

FOOD WASTE & RESCUE POTENTIAL IN PHILADELPHIA

By tackling food waste, cities can reign in climate emissions, reduce municipal waste costs, and help relieve community food insecurity.

Through NRDC's Food Matters project, we have estimated a city-wide baseline level of food waste and assessed the potential for increased rescue of surplus food. This snapshot can help identify opportunities for policy, outreach and interventions to achieve the city's goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION IN PHILADELPHIA

-  Food scraps collection from residences and consumer-facing businesses is a critical component of meeting zero waste goals. Engaging residents in food scrap reduction and recycling will be critical to improved waste management.
-  Small retail stores and corner markets are often less familiar with donation incentives, and fewer of them currently donate. When corner stores are located near one another or near last-mile food organizations logistical challenges may be surmountable. Food donation and prevention education could pair well with existing outreach efforts to these businesses.
-  Food wholesalers and distributors have business operations somewhat similar to retailers and though we were unable to quantify how much surplus food may be safe for redistribution, the sector may be an area of opportunity for food rescue.
-  Health inspectors can be invaluable assets in educating licensed food facilities on how to safely donate surplus food. Improved communication and education for foodservice businesses will be necessary to fulfill the ambitious scenario predictions.
-  Coordination with local rescue organizations can help identify current donation levels and the untapped portion of the rescue estimates.

KEY FACTS

21%

food insecurity
in Philadelphia

214K

tons of food waste
in Philadelphia

40%

of all food in the
U.S. is wasted

\$218B

of food waste each
year in the U.S.

8%

of global greenhouse
gas emissions come
from food waste



City of
Philadelphia



**DOWNLOAD THE FOOD
MATTERS TOOLKIT**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PHILADELPHIA
EFFORTS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE**

phila.gov/green
sustainability@phila.gov

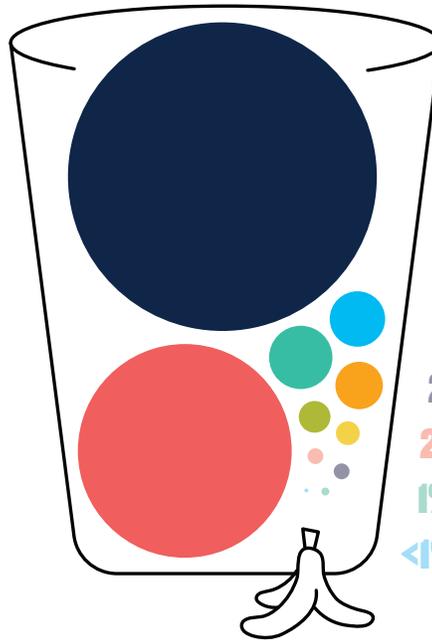
**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NRDC'S
FOOD MATTERS INITIATIVE**

www.nrdc.org/food-matters
foodmatters@nrdc.org

FOOD WASTE IN PHILADELPHIA

Though actual measurement of wasted food is optimal, waste audits can be costly, time-consuming, and sometimes impractical. The model for calculating these estimates using proxy metrics was identified from a range of national sources and NRDC's original research.

We estimate 214,000 tons of food waste are generated in Philadelphia each year. Residential is the highest food waste producing sector at 82,500 tons of food waste per year followed by restaurants, totaling 58,000 tons.



- 39% RESIDENTIAL**
- 27% RESTAURANTS**
- 8% FOOD MANUFACTURING**
- 7% GROCERS & MARKETS**
- 6% HOSPITALITY**
- 4% FOOD WHOLESALERS**
- 3% HEALTH CARE**
- 2% COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**
- 2% EVENTS & RECREATION**
- 1% K-12 SCHOOLS**
- <1% CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**

FOOD RESCUE OPPORTUNITIES

Donation of surplus food serves an important role in meeting the immediate needs of those facing food insecurity. The maximum scenario used our most optimistic assumptions about the amount of surplus food potentially available for donation with full participation from businesses within each sector. Alternatively, the ambitious scenario used more realistic assumptions and existing donation patterns to estimate an ambitious but attainable expansion of food donation efforts.

While restaurants represent a larger portion of overall wasted food, much of that waste occurs after the food is served and is unsuitable for rescue.

