

# REDUCING FOOD WASTE:

RECOVERING UNTAPPED RESOURCES IN OUR FOOD SYSTEM

## Los Angeles Area Food Recovery Guide

*Food is only a waste product when it is misallocated.*

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# Los Angeles Food Policy Council

The Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) is a collective impact initiative, representing over 300 organizations and thousands of individual community members, working to make Southern California a Good Food region for everyone—a place where food is healthy, affordable, fair and sustainable. Our key objectives are to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly in disadvantaged communities; develop a thriving “Good Food” economy; and strengthen agricultural and environmental stewardship throughout the region.

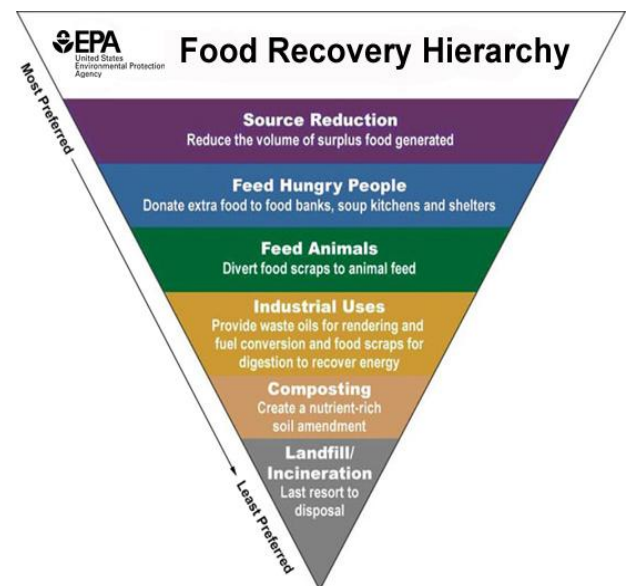
## Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Working Group

The Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Working Group (FWPR WG) works to advance policy that supports a comprehensive vision for food recovery in the Los Angeles region. Our vision bridges advocates and practitioners in food security and food recycling to address issues of hunger, equitable food access, fair labor and sustainable food systems. The working group consists of over 140 stakeholders from the non-profit, business and public sectors. Our goals include: (1) reduce surplus food through education and the promotion of source reduction practices (2) increase food security through the recovery of food resources for human consumption; (3) advance environmental sustainability through the use of diverted food waste for livestock food, energy and compost; and (4) maintain the highest health, safety and quality of life standards for workers at each point of the food recovery chain.

For more information, email [info@goodfoodla.org](mailto:info@goodfoodla.org).

## Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Food Recovery Hierarchy

Our goals for food recovery were significantly informed by the Environmental Protection Agency’s Food Recovery Hierarchy (see figure 1), which prioritizes strategies for preventing and diverting food waste. The top levels of the hierarchy are most preferred as they create the greatest environmental, social and economic benefits. The hierarchy, listed in descending order based on these benefits, consists of: (1) Source reduction, (2) Feed hungry people, (3) Feed animals, (4) Industrial uses, (5) Composting and (6) Landfill.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Food Recovery Hierarchy, Sustainable Management of Food, Environmental Protection Agency

## Acknowledgments:

This guide was only possible due to the contributions of the Food Waste Prevention & Rescue Working Group of the LA Food Policy Council. The working group dedicated many meetings and much of their personal time to researching, writing, editing and providing feedback for the completion of this collective document.

We would like to extend a heartfelt appreciation for the Working Group Co-Chairs, Amardeep Gill of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy and Amy Hammes of the City of Burbank's Recycling Center, for the many hours spent guiding, shaping, organizing and writing this guide. Additional thanks are due to each Working Group member organization for contributing towards policy, systems and environmental changes that help reach our goals of sustainably and equitably reducing food waste a reality.

## Working Group Members

City of Burbank- Public Works  
City of Los Angeles- Bureau of Sanitation  
Don't Waste LA  
EcoSet  
Food Finders  
Food Forward  
Hunger Action LA  
Kiss the Ground  
LA Compost  
L.A. Kitchen  
LA & SF Specialty  
LA County Department of Public Works  
LA Shares  
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy  
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health-  
Environmental Health Division  
Los Angeles Unified School District-Food Services  
Division  
Mayor's Office of Sustainability  
My Community Nutrition

Natural Resources Defense Council  
Office of Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Koretz,  
District 5  
Pando Populous  
Public Health Alliance  
Public Health Institute  
Pulp Pantry  
St. Francis Center  
TreePeople  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Zero Waste Business Council  
UC Cooperative Extension Los Angeles County  
Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental  
College  
Urban Harvester  
Waste Less Living/301 Organics  
Waste Not OC  
Waste Not Want Not  
Westside Produce Exchange/No Meal Left Behind  
Wynbrandt Farms



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# I. Objectives

## What is the purpose of this guide?

This resource guide was designed in response to growing national, state and local interest in policies that reduce food waste and its associated environmental, social and economic costs. This guide aims to equip stakeholders in the public, private and nonprofit sectors with resources to increase food recovery and achieve the national food loss and waste goal, calling for a 50-percent reduction by 2030<sup>2</sup>. The City of LA's Zero Waste goal is 90% diversion by 2025. We hope this guide can demonstrate the untapped value of food "waste". **Food is only a waste product when it is misallocated.**

The organizations highlighted in this guide are active members of the Food Waste Prevention & Rescue Working Group of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council, and are not an exhaustive representation of food recovery work in Los Angeles.



## Guide Objectives:

- 
- To inform and drive policy-making that facilitates and supports increased food recovery
  - To inspire new partnerships by highlighting food recovery practices
  - To demystify food recovery misconceptions related to food donation liability
  - To provide and share information and resources related to food waste prevention, recovery and donation, and composting

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<sup>2</sup> USDA's Office of the Chief Economist: <https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/faqs.htm>

## II. Problems and Solutions for Food Waste

Angelenos throw away over one million tons of organic materials every year, including food scraps and yard trimmings.<sup>3</sup> On a national level, American consumers, businesses, and farms spend \$218 billion a year, growing, processing, transporting, and disposing food that is never eaten. That equates to 52 million tons of food sent to landfills annually, plus another 10 million tons that are discarded or left unharvested on farms.<sup>4</sup> All the while, one in seven households is food insecure—or lacking reliable access to sufficient quantities of quality, nutritious and affordable food.<sup>5</sup>

Organizations and residents in the Los Angeles area can engage in the sustainable management of food through food waste prevention (or source reduction), surplus food donation, and food recycling. Green refuse and food scraps<sup>6</sup> are valuable resources that can be recaptured through improved organics waste management practices and the expansion of organics recycling infrastructure (compost sites, anaerobic digestion facilities). The new Zero Waste LA Franchise System in the City of Los Angeles, set to begin in July 2017, will be a critical tool toward building a robust, local and cutting-edge organic waste management system for the City.

Zero Waste LA will transform our waste and recycling system for businesses and apartments and move us away from dependence on landfills, dirty trucks and dangerous jobs through increased standards in waste diversion. The City and private sector's current capacity for collecting and processing *organic* waste will need to be built over time to achieve the diversion goals of Zero Waste LA. Franchise haulers will be valuable partners in creating a scaled, economically viable and environmentally sustainable waste infrastructure for organic material. Through this initiative, waste haulers will also be required to partner with food recovery organizations to help food businesses donate edible, unused food. This guide introduces relevant stakeholders to the landscape of organizations in Los Angeles working to prevent, recover and repurpose food waste in equitable and sustainable ways.



<sup>3</sup> Don't Waste LA, *Zero Waste LA Franchise Ordinance: Transforming the Waste and Recycling System for the Commercial and Multi-Family Sectors*

<sup>4</sup> ReFED Report: [www.refed.com](http://www.refed.com)

<sup>5</sup> *Feeding America*: [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)

<sup>6</sup> See glossary in appendix for definition

# III. The Case for Expanded Organic and Food Waste Processing

## 1. Achieving Waste Diversion Rates

*Organic material contributes up to 35% of waste in LA's landfills. California must achieve 75% waste diversion by 2020, and the City of LA must achieve 90% waste diversion by 2025.*

The City of Los Angeles and the Zero Waste LA franchise waste haulers will conduct waste characterization audits to understand and measure the amount of organic materials collected. In order to meet expected diversion rates, Zero Waste LA haulers will need to devise ways to encourage customers to separate organic waste at home or on the business and enroll in organic waste recycling services.

## 2. Food Insecurity

*Los Angeles County is home to the largest estimated population of food-insecure people in the U.S. — with close to 1.5 million people unsure of how and when they will obtain their next quality meal.<sup>7</sup> Nearly 40% of low-income adults in Los Angeles County are food insecure.<sup>8</sup> Discarded food, much of which is still fit for human consumption, is the largest waste stream contributing to local landfills.<sup>9</sup>*

Donating surplus food to local food banks and food recovery organizations can benefit Angelenos in need, provide tax benefits through deductible donations, and reduce the burden on landfills.

## 3. Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs)

*If food waste were a country, it would be the world's third largest emitter of GHGs.<sup>10</sup>*

Food waste that is left to rot in landfills becomes a significant source of methane emissions—a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Diverting food from landfills helps the City comply with many state mandated policies related to reducing air pollution and improving air quality.

