



## Food Service Waste Reduction, Reuse and Donation Programs

Food reaches landfills and incinerators more than any other single material in our everyday trash. As of December 2020, the State's Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling law (Assembly Bill 1826) requires businesses that generate 2 cubic yards or more of solid waste each week, to arrange for organic waste recycling services. Organic waste includes landscaping waste, food waste and food-soiled paper waste. Service options include utilizing three-stream or two-stream, color-coded collection containers for source-separated organic materials; or single-stream mixed waste if the material is sent to a high diversion organic waste processing facility.

As of January 1, 2022, Senate Bill 1383 requires jurisdictions to implement a food recovery program whereby Tier 1 commercial food generators, including food service providers, will need to recover the maximum amount of edible food that would normally be disposed of as waste. Facilities can partner with local non-profit organizations, who will receive and distribute the surplus food to the public. Tier 2 commercial food generators, including health facilities with an on-site food facility and 200 beds or more, large events

and venues, and restaurant facilities of 5,000 sf or more or at least 250 seats are required to comply by January 1, 2024.

According to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2011, 41% of Los Angeles County households living in poverty experience some form of food insecurity.

Reducing food waste saves money by reducing the cost of disposing waste and buying only the food that is necessary. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Food Recovery Hierarchy dictates that source reduction of food waste should be the first step in recovery, followed by feeding hungry people, feeding animals, and composting; with landfill disposal as the last resort. Recovering food helps to feed hungry people in

local communities and creates job opportunities. Reducing food waste also conserves resources that are required to grow, transport and dispose of the food. Each ton of food waste produces 0.54 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent that is emitted into the atmosphere which is equal to a month and a half of a car's tailpipe emissions.

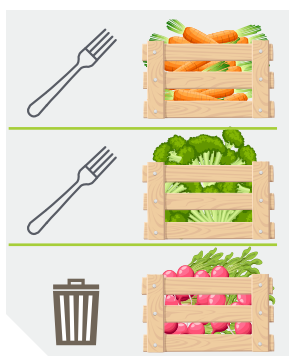
**41% of LA County households living in poverty experience some form of food insecurity.**

On average, 16% of household food purchases are thrown away every year.



Source:  
"Rising Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County", Los Angeles County Dept of Public Health, July 2015

Over a third of all food produced is lost or wasted every year.



Source:  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank


Each year, approximately 1.6 million tons of food is disposed in LA County. That's the weight of 10,666 blue whales!



Source:  
<https://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/SoCalConversion/PDFS/FoodWasteCloggingUpCalifornia.pdf>

### Tips, Resources, and Assistance

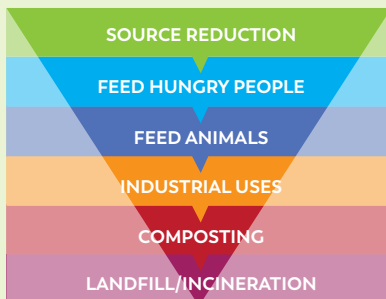
-  Follow the Food Recovery Hierarchy to help reduce food waste and feed hungry people. EPA's Sustainable Management of Food webpage can be found at [epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy](https://epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy)
-  Integrate FoodKeeper, a free app developed by the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, to help maximize the freshness and quality of food and beverages.
-  Save money by reducing wasted food and packaging using EPA's Food and Packaging Waste Prevention Toolkit, designed to help food service establishments and commercial kitchens. [archive.epa.gov/region9/organics/web/pdf/reducing\\_wasted\\_food\\_pkg\\_tool.pdf](https://archive.epa.gov/region9/organics/web/pdf/reducing_wasted_food_pkg_tool.pdf)
-  Know that the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act protects food donors from liability from donations in good faith to nonprofit organizations.
-  Find local organizations accepting food donations at [pw.lacounty.gov/epd/sbr/find-recycler.aspx?z=&m=Food+Donation&mt=](https://pw.lacounty.gov/epd/sbr/find-recycler.aspx?z=&m=Food+Donation&mt=)
-  Ensure food to be donated is kept at the correct temperatures and protected from contamination. Learn about Los Angeles County Public Health Food Donation Guidelines at [PublicHealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/WhatsNew/FoodDonations.pdf](https://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/WhatsNew/FoodDonations.pdf)

 For more information on Food Donation and Recovery, contact FoodDROP LA at [FoodDROPLA@pw.lacounty.gov](mailto:FoodDROPLA@pw.lacounty.gov) or call 1(888) CLEAN-LA., Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.



# Los Angeles County Facility Case Studies

## EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy



## Reusable Trays for Food Service and Resident Meals

Reusable food service trays are an excellent way to reduce waste at facilities that provide meals. The food service facility at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility feeds approximately 7,000 residents each day for a total of 630,000 meals each month.



Meals are primarily served on reusable plastic trays that are washed after each use. Facilities that utilize disposable single use dishware and utensils generate substantially more trash than facilities using reusable dishware and utensils. Initial cost to purchase durable and reusable foodware, as well as labor costs associated with washing can be recouped over time due to the reduced cost of disposal and product purchasing.

## Deliveries in Reusable Crates and Shipping Containers

Facilities like Acton Rehabilitation Center and Twin Towers Correctional Facility receive supplies that are delivered in reusable crates. In some locations, emptied crates are reused for the delivery of sack lunches to residents.



Ultimately, the crates are taken back by the vendor on a rotating basis when new products are delivered. The use of reusable crates can greatly reduce disposal. Additionally, vendors may be willing to negotiate reduced purchasing costs if your facility agrees to make a one-time investment in reusable crates.

## Rotation and Organization of Meal Supplies

Food supply rotation is a preferred way to manage stock, as it reduces food spoilage. Central Juvenile Hall prepares meals for staff and residents at its facility. They have several practices in place to ensure minimal food goes to waste. Viable leftover food is saved



for the next day's meal or served to staff members for dinner. To prevent over-preparation, supplies are ordered based on the number of meals served.

This facility has a consistent number of residents which allows the kitchen to know how many meals to make; however, facilities with

varying populations may need to develop more comprehensive food supply analytics to track appropriate purchases. Dry storage is organized by date and the oldest supplies are rotated forward and used first. Food expiration dates are noted on a board and checked regularly to ensure that "close to expiring" items do not go to waste. Meals are prepared from "soonest to expire" foods.

## Repurposing Leftover Food and Scraps



Los Verdes Golf Course in Rancho Palos Verdes hosts special events in their banquet hall. To reduce waste, event staff orders food based on the number of expected guests.

When there are excess ingredients, such as meat, staff will save the items and use them in the next day's

lunch at the on-site restaurant. They also make soups and stews from leftover vegetables and scraps. Los Verdes orders spices and condiments in bulk containers. Food items are marked clearly with expiration dates and "best-by" dates for all kitchen staff members.

## Summer Lunch Food Donation

Pamela Park in LA County unincorporated community of Duarte participates in the Parks and Recreation Department's Summer



Lunch Program, which provides free meals to children attending day camp. The park serves approximately 65 meals each day.

The number of meals needed is predicted based on past recipients and camp attendees. If there

are leftover meals, they are saved and handed out at the next day's lunch. After two days, remaining meals that are not expired and that have been properly stored are given to families that attend the lunch program to take home.