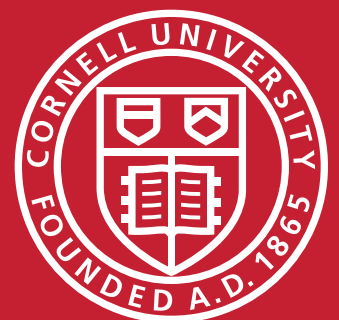




**Cornell Cooperative Extension** | **Columbia and Greene Counties**

# Annual Report

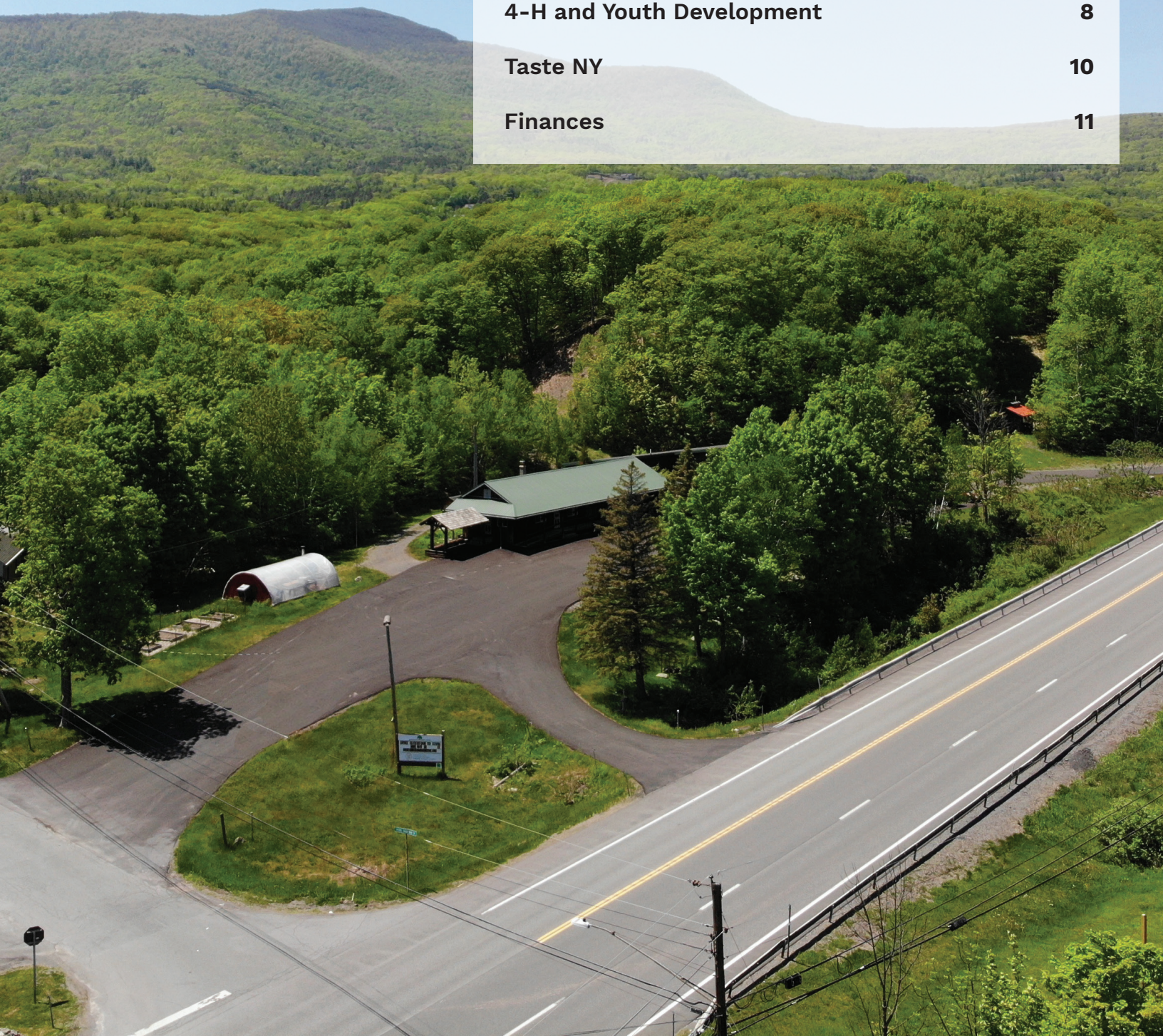
2021





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Left: An aerial view of the Agroforestry Resource Center in Greene County located in Acra on Route 23. Above: The Extension Education Center in Columbia County located on Route 66.

2021 has been a challenging year. We continue to work under the restraints and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these conditions our dedicated staff and volunteers have been able to devise creative ways to provide much needed service to our communities.

COVID-19 has served to heighten our awareness of the tremendous support network we are so privileged to have. We are immensely grateful to our board of directors, many community volunteers and funding partners for the support and encouragement provided during this volatile and uncertain time.

This report provides some of the ways in which we have adapted to a COVID-19 environment and highlights some of our accomplishments. We hope you will find the information interesting and useful. We are always open to ideas on how we can serve unmet needs in our community. Thank you for your interest and continued support. I look forward to a more normalized 2022.

Sincerely,

Evon Antonio  
Executive Director

# Board

Billy Greer- President  
Nicole Bliss – Vice President  
Virginia Benedict – Treasurer  
Alicia McCagg – Secretary  
Paula Van Meter  
Joshua Lipsman  
Dan McManus  
Rebecca Pinder  
Sandra Gardner  
Linda Levitt  
Marion Coyne  
Roberta Keller  
Bryan Frisbee  
Virgilia Tegiachchi  
Matthew Maraglio  
Ryan Skoda, Columbia County Board  
of Supervisors  
Matt Luvera, Greene County  
Legislature



# Staff

## ADMINISTRATION

Evon Antonio, Executive Director  
Shaylyn Decker, Taste NY Manager/Office  
Administrator  
Angela Tallarico, Senior Administrator/Administrative  
Support  
Bipul Saha, Finance Manager  
Donna Garafalo, Accounts Representative  
Eileen Simpson, Administrative Assistant  
Emily Warrington, Administrative Assistant  
Patrick Whitt, Facilities Coordinator  
AJ Melino, Facilities Coordinator  
Deven Connelly, Communications Manager

Kelsey West, Program Coordinator  
Sandra Linnell, Program Coordinator  
Donna Peterson, Program Coordinator  
Katie Campbell-Nelson, Northeast SARE Program  
Coordinator

## FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Rebecca Polmateer, Team Leader/Program Director  
Megan Gardner, Program Educator  
Peggy Henne, Program Educator  
Eileen West, Program Educator  
Theresa Mayhew, Program Educator

## 4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Linda Tripp, Issue Leader  
Abby Langdon, Program Manager  
Anna Harrod-McGrew, Subject Educator

## AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES and CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Connor Young, Team Leader  
Pamela Price, Program Coordinator  
Tracey Testo, Program Coordinator  
Audrey Kropp, Program Coordinator

## TASTE NY

Sarah Roberts, Manager  
Chris Lawton, Assistant Manager  
Kaitlin Camarda, Market Associate  
Lydia Casey, Market Associate  
Nicole Cruz, Market Associate  
Kayleigh Miller, Market Associate  
Joshua Hynes, Market Associate  
Lydia Johnson, Market Associate  
Vanessa Kowalczyk, Market Associate  
Mi-Lyn Dolan, Market Associate  
Samantha Puorro, Market Associate



# Family and Consumer Sciences



The Family and Consumer Sciences program area continues to bring its effective, community-based programming to families in Columbia and Greene Counties.

