

Nevada Food for People, Not Landfill Program

2020 Annual Report



**Nevada Department of
Health and Human Services**

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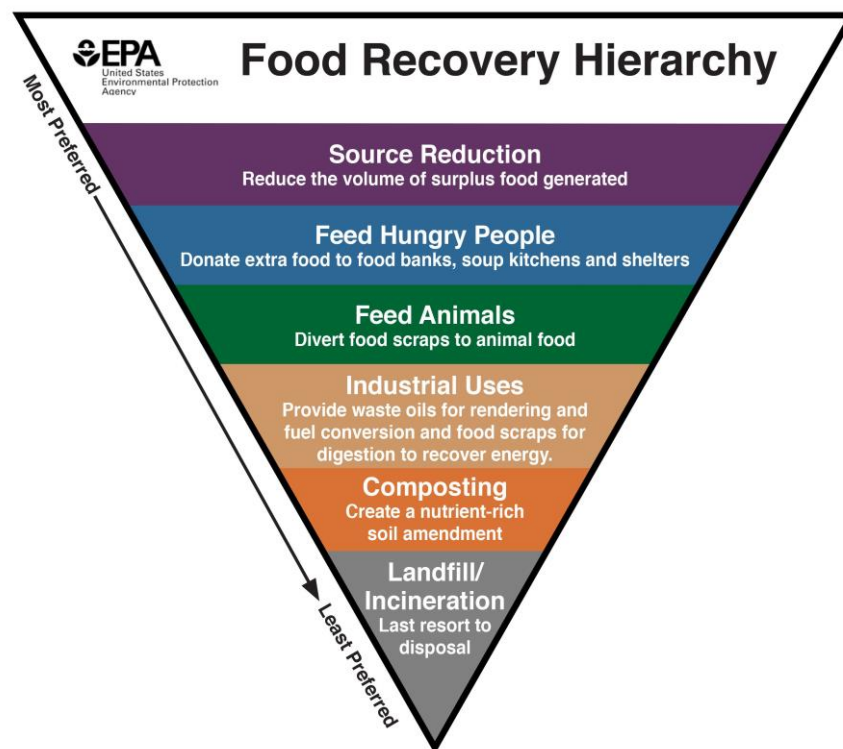
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BACKGROUND

Food Waste in the United States

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) defines food loss/waste as the edible amount of food, postharvest, available for human consumption that is not consumed for any reason.¹ According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an estimated 63.1 million tons of food waste was generated in the commercial, institutional, and residential sectors in 2018, which is 21.6% of total municipal solid waste (MSW) generation nationally.² In the United States, food waste is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply, or approximately 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food in 2010.³ It is estimated 25-40 percent of the food grown, processed, and transported in the United States will never be consumed.⁴ In addition, per capita food waste in the United States has increased by approximately 50% since 1974.⁵ Food waste has a far-reaching impact on the environment, society, and the economy. There are several alternatives for food before it becomes waste, as illustrated by the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy (Image 1).



¹ <https://www.usda.gov/foodwaste/faqs>

² https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-11/documents/2018_wasted_food_report.pdf

³ <https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/why>

⁴ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/our-approach#:~:text=In%20America%2C%20we%20have%20enough,U.S.%20will%20never%20be%20consumed.>

⁵ Hall KD, Guo J, Dore M, Chow CC. The progressive increase of food waste in America and its environmental impact. *PLoS One* 2009;4(11):e7940.

One of the most preferred methods to reducing food waste, according to the Food Recovery Hierarchy, is to donate edible, wholesome food to food insecure people. In 2015, the USDA and EPA announced the national goal to decrease food loss and waste by half by the year 2030. Led by USDA and EPA, the federal government is working with various partners nationally to reduce food loss and waste by 50% over the next 15 years.⁶ Reducing food waste in the interest of reducing food insecurity and protecting the environment is a priority at the federal level. Several states, including Nevada, are working to implement programs to support this national effort.

Food Waste in Nevada

According to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), food waste was the third largest component of Nevada's municipal organic material waste, about 24,489 tons in 2018.⁷ While several Nevada organizations, businesses, and state agencies are already working to reduce food waste, Nevada lacked a state goal and program to enhance and promote collaboration among different statewide efforts. To address this issue, Senate Bill 178 (SB178) was passed in the 80th Nevada Legislative Session, establishing the Council on Food Security (CFS) and the Food for People, Not Landfills (FFPNL) Program. The FFPNL Program was established within the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to increase food security by decreasing food waste and redirecting excess consumable food to hungry Nevada communities. Per SB178, the Food for People, Not Landfills Program is administered by the Director of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) with support and guidance from the Nevada CFS and the Office of Food Security (OFS). The legislation mandates the creation of the following:

- Goals and objectives for the ensuing five (5) years to increase the amount of food diverted from landfills and utilize such food to increase food security;
- Criteria for eligibility for a food donor to participate in the Program; and an
- Official seal for the Program;

This report provides an update on the State of Nevada Food for People, Not Landfills Program, the accomplishments and progress made throughout 2020, and next steps for 2021.

