Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia & Greene Counties

2021-2025 Strategic Plan
January 2021

Overview:

In August 2020 Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties (CCECG) launched the development of a Strategic Plan that will guide organizational and program development for the next five years. With close oversight of the process by a four-member strategic plan committee of the CCECG Board of Directors, all critical stakeholder groups of the association - CCECG leadership and staff, Board members, funders, partners and collaborators, and program customers - were engaged in the development of the plan. This comprehensive data-gathering process has proved invaluable in helping shape program direction and content so that it will best meet the present and future needs of the two counties over the next five years and beyond. The goals and objectives laid out in this document, and the gained commitment of stakeholders participating in this process, will go a long way in assisting CCECG to achieve and most likely surpass its desired goal priorities by 2025. Implemented well, this strategic plan articulates desired outcomes that will continue to trigger new and/or improved policies and practices, ensuring sustainability and resilience well into the future.

History and Background:

CCECG is a long-established quasi-governmental 501(c)3 organization that has been serving Columbia and Greene County communities for over a century. Founded originally in 1913 as an outreach entity of the land grant University system, CCE's original mission was to bring research-based information and practices to the agricultural community to help farmers and their families thrive. Over the decades, its research and education priorities have expanded to include youth development, environment and natural resource sustainability, economic development and vitality, community horticulture, and family and consumer programming for urban as well as rural families to help them improve their lives and livelihoods. Always in alignment with Cornell University Cooperative Extension's priorities, CCECG has continued to provide quality education and information services to the residents of Columbia and Greene Counties since the association was founded in 1916.

In 2019, CCECG was in a recalibration of its leadership and direction. After conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, the Board of Directors chose to keep Evon Antonio, the Acting Executive Director, at the helm of the association given his experience and demonstrated capacity to lead the organization through difficult circumstances during the last decade. With that decision, the focus switched largely to restructuring the organization and refocusing resources to more broadly reach underserved communities and address current and emerging needs in the two-county area. The decision to undertake this strategic planning initiative was made for the purpose of setting the association's paths and priorities for the next five years to ensure that the organization remains sustainable and resilient for decades ahead.

The development process of this plan was not without its challenges. Most notably, the early stages of this strategic planning process were confounded by the impact of a global pandemic that was felt on all normal processes and practices of the association. COVID19 literally changed the entire landscape of non-profit and government structure and function across the entire country. For CCECG, delivering programming in mission demanded significant, immediate new thinking and action by association staff to work around the restrictions and obstacles created by the pandemic for them to continue to serve funders, customers and collaborators with the same level of high-quality products and services. That said, CCECG leadership, staff and Board have, at the same

time, worked tirelessly on this plan over the last six months to shape their desired future, and articulate pathways for its achievement.

This strategic plan captures and incorporates the innovative thinking and action needed for CCECG to successfully navigate the pandemic environment and conditions, and build on those efforts post-pandemic to ensure even greater success in the foreseeable future. It lays out the organization's strategic direction and priorities that will allow the association to continue to build organizational capacity, sustainability and resiliency well beyond 2025. The Strategic Plan Committee has a commitment to work with Leadership and the Board to regularly assess progress toward these goals on, minimally, a semi-annual basis to ensure goal achievement.

The Strategic Planning Process:

Under the leadership and guidance of the Board of Directors' Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and the Executive Director, three steps were taken in the development of this plan. Briefly described, the purpose and actions for each of the steps were as follows:

Design of the process: In July 2020, the SPC reviewed, gave input, and approved a Strategic Plan Process set out by the consultant hired to facilitate the development of a five-year strategic plan for CCECG. Actual launch of the plan development process was delayed until August 2020 due to COVID-related closure of the association. Funding for the project was secured from the Dyson Foundation.

Collection of data and information: A number of organizational and program self-analyses were conducted by CCECG to set the stage for determining future direction. There were six key sources of input and feedback used to lay the groundwork for establishing the goals and objectives presented in this document. The self-analytic steps performed were these:

1. 2019 - Succession Plan study: This plan was done to determine stakeholder perception about CCECG's role and place as an important and integral member of the Columbia-Greene service provider network. For this study, staff, Board and external stakeholders provided input on the preferred or most important strengths and competencies of CCECG leadership, as well as on perceived program value and preferred organizational direction. Data gathered from this study have been incorporated into the Strategic Plan framework.

2. July 2020 - SWOT Analysis: A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats assessment was conducted with all staff, both individually and in teams, to determine conditions that were and could impact CCECG at both the organization and program-area levels over the next five years. The analysis, because of the unique situation being faced, was divided into two parts: SWOT during COVID19 (planning for the first 1.5 – 2 years) and SWOT post-COVID (approximately the last 3 years of the plan).

3. August 2020 - Mission and Vision Statement surveys: On-line surveys were conducted with both Leadership Team and Board members to gain feedback on the association's present mission and vision statements to determine needed modifications and revisions that would make them more appropriate and applicable to the work and direction of CCECG.

4. September 2020 - Definition of CCECG's desired culture (Core Organizational Values and Guiding Principles): A Leadership Team workshop was conducted to flesh out core values and guiding principles that drive their desired organizational culture. These were reviewed by the SPC, and committee members' input was incorporated.

