

BTCF CONNECT

Spring/Summer 2025

Together we can make life here even better.



BTCF Guaranteed Income for Columbia County
Showing up for Our Neighbors
Portraits of Generosity: Eleanor Lord
2024 Report to the Community

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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Message from Leadership



BTCF, like all community foundations, exists at the nexus of generosity and need, creating new possibilities for the public good. The connections we have with nonprofits, donors, community leaders, students, teachers, and volunteers make our work possible.

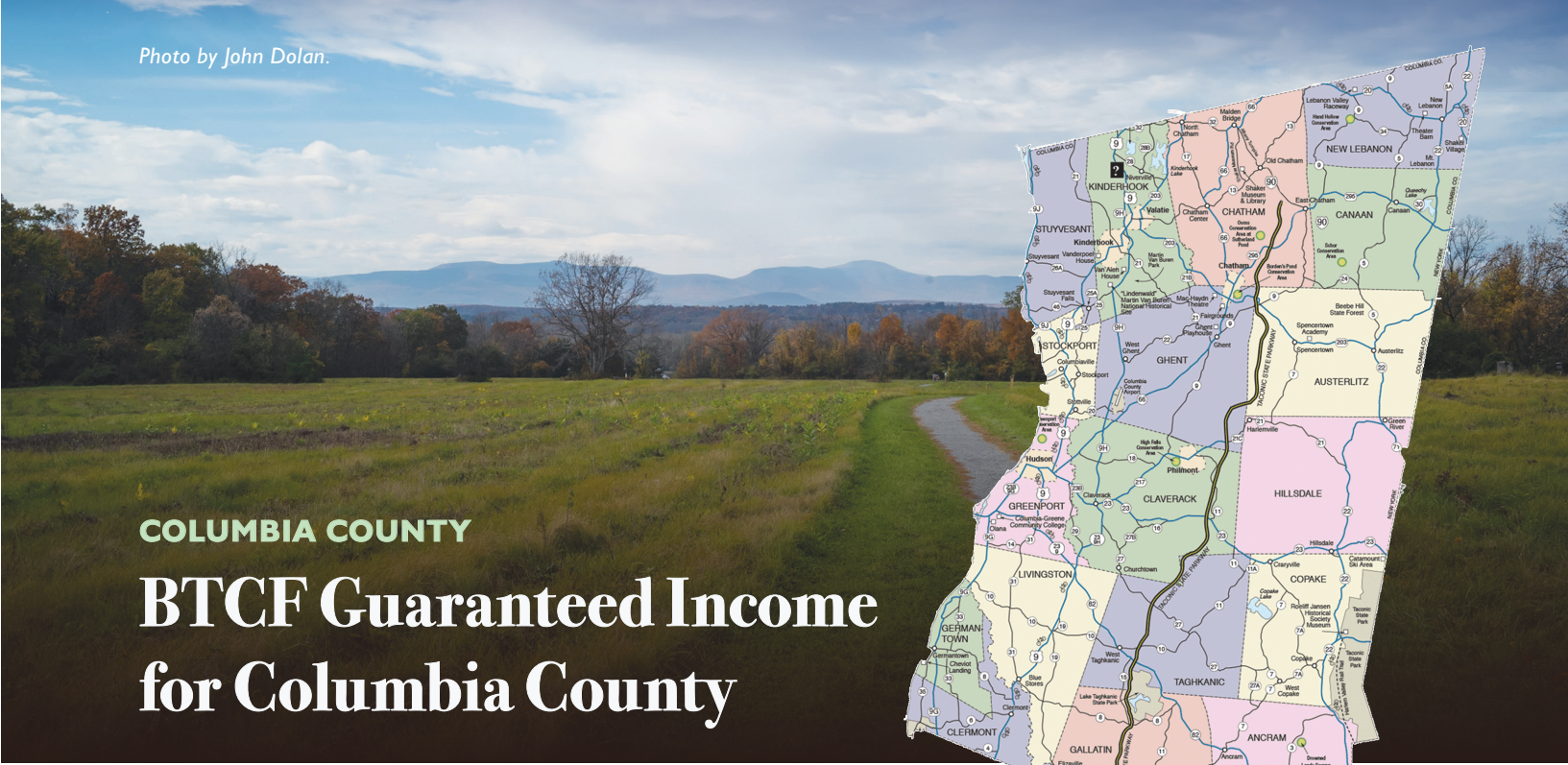
In this issue, we share stories about immigrant support organizations that are guiding lights in a time of uncertainty; share the news of our Guaranteed Income pilot for Columbia County; and illustrate how traditions of philanthropy can inspire the next generation. We also share our annual report from 2024, an overview of the state of the foundation, which we are happy to report, is strong. The tremendous breadth of support across every community we serve inspires all of us at BTCF to continue the work of uplifting everyone, especially our most vulnerable neighbors.

