



COMMUNITY
FOOD
INITIATIVES
2022 Annual Report

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Our Mission & Values

Community Food Initiatives fosters communities where everyone has equitable access to healthy, local food. Our vision is a resilient and sustainable region where everyone is nourished by a just, inclusive, and thriving local food system.



Culture and Community: We value building on our assets -- natural resources, diverse community knowledge, and an Appalachian heritage of cooperation, persistence, and creativity -- and supporting everyone to see their contribution in strengthening our community.



Education and Empowerment: We believe that by sharing the knowledge to grow and prepare wholesome foods, people become empowered to feed their families, improve their health, and strengthen their community.



Justice: We are rooted in the belief that equitable access to fresh and nutritious local food leads to a safe and clean environment, supports meaningful work with livable wages, and fulfills the needs and rights of all people.



Collaboration: We believe in the strength of collaboration, mutually beneficial partnerships, and in doing better together.

Our History

Community Food Initiatives began in 1992 as a program of Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet). While its original vision was to be a producer's association, CFI quickly evolved into its own organization with a distinct mission focused on access and equity. Since then, CFI has worked diligently to support residents of the region to grow their own food and preserve their bounty, as well as to distribute produce directly from local farmers and gardeners to community members, local pantries, and other organizations.

We celebrated our 30th birthday in 2022, and these three decades of impact were only possible thanks to the heartfelt work of our staff, volunteers, community members, partner organizations, business sponsors, board members, and so many others. We have grown as an organization, but our original purpose remains: to increase access to healthy, local food for everyone.



From the Executive Director

*"This work is
intergenerational,
inspirational, hands-
on, community-led,
collaborative,
creative,
empowering and
beautiful."*

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in late September, the Eastside Community Garden was filled with people of all ages for a CFI Garden Party.

College students, city officials, nonprofit partners, community gardeners, and friends enjoyed delicious food donated by local restaurants, participated in art activities facilitated by volunteers, and admired a gorgeous mural created through a partnership with Passion Works Studio. Gardeners led tours of their plots. Staff members helped kids dig potatoes for the Donation Station and talked with community members about the benefits of growing food sustainably. Even as we celebrated, the event spurred conversation on how gardens can serve more people in the future.

This is just a snapshot of a single afternoon at CFI in a year filled with activities, partnerships, and programming, but to me it represents so much about CFI's mission and work. This work is intergenerational, inspirational, hands-on, community-led, collaborative, creative, empowering and beautiful.

As you explore the pages of this report, I hope you also find inspiration in seeing all of the ways people are working together through CFI towards the vision of a resilient and sustainable region where everyone is nourished by a just, inclusive, and thriving local food system.

With Gratitude,

Maribeth Saleem-Tanner



2022 Snapshot & Financials

January 1st 2022-December 31st 2022

The Stats



The **Donation Station** distributed 53,500+ pounds of local food



Food Access Programs invested \$20,000+ in our local food economy



The **Veggie Van** distributed 11,685 pounds of food



Garden Giveaways provided free seeds at 7 library branches, 1,400+ plant starts & 37,930 lbs of seed potatoes



Volunteers donated 3696 hours with CFI programs



150+ hours of lessons taught in our **Garden Education Programs**



The **Veggie Van** served 1,300+ customers

The Numbers

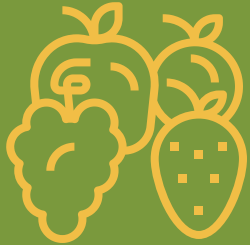
FY 2022 Income

Grants - 51%	\$156,188
Reimbursements (ERTC) - 20%	\$60,634
Fundraisers & Donations - 16%	\$47,930
Business Sponsors & Donors - 7%	\$21,225
Program Income & Funded Partnerships - 7%	\$21,018
Total Income	\$306,995

FY 2022 Expenses

Community Gardens & Garden Education Staff, Service Members, Supplies - 27%	\$81,342
Food Access Staff, Service Members, Supplies (Donation Station, Veggie Van) - 26%	\$78,734
Community Engagement Staff, Service Members, Supplies - 19%	\$57,907
Local Food Purchases - 10%	\$29,901
Capacity Building: Memberships, Fees, Fundraising - 6%	\$16,979
Facilities & Operations - 5%	\$13,953
Tax, Insurance, Accounting, Legal - 4%	\$10,959
Capacity Building: Planning, Conferences, Professional Development - 3%	\$8,002
Fuel, Mileage, Vehicle Repair - 2%	\$5,970
Total Expenses	\$303,747