5. October 2020 - Program Stakeholder Forums: Focused two-hour program-area workshops convening key internal and external stakeholders were conducted in combined in-person/Zoom meetings to gain feedback on perceived program priorities and direction for each area. This input provided Team Leaders and Executive Leadership key information on program needs, constituent bases, and changes in programming direction to better meet the needs of Columbia and Greene Counties over the next five years.

6. October-December 2020 - Additional program-specific feedback: Team Leaders sought customer and partner input through surveys and informal discussions to help clarify and develop a more complete understanding of customer needs, wants and priorities for existing and new program initiatives.

This strategic plan framework incorporates the findings from each of these self-analytic steps, and integrates the information into a usable document that can set direction and focus for the organization over both the short- and long-term future. Critical to its value is that this document is designed to be constantly monitored and modified to keep pace with changing internal and external circumstances, environments and conditions. If the self-analytic process is applied on an on-going basis, this strategic plan can be used long into the future to set new goals that build on accomplishments well beyond the five-year timeframe.

Development of the written plan: Core organizational goals were determined from the initial data and presented to the Executive Director, Leadership Team and SPC members in November to gain their input and revisions. Measurable objectives for the core organizational goals were reviewed and approved by the Executive Director and Leadership Team members. These core goals are the joint responsibility of association Leadership and Board, working together, to set and implement actions needed to accomplish them in the five-year timeframe.

Individual Program Area goals were developed, through an iterative process, by program staff working with Team Leaders. These goals set direction and pathway for organizational work for the next five years, and provide the focus of work effort for each program team and its leadership. Board Program Committees will play a key role in supporting staff in their accomplishment of these goals.

2021-2025 Strategic Plan Framework for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties

CCECG Vision Statement:

We build economically vibrant, resilient, sustainable, healthy and environmentally sound communities through education, research-based information, and trust.

CCECG Mission Statement:

"Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological and agricultural sustainability, and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping individuals, families and communities in Columbia and Greene Counties thrive in our rapidly changing world."

CCECG Desired Culture

The core culture of an organization comprises its principles and organizational values. Values define acceptable behavior within an organization; principles present the organization's code of conduct. Leadership and the Board of CCECG worked to identify the guiding principles and core organizational values that underpin CCECG employee and Board beliefs and behaviors in the workplace. These Core Values Statements and Guiding Principles are stated below.

CCECG Guiding Principles:

Our guiding principles are the precepts that guide our organization throughout all its life in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in goals, strategies, types of work, or top management. These are the truths or laws that govern our action, and are the first consideration in all decision-making and action.

CCECG's guiding principles are these:

1. We are tied to the land grant mission and we are mission-driven; all programs are designed and implemented true to that mission.

2. Our work is always science- and evidence-based.

3. We are always dedicated to growing knowledge for ourselves, our peers, and our communities.

4. We hold a commitment to non-formal education that helps the community navigate in an ever-changing world through hands-on and experiential learning to solve real-world problems.

5. We are apolitical, serving all customers, partners and funders equally and respectfully without bias or preferential treatment.

6. We connect university, extension, institutions and government for the sole purpose of furthering knowledge and education for the communities we serve.

7. We firmly adhere to Cornell University policies and legal requirements in organizational operations and programming.

8. We commit to the taxpayers of both counties to use their funding allocations wisely and prudently, and we rely on public/private partnerships to successfully fulfill our mission.

9. We are non-discriminatory and inclusive.

<u>CCECG Core Organizational Values Statements:</u>

Our core organizational values are the fundamental beliefs of and about the way we work at CCECG. Living up to our chosen values is our duty, and we commit to adhering to and enforcing these values in the workplace and in the community.

We value:

1. **Being trustworthy**
   - Our customers see us as a trusted source of information and support, our employees trust leadership, and the organization provides an effective, supportive and competent workplace;
   - All customers and employees receive respect and consideration at all times.

2. **Consistency of leadership**
   - All leaders have the management tools necessary to foster successful staff, programs and relationships within the organizational framework;
   - All leaders will provide consistent direction and employee support, feedback and guidance that treats all employees with respect, fairness and equal opportunity to grow and develop.

3. **Equal consideration and respect shown for every employee**
   - There is equal opportunity and obligation for every staff member regardless of position to improve their professional skills and knowledge;
   - Every employee has a voice, and is heard without repercussion;
   - Every staff member can expect to receive the supervision they need to be successful in their position;
   - All employees are accountable for demonstrating respect for the association and all colleagues.

4. **An identity as one unified organization regardless of geography or program**
   - Leaders have a common set of goals, and hold themselves and others accountable to moving the association and community forward toward those goals;
   - To us, the river is an interesting geological feature, not a barrier to organizational unity.

5. **Accountability to ourselves, our colleagues, our funders, and our customers for our words and our actions**
   - All actions, internally and externally, are built on a foundation of trust, knowledge and experience.

6. **Science, research, and honesty of information in all our work with the communities and organizations we serve**
   - We determine research-based solutions to the issues our customers face, and deliver those solutions with integrity, credibility and compassion.

