



tompkins food future

Tompkins County Community Food System Plan **UPDATE**

February 2022

Katie Hallas, Community Food System Plan Coordinator,
kh788@cornell.edu

We need a stronger food system now

Greenhouse gas and climate change:

food travels 1500 miles to our tables

Food spending in Tompkins County:

\$349,583,000 (\$8,556 average / household)

Food insecurity among County residents:

11.9% of adults, 13.6% of children

Diet impacts health and contributes to chronic diseases

24% obesity rate in Tompkins County



Vision: a food system that is **sustainable, equitable, healthy and affordable for all members of our community**

Process to date

Identified key challenges, vulnerabilities, and assets in the local food system.

Captured the stories, struggles, concerns, and the hopes of everyone who eats.

Will Articulate shared recommendations for future actions and policies based on input.

After plan developed, Implement changes that move us towards our shared long-term vision.

Community Collaborators and Contributors



Cayuga Health Partners

Childhood Nutrition Collaborative

Cornell Cooperative Extension TC

Cornell University

Farmers and business owners

Food Justice Project

Food pantry staff and volunteers

Food pantry clients

Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Food Task Force

Friendship Donation Network

Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming

Ithaca Area Economic Development

Ithaca Green New Deal

Ithaca College

Finger Lakes Land Access, Reparations and Reconciliation Working Group

Mothers Out Front

The Learning Farm

TC Council of Governments

TC Legislature

TC Health Department

TC Planning and Sustainability

TC Recycling and Materials Management

Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Healing

Unbroken Promises Initiative

WRFI Ithaca Community Radio

Youth Farm Project

Community Engagement and Input

Volunteers

46 volunteers with Food System
Planning Team

30+ working group members
reviewing reports

Public Meetings

100+ attendees 2020 kickoff

80+ attendees 2021 report out

Surveys

592 responses to Food Access Questionnaire

541 responses to Community Food Needs Survey

Interviews and Input

60+ in-depth interviews with stakeholders

Dozens of conversations with community members

15 in-person conversations with food pantry clients

Ongoing focus groups and stakeholder feedback

Food System Baseline Assessment Executive Summaries

Baseline Sections

- Production
- Infrastructure
- Food Environment
- Food Access and Security
- Consumption
- Waste

Data Sources:

- Primary interviews and surveys
- USDA ERS Food Environment Atlas
- USDA Ag Census
- US Census
- Feeding America
- JobsEQ (Ithaca Area Development)
- Various local studies

Read [Executive Summaries](#) at:

www.tompkinsfoodfuture.org/reports





TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRICULTURE AT-A-GLANCE

Farmers work in relationship with the land and environment to provide the foundation of food for our community.



523

FARMS IN TOMPKINS
COUNTY (DECLINING)

75%

SMALL FARMS
(<180 ACRES)

1/3

FARMLAND RENTED

8.6%

OF FARMS ARE
CERTIFIED ORGANIC

\$65M

MARKET VALUE OF
PRODUCTS SOLD

70%

SELL < \$40,000
ANNUALLY



94%

FARMLAND FOR
GROWING ANIMAL FEED

55%

FARMS REPORTING NET
LOSSES

19%

FARMS SELLING DIRECT-
TO-CONSUMER



<0.9%

FARMS RUN BY
FARMERS OF COLOR

56.8

AVERAGE AGE OF
FARMERS

Production Opportunities

Financial incentives and transition support for retiring and beginning farmers

Education, training, and mentorship program expansion to prepare and support beginning farmers

Financial investment in small farmers who wish to expand would increase capacity in our local food system

Climate impact education would help farmers prepare, plan, and maintain resiliency

Climate mitigation funds would help farmers invest in infrastructure

Payments for ecosystem services would increase the carbon carrying / water retention capacity of cultivated areas

Collective infrastructure such as a grower's cooperative would help farmers position themselves for growth

Food systems education expansion for children and area residents

Read the full Production Baseline Assessment report:

www.tompkinsfoodfuture.org/reports

TOMPKINS COUNTY FOOD ACCESS AT-A-GLANCE



Food security means always having physical & economic access to sufficient, safe & nutritious food that meets their needs for an active and healthy life.



AN AVERAGE MEAL IN TOMPKINS COUNTY IS 17% MORE
EXPENSIVE THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE



Warming, extreme weather events, and coastal flooding will all reduce the production and distribution of food. These shifts will lead to price spikes, shortfalls and exacerbated inequalities.



