

Sarah K. Kersten, MPH

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Education

2021 MPH University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
Master of Public Health
Specialization: Community and Behavioral Health

2018 BA University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
Major in Health and Human Physiology, Minor in Human Relations

Professional Experience

Research Associate, Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN)
Omaha, NE | July 2021 – Present

- Support the implementation of research and evaluation projects for an independent, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit nutrition research center
 - Prepare data for analysis by cleaning, coding, and merging data
 - Collect qualitative and quantitative data by conducting interviews/observations and administering surveys/assessments
 - Prepare quantitative measurement tools for distribution by formatting paper forms of building electronic surveys
 - Develop valid and reliable measurement tools including assessments, surveys, and interview guides
 - Conduct qualitative and quantitative data analysis

Graduate Research Assistant, University of Iowa Department of Community and Behavioral Health
Iowa City, IA | August 2020– August 2021

- Co-write and edited two manuscripts about alcohol recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Conducted and documented two literature reviews used for manuscript development
- Composed interview guide to understand recovery without utilizing specialty forms of help
- Assisted team with a thematic analysis of qualitative data
- Organized quantitative data sets into results tables for data analysis and summarization

Graduate Research Assistant, University of Iowa Department of Community and Behavioral Health
Iowa City, IA | October 2019– July 2021

- Created recommendations addressing food insecurity among older adults through report writing for food banks, food bank partners, and Area Agencies on Aging across Iowa
- Performed semi-structured phone interviews with twenty older adults in Iowa
- Developed two codebooks to assist in data analysis from interview transcripts
- Coded 25 transcripts utilizing qualitative data software programing (Dedoose)

Professional Experience (Continued)

Program Assistant/Interventionist, University of Iowa Student Wellness
Iowa City, IA | August 2019 – July 2020

- Provided harm reduction education on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in one-on-one sessions with students
- Collected data to assist in the University of Iowa’s informed policy decisions regarding alcohol usage
- Managed large data set of all students who attended harm reduction educational sessions

Community Food Systems Coordinator, RARE AmeriCorps
The Dalles, OR | July 2018-July 2019

- Expanded Oregon State University’s Food Hero program each by establishing two new partnerships through community outreach
- Implemented Food Hero Volunteer Training Program for 12 residents of Wasco County, OR
- Served on the steering committee of the Food Security Coalition as the social media coordinator
- Conducted a garden feasibility study in partnership with the Blue Zones Project

Health Promotion Assistant, University of Iowa Student Wellness
Iowa City, IA | February 2017 – June 2018

- Led over fifteen educational wellness outreach events across campus on various topics including sexual health, tobacco, alcohol and drugs, physical activity, stress management, and nutrition
- Maintained confidential student alcohol and drug program records
- Trained two new Health Promotion Assistant employees

Grants and Contracts – Current

October 2020 -
September 2027

**FNS: WIC Online Ordering – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA),
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)**

- Develop and test a safe and secure plan for implementing online grocery ordering for participants of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Role: Senior Research Associate

June 2022 -
November 2023

**From Policy to Reality: Assessment of the Successes and Challenges with the
WIC Cash-Value Benefit (CVB) Changes in Increasing Child Access to Fruits and
Vegetable – Healthy Eating Research**

- Managed a mixed method evaluation assessing the WIC CVB changes through State administrative data analysis and qualitative interviews with WIC State agencies, local agencies, and participants.
- Role: Senior Research Associate

July 2019-June
2022

Cooking Matters

- Data and evaluation consulting
- Role: Senior Research Associate

October 2019 -
September 2022

WIC Special Project Innovation – Council of State Governments (CSG)

- Assist CSG in developing measurement procedures to capture impacts of WIC projects, including wait times, participant satisfaction, and other variables.
- Role: Senior Research Associate

Grants and Contracts – Past

- April 2021 -
March 2022 **Evaluation of the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) – FHI 360 and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**
- Conduct annual NCCOR evaluation activities to support CDC, RWJF, NIH, and USDA in their collective efforts around childhood obesity prevention.
 - Role: Research Associate
- May 2019-
November 2022 **An Evaluation of the Training and Technical Assistance Model for Voices for Healthy Kids – American Heart Association**
- Build an evaluation framework for assessing the Voices training and technical assistance model, monitor capacity building, and report findings.
 - Role: Research Associate
- February 2019-
October 2024 **Evaluation of the Get Schools Cooking Program – Chef Ann Foundation**
- Assess the impact of participating in CSG for districts in cohorts 1-4 through qualitative interviews and implementation score.
 - Develop the Healthy Meal Score strategy.

Publications

1. Nitto, A.M.; Calloway, E.E.; Anderson Steeves, E.T./ Wieczorek Basl, A.; Papa, F.; Kersten, S.K.; Hill, J.L. (2022) State Agencies' perspectives on planning and preparing for WIC online ordering implementation. *Nutrients*. 14,4447. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14214447>
2. Thompson, H., Brady, P., Delger, P., **Kersten, S.**, Evans, S., Daly, E., Boudreau, H., Baymon, E., Kim, Y., Askelson, N.M. (2022). How home child care providers purchase, prepare, and serve healthy foods: In-depth interviews with Child and Adult Care Food Program participants. *Childhood Obesity*. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2021.0302>
3. Magness Nitto A., Chiappone A, Carpenter, LR, **Kersten S**, Yaroch AL. Key Informant Interviews to Inform Nutrition and Physical Activity Efforts in Child Care Settings During the COVID-19 Pandemic. November 2021. Prepared for FHI 360 by the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition.
4. Gilbert, P.A., Soweid, L., **Kersten, S.K.**, Brown G., Zemore, S.E., Mulia, N., & Skinstad, A.H., (2021). Maintaining recovery from alcohol use during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The importance of recovery capital. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. 229:1-9.

Honors, Awards, & Professional Associations

Honors and Awards

- 2021 Delta Omega Honorary Public Health Society
2019 University of Iowa Global Public Health Travel Award