



# **MODEL EXECUTIVE ORDER: MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION**



# THE BIG PICTURE ON FOOD WASTE

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.

## Uneaten Food Consumes:



**6%**  
of U.S. GHG  
Emissions



**22%**  
of all  
Fresh Water Use



**16%**  
of U.S.  
Cropland Use  
(EPA Estimate)



**24%**  
of Landfill Inputs  
(EPA Estimate)

Source: ReFED, 2021

# CITIES AND 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



## WHAT IS A LEAD BY EXAMPLE EXECUTIVE ORDER?



### 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



# BACKGROUND ON THE MODEL EXECUTIVE ORDER

- 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.

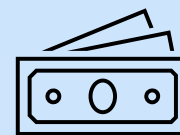
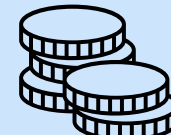
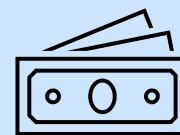
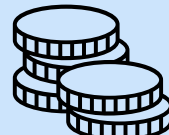
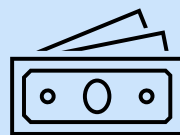
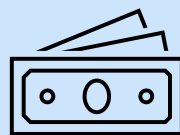
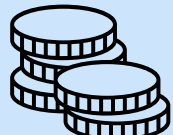
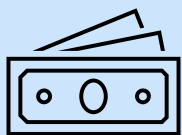
# OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS

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





# ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Diverting food waste from landfills and incinerators typically:

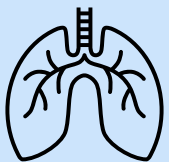
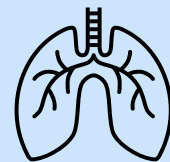
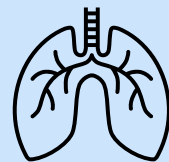
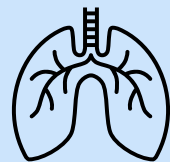
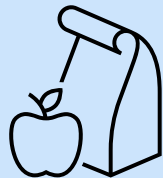
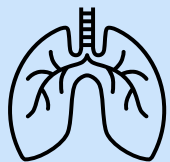
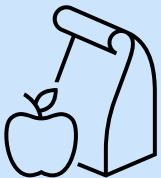
- **Reduces emissions of methane** from food waste as it decays in landfills and **emissions of carbon dioxide** from food waste that is incinerated
- **Avoids unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and wasting resources** associated with producing, transporting, and disposing of wasted food
- **Reduces 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



# SOCIAL BENEFITS

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**

## FOOD WASTE REDUCTION TARGET

“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.”

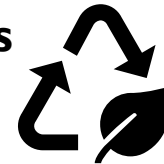
## STAFFING

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.”

## MANDATORY BEST PRACTICES FOR MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES

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)

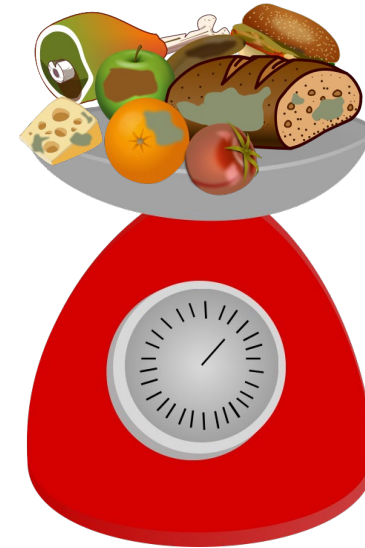


## MANDATORY BEST PRACTICES FOR MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS THAT SERVE FOOD

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**



## SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESS

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



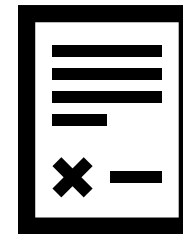


# PROCUREMENT LAWS AND POLICIES

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)



## FOOD WASTE PREVENTION TRAINING IN MUNICIPAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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



## MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FOR FOOD WASTE REDUCTION MEASURES

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



## MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE OR AGENCY RECOGNITION PROGRAM

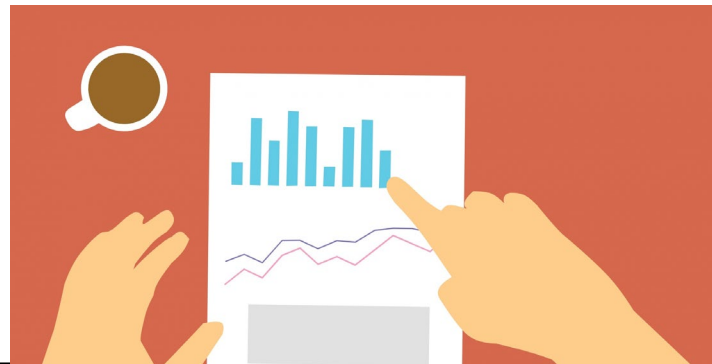
The Model also calls for the municipality to “**incentivize** food waste reduction through an **employee or agency recognition program.**”

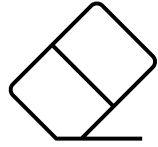


# MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT STRATEGIES

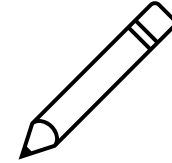
The Model specifies that municipal departments must:

- **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





## ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES INCLUDE...



- **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:

<https://www.nrdc.org/resources/model-executive-order-municipal-leadership-food-waste-reduction-and-without-commentaries>

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**



MAY 2023  
FS: 23-05-F

## MODEL EXECUTIVE ORDER ON MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

\* For a version with commentaries: *Model Executive Order on Municipal Leadership on Food Waste Reduction with commentaries*. For background information and supplemental resources: *Model Executive Order on Municipal Leadership on Food Waste Reduction Background Memorandum*.

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. \_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

### OUTLINE

- 1.0 Findings
- 2.0 Purpose
- 3.0 Definitions
- 4.0 Food Waste Reduction Target
- 5.0 Municipal Food Waste Reduction Measures
- 6.0 Municipal Department Strategies
- 7.0 Semiautonomous and Quasi-Governmental Entity Strategies



## HELPFUL SOURCES

**NRDC Food Matters:** <https://www.nrdc.org/food-matters>

**ELI Food Waste Initiative:** <https://www.eli.org/food-waste-initiative/food-waste-prevention-recovery-and-recycling>

**Nashville Food Waste Initiative:** <https://urbangreenlab.org/nashville-food-waste-initiative/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

**LINDA BREGGIN • JESSIE SUGARMAN**

**[breggin@eli.org](mailto:breggin@eli.org) • [sugarman@eli.org](mailto:sugarman@eli.org)**

[www.eli.org](http://www.eli.org)

[www.facebook.com/EnvironmentalLawInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/EnvironmentalLawInstitute)

[www.twitter.com/ELIORG](https://www.twitter.com/ELIORG)



**DARBY HOOVER**

**[dhoover@nrdc.org](mailto:dhoover@nrdc.org)**

[www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

[www.facebook.com/NRDC.org](https://www.facebook.com/NRDC.org)

[www.twitter.com/NRDC](https://www.twitter.com/NRDC)

