

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

2026 CALENDAR

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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OUR MISSION
CORNELL COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION PUTS KNOWLEDGE
TO WORK IN PURSUIT OF
ECONOMIC VITALITY,
ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY
AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING. WE
BRING LOCAL EXPERIENCE AND
RESEARCH BASED SOLUTIONS
TOGETHER, HELPING NEW YORK
STATE FAMILIES AND
COMMUNITIES THRIVE IN OUR
RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD.

**We're
Growing!**

Association MANAGEMENT TEAM

Mary Beth McEwen, Executive Director
Carol Watkins, Health & Nutrition Issue Lead
Richelle Singer, Family Development Issue Lead
Jennifer Reynolds, Agriculture Senior Team Lead
Lisa Farney, Youth Dev. Program Lead
Daniel Sharfarz, Energy Team Co-Lead
Brittany Amore, Energy Team Co-Lead
Bonnie Backman, Finance Lead
Lori North, Director of Operations
Regina Lowder, HR Lead
Roberta Oram, SBN IT Lead
Terri Harrison, Office Manager



Ground Breaking August 2025

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County



CCE Building Addition December 1, 2025



I am happy to share the Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County (CCE Oneida County) 2025 annual report with community members, partner agencies, volunteers, and elected officials. The CCE staff are unsurpassed in their commitment to offering informative programming and research-based information to the people we serve. Their enthusiasm and expertise in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, nutrition, energy, youth development, childcare, parenting, urban renewal, and agricultural economic development is inspiring. At CCE Oneida County, we are all dedicated to empowering, encouraging, and equipping our community to cultivate a future of wellness, innovation, excitement, and growth.

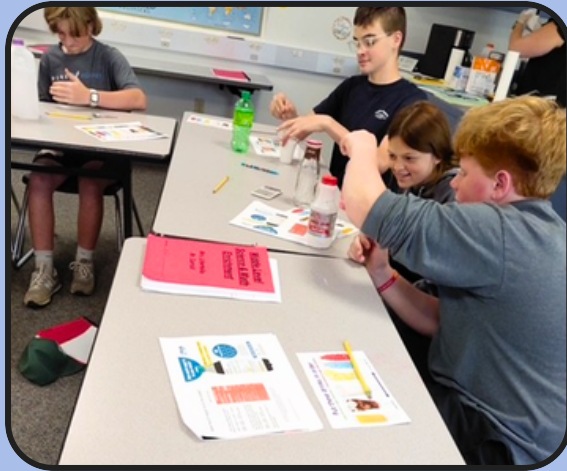
As you look through the following pages, you will see examples of the many lives that CCE touches each year. We continually strive to meet the emerging needs of our constituents. Whether it's working with Cornell University Professors and agriculture staff to conduct a neonicotinoid trial on Oneida County farms, creating a social-emotional education program to support youth in the aftermath of the pandemic, helping to expand and create childcare businesses, or introducing youth to new technology through 4H, we continue to work to bring education and economic development to our region.

This calendar features programmatic highlights from 2025, but it is impossible to share all that we do in just a few pages. CCE offers hundreds of programs each year reaching tens of thousands of participants. We use a variety of synchronous, asynchronous, and blended learning methods to deliver programming. We host in-person trainings, farm tours, classroom visits, zoom events, and record YouTube videos. At CCE Oneida County our goal is to make it convenient for people to participate in our programs and events. In 2026, we will continue to look for innovative ways to accommodate the needs of the community.

2025 has been an amazing year for CCE, but there have also been some challenges. Funding for SNAP education was eliminated. Nutrition education was a staple in our program repertoire, but in 2026 our staff of fifteen nutrition educators will become a staff of five. Although fewer in number, their commitment to bring nutrition education to the community remains steadfast. I am happy to report that we did see growth in other areas, and the other staff members were able to shift into new roles within CCE. We do recognize that there will always be challenges, but we will always be committed to continued growth and continued programmatic expansion. In the last 10 years, we have tripled in size and plan to keep going! As a result of this growth, in September, with the support of Oneida County, we broke ground on a \$7.2 million expansion project that will add 16,000 square feet to our building! This expansion enables us to continue to enhance our services to the community.

