

Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County

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TO: Kevin M. Byrne
County Executive
FROM: Stefanie Hubert,
Executive Director
SUBJECT: 2025 Annual Report
DATE: January 22, 2026

Enclosed please find our **2025 Annual Report**, along with a sincere thank you for Putnam County's continued support. This report is a brief synopsis highlighting Extension's responsiveness, nimbleness, creativity and relevance throughout 2025. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam County connects Putnam communities to services and resources from a variety of stakeholders, giving our communities access to no- or low-cost solutions to emerging challenges. Our diverse and flexible professional educators and trained volunteers delivered education, information and services to thousands of Putnam residents through a variety of methods, including unique events such as the *Putnam County Fair and 4-H Showcase* and workshops and clubs for farmers, gardeners and youth throughout Putnam County. Our program initiatives focus on the following issues: **Strengthening Community & Economic Vitality; Enhancing the Environment; and Strengthening Individuals and Families; Agriculture & Food Systems.**

Highlights and Trends:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam County:

- Provided 9,937 volunteer community service hours in Putnam County.
- Reached 39,745 Putnam residents with person-to-person programming.
- Served 1,431 Putnam youth through 4-H youth development programs and clubs.
- Delivered 32,901 free meals through the CCE Bountiful Meals freezers.
- Purchased 185,233 pounds of locally grown produce from farmers for food pantry programs including Farm to Truck, which offered free produce, eggs, meat, bread, and more to residents throughout the county via a mobile farm stand.

It is also important to note:

- Cooperative Extension's 297 volunteers, supervised by four professional staff, multiply our community outreach. These vetted and trained volunteers provided educational programs and services valued at \$382,375. (Independent Sector 2025)
- We leveraged Putnam County's **core** funding of \$364,055 with additional funding from the state and federal governments and other sources. Without the County's funding, this leveraged support would not be forthcoming.
- Putnam County provided 16% of our CCE funding however receives 100% of the programs.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PUTNAM COUNTY

Agency Address – 1 Geneva Road, Brewster, NY 10509

Phone Number – 845-278-6738

Main email address – putnam@cornell.edu

- I. Description of Agency - Since 1944, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam County (CCEPC) has extended research-based information and education to the residents of Putnam County, connecting Cornell University's world-class research with regional and county-based educators and partners. CCEPC is uniquely positioned to tailor opportunities and resources to match the diverse and evolving needs of individual communities.

CCEPC partners with local, state, and federal government agencies, and is supported by the national Land-Grant system and Cornell University. In fulfillment of Cornell's Land-Grant mission, faculty and staff collaborate with extension associates, agriculture specialists, CCE educators and staff, local partners, and volunteers to engage citizens and empower communities to transform and grow from the ground up. CCEPC educators develop programming that collects information and experience from their own communities to inform Cornell research and program development.

At Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County, we take pride in our unwavering commitment to reflecting the demographics of the county. Our dedication to fostering a culture of belonging shines through in our programs, outreach efforts, and the diverse representation of our leadership (board members and key staff). By actively recruiting and hiring individuals who reflect the rich tapestry of our population, we ensure that our services are inclusive and accessible to all. In 2025, our elected board members represented a vibrant mix of backgrounds, including diverse races, ages, genders, socioeconomic statuses, health conditions and geographic locations within the county. Our staff embodies diversity in key positions, with individuals from various backgrounds, spanning different age groups, abilities and socioeconomic statuses.

- II. Services Provided - From food and nutrition to economic vitality to environmental and social resilience, CCEPC is dedicated to improving lives across Putnam County. CCEPC connects communities with Cornell University research from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) and the College of Human Ecology (CHE) to enrich and empower neighbors, local businesses, towns and villages. CCEPC works hard to improve:
 - Farming and food production
 - Parenting, family life and family dynamics
 - Health and nutrition
 - Veteran and military family opportunities
 - Water, land and energy conservation and management

