

FACT SHEET

FOOD MATTERS: EMPOWERING CITIES TO TACKLE FOOD WASTE



Up to 40 percent of all food in the United States is wasted. Producing food that we don't consume also swallows up roughly 20 percent of America's cropland, fertilizers, and agricultural water—and generates greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 37 million passenger vehicles each year. Yet, 41 million Americans lack consistent access to adequate and nutritious food.

WHY CITIES ARE KEY TO TACKLING FOOD WASTE

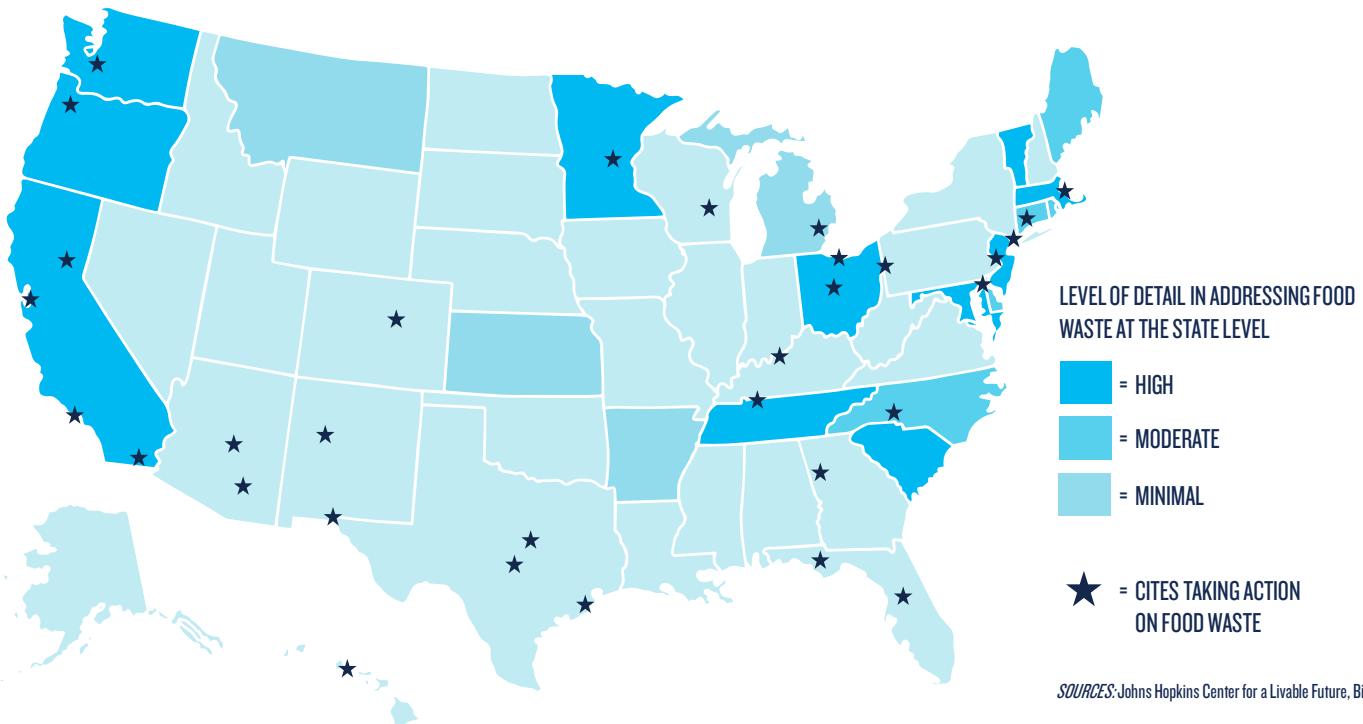
Cities are uniquely positioned to lead the fight against food waste. Cities can be more nimble in their policy development and program implementation, and have direct regulatory control over solid waste and many public health issues that dovetail with food waste. By reducing wasted food, cities can stabilize municipal waste management costs and meet climate and sustainability goals. By rescuing surplus, cities can address food gaps. And by recycling food scraps, cities can minimize what ends up in landfills.

NRDC's **Food Matters** initiative partners with cities to strive to achieve a sector-wide 15 percent reduction in food waste within five years through a comprehensive set of innovative policies and programs. Food Matters is piloting comprehensive, cutting-edge models for preventing food waste and improving efficiency in food systems with strategies that can be shared and easily replicated through a knowledge-sharing network for peer-to-peer learning.

WHY NRDC IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO HELP CITIES IMPLEMENT FOOD WASTE SOLUTIONS

NRDC detailed the scale of food waste in 2017 using the cities of Denver, Nashville, and New York City. From this analysis, NRDC designed and tested assessment tools to help cities

Cities across the United States are taking action on food waste



establish baseline estimates of how much food is wasted. This has helped cities overcome a critical barrier in trying to curb food waste: insufficient data on what, where, and why food is wasted. With this knowledge, cities can design solutions and drive actions.

In addition, NRDC developed a model to estimate how much additional surplus food could potentially be rescued to assist people in need. We then modelled that potential in Denver, Nashville, and New York City, highlighting significant opportunities for growth in food rescue.

Through research and on-the-ground efforts, we also developed a policy and program toolkit for cities. This guide presents a curated set of approaches to waste less food at the local level. Aimed at city policymakers and agency staff nationwide, the Food Matters toolkit covers a range of policy and program food waste strategies, giving cities a starting point and a path toward continued progress and impact.

These tools have been designed to help cities overcome a critical barrier: insufficient data on what, where, and why food is wasted, and the potential to direct more surplus food to food insecure members of the community. With this knowledge, cities can design more targeted action strategies and drive action.

More than a dozen cities across the United States are now using our methodologies and other tools developed through NRDC's Food Matters project. NRDC also provides technical assistance to our partner cities to translate the analysis into high-impact, cost-effective initiatives.

HOW WE ARE CREATING PROVEN, REPLICABLE, AND SCALABLE MODELS

NRDC has developed a suite of solutions, many with a well-honed business case, to stem food waste. We are working deeply with Denver, Baltimore and local partners to develop and implement a suite of policies and programs that will drive dramatic, innovative, and system-wide food waste reduction in those cities. We are also working with an ever-expanding network of cities to evaluate, replicate and scale these solutions across the country. As we build a cohort of cities, we are monitoring progress, evaluating and measuring outcomes, and sharing learnings with that cohort. Food Matters' success will catalyze meaningful policy and program implementation in Baltimore and Denver, the creation of a replicable model in cities across the United States, and market-supported standardization of best practices.