

FOOD WASTE RESTAURANT CHALLENGE GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

In our [Tackling Food Waste in Cities: A Policy and Program Toolkit](#) (strategy #7), we note that cities interested in reducing food waste should consider ways to involve business sectors in their efforts, particularly those sectors most often linked to higher food waste generation, such as food service. The NRDC report [Estimating Quantities and Types of Food Waste at the City Level](#) found that restaurants were the largest (estimated) business sector generators of food waste in all three cities studied. Some cities, including Nashville and Denver, have successfully engaged restaurants and other sectors, including hospitality and retail, through food waste challenges that encourage local businesses to adopt specific practices to reduce the amount of food going to waste, donate surplus food, and recycle food scraps. This guide to implementing a restaurant (or other business) food waste challenge is based on the models in Nashville and Denver.

DOWNLOADS

- Visit our [resource library](#) to download editable templates of the materials and customize them for your city.
- [Denver Restaurant Challenge Assets \(PDF\)](#)
- [Denver Restaurant Challenge Participant Welcome Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [Denver Kitchen Poster \(PDF\)](#)
- [Nashville Food Saver Challenge Window Cling \(PDF\)](#)
- [Nashville Food Saver Challenge Flier \(PDF\)](#)
- [Nashville Food Saver Challenge Recruitment Postcard \(PDF\)](#)

I. GOALS

The first step in setting up a restaurant challenge is to determine what your goals are and how you would like to articulate them. For example:

A. Environmental

- Up to 40 percent of the food we produce in the United States goes uneaten. When we waste that food, we waste all the water, energy, agricultural chemicals, labor, and other resources that go into growing, storing, and transporting it. Most food waste at the city level occurs among consumers, restaurants, grocery stores, and institutional food service.
- A challenge can engage restaurants of different types (and possibly other businesses) in reducing and raising awareness about food waste, following the principles of the food recovery hierarchy: preventing food from going to waste in the first place, donating surplus food, and recycling food scraps.

B. Social / Financial

- Participating restaurants can save money by reducing food waste; [one study](#) found that for every dollar invested in food waste reduction, half of the restaurants in the study saw a return of six dollars or more.
- Participants can create positive PR by adopting practices that reduce food waste. Cities can also gain positive PR by using challenges to raise public awareness about food waste, which can help in securing buy-in for future programs.
- Participating restaurants can learn from other participants and build a culture of reducing food waste. Restaurant staff can also learn from one another and potentially take ownership of food waste reduction strategies. Participating in or leading a socially and environmentally responsible initiative can build staff pride and contribute to increased employee retention.
- Benefits to the broader community include increasing the amount of donated food, reducing the amount of organic waste sent to landfills, and raising local awareness.

II. WHO TO INVOLVE

A. Participants

Determine which businesses you would like to target through the challenge (e.g., restaurants, hotels). Consider identifying the largest industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) food waste generators in your community and focus on the sectors where you will realize the biggest impact. The largest-generating ICI sector is likely to be restaurants; other potential large generators include grocers, hospitality providers, food wholesalers and distributors, universities, and health care facilities (see [Estimating Quantities and Types of Food Waste at the City Level](#)). NRDC can provide resources to help municipalities develop baseline metrics and measure impact. Although restaurants are likely to be the ICI sector generating the most food waste in your community, this represents aggregate generation; the restaurant sector is composed of many individual facilities, each of which is likely a relatively small generator, so gaining sector-wide collaboration is key to overall success.

B. Partners

Determine who can work on this initiative (e.g., city staff, local nonprofits, local restaurant associations or other trade groups, local PR organizations, chef advisory groups) and who will be responsible for each component. Identify local champions, stakeholders, and influencers and meet with them early on to get their input. These can come in the form of city agencies, programs, and task forces; external business groups and associations in the target sector; neighborhood groups; and business owners. Also approach groups that could pose a barrier to your work and try to get their buy-in. Learn what their concerns are, and design a campaign that is sensitive to their needs.



Recruitment postcard for the Nashville Food Waste Initiative

III. CHALLENGE SETUP LOGISTICS

Structure a campaign that is in concert with your existing resources, goals, and opportunities. Consider the following elements of setting up a challenge in advance of outreach. (See *Section V. Maintaining the Challenge: Partner Responsibilities* for suggestions on running challenges.)

A. Timeline

Is this a time-limited challenge or an ongoing one? (Nashville first conducted a three-month pilot during which restaurants were required to implement food-saving practices for at least 30 days; this was followed by a permanent, ongoing challenge.)

B. Informational Materials

Will there be a website, [posters](#), and/or other ways to provide information on the challenge? Who will host and maintain the website, and who will create [other informational materials](#)?

C. Recruitment

How will challenge participants be recruited (e.g., via cold calling, [mailings](#), referrals from other challenge participants, a kickoff/recruitment event, etc.)? Will you target specific neighborhoods or types of restaurants, or will you otherwise focus recruitment? Who is responsible for recruitment?

D. Participant Requirements

What practices will participants be requested (or required) to implement? (See *Section IV. Sample Requirements for Participation*.)

E. Metrics

What metrics are you hoping to collect (e.g., number of participants, number of specific practices implemented, pounds of food scraps collected for composting, pounds of surplus food donated, etc.)? Consider desired metrics when designing your campaign, and talk with your target audience and partners to verify that your goals are attainable. Make sure that waste haulers are willing to provide data on waste collected and to adjust service levels (if relevant) if waste reduction measures are successful.

F. Incentives / Recognition

Are there any incentives available for participation (e.g., discounts on organic waste collection service, [decals](#) or other promotional materials for participant facilities, promotional and/or recognition events, press opportunities, etc.)?

G. Waste Audit

Do you intend to include any waste audits? If so, who will conduct them? How will you finance them, obtain materials, solidify logistics, etc.? It is important to note that you'll probably be able to conduct waste audits only once or twice for each facility, due to cost and logistics; therefore, they are best characterized as "snapshots" rather than comprehensive analyses of a facility's normal waste generation pattern. However, challenge participants often find that the information gleaned from even a single waste audit can illuminate areas where they may be able to make improvements and adopt specific food waste strategies. For waste audits, we suggest following the protocols we developed for our baseline study, [Estimating Quantities and Types of Food Waste at the City Level](#), and include report-backs to participating restaurants as an incentive (see Appendix M in the baseline study's [Technical Appendices](#) for report-back templates). If resources for waste audits are very limited, a simple model of waste audit that separates materials into three categories (recyclables, compost/food waste, and other) may still allow you to make rough estimates of baseline generation and organics recycling potential. This simpler model can also entail gathering anecdotal information and photos of items that could be kept out of the garbage through prevention, rescue, or recycling.

MAYOR'S FOOD SAVER CHALLENGE PARTICIPANT

COOK IT, STORE IT, SHARE IT.
JUST DON'T WASTE IT.



SAVETHEFOOD.COM

A window decal for participating restaurants

IV. SAMPLE REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

A. Basic Requirements for Participants

Adapted from Nashville's [Food Saver Challenge](#).

- Register for the challenge by completing a short initial survey identifying food-saving practices you will implement or expand. (See Food Saving Practices for examples.)
- Implement or expand a minimum of a given number (e.g., five) of the food-saving practices listed on the challenge website on an ongoing basis (or for a specific period, if time-limited). This can include practices used prior to the challenge, but at least one new practice must be added.
- Report on activities to reduce food waste at scheduled times (e.g., twice a year, at the end of the challenge period, etc.) in a brief online survey received via email. The survey will take no longer than 20 minutes to complete and will include questions about your successful practices and your challenges. In addition, the survey will ask for any information you might have regarding measurable results, which could include anything from recipes created to make use of leftover food to meals donated to buckets of compost generated.

B. Food-Saving Practices

The best way to reduce the impacts associated with food waste is to prevent waste altogether, so we suggest prioritizing prevention strategies in food waste challenges. The next most important strategy is to donate surplus food to organizations that can direct it to people in need. Finally, after maximizing prevention and donation, direct any remaining food scraps to animal feed, compost, or anaerobic digestion. See the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's \(EPA\) Food Recovery Hierarchy](#) for more information on the food waste hierarchy, and refer to Appendix A. Sample Resources List for more information and guidance on these practices.

1. **Reduce/Prevent Food Waste**

- Measure back-of-house and/or front-of-house food waste (this can be as simple as separating food waste into a bucket and counting the number of buckets generated each day for a week every month—or see our Resources list for information on other measurement tools).

- Adopt new practices for food purchasing, storage, and right-sized cooking quantities to minimize waste; if possible, track any changes in amounts of food purchased.
- Use foods that might otherwise be discarded (like imperfect fruits and vegetables and unusual plant parts), and take a “nose to tail” approach with animal products; record any new or modified recipes.
- Creatively repurpose surplus foods and record any new or modified recipes.
- Be flexible on portion sizes (e.g., offer smaller portions, half-size options, etc.).
- Cook in small batches and/or cook to order.
- Make side dishes and bread optional for your customers, and ensure that garnishes are edible.
- Actively encourage the use of (appropriately sized) carryout containers.
- Educate your customers by participating in the [Save the Food](#) campaign.
- Engage your staff through training on food waste reduction and food donation, and through recognition for practices that reduce food waste.
- Enlist at least three other businesses to sign up for the challenge.
- Since you know your business best, adopt other changes that reduce wasted food in your facility.

2. *Donate Surplus Food*

- Set up a partnership with a local charity that rescues food and make regular donations. (See Appendix A. Sample Resource List for a list of potential rescue organizations.) To the highest degree possible, keep track of how much and how often you are donating. (Tracking your donations allows you to get the fullest tax deduction for donating.)

3. *Recycle Food Scraps*

- Recycle food scraps by composting them (compost on-site, deliver to a composting facility, or contact a local hauler for pickup services; see Appendix A. Sample Resource List for a list of potential recycling organizations). Keep track of how much you collect for composting, or if you use a hauler, ask the hauler to do so for you.
- Donate or sell food scraps for animal consumption (for instance, hog farms may accept baked goods and other foods) and keep track of how much and how often you donate.

AFTER OUR
RESTAURANT IS
CLOSED WE'RE
STILL PUTTING
FOOD ON TABLES.



A social media post for Denver's Food Matters partnership

V. MAINTAINING THE CHALLENGE: PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Consider what actions need to be taken to maintain the challenge (e.g., ongoing recruitment, technical support, participant networking, participant report collection/tabulation, media outreach, recognition events) and which partners will be responsible for each of these tasks. (See Appendix B for specific examples of outreach emails, social media posts, and talking points.)

Here is a sample of challenge maintenance tasks allocated to specific supporting partners:
Adapted from Nashville's [Nashville's Food Saver Challenge](#).

A. Local Restaurant Association

- Develop and update a website for the challenge that explains the initiative, outlines the steps required to participate, and lists the participating restaurants.
- Periodically disseminate educational materials on food waste and the initiative on the website and social media and at meetings.
- Recruit participants (e.g., through membership communications, by asking other local business associations to share the challenge through their channels, by developing a list of restaurant owners for the mayor to reach out to personally, etc.).
- Send an introductory email to new participants that outlines the process and resources available; include a link to the initial survey that participants are required to take.
- Maintain a list of participants, track their dates of participation, and communicate with them periodically.
- Send out reminders for reporting and collect/compile reports when due.
- Host semiannual workshops to train restaurant staff in practical food waste reduction skills.
- Assist participants with logistics, and direct their questions to other partners who can provide technical support.
- To acknowledge participation, provide participants with a decal or other sign that can be posted in their restaurants.
- Send to the mayor's office a list of participants to receive certificates each year.
- Optional: Coordinate an annual event with the mayor's office to recognize participants.

- Optional: Although everyone who participates is a winner, develop special recognition for categories such as most creative use-it-up dish, most improved, innovative practices, top donors, etc.—possibly by business type (large, small, chain, etc.).