## PARENTING EDUCATION

The Family and Consumer Sciences program offered three different parenting education opportunities in 2021. The **In-home Parenting Program**, funded through a contract with the Greene County Department of Social Services, provide free, in-home parenting lessons to families exclusively referred by the Greene County Department of Social Services. The program currently offers socially distant in-home lessons, remote lessons via zoom or phone for those who are still not comfortable meeting in-person. **Parenting Skills Classes**, also funded through a contract with the Greene County Department of Social Services, provided a series of sixteen parenting classes held at the Greene County Department of Social Services. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, we had to suspend in-person group lessons. Parenting Skills classes were offered as an in-home program to families exclusively referred by the Greene County Department of Social Services. Together, the two programs have reached more than 50 families.

The **Parenting with Confidence Program** funded through a grant with the Dyson Foundation, provides a free series of 6-10 classes to participants who are referred by community organizations in Columbia and Greene Counties. The program currently offers socially distant in-home lessons, or remote lessons via zoom and the phone for those who are still not

comfortable meeting in-person. During 2021, it reached 75 families.

## NUTRITION EDUCATION

The Family and Consumer Sciences Program offers **Nutrition Programming** through our regional SNAP-ED nutrition education team. They offer both remote and in-person nutrition education to schools and community organizations who a majority of their participants receive SNAP benefits. During 2021, they delivered programming to schools in both Columbia and Greene Counties, as well as for the Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley.

## ANGER MANAGEMENT

**Anger Management classes** were provided by a certified Anger Management Specialist I and were available to all residents of Columbia and Greene Counties. Due to Covid-19, Anger Management was offered remotely via the telephone or zoom. 43 people participated during 2021.



# Agriculture and Natural Resources

## Climate Change and the Environment

From the rural woodlots to the bustling town halls along the Hudson River, you'll find CCE program staff working alongside our resilient communities. 2021 has seen similar challenges to 2020, but it has also been a year of opportunity. We have worked with many residents, partners and towns facing shared and unique pressures. We have supported their efforts to move forward with our strong commitment to sharing evidence-based resources, knowledge and experience.



### AGROFORESTRY

Agroforestry is the intentional combination of farm and forest stewardship. These systems create healthy, productive forest landscapes with both short and long-term value. Our programs are designed for beginners and experts to engage with these sustainable practices and incorporate them into their woods. Some of the topics we cover:

1. Shiitake & woodland mushrooms
2. American Ginseng & other understory crops
3. Maple Production
4. Foraging & edible wild plants
5. Silvopasture (livestock in the woods)
6. Riparian Forest Buffers
7. Windbreaks and Alley Cropping

### Programs & Publications

1. **Over 200 people engaged in ten programs** and trainings in 2021
2. Publicly accessible demonstrations in Siuslaw Model Forest
3. Land assessment and operation planning support
4. A documented project blog on multi-functional riparian buffers
5. A new issue of Grow, Manage Harvest Series: A Guide to Ramps
6. A new resource collection on Silvopasturing in the Northeast



Top: The Siuslaw Model Forest located in Acra, NY. Bottom: The Siuslaw Model Forest offers accessible trails and educational opportunities available to the public.



## WOODLAND OWNER NETWORKS

Our Association continued its role as regional host for the Master Forest Owner Volunteer Program. This program supports woodland owners with a free property visit from a trained forest owner. These volunteers share their knowledge and experience to help neighbors effectively steward their woods and achieve their management goals.

Due to a growing interest in the outdoors, climate change impacts and real estate trends, **2021 will see a record high for landowner visit requests:**

2019: 55 visit requests  
2020: 57 visit requests  
2021 (Jan-Sep only): 77 visit requests

### **Over 40 volunteers generously support this program.**

23 new volunteers from our region participated in the statewide training this year. We're excited to welcome them into the network.

We have also partnered with the Watershed Agricultural Council's Forestry Program and Columbia Land Conservancy to launch and coordinate a Women Owning Woods (WOW) network chapter. WOW is a group of women landowners and natural resource professionals from the region who foster learning experiences and discussions about forest property. Activities include virtual events, field trainings and tours and an online community where stories and experiences are shared.