## 4. Rebuilding Soils and Sequestering Carbon

*Due to urban development and unsustainable farming practices, we have eroded over 50% of the carbon stock from our topsoil across all our arable land.*

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<sup>7</sup> Feeding America: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/>

<sup>8</sup> UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (2014)

<sup>9</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, *Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts & Figures 2013*, June 2015.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization, *Food Wastage Footprint*, 2013.



Turning organic material into compost and applying it to our homes and gardens returns key soil organisms that are crucial to jump-starting the carbon sequestration process,<sup>11</sup> and improving the quality of food grown. The restoration of our soil can lead to greater quality food production at a neighborhood and regional level.

## 5. Replenishing Local Water Stores

*Regular application of soil amendments like compost and mulch supports plants' ability to rebuild soil aggregates that increase water-holding capacity and decrease water runoff.*

Soil aggregates rebuilt through composting and mulch can hold 20% of their weight in water—thus promoting water conservation through reduced water runoff and replenishing groundwater stores. Twenty-five percent of the water used in the U.S. is for growing food that is ultimately lost or wasted.<sup>12</sup> Composting and mulch decreases the amount of water needed for food production and recycles unused food to help restore our groundwater supply.

## 6. Economic Development Opportunity

*On a per-ton basis, composting sustains twice as many jobs as landfilling and four times the number of jobs as burning garbage.<sup>13</sup>*

Specialization in organics, food waste diversion and food waste processing has potential to create jobs and new recycling enterprises. The jobs have the potential to be quality, safe and sustainable means of employment



<sup>11</sup> See glossary in appendix for definition

<sup>12</sup> Natural Resources Defense Council, *Wasted: How America is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill* August 2012.

<sup>13</sup> [Wasting and Recycling in the United States](#), Institute for Local Self-Reliance (Platt and Seldman, 2000)



## IV. State of the Waste: The Policy Landscape

### National

On September 16, 2015, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Administrator Stan Meiburg announced the United States' first-ever national food loss and waste goal, calling for a 50% reduction by 2030.<sup>14</sup>

### State

**Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling: AB 1826 (Chesbro):** Effective January 1, 2016, AB 1826 requires businesses and multi-family complexes (5 or more units) that generate specified amounts of organic waste to arrange for organics collection services. The requirements are phased in depending on the amount of organic materials disposed of per week with full implementation realized in 2019.

This law requires businesses to separate and recycle the following types of organic waste:

- Food scraps
- Green waste & yard trimmings
- Non-hazardous, non-treated wood waste
- Food-soiled paper and cardboard

**Compostable Organics Management: AB 1594 (Williams):** This bill will eliminate a loophole in state law that allows some yard trimmings and prunings that are used as landfill cover to count as being “diverted” from landfills after 2020. This state law virtually subsidizes the landfilling of this valuable material and is a major disincentive for recycling organics. There are environmentally and economically viable markets for green waste and other woody waste materials that are being undermined by the use of these materials as landfill cover.<sup>15</sup>

**Organics Management Infrastructure Planning: AB 876 (McCarty):** This bill requires local jurisdictions to annually report to CalRecycle an estimate of the amount of organic waste in cubic yards that will be generated in the county or region over a 15-year period. The bill also requires an estimate of the additional organic waste recycling facility capacity in cubic yards that will be needed to process that amount of waste, and an estimate of the areas identified by the county or regional agency as locations for new or expanded organic waste recycling facilities capable of safely meeting that additional need.<sup>16</sup>

**Statewide Compost Policy: AB 1045 (Irwin):** This bill establishes a statewide policy to promote the use of compost by requiring state entities to coordinate the development and deployment of compost that achieves multiple state goals. This bill authorizes the Secretary of California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA)

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<sup>14</sup> USDA's Office of the Chief Economist: <https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/faqs.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Californians Against Waste: <http://www.cawrecycles.org/>

<sup>16</sup> California Compost Coalition, September 2015 | Vol. 2, Issue 9

to work with CalRecycle to ensure the state has a comprehensive composting policy in place that promotes waste diversion and greenhouse gas reduction goals. In addition, AB 1045 states that Cal EPA, in coordination with California Department of Food and Agriculture, will promote the goal of deploying enough compost to reduce greenhouse gases by 5 million metric tons per year. Finally, the measure requires the Cal EPA Secretary to work with the departments and boards within the agency to ensure that policies and regulations are developed to support the goals of the bill.<sup>17</sup>

**Short-lived Climate Pollutants: SB 1383 (Lara):** This bill states that by 2030 the State Air Resources Board must develop a strategy to reduce: emissions of Short Lived Climate Pollutants (also known as Super Pollutants), methane by 40%, hydrofluorocarbon gases by 40%, and anthropogenic black carbon by 50%. *The methane emission reduction goals include a 75% reduction in the level of statewide disposal of organic waste from 2014 levels by 2025.* This bill also aims to divert 20% of edible food that is currently being disposed of, to be recovered for human consumption by 2025.<sup>18</sup>

	Previous Organics Legislation				SB 1383	
	AB 1826	AB 1594	AB 876	AB 1045	Goal	Timeline
2016	Commerical generators w/ 8 cu. yds. of organic waste			Agencies to begin meetings		
2017	Commerical generators w/ 4 cu. yds. of organic waste		Counties submit 15-year organics infrastructure plans	Publish organics recommendations		CalRecycle to develop regs to meet 2025 goals
2018		Jurisdictions submit green waste plans				
2019	Commerical generators w/ 4 cu. yds. of any waste					
2020		No diversion credit for green waste ADC		AB 1045 sunsets	50% reduction in organics disposal (compared to 2014)	
2021	Commerical gen. w/ 2 cu. yds. of any waste (optional)					
2022						Regs go into effect: statewide mandatory organics diversion
2023						
2024						Statewide penalties for non-compliance
2025					75% reduction in organics disposal & 20% food recovery	

*Source: Californians Against Waste, Organics Timeline*

<sup>17</sup> [California State Assembly AB 1045 Fact Sheet, 2015.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Californians Against Waste](#)

## Local

**Don't Waste LA** is a coalition led by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) made up of over 35 environmental organizations, worker advocates, community groups, and over 250 small business working to increase LA's recycling and composting while cleaning up a historically dirty and dangerous industry. In spring of 2014, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a Zero Waste LA franchise policy which will transform our waste and recycling system for businesses and apartments and eliminate our dependence on landfills, dirty trucks and dangerous jobs.

### **Zero Waste LA Franchise System**

In December 2016, the Los Angeles City Council approved the final component of the Zero Waste LA Franchise, making it the first and largest city nationally to adopt a robust plan to move towards Zero Waste. This followed more than four years of advocacy and research by the Don't Waste LA Coalition.

Zero Waste LA's new public-private partnership expands the City's current residential waste and recycling services to all businesses-- commercial, industrial, and large multi-family developments-- in the City of Los Angeles. Under the direction of the City's Bureau of Sanitation, it will create 11 trash hauling zones for the efficient collection and sustainable processing of waste and recyclables. A single hauler will serve each zone and will be accountable for meeting environmental, community, customer service and rate standards.

The Zero Waste LA Franchise System intends to benefit Angelenos through:

- **Food rescue assistance and support**

We highlight this feature of the new waste hauler contracts, as the LAFPC Food Waste Prevention & Rescue Working Group played a major role in shaping the inclusion of the food recovery element in LA's new waste hauling system. Including food recovery and rescue to meet the City's organic waste diversion goals not only decreases greenhouse gases from landfill, but feeds vulnerable Angelenos. (See appendix for contract hauler requirements).

- **Recycling at 100% of customer sites**
- **Landfill reduction of 1 million tons per year**
- **Organic collection & recycling services**
- **Good green jobs**
- **Clean air & reduced neighborhood impacts**





## V. Demystifying Food Donation

### Federal Laws

There are a number of federal laws that encourage food donation in the United States by providing liability protection to donors or tax incentives.

- **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act:** In 1996, Congress passed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act to encourage the donation of food and grocery products to qualified nonprofit organizations. This Act promotes food recovery by providing liability protection to food donors who donate in good faith, avoiding gross negligence or intentional misconduct. A thorough search of filings and review of reported decisions did not turn up a single case that involved food donation-related liability or any attempts to get around the protections offered by the Bill Emerson Act.
- **The U.S. Federal Food Donation Act of 2008:** specifies procurement contract language encouraging Federal agencies and contractors of Federal agencies to donate excess wholesome food to eligible nonprofit organizations to feed food-insecure people in the United States.
- **The Internal Revenue Code 170(e)(3):** provides enhanced tax deductions to businesses to encourage donations of fit and wholesome food to qualified nonprofit organizations serving the poor and needy. Qualified business taxpayers can deduct the cost to produce the food and half the difference between the cost and full fair market value of the donated food.





## VI. Guide to Local Efforts and Practitioners

Our Food Waste Prevention & Rescue Working Group is comprised of over 140 members from non-profit, business, and public sectors in the Los Angeles area. This guide highlights the work being implemented by some of our members, and serves as a resource for policy makers, waste haulers, restaurants and others in search of local resources to assist in food waste recovery and diversion in Los Angeles. The guide focuses on food recovery specifically, and does not delve into food waste prevention efforts, as there are several resources that have already been published on this topic. This document is a glimpse into the practitioners of food recovery and recycling in the Los Angeles area.



