FDWG Research Memo #4

**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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| **Upcoming actions** |
| * Keep a look out for the first survey to vote on recommendations by the middle of January |

# Project Status Since Last Update

**Project status:** On track

**Accomplishments/Milestones:**

* Out of the 41 members of the workgroup, **25 different organizations** submitted recommendations, with some organizations providing multiple suggestions. Additionally, **2 recommendations** were received from the public. In total, **30 recommendations** were collected.
* **Key themes and priorities** that emerged from these recommendations included:
  + Funding, Staffing, and Incentives
  + Supporting Research and Outreach through the Food Center and state agencies
* We had a **48%** response rate to Survey #4
* Ecology analyzed the fourth survey creating a frequency analysis to further define the areas of research on gaps in information and data that will help us to draft our recommendations.
* Ecology further refined the data through the lens of the six grouped themes: Logistics and Transportation, Partnerships, Infrastructure, Policies and Incentives, Technology and Metrics, Best Practices and Pilots.
  + **Logistics and Transportation**: Transportation is continuing to be of high importance
  + **Partnerships:** Cross sector government to private relationships and cross departmental collaboration
  + **Infrastructure:** Needs to be self-driven mutual financial benefit and ease of access
  + **Policies and Incentives:** Incentive based policies
  + **Technology and Metrics**:Technology used to create hubs for shared resources and connecting HRO’s and donors
  + **Best Practices and Pilots**: Standardized donation guidelines, education for HRO, donors and community
* Detailed responses 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 at [FoodCenter@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:FoodCenter@ecy.wa.gov) 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.