As 2025 comes to a close and we welcome 2026, I would once again like to thank our constituents, community partners, the Oneida County Executive, and the Oneida County Board of Legislators for their continued support. Finally, I have to thank the entire staff at Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County, our Board of Directors, and our wonderful volunteers for a job well done! Guided by a drive for service, compassion, and respect for one another and all members of society their dedication is unparalleled!

Best wishes for a wonderful 2026!
Mary Beth McEwen
Executive Director



Verona BOCES students
Rethinking their drink,
learning how much sugar
is in common drinks

**SNAP-Ed staff attended the
Statewide SNAP-Ed NY
Conference in May!** Held in
person for the first time in 5
years. Central Region staff joined
a presentation and panel
discussion on their new online
learning platform **Eat Easy**



- **Classes for Adults:** A total of 162 in-person adult sessions **reached 691 adult participants**
- **Classes for Youth:** A total of 1,061 in-person youth sessions **reached 4,983 individual participants** (most participants were treated to a program series, which means they were visited approximately 6 times total in 2025)
- **Retail and/or Farmer's Market Demonstrations:** 20 Farmer's market demonstrations were provided, **reaching 890 participants.**
- **New this year** was participation in the Camden Farmers' Market (Oneida County), which began accepting SNAP/EBT.

Nutrition SNAP-ED



McConnellsville Elementary
4th grade students trying the
Veggie Pasta Salad



Strough Middle school students
playing a **MyPlate Who Am I**
Game with Jamie and Rachel

Farm to Housing, New York Food for New York Families Grant Year 3

Nutrition
SNAP-ED



Season 3

\$21,000 total value of produce
1,050 households received NY Produce
11 low-income housing sites in Oneida County

Local Farms

West End Farms

Housing Sites

Rome

Colonial I&II
Madison Plaza
Dewitt Clinton
Liberty Garden
Valentine Apts.

Utica

Link at Sunset
Starting Line
Gilmore Village

Camden

Millstream Manor
Camden Apartments

January | 2026

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**Liz and Kristen during a
food distribution at Link
Apartments in Utica** ➔



◀ December | 2025

February | 2026 ▶

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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

CCE's SNAP-Ed Farm to Library:

Central Region SNAP-Ed NY continued supporting the Farm to Library program this year, a collaboration with local farms to collect donations of surplus produce that might otherwise go to waste and distribute it to community members through two local libraries: **Utica Public Library and Jervis Public Library**. The libraries also provide educational resources which include recipes, produce storage and preservation.

Through a partnership with the Oneida County Food Coalition, Cornell Cooperative Extension and the SNAP-Ed Nutrition program partner with ResQ2Feed Oneida County, a food recovery program that rescues surplus food from restaurants, grocers, schools, and other resources and then delivers the food directly to partner sites like nonprofits, pantries, meal sites, and housing.

This year's number of coordinated donations:

15 to the Utica Public Library

6 to the Jervis Public Library

Donating farms:

- West End Farm
- Utica Farmers Market Vendors
- Oneida County Public Market Vendors
- Swistak Farms
- Hilbert Farm



Squash, zucchini, and melons donated to the Jervis Public Library through the Harvest program at the Mohawk Correctional Facility.



Eat Easy Statewide Training:

- Central Region SNAP-Ed Staff Eli, Kristen & Leah developed and offered a 1.5-hour virtual training for all 12 SNAP-Ed regions across the state, reaching 187 participants.
- The training included an overview of the platform development and research, accessing the website and the resources available, example scenarios for educators to use with SNAP participants and community promotion resources.
- Eat Easy trainings for partner agencies were also provided to help promote the website to adult audiences with Utica DSS, Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Little Falls Library and the CCE Legally Exempt childcare program.





Eat Well, Play Hard in Child Care Centers (EWPHCCS) is a SNAP-Ed intervention combining direct nutrition education and policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change activities to support families in making choices to eat healthier and play more.

In Oneida County:

- The program engaged 4 childcare centers, reaching 131 preschoolers with fun and engaging nutrition education. EWPH also engaged 32 adults with parent nutrition resources and workshops.
- In addition to impactful nutrition education, the Eat Well, Play Hard program works with childcare centers to promote wellness through policy change.
- One of the participating programs, Thea Bowman House, is committed to improving the quality of life for all the families connected to their programs. The Eat Well, Play Hard program is dedicated to helping Thea Bowman and other centers in Oneida county, reach that goal.



February | 2026



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January | 2026

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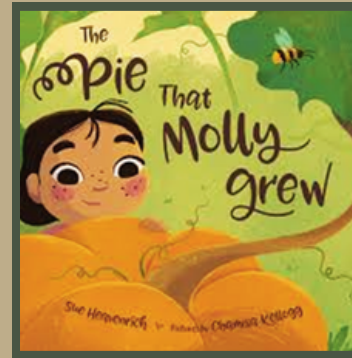
March | 2026

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"My class thoroughly enjoyed the program this year! It was great for them to be introduced to new healthy foods and healthier ways to eat, exercise and to explore new foods. Thank you again for all your hard work!"

~Pre-school teacher at Thea Bowman House~

**During Ag Literacy Week, March 17-21, 2025,
“The Pie that Molly Grew” was read by 40
volunteers to 2,909 elementary students
throughout schools in Oneida County**



2025 Ag Literacy Poster Winners



2026 Ag Literacy Week Book Seasons on the Farm Written by Chelsea Tornetto Illustrated by Karen Bunting

Throughout the year, life on a farm is filled with growth and joy, patience and renewal. On a farm, each season arrives with new jobs to do, crops to plant, animals to tend to, and fields to harvest. Readers get an insider's look at what spring, summer, fall, and winter look like on a family farm, from adorable baby animals to rumbling tractors and pumpkins to pies. This sweet, rhyming story is perfect for young readers, whether their home is on a farm or not!



**CCE Oneida County's 4-H Program
Touches children's lives beyond
the club experience through:**

- **The 4-H Government program**
which hosted 18 students
- **Ag in the Classroom**, which
teaches the importance of
agriculture in our everyday lives
- **Dairy in the Classroom** encourages
children to taste real dairy products
- **Discovery Days**, children participate in hands-
on workshops and education



4-H Government Program Participants

March | 2026



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< February | 2026

April | 2026 >

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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County



During school hours on May 30, 2025, 499 students from 10 Oneida County elementary schools learned about life on the farm at the 2025 Farm Fest at DiNitto Farms on Benton Road in Marcy.

It is estimated that over 3,200 people visited the farm from 4 pm to 8 pm, when the event opened to the public.



Raising Chickens



Collins Creamery



Kiddie Tractor Pull Fun



All About Honeybees



Oneida County FARM FEST

April | 2026

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March | 2026

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May | 2026



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Turning Farm Waste into Energy



Hay Wagon Rides

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County



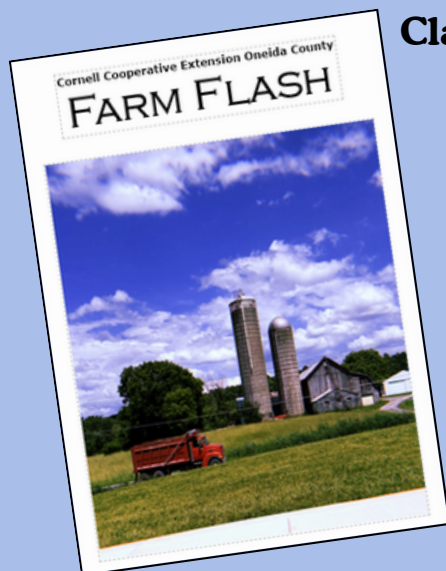
Cornell's Pro-Livestock Beef Extension Specialist, Adam Murray addressing Beef Discussion Group



Crop Congress at White's Farm Supply in Waterville



If You ate today,
Thank a Farmer!



Scan QR
Code to Read
Farm Flash
online



Classes and discussions hosted by CCE Oneida County help farmers and growers keep up with the current livestock and growing issues



Meet Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County's Ag Team

Ag Economic Development

Carl Mierek is CCE's Food Systems Specialist. His job is to conduct outreach and do research to better understand how food is moving across the state.