*Source: Food Forward*



## Food Recovery and Rescue: Feeding the Hungry

Food recovery is the practice of retrieving edible food that would otherwise go to waste and distributing it to those in need. The member organizations profiled in this section are non-profits and businesses that are dedicated leaders in the field of food recovery in the Los Angeles area and beyond. These diverse models demonstrate the economic viability of sustainable food rescue practices.

• • •

### Food Finders: Rescuing Food, Ending Hunger



Founded in 1989, Food Finders is a non-profit food rescue organization that focuses on edible surplus food recovery/rescue. Since their establishment, Food Finders has seen tremendous growth and expanded their network of agencies and food donors throughout Southern California.

**Populations Served:** Surplus food donors include grocery stores, restaurants, catering companies, hotels, schools and event venues, to name a few. Food Finders also partners with non-profit pantries, missions, shelters, senior centers, sober livings, and youth programs throughout Southern CA, that receive the food.

**Service Areas:** Their service areas include all of Los Angeles County, Orange County and Riverside/San Bernardino County.

**Accepted Food:** Non-perishable, perishable, produce, prepared, pet food, cleaning supplies, flowers

**Program Details:** Food Finders partners with food businesses to rescue good edible food and provide it to partnering agencies that feed people in need. Their program also provides 380 bags of food to schools, so that low income and homeless families have enough food to eat over the weekend.

**Greatest Successes:** Since their inception, they have rescued 129 million pounds of wholesome food and provided 107 million meals. Through their Food 4 Kids program, Food Finders delivers a bag of non-perishable food each Friday to 15 of the neediest families of elementary school students in Long Beach. Volunteers are the heart of Food Finders, picking up and delivering food, sorting and boxing during food drives, and packing their weekly Food 4 Kids bags.

**What the Future Holds:** Food Finders seeks to expand their Food 4 Kids program. They are looking for additional funding for a larger warehouse space, and would like to collaborate with more agencies to assist with their expansion of services.

**Website:** <http://www.foodfinders.org/>

**Email:** Diana Lara, VP of Operations at [dlara@foodfinders.org](mailto:dlara@foodfinders.org)





*“The partnership between Christian Outreach in Action and Food Finders is something we cherish and are grateful for. We are trying to keep up with the large number of people in need and so thankful for the wonderful support and food.”*

**Dixie Dohrmann, Executive Director of Christian Outreach in Action**





## Food Forward: Producing Donation Opportunities for Surplus Produce

Founded in 2009, Food Forward is a non-profit organization serving Los Angeles County that is committed to reducing food waste and hunger within our local communities.

By the end of 2016, Food Forward had rescued and diverted from the landfill over 30 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, the equivalent of 120 million servings of produce.

**Populations Served:** Food Forward connects fresh produce to over 300 agencies. For a list of Food Forward's food donation recipients: <https://foodforward.org/about/who-gets-our-food/>

**Service Areas:** Food Forward's programs recover and glean food from Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties. All produce is distributed to hunger relief organizations in Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Imperial Counties.

**Accepted Food:** Fresh produce

**Program Details:** Food Forward operates three programs:

- **Backyard Harvesting:** Volunteer-driven picks on public and private properties harvesting locally grown fresh produce for the food insecure. Food Forward program staff engages program partners with more than 525 unique private property owners and public space caretakers in Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties.
- **Farmers Market Recovery:** Farmers wanting to help fight hunger with their unsold produce can donate through the Farmers Market Recovery program. Food Forward partners with local farmers and farmers market managers from Santa Monica, Hollywood, Studio City, Mar Vista, West Hollywood, Culver City, Torrance, Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Larchmont, Calabasas, Pasadena, Burbank, Alhambra, Thousand Oaks, Long Beach, and the City of Ventura.
- **Wholesale Recovery:** Food Forward rescues large quantities of viable, unwanted produce from wholesale donors near the Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market. They have nearly 60 partner companies at the wholesale produce market in downtown Los Angeles.

**Greatest Successes:** Food Forward has successfully pioneered a high impact "just in time" produce recovery solution which uses high volume civic engagement, a modest sized staff, and the synergy of three programs to help feed over 1.5 million people in need across eight Southern California counties.



**What the Future Holds:** Food Forward would like to expand their three programs into new geographies. They will need additional vehicles and storage for equipment. They plan to increase staff and volunteers while strategically expanding their partnerships with existing agencies or organizations in these targeted areas.

**Website:** [www.foodforward.org](http://www.foodforward.org)

**Email:** [info@foodforward.org](mailto:info@foodforward.org)



*"It's been our pleasure to partner with Food Forward. Their standards for quality food allows us to serve those in need without any additional processing or concern. Food Forward and their army of volunteers and staff do all the coordination and logistics to collect resources year-round."*

**Will Hernandez**  
**Director of Valley Food Bank**

*"We feel so grateful to be working in Southern California, the land of abundance, at the intersection of two urgent issues: hunger relief and food waste, and being able to see and feel the impact we make in both through our programs. Where Food Forward began as a single person's desire to make change around food justice, it has quickly rippled out to a diverse inclusive family of many thousands of volunteers, produce donors, farmers and supporters who all see the urgency in the part they each play to harvest food, fight hunger and build community."*

**Rick Nahmias, Founder/Executive Director**





## EcoSet: Stable Donation Program on Nomadic Production Sets

Founded in 2009, this small business has created an award-winning model for waste diversion solutions for advertising production and events that includes small-scale food recovery. By implementing Zero Waste standards on set and advanced planning for food recovery, they can quickly reallocate surplus food styling ingredients, non-perishable food and unserved catering meals. EcoSet diverts roughly 30,000 - 40,000 lbs. annually through organics recycling and donation.

**Populations Served:** EcoSet's niche is focused on large national advertisers and production companies, as well as marketing events. They work with the caterer and then arrange for a nearby non-profit organization to pick up unserved food. On-set EcoSet manages Zero Waste practices and food donation process.

**Service Areas:** Los Angeles County, all communities where filming takes place

**Accepted Food:** Non-perishable and perishable food, such as produce and prepared unserved dishes from catered crew meals; and inedible food and plate waste is processed by an organics recycler.

**Program Details:** In addition to advanced recycling and waste prevention practices, their focus on diverting organics is an essential part of their Zero Waste plan, given how much food is generated on a set feeding crew members over long shifts.

Many production caterers serve hot food directly from their trucks, which are required to follow mobile kitchen health codes. Most caterers present their salad bar and cold items on a bed of ice so it is kept at temperature during the meal service. Hot food is kept in heated chafing dishes during the meal, and then packaged by the caterers who are trained in proper food service handling. The donation is then facilitated by EcoSet's crew as soon as the meal is complete. Working with a nearby recipient avoids long distances and transit delays.

- **Waste Prevention Strategies:**
  - Caterers use reusable cutlery and plates for lunches
  - Caterers and Craft Service avoid all polystyrene and plastic products
  - Caterers and Craft Service choose items that avoid excess packaging and waste
  - Caterers and Craft Service use only paper or plant-based disposable products
- **Waste Diversion Strategies:** All food waste, soiled paper, and plant-based disposable food service products are collected for organics recycling
- **Organic Recovery for Donation:**
  - Unserved catering food is donated when possible under the protection of the [Federal Good Samaritan Act](#) to a list of pre-approved partners. Recipient partners are required to pick up from location.
  - Unopened prop food and food styling ingredients are donated.

- In special cases, inedible but still useful food is donated to wildlife group.

**Greatest Successes:** Commercial shoots and marketing events are fast-paced and nomadic, most often with no back -end plan for responsible waste management. Yet EcoSet has mastered food donations not only from lunch service, but also in difficult conditions with odd hours, various locations and security clearance constraints. Whether it's an overnight shoot with 300 gallons of milk in a store or a flatbed truck loaded with 80,000 carrots, they will find a place for these resources to go.

EcoSet is a certified woman owned and operated business and was awarded the Sustainable Business Council of LA's (SBCLA) "Small Business of the Year" in 2013. They are also a proud member of the EPA's Food Recovery Challenge, which is a voluntary reporting of food waste diversion.

**What the Future Holds:** EcoSet is planning to scale their Zero Waste services to more types of productions and events beyond advertising and marketing. They have been working in other US markets since 2009, able to adapt their systems to any type of project, any market and any waste management infrastructure.

**Website:** [www.ecosetconsulting.com](http://www.ecosetconsulting.com)

**Email:** Kris Barberg, Executive Director, [kris@ecosetconsulting.com](mailto:kris@ecosetconsulting.com)



*"By including food recovery in the Zero Waste planning process of a production or event, we are tackling two issues at once. As part of our scope of work, we're keeping edible food out of the waste stream, but what our clients really get excited about is the opportunity to provide resources to others and invest in communities. Whether it's five pans of gourmet catered food or 50 pallets of non-perishable food, we are able to insert food donation seamlessly into a very challenging production process due to advance planning."*

**Kris Barberg, Executive Director**



## LA & SF Specialty's Chefs to End Hunger: Local Food Service Company Engages Their Clients to End Hunger

LA & SF Specialty is a leader in foodservice distribution of carefully curated fine ingredients and the most unique, seasonally ripe, locally grown produce for customers in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Orange County, San Diego, Phoenix and Las Vegas.