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- Community resilience and economic vitality
 - Nutrition education and health
 - Positive Youth Development
- III. Mission Statement – 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.
- IV. Population Served – Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County serves all Putnam County residents regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, political beliefs, and/or income.
- V. Significant Events & Accomplishments in 2025
 Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County:
- Provided 9,937 volunteer community service hours in Putnam County valued at \$382,387 (Independent Sector 2025)
 - Reached 39,745 Putnam residents with person-to-person programming.
 - Served 1,431 Putnam youth through 4-H youth development programs and clubs.
 - Delivered 32,901 free meals through the CCE Bountiful Meals freezers.
 - Purchased 185,233 pounds of locally grown produce from farmers for food pantry programs including the Farm to Truck food truck, which offered free produce, eggs, meat, bread and more to residents throughout the county via a mobile farm stand.
- a. Recently completed projects/programs**
Family and Youth Development
- 15 second grade classrooms participated in [Ag Literacy Week](#) during March 2025.
 - Educated 300 middle/high school students during their Mental Health and Wellness Fair about the CCE organization and 4-H programs.
 - Offered 10 traditional [4-H Clubs](#).
 - Started a Before School Garden Club at an elementary school.
 - Facilitated the Rooted in Learning Grant in Putnam and Westchester public schools.
 - Supported a 4-H Food Systems course in a 6th-grade class.
 - Led “Teach the Teacher” workshops at two Farm to School Summits.
 - Created and supported three new 4-H Clubs: An Agriculture/Livestock and Environmental Science Club, a Gardening and Arts Club and an additional Sewing Club.
 - Awarded two 4-H college scholarships.

Agriculture & Food Systems

- New [Bountiful Meals](#) freezers were placed in Carmel Friendship Center, Kent Public Library, Iglesia Casa Servir, in addition to the existing freezers at CoveCare Center, Brewster Library, William Koehler Memorial Senior Center, Putnam Valley Senior Center, Cold Spring Friendship Center and Putnam Valley Free Library, providing free ready-to-heat frozen meals.
- 32,901 free nutrient-dense meals delivered through our Bountiful Meals program.
- Approximately 30,093 were served through the food truck, receiving free, nutrient-dense produce, meat, eggs and dairy purchased from Hudson Valley farmers.
- 185,233 pounds of food purchased from Hudson Valley farmers, equaling the weight of 17 elephants.
- Served 12 community sites a total of 770 times with the Farm to Truck program, delivering free food items, including to all Senior Centers in the county, Putnam Valley Free Library and Chestnut Ridge Apartments.
- Provided 10 farmers with farmer marketing assistance and aided 35 farmers in increasing their profits.
- Connected 83 Putnam County farmers with grants, local workshops and Cornell University research relevant to farmer needs each month.
- \$630,000+ put into the local agricultural economy spent on produce, meat, eggs and dairy.

Natural Resources

- Educated 98 Putnam residents on lakeshore buffers and water quality by partnering with NYS Federation of Lake Associations, Putnam County Soil and Water Conservation and Kent Lakes Association, at a Regional Lakes Conference held in Putnam County.
- Marked our third year of the [agroforestry](#) demonstration plot at Tilly Foster Farm as part of a growing trend in non-timber forest products and community food forests. Shiitake Mushrooms grown there were donated to Second Chance Foods for preparation into healthful meals for those in need.

Community Horticulture

- Advised over 600 clients including green industry professionals and residents through our Horticulture [Hotline and Diagnostic Lab](#) on integrated pest management and pesticide use, to protect water quality, environmental and human health.
- Introduced 16 adult gardeners and 10 young gardeners in Putnam Valley to low-cost vegetable gardening through the “Seed to Supper” program and provided [growing resources](#) in conjunction with Cornell Garden Based Learning and the Oregon Food Bank. Growing one’s own food not only provides for healthier eating, but research has shown that children who grow food with their parents are significantly more likely to eat vegetables.

- Reached 118 residents with messages on backyard composting, waste-stream reduction, and sustainable landscape practices in conjunction with PC DOH.

Smart Energy Choices- Mid-Hudson Region

- In the seven-county Mid-Hudson region, Energy Advisors delivered 157 workshops, tabling events, home energy fairs and community presentations. These activities focused on meeting residents where they are and providing trusted, in person access to clean energy information and resources. In Putnam, 185 residents were educated by an energy advisor on energy and cost-saving programs through in-person events countywide.
- A total of 3,989 residents, businesses, and community members engaged with the Hub through outreach events and presentations. Participants received education on energy efficiency, clean energy options, affordability programs, and available incentives.
- Energy Advisors generated 1,571 referrals to NYSERDA and utility programs, contractors, and partner services with a total of 897 customers.