Research and information collected at:

- Farmers' markets
- Visited farms at the CCE Otsego and Schoharie Family Farm Day
- Collected survey information from farms interested in participating in marketing their products to downstate restaurants and consumers
- Represented CCE by participating and presenting at the Feeding NYS Summit.
- Attended the NYS Restaurant Show, SENPA Northeast Natural Foods Conference, Vitality in the Valley, Empire State Entrepreneur Expo, Doing Business with the Oneida Nation, and the Upper Hudson Valley Farm to School Gathering to spread the word about the program



Carl and Maddy (CCE's Farm to School educator), recently visited **Suzie and Peter at Jones Family Farm** in Herkimer to find out how they make their flagship product **New York Creme Cheese**



May | 2026

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◀ April | 2026

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June | 2026 ▶

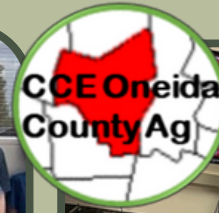
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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

Ag Economic Development



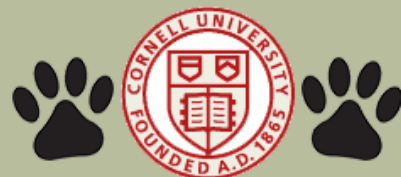
- CCE's *Farm to School* educator reached approximately 6,000 school-aged students in 2025 with lessons on the importance of farmers and our food.
- 46 kids attended **Farm to School Day Program** at CCE in Oriskany, NY



New Hartford Elementary School



Boonville Oneida County Fair (July)



Cornell Companions of Oneida County

Through Cornell Companions of Oneida County, dogs and their owners volunteer time to visit nursing homes, schools, community centers, and special events in our area. This year's visits included Utica, Clinton, Mohawk, Ilion, Whitesboro, Dolgeville, Marcy and more.

Research indicates that dogs enhance life experiences through canine/human contact. Dog therapy can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and help individuals experience overall emotional well-being.



**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County**

Horticulture

MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS

Parker F. Scripture Gardens



2025 Gardening Education included:

- Garden mini learning sessions.
- An interactive booth at Oneida Public Market during the growing season.
- Master Gardener Speaker Bureau talks at garden centers, libraries, events, and to local organizations.
- Master Gardeners writing weekly gardening tips and articles for the Utica OD, Rome Sentinel, and Big Frog's radio website. MGV Rosanne Loparco has also become a regular on the Bill Keeler Radio show.
- Over 100 families visited CCE's Garden Open House. Extension's Parker F. Scripture Botanical Gardens were filled with make-and-take booths from many of CCE's programs, and master gardener volunteers were on hand to answer gardening questions. **CCE's 2026 Garden Open House will be on July 15th.**
- Many area groups partner with CCE's Parker F. Scripture Botanical Gardens throughout the season to help in the gardens
- An Honorable Mention in the **All America Selections Landscape Challenge 2025**. Theme for the challenge was *STEAM*.



Oneida County Soil & Water staff collaborated with Parker F. Scripture Garden Master Gardeners to create a demonstration rain garden in a persistent wet area



Master Gardeners work amongst the daylilies at the July Garden Open House

Horticulture MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS

Over 600 individual garden questions were answered in 2025. Questions were received from walk-ins, e-mails, phone calls, and through our **Home and Garden Hotline.**



Groups from ARC and their adult leaders have been a big help this year in the gardens.

Master Gardener Volunteers give out samples of apple infused water along with recipes at the year round **Oneida County Public Market**



MVCC Masonry Class helps with the creation of a concrete slab in the garden compost area



June | 2026

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May | 2026

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July | 2026

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**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County**

Cornell Cooperative Extension **Smart Energy Choices – Mohawk Valley**

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Smart Energy Choices team helps homeowners and renters access weatherization programs and incentives through NYSERDA. The Mohawk Valley energy hub covers Schoharie, Otsego, Herkimer, Fulton, Montgomery, and Oneida counties.

The team visited over 130 community events in 2025. They helped educate the public on the energy efficiency programs available.

Phone calls have been pouring in at the CCE offices as more people are seeking home energy help.

The energy team's goal is to make homes healthier and more comfortable. Most programs are income-based.