## TRAINED LOGGER CERTIFICATION

CCE worked with the NYC Watershed Agricultural Council's Forestry Program to offer both core and continuing education classes to loggers and forest professionals earning or maintaining their certification through New York Logger Training.

**In 2021, over 40 loggers will have taken one or more of the following trainings:**

1. Forest Ecology & Silviculture
2. First Aid & CPR
3. Game of Logging Level I
4. Chainsaw Maintenance
5. Wetlands in the Woods

We are also expanding our annual Game of Logging for Women program to include a second course due to consistently high demand.

## HEALTHY & PRODUCTIVE WOODS

Our program offered over 20 educational programs and trainings related to forests and woodland



stewardship engaging over 200 people directly. We also reached over 40,000 through our social media posts and online resources.

Some of the topics we cover in our events, publications and resources:

1. Woodland Stewardship
  - a. Health, resilience & climate change adaptation
  - b. Water quality & ecosystem services
  - c. Forest asset protection & legacy planning
  - d. Forest management planning & working with a forester
2. Past to present conditions & practices
3. Species identification
4. Biodiversity & Invasive Species
5. Nature Journaling & Forest Bathing
6. Wildlife: Deer, birds, pollinators, amphibians



## CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

With continued support from the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program and the Cornell Water Resources Institute, **our staff supported nine communities with their climate resilience and adaptation goals.** Some of our work together included Climate Smart Community planning tools, assessments, Emergency Preparedness Guides and formal submittal for Climate Smart Community certification.

Our 2021 community partners include:

1. Taghkanic
2. Ancram
3. Hillsdale
4. Village of Coxsackie
5. Cairo

Two amazing examples of community leadership and dedication to resilience are the City of Hudson and Village of Athens. Both became Certified Bronze Climate Smart Communities in 2021.

1. City of Hudson
2. Village of Athens

We also began an impactful partnership with the New World Foundation and the Local Champions project to offer Germantown and Copake a Climate Smart Community Assessment as part of their program curriculum.

## CITIZEN SCIENCE

Our citizen science projects are a fun way to engage the public with important research. Here are a few of the opportunities we offered to learn and join the citizen science effort:

**Eel Monitoring at the Hannacroix Creek:** It was another successful year working with NYS DEC. Our teams safely engaged volunteer pods and hosted small school groups. For a short season, it made a big splash.

**Assessing Vegetation Impacts from Deer (AVID):** In partnership with Cornell University and the NYS DEC, we offered trainings to partner organizations who own publicly accessible woods. This expands the learning opportunities so others can participate in the deer browse data collection effort and involve their visitors with this important work.

**Monitoring and Managing Ash (MaMa):** We host and monitor MaMa plots in our Siuslaw Model Forest to determine resistant genetics. We use this opportunity to educate on the Emerald Ash Borer,

Ash trees and invasive species pressure on our forests.

**Invasive Species Reporting:** We track certain invasive species through our community hotlines and report to iMapInvasives, an online mapping tool for natural resource professionals to monitor & determine management needs. We also share this tool widely so everyone can contribute to the reporting and eradication of invasives.



Top: Glass eels are collected and counted at the Hannacroix Creek. Bottom: Shiitake mushrooms fruit at our demonstration site at the Siuslaw Model Forest.



# Community Horticulture



Above: A Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) explains the native pollinators at the Greene County Youth Fair. Right: The MGV display welcomes visitors into Columbia Hall at the Columbia County Fair.



Our staff and Master Gardener Volunteers were available to the community for all their gardening & landscape questions this season. While 2020 was remarkably busy for new gardeners and people exploring the outdoors, 2021 was very busy due to weather. Dry and then long-term rain created conditions for fungus, blights and pests that received a lot of attention. We also face many invasive species pressures from the Asian Jumping Worm and others that our staff and volunteers helped residents navigate.

We received over **800 calls & emails** on many topics, including:

1. Lawn & garden care
2. Vegetable & herb gardening
3. Insects, pests & invasive species
4. Plant diseases & pressures
5. Tree health & arboriculture
6. Ponds & water resources
7. Pollinators, birds & wildlife
8. Community gardens & food pantries

With COVID-19 safety protocols in place, we were able to offer soil & specimen sample services to the community. We received an estimated **75 soil samples and 40 specimens for identification**.

