



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Tompkins County

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

4-H Youth Programs | Nutrition, Health, Safety & Financial Education | Agriculture & Horticulture  
Environment & Energy | Family & Community Development



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\* indicates Program Representative to the Board



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am proud to follow Sharon Anderson's tenure this year to serve as the second interim director in support of the dedicated and caring CCE Tompkins County community during this transitional time. Both of us returned to serve in this role because of Extension's mission-driven programs, dedicated staff, and volunteers.

This has been a year of work and rediscovery to gain an understanding of how our operations and programs can become more effective. We have found opportunities to reengage, foster more joy in our workplace, and in doing so begin to bring our strategic plan to life. I look forward to helping maintain this momentum in the coming year as we transition to a new Executive Director.

We appreciate everyone's support and value the trust you have placed in the work we do. We have accomplished so much this year. Our annual report will show some highlights of our programs across all our issue areas. Enjoy!

**Meg Cole**

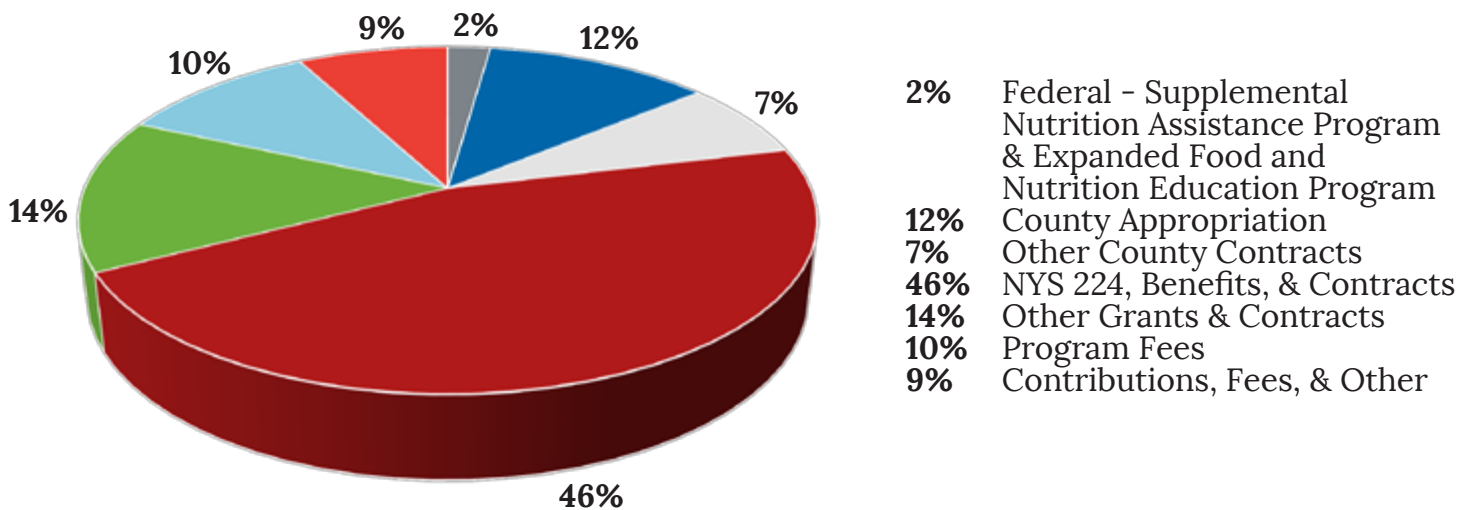
Interim Executive Director

# 2022 Finance Overview

## Financial Support & Funding Sources

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Tompkins County leverages local tax dollars to benefit the county's economic wellbeing and to invest in the quality of life of its residents. For 2022, CCE Tompkins County received direct support from sources such as grants and contracts, Cornell University, Federal resources, fees, as well as both cash and in-kind donations which include volunteer time. Calculations are based on the December 31, 2022 financial statements and are stated in percentages for clarity.

## 2022 Revenue: \$7,087,264



Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County is 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. It is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The association is part of the national Cooperative Extension System, an educational partnership between County, State, and Federal governments. As New York's land grant university, Cornell administers the system in this state. Each Cornell Cooperative Extension association is an independent employer, governed by an elected Board of Directors with general oversight from Cornell University. All associations work to meet the needs of the counties in which they are located, as well as state and national goals.

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

*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.