SCAN ME


If interested
in speaking
with an
Energy
Advisor, scan
QR code



 **Forestport Community Expo**




 **Oneida County Energy Presentation at MVCC**



 **Vernon Center Old Home Day**



 **Farm Fest**



**Ag in the Classroom instructor (AITC),
Taylor McNamara, teaches children
how Agriculture impacts their lives!**

- **AITC had 15,720 contacts* this year**
- Visiting 30 schools, spending 4-5 days a week at schools, and visiting 6-8 classes each day.
- 11 student groups were also visited (libraries, after-school programs, summer programs, and more)
- Programs included: Apples, Pumpkins, Introduction to Agriculture, Wool, Maple Syrup, Plant Science, Flowers, and Pollinators

*(Contact numbers include schools and students who enjoyed repeat visits from Taylor)



**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County**

Dairy in the Classroom (DITC) reached 5,840 students

- CCE's DITC Educator, Whitney Semans, presented hands-on lessons on making and tasting dairy products.
- 596 summer school programs and special events were also visited during the year.



CCE's Ag in the Classroom Educator, Taylor McNamara (left), was honored as an Outstanding Educator at the 19th Annual Celebration of Education hosted by The Genesis Group and First Source Federal Credit Union. She is pictured here with CCE's Farm to School Educator, Maddy Engel.



**4-H Horse and
Livestock
Competition at the
Boonville Oneida
County Fair
July 22-27, 2025**





**4-Hers
showing their
livestock at
the Boonville
Oneida
County Fair**



July | 2026

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June | 2026

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August | 2026



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**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County**



Bella & Garth (horse)



**The Oneida County 4-H
Program had 29 4-H youth show
projects at the 2025 State Fair.**

Aubrey Etter got the highest project recognition (the purple rosette) for his beautiful 4-H barn quilt



Beautiful Barn
Quilt



Aubrey

**4-Hers also competed in horse,
livestock, and animal
competitions.**



Eden and Daisy



State Fair Exhibits



Mounted Games at the Fair



Gabby &
Honey
(horse)

Ryleigh &
Scooter
(horse)

September 15 & 23, 2025

Conservation Ed Days



CCE's Ag in the Classroom educator, Taylor, helps students understand the importance of Agriculture



CCE's Energy Team members, Lucas and Jamie, educate students on energy choices

- 786 students from 38 classes in 8 Oneida County School Districts took part in Cornell Cooperative Extension's Annual Conservation Ed Days.
- This 2-day event is held at Delta Lake State Park in Rome.
- Students had to visit 10 of 15 conservation stations to complete their education.

August | 2026

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◀ July | 2026

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September | 2026 ▶

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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

Ag Economic Development



Oneida County Executive, Anthony Picente, with CCE Executive Director, Mary Beth McEwen and Ag Lead, Jenn Reynolds



The 2025 Taste of CNY was an amazing success with 30 total vendors. This family-friendly event included food tastings, free entertainment, free children's activities, and more. Approximately 500 people attended. Some vendors actually sold out of their products.



CCE's Farm 2 School Educator, Maddy E. at the apple tasting booth



One of our 30 amazing vendors



CCE's Child Care Council staff



CCE's Ag in the Classroom Educator spinning the wheel with visitors



TASTE OF CNY

November 1st | 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
North Star Orchards - Westmoreland

Eli & Lucas, CCE
Energy Team



September | 2026

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Tasting the
vendors
products is
part of the fun



An amazing turn out for this year's Taste of CNY



August | 2026

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October | 2026



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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County



2025 Referrals to assist families in finding licensed/registered child care

Oneida County: 561
Madison County: 110
Herkimer County: 74



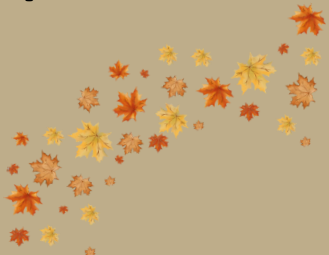
Child Care Council staff looking glamorous for the 2025 Child Care Provider Night Out. An *Old Hollywood Theme* added to the fun during this night of celebration for early childhood educators to enjoy!

Over 80 child care providers were recognized during the Provider's Night Out, for their years of service. Special recognition was given to those providers who were longest in the field, as well as providers who are new to the profession.



“Sticky Wall” visits with child care programs in Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida Counties help children with their fine motor development.

