FDWG Research Memo #2

**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.

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

# Upcoming Tasks and Action Items

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| **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](mailto:FoodCenter@ecy.wa.gov). |

# Project Status Since Last Update

**Project status:** On track

**Accomplishments/Milestones:**

* We had a **59%** response rate to Survey #2 **(we need more!)**
* The second meeting had **51** responses to the sticky note question “What do we need to learn about the WA food system to improve food rescue?”
* Ecology analyzed the second meeting sticky notes and surveys to create a SWOT analysis, and identified recommendations for further research on gaps in information and data that will help us to draft our recommendations.
* Ecology further refined the data of the sticky note **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:** Coordination, distribution, capacity, flexibility in supply chain
  + **Partnerships:** Collaborate with existing technology platforms, identify stakeholders
  + **Infrastructure:** Capacity, distribution, seasonality of food
  + **Incentives:** Funding to help with food recovery, residuals and composting
  + **Technology:** Collaboration, learn from existing platforms
  + **Best Practices:** Standardization of benefits to businesses, toolkit or guidelines for best practices to employees
  + **Policies:** Food safety standardization
  + **Pilots:**
  + **Transportation:** Predictability through supply chain
  + **Metrics:** Contaminated food from packaging, edible vs inedible food, data on what goes into compost
* The survey lent more recommendations on gaps in information, best practices and themes to research that would help to paint a bigger picture of the current food recovery effort in Washington State.
  + Infrastructure capacity
  + Best practices “let’s not recreate the wheel” in jurisdictions across the state and country
  + Standardized guidelines or training programs from corporate to store level employees on donation/recovery practices
  + Gaps in funding and what are the barriers to participation
  + Regional map of stakeholders and resources
  + Don’t focus on mandates.
* 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.