## SPRING GARDENING DAYS

Staff and Master Gardeners virtually adapted the annual event so the community could learn from our

volunteers safely. **We held four free webinars with 120-150 registrants each.**

1. Growing Vegetables
2. Growing Herbs
3. Container Gardening
4. Gardening for Butterflies & Moths

Master Gardener Volunteers also hosted a plant sale for participants that showcased plants that they learned about in the webinars.

## GREENE COUNTY YOUTH FAIR & COLUMBIA COUNTY FAIR

Our volunteers contributed two great themes for our county fairs. They were also available to answer questions about any and all gardening topics they received from the community.

The Greene County Youth Fair was all about pollinators. Master Gardeners talked about native pollinator and plant species and how to support this biodiversity in your garden.

In Columbia County, Master Gardeners transformed a portion of Columbia Hall to celebrate the theme, "Into the Woods." Wonderful murals, plants, wildlife and water features created a small forest that visitors could enjoy.



## 4-H and Youth Development



Top: The 4-H Milk Bar had another busy year at the Columbia County Fair. Left: Long time 4-H Issue Leader Linda Tripp retires after 30 years.

2021 brought a lot of changes to the 4-H program while also seeing the return of programming that was put on hold in 2020. After over 30 years of 4-H leadership, **Linda Tripp retired in June**. While we will miss her guidance, we are excited about the future of the 4-H program in Columbia and Greene Counties.

With safety protocols in place, 4-H clubs began meeting again. They provided opportunities for youth to learn, complete projects, perform community service, and show at the fairs. 4-H youth participated at both the **Greene County Youth Fair and the Columbia County Fair**. They submitted projects for judging, and competed at animal shows, public presentations and fashion review. The projects and animals on display exemplified the resilience of our dedicated 4-H youth and volunteers.





Top and far Left: Local students enter the Siuslaw Model Forest and learn about aquatic insects at Environmental Awareness Days. Left: A 4-H member shows animals at the Greene County Youth Fair.

4-H staff began to provide programming once again to our area schools. In March, we provided **Ag Literacy Week** kits to classrooms throughout both counties. Each kit included a book about the dairy industry, and ingredients and instructions to make ice cream. We continued our successful partnership with **the Hudson Afterschool program**. Twice per week 4-H staff provided a mix of in-person and remote lessons on healthy eating, literacy, and nature. In addition, we supported the **Catskill Elementary Arbor Day program** by leading a tree activity for 89 4th graders at the tree planting event. We also participated during **STEM Day at EJ Arthur Elementary School in Athens** and **Ag Day for K and 1 at Ichabod Crane Elementary**. With the support of our partner, Clermont Historical Site, we distributed over 800 individual kits to school classrooms participating in our grant-funded School Partners in Gardening. We also created six different kits (20-30 of each) to fulfill our grant-funded **Windham-Ashland-Jewett School Science Club activities**. In September, we hosted **Environmental Awareness Days** in our Siuslaw Model Forest for 88 Cocksackie-Athens 6th graders.

4-H staff also returned to community programming providing in-person, socially-distant educational opportunities to our community partners. Over the summer, we provided environmental education programming for the **Heermance Library in Cocksackie** and the **Summit Lake Explorers in Philmont**. With more partners beginning to open their doors to in-person learning, we are looking forward to providing more educational opportunities for the youth of Columbia and Greene Counties in 2022.





*at the*  
**CAPITAL REGION  
 WELCOME CENTER**

The Taste NY Market at the Capital Region Welcome Center is entering its fourth year and has grown substantially since its opening in November 2018. We have worked hard this year to retain our staff and were able to focus on product development. Due to COVID-19 protocols, we were prohibited from hosting events and tasting tables, so we pivoted and relied heavily on social media for vendor promotions.

