

FOOD WASTE
AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

EVENT GUIDE

FOOD WASTE
*Prevention
Week*



Department of
Environment &
Conservation



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Food Waste...

It happens every day in homes, restaurants, grocery stores, and even on the farm. We may not think twice about throwing away last night's leftovers because "we can just go buy more." But food is meant to be eaten, and not everyone can afford to "just buy more." Food waste is driven by many different factors along the supply chain, but education is the easiest and most cost-effective way to spark change and reduce food waste.



The purpose of this guide is to assist educational event coordinators, with the goal of increasing food waste education and awareness. Event coordinators can use this template to structure their event to maximize its educational benefits through partnerships with vendors, speakers, and organizations that participate in the event.

OBJECTIVES

1. Educate Americans about the problem of food waste and identify solutions that prevent food waste at the source, increase food recovery, and increase food waste diversion away from landfills.
2. Raise awareness of local resources available to combat food waste and food insecurity.
3. Provide tangible actions that can make a difference at home and in the community.

TARGET AUDIENCE

With the goal of educating and raising awareness, it is important to identify who your target audience will be. Food waste events have the flexibility to target all demographics. Fun and creative cooking demonstrations can appeal to families and younger audiences, whereas a Bread to Tap event would appeal to a more mature crowd. Determine the type of event you would like to host and cater to that audience.

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

Each event should encompass the following components:

1. Food - After all, these are food waste events. There needs to be food in one or more of the following capacities:
 - a. Food Waste Cooking Demo
 - b. Local Food Trucks
 - c. Food at the Event Location
 - d. Catered Food
2. Education - The purpose of the events is to educate and raise awareness about food waste reduction, diversion, and recovery. Examples include having booths set up with local organizations/businesses that provide services and resources locally, educational flyers and brochures, etc.
3. Incentives - Give people a reason to come to the event. That could include entertainment, free samples, a raffle, games, discounts on items if they bring food to donate, etc. People will come if they know they will get something out of it.

EVENT LAYOUT

Understanding the complex path that food takes from cultivation to landfill is a powerful story that communicates the value of food. When considering the best way to lay out an event, modeling the food-to-waste supply chain can be an effective way to tell that story.

Provide attendees with a (compostable/recyclable) pamphlet as they arrive explaining the problem of food waste and directing a “journey” through the booths. These pamphlets should include information on where to follow all the organizations to keep in touch on their food waste reduction journey. Consider adding space on this pamphlet for guests to check off each booth or “zone” they visit during the event. Incentivize attendee engagement by offering a chance to win prizes like a goody bag with things like fresh produce, a meal planning guide, free compost service, etc.

The pamphlet and prizes incentivize people to visit more booths and provide information on how many attendees there were at the event.

- The first “zone” highlights food production, i.e., farmers/community gardeners talking about how they harvest food, and the food waste challenges they face.
- The second “zone” highlights distributors, grocery retailers, farmers markets, etc. who can speak to food waste from the farm as it makes its way to consumers.
- The third “zone” highlights gleaning/food donation organizations like local food projects, food banks, gleaning organizations, and community fridges, who can talk about how they take food that might go to waste and provide it to the community.
- The fourth “zone” highlights composting organizations that can discuss diverting the remaining food scraps away from landfills, producing compost for farmers to use.

It would be also helpful to lay out these zones in a circle to illustrate how the food system doesn’t have to be a line from farm to landfill; rather the food system can be a circle from farm to farm.

MAKE YOUR EVENT A GREEN EVENT

Events can have a large environmental impact and waste can occur in many ways. There are a few steps you can take to lower your impact and reduce your waste footprint. Check out this [Green Events Guide](#) to learn how to make your event as sustainable as possible.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

While some events will take place indoors, many events are either entirely or partially outdoors. Event coordinator(s) will need to decide on a plan for inclement weather. Where will the event move in the event of inclement weather? If there is an alternative space in which to host the event, what layout will be used to fit the space? If the event must be cancelled in the case of inclement weather, how will the coordinator communicate this to the venue, participants, and attendees?

BUDGET

It is important to understand that hosting events such as these can have associated costs. Event coordinators are encouraged to find local partners to make these events as cost effective as possible. Some costs to consider when planning an event include:

- Event location
- Food
- Prizes/Giveaways

VENUE VET CHECKLIST

- What is the capacity of the indoor space?
- Does the venue have an outdoor space? If so, what is the capacity? Is there electricity outside?
- Is there parking? What is the parking capacity?
- Is the location easily accessible? ADA compliant?
- Does the location of the venue get a lot of foot traffic?
- Does the venue provide food? If not, is there space for a food truck? Does the venue allow external vendors/caterers to provide food?
- For those events that may not be held at a specific venue like a restaurant or brewery, check on local permitting needed prior to the event.



BREAD TO TAP EVENTS

For Bread-to-Tap events, organizations partner with brewers and take unsold bread from local bakeries and turn it into a delicious, limited-release brew to raise awareness about the problem of food waste and the many solutions and resources available. Brewers can also work with local farms and gleaning organizations to source other produce to be used to make a special brew with the same purpose.

The following is a short step-by-step guide to help you plan your event:

1. Reach out to your local brewery to ask if they are open to hosting a Bread-to-Tap event during Food Waste Prevention Week
 - Contact the brewer well in advance of your event, ~4 months prior if possible, so that a special brew can be added to their brewing calendar.
 - Know the date and time you have in mind before contacting the brewer
 - Communicate your desired time and length of event (Suggested: up to 3 hours; mid to late afternoon)
2. The event may include any of the following:
 - **Food Waste Trivia** - Questions available [HERE](#).
 - **Specialty Beer** - If the beer is being made with bread, partner with a bread company to collect upcycled bread. Brewmaster Drew Barton of Memphis Made Brewing Company's recipe can be found [HERE](#). Others have created a cider made from upcycled fruit or sweet potatoes.
 - **Food Demo** - Invite a local chef or community organization to demonstrate ways to safely cook with leftover foods, food scraps, and/or how to cook with minimal or no waste.
 - **Compost Demo** - Invite a local composter to offer a composting demonstration and possibly short-term subscriptions for residents. You can also coordinate with the composter to help make the event zero food waste.
 - **Invite Organizations/Businesses** - Research and ask around for businesses and organizations in your area who have active sustainability initiatives around food waste reduction, food recovery, and food waste diversion. Having these organizations table at the event will not only inform residents of the products and services available to them, but also allows these organizations and businesses to meet each other and network.
 - **Food Drive** - Part of reducing food waste is through food recovery and decreasing food insecurity. Encourage event goers to bring 3-5 items to donate in exchange for a discounted beer or other item served at the event. Event coordinator can choose a local organization for the donations to go to at the end of the event. Make sure to weigh or count the items so you know how much is collected.
 - **Music** - Music is always a nice addition to events. You can choose to play via a Bluetooth speaker or have a local artist come. Note: Remember you want people to be able to converse comfortably, so keep the volume and location of music in mind.

ADVERTISING

To ensure the success of these events, we encourage an event coordinator to leverage local contacts to promote the event. This may include local news stations, local organizations and businesses, etc. Once the event is planned, submit the event to the Food Waste Prevention Week events page to be featured. Make sure to share information and photos about the event on social media before, during, and after using the appropriate hashtags [#BeAFoodWasteHero](#) [#FoodWastePreventionWeek](#) [#FWPW](#) and tagging [@foodwastepreventionweek](#).