



# Reshaping the Health of Communities

Bringing the resources, expertise and commitment of the University of California to our communities

*Imagine a world where you have access to the latest health information from some of the most esteemed researchers and that you can tap into passionate, local experts who can translate that information into programs to support your community. That's what CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California, is all about.*

As a University of California program, our mission is to deliver the latest science, research and educational curricula from the university to communities in practical, immediate ways that will help reduce obesity and improve the health of children and adults. That means:

- Translating science into evidence-based strategies that both improve nutrition and promote physical activity
- Working closely with local partners to tailor programs that meet the unique cultural, ethnic and regional needs of the community
- Evaluating programs to make sure they have an impact and improve lives

Making all this work demands a skilled network of people. In addition to our professional statewide staff, our reach is magnified by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Cooperative Extension educators in 34 counties and over 1,600 teachers and volunteers – all with long-standing relationships in the communities where they work.

To deliver the most robust programs, we also partner with UC ANR experts from 4-H, Master Gardeners and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), as well as other CalFresh Healthy Living agencies.

## I INNOVATORS IN EDUCATION

Using schools as hubs for community change, we provide interactive, age-appropriate direct nutrition, garden and physical activity education for children from pre-school through 12th grade. We also support low-income adults. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we transitioned 24 curricula to a distance learning platform. This includes more than 97 youth and 40 adult lessons. As a result, our program has expanded potential for participant reach to both virtual and in-person environments, with vital information such as:

- *Plan, Shop, Save and Cook* curricula that teaches adults how to stretch their food dollars and plan better meals
- *CATCH* physical activity training and digital resources that increases school staff capacity to implement physical activity during and after school
- Garden-enhanced nutrition education that builds a positive connection to locally grown farm foods
- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement that revitalizes school lunchroom environments by increasing the appeal of, and access to, healthy foods. This reduces food waste.
- Establishing partnerships with school districts and schools to implement School Wellness Policies that enable a healthier school culture and environment

## LEVERAGING DIVERSE PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships make the difference, deepening community support and building local capacity to implement health initiatives.

We're in a unique position to bring the best statewide practices to local communities. Working with local and state stakeholders, we increase our

reach by leveraging resources, expertise and connections to meet local need. This means supporting front line workers in - schools, school districts, food banks, food pantries, Farmers Markets and community members - with in-person and online educational resources, materials, and services such as physical activity videos, nutrition education kits, and fresh fruit and vegetable distribution from school gardens.

## EMPOWERING YOUTH

Our youth engagement efforts stimulate youth leaders to create sustainable local programs that make healthy community changes. With training and mentorship, we encourage youth researchers to identify problems, offer solutions and advocate for healthier school and community environments.

Some of the policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes their efforts have successfully enacted include reducing food waste, improving school cafeteria environments and installing hydration stations in schools.

## FOSTERING CHANGES THAT LAST

Our goal is to ensure that CalFresh-eligible children, families and adults learn, eat, shop, live, work and play in environments that support healthy lifestyles.

But we look beyond behavior change to community change. Our signature programs, educational efforts and partnerships encourage the development and implementation of innovative changes to transform low-income communities into places where making the healthy choice is the easy choice

For more information, contact:

