

Recovering wholesome, uneaten food in K-12 Schools



Food Waste is a Big Problem

31% or **133 billion** pounds of food from U.S. retail food stores, restaurants, and homes goes uneaten.

All of the resources that went into producing that wasted food – including the land, labor, water, pesticides, and fertilizers – could have been saved or gone to uses of higher value to society.



Americans produce enough food waste to fill 44 Willis (Sears) Towers every year.

USDA & EPA Announce U.S. Goal to **Reduce** Food Waste by 50%

- Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the United States' first-ever national food waste reduction goal, calling for a 50-percent reduction by 2030.
- USDA will lead a new partnership with organizations, the private sector, and local governments to reduce food loss and waste.



50% by 2030

Why Food Recovery

Reduce Hunger



Mitigate Climate
Change & Conserve
Resources



Why Food Recovery?

Mitigate Climate Change & Conserve Resources



- Food is the **single largest component** of municipal solid waste going to landfills *(U.S. EPA)*
- As food rots in landfills, it generates methane, a greenhouse gas over 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide *(U.S. EPA)*
- Landfills are the **third largest** source of methane in the U.S. *(U.S. EPA)*

Why Recover & Donate Food?

Reduce Hunger

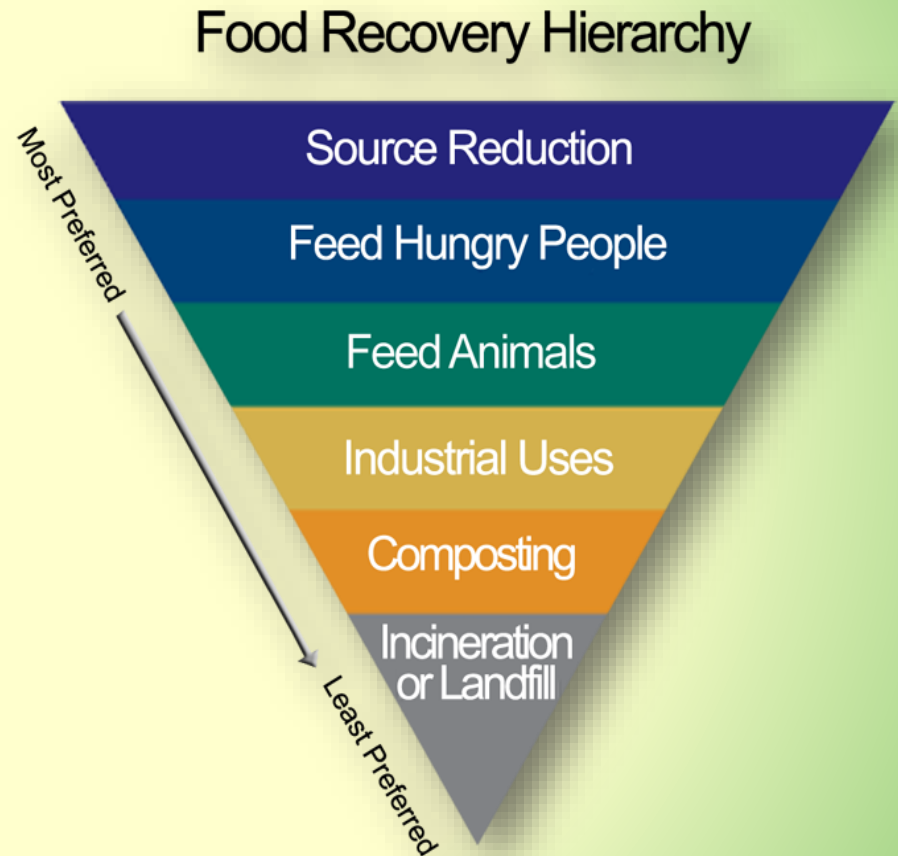
14.3% of American households were food insecure in 2013.

We can help recover wholesome unsold food from our supermarkets, restaurants, and cafeterias and donate it to food pantries & soup kitchens.



What Can Schools Do?

- **Reduce** food waste through improved ordering, prepping, & storage
- **Recover** wholesome, uneaten food and donate it to feed people in need
- **Recycle** discarded food for other uses including animal feed, compost, and energy generation



Recovering Food Waste

Federal laws and guidelines

- Food donations are offered liability protection from the [Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act](#)
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service **encourages** donation of uneaten, wholesome food. Food donation has been a longstanding policy in all Child Nutrition Programs and it has now been [clarified in the National School Lunch Act.](#)



Recovering Food Waste

State Laws vs County Laws

Local governments only have powers that are expressly given to them by the state.

- **Dillon's Rule State** = All regulations have to be passed by General Assembly at State level and counties have to follow it.
- **Home Rule State** = Regulations passed by General Assembly, but local governments can adopt different standards. Usually has greater independence and may have own "Home Rule Charter" which is analogous to Local Constitution.



- Resources: [“Good Laws, Good Food: Putting Local Food Policy to Work For Our Communities”](#) – Harvard Food Law & Policy Clinic

Federal, State, & Local Laws

Food Safety Example

ISSUE	FEDERAL LEVEL	STATE LEVEL	LOCAL LEVEL
FOOD SAFETY	<p>The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) creates the FDA <i>Food Code</i>, which recommends (but does not require) food safety provisions for retail stores and restaurants. It is not mandatory but has been adopted in some form by most states.³⁶ The federal government also regulates food safety for meat and poultry processing,³⁷ monitors food safety generally, and has some food recall authority.³⁸</p>	<p>State governments implement laws and regulations affecting restaurants and retail stores, based on federal guidance. Most states adopt a modified version of the FDA <i>Food Code</i>. States can create their own meat and poultry processing inspection regime, but it must be at least as stringent as the federal regime.³⁹</p>	<p>Local public health departments are often tasked with enforcing state food safety requirements. Some local governments also have their own set of food safety ordinances applicable to local restaurants or grocery stores.</p>