Nutrition

- SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator advanced cross-county partnerships in Putnam and Westchester counties to strengthen access to [evidence-based nutrition education](#) across schools, Friendship Centers and community-based settings. While federal funding for SNAP-Ed concluded following the passage of H.R. 1, nutrition education programming in the Hudson Valley continues to play a critical role in advancing county priorities related to food security, preventive health, aging services, mental wellness and student well-being.
- Strengthening Food Security & Healthy Aging: In partnership with the Putnam County Office for Senior Resources, SNAP-Ed delivered 16 nutrition education sessions across the county's four Friendship Centers, reaching more than 200 older adults. Programming focused on practical, budget-conscious strategies for meal planning, food selection, and preparation, while also improving awareness of food access resources such as the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program. These efforts directly support county goals to help older residents age well, maintain independence, and manage chronic disease risk through improved nutrition.
- Supporting Mental Health & Community Wellness: SNAP-Ed also established an ongoing collaboration with the Mental Health Association (MHA) of Putnam County, serving as a recurring presenter during monthly *Wellness Wednesday* programming. To date, four sessions have been delivered, addressing nutrition label literacy, grocery shopping skills, food processing awareness and cost-effective meal planning. This partnership aligns with county priorities to integrate nutrition education into mental health and wellness services, recognizing the connection between diet, mental health, and overall well-being. As noted by MHA Executive Director Alice Herde, *"Our participants love your presentations, and I truly believe they benefit from them."*

- In addition, the SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator led two Smarter Lunchroom professional development trainings and two Farm to School educator trainings.
- Populations served in 2025 included 200+ older adults and 30 school food service professionals.
- Approximately 3,000 students were indirectly impacted through improved school meals.
- Key county priorities advanced were food security and nutrition access; healthy aging and chronic disease prevention; mental health and community wellness; student health and academic readiness; and support for local agriculture and school food systems.

b. New projects/programs

- Collaborate with the Town of Kent to initiate Food Security Programing including food security mailing assessment and Bountiful Meals Program.
- Expansion of Bountiful Meals from Farm Fresh Food Fund of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley to cover all four Putnam County Senior Centers in partnership with the county's Office for Senior Resources as well as three additional distribution sites including Kent Public Library to distribute free, farm-fresh meals prepared by Second Chance Foods.
- Digging in to the Restore and Regenerate Forest restoration, a 15-year project that engages Veterans in citizen science and field biology, at Tilly Foster Farm. This project is funded by a generous \$300k grant from NYS DEC and is part of the governor's efforts to plant 25 million trees.
- Partnering with Columbia University engineering researchers, CCEPC began its first growing season in our newly built climate battery, solar greenhouse. Food, grown hydroponically in this greenhouse, was donated to Putnam CAP and Second Chance Foods. The facility also acted as an educational location for an "Extending the Growing Season: Greenhouse and Hydroponics" program for farmers, and an educational opportunity for volunteers, as well as a summer internship site.
- Expansion of Community Seed Libraries: Following a successful third year of this program from which we distributed more than 3,000 vegetable and herb seed packets to patrons of all of Putnam County's eight of Putnam County's libraries in 2025. (Funding for this program comes from the Master Gardener Volunteer May Plant Sale.)
- Started and supported four new 4-H clubs: two Cloverbud Clubs for youth ages 5-8, one STEAM Club, and one Sewing Club. On-boarded nine new Leaders.

c. Points of pride (noteworthy departmental accomplishments/successes)

- The Cornell Barn's Capital Campaign has surpassed \$600,000.
- Construction of a climate battery, solar greenhouse in Brewster.
- The Putnam County Fair and 4-H Showcase, a partnership between Putnam County and Cornell Cooperative Extension, continued to add more family

friendly demonstrations, food vendors and educational opportunities. It is estimated that over 10,000 individuals were reached over the weekend.

