

Partnership Building:

Increasing Opportunities to Sustainably Manage Food Waste



The US Environmental Protection Agency's Food Recovery Hierarchy lists methods that can be implemented to successfully divert food waste from the landfill including:

- ✓ Preventing Food Waste
- ✓ Feeding People
- ✓ Feeding Animals
- ✓ Waste-to-Energy Recycling
- ✓ Composting

However, implementing these strategies isn't always easy as barriers and challenges can impede successful implementation of strategies. This is where partnerships become important.

WHY ARE PARTNERSHIPS IMPORTANT TO SOLVE THE FOOD WASTE CONUNDRUM?

- ✓ Partnerships create a healthy community environment where people work together in cooperation sharing knowledge, resources, time, and talents
- ✓ Giving back to the community fosters a sense of well-being and community pride while collaborating to solve important issues associated with wasted food
- ✓ Working together to divert food waste from the landfill can help overcome challenges and barriers to successful implementation of strategies
- ✓ Partnerships can help increase available opportunities to put food waste to better uses
- ✓ A regional approach to partnership building allows neighboring communities to work together, further expanding available opportunities that divert food waste from the landfill

IDENTIFY BARRIERS

It's important to identify barriers when implementing strategies to divert food waste from the landfill; this can also help identify beneficial partners in the region and community. For example, inedible food waste can be composted. Who can help with this strategy? A local farmer, a municipal yard waste site, or even a partnership with local leaders who have the authority to approve a composting project on public lands. Think outside the box when looking for partners.

EXAMPLE OF A BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

- ✓ K-12 schools are notorious for the amount of food waste they generate. Let's say a K-12 school wants to collect and donate excess edible food to the local food pantry but doesn't have transportation or available staff time to make the delivery. Identifying the challenges and barriers can help identify beneficial partners. The K-12 school could contact local businesses that have a fleet of vehicles such as realtors, universities, or car dealerships and ask them to volunteer an hour a week transporting the donations to the food bank.

INCENTIVIZE

Maintaining a robust volunteer base of community and regional partners can be done through incentives. When relying on others for transportation, design and order window clings for their vehicles that proudly states they are a partner in the fight against food waste. Host an awards banquet where volunteers are recognized for their contributions to the community and/or region. Take out an ad in the local paper praising volunteers for their continued support of important community and regional initiatives. These incentives don't cost much, but provide positive PR, community pride, and a sense of accomplishment.