Founded in 1995, Counter Culture Coffee has evolved from a small roastery in Durham, N.C., to one of the largest independent specialty coffee roasters in the United States. With two roasting facilities and 12 Training Centers, we continue to lead the specialty coffee industry in the areas of quality, sustainability, and education. We operate wholesale, grocery, and direct-to-consumer sales and support channels.

Counter Culture was the first certified organic roastery in North Carolina (2002), created the first ever coffee Transparency Report (2009), became a certified B Corporation (2020), and has given over $300,000 (to date) in grants to coffee producers targeting sustainability projects of their design. We donate money annually to fund World Coffee Research and the Specialty Coffee Transaction Guide. In 2021, the company employed 116 full- and part-time employees and had a revenue of around $37 million.

This Transparency Report covers metrics and highlights from January 1 to December 31, 2021 organized in the following sections: People, Planet, Products, and Finances. The coffee purchase cycle covered in the Product > Coffee section occurred between October 1 of 2020 and September 30 of 2021. We believe there is a connection between reporting these metrics and the well-being of our value stream participants. Beyond metrics, reflecting on our highlights and explaining what we are working toward is an important part of our process to continuously improve as an organization.

This report was created by a team of transparency-driven individuals at Counter Culture. It strives for balance, but was prepared internally and therefore has a bias. If you would like to send questions, suggestions, or comments about this report please email us at listen@counterculturecoffee.com.
2021 demographic information was collected via a voluntary inclusion survey administered through our engagement platform, Culture Amp. The purpose of the survey was to collect data to more accurately understand how different groups of employees experience our company culture. This data helps us benchmark our work against other companies and pursue opportunities for continuous improvement through an equitable lens.

85 out of 116 staff members participated in the survey. The answer “Not specified” represents individuals who completed the survey and chose not to specify their answer in a specific category. “Not Provided” represents individuals who did not complete the survey.

* As of December 31, 2021
Counter Culture provides employees with benefits to support their sustainability, learning, and healthy living. These benefits primarily take the form of reimbursements in three areas—Green Fund (up to $500), Pushing Potential Fund (up to $500), and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Fund (up to $200). In 2021, Counter Culture reimbursed the following:

**SUSTAINABLE LIVING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Fund</td>
<td>$31,867.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing Potential Fund</td>
<td>$28,914.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>$7,727.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$68,500+ REIMBURSED**

- 1. HR Associate, Franny Goffinet, used her Pushing Potential Fund to buy supplies for a home renovation project.
- 2. Product Manager, Christy Duggan, shows off a radish from her CSA from Tall Grass Farm.
- 3. Social Media Manager, Emma Thomas, is happy and caffeinated in front of a Breville espresso machine she bought with her Green Fund.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

In 2021, we had three facility visits, one from Encova, a workers compensation company, one from McGriff Insurance Services, a risk management broker, and also a visit from Lauras International, a company specializing in sustainable process and operations improvement. Based on their recommendations, we made workspace adjustments to improve manual material handling procedures, use wheel chocks, and provide more forklift training. In addition, we worked with these consultants to identify potential safety risks as we continue to adjust our Durham warehouse to account for increased volume.

Incident Rate: 7.815  |  Lost Time Accidents: 1
Volunteer Hours Used: 73

**GREAT GAME OF BUSINESS**

In 2021, Counter Culture rolled out the Great Game of Business, an operating system designed to build a culture of transparency, knowledge-sharing, and comradery amongst employees. By teaching financial literacy and providing a stake in the financial outcome, the GGOB system is designed to give everyone in the company a voice in how the business is run and promote understanding and ownership at every level.

In 2021, we began hosting weekly all-staff huddles to forecast key metrics, identify opportunities to positively impact the numbers, and celebrate wins together.