That is why we did not hesitate to sign a national “Public Statement from Philanthropy,” which cautions funders not to pause efforts to assist community groups who need support and protection. As the statement says, “Everyone—wherever we’re from or whatever our point of view—wants to live in a nation that upholds the fundamental rights and liberties we all deserve and need to thrive.” Thank you, as ever, for being a part of our BTCF community.

Kara Mikulich

Kara Mikulich, *Interim President*

Photo by John Dolan.



COLUMBIA COUNTY

BTCF Guaranteed Income for Columbia County

New Countywide Program Provides \$500 per month to Single Parents and Caregivers

“The simplicity of guaranteed income is powerful—it’s direct, effective, and rooted in trust. This program is a bold step toward supporting families in a way that is both practical and transformative.”

-Kara Mikulich

“This initiative is about more than money—it’s about stability, dignity, and opportunity for families during the most important years of a child’s life,” said Kelly Sweet, Interim Director of Philanthropic Services at BTCF. “We’re proud to bring this research-backed solution to our region with no strings attached.”

BTCF Guaranteed Income for Columbia County (BTCF-GICC) is a partnership between Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood (GHPN). BTCF-GICC will deliver monthly payments of \$500 to two families in 21 towns, totaling support for 42 households for the next two years.

BTCF-GICC focuses on single parents and caregivers earning up to 80% of the area median income raising at least one child aged 6 or younger. Participants will be selected by lottery from a confidential application process in July.

Guaranteed income programs have been implemented and evaluated in communities across the nation, and they have become a proven tool to stabilize household finances, support early childhood development, increase food security and expand opportunities for improved housing.

GHPN, a trusted community-based partner, will serve as the program’s administrative lead and provide direct support to participating families. The organization operates HudsonUP, a successful guaranteed income program in Hudson that inspired this broader countywide initiative.

“I’ve seen firsthand how guaranteed income transformed lives in Hudson,” said Joan Hunt, Executive Director of GHPN. “We’re excited to expand this approach across Columbia County to bring the same kind of stability and relief to more families.”

BTCF-GICC is made possible through the generosity of the Community Fund at Berkshire Taconic, the Fund for Columbia County, Hudson River Bank and Trust Foundation, and individual donors across the region. Learn more at berkshiretaconic.org/btcf-gicc. ■

On the cover: Camino al Éxito’s cofounder Inginia Jackson (center) with high school students in the Elevation of You program.

LITCHFIELD COUNTY

Giving Forward Scholarship alums serve on committee

In March 2025, the youngest advisory committee at BTCF gathered for the first time. The committee for the \$100,000 Margaret Derwin Scholarship was made up of former recipients, now young professionals, who once navigated the same Housatonic Valley hallways as the applicants they reviewed. Their insight and energy added a meaningful new layer to the committee’s deliberations. Volunteering for the committee embodies the spirit of generosity that shaped their lives.



L-R: Committee members Emily Sullivan, Shelby Washburn, Alexa Curtiss, Cristian Umana, Becket Harney, and 2024 awardee Katerin McEnroe. Photo by Sarah Kenyon.



The team at Columbia County Sanctuary Movement. Photo courtesy of CCSM.

REGIONAL

Showing up for Our Neighbors

Immigrant-Serving Organizations Light the Way Forward

At a recent panel event, Inginia Jackson, cofounder of Camino al Éxito in Dutchess County, was asked, “What is it that immigrants need?” Her response was direct: “What do all humans need? We need housing, food, and healthcare ... Where are the resources we already have in a community, and how do we make them accessible for everyone?” At the heart of immigrant-serving organizations is the mission of access and a redefinition of belonging. This year, communities have been destabilized by rapid shifts in immigration policy, including increased ICE raids. Yet, organizations like Camino al Éxito, Berkshire Immigrant Center, and Columbia County Sanctuary Movement remain rooted in purpose. They continue to provide services ranging from legal support to language learning, from food access to cultural celebration.

