



Food Waste Reduction & Recovery Initiative

Presentation to Zero Waste Subcommittee - November 9th, 2021

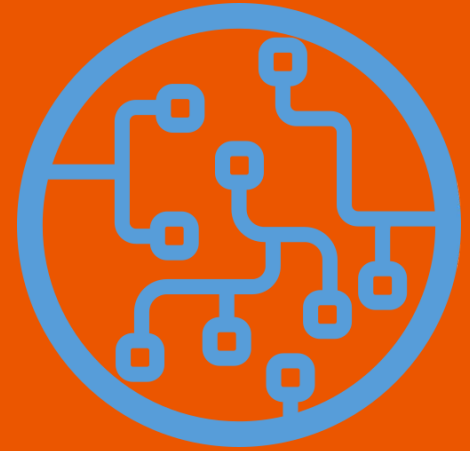
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Agenda

1. Learning from Others (5 minutes)
2. Grocery Store Survey (5 minutes)
3. Food Waste Recipient Engagement (10 minutes)
4. Overview of Food-Generating Business Partner Engagement (10 minutes)
5. Recommendations for Educational Campaign (10 minutes)

Learning from Others





Southeast Food Waste Policy Gap Analysis and Inventory

- No states in the southeast that have organics disposal bans or mandatory recycling laws
- Many other states and municipalities have these laws and oftentimes other actions were taken before the launch of those policies to gain traction
- Massachusetts was the first to ban food waste and actions leading up to the ban include:
 - Updating the permit structure for composting and AD facilities
 - Investing in infrastructure by obtaining grants and low-interest loans
 - Reduced the burden of regulation of other waste ban materials for supermarkets that diverted food waste through partnership with the Massachusetts Food Association
 - Development of a no-cost technical assistance program to support business compliance

(Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., August 2021)



Best Practices for Food Waste Reduction Planning

- [Quick Guide to Creating a City Food Waste Work Plan](#) - Natural Resources Defense Council (2020)
- [Best Practices & Emerging Solutions Guide](#) - Food Waste Reduction Alliance (2015)
- [Nashville Food Waste Initiative](#) - Partnership between NRDC, Urban Green Lab and Environmental Law Institute
- Breggin, L., Hu, A., Koenig, S. (2021). [A Toolkit for Incorporating Food Waste in Municipal Climate Action Plans](#). © 2021 Environmental Law Institute®, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved



MEANS Database as a Partner

What is MEANS Database?

A free web communications platform where food-generating businesses with excess are connected to nearby nonprofit emergency food providers.

How does MEANS Database work?

An organization sends text and email notifications to nonprofits whenever donations are posted on the website, allowing for donors and nonprofits to connect and streamline the food donation process.

What is MEANS up to in Florida?

Creating localized networks for food recovery using a national platform. Nonprofits and businesses in Florida can manage donations on the platform and receive transportation assistance for their donations. Over 45,000 pounds of food was recovered in Florida through MEANS over the past 6 months.

What we are accomplishing together...

- Assisting with logistics of food recovery from businesses to nonprofit providers
- Offer to assist with costs for transportation for food recovery
- Addressing barriers related to Tax Deductions for food donations
- Assistance with education and awareness raising
- Sharing best practices and lessons from other communities
- And this is just the beginning!

Grocery Store Engagement





Overview of Survey

Huge Shout Out to Zero Waste Gainesville

- This was a 100% grassroots initiative lead by volunteers
- Rachel Bhattacharyya and Amiya Gupta led the initiative

Methodology

- Survey questions modeled survey after *Slow Road to Zero*, a 2019 supermarket report published by The Center for Biological Diversity
- Used in-person approach to conducting survey; phone and email were less effective in getting responses

Main Questions

- If/how food is tracked to minimize food waste.
- How markets measure the life-span of food.
- The policies and procedures implemented for management and disposal of unsold food.
- The challenges faced in balancing profit against waste.
- Covid-19's impact on food policies.
- Catastrophic food loss protocols.