Donation Station



53,500+ pounds of local food distributed



40+ pantry partners across SE Ohio



\$20,000+ invested in our local food economy



37,930 pounds of seed potatoes distributed



CFI's Donation Station works with growers, producers, and gardeners to address regional food insecurity, improve community health, and strengthen our local economy. Community donations are used to supply fresh items to dozens of organizations each week including pantries, libraries, healthcare centers, and churches. Donation Station food is purchased and donated from the Athens Farmers Market, local farms and food businesses, gardeners, and the Chesterhill Produce Auction. These partners are vital in realizing CFI's mission to ensure everyone has access to healthy, local food in southeast Ohio. Since 2019, we have distributed over 344,000 pounds of food through the Donation Station.

In 2022, CFI invested over \$20,000 in our local food economy, partnered with over 40 pantries across Southeastern Ohio, and found strength in our amazing partnerships locally, regionally, and nationally with farmers and other organizations that support our mission.

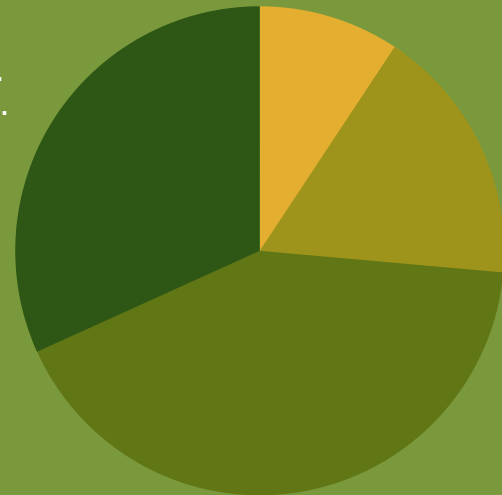
Partnerships and community generosity make Donation Station possible. This fall, Monserat Ridge Farm donated a steer that provided our distribution with over 1,000 pounds of local, grass-fed beef to share.



Oct. - Dec.
16,505 lbs.

Jan. - Mar.
4,831 lbs.

Apr. - June
8,888 lbs.



Jul. - Sept.
21,724 lbs.

Pounds of Food Distributed

CFI partnered with the Athens County Food Pantry and Athens County Job and Family Services for a collaborative community food distribution event in August that served over 85 community members. Within fifteen minutes of the start of the event, we had to make a run to restock our produce tables.



This fall, CFI presented the Donation Station model to a national audience through a webinar in collaboration with the Food Systems Leadership Network. We also helped our partner, Rural Action, start a new Donation Station in Tuscarawas County. The CFI team is excited to continue to grow and share the harvest within and beyond our region as we **address food insecurity at its roots.**

Veggie Van

With the end of 2022 came the end of the Veggie Van's third full season! Veggie Van maintained its weekly operations in Coolville and Glouster, made monthly visits to Nelsonville, and served pop-up locations in Albany, Athens, and Marietta.



The Veggie Van is a donation-based market that carries fresh fruits and vegetables to southeastern Ohio communities throughout the growing season. Offering locally-grown produce in exchange for any level of donation, the Veggie Van supports farmers while also ensuring that fresh, nutritious fruits and veggies are accessible and available for all.

All unsold produce is distributed to our food pantry partners, and all donations support food purchase and distribution. In 2022, the Veggie Van served over 1,300 customers and distributed more than 11,000 pounds of produce.



11,685 pounds of local, healthy food distributed



More than 1,300 customers served

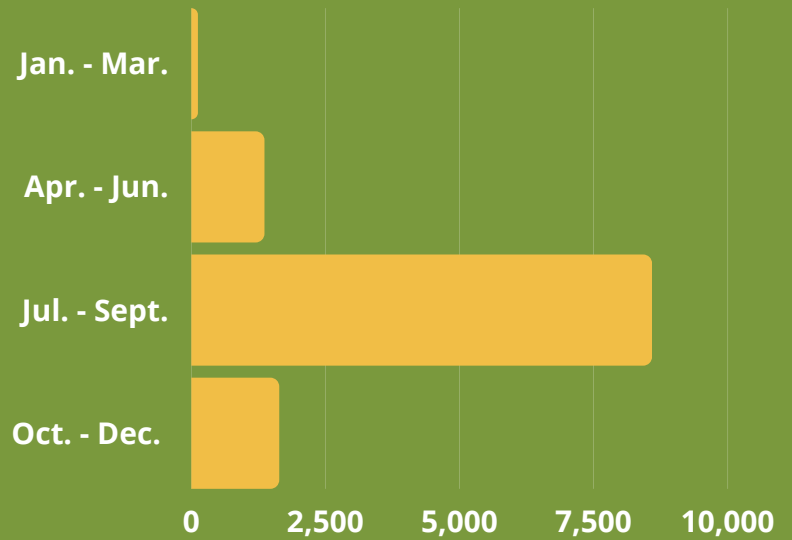


6 communities served

"I love the quality of the produce. Thank you to all who are involved in the Veggie Van!" -2022 Veggie Van Customer