Their charitable foundation, the Chefs to End Hunger program, was introduced in 2012. This internal waste prevention program uses the company's existing product delivery routes to pick up excess prepared food from participating hotel, restaurant, and food service clients and redistributes it to local hunger relief agencies. Chefs can turn their food waste into a charitable donation and provide meals to the hungry. LA & SF Specialty created the Chefs to End Hunger program to reduce their company's carbon footprint and address food insecurity in the community.

**Populations Served:** The Midnight Mission, centered in the Skid Row area of Downtown Los Angeles, is one of their main partners for receiving this food. A nonprofit operating solely on donations, they provide a drug rehab program and transitional housing for men at their main facility, as well as another facility for women and children and serve over 1,000 people each meal, 3 meals a day, 7 days a week.

In addition to creating, funding and managing the Chefs to End Hunger program, LA & SF Specialty has been donating raw product of unsellable but edible items from their wholesale business for the past three decades. A sizeable part of their waste reduction is through diverting this material as a charitable donation.

**Service Areas:** LA & SF Specialty provides their Chefs to End Hunger program to their clients in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix, and Las Vegas.

**Accepted Food:** LA & SF Specialty's clients in the Chefs to End Hunger program donate perishable items, such as prepared meals and produce. LA & SF Specialty supplies participating chefs requisite Chefs to End Hunger boxes and foil sheet pans. They pack, label then store them in their coolers until their regularly scheduled delivery drop-off. The food is taken to LA Specialty's facility to distribute to non-profit partners.

**Program Details:** LA & SF Specialty's account managers work with their food service client to customize their plan and how the program can work best for their business. Whether it is an onsite training with the kitchen staff or just simple signage, they work with the client to create reminders, handling tips and proper packing instructions. This guidance helps establish the program's support from senior management to the kitchen staff and creates the needed habits for success.

By using their existing infrastructure, LA & SF Specialty created the Chefs to End Hunger program without adding trucks or complex logistics to their delivery routes. Their clients receive Chefs to End Hunger packing kits at the time of their produce delivery. At the same time, Chefs to End Hunger prepared food kits are picked



up and taken to their regional warehouse in Santa Fe Springs, where the kits are aggregated and then picked up by charitable partners daily.

**Greatest Successes:** In 2015, Chefs to End Hunger received the Golden Heart Award from the Midnight Mission in LA for their demonstrated compassion to those in our community who are less fortunate. In 2016, they diverted over 500,000 pounds of food by way of Chefs to End Hunger kits into kitchens that can repurpose and feed needy communities. Over 1,800,000 pounds of whole product (usable but unsellable) was donated to the Midnight Mission in 2016.

**What the Future Holds:** The next phases of this program will involve introducing mechanisms for measuring results, such as weighing, tracking and showcasing impact on diverting food waste and addressing the problem of hunger. They are interested in expanding their program to other foodservice distributors.

**Website:** [www.chefsendhunger.org/](http://www.chefsendhunger.org/)

**Email:** Brette Waters, Special Programs Coordinator, [brette.waters@laspecialty.com](mailto:brette.waters@laspecialty.com)

*"Thanks to...LA & SF Specialty [the food in the kits] would be brought to my door. How easy was that? All I had to do was open the "Chefs to End Hunger Kits" and go to work...With over 40% of all food grown or prepared in the US wasted, I for one am grateful for organization like LA & SF Specialty and the Chefs to End Hunger program that will help to ensure that perfectly good food does not get wasted."*

**Chef Bill Bracken**  
**Bracken's Kitchen**



## Urban Harvester: Communities Receive an Extra Gift of Good to Share



Urban Harvester (UH) was founded as a non-profit 501 (c) (3) in 2012, but since 2009, they have been testing and implementing scalable solutions for food donations. By proper matching, vetting, site visits, advance planning, education and policy, they have successfully diverted over 90 tons of food from the waste stream by connecting over 180,000 meals from stores, restaurants and other food providers directly to non-profit agencies to distribute to the hungry. Urban Harvester has diverted more than 90 tons of organics from the waste stream and allowed agencies to use their limited funds to provide other needed services.

**Populations Served:** The efforts of Urban Harvester have allowed agencies to use their limited funds to provide other needed services. These include social services and help with basic needs for struggling families, veterans, children, older adults and other individuals, homebound as well as the homeless. They reach into the areas where access to fresh food is extremely limited and find viable partners to connect excess food to well-matched distribution channels.

**Service Areas:** Los Angeles County: UH has connected food donations from Malibu to Pomona; while their initial focus was the San Gabriel Valley and Downtown Los Angeles, they continue to expand across Los Angeles County based upon needs, requests and opportunities.

**Accepted Food:** Perishable, produce packaged, Prepared

**Program Details:** Urban Harvester is a match-maker between surplus edible food and hunger relief sites. They directly connect food producers and retail based businesses with unsold or excess food (that is all still in code and food safe) to the best match non-profit receiving agency that shares the food for free. They have been the conduit for an array of food donor partners, such as grocery stores, food producers, special events, caterers, and studios, including the TV, film and commercial industries. The food donor has immediate benefits to donating extra food as a tax deduction as well as reducing their waste costs.

**Greatest Successes:** Urban Harvester is very proud of the positive feedback attributed to their work, from several partner non-profit receiving agencies about the lives changed and the self-esteem their clients have gotten back by knowing someone out there cares about them. Their partnership with universities for in-kind support has advanced their concepts and designs, and provide their expertise with tools for advancement. Most recent university partners are Santa Clara University - Frugal Innovation Lab, Pepperdine University - Graziadio School of Business & Management. Lastly, in 2014, the City of South Pasadena unanimously passed a Food Donation Policy, co-drafted by the Linda Hess, the co-founder of UH, for certified food providers and businesses to reduce hunger and excess food wasted.

**What the Future Holds:** The model of food recovery is complex. There are many layers needed to meet the demands involving not only of the volume of food but the proper management of a scalable system. Being open to change brings the change-makers to the table. Now is the time for smart systems and more collaboration. The gift of fresh food from something that otherwise would be unnecessarily wasted that is something we can all achieve together.

**Website:** [www.urbanharvester.org](http://www.urbanharvester.org)

**Email:** [info@urbanharvester.org](mailto:info@urbanharvester.org)

*“Food donation laws have been misunderstood regarding what is allowable to donate and when. Urban Harvester feels the time is right for a clear message observing health department guidelines about what food is permissible for food producers to donate and how to best connect it to non-profit receiving agencies.”*

**Linda Hess, Founder**



## Social Service Provider on Food Rescue

Organizations that provide social programs and services to those most in need are critical partners for receiving and redistributing edible surplus food. They have direct access to communities in need and are often able to prepare and serve food on site. More service provider agencies need to be identified and equipped to accept surplus food, as they are essential in both reducing food waste and improving food security. While many service provider organizations exist throughout Los Angeles, St. Francis Center is highlighted below as an active leader in the Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Working Group.

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### St. Francis Center: Serving Hope in Our Community



Founded in 1973, St. Francis Center (SFC) is located near Downtown Los Angeles and provides relief and support to homeless and extremely low-income individuals and families in Los Angeles. Much more than a soup kitchen or a food pantry, they offer a unique range of services to sustain and empower those in need. In addition to providing support with immediate needs such as meals, hygiene, and health services, the Center now also offers case management and emergency shelter services.

**Populations Served:** Homeless individuals and families and extremely low income individuals and families.

**Service Areas:** Accept referrals from anywhere in LA County, but primarily serves residents in the communities of Boyle Heights, Central City, Downtown LA, Echo Park, El Sereno, Hollywood, Mid-City Wilshire, Monterey Hills, Mount Washington, Silverlake, West Hollywood, and Westlake (known to Los Angeles County Department of Public Health as “Service Planning Area 4”) as well as the neighborhoods of Athens, Compton, Crenshaw, Florence, Hyde Park, Lynwood, Paramount, and Watts (also known as “Service Planning Area 6.”)

**Accepted Food:** The Center currently receives food donations from the LA Regional Food Bank, Food Finders, Target, Lucky's, and many others. Drivers are available for donation pick-ups. They accept non-perishable, perishable, produce and prepared foods.

#### Program Details

- **Family Well-Being Program:** SFC offers a pantry program (Wednesday-Saturday) where individuals and families can shop for up to 50 pounds of produce weekly. Families also receive access to support with resource services, holiday programs, and summer camp programs for children at no cost.
- **Homeless Well-Being Program:** SFC provides homeless guests with warm meals and sack lunches six days a week (Monday-Saturday). Other services provided include access to showers five days a




week, health and hygiene services, mail service, emergency shelter support, case management, transportation services and resource referrals.

**Greatest Successes:** Thanks to food donations and strategic partnerships, the St. Francis Center has continued to meet growing demand for their services. Last year St. Francis Center served over 100,000 homeless meals, double what they served about 5 years ago. They also rescued over 1.2 million pounds of donated food and provided over 16,000 grocery visits to extremely low income families.

**What the Future Holds:** St. Francis Center has recently expanded their operations to satellite pantries in neighboring communities and case management services for the homeless. Lack of physical space has prevented them from accepting additional donations at times and luxury development projects near the Center have also begun to displace many homeless and low income residents from the area. The Center hopes to receive support to continue scaling their operations and possibly acquire a larger facility in the future to better serve the community.

