

Food Waste Solutions: Rescuing Food in Your Community?

Senator George J. Mitchell Center
for Sustainability Solutions



A screenshot of a web browser displaying the 'Maine Food Donation Tool Kit' page. The browser's address bar shows 'Solution 5 Tool Kit Edit', '1 / 7', '100%', and navigation icons. The page content includes the University of Maine logo and the text: 'Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions'. Below this is the title 'Maine Food Donation Tool Kit' in blue, underlined text. A paragraph follows: 'This UMaine/Mitchell Center tool kit has been created to help Maine businesses, organizations and individuals understand WHY and HOW to donate food instead of throwing it away. In Maine, unclear and confusing laws lead to unnecessary food waste, adding up to 7 million lbs of food annually wasted within K-12 Maine school systems alone, all while 1 in 7 Maine households struggle with food insecurity. 40% of food in the United States is thrown away. Organizations throw food away because they do not know what safety rules apply to donation or because they cannot access tax deductions to cover the cost of transporting such food. We created this tool kit to break down the procedures and best practices in order to get started.' Below the text is a diagram titled 'SEPA Food Recovery Hierarchy' which is an inverted pyramid with five levels: 'Source Reduction' (purple), 'Feed Hungry People' (orange), 'Food Animals' (green), 'Industrial Uses' (blue), and 'Landfill' (grey). An arrow points from the text to the diagram.

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Food Waste Problem

- 40% of food produced is never eaten (NRDC)
- “Trashing Food” wastes money, edible food, limited resources, and can contribute to water, climate, and public health problems
- Maine has the 12th highest Food Insecurity Rate in the U.S. (1:8 adults, 1:5 children)-16.5%
- Nearly 30% of Maine’s solid waste stream is food scraps



Food Waste Study

NRDC 2017 (Modeling the Potential to Increase Food Rescue) Study piloted in Nashville, Denver, and New York City

The first study of its kind to identify the relationship between untapped food donation potential and closing the meal gap.

Grocery retail represents just over 60% of the untapped food donation potential with another 23% lying in hotels, schools, restaurants, etc.

Using their provided models and scenarios, we could decrease the meal gap by as much as 50%. (68 million more meals)

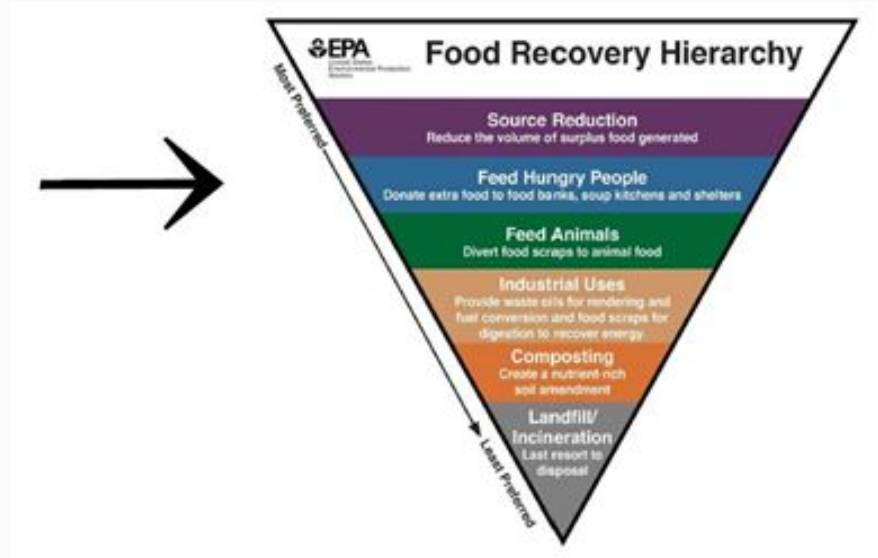
Commonly Wasted Food Items

- Milk/Cheese/Yogurt/Dairy Products
- Eggs/Butter
- Juice
- Bologna, pepperoni, other deli meat
- Fruits and vegetables (even bruised ones)
- Baked goods and breads
- Untouched premade meals
- Other Canned or nonperishable food items



Solution: Donate your Food Instead!

Donate your food to local food pantries and food banks in your area to help battle food insecurity AND reduce waste in the state of Maine!



Benefits of Donating- The Triple Bottom Line

What is the triple bottom line?

- **PROFIT-** Economic Benefits
- **PEOPLE-** Social Benefits
- **PLANET-** Natural Resources



Common Questions and Concerns

Q: Liability: Will I get in trouble?

A: No-The Good Samaritan Act (1996)

Emerson Act- Maine law states that good faith donators of food to a charitable or nonprofit organization as well as any volunteer or employee from that organization are protected from civil liability (Me. Rev. Stat. Ann. tit. 14, § 166(2)-(3), (5)(West 2017)).



Q: Doesn't it cost me extra money
to donate?

A: No- Tax Benefits Calculator

Example: Calculating the Enhanced Deduction A grocery store donated potatoes with a fair market value of \$100.

The basis value of these potatoes was \$30.

The expected profit margin is the fair market value minus the basis value (\$100 - \$30), which is \$70.

Under the enhanced deduction, the grocery store is eligible to deduct the smaller of:

$$\text{Basis value} \times 2 = \$30 \times 2 = \$60$$

Sample Tax Receipt

Charity Name

Charity Address:

Tax ID (Found on IRS website):

Date:

Donated By:

Donor Address:

Description of Food	Quantity (lbs)	Value(\$)

Money Saved!

In addition to the tax deduction benefits, creating less food waste means less food actually ends up in the garbage and less garbage is produced overall.

This means that your waste hauler won't have to pick-up from your business so often, saving you money on waste hauling costs!

You'll be helping people by donating your food, and saving money on trash!

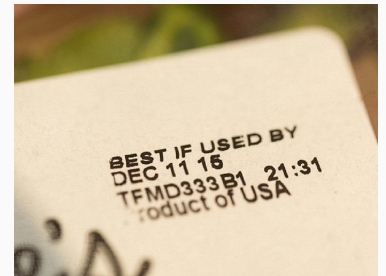
Q: What about use by/sell by
dates?

A: No -Date Labeling Protection Laws

Maine currently only has date labeling laws pertaining to shellfish.

Best by/Used by dates are used to predict when to use a food product by, to ensure best freshness and quality.

Most food is still “good” after this date, however, moldy and apparently spoiled food should never be donated for human consumption.





How Do I Get Started?

- [Food Pantries](#)- Find your nearest food donation center
- **Food Rescue MAINE** (launching in Lincoln/Knox Counties 2021 and expanding)
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“ People who probably haven’t expected to use a food bank in their life are now coming here.”

-Bob Moore, Director of the Augusta Food Bank

Food Insecurity and Covid-19

- Almost 25% of Maine children are suffering from food insecurity which amounts to about 62,660 children. That's 15,200 more children suffering from food insecurity than before the pandemic. (Feeding America)
- Similarly 42, 770 more adults in Maine are suffering from insecurity since the beginning of the pandemic leaving 215,850 people with insufficient access to food. (Feeding America)

Thanks!

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