- Bountiful Meals program distributed 32,901 free meals to freezers countywide.
- 4-H youth built (learning woodworking skills) and stocked community health pantries in two locations in Putnam County with items such as travel-size shampoos, toothpaste, alcohol-free mouthwash and lotions. They created flyers to encourage donations and coordinated places for donations to be dropped off. A note found in one of the pantries shows just how much the health pantries help people in our community. It stated, "Thank you kindly for the things that you have left in this box. Times are hard but every little bit helps."
- Eight 4-H members were honored at the Putnam County Youth Bureau for their "exemplary community service efforts" during the 40th Annual Youth Awards Dinner in April of 2025. Youth nominees must have performed unpaid volunteer service that benefits residents of Putnam County and contributes to making the community a better place to live.
- After School Garden Club: The club covered the various ways that plants grow—seeds, propagation and hydroponics while touching on subjects like phototropism and gravitropism. The program incorporated literacy, art, and hands-on activities, culminating in planting their very own "Rainbow Garden" in the unused school garden. Administrators noted that the hydroponic grow tower the club set up in the main hallway generated a lot of excitement and conversation among the student body, and one parent noted that they "have heard loads of positive praise and excitement from other kids and parents of all ages" and that the educators "patience, vision and follow through have truly made an impact" on the students at PQ, creating "a core memory."

d. Notable savings realized.

- Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County's highly trained cadre of volunteers provided 9,937 volunteer community service hours, a value of \$382,387 (Independent Sector 2025). These volunteer hours allow our staff to dedicate their time addressing other notable Putnam County issues.

e. Matters of known interest to the County Executive's Office

- Addressing Food Insecurity: Bountiful Meals program in Putnam County Senior Centers, and community partner locations, as well as our Farm to Truck mobile pantry initiative reaching underserved areas.
- Protecting Water Quality, especially Harmful Algal Blooms (HABS), protecting waterfront property/lakeside communities from erosion, and stormwater management with multi-partner collaboration.
- Participation on the Putnam County Climate Smart Task Force, which aided the county in taking actions to reduce its carbon footprint and mitigate climate change. Projects this year include establishing a native plant and pollinator planned-landscape at the transit facility.

VI. Staffing

- Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County employs eight staff members and hosts one staff member from Dutchess County and one from Orange County Cooperative Extension offices.
- There were no changes in current staffing and/or new staff.

VII. Sources of Revenue

- a. Capacity funding from federal, state and county appropriations is the critical foundation of Cornell Cooperative Extension, while grants, contracts, fees, and gifts provide some support. Over the past several decades, the purchasing power of federal capacity funding, distributed via formula, has been steadily reduced. Capacity funds are often leveraged three- to four-fold with other funding sources. The ‘cooperative’ in Cornell Cooperative Extension is the joint funding provided by federal, state and county partners. For further information see chart to right and pie graphs below.
- i. Current trends in the cost of service – CCEPC has seen an increase in operational costs by ≈ 5 percent while providing similar services as in previous years. Items seeing the most significant increase in cost include, but are not limited to insurance, staffing, supplies, and utilities.
- ii. New, unfunded mandates – Audit of Financial Statements and Federal Aware Program Audit

SOURCE	%
Federal	49
NY State	19
County	16
Other Contracts	6
Programs	1
Contrib Unrestricted	3
Contrib Temp Restricted	6

VIII. Goals for 2026

- Apply for funding to build on the successful grant proposal and resultant trail plan for Fred Dill Wildlife Sanctuary. This project is a partnership between Putnam County and Cornell Cooperative Extension Putnam County with input from the NY/NJ Trail Conference and the county historian’s office. The Trail assessment also identified natural, historical and cultural resources that connect visitors with those resources.
- Community Food Project USDA-NIFA goals will increase fresh produce on food pantry shelves, serve 600 new participants, and increase culturally relevant food by 25% served by emergency food providers will continue in 2025.
- Embark on our first year, partnering with Soldiers2Scientists, to Restore and Regenerate and Acre of fenced forest at Tilly Foster Farm. This 15-year project will engage veterans in citizen science and field biology. And will result in a local native plant nursery, which will not only grow plants for the restoration but will provide career exposure for veterans and summer interns.
- Increase the number of traditional 4-H Clubs as well as 4-H SPARK Programs (short-term educational projects) by working with teachers, leaders, parents and through interdepartmental collaborations to provide a variety of