## 4-H Youth Programs: Friends, Leaders, & Fun

4-H Youth Development programs provided hundreds of positive experiences for children throughout Tompkins County in 2022. Offerings help children grow as individuals and citizens, providing opportunities to form relationships with peers and mentors, master skills and subject areas, test their limits, and engage with their communities and the natural world. These connections provide life-long positive impacts for youth as they develop skills, create memories, and forge friendships.

**This is accomplished through the work of four unique areas within 4-H Youth Programs: 4-H Clubs, Rural Youth Services, Primitive Pursuits, and Urban Outreach.**

**4-H Clubs in 2022** had 174 enrolled participants in 11 unique, volunteer-led clubs. These focused on community service, dog care, training and showing, entrepreneurship, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), dairy, rabbits, fiber arts, baking, cooking, raptors, goats, pottery, native wildlife, and more. Youth again organized and hosted the annual 4-H Youth Fair, displaying animals, participating in competitions, and show the hard work accomplished throughout the year. Of the 34 youth showing 129 stationary exhibits, 55 exhibits were selected for the state fair, bringing home 47 blue ribbons, 3 red ribbons, and 3 purple rosettes. Forty-one youth participated in animal evaluations, and 16 served in leadership roles.

**Rural Youth Services (RYS)** offered free after school, school break and summer programs to youth in 10 municipalities, serving about 628 participants and providing 2,628 hours of programming. Youth Employment Programs in Dryden and Trumansburg placed youth in summer jobs while providing mentorship, and RYS again operated the Groton summer camp. Participants were challenged to make fires in five minutes and to be the best “Iron Chef” in the kitchen. They engaged in artistic endeavors and outdoor adventures, explored creeks and forests, and quested in mystical imagined lands through cooperative games. They made and launched rockets, learned drumming, and listened to a Gayogohó:nq’ storyteller, among other activities that promoted mastery, social and emotional growth, and community.



Primitive Pursuits youth learn about edible plants. Photo: Ben Bookout.

**Primitive Pursuits** offered nature immersion programs that inspired positive connection and understanding of how we interact with the natural world. These included school break programs, preschool and homeschool programs, afterschool programs, and summer day camps at 4-H Acres. The program served over 600 youth, enabling participants to explore their strengths, learn naturalist skills, and play and connect with nature and peers. Participants fueled their curiosity through activities such as moving silently through the woods, creating fire with a bow drill, crafting archery sets, and identifying trees and edible plants. The program funded \$10,385 in scholarships for families who needed assistance and free programming to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) youth through a Reparations Fee Waiver.

**Urban Outreach** served youth in the City of Ithaca, providing engaging, free programs to 42 youth, primarily between the ages of 5 and 10. Over 90% were Karen and Burmese, who speak English as a new language. The program focused on providing academic, language and literacy support, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) education, and meaningful connections with mentors. Partners included the Tompkins County Public Library, the Sciencenter, the Free Science Workshop, the Rink, the Floating Classroom, and Arnot Forest for outings and special programs. The program is currently on pause awaiting new staff and a new location.

“My kids love Primitive Pursuits! Every year they learn new skills and grow more confident in previous skills while having a great time. The staff has always been thoughtful, organized, and very good at working with the kids and meeting them where they are at in their social-emotional development. I’m very grateful to all of the people who make Primitive Pursuits possible!”

- Parent Feedback





# Community Well-Being *through Collaboration*

In June 2022, CCE Tompkins County piloted the **Student Resource Navigator Program** with Cayuga Health Partners, Cornell University’s Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives, and OBGYN & Midwifery Associates of Ithaca. The program is designed to help health care providers identify and respond to their patients’ unmet social needs, deploying students to outreach patients to connect them with community resources. Leading up to the pilot implementation, CCE Tompkins County staff collaborated with nine Community Advisors on program materials, developed training curricula and program workflows, and deepened relationships with partners. The program is now in the process of expanding to work with more primary care offices.

While some **SNAP-Ed programming** remained virtual, we also offered in-person classes, including at Southside Community Center, Community Justice Center, Women’s Opportunity Center, and Enfield 4-H. Our Nutrition Director also helped initiate healthy food and physical activity strategies in three nearby counties. In November, Kris Moore stepped into the role of SNAP-Ed Nutritionist to provide inclusive nutrition education this year.

The **Farm to School Program** completed four field trips with students to local farms, organized taste tests in schools, and supplied schools with curricula for food system lessons. Youth reached by in-person Farm to School events totaled 1,220, and we are expecting higher numbers in our programming for 2023.