**STOCK OPTIONS**

In 2021, Counter Culture rolled out stock options to all full-time employees. This benefit was years in the making and encourages long-term retention and internal growth.
**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**

Our ongoing work to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion is integral to the mission of our company and the well-being of our community. Based on a cultural audit completed in 2020, we implemented the following in 2021:

- Participation in formal DEI Trainings
- Holding interdepartmental meetings
- Updating our hiring process with steps that are proven to support diverse hiring choices
- Starting a staff newsletter
- Evolving our performance review process to include more stakeholders
- Increasing language accessibility by making interpreters available in operations meetings for non-bilingual employees when necessary. Moving surveys and performance reviews to Culture Amp, which allow accessibility in multiple languages.

**2022 WORK IN PROGRESS**

**Compensation Transparency** | In 2020-21, we made progress on increasing the transparency of our compensation strategy by sharing with individual employees the Payscale™ benchmarks that inform the ranges for their position and base salary. In 2022, we will build on this work by sharing every role's benchmark internally. In addition, we will conduct a wage equity audit and be incorporating greater wage transparency into our recruitment process.

**Continue Improving our Culture** | Guided by our People & Culture team and championed by our DEI Council, we are working to continue leadership development for all staff through the Strengthscope, KSA gap analysis, and 360 feedback and experience surveys. We will enhance staff's accessibility to resources, benefits and training to ensure an equitable employee experience.

**B Teams** | The B Corp framework provides insight into our impact on employees, communities, customers, environment, and governance. In 2020, Counter Culture received B Corp Certification and, in 2021, we formalized and started working in cross-departmental B Teams. These teams are working in 2022 on the following to increase our score by 30% and become a more sustainable organization:

- Switching to using renewable energy sources where possible
- Creating a better trash management system at our 12 locations
- Using our baler to increase the amount of LDPE plastic recycled in the Durham coffee community
- Implementing a Customer Code of Conduct
- Creating a process to audit customer feedback and satisfaction
- Increasing our staff participation in Volunteer Time Off
- Auditing our local purchasing and hiring policies
- Create and implementing a Supplier Code of Conduct
- Reviewing our overtime policy
- Reviewing and auditing our compliance with paying Family Livable Wage
- Expanding our current healthcare plan to include more inclusive coverage options
- Continuing rolling out of the Great Game Of Business framework to the company
- Formalizing a Teams Charter to guide company-wide participation
Correction: In 2020’s report, we incorrectly calculated our staff commuting footprint and double counted some employees’ trips. The corrected calculation reduces our 2020 emissions by 70 tonnes CO2e. This has been updated in our records for offsetting purposes.
Almost every bag of green coffee we receive is lined with a plastic bag, an extra barrier that prevents moisture and scents from infiltrating coffee on its journey to us. These bags have amazing benefits for quality, but unfortunately they are made of LDPE plastic, which is not easily recyclable in most municipalities. The EPA estimates 13% of LDPE is recycled in the United States. In 2018, we purchased a baler in Durham which allows us to condense several hundred bags in order to ship them to a recycling center that accepts this type of plastic.

At our roasting facilities, we use Optical Sorting machines to remove the quakers—immature and underdeveloped beans—from some of our offerings. Sorting roasted coffee is rare in the coffee industry and is a step that improves quality, though it does create unsellable coffee. We donate re-roasted quakers to mitigate our potential waste. In 2021, we donated over 8,000 lbs to Healing Transitions, TROSA, and the Alameda County Food Bank near our Durham and Emeryville locations.

Through our partnership with Trees, Water & People, 196 clean cookstoves were installed in rural Honduran households in 2021. By decreasing the firewood necessary to cook, each stove reduces indoor and outdoor pollution and avoids the production of 12 tons of CO₂e over 5 years, an impactful investment in offsetting our business’ footprint.

Offsetting | Budgeting for offsets has been challenging for us: our company has not realized huge profits in the past few years and we do not want to simply pass that cost off to our customers at the point of sale. However, the relationship between greenhouse gases and climate change is a scientific fact and we are committed to mitigating this by investing in offsets. To do this, we will continue partnership with Trees, Water, People to implement additional clean cookstoves. Moving forward, we will explore ways to thoughtfully neutralize our carbon footprint.
Since 2009, this annual transparency report has served as a blueprint for our green coffee purchasing practices and a response to chronically low prices in the coffee industry. We believe paying more for green coffee is an important investment in the long-term viability of our coffee-growing partners’ businesses and our supply. See this year’s purchasing data spreadsheet.

