

2022-2026 Strategic Plan

4-H

trust

youth

Home

urban

agriculture

economic justice

LGBTIQ

rural

racial equity

FARMERS

RYS

compost

climate change

BIPOC

Consumer Issues

volunteers

education

food

family

transparency

Living Wage

gardening

sustainability

local

energy

nutrition

farmers' markets

diversity

Way2Go

environment

inclusion

parenting

community



CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION.....1
 Who We Are.....2
 Our People.....3
 Our Finances & Assets.....3

OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS.....4

MISSION, VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....5

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES.....6-7

HOW THE GOALS ADDRESS THESE THEMES.....8

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & SAMPLE ACTIONS.....8-10

IMPLEMENTATION.....11

CONCLUSION.....12

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CCE-Tompkins is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq’ (the Cayuga Nation). The Gayogohó:nq’ are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign nations with a historic and contemporary presence on this land. The confederacy precedes the establishment of Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, New York State and the United States of America. We acknowledge the painful history of Gayogohó:nq’ dispossession, and honor the ongoing connection of Gayogohó:nq’ people, past and present, to these lands and waters.

INTRODUCTION

Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) created our new five-year Strategic Plan in 2021, a time in which COVID-19 tested us all. We executed a rapid pivot alongside our community (the specifics are described in our 2020 Annual Report). As we faced new challenges, opportunities also arose: we could vastly extend our reach and did, to new audiences beyond our county’s borders. The robust online environment enabled us, along with everyone else, to enter a new relationship with space and time.

Our world has become more asynchronous, more remote. We could, and did, work and learn from anywhere, at any time, often at times of our own choosing. We learned to adapt. We reached out. We accessed our social networks, and CCE-Tompkins was there. COVID tested us and we showed what a resilient, responsive, and effective association we are. Our new Strategic Plan demonstrates our commitment to continuing to build on our past successes.



WHO WE ARE

Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) is part of the national Cooperative Extension Land Grant system, an educational partnership developed in the late 1800s between County, State, and Federal governments that is administered in New York State through Cornell University. CCE-Tompkins is an independently operated, not-for-profit organization. It is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is considered under New York State's County Law Section 224 subsection 8 as a subordinate governmental agency with an educational mission that operates under a form of organization and administration approved by Cornell University as agent for the State of New York.

Historically, the national Cooperative Extension system has concentrated on three program areas: agriculture, home economics, and 4-H with rural audiences. As U.S. demographics have changed, so have the programs of Cooperative Extension. Program areas now include agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community development. Although production agriculture remains an important component, programs now include a focus on practices that protect the environment.

Today, diverse educational programs are offered for families and communities on topics such as nutrition and food safety, financial management, parenting, community and economic development, and water quality.¹ Extension enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. Extension staff and trained volunteers deliver education programs, conduct applied research, and encourage community collaborations. In Tompkins County, our ability to match university resources with community needs helps us play a vital role in the lives of individuals, families, businesses, and communities throughout the County.

Since 1913, CCE-Tompkins has responded to the needs of local residents with unbiased, research-based information, tools, and education that people have come to depend on and trust. Our programs are developed in direct response to community input and are based on the most current information available from Cornell University and other Land Grant universities from across the nation. CCE-Tompkins has focused on practical and "hands-on" learning from its start, moving into new areas within the county to assist communities in need, especially in the areas of youth development and food systems.

¹ Franz, N. K., & Townson, L. (2008). The nature of complex organizations: The case of Cooperative Extension. In M. T. Braverman, M. Engle, M. E. Arnold, & R. A. Rennekamp(Eds.), Program evaluation in a complex organizational system: Lessons from Cooperative Extension. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 120, 5–14.