Pounds of Food Distributed



"Keep it up! Friendly, kind and helpful folks to deal with. Knowledgeable also." -Coolville Veggie Van Customer



Community Gardens

Gardens are at the heart of CFI's mission to grow and share the harvest. CFI manages four Community Gardens in Athens and Nelsonville that had over 120 garden plots tended by community members over the course of 2022!

CFI was able to work with volunteers in 2021 to build a new shed to house shared tools for the Eastside Community Garden. In the summer of 2022, we partnered with Passion Works to have a beautiful mural painted on that very shed.

The garden shed mural was revealed in September at a Garden Party with live music, a delicious potluck spread, crafts, garden tours and kids' activities. Welcoming nearly 100 people at the event was inspiring and energizing!



"This work feels so important because food is deeply personal ... I love that I am always learning from the people we serve and becoming a better gardener with time because of it." -Raya,
COMCorps Community Gardens Coordinator



120 garden plots
tended by
community members



Distributed over 1400
plant starts to 150+
individuals who
planned to share
garden produce with
278 families.



The shed isn't the only update to the gardens this year. A new compost area was also built at Eastside Garden, providing gardeners a sustainable way to manage overripe produce as well as unwanted plants; the Athens Southside Garden added several kid-sized plots and bird feeders; and the Nelsonville Garden added a sensory garden area thanks to the HIVE Garden Club, along with a hügelkultur demonstration plot.



Garden Education

Community Food Initiatives is on a mission to strengthen the relationship students have with local food and the natural environment. In school gardens, community-based youth education, and Sprouts--CFI's own garden-based curriculum offered in first-grade classrooms--students work with hands-on projects that spark curiosity in the natural world and help them recognize the beauty that exists all around us.

In 2022, the Garden Education Team partnered with the HIVE youth center in Nelsonville to pilot a summer garden program and expand an onsite growing area, helped design and install a pollinator/sensory garden at Amesville Elementary, led the process of installing two new ADA-accessible gardens in the Athens City School District, and supported another successful season of Hope Drive Garden Club workshops and events, engaging over 40 residents.



157 hours of garden lessons taught



7 school gardens supported by CFI

Looking at other numbers, our Garden Education team put in some serious work in 2022! We also presented to 52 adults about educating our youngest gardeners at state and national conferences in Columbus, OH, and Denver, CO, and reached 75 adults through additional Garden Education programs.

Through our garden education programs, Community Food Initiatives sows seeds of food resiliency and prosperity in the region. We're looking forward to continually finding new ways to **inspire future and current generations** of gardeners in the region.



"Recently, we were lining up to go back inside after a Sprouts lesson in a school garden, and one of the kids shouted out, "gardening is more fun than recess!" and kids agreed, then another one shouted, "more fun than PE!" and on and on they went raving about how much fun they were having, to the point that then the whole line started chanting "garden! garden!" in unison. It was heartwarming to say the least." -Molly, Director of Garden Programs

"The focused engagement and enthusiasm of children as they stir compost, collect seeds or move piles of mulch is telling of the benefit from offering garden experiences. Children joyfully connect with nature, the cycle of gardening and healthy eating thanks to CFI." -Laura, School Garden Volunteer



406 first graders reached in 20 classrooms through the Sprouts program



236 youths reached through additional CFI Garden Education programming

Discovery Kitchen

Discovery Kitchen is a CFI program that aims to make local, seasonal food more accessible by connecting people with creative ways they can use seasonal produce and teaching people about the many local foods that are available in this area. Beyond that, Discovery Kitchen brings the joy of cooking to people we live and work with in our community. After greatly reducing our in-person workshops for the last two years, we are excited to be back at the table with events like cooking demonstrations, tasting tables, and educational workshops.



Nourishing Networks

In CFI's Nourishing Networks program, trained facilitators host workshops that provide data on food security, introduce food justice concepts, discuss barriers to and strategies for food access, and support community-led follow-up projects. Nourishing Networks programs create powerful collaborative spaces that engage diverse stakeholders and build a strong community-based network of food justice advocates.