WE PURCHASED

3,951,707
LBS OF GREEN COFFEE* IN 252 UNIQUE LOTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counter Culture Weighted Average FOB**</th>
<th>conventional</th>
<th>organic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Coffee</td>
<td>$3.10</td>
<td>$2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blends</td>
<td>$2.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Origin***</td>
<td>$3.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Fair Trade minimum FOB

- Conventional: $1.72
- Organic: $2.85

Average C Market: $1.42

* Coffees harvested between October 1st, 2020 and September 30th, 2021. Most of these coffees were sold during the 2021 calendar year.

** FOB or Free on Board refers to the contracted price of a coffee at the time of export from a country or area of origin.

*** Coffees we purchased for Single-Origin, Limited Release, or Exclusive products.
Many roasters buy from different vendors annually, depending on quality. Counter Culture takes a different approach. We build long-term relationships with producers and producer groups, providing them with the stability and risk mitigation needed to invest in their operations and the quality of their product.

Length of Partnership by Volume

- 15+ years: 18.6%
- 10-14 years: 33.1%
- 5-9 years: 29.1%
- 1-4 years: 19.7%

FORWARD CONTRACTS

In addition to paying premium prices, we forward contract most of our purchases—95.06% during this period. That means we enter into a contract to buy the coffee before it leaves its country of origin, in many cases before the coffee is harvested. Sharing our purchase intentions with suppliers ahead of time allows everyone to better plan costs.

95.06% OF OUR COFFEE WAS FORWARD CONTRACTED

QUALITY

The coffee industry consensus is that “specialty coffees” are those which score 80 points or higher on a 100-point scale and contain minimum defects. Blends continue to be the products that are highest-in-demand from our customers. However, we also increased the number of single farmer lots and variety separations we purchased, many of which we sold as subscriber exclusives. Our partners are always innovating quality, and we are thrilled to support and highlight their efforts.

The highest-scoring coffee we sold this year was from longtime partner Jose Gallardo, owner of Finca Nuguo. This stunning gesha variety scored 94 points and is consistently one of the best coffees we offer every year.

THE HIGHEST SCORE

Type of Coffee Sold by Volume

- Blends: 85.4%
- Single-Origin: 14.6%

In an effort to release this year’s transparency report earlier, this tabulation comes from the score of a coffee at the time of purchase approval, as opposed to our score of the coffee when it is sold. While approval scores will often be slightly higher due to a coffee’s quality degrading over time, calculating in this way better demonstrates how we value the coffees we purchase.
Seeds

Our Seeds program offers financial grants to producers and producer organizations we work with to implement sustainability projects that they identify as beneficial. We fund this program annually by collecting 1 cent from each pound of coffee sold. In 2021, we also directed $1 from each pound of Iridescent sold into Seeds.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Caravela Peru

Caravela aims to be carbon neutral by 2025 and to achieve this goal they must work with the entire supply chain while seeking to mitigate the effects of production activities that generate greenhouse gasses. This project first measured the carbon footprint of 45 organic farms in the Cusco region and identified critical areas of improvement. Climate smart production strategies were shared through farmer training after this initial assessment, with the goal of reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions of these farms.

We Gave $42,170 to 10 Seeds Fund Projects

Plant Nursery at La Voz, Guatemala

This Seeds grant assisted the La Voz Cooperative’s construction, maintenance, and administration of a centralized nursery. By growing over 20,000 coffee seedlings and an additional 6,000 seedlings for various shade tree species, the cooperative supported over 164 producers in renovating their farms. Through such renovation, they seek to strengthen the level of resilience to the effects of climate change and maintain the quality of the coffee we’ve all come to expect for many years to come.

