



N A S H V I L L E
F O O D
W A S T E
 I N I T I A T I V E

VALUE OF WASTED FOOD
 IN THE U.S. EACH YEAR
\$ 218 BILLION

FOOD WASTED BY THE
 AVERAGE PERSON MONTHLY
28 POUNDS

ANNUAL COST OF FOOD WASTE
 TO THE AVERAGE FAMILY OF
 FOUR
\$ 1800

ANNUALLY THE GREENHOUSE
 GAS EMITTED BY WASTED FOOD
 IS THE EQUIVALENT OF
37 MILLION CARS

THE FOOD WASTED IN THE U.S.
 EVERY DAY COULD MORE THAN
 FILL NISSAN STADIUM, HOME OF
 THE TENNESSEE TITANS



BACKGROUND

Up to forty percent of the food we produce in the United States goes uneaten. When we waste that food, we waste all the water, energy, agricultural chemicals, labor, and other resources that go into growing, storing and transporting it. Most waste occurs among consumers, restaurants, grocery stores, and institutional foodservice—and 95 percent of that food is disposed in landfills, where it emits harmful greenhouse gases. The federal government has set a national goal of reducing food waste by 50 percent by 2030.

If we reduced our food waste by just 30 percent and redistributed that food effectively, we could take care of all 42 million food-insecure Americans every day of the year.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)—a leading national environmental organization of scientists, lawyers, economists, and other experts—is at the forefront of efforts to address the nation’s food waste challenge. NRDC is developing local and national strategies to prevent food from going to waste, rescue surplus food, and recycle food scraps.

Cities play a critical role in meeting America’s food waste challenge. In 2015, NRDC selected Nashville as its pilot city for developing high-impact local policies and on-the-ground actions to address food waste. The Nashville Food Waste Initiative (NFWI) develops and implements strategies and practical tools that serve as models for cities around the country. Urban Green Lab, a Nashville-based nonprofit teaching communities how to live sustainable lives, is part of the NFWI leadership team and is helping organize its goals through innovative programming in local classrooms, households, and workplaces.

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

NFWI’s goal is to engage governments, consumers, restaurants, community institutions, and retailers to prevent food waste, rescue surplus food to direct to people in need, and compost and digest what’s left to help build healthy soil. We are connecting people from across the community to leverage the impactful initiatives already underway and identify and implement new approaches. NFWI shares Nashville’s success stories nationally so that they can be replicated by cities throughout the country.

NASHVILLE FOOD WASTE INITIATIVE PROJECTS

PREVENTION

Save the Food Campaign

NRDC is partnering with the Ad Council on the first-ever [national consumer campaign](#) to reduce food waste. The campaign includes creative materials that are being disseminated widely nationally and in Nashville, including on billboards and in buses, university dining halls, and concession stands in professional sports arenas.

Mayor's Food Saver Challenge

NFWI collaborated with the Mayor's Office, Nashville Originals and The Greater Nashville Hospitality Association on a [Food Saver Challenge](#) for the hospitality sector. In order to participate, participants implement measures to prevent food waste, rescue surplus food and/or recycle food scraps—and report on their progress. There is also a separate Mayor's Challenge for food retailers.

Food Waste Measurement Project

NRDC conducted [research](#) to estimate the amounts, sources, and types of food going to waste in Nashville (along with two other cities). NRDC also assessed household food waste through kitchen diaries and consumer surveys to foster a better understanding of the underlying causes of food waste.

Reducing Food Waste in Colleges

NFWI is working with three local universities to prevent food waste and reduce costs in food service environments through [innovative waste tracking software](#).

Food Waste Education Events

NFWI has co-hosted several panel discussions as well as screenings of ground-breaking documentaries such as *Wasted! The Story of Food Waste*, including at the Adventure Science Center, Vanderbilt University and Green Door Gourmet farm. NFWI is also partnering with several local nonprofits to bolster their food waste-related programs.

RESCUE

Food Rescue Potential

NRDC assessed what portion of food discarded in Nashville is, in fact, appropriate for rescue. The [analysis](#) quantified the scale of potential food donation in Nashville and set the stage for dialogue and actions to expand food donation and deepen food rescue capacity.

Food Rescue Expansion

Based on [research](#) on the key barriers and opportunities for prepared food donation in Nashville, NFWI is matching potential surplus food donors with hunger relief nonprofits. NFWI is also educating businesses about federal and state liability protection and the enhanced federal tax deduction for food donation. In addition, NFWI collaborated with Metro's Public Health Department to develop food donation guidance and share it with regulated food facilities.

RECYCLING

NFWI serves on Metro Nashville's Solid Waste Master Plan Task Force, which advises the City on the development of its long-range plan to achieve zero waste to landfills through organics recycling and other measures. In addition, NFWI is conducting research on barriers and opportunities for expanding local food scrap recycling infrastructure and increasing the amount of food scraps recycled by businesses.

RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- [The Compost Company](#)
- [Compost Nashville](#)
- [Mayor's Food Saver Challenge](#)
- [Nashville Farmers' Market](#)
- [The Nashville Food Project](#)
- [NRDC: Food Waste](#)
- [One Generation Away](#)
- [Resource Capture](#)
- [Save The Food](#)
- [Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee](#)
- [Society of St. Andrew](#)
- [TN Department of Environment and Conservation](#)
- [Urban Green Lab](#)

CONTACT

More information can be found online from [NRDC](#) or [Urban Green Lab](#).

Linda Breggin, Project Coordinator,
Nashville Food Waste Initiative, breggin@eli.org

Todd Lawrence, Urban Green Lab,
todd@urbangreenlab.org

Darby Hoover, NRDC, dhoover@nrdc.org