Indiana Food Recovery Guidelines



- Food Rescue worked with Indiana Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health to come up with [food recovery and share table guidelines](#)

Recovering Food Waste

- Don't assume food can't be donated – food banks take fresh produce, hot prepared foods, & processed goods
- Work with your food pantry, food bank, or caring agency to keep good quality food from landfills
- Check with your local health department to see what foods you can donate
- Work with a local food policy council to make changes at the county or state level in regards to food waste
- Small amounts of food from each school in the district add up to large amounts in the overall community



A refrigerator at Chesterbrook Elementary School in Virginia is dedicated to recovered food that will be donated. Food banks and pantries have a high demand for fresh milk.

Recovering Food Waste

- Schools can work with [food recovery groups](#) such as the [Food Bus](#) or [Food Rescue](#) to setup a food recovery program in their schools.
- Or, they can start a direct relationship with a [local food pantry](#) or [food bank](#).
- Involve students - Form food recovery teams made up of students that help educate other students on which food items can be donated and which can be composted. These student teams can also help with donation collection and drop-offs.

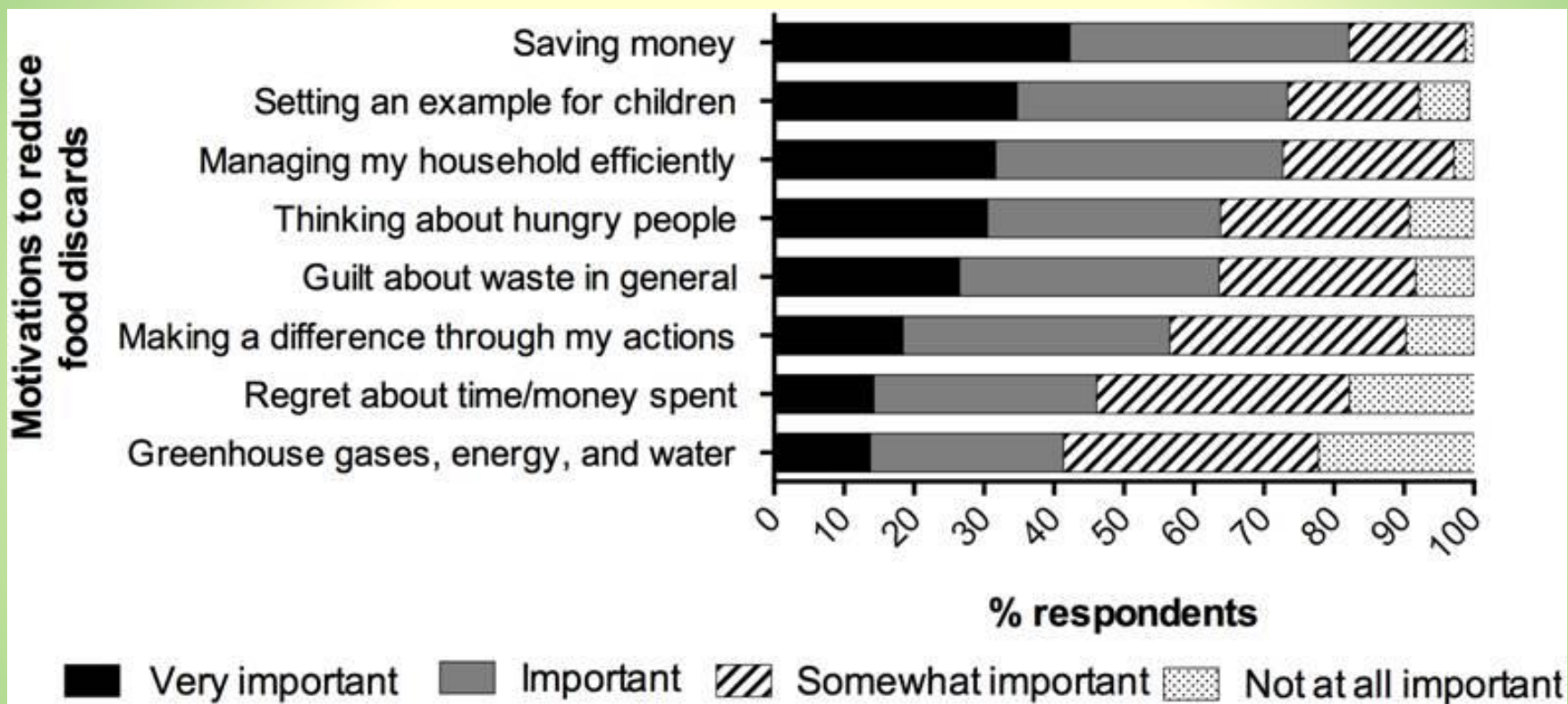
“The children in the schools are not only learning how to *not* throw away their food and add it to the national waste stream, but they’re learning that it can be used by someone who is hungry. They are getting a little spark of community service now that may have an impact in their life and the lives of the many people around them when they are adults.”

– Kathleen Weil, Founder of the Food Bus

Indiana Encouraging Next Generation of Food Waste Reducers

- Food Rescue is awarding 5 - \$1,000 scholarships to participating high schools in their [Student Led Entrepreneurship Initiative \(SLEI\)](#) program to find the next great food rescue entrepreneur.

Reasons for Wanting to Reduce Food Waste



[“Wasted Food: U.S. Consumers' Reported Awareness, Attitudes, and Behaviors.”](#)

**U.S. Food
Waste
CHALLENGE**

For more information, visit:
www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/webinars.html