B. Mayor's Office

- Recognize participating restaurants on an annual basis by, at a minimum, mailing certificates of participation that can be framed and posted.
- Potentially cohost with partners an annual event or meeting with chefs at which participants are recognized and progress is discussed.
- Incorporate success stories provided by partners into the mayor's social media periodically.
- Update the mayor's website to direct interested restaurants to the challenge website.
- Respond to media inquiries about the challenge.

C. Local Nonprofit

- Assist with development of and updates to the challenge website.
- Coordinate technical support to participants, including in-person, on-line, or phone meetings to troubleshoot or answer practical questions as needed. Work with experienced chefs to provide tips. Make site visits as needed.
- Send regular emails to participants with highlights of best practices, media coverage, solicitation of questions, and discussion of any new resources or developments.
- Cosponsor and help plan meetings and events for the challenge.
- Help identify participants for recognition.
- Use social media and the email list to promote and highlight the challenge throughout the year.
- Highlight the challenge in events hosted by the nonprofit.
- Help develop a participant recruitment plan.
- Assist with the analysis and interpretation of reported results.
- Publicize results (in aggregate and/or with specific examples, if challenge participants allow it).

D. PR Partner

- Provide content for the mayor's social media channels and email list.
- Provide content for participants' social media channels.
- Develop promotional materials for participants (e.g., window decals, etc.)
- Help garner media attention for the challenge.
- Develop content for all partners' social media and email lists to promote and highlight the challenge throughout the year.
- Reach out to key players in the city's food scene—including bloggers and influencers—to ask that they feature the challenge on their social media (and perhaps include an invitation to attend and cover any participant events).

VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A. Sample Resources List

Adapted from Nashville's Food Saver Challenge resource list. These resources should be customized to fit your community.

The EPA's [Wasted Food Programs and Resources Across the U.S.](#) may be helpful in putting together your list. The EPA has developed a commonsense approach prioritizing best practices in food waste diversion. The best way to reduce the impacts associated with food waste is to prevent wasting food, so prioritize these practices in your business. The next most important strategy is to donate surplus food to organizations that can direct it to people in need. Finally, after maximizing prevention and donation strategies, direct any remaining food scraps to animal feed, compost, or anaerobic digestion. Visit the [EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy](#) for more information.

1. Reduce/Prevent Wasted Food

- [National Restaurant Association's Best Practices Guide](#)
- [EPA Tools for Assessing Wasted Food](#)
- [Save the Food Campaign](#)
- [LeanPath's 20 Food Waste Cutting Tips](#)
- [NRDC's Food Waste Reduction Strategies](#)

2. Donate Surplus Food

Here are some resources that can coordinate pickup and delivery of surplus food in Nashville, work with you to address other logistical questions, and even provide information on tax incentives (*replace with links to your local rescue organizations*):

- [One Generation Away](#)
- [Food Donation Connection](#)
- [The Nashville Food Project](#)

The following links contain information that may help you donate surplus food:

- [Metro Public Health Department Guidelines for Donating Prepared Food](#)
- [Metro Public Health Department and Nashville Food Waste Initiative Brochure on Food Donation](#)
- [Donor's Guide to Federal Tax Incentives](#)
- [Harvard Food Law & Policy Clinic Fact Sheet on Liability Protections](#)

3. Recycle Food Scraps

The following companies offer food scrap composting collection services in Nashville and can work with you to establish a collection system that works for you (*replace with links to your local collection services*):

- [Compost Company](#) (discount for challenge participants)
- [Compost Nashville](#) (first month is half-off for new members participating in the challenge)
- [Earth Savers](#) (fourth month is free for new members participating in the challenge)
- [Eternal Returns](#) (first month is half-off for new members participating in the challenge)

4. Additional Resources

- [EPA Food Recovery Challenge](#)
- [City of Atlanta Full Circle Food Challenge](#)
- [NYC Mayor's 2013 Food Waste Challenge to Restaurants](#)
- [ReFED Restaurant Food Waste Action Guide](#)
- [Worldchefs Food Waste Challenge](#)
- [The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste: Restaurants \(Champions 12.3\)](#)
- [Maximizing Food Scrap Composting Through Front-of-House Collections at Food Establishments \(EcoCycle\)](#)

Appendix B. Sample Outreach Emails, Social Media Posts, and Talking Points

These samples are adapted from [Nashville's Food Saver Challenge](#). All communications should be customized to fit your community.

1. Sample email to chef/restaurant participants post-registration

Dear Chef,

Thank you so much for signing up to participate in the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge for Restaurants. We appreciate your dedication to reducing food waste in Nashville.

Please share your participation widely and encourage other restaurants to sign up. Getting other restaurants to sign up counts as a food-saving practice outlined in the challenge, so we encourage you to spread the word about your participation. We've drafted a few Facebook posts and tweets below that we hope you'll consider using. Your restaurant is also listed as a participant in the challenge on the mayor's website.

Facebook:

- We are proud to be one of the restaurants in Nashville coming together and signing up for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge in an effort to reduce food waste. To see all the restaurants that are participating, visit [link]. #NashSavesTheFood
- We have signed up for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge. We are committing to expand our food waste reduction practices. #NashSavesTheFood

Twitter:

- Nashville restaurants are coming together for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge in an effort to reduce food waste. Visit [link] to sign up.
- We've signed up for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge! Check out the restaurants participating: [link]

2. Sample email to ongoing chef/restaurant participants

Dear Chef,

We hope that the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge is off to a great start for you and your team and that you all are adjusting well to your new food-saving practices!

What have you learned so far? Please share your participation on social media.

- Take a selfie with your Food Saver Challenge window decal.
- Show what food-saving practices are being implemented in the kitchen.

- Use the hashtags #WasteLessNash and #NashSavesTheFood.

We'd like to applaud you and the other participating restaurants for your commitment to reducing the amount of food going to waste.

Thanks again for your participation and hard work in reducing the amount of food going to waste in Nashville. Please be in touch if you have any questions.

P.S. In case you missed it, the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge was featured on Nashville Public Radio and also aired across the country on NPR's "Here & Now." You can check out the story here: <http://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2017/04/18/nashville-food-waste>

There will be additional media opportunities over the next month. Please reply to this email to let us know if you are interested in participating.

3. Examples of social media posts

Restaurant challenge social media posts for the mayor's office

Facebook

- Restaurants around Nashville are taking a stand against food waste by joining the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge. Up to 40 percent of food in America is wasted, and a family of four loses about \$1,800 in wasted food each year. Nashville, we need your help to ask your favorite local spot to participate in the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge. [link]
- I'm challenging Nashville restaurants to reduce food waste in our community and join the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge. These restaurants are committing to expand their food waste reduction practices. To see which restaurants have signed up to participate, visit [link].
- I launched the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge for restaurants to help us learn about what we can do to reduce food going to waste. Ask your favorite Nashville restaurants if they are participating in the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge to help reduce food waste in our community. There is still time to sign up. And thank you to all participants! [link]
- In 2019 and beyond, I'm challenging Nashville's restaurants, hotels, and entertainment venues to take steps to reduce food waste in our city. More than 30 Nashville restaurants have accepted the challenge so far, but it's not too late to sign up. Learn more about the challenge and register here. [link]
- During the holidays, it's important to remember the people without enough food on the table. More than 100,000 Nashvillians are food insecure, and that's one reason why I've decided to launch the Food Saver Challenge. Restaurants, hotels, and event venues across the city are participating in my Food Saver Challenge to reduce the amount of waste in our landfills while donating quality food to local nonprofits. Is your favorite Nashville business on the list? Tell them to sign up here: [link]

Twitter

- Visit [link] to see which Nashville restaurants have signed up for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge.
- Nashville restaurants are participating in the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge to help reduce food waste. See who's joining the effort: [link]
- In 2019, I'm challenging Nashville's hospitality and food service businesses to reduce food waste in our city. More than 30 businesses have taken the challenge so far, but it's not too late to sign up. Learn more about the challenge and register here: [link]
- During the holidays, it's important to remember the people who are hungry. More than 100,000 Nashvillians are food insecure, and that's one reason why I've decided to launch the Food Saver Challenge. Make sure your favorite business is signed up: [link]

Restaurant challenge social media posts for participating restaurants

These samples are adapted from Nashville's Food Saver Challenge. All communications should be customized to fit your community.