Founded in 2021 by wife-and-husband duo Inginia and Shannon Jackson, **Camino al Éxito** improves bilingual access to education, health, and legal resources in northeast Dutchess County. Their mission empowers both youth and adults while building community engagement.

After relocating from urban Westchester County to rural Dutchess County, the Jacksons noticed a stark contrast. “We knew there were immigrants

and Latinos here, but they were behind doors. They didn’t feel like they belonged,” Jackson shared. After four years of operations, they’re beginning to see the results of efforts to integrate the community, and partnerships have been a key part of that change. “We’re collaborating with libraries, churches, and school districts to close the language gaps, and we want other nonprofits to know we’re open for partnerships. Leaders of bigger nonprofits ask us how we’re connecting so well with immigrant families.” Their answer: “A pipeline of trust.”

One of Caminos’ standout programs, Elevation of You, supports immigrant high school students through financial literacy, employment guidance, social-emotional learning, and college prep. Recently, eight teens also secured Special Immigrant Juvenile Status visas with help from a licensed lawyer arranged by Camino. “If it wasn’t for us, they wouldn’t have known they qualified,” Jackson said of this vital pathway to citizenship.

In the Berkshires, the **Berkshire Immigrant Center** (BIC) has helped immigrants navigate the path to citizenship for nearly 30 years. It is the only nonprofit in the county recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice with DOJ-accredited case workers. BIC serves over 800 individuals annually

from more than 60 countries. “Our clients are family, friends, workers, and neighbors who want to follow the law and build their lives with dignity and stability,” said Executive Director Melissa Canavan, “Many face long, complex journeys, and the support they need is not just legal, it is human.”

In response to rapidly shifting federal policies in 2025, BIC has ramped up multilingual outreach and education, offering “Know Your Rights” sessions for immigrants and allies. “Collaboration is not a luxury; it’s a necessity,” says Canavan, extending gratitude for fellow nonprofits and funders who show up “even when the path is hard.” Partnerships with healthcare providers, housing advocates, employers, and faith leaders have been critical for meeting community needs. BIC was proud to open its doors at a new, expanded location on North Street in Pittsfield earlier this year. It has been transformative for their services. “It is more accessible and better equipped for the sensitive and complex work we do,” said Canavan.

Columbia County Sanctuary Movement (CCSM) was founded in 2016 “amidst intersecting crises and attacks on immigrant communities.” Since then, the organization has steadily built its support networks and capacity to respond to constituent needs. Today, it has six core program areas: community organizing, legal support, deportation defense, accompaniment and family support, community building, and food justice. CCSM hosted a virtual Emergency Funders Briefing in April that spotlighted its deportation defense program and a key innovation: building a decentralized training model to expand Rapid Response capacity. Co-Executive Director Bryan MacCormack shared that CCSM’s new Safety and Security Team has expanded workplace preparedness. “We’ve trained close to 300 individuals from nonprofits, businesses, and interfaith institutions to create business protocols for immigration enforcement activities,” he said. “That includes knowing the rights involved if ICE arrives, recognizing administrative vs. judicial warrants, what signage should be up, and who the point person is.” Demand for this kind of training continues to grow.

A regional leader in immigrant rights, CCSM has led rallies and trips to the state capital in support of the New York for All Act, which the NYCLU says “draws sensible limits between local government and



Photo by CCSM Multi-Media Organizer Tony Ramirez.

immigration enforcement.” “Now more than ever,” said MacCormack, “CCSM and immigrant-led organizations need community support to navigate the political landscape safely and effectively.”

