

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS (CFS) PRACTICUM DESCRIPTION
CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - TOMPKINS COUNTY (CCE-TC)

2017

1. Practicum Title: Cornell Cooperative Extension Community Food Systems Minor Practicum

2. Practicum Host Name: Cornell Cooperative Extension – Tompkins County

3. Practicum Host Agency/Organization Description:

Since 1913, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) has responded to the needs of local residents with unbiased, research-based information, tools and education that people have come to depend on and trust. Our programs are developed in direct response to community input, and are based on the most current information available from Cornell and other Land Grant universities from across the nation.

The mission of Cooperative Extension is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. Extension staff and trained volunteers deliver education programs, conduct applied research, and encourage community collaborations. Our educators connect people with the information they need on topics such as commercial and consumer agriculture; nutrition and health; youth and families; finances; energy efficiency; economic and community development; and sustainable natural resources. Our ability to match university resources with community needs helps us play a vital role in the lives of individuals, families, businesses, and communities throughout Tompkins County. For more on CCE Tompkins' goals with respect to the CFS Minor, please see page 4 below.

Community Partner Supervisor & Faculty Advisor: Chris Kai-Jones and project-specific supervisor.¹

4. See below for a list of potential projects.

5. Student Responsibilities & Expectations: (both on site and on-campus)

- a. On-site: TBD, project dependent. Upon selection of project, Chris Kai-Jones and student will develop a brief overview of student responsibilities and expectations.
- b. On-campus: Weekly check-in requirements with faculty advisor and monthly group check-in as per below (standard across all practicums)

¹ Chris Kai-Jones, is the Student and Community Coordinator for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Chris has experience of working with students in a number of countries, has taught at Cornell, and is currently pursuing his NYS social workers' license. He looks forward to working with you to meet your learning goals!

6. **Expected Learning Outcomes:** TBD, project dependent. Upon selection of project, Chris Kai-Jones and student will identify learning outcomes (to be combined with “Roles and Responsibilities” document).
7. **Location:** Tompkins County, NY.
8. **Pre-requisites:** Housing.
9. **Performance Evaluation Methods:** Students will be assessed using a CFS Minor standard evaluation that will be tailored to each respective practicum; the assessment will address both the overall learning objectives for the practicum and site-specific outcomes

PRACTICUM PROJECTS: CCE-Tompkins welcomes project ideas from students and the list below only represents some of our work on food-related issues.

Food Entrepreneurship:

The CCE-TC Food Entrepreneurship Program is a comprehensive education and support system for food entrepreneurs. This program draws on resources such as our kitchen, scholarships, and a range of community resources to help develop part of the “food chain.” This program has a focus on under-resourced communities and communities of color. CFS Minor students will assist educators in supporting low-income food entrepreneurs. A great variety of “hands on” and/or research tasks.

Mapping projects (GIS):

Utilizing secondary (e.g.: USDA and Census Bureau data sets) and primary (e.g. focus groups and interviews with local citizens), work with CCE staff, partner organizations, and citizens to develop maps of food deserts and public transportation routes to markets, farm stands, food pantries, etc. Mapping projects will be used for various purposes including facilitating change at a systemic level through a cross-cutting coordination of efforts to address needs.

Interviewing and filming local small farmers about their experiences. More information available upon request.

Nutrition Education:

Assist Nutrition Educators in working with:

- Farmers’ markets with EBT to increase EBT redemption, especially of fruits and vegetables, and increase use of local produce at home
- School and community groups to start and sustain garden projects with the goal of improving the food environment, increasing access to and consumption of fruits and

vegetables and incorporating nutrition education and basic food preparation skills into schools and communities

- School districts to organize and sponsor a [Coordinated Approach to Child Health \(CATCH\)](#) School Implementation Training that invites administrators, teachers, and food service directors to use this effective program to positively impact student nutrition and physical activity behavior.

Improving Nutrition in Incarceration Facilities:

Improve nutrition at the Tompkins County Jail in Ithaca. Goals include: improving taste and quality of meals being served as well as increase variety of foods and add fresh fruits and vegetables, local if possible. Have input on menu changes.

- Work closely with team of nutritionists, local chefs, and reentry professionals in revising the menu for incarcerated men and women while sticking closely to budgetary constraints.
- Coordinate with jail cook and jail administrators to ensure revamped menu meets nutritional guidelines, Work with local nutritionists on getting approvals on menu changes. This is intended to reduce waste, among other effects.
- Coordinate training for kitchen staff and incarcerated individuals
- Assist staff and incarcerated individuals manage jail garden.
- Possible opportunity to involve incarcerated individuals in process; may assist in development of food surveys for incarcerated individuals.
- Possible opportunity to create educational programs on nutrition for incarcerated individuals.
- Possible opportunity to get involved in research on the larger food systems in which the jail is operating.