In 2022, the **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program** collaborated with the Groton Public Library, Beverly J. Martin Elementary, the YMCA of Ithaca and Tompkins County, Cayuga Health Partners, Food as Medicine, and Tompkins Families. From these partnerships, 37 families — 121 family members and 49 youth — participated.

Our **Cargill Teaching Kitchen and 4-H Acres Kitchen** continue to provide a space for our programs and the wider community. The two commercial kitchens provided 2,392 hours of space for nine local food vendors, seven of whom were in their first year of business.

Our team has provided different kinds of support for the multi-agency collaborative **Food as Medicine** program which helps to get more fresh fruit and vegetables to those who have received a “prescription” for more nutritious fare from their health care provider.

We continued to provide **education around life skills and personal finances** for those attending Day Reporting. As a team we are motivated to provide support to those involved in the criminal justice system and who are facing many challenges related to the social determinants of health.

**At the core of our work is a focus on community health.** In 2022, the Nutrition, Health, Safety, and Financial Education program leader was the Principal Investigator on a four-county CCE project addressing how we can better work towards health equity. The report is available for review at [CCEtompkins.org/Health](http://CCEtompkins.org/Health).



A SNAP-Ed class on making cranberry oatmeal balls.



“I’ve never seen [my daughter] eat so many vegetables. She’s never been willing to try broccoli or radishes at home.” - **4th grade parent from a Farm to School field trip**

“Our family is eating more chicken and fish, incorporating more vegetables at each meal as well as limiting sugar in our diet.” - **Participant in Food as Medicine**



## Local Farms *Creating a Healthier Ecosystem*

**Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)** Programs incentivize and reward local land managers for the environmental benefits that their properties provide to the community. These benefits include increasing flood and drought resiliency in the land itself, improving soil health and biodiversity, and reducing emissions and pollution to keep our air and water clean.

However, PES systems are often built with limited equity considerations. For those that can access them, it can be difficult to navigate requirements and first steps. On top of this, challenges such as droughts, flooding, temperature variation, and financial barriers add stress to a sector that is already struggling with economic and systemic racial barriers.

In the past year, CCE Tompkins County's PES Work Team has started a regional pilot program focused on local BIPOC and beginning farmers, connecting them with incentive programs to aid in the transition to regenerative practices.

The program aims to compensate farmers for the ecosystem services that they provide such as carbon sequestration in healthy soils and trees, improved water infiltration rates, and reduced runoff and erosion.

CCE Tompkins County educators have also developed outreach materials for farmers to access existing PES programs, outlining opportunities and their parameters through easily updated materials on the our website.

In the first six months of our two-year pilot program, six regional farmers have joined in, providing integral programmatic development to inform both short-term and long-term goals. Having regular conversations and meetings with the farmers has also ensured that equity considerations remain central to the program design.

The project continues in 2023, ensuring cleaner air and water and a healthier food system in our county.

40+ community stakeholders on the PES Work Team (advisory committee for the program) are working with 6 participating farmers in the pilot program

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## The Beautification Brigade *Goes Electric*

The brightly painted flower van and pickup truck of the **Tompkins County Community Beautification Program** are familiar sights as staff volunteers plant and maintain colorful flora in public areas around Ithaca. In October, a new 2022 electric pickup replaced the 2004 Chevy that had served the program since 2018. "An electric vehicle is extremely well-suited to the type of short distance, in-town driving we do in our program," says Janine Willis, Community Beautification Manager. "And since we installed an EV charging station in our parking lot in 2020, it's easy to keep charged."

The Beautification Team is exploring options to decorate the new truck with flower artwork in the form of a vehicle wrap.



The Beautification Brigade worked on community plantings from April to December, coordinating **60+ volunteer sessions** adding up to over **700 volunteer hours**

In 2022, the Beautification Program:

- Worked with a landscape architecture firm to better provide education to the public on what plants are in our gardens and the benefits of a variety of plants.
- Grew more plants than were needed for our program and donated the excess to local organizations that work with underserved populations.
- Incorporated more perennials and shrubs into our plantings, reducing the need for supplemental watering after plants are established.