7. **Cross-silo understanding, awareness, and tolerance, and assure every staff member has a basic knowledge of what every other staff member does for the association.**
   - Always seek ways to collaborate across program areas to improve services provided to our communities, enhance efficiencies and increase internal knowledge.

Goal Statements

The goals presented in this strategic plan are aspirational statements that articulate the association's targeted achievements over the next five years in pursuit of the organizational mission and vision. Objectives are the shorter-term milestones that will lead to goal achievement within the five-year plan timeframe.

CCECG Core Organizational Goals 2021-2025

The Core Organizational Goals are the responsibility of Board, Executive Director and Leadership Team to set actions and accomplish over the five-year timeframe. These goals are categorized according to strategic areas of overall organizational growth and development:

Leadership: *Maintain and build leadership capacity of the organization's staff and Board to be able to respond efficiently and effectively to emerging needs and trends*.

Resource Development: *Build and maintain a strong network of reliable and consistent organizational support through government, corporate, foundation and individual sources*.

Communications and Public Relations: *Build and enhance branding, messaging and overall external and internal communications to ensure organizational recognition and support from all sectors and constituencies, and smoothness and consistency of internal operations.*

Infrastructure Development: *Build internal functions to support effective and efficient organizational operations and maintain high staff morale*.

Programs and Education: *Ensure high quality educational programming that meets present and future needs of the community according to the mission of the association*.

Strategic Area: Leadership

Core Leadership Goals 2021-2025:

- Have in place a Board/staff plan and process for recruiting and hiring executive and senior leadership positions that can be used as needed over the foreseeable future.

  Objective: Complete a framework and plan to conduct an Executive Director search once the present ED indicates a retirement date.

  Objective: Fully identify a set of qualifications, characteristics, and experience desired in the next Executive Director of CCECG.

  Objective: Establish a selection committee and process that can be adapted as needed for future hire of key leadership positions as openings occur.

- Have an organizational culture that ensures an environment of unity of values, agreed-on mission and vision, a sense of common history and purpose, and one united staff and Board across two counties, all focused on the same goals and desired outcomes for the communities CCECG serves.

  Objective: Every staff and Board member knows and agrees to adhere to the core values and guiding principles that define CCECG.

Objective: Physical office space is set up to most efficiently and effectively blend staff into one unified group that operates collaboratively.

Objective: Physical and psychological characteristics that define the two-county geography are used to enhance programming and administrative policies and practices to best serve customers and constituents.

- CCECG is guided by a fully involved Board of Directors in which each and every member is actively engaged and fully committed to the fiduciary and programmatic health and resilience of the organization.

  Objective: Every Board member has specific assignments to organization and/or program committees, and actively fulfills on those commitments.

  Objective: Every Board member fully understands association financial statements and other financial and programmatic requirements, and contributes to discussions at Board and committee meetings.

- CCECG is fully aligned and committed to a CCE SBN region that best fits its business and program needs and interests.

  Objective: Board and Executive Leadership have a clear rationale about the best region to meet the needs of CCECG, and have a plan to be an active member of that region.

  Objective: If CCECG decides to change its present SBN affiliation, Board and Executive Leadership secure agreement from CCE Administration to enact that transfer of regional alignment.

  Objective: CCECG becomes a fully engaged and contributory member of the SBN region to which it commits.

Strategic Area: Resource Development

Core Resource Development Goals 2021-2025:

- Increased involvement with like-minded CCEs and other non-profits, creating new networks of partners and collaborators that can potentially participate on future joint initiatives.

  Objective: Establish programmatic connections with CCEs from every region of the state to share efforts, resources, and funding opportunities.

  Objective: Secure a broader, stable, and more diversified range of funding sources, ensuring that every CCECG program area has multiple funders to accomplish its goals.

  Objective: Secure additional sources of general operating funds to support core association functions.

- Have in place a system of regular assessments with CCECG customer bases to provide data on wants and needs of presently-served and underserved communities.

  Objective: Develop standardized survey tools and methodologies used annually to capture customer input and feedback to guide program development and targeting.

Objective: Achieve program efficiencies through new and existing partnerships with community organizations that provide similar and complementary services and programs.

Objective: Successfully expand program reach to underserved/unserved communities and customer bases throughout the two counties.

- Double the present level of Extension contacts and collaborations with Cornell faculty and CCE Administration, Columbia Greene Community College, and with other land grant and regional universities having mutual interests and research needs.

    Objective: Engage Cornell faculty support and collaboration in every program area to tap research opportunities that will strengthen and build CCECG program rationales and approaches.

    Objective: Establish research connections with regionally-located colleges and universities that are pursuing similar goals and interests.

    Objective: Secure funding that builds partnerships with other CCEs across the state to achieve mutual research and programming goals.

- Provide leadership on at least one regional initiative to test new approaches in alternative community education and outreach.

    Objective: Apply newly-developed expertise in technology-based learning and service to lead and assist the programming and customer outreach of other non-profits and government agencies in the two counties.

    Objective: Secure at least one multi-county grant that gives CCECG the lead role on program expansion in one or more program focus areas.

