

Wasted Food Solutions for Southwest Ohio

Resources to Help Businesses Reduce, Recover, and Repurpose Wasted Food

Why Reduce and Divert Food Waste from Disposal?

According to [ReFED](#), each year businesses in the US throw away 25 million tons of food, and spend roughly \$57 billion dollars on growing, processing, transporting, and disposing of food that is never consumed. Decreasing the volume of wasted food can reduce the overall cost of business operations and increase operational efficiency. Keeping food waste out of landfills can also mitigate significant greenhouse gas emissions and enable a range of beneficial end uses, from feeding the hungry to resource recovery through composting.

How to Reduce, Recover, and Repurpose Wasted Food?

The following information provides resources to support businesses and institutions as they pursue opportunities to prevent, rescue, and divert wasted food. The Center for EcoTechnology (CET) in partnership with your local Solid Waste Management District is also available to provide no-cost technical assistance to businesses and institutions that generate wasted food in Southwest Ohio. Contact wastedfood@cetonline.org to learn more or to schedule your free consultation.

Preventing Food Waste through Source Reduction

The US EPA [Food Recovery Hierarchy](#) ranks source reduction at the top of its priorities as a strategy to reduce wasted food. Source reduction is also the most cost-effective food recovery strategy and many commercial entities realize monetary savings through reduced purchasing and lower hauling costs. Tracking wasted food is a great first step to start or expand a source reduction program. Several companies provide waste tracking systems which assist food service businesses in quantifying wasted food by weight, and tracking the amount disposed of during service. Here are a few examples:

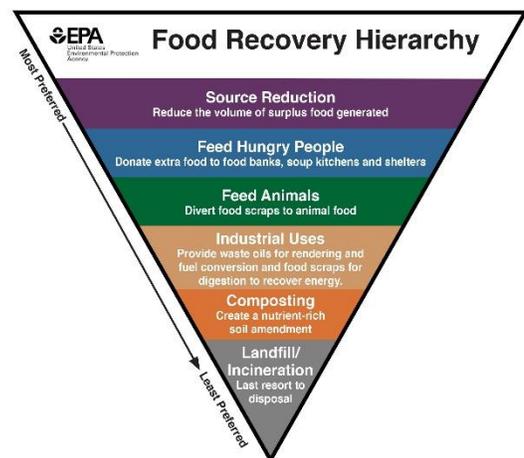
- [Leanpath](#) - info@leanpath.com
- [Winnow Solutions](#) - info@winnowsolutions.com
- [Phood](#) - info@phoodsolutions.com

Additionally, Hamilton County has developed a [Smart Kitchen Initiative](#), which provides tips and tools for commercial kitchens seeking to reduce food waste. As a component of this initiative, the county has offered workshops and piloted waste prevention tracking technologies with area businesses. For more tips on preventing wasted food at your business, refer to the CET [Source Reduction Best Management Practices](#).

Feeding Hungry People through Food Donation

After reducing food waste at the source, the US EPA ranks feeding hungry people as the next highest priority for reducing wasted food. Food donation yields financial, environmental, and social benefits as approximately 1 in 7 people in Ohio currently face hunger. Key steps to establishing a successful donation program at your business include:

- Identifying the types and amounts of surplus food to be donated
- Understanding labeling and storage requirements to ensure food safety
- Partnering with a food rescue organization





- Establishing a transportation plan and protocol, including pick-up or drop-off frequency and quantities

Example Food Rescue Partners in Southwest Ohio include:

- [Freestore Foodbank](#) (513) 482-4500
- [The Food Bank, Inc.](#) (937) 461-0265
- [La Soupe](#) (513) 271-0100
- [Last Mile Food Rescue](#) (513) 449-1698
- [Master Provisions](#) (859) 474-0467
- [Shared Harvest](#) (513) 874-0114
- [Southeast Ohio Food Bank](#) (740) 385-6813

Some businesses may be wary of donating food for human consumption but there are several federal and state laws protect food donors from liability. The **federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** (42 U.S.C. § 1791) **encourages food donation** by providing liability protections for businesses and schools that donate “apparently wholesome” food in “good faith” to nonprofit organizations.