OUR PEOPLE

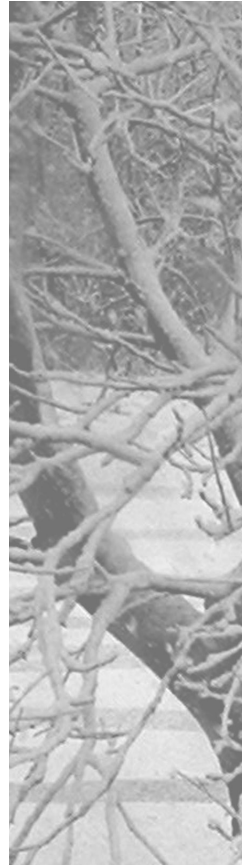
CCE-Tompkins' staff and volunteers are its most valued resource. In 2020, CCE-Tompkins employed 199 staff members and the efforts of our extensive volunteer corps accounted for 5% of the year's total budget. A hallmark of our current organizational structure is the shared leadership model at CCE-Tompkins. Board Co-President roles were established in January 2020; this approach has served to increase overall Board engagement and our Board's capacity to govern itself, govern the association, and be ambassadors to the community. A shared staff leadership model has been in place since 2015. Our Leadership Team, with staff input, shapes strategy for all areas, and supports the governance structure of CCE-Tompkins. This model has helped us to identify the goals, themes, and strategies for this plan, and will enable us to implement it successfully. Supervisors and staff working together as teams develop and inform programs that respond to community needs, according to funding availability.

OUR FINANCES & ASSETS

In 2020, our operating budget of \$10.5 million included revenue streams from Contracts and Grants (36%), NYS Fringe Benefits (22%), Cornell and Federal resources (19%), Donations and Fees (8%), Tompkins County Appropriation (7%), Volunteer Efforts (5%), and State and Federal Appropriation (3%). While individual programs conduct their own fundraising events periodically, our annual giving program has lapsed for many years. Individual and corporate giving are untapped sources of unrestricted revenue for CCE-Tompkins.

Our primary facility on Willow Avenue in Ithaca, New York houses administrative and program staff, and includes classrooms, meeting rooms, a commercial kitchen and demonstration gardens. We also offer programs at two additional properties. 4-H Acres is CCE-Tompkins' rural nature facility located near the geographic center of Tompkins County, between Ithaca and Dryden with facilities that include a commercial kitchen, covered BBQ pit, pole barns and nature trails; it is home to the annual 4-H Fair and 4-H Primitive Pursuits programs. The site is available for large meetings and overnight tent camping. Cornell's Arnot Forest Field Campus, leased by CCE-Tompkins, provides day-use or overnight accommodations adjacent to the 4,200-acre Cornell Teaching & Research Forest and Cornell's Maple Program Lab. 4-H Primitive Pursuits offers youth and adult programs at this site and provides rental opportunities to outside groups for research, workshops, retreats, conferences, weddings, and celebrations. Facilities include the Main Lodge (with fully equipped kitchen, and conditioned interior space that can accommodate 100), a bathhouse, two pavilions and 12 rustic cabins that each can accommodate 4 to 8 sleepers.

OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



Our most recent Strategic Plan for CCE-Tompkins spanned the years 2014-2019. The plan outlined six Strategic Goals: (1) Thriving children and families, (2) Strong communities, (3) A strong local economy, (4) A healthy environment, (5) Food security for all, and (6) An organization structured for the 21st century. We were well on our way to serving the myriad needs of Tompkins County citizens —rural and urban; children and elders; white, black, and brown; “haves” and “have nots.”

As the 2014-2019 Plan was nearing completion, a Strategic Planning committee made up of CCE-Tompkins Board and staff was convened and tasked with developing a new plan for the next five years. But in the first quarter of 2020, the world changed abruptly for all of us due to the COVID -19 pandemic. We all pivoted to address immediate needs in partnership with Tompkins County and other human service agencies. The committee continued to work through the COVID-19 pandemic toward a plan that focused on the emerging, critical needs of our community. Through interviews and surveys with Leadership Team members and other stakeholders, five cross-cutting themes of climate change, economic justice, organizational development, racial equity, and social determinants of health emerged that will inform our work for the next 3-5 years.