Strategic Area: Communications and Public Relations

Core Communications and Public Relations Goals 2021-2025:

- Complete the development of enhanced association policies to expand alternative work arrangements that empower staff to maximize productivity and outreach in the two-county area.

    Objective: Determine and approve written policies and guidelines for the continuation of work-from-home options for staff after COVID.

    Objective: Put in place a system of checks-and-balances with the work-from home policies that ensure transparency, compliance and fairness.

- Increase internet traffic of customers by 200% through expanded CCECG presence on social media platforms.

    Objective: Determine, through customer and partner feedback, the most effective platforms for CCECG to add to its outreach efforts to positively impact CCECG stakeholder reach.

Objective: Determine and implement the most effective messaging to build and maintain its customer base.

Objective: Devise and launch a constant feedback system on platform traffic, and use those data to modify and update information and messaging to attract the highest level of customer usage.

- Maintain and enhance print and in-person messaging and outreach to ensure that non-technology-using customers' needs are met.

    Objective: Determine, with customer and partner feedback, the audiences most effectively reached and impacted by print and in-person contact.

    Objective: Determine and implement the most effective print and in-person conduits and messaging to maintain and build audience reach on program awareness and participation.

    Objective: Devise and launch a constant feedback process that tracks the impact of print and in-person messages in influencing customer response and behavior.

- Ensure that core organizational values and guiding principles underpin all actions and behaviors of staff and Board.

    Objective: Clarify that staff and Board understand what the core values and guiding principles mean in terms of behavior and decision-making.

    Objective: Ensure that every staff and Board member is in agreement with the core values and guiding principles.

    Objective: Revise hiring guidelines and Board recruitment processes to ensure that new employees and Board members are aware of and agree to upholding the core values and guiding principles in regular decision-making and action.

Strategic Area: Infrastructure Development

Core Infrastructure Development Goals 2021-2025:

- Establish and fully implement standardized time-tracking tools and processes, and objectively assess the impact of these practices on improving accountability and report accuracy both internally and in reports to funders and partners.

    Objective: Convert all in-house time-keeping and benefits-tracking systems to one computer-based program, and eliminate paper tracking and reporting.

    Objective: Establish project-based time tracking processes and guidelines that allow accuracy of staff time allocation to individual projects and tasks.

    Objective: Ensure that funders and partners continue to receive more accurate reports on CCECG program time and effort in alignment with outcomes and accomplishments.

- Have in place fully tested systems for data-tracking and analytics that support story-telling and demonstrate learning, value and outcomes from CCECG programming.

  Objective: Establish evaluative parameters and methods most effective in building program-related databases, and identify and implement appropriate tools and instruments for collecting data in each program area.

  Objective: Ensure partner and funder congruence and agreement on measures that constitute successful learning and outcomes for each program.

  Objective: Ensure consistency in data utilization to improve program design and delivery in order to achieve higher levels of ROI (return on investment).

- Achieve measurable improvement in employee professional growth, satisfaction and retention by implementing a dedicated employee professional development and training benefit that gives employees an opportunity to update skills and abilities in customer service and programming.

  Objective: Strengthen and promote an association funding pool dedicated to staff skills- and knowledge-building in order to improve overall staff capacity and competencies.

  Objective: Ensure updated policies that guide and determine staff eligibility to access association-supported development opportunities.

  Objective: Ensure successful staff outcomes from training and development, skills-building, and research opportunities by using evaluation methods that track employee growth, satisfaction and retention.

- Apply lessons learned from the impacts of COVID on the association to inform the on-going development of association policies and practices for post-COVID operations.

  Objective: Collect data on COVID19 impacts on the CCE system across the state to determine breadth and depth of positive and negative effects on programs and services.

  Objective: Project programming changes needed through the end of 2022 to be able to successfully meet customer needs in a pandemic-impacted society.

  Objective: Maintain all beneficial COVID19-related programming changes and incorporate them into on-going programs post-pandemic.

- Ensure staff members are always sufficiently equipped and trained to meet the technological demands required to provide quality programming and services to customers in both counties.

  Objective: Ensure that all program staff have the correct technology they need to perform their jobs at the highest level.

  Objective: Ensure that all staff have access to the training they need to utilize the technology in programming and service provision to customers.

Objective: Ensure that alternatives to technology-based programming and service delivery are available to, and accessible by, customers who don't have broadband access.

- Develop staff and Board administrative, financial and programmatic policies and guidelines that are perceived to be fair and equitable, and that lead to improved morale, association performance and productivity.

  Objective: Determine policies that are deemed to be problematic or otherwise interfere with association performance and productivity.

  Objective: Create a joint Leadership/Board committee to review problematic association policies to understand the background rationale for each, and to determine its fairness and equitability.

  Objective: Establish a review and assessment process for changed policies to ensure they are achieving the desired positive impact on association performance and productivity.

- Ensure an annual performance review process for all levels of leadership staff to ensure that all supervisors are performing at their highest levels, and are solidly skilled and effective in their leadership roles.

  Objective: Ensure that every supervisor is trained and capable of conducting objective performance reviews of staff.

  Objective: Ensure HR oversight of the performance review system so that all reviews are objective and consistent with CCE guidelines and needs.

