FDWG Research Memo #1

**Project Title:** Food Center Food Donation Work Group Research

**Summary/Scope:** This workgroup formed according to Washington’s Organics Management Law (OML) 2.0, passed by the 2024 Legislature as [HB2301](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2301&Initiative=false&Year=2023). The goal is to develop recommendations for increased food donation from commercial generators in Washington State. The Food Center at the Department of Ecology (“Ecology”) facilitates the workgroup and will pass their recommendations to the legislature in a report by Sep. 1, 2025.

The work group will address:

* Logistics to phase in edible food donation programs, including incentives;
* The food recovery network system necessary to support increased donation of edible food by commercial generators;
* Assess asset gaps and food infrastructure development needs.
* How to facilitate the creation of networks and partnership to address gaps and needs;
* Develop innovative partnership and models where appropriate;
* Actions taken, costs, and lessons learned by other jurisdictions in the United States that have enacted policies focused on reducing edible commercially generated food waste, including studying voluntary pilot projects carried out by commercial generators.

Ecology will submit a report to the legislature by September 1, 2025, with recommendations from this work group, which will make recommendations based on consensus.

**Ecology Facilitators:** Jade Monroe, jadm461@ecy.wa.gov

Selena Ligrano, slig461@ecy.wa.gov

**Project dates:** June 1, 2024 – Sept. 1, 2025

# Upcoming Tasks and Action Items

|  |
| --- |
| **Please complete the following tasks (Outlook reminder attached in email)** |
| * All members - Begin completing the [recommendation worksheets](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/Documents/food-donation/FDWG_Rec_Worksheet.docx). Worksheets can also be found on the [EZ View webpage](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/DesktopDefault.aspx?alias=1962&PageID=39940). Please send finished worksheets to FoodCenter@ecy.wa.gov.
 |

# Project Status Since Last Update

**Project status:** On track

**Accomplishments/Milestones:**

* We had an **80%** response rate to Survey #1 (**thank you!**)
* For the first meeting we highlighted **92 Challenge** stickies and **76 Opportunity** stickies.
* Ecology analyzed the first meeting sticky notes and surveys to create a SWOT analysis and frequency analysis to help understand the possible opportunities and more pressing barriers that will help to draft the recommendations.
* Ecology further refined the data of the **SWOT analysis** through the lens of 10 categories: Logistics, Partnerships, Infrastructure, Incentives, Technology, Best Practices, Policies, Pilots, Transportation and Metrics. The categories will continue to be defined as more research is done to create the most representative categories and themes for the recommendations.
	+ **Logistics:** Consistency, reliability, coordination, staff turnover, volunteer based, capacity for processing/value-added products
	+ **Partnerships:** Communication, collaboration, coordination, engagement, interagency/multi sector relationships
	+ **Infrastructure:** Cold storage, processing/value-added products, commercial kitchen
	+ **Incentives:** Funding through grants, tax deductions, subsidies, funding for composting food, fines for noncompliance
	+ **Technology:** Online marketplace - collaboration, connecting stakeholders, producers to consumers, infrastructure and information sharing resource
	+ **Best Practices:** Food recovery worked into job description/SOP, education and guidelines for businesses and managers, toolkit created to fit industry and size of business
	+ **Policies:** Food safety - food labeling and standardization of trainings and protocols, consistency
	+ **Pilots:** Business opportunities
	+ **Transportation:** Consistency, reliability, funding for staff, utilizing empty trucks, standardized routes, food safety taken into consideration, volunteer run pickups
	+ **Metrics:** Data on commercial and residential food generators, consistency, data on specific foods and crops, life-cycle analysis of supply chain
* The **top 9 topics** the **Frequency Analysis** highlighted were partnerships, food safety policy, education on policy at the business and organization level, funding for infrastructure – cold storage, transportation, technology, funding opportunities, processing of ingredients, and staffing. Detailed responses, including survey and stickies data, can be found on the [EZ View webpage](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/DesktopDefault.aspx?alias=1962&PageID=39940).

**Risks/Issues:**

* This project is on a tight timeline to get all the recommendations done by May 1, 2025, to allow for the report to be drafted and submitted by September 1, 2025. We are optimistic that through these updates, surveys, recommendation worksheets, and monthly meetings, the Food Team will be able to write a report representative of the diverse perspectives and recommendations from all of you.

# Notes from the Facilitator

* Contact us with any questions, concerns, comments, etc. We know the turnaround is tight and you all have a lot going on. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help in the process.
* We look forward to seeing you at future Food Donation Work Group meetings. Thank you for your contributions to this critical work.