Our sales began to increase beginning in May, they were close to surpassing 2019 sales. At the end of July the New Baltimore (NB) Rest Area closed down for demolition. The signs on the Thruway for the NB Rest Area were taken down and replaced with “NO FOOD” and “NO RESTROOMS” signs. However, signs indicating that the Capital Region Welcome Center is still open are small and confusing. Consequently, we have seen a dramatic decrease in traffic and sales.

We have had over 63,000 transactions in the store and approximately 435,000 visitors to the Capital Region Welcome Center from October 2020 – October 2021.

The Taste NY store is under the new leadership of Sarah Roberts, who is bringing some fresh, new ideas to the market. 2022 will be a year of expanding menu items, bringing in new products, starting our Farmers’ Market initiative, and focusing on community outreach.



Month	Net Sales 2021	Net Sales 2020
January	\$28,821.61	\$46,745.18
February	\$37,222.53	\$51,509.97
March	\$43,680.65	\$30,032.75
April	\$40,649.35	\$5,549.30
May	\$59,536.81	\$13,648.28
June	\$71,904.60	\$33,413.63
July	\$100,817.06	\$55,562.58
August	\$78,116.48	\$75,672.06
September	\$55,568.46	\$60,680.79
October	NA	\$57,612.30
November	NA	\$37,603.88
December	NA	\$38,504.10



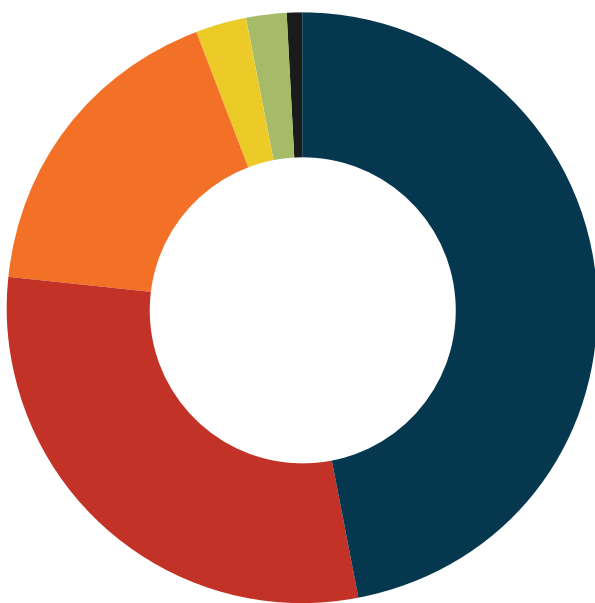
# Finances

## 2021 YTD REVENUES



- Contributions, fundraising, program fees, other \$154,065.69
- Other Grants/Contracts \$195,039.00
- County \$813,024.40
- State \$1,504,602.25
- Federal \$197,444.34

## 2021 YTD EXPENSES



- Interest Expense \$19,106.95
- Facilities Maintenance/Utilities \$56,857.17
- Regional Team/Assoc. Support \$78,355.47
- Program/Operating Expenses \$471,155.16
- Employee Benefits \$803,856.66
- Salaries \$1,278,281.00





## CCE at a Glance

CCE connects communities with Cornell research and expertise to enrich and empower New York State neighbors, local businesses, towns, and cities.

In neighborhoods, homes, workplaces, and schools, CCE educators work to empower individuals and families with raising children, saving energy and money, growing and preparing food, starting, sustaining businesses, and protecting the environment.

Each CCE office relies on county, state, and federal funds to solve local problems and strengthen communities.

CCE Columbia and Greene Counties is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

## Connect

Agroforestry Resource Center  
6055 Route 23, Acra, NY 12405  
(518) 622-9820

Extension Education Center  
479 Route 66, Hudson, NY 12534  
(518) 828-3346

Website: [ccecolumbiagreene.org](http://ccecolumbiagreene.org)  
Email: [columbiagreene@cornell.edu](mailto:columbiagreene@cornell.edu)

Facebook: @CCEColumbiaGreene  
Instagram: @CCECGC

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