  Objective: Ensure that all staff understand the purpose of their performance review, what internal promotion pathways may be available to them, and that they know the performance benchmarks they need to achieve in order to be eligible for promotion and/or employee benefit access.

- Identify objective indicators of financial sustainability and resiliency, and have a strong set of policies and "circuit breakers" in place that would launch protective actions if/when circumstances change in order to prevent financial instability or insecurity of the association.

  Objective: Establish the essential core financial needs required to keep CCECG in existence under the "worst-case scenario" of funding loss due to external conditions, including those conditions not in CCECG's control.

  Objective: Ensure that the financial director has the knowledge and capacity to trigger budget trip-points that prevent association deficit spending, and that those trip-points are known and agreed to by Leadership Team members and Board leadership.

  Objective: Ensure that all management level staff are capable and willing to lead and assist fundraising efforts through grants preparation or other avenues of revenue generation.

- Have available to staff a range of non-monetary and affordable benefit options that incentivize long-term retention of high-quality staff.

Objective: Determine the list of non-monetary and low-monetary incentives that attract staff interest and commitment.

Objective: Establish benchmark achievement requirements for eligibility for each incentive, and track benefit access and use to ensure equity of application, staff satisfaction and staff retention relative to the provision of these benefits.

Objective: Incorporate these benefits into position advertising and promotion to attract future high-quality CCECG employees.

Strategic Area: Program and Education

Core Program and Education Goals 2021-2025:

- Fully institutionalize the use of technology to reach CCECG customers with programming and education, and expand the use of technology in all program areas to ensure that CCECG remains a leader in technology application.

  Objective: Ensure all program staff have the competencies and technology to provide alternative means for delivering programming.

  Objective: Expand the use of technology to reach unserved and underserved customer groups in the two-county area.

  Objective: Determine new areas of programming consistent with CCECG's mission that could be developed to enhance CCECG's reach and program repertoire.

  Objective: Explore opportunities to provide technology training for customers with limited access to/knowledge of technology.

- Fulfill the education and support needs of the commercial and non-commercial agricultural community in the two-county area, ensuring efficient and effective programming that meets their needs.

  Objective: Complete a full assessment of ag community education and service needs that are not currently met by regional ag teams, and determine the level of CCECG resources and commitment that would be required to meet those needs.

  Objective: Develop and have ready a position description for an ag educator that would allow the organization to advertise and attract a successful candidate to that position should it be needed.

  Objective: Undertake a cost/benefit analysis of an internal v. external ag customer support to growers in Columbia and Greene Counties, and report those findings to the CCECG Board for their consideration.

  Objective: Ensure a robust education program that prepares and integrates local ag producers to access TasteNY market outlets.

- Have cross-program education that addresses community issues holistically.

    Objective: Determine specific education programs where cross-silo programming could be beneficial and where cost and staffing efficiencies could be realized.

    Objective: Establish staffing integration patterns that open avenues of cross-silo programming opportunities, efficiencies and skill development.

    Objective: Secure funding for at least two cross-program initiatives that demonstrate full integration of program goals and objectives across at least two program areas.

- Have a cadre of available translators so that all foreign-speaking populations in the two counties have access to CCE programs.

    Objective: Determine bi-lingual needs to expand customer outreach in each program area.

    Objective: Establish partner and collaborator connections that would provide translation opportunities for outreach and education in non-English speaking communities.

    Objective: Include bi-lingual competencies as a valued qualification in any future job postings for program staff.

Core Individual Program Area Goals 2021-2025

Agriculture and Natural Resources
*Agriculture represents an important economic sector in Columbia and Greene Counties. CCECG supports local agriculture by providing resources for farmers and consumers to help strengthen our local and regional food systems; and **Climate Change and the Environment***: CCECG staff work to engage the community to solve and respond to key environmental challenges, reduce and make more equitable our collective use of the Earth's resources, and inspire respect for natural systems and our reliance on them.*

- Deliver high-quality woodland education by upholding established programs supported by key partners (Nov – Jan 2021-2025).

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Continuously deliver effective programs that advance participant knowledge and build impactful relationships with the woodland community. These programs include: TLC, Forest Owner Education Program Series, woodland owner workshops, Forestry Friday, online resources for CCE and MyWoodlot, GOL for women and WOW, AVID and community response.

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Maintain strong relationships with the following long-term funding partners: WAC Forestry Program, NYS and Cornell AVID, Wentorf Foundation, NYC DEP Model Forest Program (DEP, WAC, SUNY ESF, model forests).

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Secure extended or new agreements that: advance long-term partnerships based on shared goals, continually meet the needs of the CCE community and partners, foster and support evidence-based woodland stewardship concepts, expand programs to meet the needs of new and diverse audiences.

- Expand natural resources education to meet evolving need and support new and diverse audiences.

  Objective: Widen social media content to highlight issues relevant to new and diverse audiences.

  Objective: Secure relevant input through community needs assessments, surveys, forums and outreach efforts.

  Objective: Continue to develop relationships and resources with new and underserved groups in the natural resource community such as indigenous people, people of color, women and others.

  Objective: Work with new woodland owners in Columbia and Greene Counties in support of sustainable management practices. Foster existing municipal relationships to provide education.