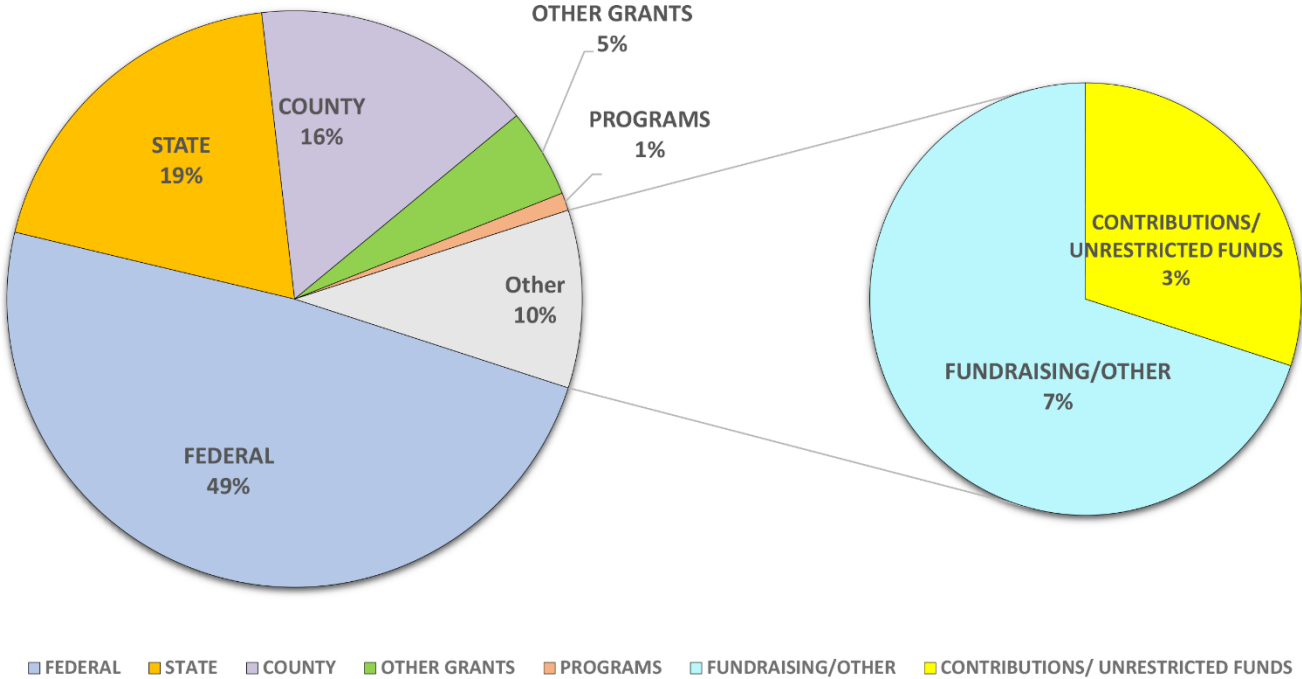
opportunities for youth to pursue their sparks, experience authentic belonging and have positive developmental relationships with their peers and caring adult volunteers.

- Support existing 4-H clubs and programs.
- Recruit more volunteers and 4-H leaders to provide increased and varied programming while also sustaining present offerings.
- Create a catalog of new educational media, curriculum and workshops for "Teaching the Teacher."
- Facilitate Rooted in Learning Grant in Brewster and North Salem Central School Districts.
- Facilitate Putnam County Youth Bureau Grant via the Hay You Agriculture 4-H Club.
- Meaningfully partner and collaborate with community organizations, BOCES and school districts to create opportunities for all youth. For example: MTSS support, after school enrichment programs, lunch and study hall programming about student leadership and civic engagement.
- Foster future collaboration with Harvest NY and Farm to School Education.
- Complete construction of The Cornell Barn at Tilly Foster Farm.

