Joe Lombardo Governor Richard Whitley,

MS

Director



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES





Cody L Phinney, MPH Administrator

Ihsan Azzam, Ph.D., M.D. Chief Medical Officer

January 31, 2025

Diane Thornton, Director Legislative Counsel Bureau 401 South Carson Street Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Director Thornton:

Please find attached for your review the 2024 Annual Report of the Food for People Not Landfills Program (FFPNL) due to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau by January 31, 2025, per Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 232.4969. This report must cover FFPNL accomplishments and the impact of the Program on food security in the State of Nevada.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cody L. Phinney, MPH Administrator Division of Public and Behavioral Health

FOOD FOR PEOPLE NOT FOR LANDFILLS 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024



Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Department of Health and Human Services
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Food waste is a challenge in Nevada which impacts food security sustainability, the environment, and the economy. Since a significant amount of perfectly good food ends up in the landfill every day, with Nevada having the highest rate per capita of eight (8) pounds per person disposal rate per day.¹ Reducing food waste is an opportunity to reduce costs and tackle some of the pressing social and environmental issues of our time, such as addressing food insecurity and combatting climate change.² The Division of Public and Behavioral Health is entrusted with the Food for People Not for Landfills (FFPNL) Program to support Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 232.4969 on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Director's Office. In addition, the Director's Office has tasked DPBH with providing administrative support to the Council on Food Security (CFS) which created a FFPNL subcommittee to further support food waste initiatives, which include enlisting the support of organizations and programs to enhance statewide collaboration around food waste reduction. The history of FFPNL deliverables is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. 2019-2024 FFPNL Background

2019	Nevada took action to increase the amount of food diverted from landfills to increase food security by developing Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) <u>232.4969</u> (unfunded mandate).
2020	FFPNL was created to increase food security by decreasing food waste and redirecting excess consumable food. The subcommittee completed activities resulting in a donor toolkit outline, a draft program seal, and criteria for partner participation.
2022	The subcommittee meetings paused due to the lack of funds.
May 2023	To support FFPNL, the Office of Food Security (OFS) and the Health Equity Unit applied for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) grant and CDC's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant. Nevada's applications were not selected.
June 2023	OFS partnered with KPS3, a local marketing firm, to assist with developing a range of program initiatives, should funding be secured. These initiatives range from creating awareness of an overall visual identity to an immersive plan focused on a multi-channel campaign to promote efforts through digital, media, and public relations.
2024	OFS partnered with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) to host three (3) part-time AmeriCorps members (1200 hours for up to a year). Two (2) members are assigned to food security issues, which include the FFPNL program. AmeriCorps members have begun reaching out to agencies recommended by CFS to identify subcommittee members (Table 2).



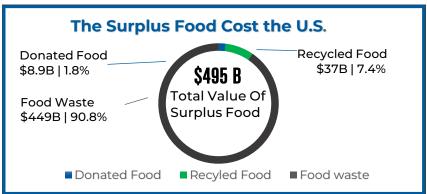
FOOD WASTE DATA OVERVIEW

Food waste is an issue which impacts the environmental, social, and financial aspects of one's life. In 2020, the World Bank estimates food waste costs the global economy more than \$1 trillion (U.S.). In addition, it is thought an equivalent of 1 billion meals of edible food are wasted every single day worldwide.³ However, this is likely an underestimation with the real amount much higher. This conservative estimate is equivalent to 1.3 meals lost per person per day. Food waste represents one-third of all the food produced globally and nearly 30% of the world's agricultural areas.^{3,11} This waste has potentially devastating effects on both the planet and people. In 2022, an estimated 30% of the global population was moderately or severely food insecure, and up to 783 million were affected by hunger, which is around 122 million more than in 2019.³ The reduction of food waste has the potential to increase food availability for those in need. In addition, food waste is responsible for up to 10% of greenhouse gas emissions³ and is a significant issue on the global policy agenda. The United Nations, the U.S. Government, the European Parliament, and global business coalitions have all set goals to cut food loss and waste in half by 2025 or 2030. ⁴

In the United States, food is the single most common material sent to landfills, comprising 24.1% of municipal solid waste.⁵ Also in the United States, 38% of 235 million tons food go unsold or uneaten.⁴ Another term for this is surplus food, and while a very small portion of it is donated or recycled, the vast majority becomes food waste in the form of landfills, incineration, washed down the drain, or left in the fields to rot. It is estimated that 33% of all food in the United States (78 million tons) and 145 billion meals' worth of food goes unsold or uneaten each year. ⁴ In Figure 1, 90% of the \$473 billion of surplus food is due to food waste, with the greatest financial burden on the consumer.