  Objective: Identify overlapping opportunities with the CCECG programs to address farmer, youth, public health and other overlapping community needs.

  Objective: Monitor NYS Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act implementation to identify impacts and opportunities for woodland communities and stewards.

Objective: Establish on-going partnerships with other CCE associations and organizations to regionally educate on natural resources subjects with impacts beyond Columbia and Greene (e.g., forest carbon storage, habitat connectivity, invasive species, ecosystem health and resilience).

Objective: Continue to address woodland legacy and conservation issues through direct programming and collaboration with partners such as Columbia Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, WAC Easement Program, and other CCE associations.

- Sustain robust Master Gardener and Master Forest Owner Volunteer Programs (on-going 2021-2025).

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Assess COVID-19 impacts on volunteer participation and program potential. Explore new opportunities for innovation, training and public education.

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Provide direct MGV service to community members through phone, email, visits and special events (e.g., programs, plant sales).

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Provide direct MFO service through facilitating volunteer visits and resource sharing for woodland owners.

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Work with staff and existing volunteers to recruit new members and design roles that best fit volunteer skill sets and passion. Provide training and room for volunteers to work autonomously under CCE guidance.

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Co-coordinate regional trainings for new MG volunteers and provide opportunities for continuing education credits.

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Support the annual statewide MFO training for new volunteers and coordinate regional refresher trainings for the Catskill/Hudson Valley group.

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Promote and fully implement the "Enhanced" MFO service for CCE associations in the Catskill/Hudson Valley MFO region.

- Make the Agroforestry Program a regional leader in partnerships, research and knowledge.

  Objective (4/yr; 2021-2025): Coordinate high-quality, introductory programs while integrating advanced topics to maintain engagement and build trust with our audiences.

  Objective (2021): Obtain a working knowledge of current practices and needs in the agroforestry sector.

  Objective (on-going; 2022): Engage intermediate and expert level producers/stewards and build community network.

  Objective (on-going 2021-2025): Continually build partnerships through affiliations and collaborative work teams.

Objective (2021-2022): Update online resources and expand content availability through local and partner platforms.

Objective (2021- on-going): Leverage existing funds to deliver agroforestry programs and resources.

Objective (2021 – on-going): Secure new funding for projects, programs and research.

Objective (2021 – on-going): Work with affiliates and local partners to establish land-based research projects and tours to further regional experience and advance best practices.

Objective (2022-2023): Develop a framework and determine feasibility of a fee-for-service model to provide land assessments, business planning, land and market access and value-added product support to new and existing agroforestry producers.

Objective (2022-2023): Assess need and interest in an annual conference, an agroforestry school or a regional agroforestry team based in Columbia and Greene Counties.

Objective: Research and implement a community-based maple program that utilizes the saphouse facility for production on top of its current limited E and O function.

Objective: Recognize the potential for use of the existing greenhouse and MFO/MG volunteers to produce nursery stock of species for MFRB projects that are not available commercially.

- Make Siuslaw Model Forest the best woodland education and research forest site in the region.

    Objective (2021-2022): Complete the Forest Management Plan incorporating feedback, new tools, and innovative goals.

    Objective (2021): Develop a plan for implementation of management goals and establishment of new educational sites with partner support and funding.

    Objective (2022-2025): Complete assessment and build multiple use outdoor education space, new demonstrations for advanced forest stewardship and adopt a safe transportation model through the forest.

    Objective (2023 – on-going): Implement research programs for undergraduate and graduate students to utilize the forest for research projects.

    Objective (2024-2025): Launch an annual outdoor expo with sponsors, speakers, demonstrations, and interactive hikes and tours.

- Re-establish local agricultural program that meets the needs of Columbia and Greene Counties.

    Objective (2021-2022): Conduct region-wide assessment of the agricultural sector to determine CCECG's near and long-term goals for a local ag program.

    Objective (on-going): Build and maintain relationships with Taste NY vendors and develop new ones through CCE staff and Board, outreach, partners and existing programs.

Objective (2022): Develop the core agricultural program goals in close collaboration with program staff, committee, and Taste NY.

Objective (on-going): Develop the core agricultural program goals and aggressively pursue those through new partnerships and funding.

- Sustain impactful work with municipalities in building resilient communities through established programs and partnerships.

    Objective (Sept – Nov 2021 -2025): Deliver complex and highly impactful climate change adaptation education and technical assistance to municipalities, elected officials/staff and CSC task forces.

    Objective (on-going): Maintain strong relationships with partners and funders in the Climate Smart Communities Partnership, regional road-stream crossing teams, and supporting organizations.

    Objective (quarterly, 2021 – 2025): Maintain strong relationships with past, current and new municipal partners ensuring steady participation and momentum.

    Objective (Dec 2021 – 2025): Work collaboratively with CCE and external partners to shape future resiliency work in the Catskill/Hudson Valley Region.

    Objective (2021): Develop new partnerships to support this work beyond current capacity.

    Objective (2022): In close partnership with Trout Unlimited, continue road stream crossing assessment and inventory projects and pursue larger applications for their use.