Even in difficult times, joy and cultural pride are central to building community. In 2020, CCSM organized the county’s first-ever Latinx Parade and Festival. “This year will be our fifth,” said MacCormack, noting changes ahead. “Due to security concerns, the 2025 Festival will go on tour. We’re shifting to smaller private events that allow for controlled entry and expanded reach into new communities.” CCSM also launched a Caribbean Festival in 2024, which returns this year. Similarly, Camino al Éxito hosted its first Hispanic Heritage celebration in 2024, “Over 100 families were walking in town, proud of their culture. We even had government officials visiting us,” said Jackson. ■

Learn more about these organizations:
caminoalexitopfa.org,
@caminoalexitopfa
berkshireic.org,
@berkshireimmigrantcenter
sanctuarycolumbiacounty.org,
@ccsmny

The vital work of these immigrant-serving nonprofits is supported by many mission-aligned donors at BTCF, and three funds have had an exclusive focus on immigrants: the New World Fund of the Berkshires, the Northeast Dutchess Fund and its NEDCorps Immigrant Support Grant program, and the New Americans Fund.

Visit berkshiretaconic.org/immigrant-support to learn about BTCF’s newest Immigrant Support Funds that will provide direct financial assistance and program support.

PORTRAITS OF GENEROSITY

Local Artist & Activist Eleanor Lord Leaves an Enduring Legacy to Her Community

Julia and Rebecca Lord, daughters of Eleanor Lord (1929-2024), have recently made a bequest of \$1 million from their mother’s estate to The Eleanor Lord Fund at Berkshire Taconic. With this gift, they can sustain and significantly expand upon their mother’s dedication to helping her community with a fund she established in 2012. Eleanor’s giving focused on the issues she was most passionate about: women’s rights, the arts, environmental protection, immigrant support, healthcare access and affordable housing.

A Life of Listening, Learning and Service

An artist and social justice activist, Eleanor was naturally curious, creative, and responsive to her times. Her daughters describe her as someone who was simultaneously soft-spoken and equally committed to speaking out about issues she cared about, at a local or international level. In the seventies, Eleanor attended marches in support of civil rights and women’s rights and against the Vietnam war. She was an accomplished scholar, with a bachelor’s degree in economics from Vassar and a master’s degree in international affairs from Columbia University. In New York City, she wrote the international column for the Morgan Guaranty Bank newsletter.

Eleanor’s education and experiences provided fertile ground to build upon when she reached the Berkshires. Originally from Connecticut, she and her young family moved to Egremont in 1957

and finally settled in Stockbridge in 1959. It was in the Berkshires that she found great personal satisfaction in volunteer work with several women’s organizations. This enabled her to further develop her feminism and hone her areas of focus for social justice work.

Eleanor was a founding member of the Elizabeth Freeman Center, an organization devoted to protecting people from domestic and sexual violence. She was interested in doing the hands-on, challenging work that required compassion and sensitivity. At one point, she answered the women’s crisis hotline at the center. She personally assisted women navigating the process of getting help and accessing crucial services. Inspired by her example, her daughter Rebecca went on to volunteer and march in EFC’s “Take Back the Night” event.

In the late nineties, Eleanor was proud to be asked to serve on the board of The Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts in its first stages of development. She was drawn to its comprehensive perspective on advancing gender equity and its collaboration with community nonprofits.

Later in life, when her children were grown, and after decades of service to her community, Eleanor discovered a passion for painting. Her daughters saw her dive into artmaking like “a duck to water.” Eleanor worked in oils and watercolor and then found her niche in vibrant pastels. A fellow artist and mentor described Eleanor’s artwork as brave

and confident. The Berkshire landscape was her favorite subject, in all seasons. She exhibited her work in art shows in Berkshire County and in a gallery in Hudson. She was thrilled to take her place in a community of other artists.

Bringing Eleanor’s Vision into the Future

Rebecca and Julia are deeply grateful to their mother for empowering them to make a positive difference in their own community. They feel that her trust in them to realize her vision and steward her fund into the future is one of the greatest gifts their mother could have given them.

Taking their mother’s lead, they are embracing their personal values and developing a plan of action for the future of the fund. Both have personal connections to people in their community that are becoming more and more vulnerable on various fronts. With the conviction that “safety nets” need to be shored up, they will use the fund to fortify food security (local farms, food banks), immigrant support, healthcare resources, literacy and

housing. In addition to financial support, Rebecca, a social worker, and Julia, a literary agent, are taking steps to free up more personal time to devote to local organizations. They find this is the most valuable and gratifying way to gain insight into what people in the community need most. ■



Artwork by Eleanor Lord.