\$7.4M

EXTRA \$ NEEDED FOR
FOOD INSECURE
FAMILIES TO MEET
NEEDS

62%

SNAP ELIGIBLE
RESIDENTS NOT
ENROLLED

1/3

FOOD INSECURE
RESIDENTS NOT
ELIGIBLE FOR SNAP



**TRUMANSBURG
GROTON ENFIELD**

FOOD INSECURITY HOTSPOTS

11.6%

OF RESIDENTS ARE
FOOD INSECURE

13.3%

OF CHILDREN ARE
FOOD INSECURE



WIC

PARTICIPATION HAS
DECLINED SINCE 2011



Household Food Insecurity

Tompkins County NY

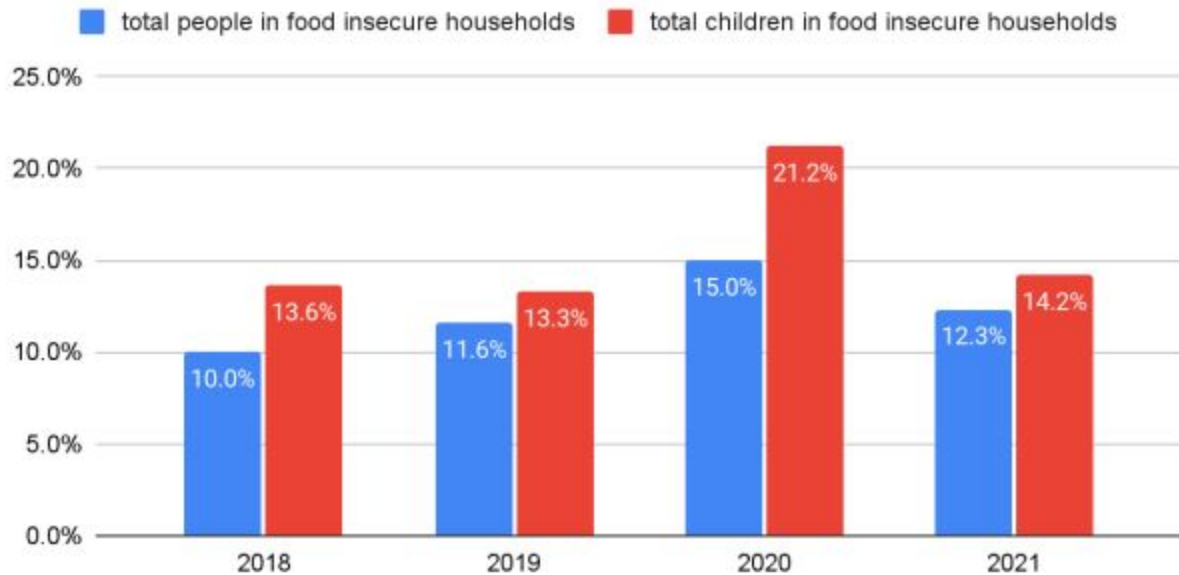


Figure 8: Household food insecurity in Tompkins County.

*From Feeding America's Mapping the Meal Gap Study (food insecurity refers to the USDA's measurement of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle for all members of a given household, and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods) <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

**From Feeding America's analysis of food insecurity "Scenario C" (if unemployment increases by 7.6 percentage points and poverty increases by 4.8 percentage points, 17.1 million more people will experience food insecurity) <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/2020/03/impact-coronavirus-food-insecurity/>

Opportunities

Pay a living wage throughout Tompkins to help more households afford food

Make SNAP participation easier to increase the food budgets of the 62% of eligible households not currently enrolled

Provide free transportation for food access to support the use of SNAP and WIC benefits

Provide free/low-cost food delivery for low-income households to minimize the burden transportation places on food access

Expand community outreach to inform residents about their options and reduce stigma associated with financial food assistance and free grocery programs

Improve data and resource management for food donations, food rescue, and perishable items to optimize distribution of emergency food

Develop our food assistance workforce to increase quality food and service in emergency food programs

Read the full Food Access and Security Baseline Assessment report:

www.tompkinsfoodfuture.org/reports

TOMPKINS COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE AT-A-GLANCE

The process of how our food gets to our plates is complex, obscure and poorly understood by food consumers. It requires transportation, cold storage facilities, computer systems that track orders and inventory, and relationships and shared expectations between farmers, value added producers, distributors, retailers, and end users.



HOW MANY FOOD
DOLLARS LEAVE
TOMPKINS

Large food businesses that operate in
Tompkins will not share their data or provide
transparency about their operations here.



WHERE ARE LARGE
DISTRIBUTORS
SOURCING FROM



LOCAL DISTRIBUTORS
SPECIALIZE IN BUYING FROM
LOCAL FARMS AND ENGAGE IN
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS IN
TOMPKINS IS HIGH, MAKING LOCAL
FOOD PRODUCTS MORE EXPENSIVE
THAN COMPETITORS



MONTHS OR YEARS FOR
AN APPOINTMENT TO
PROCESS LIVESTOCK



SMALL FARMS HAVE TROUBLE
FINDING PROCESSORS TO FREEZE,
CAN, OR FERMENT THEIR PRODUCE



ENTREPRENEURS NEED ACCESS
TO COMMERCIAL KITCHENS,
REFRIGERATED TRUCKS AND
OTHER EXPENSIVE CAPITAL
EQUIPMENT

TOMPKINS COUNTY FOOD ENVIRONMENT AT-A-GLANCE

A mix of businesses and institutions create the “food environment” in any community. Grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores, specialty markets, institutional food service, farmers markets, restaurants public schools, and emergency food services impact the lives of residents and the broader local economy.