Preliminary Insights

- For the most part, grocery stores are beholden to the policies made a corporate level.
- Reporting / data tracking of food and sustainability-related information is not transparent to the public.
- Corporate websites often present sustainability goals, but lack the data and specifics to support these claims.
- Catastrophic food loss events (i.e. storms) create significant food waste. Stores do not have backup generators on site.
- There may be more food wasted upstream from distributors than at grocery store locations themselves.
- Most grocery stores in Gainesville are already donating to Bread of the Mighty Food Bank, but it is unknown how much edible food waste being produced is being donated vs. discarded.
- Anecdotal interest in municipal composting

Food Waste Recipient Engagement





Overview of Survey

Main Questions

- What are your current operations?
- Are you at capacity?
- What challenges would you experience in receiving more food donations?
- What resources do you need to receive more food donations?

Methodology for Conducting

- Phone calls
- Email
- Follow-up at least twice

Target Audience

- Brick and Mortar Food Pantries
- Food Distribution Event Organizers
- Home Delivery Organizations
- Prepared Meal Distribution Organizations

Response Rate

- Reached out to approx. 30 organizations
- Response from 14



Brick and Mortar Food Pantry

- Nine respondents operated a pantry at their facility
- Eligibility Requirements: Member of an organization, possess ID, sign-up list, zip code, need/emergency, income level, employment status, county resident
- Seven groups indicated interest in having educational resources or programming around health and nutrition
- Five organizations would allow more people to take more food if they had it, one would give food to more people
- BOTM supplies food for 5 groups and 7 groups take donations in addition to that
- Most donations arrive at pantry via volunteers outside the recipient organization
- Six groups at least occasionally have perishable items. To obtain or have more, they would need:
 - Storage space - 8
 - Refrigeration - 6
 - Staff - 5
 - Volunteers - 4
- No groups end up with excess food that they must throw away



Food Distribution Events

- Seven respondents host distribution events in the community
- Most are hosted monthly, one twice monthly, one 2-3x/year, and one weekly
- Eligibility criteria: Income level (3), county resident, employment status
- Food is obtained through Farmshare, donations, the Mobile Outreach Clinic and BOTM
- Five groups would like to host more frequently. To do so, they would need:
 - More donations -5*
 - Volunteers - 3*
 - Refrigeration -5*
 - Staff Capacity - 1*
 - Storage Space - 5*
- Five organizations at least occasionally have perishable items which are stored in their limited refrigerator/freezer, a refrigerated food truck, or are distributed the same day as it is received
- Four groups reported they have run out of food and one group reported that they have had excess food in the past
 - Excess is because people don't want certain items and is distributed at the next month's event*



Home Deliveries of Food

- Five organizations deliver food to homes
 - 3 do so on an as-needed basis
 - 2 do so as a regular part of operations
- Eligibility criteria: Age, experiencing homelessness, signed-up client, income level
- Organizations deliver when they are able, weekly, twice a month, and monthly
- Food is supplied by donations, Bread of the Mighty, community gardens, and Farmshare
- Four groups provide perishable food in the deliveries
 - Storage of perishables ranges from the use of other groups' refrigeration, cooler bags, in-house refrigeration, and same-day distribution
- All organizations are interested in doing more deliveries. To do so, they would need:
 - More food donations - 4
 - Storage/Operating Space - 3
 - Refrigeration - 3
 - Staff Capacity - 2
 - Volunteers and transportation
- Four organizations run out of food and 1 does not
- Two groups can have excess as well
 - Excess is sent to additional recipients, saved until the next event, or refrigerated for organization members



Prepared Meals

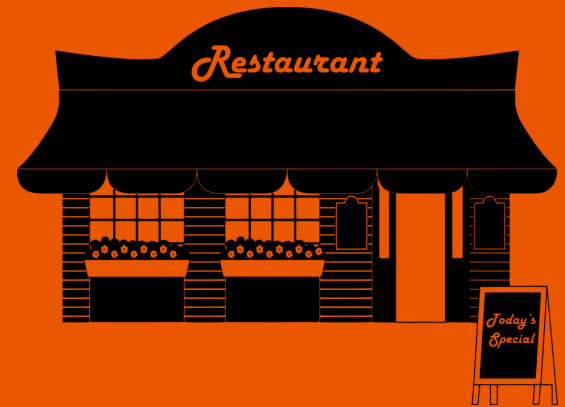
- Four respondents prepared meals for the community at their facility either once a month or weekly
- Meals are prepared by volunteers from the organizations
- Food is purchased from the store or is obtained through donations (Leonardo's Pizza, Publix)
- Two groups are interested in more frequent meals and would need:
 - More food - 2*
 - Staff Capacity - 1*
 - Refrigeration - 1*
 - Facility/storage space - 2*
 - Volunteers - 1*
- All groups can run out of food and have excess food
 - Excess is given to volunteers, shared the next day, or taken to social service organizations like GRACE Marketplace or St. Francis House