Matters of known interest to the County Executive's Office

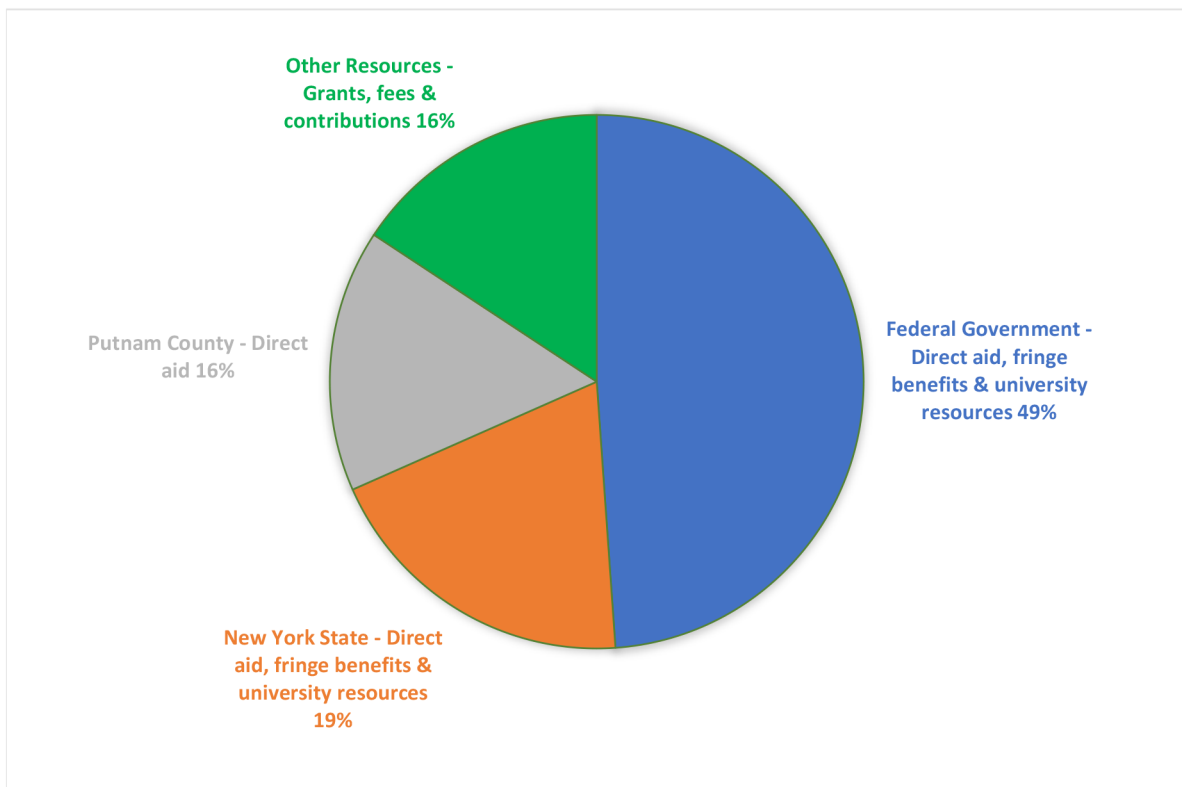
- Addressing food insecurity and supporting local food pantries to continue reaching underserved areas.
- Protecting water quality, protecting waterfront property/lakeside communities from erosion, and stormwater management with multi-partner collaboration.
- Building relationships with Putnam County departments, multiplying our impact.

Revenue Source for 2024



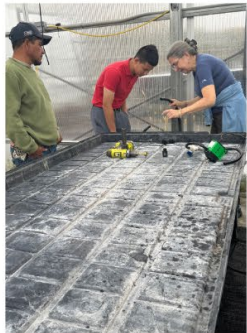
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PUTNAM COUNTY		
Annual Appropriation	\$	364,055.00
Other County Support	\$	12,020.00
TOTAL PUTNAM COUNTY SUPPORT	16%	\$ 376,075.00
STATE		
County Law 224	\$	118,225.24
Fringe Benefits	\$	342,764.67
TOTAL STATE SUPPORT	19%	\$ 460,989.91
FEDERAL		
Smith Lever	\$	11,203.02
University Resources	\$	1,144,668.32
TOTAL FEDERAL SUPPORT	49%	\$ 1,155,871.34
OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT		
Enrollment Fees, Program Participation Fees	\$	30,658.00
Sale of Equipment, Income from Publications, Dividend, Income, Interest, Facilities Use, Fundraising, Miscellaneous Sources	\$	135,928.33
Restricted and Unrestricted Contributions	\$	77,392.52
Special Projects: Grants	\$	127,807.49
TOTAL OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT	16%	\$ 371,786.34
GRAND TOTAL OF ALL SUPPORT		\$ 2,364,722.59



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