113

FOOD RETAIL
OUTLETS

105

FULL SERVICE
RESTAURANTS

74

FAST FOOD
RESTAURANTS

3,279

WORKERS IN
FOOD RETAIL
SECTOR

\$37K

AVERAGE
ANNUAL WAGE

5

RESTAURANTS
PROVIDING LIVING
WAGE

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE
PURCHASING POWER, MINIMAL
LOCAL FOOD PRODCUREMENT



AT LEAST 17 FOOD PANTRIES COUNTY-WIDE,
PRESENT IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY. 25 FOOD
BANK OF THE SOUTHERN TIER PARTNERS.

FARMERS MARKETS IN 6 COMMUNITIES, EVERY
DAY OF WEEK, 143 VENDORS. THIN MARGINS FOR
FARMERS, HIGH COSTS FOR CONSUMERS.





TOMPKINS COUNTY FOOD CONSUMPTION AT-A-GLANCE

Dietary patterns, food culture, and availability affect what we eat and that impacts our community health, economy, and the environment

24%

OF ADULTS ARE
OBESE

12%

OF CHILDREN
ARE OBESE

87%

SAY "GOOD FOOD"
MEANS NUTRITIOUS
AND ENJOYABLE TO
EAT*

24%

SAY THEY EAT 2 OR
FEWER DAILY SERVINGS
OF FRUIT OR VEG* EACH
DAY

53%

SAY HEALTHY,
AFFORDABLE FOOD IS
A KEY ISSUE*



\$4,972

SPENT ON FOOD EATEN AT
HOME



\$3,593

SPENT ON FOOD EATEN
OUT

Increasing access to healthy food was the
highest priority identified by Tompkins
community members.



*BASED ON TOMPKINS COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

TOMPKINS COUNTY FOOD WASTE AT-A-GLANCE

Wasting food is a misuse of valuable resources. Food is the single largest component of solid waste in landfill and incinerators - and a major source of the greenhouse gas methane.

3,384,900

POUNDS OF FOOD
WASTE COMPOSTED BY
CAYUGA COMPOST

120,372

POUNDS OF
RESIDENTIAL FOOD
SCRAPS COLLECTED

AN ESTIMATED 35% OF
ALL FOOD PRODUCED
IS NEVER EATEN.



14

FOOD SCRAP DROP
SITES IN TOMPKINS

1,400

LBS OF FOOD SAVED
PER DAY BY FDN

BARRIERS

- INSUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR RESIDENTIAL COLLECTION
- FEAR OF LIABILITY RE: DONATIONS
- MISCONCEPTIONS + EDUCATION
- LACK OF SMALL - MEDIUM COLLECTORS + COMMUNITY COMPOSTING SITES

UNEATEN FOOD IS
RESPONSIBLE FOR 4%
OF US GHG EMISSIONS



OPPORTUNITIES

- △ PROVIDE RESIDENTIAL FOOD SCRAP COLLECTION
- △ NYS FOOD DONATION AND FOOD SCRAPS RECYCLING LAW WHICH BANS FOOD WASTE FROM LARGE GENERATORS
- △ OFFER FOOD WASTE REDUCTION TOOLS (SCHOOLS, RESTAURANTS, STORES)

Moving Forward Together

VISION: A food system that is **sustainable, equitable, healthy and affordable for all members of our community**

3 DIRECTIONS for our local food system:

1. Build Resilience
2. Cultivate Equity, Sovereignty, and Economic Opportunity
3. Promote Human and Ecosystem Health

Read the Food System Plan Draft Directions and Goals:

www.tompkinsfoodfuture.org/reports

Moving Towards Implementation



Collaborate with community and stakeholders to develop food system plan **recommendations**, finalize **Food System Plan**
Spring 2022



Provide support and coordination for collaboration among **local governments, organizations, institutions, businesses and community groups to implement** recommendations and achieve shared food systems goals.



Develop and gather signatures on a **Tompkins Food Future Charter** based on the Food System Plan. Encourage stakeholders to become champions, get involved in the food system, provide endorsements, and provide funding as sponsors.

Thank you to our funders and supporters



Food Policy Council of Tompkins County

Working to create a just, healthy and inclusive food system in Tompkins County, NY

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Tompkins County



**RECYCLING AND
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT**
OF TOMPKINS COUNTY



tompkins food future

Get Involved!

Join TC Food Policy Council

Meetings: 9am 3rd Friday of the month

Contact: Don Barber, Chair, Tompkins
County Food Policy Council
sunnybrk@gmail.com

Learn and Contribute

Reports: www.tompkinsfoodfuture.org/reports

Comment: www.tompkinsfoodfuture.org/get-involved
or
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Edwfuw3vd2yklZqFySYaXQtdEGa8k4l5CoirDH2eXM8/edit?usp=sharing>

Volunteer with TFF

Visit: www.tompkinsfoodfuture.org/get-involved

Email: Katie Hallas kh788@cornell.edu