MODEL EXECUTIVE ORDER: MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION
Up to **40%** of all food in the U.S. goes uneaten, which is worth $444 billion per year.

Food waste is generally **not a partisan issue** – all three of the most recent presidential administrations have strong records on food waste.
Municipal governments are uniquely well-positioned to address – and lead by example on – food waste because...

- Municipalities often **employ many people** and **procure a large amount of food**; consequently, food waste reduction efforts in municipal operations can have a significant impact.

- **Climate change** mitigation and adaptation goals, zero waste goals, and other sustainability goals set by cities can be advanced through adoption of food waste reduction strategies and actions.

- Municipal solid **waste management** (collection, processing, and disposal) costs can be reduced by producing less waste.

- Local **food insecurity** can be reduced by directing more surplus food to people who need it.
The Executive Order on Municipal Leadership on Food Waste Reduction requires a municipality to “lead by example” by instituting policies, programs, and actions within and across city government to raise awareness about and reduce food waste.
GOALS AND PURPOSES

1. To **reduce** the amount of food wasted throughout municipal operations
2. To **highlight** the importance of reducing food waste to businesses, households, and other private entities
3. To **demonstrate** food waste reduction measures that businesses and other entities may voluntarily replicate
Model developed by NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and the Environmental Law Institute (ELI)

Based on extensive research and best practices

Adaptable tool that can be tailored to needs of individual municipalities

Versions with and without commentaries

Version with commentaries and accompanying research memo offer background information and alternative approaches

Is an Executive Order right for my city?

Generally, EOs are appropriate for actions that address the administration of internal municipal functions, but jurisdictions vary. The Model can be reframed as an ordinance with relatively few changes to the document, if necessary.
OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS

Addressing food waste provides myriad economic, environmental, and social benefits for a municipality.
ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Diverting food waste from landfills and incinerators typically:

- **Reduces the need to expand and create new landfills**, which are costly and disproportionately sited in low-income communities and communities of color.
- Fosters **economic development** through increased compost supplier and processor jobs.
- **Lowers waste management costs** associated with landfill or incinerator disposal.
- **Increases production of compost when food scraps are recycled**, which can reduce the demand for irrigation and fertilizer, thereby reducing operational costs.
Diverting food waste from landfills and incinerators typically:

- **Reduces emissions of methane** from food waste as it decays in landfills and **emissions of carbon dioxide** from food waste that is incinerated.
- **Avoids unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and wasting resources** associated with producing, transporting, and disposing of wasted food.
- **Reduces the harmful environmental (and public health) impacts** of landfills and incinerators, which are disproportionately sited in low-income communities and communities of color.
- **Increases production of compost when food scraps are recycled**, thereby producing valuable soil amendment that can sequester carbon and increase nutrient and water retention, which can reduce the demand for irrigation and fertilizer.
Diverting food waste from landfills and incinerators typically:

- **Reduces the need to expand and create new landfills**, which are disproportionately sited in low-income communities and communities of color.
- Reduces the harmful **public health impacts** of landfills and incinerators.
- **Addresses food insecurity when surplus food is rescued** and distributed to food-insecure populations, particularly households and communities of color which disproportionately face hunger.
KEY PROVISIONS OF THE MODEL
“The [Municipal Government] hereby adopts a goal of reducing food waste in [Municipality] by 50 percent by 2030, consistent with the federal goal set in 2015.”
Staffing

The Model calls for the municipality to “create a **central entity for coordinating municipal food waste efforts** by hiring or designating a City Food Waste Reduction Coordinator… and/or convening a cross-agency working group.”
The Model specifies that the municipality must “develop and implement mandatory best practices for municipal buildings and properties.” This could include food scrap recycling practices such as:

- **Requiring organic waste collection** at all municipal offices, buildings, and municipality-leased properties
- Providing **organics recycling collection bins alongside trash bins** in public spaces
- Requiring future municipal construction projects to include **room for organics recycling bins in collection areas** (e.g., communal spaces, loading docks)
MANDATORY BEST PRACTICES FOR MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS THAT SERVE FOOD

The Model specifies that the municipality must “develop and implement mandatory best practices” for municipal departments that regularly serve food. Examples include:

- **Measuring/benchmarking** food waste generation
- **Donating** surplus food
- Offering **variously sized portions**
- **Eliminating** trays and buffets
- Implementing “**offer versus serve**” protocols
- Collecting food scraps for **recycling**
Municipalities must “**provide training** and **require food waste reduction measures** as part of the special event permit application process.”

Reduction measures for special events may include:

- Forecasting demand for food items to **avoid over-ordering** for the event
- Providing **organics recycling collection bins** at the event and arranging for recycling of collected food scraps
- Offering **variously sized portions** and **flexible ordering options** to attendees
- Pre-arranging for **donation of surplus food** after the event
The Model calls for municipalities to include food waste reduction measures in the implementation and/or adoption of procurement laws and policies, contracts, and bid solicitation documents where possible.

These measures include:

- Preferences for outside contractors and vendors that employ food waste reduction measures
- Procurement and use of:
  - Food waste management software
  - Compost
  - Food items with minimal packaging and waste
  - Compostable and/or recyclable foodware (if not reusable)
The Model also specifies that food waste reduction training must be included in municipal education programs, which could include:

- Education for municipal employees on **best practices for food waste reduction** in their **offices** and in their own **households**
- **Targeted education for health inspectors, facility managers**, and others whose roles relate to surplus food or food scrap generation, or engaging with those who generate surplus food or food scraps
- Food waste awareness **community events** sponsored by the Mayor to highlight municipal government practices that could be applied more widely
The Model calls for municipalities to “offer municipal employee benefits that foster food waste reduction measures.” Examples include:

• Free or discounted kitchen food scrap bins and/or **home composting bins**
• Discounted food scrap **recycling collection** services
• Discounted subscriptions to services delivering **groceries that do not meet typical cosmetic standards** or are surplus
• Free reusable **food storage** containers
• Free e-books or other materials containing **recipes that incorporate leftover food** and/or lesser used food items
The Model also calls for the municipality to “incentivize food waste reduction through an employee or agency recognition program.”
The Model specifies that municipal departments must:

- **Develop a strategy** for preventing food waste, rescuing/donating surplus food, and recycling food scraps
- **Submit a qualitative and quantitative report** on food waste reduction efforts to the Mayor’s Office each year
• **Food Waste Reduction Target:**
  A municipality may opt for a more ambitious target, replacing the federal goal with a specific and higher number.

• **Staffing:**
  A municipality could allocate new duties among existing sustainability or facilities staff, rather than hiring/designating a Coordinator and/or establishing a cross-agency working group.

• **Best Practices for Municipal Departments:**
  The specific food waste reduction practices that a municipality requires may vary according to local circumstances and stakeholder input.

• **Procurement:**
  Procurement policies adopted pursuant to the Model could stand alone or be part of a broader environmentally preferable purchasing policy.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION
Dive into the Model Ordinance

Model Executive Order on Municipal Leadership on Food Waste Reduction:

Visit the link above to find:
• The full model executive order, with commentaries
• The full model executive order, without commentaries
• The accompanying background memorandum
• A copy of this presentation
**Helpful Sources**

**NRDC Food Matters:** [https://www.nrdc.org/food-matters](https://www.nrdc.org/food-matters)


**Nashville Food Waste Initiative:** [https://urbangreenlab.org/nashville-food-waste-initiative/](https://urbangreenlab.org/nashville-food-waste-initiative/)