**Website:** [www.sfcla.org](http://www.sfcla.org)

**Email:** Jose Ramirez, Executive Director, [jramirez@sfcla.org](mailto:jramirez@sfcla.org)



*"Our Center relies heavily on food donations from local partners to provide nutritious meals and groceries to some of Los Angeles' poorest residents. It is vital that we continue to forge new partnerships to support our food recovery efforts so that we can multiply our impact and continue to combat food insecurity in our communities."*

**Jose Ramirez, Executive Director**



## Compost

While food waste includes edible surplus food that can be recovered and diverted to feed the hungry-- it also includes food scraps that cannot feed people, but can feed the soil through composting. Composting is a regenerative process that encompasses a closed loop cycle, where food scraps are seen as a resource with life and nutrients still available, and should not be tossed “away,” but returned to give life to the soil. The members profiled in this section focus on building community scaled composting operations and provide education and awareness on the multitude of benefits of composting.



### LA Compost: Soil + People

Founded in 2013, LA Compost is a non-profit organization working to create the first county wide community composting program, neighborhood by neighborhood. Through community composting hubs, LA Compost works to keep valuable organic resources within communities by educating, equipping and empowering individuals to partake in the beautiful process of composting. Since their inception, they have diverted over 50,000 pounds of food scraps from the landfill.

**Populations Served:** LA Compost works with schools, restaurants, community gardens, churches and other community-based organizations to build community composting sites.

**Service Areas:** LA Compost currently has eight functioning compost hubs: Monrovia High School, Westridge School, Elysian Valley Community Garden, Women’s Center for Creative Work, USC, Natural History Museum, Mar Vista Gardens, and a juice bar called The Juice. LA Compost is working to establish additional community compost hubs throughout LA County. With a current waiting list of over 20 potential sites, LA Compost plans to 10 new community compost hubs in 2017.

**Accepted Food:** Food scraps for compost

**Program Details:** LA Compost educates, equips and empowers communities to create new habits around food waste recycling, while also expanding access to quality compost for local food growing. Each community compost hub is equipped with the necessary tools, education, and resources to become a self-sustaining compost center in the future. The compost hubs build community around a common goal-- to divert food scraps from landfills to create nutrient-rich compost. The compost created onsite stays within the same zip code where the food was initially consumed and is freely given to local growers.

Some compost hubs receive food scraps from an on-site kitchen or garden, and others accept food scraps from the public. LA Compost provides the hub equipment, signage and trains local stakeholders how to maintain the



compost hub, including measuring pounds of food scraps diverted from landfills. The high-quality compost is then used on-site for gardening and landscaping, or donated to local food growers.

**Greatest Successes:** Keeping food scraps within the same community where food was grown and eaten. Establishing 8 functioning community compost hubs within a 2-year period. Providing free workshops to the public throughout the year.

### **What the Future Holds**

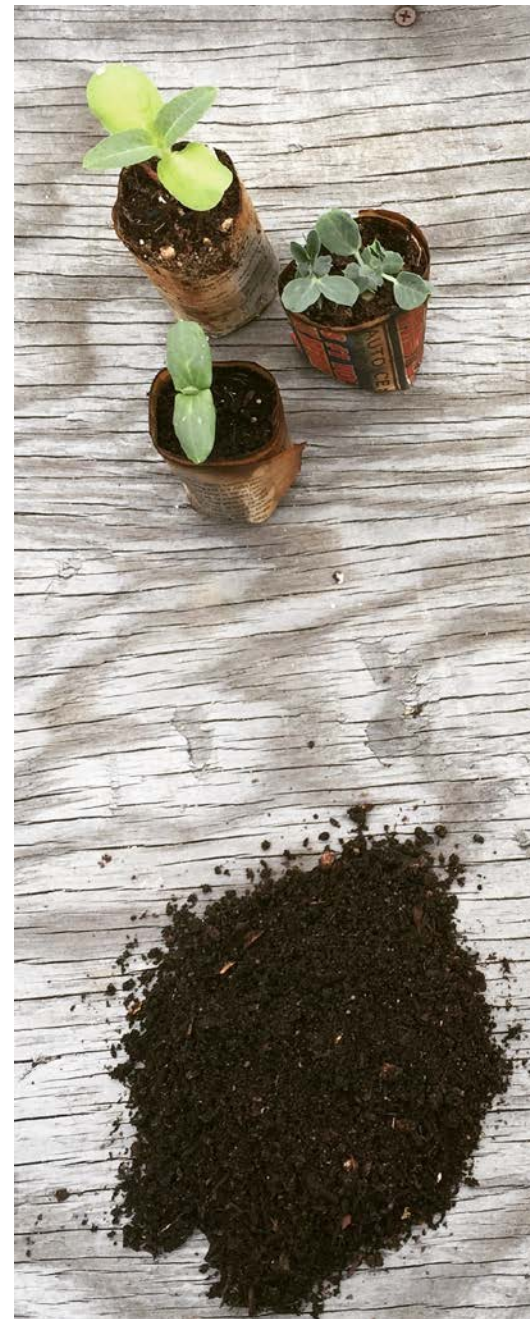
LA Compost plans on opening new hubs throughout 2017. One of these hubs will be a medium sized hub and will allow for even more organics to be processed. LA Compost hopes its community education services raises awareness among Angelenos about why food should never be thrown away and getting people involved in the process of actively recycling their discarded food in their neighborhoods.

**Website:** [www.lacompost.org](http://www.lacompost.org)

**Email:** Michael Martinez, Executive Director, [michael@lacompost.org](mailto:michael@lacompost.org)

*"Our community based hubs allow us to mimic the process of compost. We see composting as a beautiful process that is collaborative, self-giving, and one that exemplifies the type of community we want to embody. The hubs create the space for the people of Los Angeles to have a place to connect with their soil, their food, and their neighbor."*

**Michael Martinez, Founder**





## Kiss the Ground: The Solution is in the Soil

Kiss the Ground, founded in 2013 is a non-profit 501c3 whose mission is to educate, advocate, and inspire for the restoration of soil worldwide. Kiss the Ground focuses on conversion to regenerative agriculture, city composting, and hyper local food systems.

**Populations Served:** Kiss the Ground provides education for the general public around soil health as a climate mitigation tool. They also contribute to City and State governments sustainability efforts relating to healthy soil or composting. They assist farmers converting to, or who already practicing, regenerative agriculture, including compost producers and the constituents they serve (helping guide participation and enrollment of composting efforts). Locally, Kiss the Ground uses their community garden in Venice to feed homeless and collect food scraps to process local compost.

**Service Area:** Los Angeles

**Program Details:** Kiss the Ground has become a key contributor to the soil health/regenerative agriculture movement worldwide. By acting as the storytellers, they are uniquely positioned to bring together scientists, leaders, and key stakeholders to create content that serves the movement itself and not individual interests. Kiss the Ground's demonstration garden, located in Venice CA, provides a space for teaching regenerative agriculture practices, growing crops that feed homeless and providing managed compost bins for local residents to use. Kiss the Ground uses its vast resource of science advisors, contacts, and branding experience to provide the most up-to-date information and recommendations for compost producers, farmers, and brands converting to a regenerative/soil health approach.

**Greatest Successes:** The Soil Story, created by Kiss the Ground, in partnership with Louis Fox, best-known for the acclaimed viral series, "The Story of Stuff", is a four-minute film that tells the new story of soil. Science meets inspiration in this tale of nature's best hidden innovation: soil.

**What the Future Holds:** Kiss the Ground has partnered with the US Composting Council, Association of Compost Producers, UC Cooperative Extension, Kellogg, and more to produce another short film like *The Soil Story* called, *The Compost Story*. *The Compost Story* will be complete by end of January 2017 and will be set for final release May 1st for National Compost Awareness Week. Kiss the Ground has also partnered with Big Picture Ranch to produce a feature-length documentary called *Kiss the Ground*, that delves into the lives of passionate scientists, farmers, ranchers, activists and policymakers who are on the front lines of the battle to save the world's soils — and to thereby save our species. This will be a landmark film for the healthy soil movement worldwide.

**Website:** [www.kisstheground.com](http://www.kisstheground.com)

**Email:** [info@kisstheground.com](mailto:info@kisstheground.com)

*"Kiss the Ground is unique in combining passion, reverence, policy know-how and business commonsense to the critical task of regenerating our precious soils. As a long-time activist and leader in the regenerative agriculture movement I am deeply grateful that this group is spearheading a public awareness campaign, and promoting sound laws, to address one of the most important issues of our time. Healthy soils are essential to ecological farming which IS our food future, and generating soils also offer a hopeful path to sequestering CO2 and alleviating the Climate crisis."*

**Andrew Kimbrell, Executive Director,  
Center for Food Safety**





## 301 Organics: Recycling Nature's Way



Founded in 2009 and first known as Waste Less Living, 301 Organics launched to raise awareness about the adverse impacts solid waste has on our environment and to offer more sustainable solutions to reducing our society's waste loads. 301 Organics is committed to keeping food waste out of landfills by recovering it for composting and/or human or animal consumption. 301 Organics has helped its clients, schools and institutions divert upwards of 97% of their waste loads from landfills through its educational programs and services.

**Populations Served:** 301 Organics serves schools, non-profit organizations, commercial businesses, institutions and private individuals to develop organics recovery and diversion programs. Institutions include the University of La Verne, the Rose Bowl Stadium, JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) and Polytechnic School.