The Strategic Planning Committee and CCE-Tompkins leadership value input from our program participants and community members who would benefit from our services and resources. As a starting point for the new Strategic Plan, we invited Tompkins County residents to share their priorities for local extension programming at the 2020 Annual Meeting & Strategic Planning Session of CCE-Tompkins via Zoom on December 15, 2020. More than 100 individuals attended online including program participants, local government and nonprofit leaders, members of the CCE-Tompkins Board of Directors, Program Advisory Committees, and staff. Attendees self-selected to join breakout rooms focused on the cross-cutting themes.

In early 2021, the committee asked the Board of Directors to engage a consultant to move the Strategic Planning process forward through August 2021. A Request for Proposals was issued and Illume Projects, LLC, was selected in April 2021. To ensure collective ownership of the Strategic Plan, Illume developed a process outline and facilitated two board retreats, ten committee meetings, two all-staff Strategic Planning activities, one all-day Strategic Planning objectives retreat, five external stakeholder interviews, eleven internal stakeholder interviews, three Leadership Team working sessions, and two internal surveys (one for Board and Leadership Team and one for staff).²

² Results from interviews, PESTLE analysis, statement on CCE values, and other background information are contained in appendices that are available upon request.

A high-level PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental) analysis was also developed as part of our Strategic Planning process to help identify additional external factors that influenced strategy development and will continue to have an influence on future planning.

Our resulting Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 encompasses three overarching goals, five cross-cutting themes, and numerous objectives and strategies for achieving those goals, including ongoing evaluation and metrics for measuring-success. Our intention is for this to be a living plan over the next five years, which can and will be modified as community needs shift, resources become available, and our leadership and staff continue to explore the best ways to utilize research-based findings to serve all residents of Tompkins County.



MISSION, VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OUR MISSION

We put knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping families and our community thrive in our rapidly changing world

OUR VISION

Individuals, families, and communities thrive, live well, and reach their potential in Tompkins County.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES (how we do our programmatic work)

Our work in the community is realized through:

- Participatory learning, action, and reflection
- Collaborative community building
- Civic participation and leadership development
- Utilization of community assets
- Research relevant to communities

We also acknowledge Cornell Cooperative Extension values from the most recent Statewide Strategic Plan. We recognize these values of the Statewide Plan are also relevant to us and are in alignment to help guide CCE-Tompkins’ actions as we carry out our new Strategic Plan.



CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

The five cross-cutting themes of the Strategic Plan underscore what is vitally important to both the community and to us. These themes are interrelated and encourage our staff to use creative problem-solving to align each CCE-Tompkins program with two or more themes. Cross-program collaboration is a central feature for the new Strategic Plan.

CLIMATE CHANGE

We will engage community members, businesses, organizations, and municipalities to reduce their energy use, transition to clean energy sources, become more resilient, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. As we develop or identify the knowledge, tools, and actions that will move the community forward, we will emphasize the urgency of the climate crisis and address the intersection of climate change, racism, and economic inequities for all community members.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

We will help marginalized and underserved groups acquire marketable skills, financial understanding, and access to essential resources to address systemic power imbalances for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+, immigrants, migrants, the formerly incarcerated, the elderly, people in recovery, people with disabilities, non-English speakers, and low income rural and urban individuals, families, and communities in Tompkins County.



ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

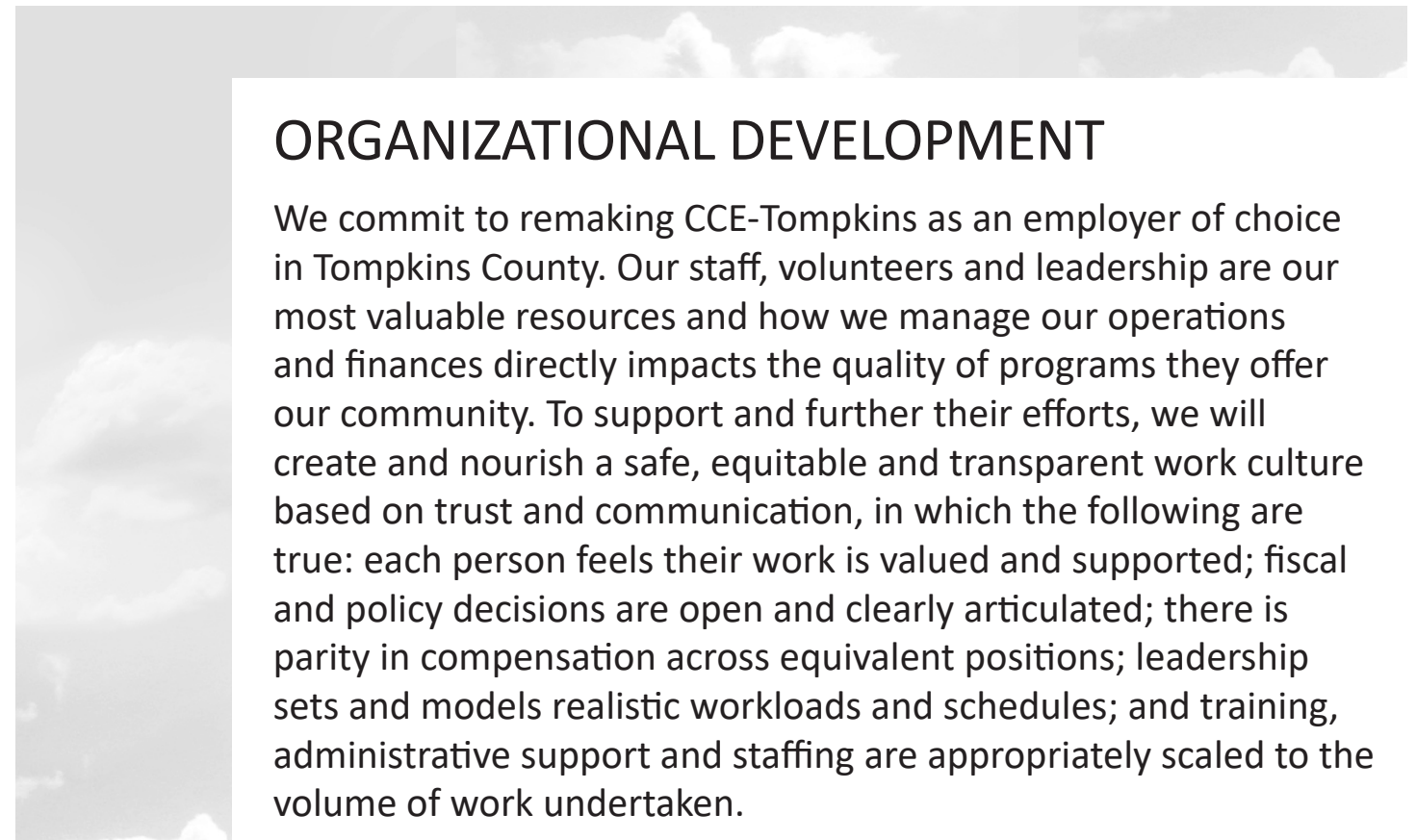
We commit to remaking CCE-Tompkins as an employer of choice in Tompkins County. Our staff, volunteers and leadership are our most valuable resources and how we manage our operations and finances directly impacts the quality of programs they offer our community. To support and further their efforts, we will create and nourish a safe, equitable and transparent work culture based on trust and communication, in which the following are true: each person feels their work is valued and supported; fiscal and policy decisions are open and clearly articulated; there is parity in compensation across equivalent positions; leadership sets and models realistic workloads and schedules; and training, administrative support and staffing are appropriately scaled to the volume of work undertaken.

RACIAL EQUITY

We will address long standing structural inequities and become a more equitable, antiracist, diverse, and inclusive organization. Our antiracist work will acknowledge how the overlap of various social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, and class, contributes to the systemic oppression experienced by an individual and how this has an impact on program participants, partners, staff, and volunteers.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

We will identify, develop, and deliver culturally relevant programs that build long-term equitable access, including digital access, to needed resources for individuals, families, and communities in Tompkins County. We will help support better physical, mental, social, political, and economic well-being and food security among all individuals, families, and communities in Tompkins County.