Our 2022 workshops attracted 54 participants throughout 5 events and generated strong engagement. Inspired by the power of these conversations in our communities, CFI also partners with interested organizations to train others on how to host their own Nourishing Networks workshops and discuss food insecurity wherever they are. In 2022 we trained 16 new facilitators on how to lead their own Nourishing Networks workshops!



"I liked the community coming together in discussion, expressing ideas and interested in helping their own community." -**Stewart Nourishing Networks Participant**

2022 Partnerships

We're thankful for our program partnerships with organizations across the region, from businesses, to schools, to farmers, to other non-profits. Together, we're working toward a more equitable, just, and environmentally friendly future across Appalachian Ohio.

ACEnet
Alexander Lions Club
AmeriCorps COMCorps
Athens Catholic Community Food Pantry
Athens City-County Health Department
Athens City School District
Athens County Children's Services
Athens Co. Creating Healthy Communities Coalition
Athens County Food Pantry
Athens County Jobs and Family Services
Athens County Master Gardeners
Athens County Public Libraries
Athens County Visitors Bureau (Visit Athens County)
Athens Farmers Market
Athens Food Rescue
Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority
Athens Photo Project
Bishopville Food Pantry
Blackberry Sage Farm
Blooming View Montessori School
Bodhi Tree
Care Closet
Casa Nueva
Chesterhill Produce Auction
City of Albany
City of Athens
City of Athens Arts, Parks and Recreation Department
Cutler Community Center
Equinox Botanicals
Federal Hocking School District
Federal Valley Resource Center
First Presbyterian Church of Athens
First United Methodist Church
Good Works
HAPCAP
Hocking College Agroecology
Hopewell Health Centers
Hunger Prevention Coalition
Integrated Services for Behavioral Health
Kilvert Community Center
Kindred Market
Live Healthy Appalachia
Little Fish Brewing Company
Lottridge Community Center
Marietta College
Mineral Feed My Sheep Pantry
Nelsonville Food Cupboard
Ohio CDC Association AmeriCorps VISTA project
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Ohio Farm to School Network
OhioHealth
OHIO Student Farm & Farm to Ohio Working Group
Ohio University Center for Campus and Community Engagement
Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery
OSU Extension
OUHCOM Community Health Programs
Radical Times Nelsonville
Rural Action
Rural Women's Recovery
Salvation Army
Serenity Grove
Shagbark Seed & Mill
Sheltering Arms
Snowville Creamery
Sojourners
The Hive of Nelsonville
Trimble Local Schools
United Campus Ministry
United Plant Savers
University of Buffalo
Vest Farm
Village Bakery
Wallace Center Food Systems Leadership Network
Washington Co. Creating Healthy Communities Coalition

And many more!

Sponsors and Funders

The work we do at Community Food Initiatives is only possible thanks to the financial support we receive from grants, donations, and sponsors. As a grassroots community organization, CFI depends on the investment of those who support our mission. Donations, grants, and business sponsorships allow us to purchase and distribute produce, create and implement lessons for students, operate our Veggie Van, maintain our beautiful Community Gardens, and implement community-based strategies to **strengthen Southeast Ohio's local food system**. Thank you to all those that supported us in 2022.

2022 Platinum Harvest Sponsors

Sprouts Classroom Hero, Veggie Van Farmstand Sponsor, Donation Station Powerhouse Sponsor

Sirius Systems Consulting

2022 Gold Sponsors

Sprouts Teacher's Friend, Veggie Van Bundle Sponsor, Donation Station Food Access Champion

Hocking Valley Bank

Integrated Services for Behavioral Health

Jackie O's Pub & Brewery

Modern Woodmen

Shagbark Seed & Mill

2022 Silver Sponsors

Sprouts Garden Caretaker, Veggie Van Pop-Up Sponsor, Donation Station Steward

Don Linder, e-Merge Real Estate

Erie Insurance

Parks Place Kitchen LLC

United Way of the Mid-Ohio Valley

2022 Bronze Harvest Sponsors

Sprouts Lesson Helper, Veggie Van Sample Sponsor, Donation Station Food Access Responder

