



2017

Greater Cincinnati Food Waste Action Plan



Food Waste Forum Planning Committee
Key Strategies to Prevent, Recover and
Recycle Food Waste
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Key Strategies to Prevent, Recover and Recycle Food Waste

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FOREWORD

This document is the outcome of the *Forum for Food Waste: A Strategic Regional Conversation*, which occurred on November 4, 2016 at Xavier University's Cintas Center. The goal of the Forum was to engage key stakeholders in a strategic conversation and identify priorities and actions for the prevention, recovery, and recycling of food waste in our region. This document is intended to be a roadmap for our region to achieve the goal of reducing food loss and waste 50 percent by 2030.

The Action Plan set forth in this paper incorporates the feedback and inputs of those in attendance at the November Forum, as well as the additional work and dedication of the Food Waste Forum Planning Committee. The Committee acknowledges the important contribution of [ReFED: Rethinking Food Waste Through Economics and Data](#) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency for serving as models and inspiration for both the Forum and the Action Plan.

Key first steps for moving forward include:

- Individual stakeholders (this means you!) review the Action Plan and identify where you and/or your organization can take action to assist in progressing the work.
- The Planning Committee is developing an organizational structure to coordinate future work, including securing funds to hire a project leader. If you can contribute to this, please reach out to a member of the Planning Committee or email savethefood@greenumbrella.org.

Thank you for your involvement and support of reducing food waste in the greater Cincinnati area. Along with your commitment to build regional collaboration, the work started back in November can continue to make progress and achieve the goals set forth to reduce food loss and waste. We look forward to our next steps and the continued collaboration with everyone!

Thank you,

The Food Waste Forum Planning Committee

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Key Strategies to Prevent, Recover and Recycle Food Waste

Prevent

Drive source reduction solutions to reduce wasted food creation

1.1 Advocate for standardize date labeling, promote off-standard produce & improve packaging

- a. Advocate for adoption of federal standardization for expiration dates and best by dates (e.g., [The Food Date Labeling Act](#)).
- b. Create availability and markets for all grades and standards of [produce](#).
- c. Create gleaning programs for farms and use of B-grade produce to create value added food.
- d. Institute variety of package-size/weight purchasing options to fit individual purchasing needs.
- e. Institute spoilage prevention packaging.

1.2 Implement waste tracking, analytics, and inventory management tools to help both consumers and commercial entities to measure wasted food

- a. Provide consumers with toolkit to measure wasted food and its dollar value (e.g., [Food Too Good to Waste](#)).
- b. Provide businesses and institutions with toolkit for measurement and analytics (e.g., [Food Recovery Challenge](#); [Lean Path](#), [Food Recovery Network](#)).

1.3 Create cultural shift in the way people perceive and value food

- a. Promote seasonal, local produce and local farmers' market shopping.
- b. Create standard portion sizes according to [MyPlate](#) in restaurants, institutions, and homes.
- c. Offer differing portion sizes in restaurants.
- d. Promote smaller plate sizing/trayless dining.
- e. Conduct Faith Communities [Pledge](#) Campaign.

1.4 Modify the implementation of nutrition assistance [programs](#) and policies at state and local levels to minimize food waste and maximize food recovery

- a. Advocate for policy changes to improve the [Child Nutrition Programs](#) to minimize wasted food and maximize recovery, including within the fresh fruit and vegetable program (FFVP).
- b. Work with local and state Departments of Health and local school districts to allow sharing tables and food recovery.

Recover

Establish new channels and capability to distribute food to feed hungry people

2.1 Identify and strengthen existing food recovery network, by geographic community

- a. Work with regional faith based communities to identify food pantries to include in network.
- b. Identify/define role of Feeding America's Freestore Foodbank.
- c. Identify other non-affiliated food recovery organizations for inclusion in network (Master Provisions, La Soupe, etc.).
- d. Use supply chain resources (UC students, MBA's, etc.) to complete map of entire logistics network.
- e. Identify new recovery sources and their needs. Benchmark other cities. Create links.
- f. Identify tiers of food recovery organizations to simplify operations.
- g. Create logistics network for food unfit for human consumption, i.e., animal feed (dairy/pig farm capability, etc.).

2.2 Identify and educate food waste sources, by type and geographic community

- a. Create inventory of all wasted food creators (institutions, schools, restaurants, caterers, groceries, convenience stores, food manufacturers, etc.).
- b. Assess existing sources for current wasted food volumes, current solutions/best practices and identify biggest needs.
- c. Create communication tools for individual sources, targeting information to their specific customers/situations.
- d. Work with local farm community to develop plan to address gleaning of fruit and vegetables.
- e. Identify Top 10 creators of food loss/waste in Greater Cincinnati, focus solutions to address specific needs.

2.3 Develop needed tools to drive programs

- a. Work with stakeholders to further identify problems, obstacles and opportunities.
- b. Benchmark apps developed in other cities. Copy or develop alternatives to simplify recovery.
- c. Partner with Uber, Lyft and other transportation sources to facilitate donation deliveries.