⁶ <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/united-states-2030-food-loss-and-waste-reduction-goal>

⁷ https://ndep.nv.gov/uploads/recycles-docs/Copy_of_Official_State_RecyclingRate2018.pdf

FOOD FOR PEOPLE, NOT LANDFILLS PROGRAM UPDATE

To assist with development and implementation of the program, the Nevada CFS established the FFPNL Subcommittee in July 2019. The Subcommittee is comprised of various cross-sector partners, consisting of both voting and ex-officio members, including:

Amanda Jerzak <i>Three Square Food Bank</i>	Diana Barrett <i>Helping Hands of Vegas Valley</i>	Liz McMenamin <i>Retail Association of Nevada</i>
Brittany Price <i>MGM Resorts International</i>	Elika Nematian <i>Three Square Food Bank</i>	Marie Baxter <i>Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada</i>
Devin Wilcox <i>Nevada Department of Agriculture</i>	Jodi Tyson, Chair <i>Three Square Food Bank</i>	Steve Schmitt <i>Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada</i>

Throughout 2020, the FFPNL Subcommittee met seven (7) times to discuss matters related to food waste in Nevada, including existing initiatives and available data. The Subcommittee's first meeting took place January 13, 2020. At this meeting, the Subcommittee worked to establish a "working dictionary" of terms specific to the industries involved in food rescue efforts. Since Nevada efforts require cross-industry collaboration, many of these terms were new to members and creating a foundation of technical language was necessary. Subcommittee members and guests also listened to presentations from partnering agencies and businesses on existing cold and hot-food rescue programs statewide. Representatives from Three Square Food Bank, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, MGM Resorts, and Caesars Entertainment presented on food rescue initiatives.

Food Rescue Categories

At the February 2020 Subcommittee meeting, members identified three (3) food rescue categories which encompass the scope of the FFPNL Program. Data collected under each category will be used to establish the program baseline and set cumulative annual goals for the next five (5) years. The categories and characteristics of each category are outlined below:

Category 1: Perishable Prepared Food

Characteristics of food in this category:

- Food that is temperature sensitive and must be quickly consumed or flash frozen
- Bulk food that is temperature sensitive and must also be packaged into usable portioned amounts

- Planned food rescue that requires food bank/agency labor within a short window

Included in this category:

- Banquets, events, concessions
- Restaurants

Category 2: Perishable Non-prepared Food

Characteristics of food in this category:

- Food that is individually sold as grocery/retail products
- Bulk food that is already frozen or dry but is pre-packed and needs only a scheduled pick up
- Food that is in small, moderate, or large amounts that are pre-scheduled for pick up on regular routes

Included in this category:

- Gleaning/agricultural
- Grocery retail
- Emerging retail
- Vendors/food production

Category 3: Non-perishable Food*

Characteristics of food in this category:

- Food resourcing based on circumstances that are unusual or irregular
- Canned, packaged, dry goods

Food included in this category:

- Grocery retail
- Emerging retail
- Food shows
- Vendors/food production

**Donated food procured from community food drives will not be included, as some of those foods are purchased for donation and not to divert food from landfills.*

Food Rescue Data

The FFPNL Subcommittee collected 2019 food rescue data from three (3) major partners to develop a food rescue baseline to inform the five (5) year program goal required per SB178. The data, per organization, as well as a cumulative data for each category is outlined below:

Three Square

Category	Pounds	Meals	Donors
1: Prepared Perishable Food	82,189	68,491	16
2: Perishable Non-prepared Food	10,006,473	8,338,728	349
3: Non-perishable Food	9,810,511	8,175,426	N/A*

**Most of these donors overlap the other two buckets. The additional donors are mostly donors of beverages – Niagara, Nestle Water, Bonanza Beverage, Premium Waters, Pepsi, Coca Cola, etc.*

Food Bank of Northern Nevada

Category	Pounds	Meals	Donors
1: Prepared Perishable Food*	N/A	N/A	N/A
2: Perishable Non-prepared Food	9,804,084	8,170,070	164
3: Non-perishable Food	2,868,812	2,390,677	151

** Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN) does not rescue or receive food that falls into Bucket 1. FBNN does not have the equipment or resources to accept and properly store Category 1 foods.*

Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada

Category	Pounds	Meals	Donors
1: Prepared Perishable Food	9,387	7,823	8
2: Perishable Non-prepared Food	N/A	N/A	N/A
3: Non-perishable Food	N/A	N/A	N/A

Cumulative

Category	Pounds	Meals	Donors
1: Prepared Perishable Food	91,576	76,314	24
2: Perishable Non-prepared Food	19,810,557	16,506,798	513
3: Non-perishable Food	12,679,323	10,566,103	151

The Subcommittee will continue to collect food donation data in pounds, meals, and number of donors throughout 2021 to assess trends and track variances due to COVID-19. Due to barriers related to COVID-19, the Subcommittee also agreed to establish a short-term goal regarding donor retention to maintain and increase donors throughout the pandemic.

Recognizing there are likely additional food donation/rescue efforts occurring statewide, particularly in rural counties, the Subcommittee conducted an environmental scan. Between October and November 2020, two (2) environmental scans were conducted: one (1) by Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada to assess northern rural counties and one (1) by Three Square Food Bank to assess southern rural counties. The results of both environmental scans will be presented and discussed at the January 2021 FFPNL Subcommittee meeting.

To explore other opportunity gaps, the Subcommittee asked representatives from the NDEP and EPA to present on existing Nevada data. The EPA shared their new resource, the *Excess Food Opportunities Map*, which informs waste management and food recovery at the local level by identifying potential sources of organic feedstocks, infrastructure gaps, and alternatives to landfill. The map supports diversion of excess food from landfills through the identification and display of establishment-specific information about potential generators and recipients of excess food.⁸ The map includes potential excess food generators and low/high estimates for excess food amounts.

In addition, the Subcommittee plans to use the following steps, per the *Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.*, to help estimate the amount of surplus food that potentially could be available for rescue from select sectors of the local food economy:

1. Identification of relevant businesses and institutions located in Nevada
 - a. The following sectors have been identified: Colleges and Universities; Correctional facilities; Events and recreation facilities; Food manufacturing and processing; Food wholesalers and distributors; Grocers and Markets; Health care (hospitals and nursing homes); Hospitality (Hotels); K-12 Schools; and Restaurants and Caterers
2. The percentage of providers included as potential food donors (i.e., the participation rate)
3. Metrics to quantify how much surplus food potentially could be available for donation from those business and institutions (i.e., the donation rate)
4. Estimated amounts of food currently donated by these sectors. By deducting amounts currently being donated, we arrive at the “untapped potential” for increased food donation.

These steps, along with the EPA’s excess food estimates, the Nevada environmental scan results, and the 2019/2020 food donation data, will be used to develop Nevada’s Food for People, Not Landfills Program five (5) year goal.

Program Seal

The FFPNL Subcommittee is working with the OFS and DHHS to develop the official program seal. Seal drafts were presented to the Subcommittee at the September 2020 meeting and members provided feedback. The FFPNL official program seal will be finalized in 2021.

⁸ <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/excess-food-opportunities-map>

NEXT STEPS

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to exacerbate food insecurity and food supply/access issues in Nevada, it is critical now more than ever to be mindful of food waste, when so many Nevadans are struggling with hunger. Many states have joined the national efforts to reduce food insecurity, including Nevada. The purpose of the Food for People, Not Landfills Program is to reduce food insecurity by redirecting edible food to hungry communities, food that would otherwise be diverted to the landfill.

There are currently no nationally standardized terms used on food labels for food date labeling. As a result, many states and localities have standards that vary widely, contributing to a patchwork of different date labeling terms that are often misleading to end-users. In 2018, the first-ever Bipartisan Food Recovery Caucus was formed to support EPA's and USDA's national food waste reduction goals and later in 2019, H.R. 3981 Food Labeling Act of 2019 was passed to standardize food date labels. The Food for People, Not Landfills Subcommittee has begun conducting research and will continue to explore the possibility of statewide standardization of food date labels in Nevada, as other states such as California (A.B. 954) have done.

The Food for People, Not Landfills Subcommittee has made significant progress within SB178's first year of implementation, despite the pandemic impacting and disrupting in-person meetings as well as 2020 food donations. Progress will continue into 2021 through identification of potential opportunity gaps to ensure all data is captured to develop a comprehensive, educated baseline measure and five (5) year goal. The program seal and criteria for partner participation will also be finalized in 2021. In addition, the Subcommittee agreed to begin development of a donor toolkit to support new/existing food donors. The toolkit will include best practices and resources and will be completed later in 2021.