Bagel Street Deli

Beads and Things

Birds and Buckwheat

Bodhi Tree Guesthouse and Studio

Gerig and Gerig

Linscott Trucking

Precision Imprint

Purple Chopstix

River Willow Culinary Services, LLC

Susan Roth Art and Design

Unified Bank

Sponsors and Funders

2022 Foundations and Supporting Organizations

Amesville Elementary PTO
Arts Midwest with support from the National Endowment for the Arts & Ohio Arts Council
Athens City Schools
Athens County Foundation
Athens CROP Walk
Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority
Athens Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
Athens Sunrise Rotary
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Edward Lamb Foundation
Education Foundation of America
Federal Hocking School District
First Presbyterian Church of Athens
Food Systems Leadership Network
Foundation for Appalachian Ohio
Health Path Community Connections
KidsGardening
Kleinpenny Educational Fund
Kramer Family Foundation
Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
North Central SARE
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville
Peoples Bank Foundation
Rocky Community Improvement Fund
Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation
Serve Ohio
Sisters Health Foundation
Sugar Bush Foundation
State University of NY at Buffalo
USDA National Institute of Food & Agriculture
Visit Athens County
Whole Kids Foundation

2022 Members and Community Donors

CFI is a membership organization, supported by 133 active members who donated to support our mission in 2022. These members, along with many additional individuals who contributed to Donation Station at the Athens Farmers Market, participated in social media fundraisers, or donated at Veggie Van, are the heart of CFI, and provide about a quarter of our budget each year.

We also rely on the growers, gardeners, and businesses that partner with us to grow and share their harvest. **In addition to dozens of individual gardeners, the following business and organizations provided food to Donation Station in 2022:**

Athens County Food Pantry, Athens County Job and Family Services, Athens Food Rescue, Athens Local Food Buying Club, Athen's Own, Blackberry Sage Farm, Blaney Family Farm, Bodhi Tree, Butcher's Bites, Cherry Orchards, CFI Community Gardens, Cowdery Farms, Crumbs Bakery, Deep Roots Farm, Gillogly Orchard, Green Edge Gardens, Greenlee's Greens, Hocking College, Homecoming Farm, Integration Acres, Jackie O's and Jackie O's Bakery, Jackson Area Ministries, Laurel Valley Creamery, Little Fish Brewing Co., Master Gardeners (Children's Garden), Milo's Whole World Gourmet, Minefire Farm, Monserat Ridge Farm, Mushbloom Garden, Mushroom Harvest, Olive Branch Catering, Park's Place, Rich Gardens, Rural Action, Sarah's Sweets, Sassafras Farm, School Garden at Amesville, School Gardens at Athens City Schools, Shade River Farm, Shagbark Seed and Mill, Snowville Creamery, Sticky Pete's Maple Syrup, Toadally Awesome Garden, Vest Farm, Wagner Fruit Farm, Westside Community Garden

Staff, Board, and Volunteers

We are able to accomplish all of the work that we do thanks to the continued support and person-power of our staff, volunteers, AmeriCorps members, and our Board of Directors.

Staff

Maribeth Saleem-Tanner, Executive Director
Susie Huser, Director of Outreach
Molly Gassaway, Director of Garden Programs
Reggie Morrow, Donation Station Program Manager
Ivan Orquera, Veggie Van Program Manager

Board of Directors

Adam Kody, President
Mat Roberts, Vice President
Sierra Faris, Treasurer
Linda Parsons, Secretary
Members:
Ruth Dudding, Pat Tegge, Ginny Stack, Tiffany Arnold, Becky Clark, Alexandria Polanosky

AmeriCorps Members and Full-Year Interns

2021-2022 Cohort: Raya Abner, COMCorps Community Gardens Coordinator; Ravi Harley, COMCorps Food Access Coordinator; Abby Hearne, COMCorps Education Coordinator; Zach Perie, Local Food Access Community Relations VISTA

2022-2023 Cohort: Raya Abner, COMCorps Community Gardens Coordinator; Sam Alexander, COMCorps Food Access Coordinator; Lucy Peloso, COMCorps Education Coordinator; Jessica Hough, Local Food Access Community Relations VISTA

Full-Year Interns 2022-2023: Sarah Stonerock

Get Involved

Community Food Initiatives is always looking for community members and Ohio University students interested in food justice to volunteer or intern with us! There are a number of ways you can get involved with CFI. We host volunteers, interns, and AmeriCorps service members. Scan the QR code to learn more about CFI -- sign up for our newsletter, connect with us on social media, or reach out to us about available opportunities.

Program areas:

- Community Gardens
- School Gardens
- Garden Education
- Food Distribution
- The Donation Station
- The Veggie Van
- Discovery Kitchen
- and more!



"CFI has remained one of my favorite community organizations that I've ever been a part of because of the abundance of services CFI and its members provide to the southeastern Ohio community. It was volunteering at CFI where I first began to understand the importance of 'on the ground' programming and community-building." -Bethany, CFI Volunteer