Seed Bank at Tierradentro, Colombia

This Seeds grant strengthened the “FXiw The’gnas” (“Guardians of seeds” in the Nasa Yuwe language) strategy of Tierradentro by increasing, diversifying, and conserving the seed bank inventory of more than 35 different species of food and medicinal seeds at their “Center for Seeds and Knowledge.” The growth of the inventory enables more farmers to diversify their farms and grow nutritious foods.

Bird Conservation at Finca Nueva Armenia, Guatemala

One of our most environmentally conscious and bird-friendly partners, Finca Nueva Armenia, used this Seeds grant to pursue a multi-pronged approach to hummingbird conservation. Their project provides secure habitat through the construction and administration of feeding stations. Additionally, by giving educational classes to farm workers and their families on the value of hummingbirds and biodiversity, they hope to foster joy and care for the environment in which they live.

Travel Deferred

While vaccine availability and better treatment options loosened restrictions in the US, there is still a considerable gap in the availability of these resources in many coffee-producing regions. In 2021, we continued to pause travel to visit partners abroad.

To Fund Seeds Projects

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School Supplies at YCFCU, Ethiopia
In 2019, the Yirgacheffe Coffee Farmers’ Cooperative Union purchased a school enrolling K-12 students with discounted or waived fees for members’ children or others from the community in need of education. This Seeds grant went towards purchasing reference books and playground equipment for the school, serving over 1,500 students annually.

Food Security & Income Diversification at Valle del Santuario, Peru
This grant focused on promoting food security and income diversification for the families who produce Valle del Santuario. Often, coffee is produced in monocultures due to its potential as a cash crop. Through targeted radio broadcasts in these communities, food production and healthy eating is promoted through topics such as growing fruits, vegetables, and other staples as well as animal husbandry best practices. An added benefit is the ability for families to sell excess food as a means to augment and diversify their household income as the coffee market can be volatile from season to season.

Literacy Training at Buchiro, Democratic Republic of Congo
The Muungano cooperative maintains ongoing programs to support and educate their members. In 2021, a survey was conducted showing that nearly 70% of the cooperative’s members could not read or write. This grant funded a literacy campaign for 485 female and young coffee farmers. Basic literacy will increase the impact of specific quality training initiatives by the coop and is also valuable in daily life. This project will be highly impactful for farmer members and their communities.

Agronomy Training at Cinco de Junio, Nicaragua
This grant funded the construction of a farmer field school focusing on agronomy and processing training for the cooperative’s members. The workshops covered soil management, use of organic fertilizers, exploring new varieties, and climate change adaptation techniques. The initial training was held for 40 members of the cooperative, many who have good physical quality but want to improve their cup quality while also improving yield. The long term goal is to construct more field schools amongst the members’ communities and refine agronomy techniques based on elevation and microclimate.

Apiaries at Cueva de los Llanos, Colombia
Building on the success of a 2019 Seeds project (which funded communal apiaries), Cueva de los Llanos used 2021 Seeds grant to finance 24 more apiaries, benefitting 64 additional members and more than 400 households who have crops in the area. Besides the environmental benefits, the members will commercialize honey and contribute a percentage of sales to their savings group, strengthening their economic status as a community.

Apiaries at Toldopamba, Colombia
Toldopamba used a Seeds grant to establish a beekeeping production group among 11 female producers. The use of pesticides and agrochemicals in agriculture has drastically decreased the bee population in this area of Colombia, a trend that has a negative effect on food production and plant biodiversity. The 33 apiaries this Seeds grant funds will improve plant production and generate income for these women’s households from the sales of honey.

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2021 saw the beginning of a historic rise in global coffee prices, mainly due to a severe weather event in Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer. Additional factors putting upward pressure on prices are higher demand, and increasing fuel, fertilizer, and shipping costs. On top of that, shipping delays, port congestion, unavailability of shipping containers, and lack of trucking and rail capacity continue to increase costs and create headaches across all global value streams, including coffee. By the end of the harvest period covered in this report, we began to see price offers rise considerably, a trend that is continuing through 2022 and affecting companies of all sizes trading all grades of coffee.