Zay and Karla at a Breast Feeding Event in Madison County





On a hot July day, **the Oneida County Master Gardeners hosted a Garden Open House** and **most of Cornell Cooperative Extension's programs were represented with fun booths for the adults and children.** The photos show our Child Care Council staff enjoying the afternoon with visitors.



October | 2026

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◀ September | 2026

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November | 2026 ▶

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County



Mayah is a beautiful accent to the Child Care Council banner behind her. She is Marina Bridgham's little girl.



Kayla and Than at a local event, joined by Than's son, Ozaid.

Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency selected Ellen Olson to receive this year's Community Visionary Award! This award is given annually to an individual who has contributed unselfishly to the betterment of our community as a whole and works toward the goal of ending poverty in our community.



Many of the CCE staff attended the luncheon to see their co-worker and friend honored

**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County**

Supporting Businesses & Helping Employees with Child Care Needs

In February of 2025, the **Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County** hosted a **regional launch of the Navigator Toolkit** with 75 people in attendance, including New York Secretary of State Walter Mosley. This statewide initiative aims to provide support to businesses and employers affected by child care issues in their workforce.

According to **Raising New York's 2022 analysis**, **41% of N.Y. parents with children under 5 report child care problems** affecting their ability to work, attend school, or manage other commitments.

Since the launch, **the Child Care Council has assisted 68 employers**, helping their employees and clients find and pay for child care.



An **Oneida County Start-Up Grant** has provided Oneida County with **21 new child care programs, offering 204 more openings for children.**

This opportunity, initiated by **County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr.**, has provided over \$48,000 in its first year, creating 25 new jobs for child care providers and helping families work and learn in Oneida County.



Child Care Council Staff attend and present at the Business Navigator Luncheon at the Hart's Hill Inn



Than Than, a CCE Child Care staff member holds an information session for the Child Care Assistance Plan, facilitated in Burmese, at a local business.



Cornell Cooperative Extension's Social Emotional Programming is reaching 29 local schools in the Mohawk Valley and beyond!

In 2026, we'll expand our education in classrooms to provide more comprehensive education around screentime and social media with a new grant from Mother Cabrini Health Foundation



CCE 's Child
Care Council
Family
Development
Educator,
Marina





**Santa
Laughs and
Doggie Hugs
is hosted
each
December by
CCE
employees
and CCE Dog
companion
participants
at the Thea
Bowman
Center in
Utica**



November | 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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◀ October | 2026

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December | 2026 ▶

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**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County**



Summer Season: May-October
Holiday Season: November-December
Winter Season: January-April*
*every other Saturday

At the Historic Utica Train Station
321 Main St, Utica, NY



The Oneida County Public Market Features:

- **Shopping for everything** from local produce and meats to fresh cut flowers and hand-crafted artisan goods. The Oneida County Public Market has it all! The only year-round farmers' market in Oneida County!
- **Regular visits** from CCE Master Gardener Volunteers, SNAP-Ed educators, the Children's Museum Mobile Museum, and local musicians.
- **Strong collaborations** with our community partners: The Center, MVCC, NAACP Rome Chapter, and the Mohawk Valley Latino Association

Public Market
attendance in 2025 was
17,793 (up 8% over 2024)

SNAP and Double Up
Food Bucks (DUFb)
increased to \$10,800
(up 13% over 2024)





Indoors or Outdoors, come
and experience the year round
Oneida County Public Market



Scan QR Code
to visit
**Oneida County
Public Market**



December | 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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◀ November | 2026

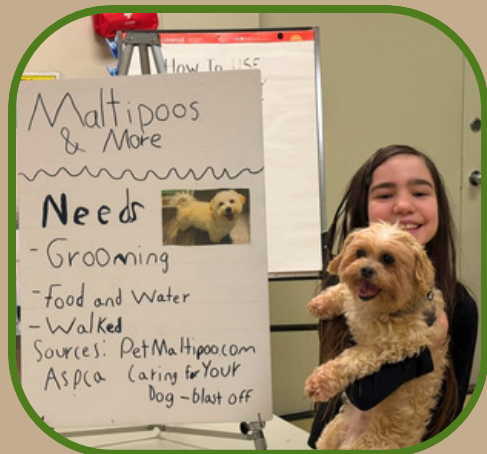
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January | 2027 ▶

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

CCE SNAPSHOTS



4-Hers give presentations to CCE staff and volunteer Judges to prepare for the Boonville Oneida County Fair Competition



July Garden Open House at CCE



The 2025 Connected Community Classroom is Awarded to CCE and is accepted by Child Care Council staff members, Lyndsey and Richelle.