# 40th Annual Spring Plant Sale



## Growing Knowledge

In 2022, a revival of the Demonstration Gardens on the CCE Tompkins County grounds took hold as a central project for the Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) Program. Though many of the gardens have existed for 30 or more years and have gone through design and theme changes, they have lacked visible educational information and signage. The MGVs are spearheading an effort to label plants and create informational brochures along with webpages for each of the gardens. Other possibilities include interpretive signs, seasonal and technique related signs, and a kiosk to orient visitors to the gardens as a whole.

Last year, MGVs took ownership of several of the gardens, which are each based on separate garden themes: deer resistant shade, native, four-season interest, pollinator, vegetable, and understory, to name a few. The goal is to maintain the 10 or so individual gardens as teaching gardens and, eventually, a set of gardens that can be a destination for both locals and out of town visitors.



Photos clockwise from top left: Shoppers check out plants outside the market; Master Composter Heidi Doggett & Adam Michaelides, Compost Program manager; shoppers at Blue Heron Farms booth; Master Gardener volunteers provide pH soil tests; Shoppers at Graceful Gardens booth; Sharon Anderson views plants at Knapp Farms booth. Photos: Sandy Repp.

# Tompkins Food Future Comprehensive Plan

Tompkins Food Future, the County's first community food system planning initiative, completed its food system baseline assessment and food system plan in 2022, engaging more than 2,000 residents representing more than 50 businesses and organizations throughout the county.

The **Tompkins County Food System Plan: A Roadmap for our Food Future** — presented to the County Legislature on July 19 — was enthusiastically supported with all 13 legislators present voting unanimously to accept the plan.

The plan — available at [TompkinsFoodFuture.org](http://TompkinsFoodFuture.org) — articulates the community's vision of a resilient, equitable and healthy food system and recommends key actions to realize this vision.



Don Barber, Chair of the Food Policy Council of Tompkins County, shares project results at a Stewart Park event in September. Photo: Katie Hallas.



## How Tompkins Got Its Green Back

**Get Your GreenBack** Tompkins successfully concluded its management of the NYSERDA-funded Community Energy Engagement Program for the 8-county Southern Tier region. Over a period of four years, staff provided over 3,000 residents — mostly low and moderate income — with free energy advising, and over 1,200 of those residents took a high-impact action such as insulating their home or installing a heat pump or solar. Close to \$9 million were invested in clean energy projects, with over \$6.5 million in grants and incentives from local, state, and federal sources.

The tiny home **PowerHouse** — which now has an adequate truck and hitch so it is not dependent on the kindness of our local towing company — was used to support energy outreach in various venues, and revenue was raised through fee-for-service programming at area schools and libraries, which complements grant funding.

**Get Your GreenBack as a program and identity will be coming to a close in 2023, but its work will continue with the NYSERDA Regional Clean Energy Hub, a \$3.5 million four-year grant serving the Southern Tier.**



575+ people visited the Powerhouse in 2022, at local schools, libraries, a Climate Action Expo, the Sciencenter, and the Ithaca Festival

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## Way2Go Transportation Access & Equity

**As Tompkins County's transportation information and learning hub, Way2Go connects people with options and community solutions to create a transportation system that works for all.** In 2022, we strengthened partnerships within the Tompkins County community by collaborating with transportation service providers to share resources with workers who struggling with rising gas prices and supporting GO ITHACA's newest low income program to help people commute using free and discounted transportation services.

In 2022, Tompkins County's Transportation Equity Coalition, led by Way2Go, began a Transportation Equity Needs Assessment. This started with six focus groups sharing experiences with the local transportation system. The Coalition then developed a county-wide survey tool which will inform our work moving forward and Way2Go's next 5-Year Strategic Plan.

The School Success Transportation Coalition works with Ithaca City School District to ensure that children and families have the transportation they need. In 2022, the Coalition distributed bus passes to over half the students age 14+ in the district, worked with Bike Walk Tompkins to give away almost 200 bike helmets, began training Transportation Liaisons for each school building, and shared information by tabling at open houses and distributing handouts to every family in the district.

Way2Go also worked with CCE Tompkins County's Energy Team to build community knowledge of electric vehicles. Staff provided practical education through free Auto Finance Classes, car buyer maintenance classes, and community events. These fun and engaging events included a National Drive Electric Earth Day Show at Cass Park, the Ithaca Festival Parade, Streets Alive!, Newfield Old Home Days, the Ellis Hollow Fair, the Trumansburg Fireman's Parade, and more.

Way2Go supplemented these with a media strategy that reached 100,000+ people across the county.