Figure 1. The Surplus Food Cost the U.S (November 2024)



Data Source: ReFED

Food waste creates many economic challenges, including cost related to labor, logistics and transportation, handling, selling, and the value of the product.⁵ Each year Feeding America rescues around 3.6 billion pounds of food,⁶ and although substantial, is still only a fraction of the food ending up in landfills. This is concerning since one in eight Americans (many of them children) are food insecure, meaning they lack reliable access to sufficient, affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, which could potentially be alleviated through the perfectly edible food considered waste.⁴ The impacts of surplus food and food waste on the climate and environment are additional reasons to adopt food recovery plans since uneaten food still requires resources to grow, harvest, transport, cool, cook, or otherwise prepare, even when it ends up being disposed. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Wasted Food Scale provides examples to help reduce the impact of food waste (Figure 2). ⁷



Figure 2. Wasted Food Scale (October 2023)



Data Source: U.S. EPA

Nevada has the highest national per person disposal rate of eight (8) pounds per day compared to the average in the United States of 5 pounds per day. Over one year this equals 1,825 pounds in the United States and 2,920 pounds per person in Nevada. A portion of this waste is generated by the Las Vegas Strip area, which produces 160,000 pounds of food waste per day.

Food waste and food insecurity are closely linked. An example of this can be seen in Nevada where hundreds of thousands of people struggle to access to nutritious food and significant amounts of edible food ends up in the landfill. Based on USDA data in 2023, the food insecurity rate in Nevada was 12.5%. 8 On the other hand, Feeding America indicated the rate of food insecurity among children is 20.9% (144,290) in 2022.9

Some organizations such as regional food banks, local food pantries, homeless shelters and charities have strategies to reduce food waste. During the Impact Presentations given to CFS on July 16, 2024, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN) reported rescuing nearly 5 million pounds and Three Square recovered more than 14 million pounds of quality food from retail food partners. In Las Vegas, the EPA recognized MGM Resorts International for implementing a new program to donate unserved food from hotel events, mini-bars, and warehouses to Three Square Food Bank. This program totaled 54,400 pounds of donated food, which is the equivalent of 45,000 meals. ¹⁰ According to the SFY24 Fund for Healthy



Nevada (FHN) Hunger survey conducted by Office of Food Security (OFS), four (4) of the eleven (11) FHN partners reported addressing food waste by collaborating with local senior centers, gleaning programs, local farms, Olsen Farms, Begonia Farms, Green Life Produce and other businesses (i.e., Smiths, Albertsons, Starbucks, KFC, Walmart, and Raleys). Eight of the partners reported major food supply chain management (retailer to consumer operations) as the major barrier to reducing food waste in Nevada. Additional barriers included funding, education, policy, and refrigerated trucks.

2024 FFPNL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The CFS discussed the FFPNL Program at four meetings in 2024 (01/16/24, 04/02/24, and 07/16/24, and 10/15/2024), which included status updates and finalized the program logistics and a FPPNL subcommittee member list (Table 2). The CFS determined the FFPNL Program will remain as a running agenda item for CFS to monitor activities, deliverables, and provide expert guidance as needed. Additionally, DPBH partnered with National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) to host several AmeriCorps members. Two (2) were assigned to the food security, including the FFPNL Program. To date the FFPNL remains an unfunded mandate and DPBH continues to explore funding opportunities.

Table 2. FFPNL Subcommittee CFS Recommended Agencies

United States of Department of Agriculture (USDA) or Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA)

Three Square

University of Reno Extension Program

Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, includes food rescue

Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada

Food Bank Northern Nevada, includes food rescue

North gaming industry

South gaming industry

Retail or grocery

Reno Gleaning Project

A representative from an organization that does farmers market buy back and/or food rescue from agricultural producers

Helping Hands of Vegas Valley

A representative from food service



FFPNL FUTURE FOCUS FOR 2025

OFS intends to reconvene the subcommittee in 2025 and DPBH will continue to explore funding opportunities. Once the new subcommittee members convene, future goals will be developed. The anticipated goals may include:

- Establishment of program goals.
- A meeting guideline which will include the duration of meetings.
- Development of a financial plan to identify and apply for funding opportunities.
- Establishment of program initiatives and priorities.
- Development of a sustainability plan.
- Determine data that will be used to show the impact of FFPNL on food security in Nevada.
- Establish the criteria for eligibility for a food donor to participate in the Program.
- Gather existing Nevada data on food waste.
- Identify food waste partners.
- Finalization of the program seal and development of a process to allow a food donor who participates in the Program to display or otherwise use the official seal of the Program.
- Finalize the FFPNL toolkit.

CONCLUSION

Food waste is a significant problem in Nevada with social and environmental impacts to the state. DPBH will continue to take measures to secure funding for the program and assist in reducing food waste throughout Nevada. This will include OFS working with the CFS and the subcommittee to provide concerted efforts in establishing FFPNL initiatives and priorities, as well as exploring opportunities with community and state partners.



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