Looking for a PhD student to work on a USDA grant in the area of Community Nutrition.

Considering graduate study in public health nutrition or community nutrition? We are looking for a PhD student to work on evaluation of the Utah Double Up Food Bucks Program. Compensation for this ½ time research assistantship would include a stipend of $17,000/year for a 12-month appointment, full graduate tuition ($14,000+ value for in-state), and subsidized health insurance. If eligible, they could also compete for USU’s prestigious Presidential Doctoral Research Fellowship, which would provide an additional $10,000/year stipend, and much more!

Studies will focus on community/public health nutrition with a focus on the impact of economic, social, and cultural factors on people’s dietary choices. Students will take coursework on a wide range of nutrition science topics with faculty whose expertise areas include hunger and food insecurity, gut health, human nutrition, childhood obesity, epidemiology, and community nutrition. Elective courses can be used to create a program of study focused on the student’s individual interests and career goals.

Due to an increased awareness of how food directly affects the population’s health there is an increased demand for professionals trained in the public health or community nutrition field, resulting in all-time high career opportunities. This degree program prepares students for a wide range of career opportunities including working with government agencies, non-profit organizations, teaching and research, Extension, and advocacy/public policy.

Who we are looking for

We are looking for a highly-motivated and hard-working student with a great attitude and love of learning. The applicant should be interested in a career that requires or would benefit from a PhD, and be interested in the general research area of community or public health nutrition.

Required Qualifications:
- Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited university
- Must have a 3.5 GPA in the last 60 credit hours
- Interest in pursuing research in public health/community nutrition, food insecurity, food choice, food access, food purchase behavior, fruit and vegetable incentives, nutrition behavior interventions for populations with low-income, or a related topic.
Preferred Qualifications:

- Master’s or Bachelor’s degree in nutrition, dietetics, public health, or a related field.
- Previous experience with (or knowledge of):
  - conducting quantitative survey research
  - conducting qualitative data collection and/or analysis
  - writing academic journal articles
  - writing scientific reports
  - writing grant proposals
  - supervising other’s work
  - conducting literature reviews
  - writing for the general public
  - working independently

Percent of Time or Hours per Week: 20 hours per week (this assistantship time is in addition to time needed for your coursework and work to complete your dissertation).

To apply, please Dr. Mateja Savoie Roskos (mateja.savoie@usu.edu) and Dr. Carrie Durward (carrie.durward@usu.edu) the following required documents:

- Cover Letter please include:
  - Information about how you meet the minimum requirements
  - Information about how you meet any relevant preferred qualifications
  - Information about any relevant previous job or academic experience
  - Why you want to get a graduate degree
  - Why you are interested in community nutrition or public health nutrition
  - What you want to do when you are done with your degree

- Resume/CV including education details, GPA, and any publications

- Names and contact information of 3 professional references

- Writing sample

- English language proficiency exam scores (if ESL applicant)

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Mateja Savoie Roskos (mateja.savoie@usu.edu) and Dr. Carrie Durward (carrie.durward@usu.edu) if you have any questions about this position.

The research assistantship

This ½-time (20 hours/week) research assistantship will focus on evaluating the impact of the Utah Double Up Food Bucks program, a public health intervention that provides a financial incentive to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to help them buy more fruits and vegetables. This work will be conducted in partnership with the Utah Department of Health (the implementing agency), farmers markets, and non-profits around the state of Utah. This work will provide an excellent foundation in program evaluation, survey research, working
with stakeholders, and data analysis. It will be possible for the student to become proficient working with mixed methods data, food purchase data, and cost-benefit analysis. Some flexibility in the evaluation plan leaves room for a motivated student to design and run their own study as part of the work.

This student would be employed for up to four years through a USDA fruit and vegetable incentive grant. Funding for year two-four would be contingent upon satisfactory job performance in prior years.

Start Date: August 2021 (or earlier, if available)

Compensation:
- $17,000/year for a 12-month appointment
- Full graduate tuition ($14,000+ value for in-state, the student would be responsible for any class/student fees)
- Subsidized health insurance (the student would be required to cover a portion of the health insurance cost)
- If awarded the PDRF the student would also receive a $10,000/year additional stipend.

Primary job duties:
- Collaborating with mentors and the Utah Department of Health to conduct a yearly assessment of the Utah Double Up Food Bucks program:
  - Developing evaluation procedures and tools
  - Collecting data in person, online, and over the telephone
  - Analyzing data
- Writing reports and scientific articles to document findings
- Supervising undergraduate research assistants
- Other duties as assigned

Who you will be working with

The Presidential Doctoral Research Fellow will work with Dr. Carrie Durward and Dr. Mateja R Savoie Roskos in collaboration with public health, USU Extension, and non-profit partners. They will also have the chance to learn from the wide variety of expertise in our NDFS faculty and departments across campus.

Dr. Carrie Durward, RD is an Associate Professor and Extension Nutrition Specialist at USU. She has a BS in Human Nutrition from Arizona State University, PhD in Nutritional Sciences from The Pennsylvania State University, and completed her dietetic internship at the Pennsylvania State University. She has previously won a Notable New Grant Award and the department’s Faculty Researcher of the Year. She has received millions of dollars in external grant funding, and is regularly published in top nutrition journals including the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, The Journal of Nutrition, and the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Her research focuses on community nutrition, program evaluation, and nutrition behavior measurement. Her Extension programming has focused on online nutrition
education, fruit and vegetable access, hunger relief, and the intersections of nutrition and mental health.

Dr. Mateja R. Savoie Roskos is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences. She is also the Director of the Master of Public Health Program (with emphasis areas in Nutrition and Veterinary Public Health) in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences. Dr. Savoie Roskos teaches many undergraduate and graduate level courses in the NDFS department including: Hunger Issues and Solutions, Advanced Public Health Nutrition, Motivational Interviewing for Health Professionals, and more. She has worked with many NDFS graduate students over the years and has won numerous awards for teaching, mentoring, and scholarship of teaching/learning. Dr. Savoie Roskos regularly publishes in journals such as the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, The Journal of Nutrition, The Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and Health Promotion Practice, among others. Much of her research focuses on ways to make the healthy choice, the easy choice, especially among individuals of low incomes. This includes farmers market incentives, nutrition education, healthy food pantry interventions, and more.

Relevant publications:


You can see a complete list of publications from Dr. Durward and Dr. Savoie Roskos.