HOW THE GOALS ADDRESS THE FIVE THEMES

From these five themes, we developed three goals. While the themes inform and will be found within all three goals, Goal One clearly addresses Racial Equity, Goal Two addresses Organizational Development and the themes of Climate Change, Economic Justice and Social Determinants of Health are the main focus of Goal Three.

Goal 1: TRANSFORM into a more equitable, antiracist, diverse, and inclusive organization.

<p>Objective 1.1: Develop and maintain a standard Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) and antiracism scorecard. The scorecard will establish specific measurable internal and external benchmarks that will be used across the entire organization.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish recruiting and retention benchmarks for BIPOC staff. • Create visible dashboard for tracking key indicators.
<p>Objective 1.2: Build an effective team to lead ED&I and antiracism work, including dedicated staff, staff committee, representatives in each issue and program area, and liaison with Board and campus.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and retain an ED&I Coordinator. • Reconstitute the staff ED&I Committee with representation from each issue area, large program area, and functional team. Fund committee work with paid time.
<p>Objective 1.3: Create a clear and accessible process for resolving issues of inequity, exclusion, and racism that affect individual staff and the organization as a whole.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct support to staff struggling with ED&I issues within CCE Tompkins. • Provide robust training for supervisors on ED&I issues.
<p>Objective 1.4: Implement antiracist and ED&I best practices in hiring, HR, and retention.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build ED&I best practices into onboarding processes. • Include ED&I questions in interviews and performance reviews.
<p>Objective 1.5: Develop and integrate ED&I goals into all programs in the areas of program design, fundraising, community outreach, delivery, assessment, and evaluation.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop funding sources compatible with ED&I goals. • Develop best practices, training, and resources for incorporating ED&I goals into programmatic needs assessment, program design, evaluation, outreach, and grant applications

Goal 2: STRENGTHEN internal structures to become a more equitable, effective, transparent, and supportive organization.

<p>Objective 2.1: Provide administrative support and staffing that are appropriate to the work undertaken.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate FTEs to ensure functional, efficient HR, Finance, Marketing & IT departments, and across the Association. • Undertake succession and retirement planning for key staff positions.
<p>Objective 2.2: Become a Tompkins County Living Wage Employer and ensure that compensation policy is equitable and transparent.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current compensation by position across the Association. • Develop a plan to address salary compression and bring compensation of long-term staff to levels of new hires in comparable positions.
<p>Objective 2.3: Train staff and volunteers for their work, and provide supervisory support, professional development and career advancement paths for staff.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify skills needed by supervisors and provide necessary training. • Train staff who can provide redundancy/backup in critical day-to-day needs to ensure continuity of functions.
<p>Objective 2.4: Assess and improve facilities and IT usage, function, and condition to optimize program delivery and ensure safety for staff, volunteers, and participants.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess, address, and share building condition/repairs status across the association. • Develop remote working options and policies for all staff.
<p>Objective 2.5: Improve the diversity of revenue streams in order to broaden the funding base and enable the Association to thrive.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the potential to create a Grant Specialist position to support staff in grant research, acquisition, tracking and stewardship across the association. • Assess the potential to improve Association revenue streams by adding an annual giving program.
<p>Objective 2.6: Improve internal communication systems between and within all levels of the Association.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematize fiscal and policy decision making, and ensure decisions are communicated clearly and transparently.
<p>Objective 2.7: Improve external communications to support partnership and network building and provided unified messaging to the community.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support small, community-based, green enterprises that keep money and jobs local and provide training in green jobs for disadvantaged community members, youth, and displaced carbon-based energy workers.

Goal 3: EDUCATE to support systemic changes that improve the conditions in which people grow, learn, live, work, and age in Tompkins County.