In 2021-2022, Counter Culture's coffee purchasing team is working to gain efficiency to partially offset the rising cost of green (unroasted) coffee. We are purchasing larger lots from long-term partners to streamline sample load, logistics, and communication. We are also accommodating suppliers’ requests for differential contracts, which allow both buyer and seller to fix prices at different times, an important hedging tool in a volatile market. Finally, we are taking ownership of our coffee from importers in a way that reduces financing costs. The goal is to maintain paying higher prices to producers while offering affordable coffees to customers.

Counter Culture believes in paying higher prices for higher quality and being transparent about what we pay. While sudden market corrections can create strains on value streams, the sector's chronically low prices negatively impact the sustainability of coffee farming and well-being of coffee producers. We hope the adjustments we’re seeing will contribute to the long term viability of coffee farming for producers everywhere.

Enveritas Verification | During the next harvest cycle, Enveritas will verify and assess the sustainability of more than a million pounds of coffee we purchase. Through these assessments, we aim to connect coffee producers with better information and resources to make strategic investments in their sustainability.
Our training and education philosophy is to share the why along with the how. We believe that the more we know about the beverage we consume every day, the more effective we are as stakeholders in sustaining the value stream of coffee. Creating cutting-edge coffee people ensures that the commitment to quality at origin translates all the way to the cup.
In 2021, Educators put in a remarkable amount of effort and energy professionally developing, educating, and training thousands of our customers. Because of their dedication, we made significant progress on our Coffee Skills Program initiative. We’re thrilled to launch the CSP Barista Module in 2022.

Since 2003, we’ve invited our communities to join us for coffee on Friday mornings. This Friday morning ritual has taken on many forms. In 2020, we paused Tastings at Ten. The pandemic kept 2021’s Friday mornings in a holding pattern and we used the time to reevaluate and re-envision what coffee with our neighbors could look like. Inspired by our B Corp certification process, we began to consider ways to connect with our communities more meaningfully. Midway through 2021, the next iteration of Friday morning coffee at Counter Culture was conceived. In 2022, we launch Shift Drink™ — a monthly pop-up cafe where we highlight and fundraise for nonprofits doing good work in each of the communities we operate in, shifting our ritual once again.
Our technical services program keeps wholesale partners brewing. Our technicians are committed to repairing old equipment, instead of replacing it—an ethos that is financially sustainable for our customers and friendlier to the environment. Additionally, the approach of preventative service reduces emergencies and unexpected downtimes. In 2021, the team spent more time doing preventative maintenance for our customers than unexpected service calls.
That’s a lot of phone calls, audio books, and podcasts!

Promoting Career Sustainability | 2021 was a time of significant flux within our technical services department. Many of our seasoned technicians chose to leave and pursue other opportunities and dreams. Conversations and interviews with current and former tech team members informed the following changes to promote career sustainability and a better work life balance:

> We overhauled the frequency of preventative maintenance visits. We tailored our work to the actual wear and tear on equipment rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach.
> We rolled out a new phone system designating separate work numbers and automatic call handling for phone calls that come in outside of normal business hours (M-F 8am-5pm).
> We hired a full-time technical services coordinator that will focus on training and development of our technical services team.

**Tech Hours Spent Working vs Driving**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Of Techs Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Calls</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installations</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventative Maintenance</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive Time</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2022 WORK IN PROGRESS

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> We hired a full-time technical services coordinator that will focus on training and development of our technical services team.
2021 continued to be a volatile year for many businesses, including Counter Culture. Throughout the year, we saw multiple increases on our costs of raw materials as well as delivery delays due to supply chain issues. In order to maintain a sustainable business, our teams thoughtfully evaluated how to navigate the changes without compromising our values. These opportunities came in many forms, from sourcing raw materials—like bags and boxes—from multiple locations, to re-evaluating thresholds, to implementing a price increase—effective Q1 2022—across all channels—our first price increase since 2017.