Facebook

- Did you know up to 40 percent of all food in the U.S. goes uneaten, with 95 percent of that wasted food ending up in landfills or incinerators? There are many ways to prevent this, including donating food and composting food scraps. Follow this link to sign up for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge and find a list of local compost haulers and food rescue organizations: [link]
- Composting is one of the many ways Nashville businesses are committing to preventing food from going to waste in the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge. @CompostNash CEO and compost hauler Matthew Beadlecomb says it's the easiest way to keep food out of our landfills. Participating businesses qualify for a discount with @CompostNash. [link]

Twitter

- Did you know 95% of wasted food ends up in landfills or incinerators? Stop the cycle by preventing food waste, donating surplus food, and composting food scraps. Sign up for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge and find a list of local resources here: [link] #WasteLessNash
- Composting is one of the many ways Nashville businesses are preventing food from going to waste. Businesses participating in the Mayor's Food Challenge qualify for a discount with Compost Nashville. Learn more from Compost Nashville's CEO here: [link] #WasteLessNash



RT NashvilleMCC: Proud to be part of the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge in an effort to reduce food waste. To see all the businesses that are participating, visit bit.ly/2AwXqd7 #WasteLessNash #foodwaste #savethefood #nashsavesfood MayorBriley NR...



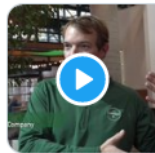
Proud to be part of the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge in an effort to reduce food waste. To see all the businesses that are participating, visit bit.ly/2AwXqd7 #WasteLessNash #foodwaste #savethefood #nashsavesfood @MayorBriley @NRDC



NEWS FROM NASHVILLE FARMERS' MARKET & MAYOR DAVID BRILEY 'S #FOODSAVERCHALLENGE W/HELP FROM NRDC . WE ARE PROUD TO BE A PART!

[#wastelessnash](#) [#nashsavefood](#)

Clay Ezell - IMPACT - Mayor's Food Saver Challenge Press Conference (2018) youtu.be/zMkSl8yMxWQ via @YouTube



Clay Ezell - IMPACT - Mayor's Food Saver Challenge Press Con... Register for the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge HERE: <https://www.nashvillefoodsaver.com/register/> Clay Ezell share... [youtube.com](https://youtu.be/zMkSl8yMxWQ)

4. Sample script for outreach staff to recruit restaurants to the challenge

- My name is [name], and I'm with [organization].
- I am reaching out on behalf of Mayor [name]'s office and [partner organizations] to tell you about an exciting opportunity for Nashville restaurants.
- Our mayor recently issued a challenge to the restaurants of [city] to reduce the amount of food being wasted.
- Restaurants are being asked to implement or expand a minimum of five food-saving practices between now and [date].
 - Our mayor understands the importance of the restaurant industry to our economy.
 - This challenge is intended to engage restaurants in reducing, and raising awareness of, food waste.
- Would you be interested in hearing more about this challenge?
- What's the best way to get you more details about the challenge?
 - Offer to text them the link to learn more and register.
 - Ask for their email address. Offer to send them an email.
 - Encourage them to visit the challenge website.