Student Assistance

- **Students to assist with campaign to solicit donations**
 - Marketing/design students to develop a campaign requesting donations of items like shelving and refrigeration
 - These donations will support pantry operations and are a direct ask from the results of the survey
- **Students to assist with volunteer capacity**
 - Engagement survey sent to students allowing them to share areas of interest and experience as it relates to community-based service
 - Staff is working from this list to engage students interested in marketing for the donations campaign
 - Staff is sharing community partner organization volunteer needs with students who indicated interest in food access initiatives

Food-Generating Business Partner Engagement





Local Partner Engagement Survey

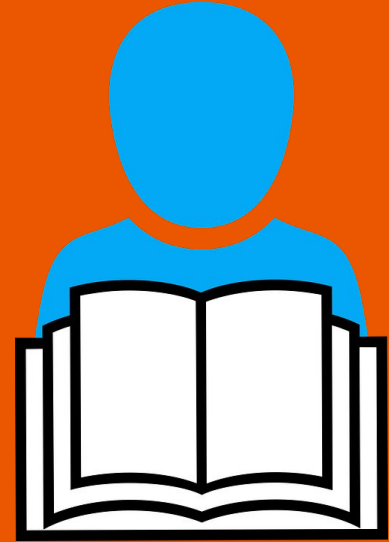
- Tool to gather insights and current challenges local food generating-businesses have with food waste diversion
- Survey opened November 1st and will remain open through February 2022
- Composed by The Repurpose Project with additions from City staff
 - Feedback provided by local business owners
- **Section 1: Source reduction practices**
 - Amount of waste generation
 - Current reduction practices
 - Barriers to reducing waste
- **Section 2: Edible food donation and rescue**
 - Established partnerships for human consumption
 - Donated food for animal consumption
 - Motivations for food donation
 - Challenges to donating excess edible food
- **Section 3: Food scrap diversion for composting**
 - Amount of composted materials
 - Motivations for composting
 - Barriers to composting
- All sections include questions to assess what resources businesses would need to be successful with each of these components



Student Volunteer Training Process

- Students interested in community-based service around food waste diversion were provided an opportunity to attend a training to assist in the surveying of local food-generating businesses
- On Tuesday 10/26, students were trained by City and The Repurpose Project Staff
- Training included:
 - An overview of the Food Waste Ordinance and food waste diversion
 - A question-by-question walk-through of the survey
 - Tips on interacting with business staff
 - Additional volunteer opportunities around food
 - Role-play of a survey session
- 7 students were trained during this session
- Each student signed up for 3 businesses to survey and may choose to complete more
- We will host additional trainings per interest of more students

Educational Campaign Recommendations





Possible Components of Educational Campaign

Education following the Food Recovery Hierarchy

- Source Reduction
- Rescuing Edible Food
- Composting

FAQs

FL laws and liability information

Platforms:

- Website - Toolkit style
- Videos
- Content available to pull off and distribute
 - Fact Sheets
 - FL laws related to food recovery
 - Food Recovery partners
 - Composting partners



Proposed Campaign Budget

- Approximately \$7,500 for consultant/partner (i.e. The Repurpose Project) to create educational materials needed for food-generating businesses to follow the Food Recovery Hierarchy.
- Additional resources (i.e. City staff resources) will be necessary to provide technical assistance for businesses to implement best practices once policy takes effect.



Campaign Development Timeline

4 Phase Timeline - 6+ month project:

- Phase 1 - Data collection (survey)
- Phase 2 - Data analysis, review similar campaigns, follow up stakeholder interviews if necessary
- Phase 3 - Create educational content
- Phase 4 - Edit & review content, prepare for website building

Extra Components for this Program to Consider:

- Recognition program for businesses (i.e. acknowledgement of compliance)
- Technical assistance to implement best practices / make use of educational materials (once ordinance takes effect)

*We are already building partnerships between businesses and nonprofits, recruiting volunteers, and seeking donations of refrigerators / shelving for nonprofit partners to help increase capacity

Collaboration is Key!

Thank you to our partners and volunteers!



**HOSMP - Homeless Outreach and Street
Medicine Program**