    Objective (2022): Pursue opportunities with CCE staff and partners on dam assessment, removal and restoration.

    Objective (2022 – 2025): Support Cornell's research and share resources for road-side ditch vegetation, storm water and other water management BMPs.

- Be a leader and ally in climate change education for Columbia and Greene Counties' communities and most vulnerable groups.

    Objective (2021): Work with the Family and Consumer Sciences Program to identify overlapping needs and pursue projects collaboratively (e.g., public health, financial planning).

    Objective: Monitor and strategically educate the community on federal and state legislation (NYS Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act) with colleagues and partners.

    Objective: Seek new funding and partnerships to equitably assess, model and support projects for Columbia and Greene Counties' most vulnerable communities.

    Objective: Expand Climate Change and The Environment Team capacity and hire a new position to carry out grant-funded projects.

- Be a leading local source for high-quality, trust-worthy information on sustainability, environmental health and climate resilience.

  Objective (2021 – 2025): Grow online and social media presence highlighting legislation, programs and practices that support personal, community and environmental resilience.

  Objective: Expand resources and programs for landowners and farmers on sustainable flood plain and riparian buffer management.

  Objective (2022): Continue water resource and watershed protection projects including fluvial geomorphology and stream restoration education.

  Objective (2022): Update online resources for residential drought, storm and flood preparedness.

  Objective: Expand online resource offerings on sustainable energy and residential improvement programs (with Family and Consumer Sciences Program).

  Objective: Work with CCECG programs and volunteers to incorporate pollinators, biodiversity and ecosystem health into outreach efforts.

  Objective: Expand climate change and natural resources tools and partnerships to better educate on evolving adaptation strategies through partnerships with NIACS and TNC.

  Objective: Support the team and other programs in integrating environmental factors and priorities in Siuslaw, public programming and resources.

  Objective: Support the 4-H Youth Development program in engaging youth and families on these issues.

- Be the first line of support for the community on invasive species identification, management and eradication.

  Objective: Maintain strong relationships with CRISP and the county CCEs within the jurisdiction through annual contracting that supports region-wide community education through our websites, fairs, programs and Master Gardener hotlines.

  Objective: Improve training opportunities for staff and volunteers and improve resource access for stewards and landowners.

- Coordinate programs that foster a deeper understanding of complex ecological systems.
  Objective: Continue to coordinate the Hannacroix Creek Glass Eel monitoring site in partnership with HREP.

  Objective: Explore new program opportunities with partners and local conservation organizations that explore the deeply connected ecological systems within our communities (water systems and habitat, wildlife, symbiotic fungi, etc.).

Family and Consumer Sciences

The FCS program provides resources that advance community resiliency and family well-being, and works to contribute to the advancement of socio-economic potential of communities and the empowerment of people to achieve optimal well-being.

- Ensure low-income residents in Columbia and Greene Counties have access to the resources they need to find adequate housing.

    Objective (2023): Incorporate programming that addresses aspects of pursuing and successfully locating affordable and safe housing.

    Objective (2024): Have available low-income housing options for families to pursue if needed.

- Be the most comprehensive parenting support, education and referral program in the two-county area.

    Objective (2022): Have available a full catalog of on-line programming that complements each component of parenting that we now provide by in-person education.

    Objective (2022): Provide some type of meaningful childcare during parenting education group programming.

    Objective (2025): Expand more fully into remote areas of the two counties where programming is minimal.

    Objective (2022): Incorporate resources on finding meaningful employment into programming.

- Have a collaborative network that includes 100% of all community-based organizations doing similar or complementary work.

    Objective (2023): Have a comprehensive referral system in place that ensures that at least 40% of program participants are provided access to the resources they need to function successfully in society.

    Objective (2021-25): Ensure community agencies in Columbia and Greene Counties are aware of each other's presence and what the agency provides.

- Achieve at least a 75% success rate in reuniting parents with their families after prolonged absence from the family unit.

    Objective (2021-25): Work with at least 40% of incarcerated parents in prison and jail facilities in the two-county area to provide a full complement of parenting programs that will guide and support positive and successful interactions with their family upon their release.

    Objective (2021-25): Work with at least 40% of parents returning to their families after a prolonged absence in the two-county area due to reasons beside incarceration.

    Objective (2024): Establish partnerships between agencies working on issues pertinent to ReEntry in Greene County.

    Objective (2022): Incorporate resources on finding meaningful employment into programming.

Core Cross-Program Area Goals 2021-2025:

- **FCS/Ag&NR/4-H/CC&E/TNY:** Make CCECG a trauma-informed agency.

  Objective (2022): Have all staff knowledgeable about trauma and its impact on program participation.

  Objective (2022): Ensure all CCECG facilities are designed for participants to feel safe and not re-traumatized.

  Objective (2021): Have employee policies that ensure staff feel safe and not re-traumatized, as well as deal with the issues related to secondary trauma.

4-H & Youth Development
The 4-H program develops and offers supportive, hands-on and experiential learning programs through a wide variety of formats and locations to fit the interests and needs of the diverse young people ages 5-19 who live in rural and urban communities in Columbia and Greene Counties.

- Implement a wide-reaching 4-H program marketing plan.