5. Sample script for an event to recruit grocers to a retailer food waste challenge

- We throw away up to 40 percent of food in this country, and cities like ours can play a critical role in reducing the amount of food going to waste in the United States.
- In 2015, the Natural Resources Defense Council selected Nashville as its pilot city for developing on-the-ground approaches to addressing food waste.
- The Nashville Food Waste Initiative is working on
 - preventing food from going to waste;
 - rescuing surplus food; and
 - recycling food scraps.
- Addressing wasted food will help enable our city to
 - preserve natural resources;
 - mitigate climate change; and
 - feed people who are food insecure in our community.
- The strategies and practical tools we develop here in Nashville will serve as models for cities around the United States.
- We are delighted to have partnered with the mayor, city agencies, and other local stakeholders on a wide range of projects, including this important initiative announced today—the Grocery Retailers Challenge.
- There are so many exciting examples of businesses and individuals working to reduce the amount of food going to waste.
- It's not just grocery stores that are reducing the amount of food that is wasted; many businesses, including restaurants, concert venues, sports venues, museums, and caterers, are stepping up on this important issue, donating thousands of pounds of

surplus food to the many nonprofits that feed the hungry and composting food scraps.

- Thank you to all of the businesses that are helping to keep food from going to waste and setting an example for other cities, and thank you to all the individuals who are also taking action to address food waste in their own homes.
- We look forward to continuing to work with all of you to stop wasting food!

Appendix C. Nashville's Food Saver Challenge

This description is written from a local perspective for [Nashville's Food Saver Challenge](#). The description and mission of your restaurant challenge should be customized to fit your community.

Back in January 2017, the [James Beard Foundation](#) came to Nashville and hosted an advocacy workshop for local chefs that focused on food waste. Included in the training was a discussion of what a challenge for restaurants might look like. The Nashville Food Waste Initiative (NFWI) used that discussion to shape and develop the program. NFWI organizers listened to the people they wanted to participate and got their buy-in on the front end.

In the chef community, it really matters what their peers say.

With that feedback in hand, NFWI put together a proposal for a challenge and approached then mayor Megan Barry's office about partnering to execute it. A food saver challenge had also been discussed in meetings of our Livable Nashville Committee, a group of community leaders and stakeholders working at the time to develop a shared vision for protecting and enhancing Nashville's livability and environmental quality and to initiate ambitious sustainability goals, policies, and projects.

In the spring of 2017, Nashville launched a pilot of the Mayor's Food Saver Challenge, and more than 50 restaurants participated for a period of 30 days. It was a small but highly visible pilot. The chef community was positioned to be a trusted authority for Nashvillians about what they could do in their own homes. Using local chefs and sharing their stories about how they made a difference rescuing food from going to waste, we were able to attract extensive media attention.

Following the pilot, Nashville Originals (a local association of independent restaurants) and the National Restaurant Association's local chapter approached NFWI about partnering on a permanent continuation of the challenge and broadening its scope to include the hotel sector as well. The Greater Nashville Hospitality Association later signed on too. These industry groups came to NFWI to be a part of this voluntary effort because of their members' interest in the issue and the PR value.

When the organizers got ready to relaunch the challenge with a new mayor, they were able to ensure that the involvement of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County (Metro) required only a limited amount of staff hours and resources, because the private sector—with support from NFWI—was prepared to manage the implementation of the challenge. The Mayor's Office's partnership enhanced the profile of the challenge and provided visibility and

outlets to market the initiative, but the Challenge was possible only because such strong partners were sharing responsibilities for its administration.

Even before the project was relaunched, the industry partners launched a website, www.nashvillefoodsaver.com, to provide educational materials to the restaurant and hospitality sectors that could serve as a companion to the Mayor's Office webpage about the challenge. It helped all partners to have clear allocations of responsibilities in administering the challenge before it was relaunched. A key lesson learned is that it is important to be flexible and make sure the challenge works for the chefs and the members of the industry partner groups.

Nashville also has an open Food Retailer Challenge. Mayor Barry, in collaboration with NFWI, announced a food waste challenge for grocery stores and other food retailers in October 2017. The announcement was made at an event cosponsored by the Second Harvest Food Bank and Kroger, which launched its Zero Hunger/Zero Waste campaign at the same event.

Appendix D. Denver's Restaurant Challenge

This description is written from a local perspective for Denver's Food Waste pilot program. The description and mission of your restaurant challenge should be customized to fit your community.

