

**California State University, Fullerton**  
***Fullerton, California***

**Institution Contact Information:**

**First Name:** Dianna                      **Last Name:** Lopez  
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**TEACH Grant Recipient**

**First Name:** Jenny                      **Last Name:** Lee

**Student Profile:**

The learning challenges I faced in my unique journey as an impoverished Hmong American student sparked and fed my desire for higher education. I was born and raised in Merced, California years after my parents escaped Laos after the Vietnam War. My family immigrated to the United States and settled in South Merced, a low-income area with a predominantly African American and Southeast Asian refugee population. Poverty, which was shared by countless other Hmong and Laotian refugee families in the area, negatively impacted my family throughout the years. The TEACH Grant helps me reduce my loan debt and financial needs by allowing me to allocate and dedicate more time to my studies. I will contribute to the field of education in many ways once I complete the program. As a member of the Hmong community, which is an underrepresented group in higher education, my membership will help to diversify the pool of teachers in the academic field.