Legacy Circle

We thank the legacy donors who, like Eleanor Lord, have made the commitment to strengthen the future of our region and have chosen us as the vehicle for their generosity.

- Eunice Agar
- Dr. Nicholas Boraski*
- John Brett
- Christine and Tack Burbank
- Duncan Calhoun and Russell Gibson
- Ted Cobden
- Claudia L. Coplan
- Kevin and Jean Decker
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- Sally Eagle and Dan Mead
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- Monroe England*
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- Ralph D. Fedele

- Renee Fuller*
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- Jane Iredale
- Thomas and Barbara Joseph
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- Peter Krysa*
- Jane Laning
- William S.* and Patricia G.* Linscott
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- Priscilla J. McEwen and Charles A. Garman
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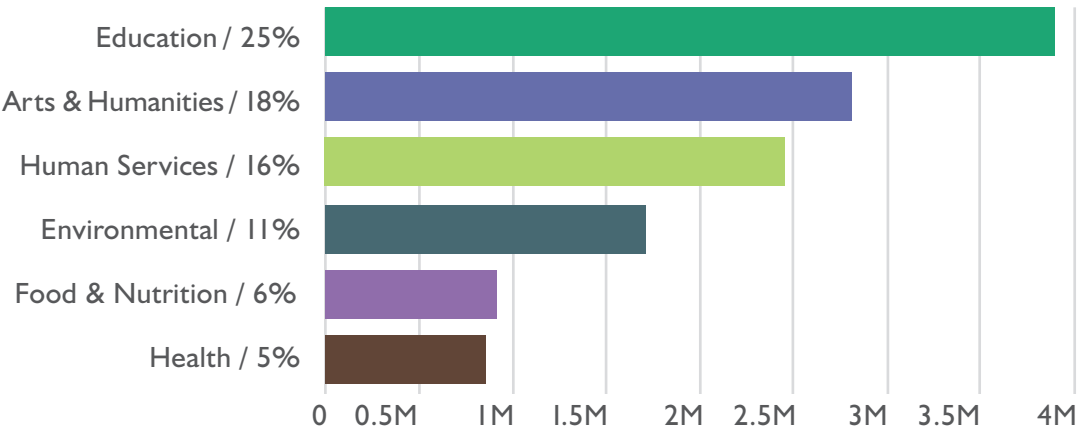
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- Mary Silks
- Sam and Elizabeth Smith
- John* and Jid Sprague
- Lawrence Strauss
- Laurel Trahan
- Vera V.J. Weintraub
- Alan Ziter
- Anonymous (33)

*Deceased

Report to the Community 2024

\$14.9 million	\$15.4 million	\$252 million	
Total gifts and bequests	Total grants, scholarships and distributions	Total assets	
3,808	303	2,406	47
Grants to nonprofits and individuals	Scholarships to students	Gifts and bequests	New funds