**Service Areas:** San Gabriel Valley

**Accepted Food:** Produce and all food types, paper products, certified compostable tableware.

**Program Details:** 301 Organics offers the following:

- Solid Waste Audit
- Zero-waste Consulting
- Urban Resource Management Planning
- Organics Management & Food Waste Recycling
- Technology Selection & Evaluation
- Zero-waste Event Management
- Specialty Materials Composting (e.g., manure)
- Training and Education
- Public Relations/Marketing
- Data Tracking, Analysis & Reporting

**Greatest Successes:** As Waste Less Living, they developed a sophisticated service model for not only recovering food waste generated at small to large events, but also the compostable tableware to ensure that such material is actually composted and not landfilled. Their service “closes the loop” on this product - guaranteed! They successfully established business relations with existing composters who trust we are delivering clean and 100% compostable loads that typically would run the risk of being rejected.

Another success is the development of an award-winning school-based Organics Recovery Program that has achieved diversion rates as high as 97% and has been recognized by U.S. Congresswoman, State Senators and Assemblyman and local officials.



**What the Future Holds:** 301 Organics' vision is to spearhead the development of a locally-based composting infrastructure model using the most advanced and appropriate composting technology suitable for urban centers. To this end, their focus will be on expanding consulting practice in support of clients needing to comply with California's new food waste recycling law and building strategic and collaborative public, private and school based partnerships within the community. They also foresee expanding school-based Organics Recovery Program to more schools as they, too, generate a substantial amount of food waste that can be diverted and can serve as educational hubs to the greater community.

**Website:** [www.301organics.com](http://www.301organics.com)

**Email:** Christine Lenches-Hinkel, Founder, [clhinkel@301organics.com](mailto:clhinkel@301organics.com)



*"Our biggest challenge (and conversely our "success") is instilling in our clients the value that food waste is not 'trash' or 'solid waste' but rather a 'resource' and that an investment in recovering this material for composting is not only good for the environment but also for their bottom line."*

**Christine Lenches-Hinkel, Founder**



## Value Added Processing: Giving Food a Second Chance

Value added processes are activities that transform surplus food into items with increased value. Often, food that is cosmetically imperfect for retail will be given a second chance in a meal or food product instead of going to waste. The three member organizations profiled below, two of which are non-profit and one that is for-profit, provide unique contributions to how recovered food is re-used again in Los Angeles.

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### L.A. Kitchen: Revealing the Power of Food

L.A. Kitchen (LAK) was founded in 2013 by Robert Egger, the pioneering creator of DC Central Kitchen, when he returned to his birthplace of Southern California to address one of the greatest challenges to face America this century — a rapidly growing senior population and their declining health and financial status. In 2016, LAK had reclaimed over 81,000 lbs. of produce and prepared 104,000 meals with help of over 2,000 volunteers and job trainees from their Empower L.A. program.

**Populations Served:** LAK distributes free, nutritionally-dense meals, snacks and food products to social service agencies that serve Los Angeles' most vulnerable populations, with a special focus on older adults. LAK food products are also made available to after-school programs, drug treatment centers, and programs that empower the homeless, with the goal of saving them millions of dollars that can be used to empower and uplift their clients.

**Service Areas:** LAK receives donations from farms that over-produce or have a "blemished" crop they cannot sell. The farms LAK receives directly from are all within Los Angeles County, the closest being in West Adams in the middle of City of Los Angeles. They also pick up and accept food from CSA's and some juicing companies who are either overstocked or have food that do not meet specs for recipes. The juiceries and CSA's are all in LA County, but their sourcing extends to farms around the Bay area.

**Accepted Food:** LAK collects fruits and vegetables that are cosmetically unsalable.

**Program Details:** LAK has two primary programs, Empower L.A. and Impact L.A.

- **Empower L.A.**'s culinary job training program provides opportunities for employment in the foodservice industry for the formerly some of LA's most vulnerable communities, the recent parolees, emancipated foster youth and the previously homeless. Throughout the 15-week training program, students will participate in a variety of hands-on culinary training, self-empowerment programs and local internships.

- **Impact L.A.** has three significant areas of focus: 1) The fight against food waste, 2) proactive engagement through volunteerism, and 3) partnerships with charitable organizations serving L.A.'s most vulnerable populations.
  1. The program works directly with local farmers and wholesale companies to collect fruits and vegetables that are cosmetically unsalable and would otherwise go to waste
  2. LAK cultivates, recruits, and engages a vibrant cross section of volunteers from diverse age groups, cultural communities, and professional and personal backgrounds and life experiences to help transform raw fruits and vegetables into fresh, nutritious, scratch-made meals and snacks. Intergenerational engagement is a core component of the Volunteer Program where older adults and young people work side-by-side and connect through meaningful dialogue with job trainees and graduates of LAK's Empower program.
  3. LAK distributes free, nutritionally-dense meals, snacks and food products to social service agencies that serve Los Angeles' most vulnerable populations, with a special focus on older adults. LAK's food products are also made available to after-school programs, drug treatment centers, and programs that empower the homeless, with the goal of saving them millions of dollars that can be used to empower and uplift their clients.

**Greatest Successes:** LAK has introduced more and more people to the power of food; so that they can see how food can empower, employ or engage a person, and not merely just feed them. They are excited that Empower L.A. has so many great partners who are helping them enroll great candidates, or employ new grads.

**What the Future Holds:** LAK recently announced that over the next two years, they will be supporting 50 new healthy meal, senior service centers in Watts, Crenshaw, Inglewood and Boyle Heights, where seniors of color are experiencing a higher rate of poverty and displacement. LAK would like to continue to become a powerful distributor of healthy meals, meals that provide at least 1/3 of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for their recipients. Their goal is to reach deep into corners of the City with little nutrition resources, and use food to promote dynamic new programs, with an emphasis on programs that get generations together. They would like to serve as a resource to other communities who seek to model programs on their work.

**Website:** <http://www.lakitchen.org/>

**Email:** [reclaimla@lakitchen.org](mailto:reclaimla@lakitchen.org)





*"LAK is focused on squeezing every ounce of opportunity out of every pound of food we receive. Our goal is to reveal the power of food to uplift, engage, heal and employ."*

**Robert Egger, President**



## Pulp Pantry: Better-for-you, Better-for-the-Earth



Founded in 2015, Pulp Pantry is a for-profit food brand using up-cycled, organic juice pulp to create crave-able plant-based snacks. As a forward-facing brand, their mission is to reduce food waste while inspiring others to take initiative as stewards of their bodies, communities and environment. They have repurposed 10,000 pounds of fresh produce and nut pulp since their inception, repurposing 200 pounds of produce per week.

**Populations Served:** Juiceries

**Service Areas:** Pulp Pantry has two consistent commercial juicery partners, with 6 total juiceries participating throughout the year and plans for expansion to larger regional juice manufacturers.

**Accepted Food:** Perishable, Produce

**Program Details:** Pulp Pantry manufactures a line of raw, grain-free vegetable-based granolas, raw veggie crisps and vegetable-based flours. They collaborate with a local baker, restaurant, and soap maker, providing pulp ingredients that are used in their snack products.

**Greatest Successes:** Diverting juice pulp from the landfill in partnership with juiceries who also sell Pulp Pantry co-branded products in house.

**What the Future Holds:** Pulp Pantry is looking to actively partner with companies that share their vision to: a) reduce waste-related costs; b) improve revenues and operating margins through new revenue streams and product lines; c) embrace sustainability; which will d) enhance corporate goodwill and community citizenship. In partnership with food manufacturers, Pulp Pantry will develop marketing and business certification campaigns that will bring the hidden part of a product's life cycle (waste) to the forefront of consumer awareness.

**Website:** [www.pulppantry.com](http://www.pulppantry.com)

**Email:** Kaitlin Mogentale, Founder, [kaitlin@pulppantry.com](mailto:kaitlin@pulppantry.com)

*Photos by: Maral Tavitian*





*“Each day, Pulp Pantry has the capability to process 300 pounds of organic fruit, vegetable, and nut pulp from two local juiceries into 10 varying products. Each of Pulp Pantry's products is made from juice pulp as the primary ingredients, maximizing the amount of waste that is eliminated. The processing model is replicable and scalable for juiceries and other food companies across Los Angeles and beyond.”*

**Kaitlin Mogentale, Founder**



*Photos by: Maral Tavitian*





## Coordination and Education

Coordination among organizations, businesses and public agencies involved in waste management, food recovery, food enterprises, and hunger relief is critical to ensure synchronization of efforts and unified action towards the common goals of diverting food waste from landfills through feeding people and/or composting. Consumer education is also essential in building solidarity, catalyzing community support, and sustaining a shift in norms towards these same goals. The member organizations highlighted in this section are increasing awareness around food scraps as a resource for soil regeneration, combatting increased greenhouse gas emissions and shaping a healthier future.



### Los Angeles County Food Redistribution Initiative: Feed People Not Landfills

Often times, food businesses hesitate to donate for fear of food safety liability concerns. The Los Angeles County Food Redistribution Initiative (LACFRI) is a county government project that began in June 2016 that provides resources to the public and businesses about safe methods to prevent, donate and recycle excess food, debunking misinformation about liability, and supporting policies that divert food from landfills. LACFRI is housed within the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health — Environmental Health Division. Its mission is to educate the public about safe methods to prevent food waste, donate and recycle excess food, as well as support policies that divert food from landfills.

