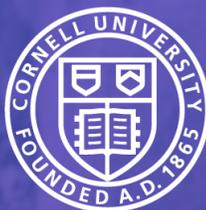
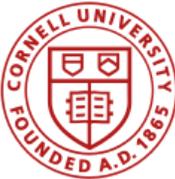


# ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

2020





**Our plan is to  
empower, equip, and  
engage our community  
to create a more  
sustainable campus,  
city, and world.**

**content**

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# A YEAR IN REVIEW

**AUGUST 29, 2019**

Sustainable Cornell Council is created to direct and coordinate Cornell's role in sustainability

**MARCH 7, 2020**

For the first time in 100 years, the Ithaca campus sees power demand matched entirely by renewable energy

**JUNE 5, 2020**

Cornell becomes the 1st Ivy League and 6th institution in the world to achieve STARS Platinum

**JANUARY 17, 2020**

New Cascadilla Solar Farm doubles clean and renewable electricity to 20%

**MAY 22, 2020**

Cornell announces moratorium on fossil fuel investments

**Cornell University is a global leader in the path towards campus sustainability**

Our campus participates in transparent higher education reporting and goal-setting efforts, ensuring solutions can be shared and progress accelerated across Universities. Through reporting to Second Nature, AASHE, and other entities, Cornell can also benchmark successes and look for areas of improvement. Recent accolades include:

**CARBON COMMITMENT**

**1st**

Ivy League institution in the Second Nature Carbon Commitment

**EMISSIONS REDUCTION**

**4th**

largest carbon reduction in the country for campuses with over 12,000,000 sq. feet

**STARS PLATINUM**

**6th**

campus in the world to earn a platinum rating from STARS, a higher ed sustainability reporting tool

**Cornell is committed to carbon neutrality by 2035**

**2035**

To learn more about Cornell's climate data, check out our greenhouse gas inventory.  
**[climateaction.cornell.edu](https://climateaction.cornell.edu)**

# Carbon Neutrality

Cornell University has successfully reduced greenhouse emissions, which lead to climate change, by a third since its original 2008 baseline. The annual greenhouse gas inventory details this progress, and new areas of consideration and reporting on Cornell's footprint.

In FY2019, students completed an initial survey of Cornell's purchasing emissions impact. This study will be used to continue understanding where our community can make the biggest impact to model climate mitigation and sustainability, in every part of our habits and supply chain.

Here are some highlights on our path to carbon neutrality:

**18%**  
**increase**

**in clean and renewable electricity since 2012.**

Green energy accounts for 20% of Cornell's total electricity needs, compared to 2.3% in 2013.

**33%**  
**decrease**

**in total waste per weighted campus user since 2013.**

Total waste has been reduced to 0.30 tons per campus user, compared to 0.44 tons in 2013.

**36%**  
**reduction**

**in campus greenhouse gas emissions since 2008.**

Greenhouse gas emissions have dropped from 319,743 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2008 to 203,000 metric tons.

**Not only is there a moratorium on new fossil fuel investments, but Cornell invested**

**\$107,693,563**

**to sustainable industries and sustainability investment funds**

# Education and Engagement

By empowering our community, we can harness the innovation potential of every member of the campus community. For the first time ever, every college at Cornell University includes sustainability learning outcomes as part of the core curriculum for students. That means every students - regardless of area of study or major - graduates from Cornell ready to create a better tomorrow. Whether you study in English, Industrial Labor Relations, International Business, Plant Sciences, or Engineering, classes you will take prepare you for our greatest challenges. Our engagement programs are growing.

More facts about education and engagement this year:





Since reopening in Fall 2019, student-run Anabel's Grocery has served

**1400+**

**members of the Cornell community** with healthy and affordable groceries to battle food insecurity on campus.

**STUDENT  
IMPACT**

Cornell Students for Black Lives, a coalition of 185+ student organizations, fundraised