### Way2Go in 2022

11,605 website visits

3,440 views on transit instruction videos

1,292 people referred to transit resources

2,000 reached via education programs

At the Ellis Hollow Fair, EV owners showcased their vehicles and shared their experiences of EV leasing or ownership. Photo: Holly Payne.





# Energy & Climate Change *Team Successes*

**The Energy & Climate Change Team provides resources to save energy, transition off fossil fuels, and understand and adapt to the changing climate.**

In 2022, the team continued a collaboration with the City of Ithaca to further design and implement the Ithaca Green New Deal. Focusing on the Southside community, we forged relationships with residents, the Southside Community Center, Ithaca Catholic Worker, and others to create a community-based program around the benefits of electrification of buildings, workforce development, and the history of the neighborhood. Our partners helped Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services explore bringing heat pumps, solar, battery backup, electric vehicle charging stations, and more to a multi-family, multi-use building.

The past year also saw the launch of education and outreach for NYSEG's Non-Pipes Alternatives program, an effort to reduce gas use in the Lansing moratorium area in order to ensure adequate pressure even at high demand without larger gas infrastructure. The effort supports other projects, including a geothermal heat pump system at the Cornell Childcare Center, a district geothermal system connecting about 12 homes, a community-wide heat pump and weatherization campaign offering incentives in the area (in addition to those available to all NYS home and business owners), and energy upgrades and installation of new higher-efficiency gas boilers for Lansing Central School District. If successful, this program will divert millions of dollars approved for a larger pipeline and show that reducing gas use is an effective way to increase reliability.

Clean Energy Communities Coordinators continued to support programs throughout the Southern Tier to take on "high-impact actions" that save money, increase resilience, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In all, 13 new communities pledged to participate (for a total of 87), 13 took enough actions to be designated a Clean Energy Community (63 total), and 121 total actions were completed across eight counties.

Through the Climate Smart Communities program, which we coordinate in Tompkins and Chenango Counties, we helped four communities enter the program by pledging to be "Climate Smart," acting to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate. Two communities achieved Bronze level for taking clear, identifiable actions; Tompkins County achieved Silver level for making concrete progress in a range of areas.

The Ag Energy NY Program created resources for farmers across NY State to reduce the energy use of their farm operations. Working closely with about a dozen CCE offices across the state, we trained Ag educators who provided outreach and resources to their communities.

We also wrapped up work with NYSEDA's Community Energy Engagement Program in the North Country, where we have been working since 2019 to support CCE and the Adirondack North Country Association. This program provided one-on-one support for community members and helped low- and moderate-income families access funding for home energy upgrades.



Energy Team Leader Guillermo Metz explains the energy savings an induction cooktop offers in a workshop in June. Photo: Sandy Repp.

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## Reducing Waste *through Composting*

At events and festivals in Tompkins County, Master Composters spoke to nearly 1,000 people and diverted about five tons of food scraps from the landfill. Staff reached an additional 200 by providing educational workshops at our demonstration site and at the Newfield Public Library.

The Compost Program trained 15 Master Composters in 2022, with 63 returning to teach. In addition to program events, Master Composters led projects in their communities, volunteering over 1,000 hours. Master Composters helped set up food scrap collection at the Ithaca Farmers Market, reducing trash by a third.

The program worked with multi-family groups at Kendal, Hasbrouck Apartments, the Freeville Community Garden, and more to start or improve composting. Support and encouragement via the telephone "Rotline" aided about 150 residents, and our fact sheets and videos were used thousands of times.



# Parenting Education Brings Families Closer

**Tompkins Families!** staff present classes and workshops designed to build on individual, family and community strengths. These incorporate a lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as the Protective Factors Framework — resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete supports, and social and emotional competence of children. Most are offered free thanks to funding from the County Department of Social Services and the State Office of Children and Family Services.

During the pandemic our parenting workshops were adapted for virtual delivery. With positive feedback and fine tuning, we incorporated breakout rooms, check-ins and review at the beginning, sticky-note activities, a closing activity at the end, and more.

Success of these classes is due to parent educator expertise, flexibility of the curriculum, and the energy and openness of parent participants. We strive to create an environment where people feel safe, open up to each other, and share honestly. Many of the participants attended multiple workshops, with some planning to continue meeting after the conclusion of a series for ongoing support and discussion around parenting.

**P.S. It Works! Strength Based Communication Skills**, aka the Parenting Skills Workshop Series, teaches five concrete communication skills: Encouragement, Can Do, Shared Decision Making, Self-Control and Respecting Feelings. During PS: It Works! session participants learn skills by practicing them in real life situations.