**Populations Served:** All of Los Angeles County

**Service Areas:** Los Angeles County

**Program Details:** Currently LACFRI's primary goal is to provide safe food donation education and guidance to grocery stores, restaurants, schools, and other interested businesses who want to donate their excess wholesome food to the needy. LACFRI hopes to expand its outreach to address myths and questions about liability to businesses as well, working closely with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works and others. Participants include several county departments, businesses, community members, and nonprofit organizations. Additional partners include private businesses, nonprofits, schools, hospitals, and food banks.

**Greatest Successes:** LACFRI has been a beneficial resource in assisting school districts in developing safe school food donation best practices with guidance from the Los Angeles County Public Health Department.

#### What the Future Holds

- **Build up the LACFRI Website**
  - More resources, a robust website with downloadable food donation guidelines for businesses
  - Safe food donation “how-to” videos and educational resources tailored to schools, restaurants, grocery stores, catering operations etc.

- **Offer Speaking Engagements**

- Countywide webinars, workshops, and panel discussions on safe food donations and food donation policies tailored to nonprofit organizations and businesses.

- **Clarify School Food Donation Guidelines:**

- “Share table” best practice guidelines for school districts in LA County.
- Guidance document for schools interested in donating their surplus wholesome food.

**Website:** <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/misc/LACFRI.htm>

**Email:** Bernadet Garcia-Silva, LACFRI Program Manager, [bsilva@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:bsilva@ph.lacounty.gov)



Founded in 1973, TreePeople is an environmental non-profit with a focus on education and whose mission is to inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable. Over the last 40 years ago, TreePeople has engaged and involved over 2 million people in planting and caring for more than 2 million trees.

**Populations Served:** Los Angeles County of Public Works and Los Angeles County secondary schools, grades 7-12

**Service Areas:** Los Angeles County

**Accepted Food:** Non-perishable, perishable, produce, prepared, for compost

**Program Details:** TreePeople's Environmental Education department focuses on creating sustainable solutions for campus and community environmental issues, utilizing student voice to empower progress. TreePeople also runs the LA County Department of Public Works' environmental education program, called Generation Earth. The program is free of charge for Los Angeles County secondary schools, grades 7-12.

**Greatest Successes:** TreePeople guides schools across Los Angeles County to utilize student voice and environmental education to create meaningful impact on their campus and in their community. Their award-winning program, Generation Earth, guides teachers and student groups to implement environmental service learning projects on campus, with a focus on program sustainability through education, community partnerships, and student ownership. Example projects include:

- Campus Recycling
- Composting
- E-waste or Textile Drives
- Food Waste Recovery and Donation
- Tree Planting
- Water Pollution Prevention through Rain Gardens or Rain Barrels
- Native Garden Installation

**What the Future Holds:** TreePeople would like to see more investment in funds for materials and supplies and support and services provided by cities, waste haulers, and school districts. In addition, they'd like to expand their educational assistance to students that contact organizations that can pick up food.

**Website:** [www.treepeople.org](http://www.treepeople.org)

**Email:** Alyson Schill, Waste Reduction & Recycling Specialist, [aschill@treepeople.org](mailto:aschill@treepeople.org); [schools@treepeople.org](mailto:schools@treepeople.org)





*"I utilized all of the resources that TreePeople shared following the Recycling Workshop, including the videos, and slides. I printed the handouts for lessons, from the Waste Reduction Project Toolkit. These resources made it possible for me to implement this project with my students. I look forward to more TreePeople workshops in the future."*

**Ms. SB, Vista Charter Academy**



## Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Food Recovery Challenge and Sustainable Management of Food Program



The mission of the EPA is to protect human health and the environment. The EPA launched its food recovery efforts in 2011 with the Food Recovery Challenge. The EPA created the Sustainable Management of Food (SMF) Program, which serves as a hub for EPA's tools and programs in food recovery. The Food Recovery Hierarchy helps organizations and individuals advance towards their food recovery goals.

**Populations Served:** Consumers, businesses, public and government agencies, non-profits, and schools, all throughout the U.S.

**Program Details:** EPA makes available the following food recovery tools and program on the SMF website:

- *Food Recovery Challenge:* The program provides organizations with a web-based platform to track and measure their food recovery. In 2015, 800 [Food Recovery Challenge](#) participants prevented and diverted over 691,000 tons of wasted food from entering landfills or incinerators.
- *Food Waste Assessment Guidebook:* The first step toward reducing wasted food is to perform an assessment to identify what is actually being thrown away. Retail, food service, and other food management establishments can use the [Food Waste Assessment Guidebook](#) to learn how to do a wasted food assessment.
- *Reducing Wasted Food & Packaging Toolkit:* Food service establishments can use this tool to track the daily amount, type of, and reason for wasted food and packaging with a pre-programmed Excel spreadsheet. Users enter information into the [Food and Packaging Waste Prevention Tool](#), which automatically creates graphs and data summaries to help identify patterns of food waste generation. Based on these patterns, a business can make strategic food recovery changes in their operation.
- *Food Steward's Pledge for faith-based organizations:* Guides religious congregations on a [Food Steward's Action Plan to Reduce Wasted Food](#).
- *Food Loss Prevention Guides:* At the top of the Food Recovery Hierarchy is Source Reduction, reducing the volume of surplus food generated. To boost source reduction, use EPA's [Food Loss Prevention Guides](#) for grade schools, manufacturers, restaurants, universities, and grocery stores.
- *Links and Resources about Food Recovery in Los Angeles:* Provides hands-on food recovery resources at each step of the Food Recovery Hierarchy. For example, if you have surplus food to donate, the Guide contains the list and contact info of L.A. area food recipients.
- *Food Recovery Resource Guide for K-12 Schools*
- *Food Recovery Webinars:* EPA offers periodic food recovery webinars. To register for upcoming webinars or to view archived webinars, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-web-academy>

- **Food: Too Good to Waste:** It is estimated that at the retail and consumer levels in the United States, food loss and waste totals \$161 billion dollars. According to ReFed, households contribute 43% of excess food to landfills, by weight. In 2010, the average amount of food loss per American was 429 pounds. EPA, together with the West Coast Climate & Materials Management Forum, created [\*Food: Too Good to Waste\*](#), which is an implementation guide and toolkit that helps reduce wasteful household food management practices based on five simple strategies.
- **FurtherWithFood.org:** Further with Food is a public-private partnership that serves as a virtual resource center providing information on food loss and food recovery. Fourteen organizations, including EPA, have provided a wide variety of proven solutions and innovative new approaches to reduce the volume of surplus food generated, feed hungry people, and divert food scraps to the highest beneficial use.

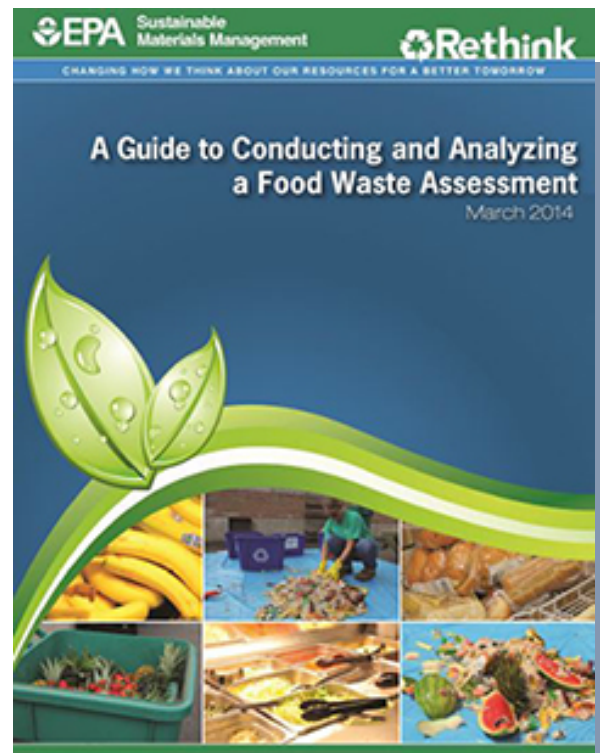
**Greatest Successes: Food Recovery Challenge:** In 2015, more than 800 Food Recovery Challenge (FRC) participants and endorsers prevented and diverted over 691,000 tons of wasted food from entering landfills or incinerators. Of this amount, participants and endorsers:

- prevented over 1,000 tons of wasted food from being created through source reduction (prevention) activities
- donated approximately 302,000 tons of food
- anaerobically digested nearly 75,000 tons of food
- composted more than 313,000 tons of food
- reduced carbon emissions by almost 407,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E)

The accomplishments of the FRC participants and endorsers went a long way towards meeting the United States' first ever national wasted food reduction goal — a 50 percent reduction by 2030. For more information on the FRC awardees, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-challenge-results-and-award-winners>.

**What the Future Holds:** EPA will continue to build coalitions with its stakeholders, while moving the Southern CA community towards the national goal to cut food waste in half by 2030.