[ReFED’s Policy Finder](#) provides information about Ohio regulations for date labeling, liability protection, tax incentives, animal feed, and organic waste recycling laws. Currently, Ohio does not offer additional tax incentives beyond what is provided for through federal initiatives. Statewide legislation enables extra liability protection from civil action for those donating food under certain circumstances.

Green Umbrella’s [State of Wasted Food in Greater Cincinnati](#) report from 2019 provides additional information about date labeling legislation, as well as information about tax incentives through the PATH Act. Additionally, businesses located in Hamilton County received information in 2020 with their food licensing permit applications from their local Health Departments explaining donor liability protections and safety protocols.

For additional tips on starting or expanding a food donation program at your business, refer to the CET [food donation guidance](#).

Recovering Wasted Food through Source Separation

Source separated food may be recovered for animal feed, anaerobic digestion, and composting. In Ohio, licensed facilities may feed swine excess food, and heat treatment is required for certain types of materials.

Anaerobic digestion facilities also may have the capacity to accept food processing waste as well as other waste, and are often paired with depackaging equipment, enabling these sites to accept packaged materials for handling. These facilities may require material to be liquified before transport, and businesses such as [Grind2Energy](#) provide technology that can support material preparation. There are several anaerobic digestion facilities, such as [Quasar](#), located within a few hours drive of the region that may accept food waste for processing. Additionally, plans are underway for the development of a facility in St. Bernard, OH, which is being developed by [Synthica Energy, LLC](#). Composting service in Southwest Ohio is also expanding, and in-vessel units are now being installed at local entities to process organics that are generated on-site. The [On-site Processing Guidance](#) from RecyclingWorks provides additional information about considerations for various processing technologies.

Example Composting Service Providers in Southwest Ohio include:

- [Compost Dayton](#) (937) 750-3438
- [Future Enviroassets, LLC](#) (513) 349-3844
- [GoZERO Services, Food Waste Compost Courier](#) (844) 467-0874
- [Paygro](#) (937) 462-8350
- [Queen City Commons](#) (513) 202-3260



The service providers listed above are just some of the food waste haulers that operate in Southwest Ohio. For guidance on how to properly separate and collect wasted food at your business, refer to the CET [source separation guidance](#). Additionally, CET's [hauler contracting guidance](#) provides information about setting up contracts for hauling trash, recyclables, and/or organics as well as how to effectively manage these services and adjust contracts.

Additional Resources

There are many additional resources available to businesses interested in learning more. The list below includes some examples.

- [Central Ohio Food Waste Initiative](#)
- Ohio EPA
 - [Food Scraps Recovery Initiative](#)
 - [Grant Opportunities](#)
 - [Food Waste Map](#) identifying composting programs in the state
- Local Municipalities
 - [Adams-Clermont Solid Waste District](#)
 - [Butler County Recycling & Solid Waste](#)
 - [Hamilton County - Let's Stop Waste...at Work](#)
 - [Montgomery County Solid Waste District - Grant Programs](#)
 - [Warren County Solid Waste Management District](#)
- [Ohio Association of Food Banks](#)
- [Green Umbrella – State of Wasted Food in Greater Cincinnati](#)
- [Food Recovery Network – Ohio Chapters](#)
- [Ohio Sustainable Business Council Food Waste Reduction Resources](#)
- [Ohio State University Food Waste Collaborative](#)
- US EPA
 - [Food Recovery Challenge](#)
 - [Tools for Preventing and Diverting Wasted Food](#)
- ReFED
 - [Foodservice Food Waste Action Guide](#)
 - [ReFED Insights Engine](#)
- NRDC
 - [Food Matters](#)
 - [Food Rescue Landscape Assessment Guide](#)
- Food Waste Reduction Alliance
 - [Best Practices and Emerging Solutions Guide](#)
- [Further With Food: Center for Food Loss and Waste Solutions](#)

If your business provides any of the above wasted food solution services and are not listed here, please contact CET at wastedfood@cetonline.org.