**Thriving with Your Spirited Child** teaches parents about temperaments (their child's and their own) and how to work with, instead of against the grain. Once parents understand a child's first and most natural way of

## Parenting Workshops

- 101 parents attended, representative of our diverse local population
- 134 children impacted by outcomes
- 4 parents attending in preparation for the arrival of a baby

reacting to the world around them, they can work with them to ease the hassles and teach new behaviors.

**Parenting Styles** topics covered include understanding your own style, positive discipline, how culture and our own upbringing affects our style, and issues that influence family life such as cultural and environment. Parents increase their understanding and perceptions of the many influences that shape the lives of their family.

**Parents Apart®** is offered to help separating or divorcing parents understand the effects of their breakup on their children and give them resources to make the new situation easier and more livable. In 2022, 97 parents attended, impacting 128 children. This workshop is funded by participant fees, donations, and support from local agencies — donations of any amount are welcome.

As part of our Institutional Challenge Grant, a Research-Practice Partnership with Cornell University, staff worked with a Cornell intern to develop a **2 Generation/2Gen version of PS It Works!** — an adaptation where communication skills are taught to parents and youth ages 7-10, followed by practicing the skills together.

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## Food, Fitness & Fun Activity Series

In July and August, CCE Tompkins County hosted a series of special events to help parents and children feel a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation.

The partnership between Family and Community Development and Nutrition staff, the Finger Lakes Toy Library, an I-JUMP instructor and the Food Bank of the Southern Tier brought participants together weekly on Wednesday mornings. Parents and kids together participated in a cooking class, joined in group jump rope sessions, enjoyed a play area, received healthy food, and chose from free books.

Over the course of the program, families were visibly more engaged as they had fun, made connections, and socialized in a healthy setting.



## Coalition for Families in 2022

- May: "Parenting in "Anxious Times: A Conversation with the Mental Health Mamas"
- June: "Food Resources During the Summer"
- August: "Children with Special Care Needs"
- October: "Mothering Through Domestic Violence"
- November: "Fostering Early Literacy & Learn About The Nook"
- December: "Support Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Diverse Youth"



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT >>

# Training the Workforce of the Future Economy

The Green Career Pathways Project (CPP), coordinated through CCE Tompkins County, is a collaborative workforce training, employer training and employment connection program that helps low income individuals, returning citizens, veterans, and people from underserved communities enter sustainable green jobs, contribute to the well-being of their neighborhood, and prepare the community to be climate resilient.

In partnership with the City of Ithaca, the CPP program combines classroom learning with development of soft and hard skills, providing a trained workforce with knowledge and skills to meet the growing employment needs of the local green economy.

In 2022, 9 individuals participated in the 12-week Roots of Success workforce training, with 7 obtaining federally-approved pre-apprenticeship certification as environmental technicians.



Graduation ceremony of the Roots Of Success workforce training program.

## GET INVOLVED >>

# Be a Part of Our Work!

**Volunteers are very important to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County.** Almost 300 individuals volunteered their time to a variety of Extension activities, contributing thousands of hours.

Through duties as diverse as teaching others to prune trees or make compost, answering callers' questions on consumer or gardening issues, mentoring young people as they acquire new skills, or serving as board members or on committees, volunteers extend the far-reaching roots of our work.

### Ongoing opportunities include:

- Organizational Leadership Program Committee
- Beautification Brigade
- Childcare Provider(s)
- Citizen Pruners
- Energy Navigators
- 4-H Youth Program Leaders
- 4-H Club & Fair Programs
- Green Building Volunteers
- Master Composters
- Master Gardeners
- Nutrition Education Volunteers
- Seed-to-Supper Educators

Find an application form and descriptions of each opportunity at [CCEtompkins.org/volunteer](http://CCEtompkins.org/volunteer).


Our programs and services help county residents with important and relevant family, gardening, consumer and nutrition, agriculture, and environmental resources that, in many cases, are not available otherwise. From afterschool activities for youth in rural areas, to support for local farmers, to assistance with families' budgeting or nutrition needs, CCE Tompkins County is here for our neighbors in the entire county.



Volunteers plant flowers in Van Horn Park; 4-H Youth Services participants learn to make food (Photo: Bethany Resnick); Way2Go staff and volunteers talk with locals at Streets Alive!

# Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County

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