

Overview: Integration of SNAP-Ed (nutrition education) and 4-H Youth Development Programming increased health and wellness in low-income communities while creating more equitable access to government resources. **Challenge:** Eating healthily and being physically active are two of the most important health behaviors for preventing obesity and related chronic diseases. In California, over 40 percent of 5th graders are overweight or obese and California spends over \$52 billion annually in healthcare costs associated with obesity. Youth in low-income and minority communities face greater barriers to achieving a healthy diet and regular physical activity. In addition, while there is strong evidence that participation in high-quality positive youth development programming decreases the incidence of risk behaviors, improves school achievement, and increases their sense of personal efficacy and empathy; historically, youth of color have been less likely to participate in positive youth development programming like 4-H. **Innovative Solution:** The UC Cooperative Extension Department in San Luis Obispo County and through the Agriculture/Weights & Measures Department in Santa Barbara County have developed two innovative school-based programming models to address these challenges. These program models include 4-H SNAC (Student Nutrition Advisory Council) Clubs and UC Garden Nutrition Extender Program (UC GNE). Collectively, the goals of this integrated programming are to facilitate changes in school policies, systems and/or physical environments in support of improved nutrition and physical activity behaviors and overall wellness among students and parents in underserved communities. The goal of 4-H SNAC Clubs is to create innovative, efficient, and effective 4-H and SNAP-Ed UC CalFresh Nutrition Education (UC CalFresh) programming that integrates nutrition education and youth development efforts in historically underserved low-income and Latino communities. 4-H SNAC Clubs combine the positive youth development expertise from 4-H staff and programs with the existing partnerships and community health expertise of the UC CalFresh program. The goal of the UC GNE program is to develop a community-based network of trained school garden nutrition education advocates, experts and leaders in order to support, enhance and maintain gardens in schools in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. The UC GNE program depends on the expertise of the UC Master Gardeners, Master Food Preservers, 4-H and UC CalFresh Nutrition Education staff to provide annual training and continuing education to trained volunteers. Local schools are invaluable partners in these efforts. **Originality:** Our Departments developed and piloted an integrated programming model that would become SNAC Clubs and, later the UC GNE program. This integrated programming has more flexibility to respond to the needs and interests of the communities served including expanding youth engagement into STEM projects, career pathways, food preservation, and earth science. This programming is now recognized as a model for Cooperative Extension in counties across California, as well as being evaluated for national implementation. **Cost**

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Effectiveness: The integrated nature of the programming allowed our departments to leverage existing financial resources and partnerships to expand access to and participation in programming without increasing our department budgets. Beyond our county department budgets, UC Cooperative Extension is supported through federal, state, and private resources. **Results:** Programming is currently operating in 5 schools across both counties serving a total of 4,100 elementary age youth. Across all sites, 71 youth leaders collectively engage in 600+ hours of leadership activities annually, including leading garden, nutrition, and physical activity lessons for their peers and families. Matched pre and post surveys (n = 30) from academic year 2016/17 showed that after participating in 4-H SNAC Clubs for an entire school year, youth leaders found it easier to engage in healthy behaviors. At the end of the 16/17 program year, 56% of SNAC Club youth leaders indicated that they felt it was “not at all hard” to eat smaller servings of high fat foods like French fries, chips, and snacks (compared to 49% of 4-H youth statewide). After program participation, a higher percentage of youth (96%) indicated that they engage their families in healthy behaviors, including encouraging their families to eat meals together, asking their families to buy fruits and vegetables, and to keep fruits and vegetables in easy to reach places (versus 83% statewide). These integrated efforts have increased access to 4-H Youth Development programming in underserved communities. Since beginning these efforts in 2013, our counties have significantly increased program participation:

- In San Luis Obispo County overall 4-H enrollment more than doubled with 1,675 youth participating at the end of the 12/13 program year and 3,464 youth participating at the end of the 16/17 program year.
- In Santa Barbara County overall youth enrollment in 4-H increased from 5,449 youth participating in 12/13 to 12,940 youth participating in 16/17.
- In San Luis Obispo County, Latino youth enrollment in 4-H increased from 15.64% in 12/13 to 48.38% in 16/17.
- In Santa Barbara County, Latino youth enrollment in 4-H increased from 46.34% in 12/13 to 88.14% in 16/17.
- Combined, our counties, served 30.31% of all Latino youth participating in 4-H in the state of California (n=45,528 Latino youth in California).

This represents significant systems and organizational change that may have implication across the state and nation. Broader and more long-term impacts that we are not able to assess within the scope of this project include the effects of increasing equitable access in under-represented communities to positive youth-adult partnerships,; cultivating leadership and advocacy skills for the promotion of community health; and providing access to 4-H youth development opportunities to youth that have not traditionally been involved in 4-H. **Contact:** Katherine E. Soule, Director, UC Cooperative Extension Department, San

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Submission: Please see enclosed materials.