Community Food System Practicums with CCE-Tompkins

To the students considering working with us,

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) offers a wide range of programs for your practicum. These include interviewing and filming local small farmers about their experiences; various programs focused specifically on creating just local food systems; food, students, and Cornell campus; mapping resources; community-based food entrepreneurship; early childhood nutrition (prenatal/postnatal/breastfeeding); food entrepreneurship, justice and equity issues around diversity; food and nutrition in correctional facilities; and many more programs related to the local food system.

We can also create projects with you such that you can take ownership of them. Projects that you have designed and completed can be effective for later job and graduate school applications, especially since you can stay involved during your time in Ithaca. We welcome this kind of initiative and leadership in our Association. But if you're worried about creating all that for yourself, we have a broad range of ongoing programs for you to get involved in.

In general our approach is to build relationships with people on the ground so that you can understand the reality, rather than just the textbook understanding, of the problem. Through these relationships you can elicit possible solutions you would never have thought of and see more clearly who needs to be invested to make things actually work in a sustainable fashion.

Here are some other reasons why you might want to undertake your practicum with us:

- Our role in building local sustainable food systems includes projects related to everything from production to processing to entrepreneurship to availability to consumption.
- As practicum students who live in the area you have the freedom to find out what is really going on, and work towards a sustainable solution to the challenges you are addressing. You can even stay involved with the project after you officially finish, and some of our interns do just that. You can apply for grants to support the work and our Association will support those applications.
- Use Cornell resources that community partners cannot access to do the work you care about.

- Some interns come and work for us for a while after graduating, and that has all kinds of advantages both for you and us. Building out a project you worked on earlier (with some kind of financial support for living expenses) can be a very useful next step in the year or summer following graduation. We are eager to work with/hire students we have worked with previously.
- You can do work across various programs on different days, and even Associations elsewhere. And if you really need to get NYC into your life and can come up with a comparative Tompkins-NYC project that has value, that might work as well. There are Extension Associations in every county in NYS. That means you can draw on and/or produce data etc. relating to a wider area than just Tompkins County.
- We also have a developed support infrastructure for students who are working with us.

If you are thinking about doing your practicum with us, the first step is to reach out to Chris Kai-Jones on chj7@cornell.edu, or call him on 607 280 5846. You may wish to look at our website (ccetompkins.org) to get a sense of our mission. (Bear in mind that we run a lot of other programs that are not on the site there since things are constantly changing.) Talk to Chris—who is happy to meet one-on-one—about what you are interested in, and then he can start connecting you with people and projects so we can see what the possibilities are.

We welcome applications from any and all kinds of identities and try to be as inclusive as possible. If you have concerns or questions about this feel free to reach out to Chris in confidence. He is very willing to address any and all concerns, or if you prefer he can put you in touch with others so that you can talk about what our Association's work culture is like.

Additional Information

I would like to stress the following to students who are considering undertaking a practicum with us.

- 1) All our programs at CCE-Tompkins are, to a greater and lesser degree, in a constant process of needs and outcomes assessment. These can be thought of as frames around the delivery of the work itself. Undergraduates can use their experience, education, and access to Cornell's resources to engage with the

programs and community while thinking about the work systemically, and using other lenses. We welcome critical and constructive feedback on our work.

Undergraduates may develop excellent proposals for future work based on their practicums with us. They may then be able to undertake at a later date, possibly be funded for, or at least use those to inform the work of the next cohort.

- 2) The work the students undertake can to a certain extent be negotiated with program managers, who are their direct supervisors. There are many projects “around” what is actually being done in fact at any time and many supervisors would love someone to work on those. They can perhaps also be tweaked to suit the students’ interests. Alternatively, prospective practicum students are welcome to propose projects but our response may be constrained by the needs of the program and the extent to which the proposal reflects the reality that is to be engaged with.
- 3) CCE-Tompkins is collaborating with many other groups, organizations, businesses, and government offices in an effort to produce meaningful systemic change. The goal of this collaboration—gathered under the title of “Cradle to Career”—is to ensure as far as possible that all children in Tompkins County grow up to be thriving as young adults. These groups etc. work together to coordinate solutions to social, educational, food, and health-related problems (from prenatal to 26) which require coordinated action by multiple parties to achieve positive results. CCE-Tompkins is closely involved with these groups (and the leadership committee) and can potentially involve students at whatever stage has been reached in this very large and ongoing project.
- 4) Given the approximately 150 or so programs we run at CCE-Tompkins, there may be opportunities to craft an internship so as to get learning opportunities outside any one particular program. For example, training in running community cafés—essentially community listening exercises, and taught by our Family and Community Development folks—would enable students to develop some of the skills required to understand what the community members actually think and care about (as opposed to what some of us might assume they care about). This training could be integrated with other projects with specific themes and content (e.g., whether or not people want a food pantry, what that means to them, and so on).

- 5) There will be other optional community-based leadership training opportunities for summer interns/practicum students (depending on your work agreement with your direct supervisor).

Chris Kai-Jones (chj7@cornell.edu)

12/04/2016