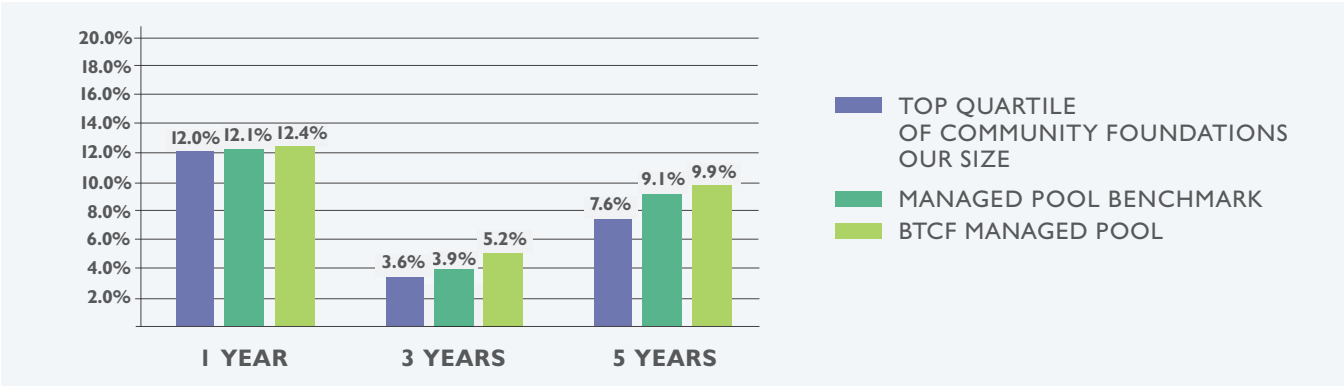
GRANTS BY INTEREST AREA



INVESTMENT REPORT 2024

Since 1987, generous donors have entrusted their philanthropy to Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. A hallmark of our program is strong investment performance, even in the face of shifting economic conditions. We take our responsibility to steward these resources seriously, employing prudent, long-term strategies that not only maximize grantmaking but also preserve and grow philanthropic capital for the future.

MANAGED POOL



The majority of funds at BTCF are allocated to the Managed Pool, a globally diversified portfolio designed to deliver consistent, stable growth while maintaining moderate risk. Our team of investment professionals collaborates with Prime Buchholz to oversee the fund’s management.

For the year ending December 31, 2024, the Managed Pool **outperformed the top quartile of Community Foundations of similar size by 0.4%**. Over three and five years, it outpaced peers by **1.6%** and **2.3%**, respectively.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT POOL



ASSET ALLOCATION



INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

BTCF’s investment program is overseen by a diverse group of board members and community leaders with extensive expertise in institutional investments. Together, they bring a wide range of knowledge across various asset classes and work with top-tier investment managers in each category.

Appointed by the foundation’s board of directors from both board members and other community members, the Investment Committee meets at least quarterly to establish long-term strategy, review performance, rebalance the portfolio, engage with current and potential managers, assess market conditions, and set manager-specific benchmarks.

- Elizabeth Hilpman*, Chair

Carol Flaton*

Elizabeth Hewitt*
- Thaddeus Gray, CFA

Daphne Richards

Seth Masters
- Ben Farkas

John O’Brien*

*BTCF board member

For more detailed information, please visit berkshiretaconic.org/investments.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2024

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents
\$2,717,317

Investments
\$247,712,477

Other assets
\$1,911,772

TOTAL ASSETS
\$252,341,566

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Grants payable, accounts payable
and other liabilities
\$1,307,122

Funds held for
nonprofit organizations
\$64,717,956

TOTAL LIABILITIES
\$66,025,078

Without Donor Restriction
\$52,540,879

With Donor Restriction
\$133,316,488

TOTAL NET ASSETS
\$186,316,488

TOTAL LIABILITIES
AND NET ASSETS
252,341,566

NEW FUNDS IN 2024

We are grateful to partner with all the fundholders
who established new funds in 2024.

Julie R. Fenster Philanthropic Fund
Ann and Myron Falchuk Charitable Fund
Robert Anelli Family Scholarship Fund
Fred & Nancy Fagelman Fund
Morse Majewski Fund
Ando’s Fund
Alan Ziter Legacy Fund
Oblong Art Scholarship Fund
Stanbrook-Nagel Community Resilience Fund
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Rick Ryan Fund for Columbia County
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Development Fund
CCHS Fund for the
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unseen/unheard
BTCF Guaranteed Income in
Columbia County Fund
Highfield Farm Fund
Windswept Farm Fund
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Hoebel Translator Fellowship Fund
Spector Family Fund
Barbara and Gary Allen Fund
Bang Family Fund