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- d. Identify existing (used and unused) refrigerated storage and delivery capability. Assess need for additional storage capacity.
- e. Implement Food Recovery Network at universities (student led).
- f. Develop website/social media to aid in program awareness and operations.
- g. Implement “sharing table” at PreK-12 schools. Clarify safety rules and legal protection.
- h. Collaboration and coordination between all health departments (states and local) to assist in safety assurances for sharing tables and donations.
- i. Assess potential for Blue Apron, Dream Dinners, Meals on Wheels and similar to provide support for network.
- j. Push for policy changes to assist in recovery goals.
- k. Establish link with local media sources to drive awareness of wasted food recovery solutions.

Recycle

Create alternative solutions to avoid landfilling any food

3.1 Pursue innovation and technology for increasing food diverted from landfills

- a. Identify and monitor potential materials and markets for post-consumer food waste, i.e., bio-plastics and bio-fuels from restaurants.
- b. Understand role of existing technology, such as Grind2Energy, in-home garbage disposals, vessel composters and Vermiculture to advance food recycling rates.
- c. Create network of food waste recycling opportunities and infrastructure rather than relying on one-size fits all approach.
- d. Encourage local university research into technological innovation related to food waste diversion, recycling and repurposing.

3.2 Advocate for policies to support composting and anaerobic digestion

- a. Renegotiate municipal waste contracts to require composting.
- b. Identify local and state rules or ordinances that conflict with increasing localized, small-scale composting (i.e. zoning).
- c. Allow for management of on-site and off-site food waste at designated community garden sites.
- d. Identify legislative barriers to development of large-scale anaerobic digestion facilities.
- e. Investigate alternative methods to pay for local collection of food waste.
- f. Create resource identifying local, state, federal, including health code rules pertaining to food waste reuse/recycling.

3.3 Increase local composting capabilities.

- a. Pilot small-scale, decentralized compost collection projects.
- b. Pilot curbside food waste pickup service, especially from multi-family dwellings and businesses.
- c. Increase large event composting opportunities.
- d. Involve local extension agencies and farming representatives to increase local capacity.
- e. Distribute food waste bins at discount to residences who receive training (rain barrel model.)

3.4 Develop anaerobic digestion facilities for regional food waste generators

- a. Pool region's largest food-waste generators to sponsor development of an anaerobic digester.

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- b. Explore, identify and catalog sites in tristate region that can be developed for anaerobic digestion.
- c. Establish food waste transfer stations to allow minimization of transportation distances.
- d. Create regional de-packaging facility.
- e. Pursue both public funding and private funding options.
- f. Develop business case for anaerobic digestion at regional level.

Educate

Create education and measurement tools, and organization structure, to drive local food waste reduction and improved solutions

4.1 Conduct campaign with policy makers and elected officials to raise awareness about the food waste problem.

- a. Leverage existing tools (e.g., ReFED and [Save the Food Campaign](#)).
- b. Educate and advocate on how food policy contributes to, and can be used to prevent, recover and recycle food waste
- c. Develop materials that show the connection between reducing food waste, economic development, food insecurity and public health

4.2 Conduct Campaign focused on PREVENTION

- a. Identify education strategies tailored to specific audiences: general public, school-age children (pre-K through 12), college students, food producers (farmers), food distributors (e.g., Castellini Group), retailers (e.g., Kroger stores), food service providers (e.g., restaurants, cafeterias, nursing homes, hospitals).
- b. Leverage existing tools (e.g., Save the Food, Love Food Hate Waste).
- c. Find and share mobile apps related to handling food (e.g., Food Keeper).
- d. Educate consumers on accepting imperfect produce as valuable and nutritious (Ugly food campaign)
- e. Promote “home economics” courses to teach about the value of food; use open-source education tools; clarify date labeling ambiguities and meanings.
- f. Train food service workers in tools and strategies for managing and reducing waste stream.

4.3 Conduct Campaign focused on RECOVERY

- a. Identify education strategies tailored to specific audiences: general public, school-age children (pre-K through 12), college students, faith communities, food banks, food producers (farmers), food distributors (e.g., Castellini Group), retailers (e.g., Kroger stores), food service providers (e.g., restaurants, cafeterias, nursing homes, hospitals).
- b. Awareness of Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act.
- c. Train food service workers on places and means for repurposing safe, surplus food.

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- d. Educate stakeholders regarding available infrastructure (transporting from donor to recipient, cold storage locations, etc.).

4.4 Conduct Campaign focused on RECYCLING

- a. Identify education strategies tailored to specific audiences: general public, school-age children (pre-K through 12), college students, food producers (farmers), food distributors (e.g., Castellini Group), retailers (e.g., Kroger stores), food service providers (e.g., restaurants, cafeterias, nursing homes, hospitals).
- b. Educate consumers and regulators on regulatory definition and language (move from waste management thinking to materials management thinking).
- c. Educate citizens, officials, and materials management companies on how zoning changes facilitate appropriately siting food recycling facilities.
- d. Promote local placement of small-scale treatment systems.
- e. Educate citizens, officials, and materials management companies the suite of treatment technologies (i.e., there's a place from composting, anaerobic digestion, fermentation, and other technologies to address the heterogeneous nature of the 'waste stream').