<p>Objective 3.1: Educate to support and improve policies and practices to increase climate resilience and mitigate climate change.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support increasing charging stations around the area so people feel secure about changing over to Electric Vehicles (EVs). • Teach people to grow more plants that can absorb more CO², produce food and take less energy input than growing lawns.
<p>Objective 3.2: Support resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the agricultural community in adopting practices and systems that provide ecosystem services. • Work with partners to ensure that all parents and their children have year-round access to fruits and vegetables in sufficient quantities to meet USDA/health dietary guidelines.
<p>Objective 3.3: Foster physical, emotional, and mental well-being through programs for people across the age spectrum.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate practical steps and systems change that result in BIPOC and rural youth having access to the four elements that support positive youth development as defined by ACT for Youth.
<p>Objective 3.4: Provide education and connection to resources and opportunities so that our community can achieve economic vitality and economic justice.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support small, community-based enterprises that keep money and jobs local. • Coordinate public and private sector workforce development efforts to focus on youth, people with disabilities, diverse underrepresented populations, discouraged workers, and people needing childcare.
<p>Objective 3.5: Strengthen systems that improve health outcomes across communities.</p>	<p>Example Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with health care providers to develop systems to link/refer patients to community organizations and share program offerings. • Develop and utilize tools to measure current programs' impact on Social Determinants of Health in terms of systemic change/impact on individuals & families.

IMPLEMENTATION

Early in their consulting engagement, Illume asked our Board, staff, and Strategic Planning Committee members what they would consider to be a successful, relevant Strategic Plan. The response was loud and clear: a document that is living, doesn't just sit on the shelf, and can be a unifying resource to guide the work of CCE-Tompkins into the future. Each year this plan will be reviewed, and the Action Plans assessed and improved upon as we measure our progress in meeting our strategic objectives.

We have made efforts throughout the Strategic Planning development process to actively involve a wide range of CCE-Tompkins leaders and staff to develop inspiring goals with associated measurable objectives and Action Plans. Board and staff members want to see accountability for the delivery of the new Strategic Plan. Below are the details for accountability across the Association throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

ACCOUNTABILITY & PROGRESS REPORTING

Our Board, Executive Director, Leadership Team, Supervisors and Staff

- will share our Strategic Plan when onboarding new board members, staff members, program advisory committee members, and volunteers as everyone has a role to play in helping to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan.

Our Board, Executive Director and Leadership Team

- will celebrate successes and highlight progress against goals in the Strategic Plan at the CCE-Tompkins Annual Meeting and in the Annual Report.

Our Executive Director and Leadership Team

- will engage the staff, supervisors and program advisory committees to achieve the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.
- will develop an implementation plan with guidance for supervisors on how to develop and prioritize actions and measures of success, in a cross-programmatic, collaborative way
- will create and use a Strategic Planning Dashboard document to track and evaluate our overall progress as an organization toward achieving the Strategic Plan over the next five years, and will aggregate the Action Plans into the dashboard document.
- will report progress against goals in the Strategic Plan dashboard annually.
 - o The Executive Director will report to the Board during a regular board meeting.
 - o A Leadership Team designee will report to staff during a regular staff meeting.
 - o Issue Leaders will update Program Advisory Committees

Our Board

- will evaluate the Executive Director and Leadership Team's ability to move forward and achieve the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan as part of the annual performance review and evaluation of the Executive Director.
- will review the Strategic Plan annually to establish the board's own development and work plan for the coming year.

Our Executive Director

- will consider the organization's overall achievement toward Strategic Plan goals as part of the annual performance review and evaluation of members of the Leadership Team.

Our Supervisors

- will share and discuss with their staff the impact of the Strategic Plan to their work.
- will work with their staff to identify, develop, and prioritize specific, measurable Action Plans.
- will discuss the status of these Action Plans annually in staff performance reviews and evaluations.
- will engage others in developing Action Plans, focusing on cross-programmatic opportunities

Our Staff

- will work with their supervisor to develop measurable Action Plans that will advance the Strategic Plan goals and objectives.
- will engage other program staff in developing Action Plans, focusing on cross-programmatic opportunities.
- will engage volunteers when feasible to help achieve the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

CONCLUSION

Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County is poised to serve Tompkins County effectively in collaboration with Cornell University, statewide CCE, county government, and local non-profits and community groups as new challenges and opportunities present themselves. We are grateful for the opportunity.