In April of 2021, the PPP loan Counter Culture received through the U.S. Small Business Administration was forgiven. In July 2021, Counter Culture applied for the Employee Retention Credit ("ERC") under the CARES Act, a process which included a diligent review of specific criteria as established by the IRS. In both cases, the funds were used to employ staff while sustaining the effects of lost business. Both were recognized in the 2021 fiscal year as $2,000,000 in other income.

Overall in 2021, Counter Culture saw a Net Ordinary Loss of $707,000. Due to the other income received from Federal Relief funds, the financial statements present a Net Income of $1,200,000.

**What We Spent Our Money On**

- **Coffee Product:** Green coffee, transportation of green coffee to our roasteries, consumer-ready packaging (42.2%)
- **Non-Coffee Product:** Non-coffee products we sell, such as equipment and merchandise (5.4%)
- **People:** Employee salaries and benefits (23.5%)
- **Shipping:** UPS and USPS shipping to send product to customers (8.7%)
- **Marketing & Travel:** Advertising and employee travel, e.g. attendance at our company conference and visits with growers and partners in coffee producing countries (3.9%)
- **Facilities:** Rent, utilities, and maintenance expenses at 12 Training Centers and 2 roasting facilities (5%)
- **Technology:** IT services and computer equipment (2.5%)
- **Operations & Administration:** Educational and lab materials, tech supplies, office supplies, professional fees, Seeds Fund, and World Coffee Research contributions (4.5%)
- **Taxes, Depreciation & Interest:** Sales and business taxes, interest, and depreciation of assets (4.4%)
Summary

**PEOPLE**

**What We’re Most Proud Of:**
- Going beyond EEOC requirements by creating and running an engagement and inclusion survey to report on a broader definition of diversity.
- Rolling out stock options to all full-time employees.

**Priority For Improvement:**
- Increasing participation in surveys to gather employee feedback and inform our diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy.
- Working in teams to improve our B Corp Impact Assessment score.

**PLANET**

**What We’re Most Proud Of:**
- Our partnership with Trees, Water, & People—installing 196 clean cookstoves in rural Honduras.
- Maintaining a diminished footprint from travel.

**Priority For Improvement:**
- Being more thoughtful about managing the waste at our 12 facilities.
- Reducing and offsetting our carbon footprint.
**PRODUCTS - COFFEE**

**What We’re Most Proud Of:**
> What We’re Most Proud Of: Funding 10 Seeds Projects in coffee-producing countries and providing farmers with sustainability verification and resources through our partnership with Enveritas.
> Paying more for coffee—$3.10 weighted average FOB price during a time when the average C market price was $1.42.
> Offering a high quality product through amazing partnership—the coffees we purchased scored an average of 86.5 points and 71% were from partners we’ve worked with for over 5 years.

**Priority For Improvement:**
> Mindfully managing the rising cost of green coffee.

**PRODUCTS - EDUCATION**

**What We’re Most Proud Of:**
> Spending thousands of hours in classes and trainings and facilitating the Licensure of 10 of our Educators as Authorized SCA Trainers.

**Priority For Improvement:**
> Increasing participation in the Specialty Coffee Association’s Coffee Skills Program in each of our regions.
> Gathering with and positively impacting our communities through in-person events at our Training Centers.

**PRODUCTS - TECH**

**What We’re Most Proud Of:**
> Keeping people brewing—spending more time doing preventative technical services maintenance for our customers than unexpected service calls.

**Priority For Improvement:**
> Promoting career sustainability by continuing to improve our technical services program.

**FINANCES**

**What We’re Most Proud Of:**
> Rolling out Great Game of Business, an operating system designed to teach financial literacy and give everyone in the company a voice in how the business is run.

**Priority For Improvement:**
> Achieving 2% profit before tax.

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_Thank you!_  
**YOU READ THE WHOLE THING, YOU DESERVE A CUP OF COFFEE._