: SLM, school/community projects

San Luis Obispo/Santa Barbara County Cluster UC CalFresh implements programming in both counties but the youth engagement work is primarily happening in Santa Barbara.

Through an integrated youth-focused healthy living project, called Food Smart Families, funded by National 4-H, the UC ANR 4-H Youth Development Program, and the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education program, 32 fourth- through sixth-grade student leaders were brought together from three schools in Santa Maria, Calif., for a full-day educational retreat that focused on engaging youth to explore their healthy lifestyle interests and see themselves as leaders.

UC CalFresh wants to continue to engage these students through a summer program once a week and have the students explore a potentially a PSE project, most likely PhotoVoice. At this point it is too early to determine how many students will consistently attend the summer program and if a project will be possible. PHI will be hosting a youth training

UC CalFresh Santa Barbara then plans to for the first time work in middle school following some of the students next year for a more robust PSE school based project.

Opportunities: Advisor oversees CalFresh and 4H, strong leadership supporting integration, Building off of successful special grant funding and SNAC.

Challenges: Summer program cohesiveness for continuing work with the youth, First time working with middle school site in the Fall, New to implementing PSE strategies, cultural competency barriers.