  Objective (2022): Research and create a complete listing of local marketing strategies including virtual, social media and traditional newspaper and radio.

  Objective (2021): Ensure that staff are provided training and resources needed to best use these marketing approaches.

  Objective (2022): Create an updated and current marketing package that will be carried through all marketing methods including brochures, displays, social media, etc.

  Objective (2021): Build 4-H webpage as an active resource for current 4-H members and others looking for youth resources.

- Youth from every town will participate in 4-H programming that fits their interests and life circumstances.

  Objective (2022): Establish a connection with a decision-maker in each school district who will help to promote 4-H and its programs.

  Objective (2022): Create a mechanism to connect with home school groups and learn how best to involve their youth in 4-H programming.

  Objective (2021-25): Collaborate with at least five youth-serving community organizations to provide 4-H programming to their enrolled youth.

  Objective (on-going): Respond to requests for 4-H club membership within one week of receipt.

- Double the number of 4-H volunteers supporting our youth programs.

  Objective (2021-25): Increase the number of 4-H clubs to 50.

Objective (2022): Streamline the volunteer application process by utilizing the 4-H webpage as well as on-line orientation programs.

Objective (2023): Reach out to local organizations whose membership may be a source of volunteers to the 4-H program.

- Infuse aspects of positive mental health care into all 4-H sponsored programs.

  Objective (2021): Provide staff and volunteers with training and resources.

  Objective (2022): Ensure that at least two mindfulness activities are included in each afterschool program taught.

- Increase participation in agriculture and natural resources project areas by 100%.

  Objective (2021-22): Create short-term SPIN clubs that will provide an introduction for both adult volunteers and youth to 4-H participation.

  Objective (2021-25): Gain commitment from a full complement of community-based experts to provide support to 4-H clubs and programs on an as-needed basis.

  Objective (2022-25): Increase participation in career awareness trips and teen leadership opportunities.

- Youth have opportunities to develop healthy eating habits and skills through 4-H-provided programming and opportunities.

  Objective (2022-25): An Agriculture Ambassador program will provide opportunities for 4-H members enrolled in agriculture projects to share knowledge about local foods with the public.

  Objective (2021): Youth will have hands-on opportunities to build their food selection and preparation skills.

- 4-H clubs and their members will understand and embrace the importance of their being an integral part of their local community.

  Objective: Every 4-H club will complete at least one community service project benefitting their local community per year.

  Objective: At least four 4-H members will participate in the NYS 4-h Capital Days trip each year.

- Every 4-H member is exposed to the public speaking program.

  Objective (2022): Engage a minimum of 50% of new 4-H members in the public speaking program within their first year of membership.

Objective (2022): Involve experienced 4-H public speakers in teaching and mentoring other 4-H members in related skills.

Objective (2021-25): Ensure that 4-H members are included as regular members of the 4-H Advisory Committee and all 4-H Work Groups.

Taste NY

The Taste New York program is designed to provide more exposure to local agricultural producers, and educate the public on the benefits of supporting local agriculture. TNY improves agri-business performance, management and marketing, and provides education, training, and certification opportunities for farmers interested in placing products in the TNY Market.

- Understand the economic impact of wholesale purchasing by TNY on Columbia and Greene Counties (2021-2025).

    Objective: Develop a comprehensive tracking protocol to organize data.

    Objective: Systematically input wholesale purchases from Columbia and Greene County vendors in order to have a quarterly overview of impact.

    Objective: Data are presented to Economic Development committees and for CCECG's Annual Report.

- Be more sustainable/ecologically focused in TNY store operations.

    Objective: Expand on-going measures that are already in place: reusable bags, no plastic bags, eliminate plastic straws, recycling/reusing all the packing materials that products come in, working with vendors to use reusable packaging for bakery deliveries, on-board more sustainably conscious brands.

    Objective: Reduce wasted food, particularly when customer flow normalizes after COVID.

- Expand promotion and marketing content.

    Objective: Begin monthly coffee subscription for regular customers.

    Objective: Get customers to sign up for quarterly newsletters which showcase local vendors and give customers insight to their operations.

    Objective: Begin customer surveys again for feedback on products and customer service.

- In-depth customer service training for all employees on an annual basis.

    Objective: Expand upon customer service training designed with TNY Todd Hill of CCE Dutchess County.

    Objective: Work with other TNY/Welcome Centers to have consistent trainings across the brand.

    Objective: Propose to Ag and Markets that customer service training modules or videos be accessible/created.

Core Cross-Program Area Goals 2021-2025:

- TNY/Ag&NR: Develop a mapping tool identifying resources for vendors in the region.

  Objective: Have a detailed list of resources vendors can access to expand business opportunities: certified commercial kitchens, rental spaces for refrigerators and freezers, co-packers, certified butchers, local printers, local marketing agencies, market places, etc.

  Objective: Work with Ag&NR to identify extensive ag resources.

- Ag&NR/FCS/4-H: Become the source of holistic education programs that address the purchase and use of local agriculture by school districts throughout the two-county area.

  Objective (2021-2022): Identify and secure farm-to-school grant opportunities with local school districts to combine CCECG Ag, nutrition, youth education and public health programming.