CCE MOMMY SNAPSHOTS



Marina and Mayah



Liz and Leo



CCE Child Care Council LE employees attend conference in Las Vegas

Financial Support 2025

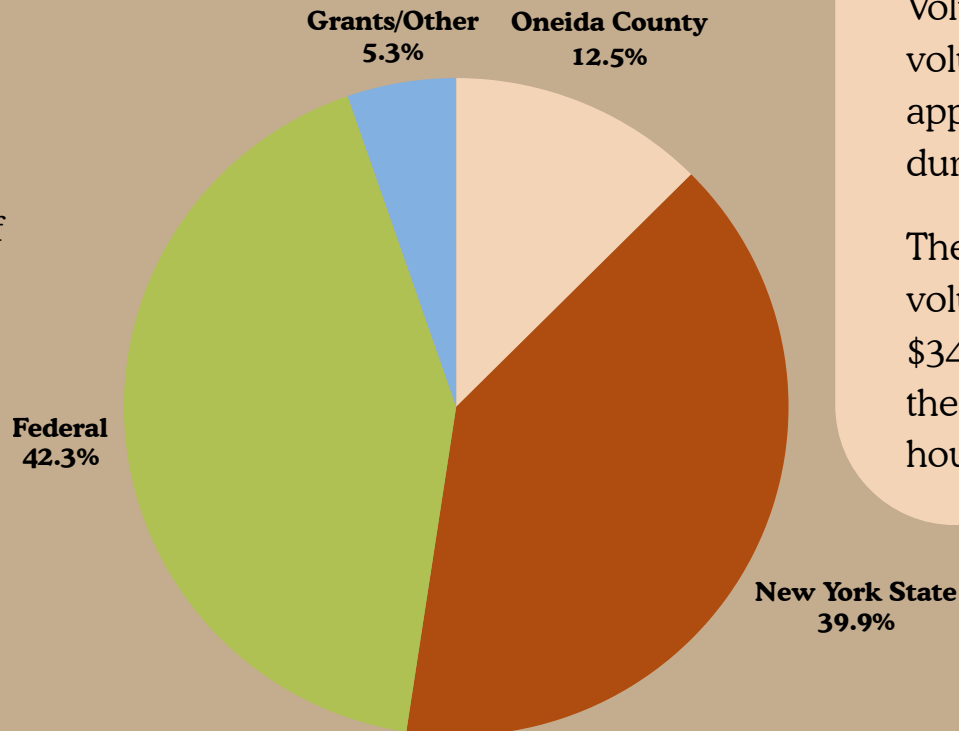
CCE Oneida County's operating budget in 2024 totaled \$9,085,417. As we come to the close of 2025, the operating budget totals \$9,688,211, reflecting an increase of \$602,794 or a growth of over 6.6%.

Income sources include:

County of Oneida, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, NYS Department of Health, Office of Children & Family Services, Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, NYS Energy Research & Development Authority, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Leatherstocking Shared Business Network, The Community Foundation, and Cornell University

2025 Budget

County	\$ 1,209,578	12.5%
State	\$ 3,867,470	39.9%
Federal	\$ 4,097,567	42.3%
Grants/Other	\$ 513,596	5.3%
Budget Total	\$ 9,688,211	100%



Volunteer Hours 2025

CCE Oneida County Program Leads, Lisa Farney, 4-H, and Holly Wise, Master Gardener Volunteers, estimated volunteer hours to be approximately 3,463 during the 2025 fiscal year.

The current value on volunteer hours is set at \$34.79 per hour making the value of the volunteer hours a total of \$120,478.



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

CCE Staff December 2025



Thank -you!



Visit us at cceoneida.com

121 Second Street Oriskany, NY 13424

Home and Garden Questions can be called in to 315-736-3394 x333

Our Parker F. Scripture Botanical Gardens are open daily sunrise to sunset in-season.

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for providing equal program and employment opportunities in accordance with applicable laws.

