



Executive Summary Food Systems Analysis

Date: August 5th, 2026

Introduction

The Broome County Food Council evolved from the 2013 Child Hunger Task Force into a countywide coalition focused on addressing food insecurity and strengthening the local food system. It played a key role in coordinating emergency food efforts during COVID-19 and, in 2021, launched the Broome County Food Access Plan. Today, with nearly 200 members, the Council works to improve equitable food access and support a resilient local food ecosystem.

To support this next phase of work, the Council initiated a countywide **Food Systems Analysis** to move beyond emergency response and access solutions toward long-term sustainability and resilience. Through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, the Council selected **Seeds of Change Consulting** to guide this effort. Their expertise supports a comprehensive, data-informed assessment of the food system — from production to recovery — ensuring that future planning reflects both community realities and emerging opportunities.

The Food Systems Analysis is organized around five interconnected focus areas:

- **Health**
- **Food Waste & Recovery**
- **Hunger Education**
- **Agriculture & Small Farm Development**
- **Expansion of the Food Access Plan**

Together, these focus areas reflect the Council's commitment to moving from short-term hunger relief toward systemic change. This analysis will inform the development of a Broome County Food Systems Plan and contribute to building a resilient, equitable food future for the region.

The Big Picture

The **Seeds of Change Consultants** identified the following:

- 1) Food insecurity in Broome County is not caused by a lack of food but by deeper structural conditions, cost of living, housing instability, and transportation barriers.
- 2) Their 105-page report provided recommendations to move from
 - a) Crisis response to infrastructure investment
 - b) Siloed programs to integrated approaches

- c) Informal networks to formalized systems
- d) Emergency food as the default to emergency food for emergencies

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Initial Action Plans

Building on the findings of the Food Systems Analysis and the momentum of the **Food Access Plan**, the Broome County Food Council will enter an implementation phase focused on cross-sector collaboration, regional alignment, and measurable systems change. These initial actions reflect the work of the Council's four Work Groups and prioritize integration with public health planning efforts and emerging regional partnerships — particularly with the newly forming Tioga County Food Alliance.

1. Strengthen the Food Systems Expansion Plan Through Steering Committee and Work Group Action

The Steering Committee, each Work Group, and the Focus Group are reviewing the 6-12- and 13-24-month goals as recommended by the Analysis. They will update the Council members on their progress at each Council meeting with a Food Systems Draft, potentially complete by September 30th.

2. Expand Cross-County Collaboration with the Tioga County Food Alliance

The formation of the Tioga County Food Alliance presents a critical opportunity to move toward a **Southern Tier Regional Food System**.

This partnership will create the foundation for regional planning that strengthens resilience beyond county boundaries.

3. Integrate Public Health Data and Planning

A key next step will be aligning food system work with the priorities identified in:

- The Community Health Assessment led by the Broome County Health Department
- Public Health planning process of the Tioga County Public Health Department

This work is in alignment with the findings of the recently issued County Health Assessments and the priority goals of our health departments. We strive to create and support broad collaborations on our most pressing needs and opportunities.

Action steps include:

- Mapping food insecurity, chronic disease, and social determinants of health across both counties.
- Identifying shared priority populations and geographic gaps.

- Embedding food access strategies into Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs).
- Coordinating interventions that address both nutrition access and long-term health outcomes.

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4. Build Systems Through Collaboration

To sustain long-term impact, the Council will:

- Formalize partnerships between healthcare, agriculture, education, and emergency food providers.
- Support schools as anchors for community food access.
- Coordinate infrastructure investments that improve efficiency and equity.
- Develop shared metrics across sectors to measure system change rather than isolated outputs.

Moving Forward

These initial actions represent a shift from planning to implementation — strengthening the local food system while building a coordinated regional approach. Through collaboration with Tioga County and alignment with public health priorities, the Broome County Food Council is positioned to advance solutions that improve health, reduce waste, support local agriculture, and ensure equitable access to nutritious food for all residents.