**\$118,136**

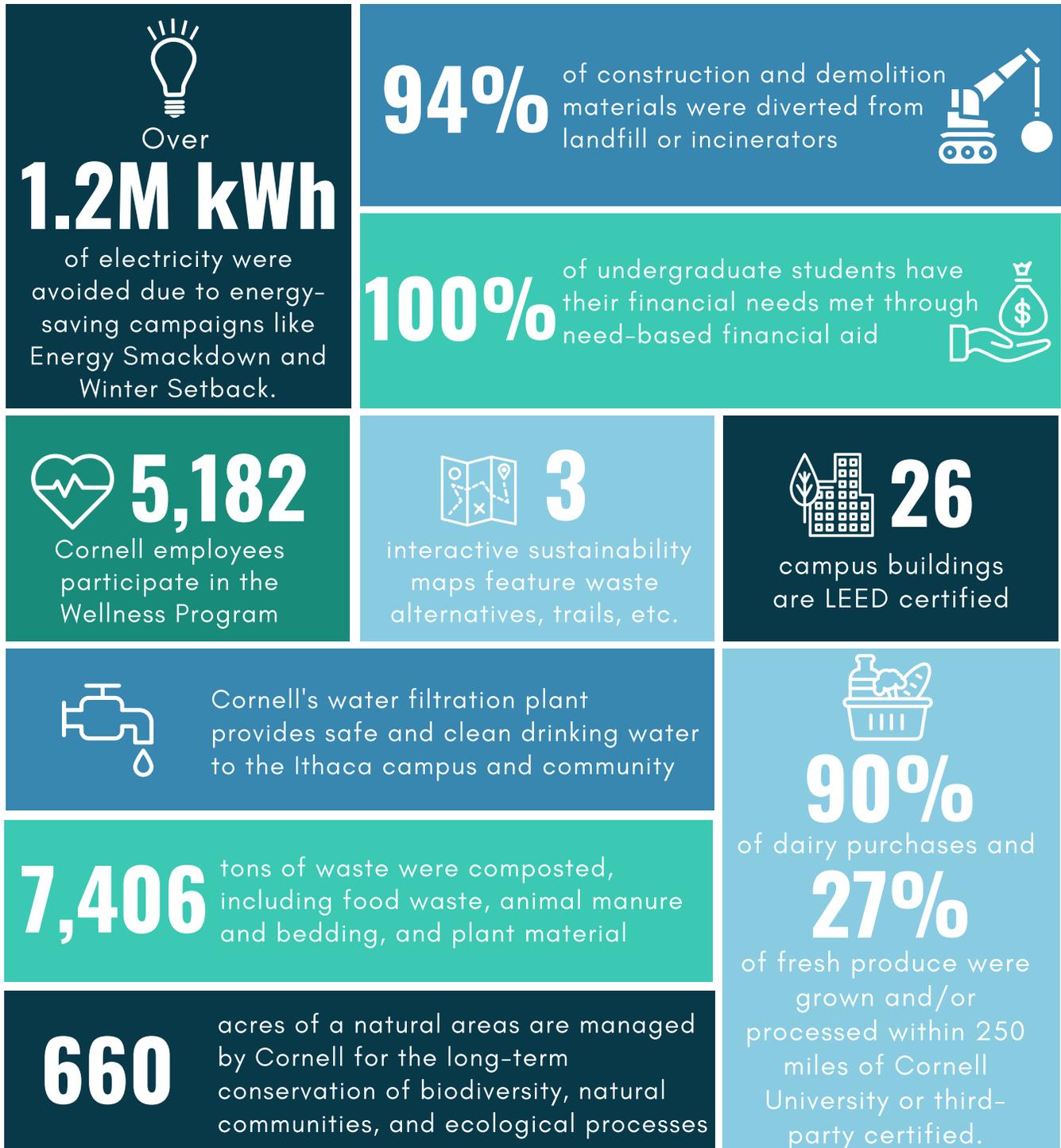
**in the fight for racial justice**

to support the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Southside Community Center, and other nonprofits united for black lives.

# Campus Operations

What happens when faculty, students & staff work together on big ideas by using our campus as a test bed for new ideas and study? **Big change.** Our vision for a living laboratory campus is one where faculty, staff, and students can utilize the campus as a testing ground for new ideas, and study our own behaviors and operations to rapidly improve sustainability.

Explore more facts about sustainable campus operations this year.



# Leadership & Priorities

The Sustainable Cornell Council (SCC) directs and coordinates Cornell's role as an international leader in addressing climate change and sustainability, using our campus as a living laboratory.

The Council includes three steering committees charged with identifying, prioritizing, and advancing sustainability goals. Here are their committees:

- The **Carbon Neutral Campus Committee** works to advance campus carbon neutrality through the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.
- The **Campus Operations Committee** advances initiatives for a model sustainable campus that support climate resilience and human and planetary health.
- The **Education & Engagement Committee** cultivates literacy and a culture of sustainability responsibility that catalyzes participation across the campus community.

We know our current achievements are only the beginning. That's why in December 2019, the Council set the following priorities:

- make or buy summer electricity
- create a protocol for upstream methane leakage
- offset air travel and low carbon business travel
- optimize purchasing and inventory
- reduce dining operations food waste
- prioritize transportation impact
- develop incoming student climate literacy
- change behavior through choice architecture
- design a living laboratory program assessment
- increase number of green certified buildings
- grow investments in alternative energy tech
- expand clean and renewable energy sources
- and many more...



# Innovation Highlights

Our campus is a living laboratory for innovation in sustainability. Here are some recent events and projects from across departments and initiatives on campus.



## Golden Gorge Awards

Every spring, the Golden Gorge Awards celebrates student accomplishments, ideas, and innovation in creating a sustainable campus. This year, the Awards had the largest pool of nominations, over 50, in an unprecedented semester.



## Residential Compost Program

The Residential Compost Program is an initiative that provides volunteer-run compost collection in all residential facilities on campus. The Program made a significant contribution of 5 tons of compostable waste this year.



## North Campus Rooftop Solar Arrays

Cornell is constructing rooftop solar arrays on all five buildings of the North Campus Residential Expansion. The solar power from this project will reduce the university's carbon footprint by providing about 35% of the power needed for the new buildings.



## Renewable Energy NY Consortium

The newly launched NY Higher Education LSRE Project, formed of 20 State University of New York and private NYS higher education institutions, joined together to lower financial barriers to renewable energy procurement through combined purchases of large scale renewable energy.



## Hump-frees Exchange

Created by the Facilities & Campus Services Green Team, this freecycle closet fosters a "free to give, free to take" culture to encourage reuse and recycling of usable office supplies. The cabinet is located in the Humphreys 1st floor break room near the Human Resource offices.

**For more stories, visit [sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/news](https://sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/news).**