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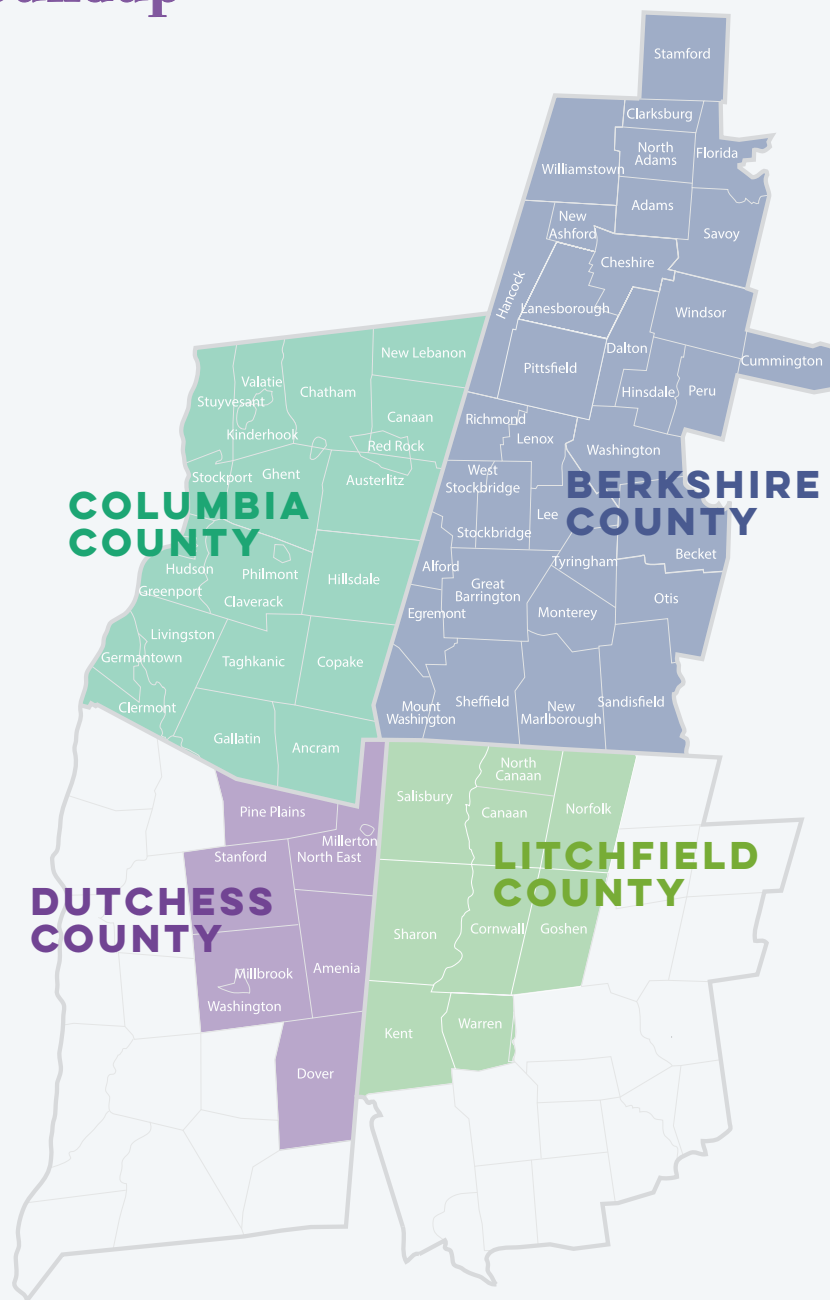
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Regional Roundup

**The Fund for
Columbia County has
granted over \$450,000
this year as it marks its
25th anniversary.**

FCC is a leading contributor to BTCF Guaranteed Income for Columbia County granting \$50,000 per year for the two-year pilot. They also contributed \$60,000 to the Neighbor-to-Neighbor direct-assistance emergency relief fund.

**Northeast Dutchess
Area Fund
mobilized support
for housing solutions
with a \$7,500 grant for
Rebuilding Together Hudson
Valley for home repairs and
accessibility. The NEDCorps
Housing Stabilization Fund
awarded 19 direct-aid grants
ranging from \$225 to \$5,000
to help residents remain in
their homes and avoid
displacement.**



**Twenty-four Berkshire
County nonprofits
received Planning and
Technical Assistance
grants mobilizing a
total of \$140,000 for
organizational development
and capacity building.**

**Arts Build Community
Incubation Grants
totaled \$67,000 for 12
arts organizations testing
new ways of increasing
community engagement
through the arts and
creative process.**

**The Fund for the
Northwest Corner
sustained funding
for a fourth year
of Region One's
successful Summer
Mountaineer Experience,
a summer program for
middle school students
in all Northwest Corner
towns. The Fund also
awarded Planning and
Technical Assistance grants
to Goshen Community
Care, Great Mountain
Forest, and Salisbury
Housing Committee.**