Denver was fortunate to have had [an assessment performed by NRDC](#) that showed households to be the largest generator of food waste (41%) and restaurants to be the second-largest (25%). Given that Denver restaurants were the largest commercial food waste generators, and given the city's longstanding business sustainability program with strong ties to the restaurant community, it was a no-brainer to choose to work with this sector.

Denver hosted a [two-month food waste pilot for eight restaurants in the Highlands neighborhood](#). The pilot was structured after [ReFED's simplified food waste pyramid](#) and added a fourth module to ReFED's three: Close the Loop. The modules are:

- Prevention: Denver provided restaurants with a list of options for food waste prevention that were developed in Nashville by NRDC, chefs, and the James Beard Foundation. Each restaurant was asked to adopt at least one measure from that list or craft its own.
- Rescue: Denver partnered with We Don't Waste, a local food donation group that picked up usable food from restaurants twice per week and redistributed it through its channels. The group also tracked the donated food and provided reports to each restaurant.
- Recycling: For the pilot, Denver provided free compost service to restaurants for two months. The city also provided custom signage, infrastructure, kitchen setup, troubleshooting, and staff training.
- Close the Loop: Denver worked with the Parks Department to apply finished compost to a park in the pilot neighborhood to demonstrate the importance of closing the loop. It held a community film screening of *Just Eat It* at the park to celebrate the accomplishments of the restaurants and to educate the residential sector on the importance of reducing food waste.

Denver collected metrics from the pilot through surveys, interviews, anecdotal information, waste audits, hauler data, reports of cost savings or increases, employee engagement, and more. Denver provided participating restaurants with public-facing recognition including a tool kit that featured a window decal, a POS/table tent info piece, a card that could be attached to takeout containers linking to household composting options, and social media tiles. The city also put out a press release, which was picked up by all four major network news stations and additional publications, with a reach of more than 15 million impressions.

In-house materials for staff included a kitchen poster with information on prevention, donation, and compost and a more detailed manual with all pilot details, contact information, and a calendar. Denver held kickoff and wrap-up meetings for all participants and held trainings and exit interviews with restaurants individually. Officials found this to be a good format for collecting and disseminating information. Surveys were not a successful means for gathering data. Denver recruited one restaurant in the neighborhood to act as a champion for the others. Workers at this restaurant were already successfully preventing food waste, donating excess food, and composting food scraps. They presented as a peer at the kickoff meeting; offered to give tours of their kitchen to show how they had set it up to facilitate prevention, donation, and compost; and were available as a resource to the other restaurants throughout the pilot.

Lessons learned:

- **Prevention:** Most restaurants had a hard time coming up with prevention strategies in the beginning. The majority adopted prevention strategies after implementing composting collection, which showed them how much they were wasting.
- **Rescue:** Very few restaurants were able to donate food through the program because they cook to order. There were some opportunities for donation at times of menu changes and upon receipt of incorrect orders.
- **Recycling:** Free compost service, training, and infrastructure enticed restaurants to participate. Results surprised restaurants and served as a catalyst for prevention and behavior change.
- **Behavior Change:** All participants liked composting and reported cultural changes around food waste prevention both within the restaurants and for employees at home. Six out of the 8 participating restaurants plan to continue to compost.
- **Diversion:** While the data were imperfect, anecdotally, Denver saw the restaurants increase their waste diversion from approximately 18 percent to about 70 percent during the two-month period. Waste audits showed that they have the potential to divert between 85 and 90 percent of their waste from the landfill.
- **In-house point person:** Denver saw the most successful outcomes with restaurants that had strong buy-in from the ownership/chef and also had a strong in-house point person to champion the day-to-day implementation.
- **Pilot format:** The participating restaurants liked the small-scale format of working closely with the city and haulers. They felt that the format allowed them to develop a community with other, like-minded restaurants in the neighborhood.

Going forward, the city plans to host a series of two-month, neighborhood-based restaurant projects incorporating the format and lessons learned from the pilot.