**Website:** <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food>  
**Email:** Andre Villasenor, [villasenor.andre@epa.gov](mailto:villasenor.andre@epa.gov)





## VII. Policy Recommendations and Strategies

This resource guide explores best practices employed by a wide array of organizations with diverse purposes, missions and outcomes, all with the unifying goal of eliminating food waste from our landfills. While their collective impact on an individual and aggregate level is critical to achieve scaled impact, policy change must reinforce, encourage and amplify their efforts if we are to achieve a truly Zero Waste future. Below are a policy recommendations and strategies that can further food recovery and recycling efforts in the City of Los Angeles and beyond.

- *Investment in Infrastructure via Funding and Coordination:* Additional investment is needed to continue to build the food recovery infrastructure necessary to achieve our food loss reduction goals. Infrastructure investments could include trucks and storage space for non-profits who play these critical roles in recovery and donation, or for the development of community compost sites. Additionally, City of Los Angeles can coordinate dissemination of information and resources with the LA County Health Department's efforts of the LA County Food Redistribution Initiative. Coordination with the County and other local cities will foster a comprehensive commitment to waste reduction, as regional efforts will strengthen the effectiveness of the Zero Waste LA plan.
- *Include Food Recovery in All City Food Contracts:* Including a food recovery requirement in the Zero Waste LA Franchise is a significant step forward in supporting community-based food waste diversion initiatives. We recommend a review of all City food contracts to identify opportunities for subcontracting with local organizations that contribute to less food waste, greenhouse gas reductions and increased food security. A 2010 City Council motion requested all city departments to donate surplus food. Zero Waste LA's food recovery provisions now activates the donation mechanisms needed to achieve that. Additionally, a "food recovery" component could be built into to City event permits that could require a plan for food waste, in the application and permitting process.
- *Invest in Cross-Sectoral Partnerships for Food Waste Reduction:* Increase incentives for food manufacturers to explore partnerships with for-profit and non-profit organizations that provide waste reduction services. For example, large food manufacturers could secure public incentives to partner with local organizations and establish compost hubs near their manufacturing sites. This approach could ultimately lead to reduced waste management costs, and help the City meet its Zero Waste goals.
- *Establish a Food Recovery Certification Program at the City:* Establish a public recognition program for businesses in the City making significant strides in food waste reduction. This certification could raise the visibility of the City's waste diversion priorities and serve as a marketing tool for businesses committed to sustainable waste management practices. Moreover, this certification could further incentivize creative partnerships between businesses and local food recovery organizations.

- *Community Composting Efforts and Infrastructure:* Community composting, i.e., less than 100 cubic yards within a footprint of 750 square feet, is allowed by new state law. Offsite materials can be composted, and compost can be given away or sold. All food scraps, agricultural material and green waste material can be composted with no permit from CalRecycle Legal Enforcement Agency. Additional investments in composting systems, resources and structures are needed, as well as policies that support decentralized and diversified composting throughout the City. Community and neighborhood composting benefits Los Angeles in numerous ways including: improved and remediated local soils, carbon sequestration, greater water retention, increased green spaces, sustainable food production, more jobs, and potentially less truck traffic because waste stays on or near the site where it was produced. Investing in community composting can be another means to divert food from landfills and educate the public about the value of food waste.

The above list is not intended to be an exhaustive compilation of policies and strategies relevant to improving current food waste management efforts. As the provisions of Zero Waste LA, and other food waste reduction policies, continue to be implemented, new ideas and approaches to building upon our food recovery efforts will likely generate. To be successful, the recommendations listed above must be components of a broader, more comprehensive initiative to fundamentally shift the ways that surplus foods are viewed, treated, repurposed and distributed in our city. The successes of organizations highlighted in this guide indicate our potential to pioneer this transformation. At this critical juncture, however, we must continue to move the needle forward in food recovery and waste reduction to ensure a more sustainable, equitable and fair future for our City.

## VIII. Resources

- National Resource Defense Council's [\*Wasted: How America is Losing up to 40 Percent of its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill\*](#)
- ReFED Report: [Rethink Food Waste](#)
- LA Regional Food Bank's [Get Food: Locate a Partner Agency map](#)
- [Food Oasis Los Angeles \(FOLA\) map](#)
- [LeanPath](#), food waste tracking software
- State Organics Food Recovery Grants
- CalRecycle has allocated \$40 million towards for investments in waste diversion and greenhouse gas reduction. For information on available state grant programs: <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Climate/GrantsLoans/> To receive updates on the timing of the grant program and notices for release of grant documents, workshops or hearings, sign up for CalRecycle's [GHG reductions list-serv](#).



- Food Recovery Apps

- Bread and Butter
- Buffet Go
- Cerplus
- Chow Match
- Copia
- CropMobster

- Food Cowboy
- LeftoverSwap
- PareUp
- Re-Plate
- Spoiler Alert
- Too Good To Go

- Transfarnation
- Unsung
- Waste No Food
- Yo No Desperdicio
- Zero Percent



*Source: Food Forward*



## IX. Glossary

The source of the following definitions are from the Environmental Protection Agency's Terms of Environment Glossary and CalRecycle's Glossary of Local Government Waste Management Terms.

**Anaerobic Digestion:** A method of composting that does not require oxygen. This method produces methane and is also known as "anaerobic composting."

**CalRecycle:** The California Department of Resource Recycling and Recovery, formerly known as the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

**Collection:** The process of picking up waste from residences, businesses, or a collection point, loading them into a vehicle, and transporting them to a processing, transfer, or disposal site.

**Compost:** The relatively stable humus material that is produced from a composting process in which bacteria in soil mixed with garbage and degradable trash break down the mixture into organic fertilizer.

**Composting:** The process of collecting, grinding, mixing, piling, and supplying sufficient moisture and air to organic materials to speed natural decay. The finished product of composting operations is compost, a soil amendment suitable for incorporating into topsoil and of growing plants.

**Diversion:** For waste measurement purposes, diversion is any combination of waste prevention (source reduction), recycling, reuse and composting activities that reduces waste disposed at landfills and transformation facilities. Diversion is achieved through the implementation of diversion programs.

**Diversion Rate:** The proportion of waste material diverted for recycling, composting, or reuse and away from landfilling or incineration.

**Food Recovery:** The practice of reducing wasted food by engaging in source reduction, food donation, and/or food recycling.

**Green Refuse:** Yard trimming such as grass, leaves, branches, flower cuttings, wood chips, etc, biodegradable waste from a park or garden.

**Organic Waste:** Technically, waste containing carbon, including paper, plastics, wood, food wastes, and yard wastes. In practice in MSWM, the term is often used in a more restricted sense to mean material that is more directly derived from plant or animal sources, and which can generally be decomposed by microorganisms

**Source Reduction:** The design, manufacture, acquisition, and reuse of materials to minimize the quantity and/or toxicity of waste produced.

**Waste Characterization:** The act of determining the types and amounts of materials in the disposed waste stream. Waste characterization studies typically involve the sorting and weighing of samples of disposed waste.

## X. Appendix

### City of Los Angeles Zero Waste LA Hauler Contract Requirements Regarding Food Recovery

***Section 5.1 Diversion and Outreach:*** City Directed Outreach Program—The contractor shall deliver outreach to the customer as directed by the City. It is the responsibility of the contractor to procure all outreach and educational materials. Any materials developed by the contractor shall be reviewed and approved by the City Project Manager, and shall conform to the messaging and outreach plan developed by the City. The contractor shall provide multilingual outreach and educational materials to reach affected City residents and customers. All contractor collateral materials and premiums, at a minimum, shall use recycled paper and/or be made of recycled material. The contractor will use 100% post-consumer paper, and procure collateral materials from local businesses.

***Section 5.4 Quarterly Outreach and Education:*** Each quarter, the contractor, at its own expense, will disseminate information to all customers that encourages source-separation of commingled recyclables and organics, as well as reminders of the customer service center location, and City’s customer care center phone number and website. This communication should be given both electronically and in printed form, and it may be in the form of a newsletter, subject to the review and approval of the City Project Manager.

***Section 5.7 Utilization and Funding of Reuse Organization:*** The contractor shall invest in reuse organizations to increase activities in this sector, through direct funding and in-kind services. Funding shall be provided that is equal to at least \$1,000 per 100 customer accounts annually. Reuse organizations may include food rescue, as applicable. Funding shall be provided to non-profit and/or charitable organizations that provide these services. Contractor shall provide a list of organizations to the City Project Manager for review and approval before funding is provided. The contractor shall promote reuse programs to customers through its outreach and educational campaigns. Acceptable materials include reusable goods and materials, which may be either new or used. Reusable materials include manufacturing overages, discontinued or surplus items, or other gently used items. The contractor shall submit to the City an annual report of financial support including receipts, tonnage estimates, and other documentation of in-kind services and/or cash donations.

***Section 5.8 Cooperation with Food Rescue:*** The City believes that the highest and best use for edible food is to feed people. The contractor shall not impede the implementation or expansion of edible food placement networks in the City of Los Angeles. The contractor shall partner with an appropriate local non-profit for the redistribution of edible food “Before the Bin.” Collection services for foods that are safe for human consumption shall be offered to all customers in coordination with a City directed food rescue program. Tonnage estimates from this material stream shall be reported in the contractor’s monthly diversion report.

For more info, please check out the [LA Sanitation website](#) where you can find all the RFP language, awarded contract language and supplemental/related documents.



[www.goodfoodla.org](http://www.goodfoodla.org)