

# Focus on: Use Food Well Washington Plan



## Food waste reduction in Washington

In 2019, the Washington Legislature passed ESHB 1114 establishing statewide food waste reduction goals. The law, codified as [RCW 70A.205.715](#), tasks Ecology with adopting a food waste reduction plan, identifying baseline food waste data, and annually measuring progress toward statewide food waste reduction goals. The planning process was completed in December 2021.

Staff at Ecology developed the baseline data and further defined the edible food waste reduction goal, resulting in the following statewide food waste reduction goals:

**Goal 1: Reduce food waste generated by 50% by 2030.**

**Goal 2: Reduce at least half of edible food waste by 2030.**

The *Use Food Well Washington Plan* ([UFWW Plan](#)) followed the direction of the law through a collaborative research process that took place from 2019 to 2021. Ecology drafted the plan after consulting with the Washington departments of Agriculture, Health, Commerce, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and over 100 subject matter experts to identify ways to reduce food waste in Washington.

Thirty actionable recommendations, across all sectors of the food system, are included in the *UFWW Plan*. By focusing on federal and state policy, funding, public education, and infrastructure development, these recommendations can help Washington meet its 2030 food waste reduction goals and create a more resilient food system.



## Moving from planning into action

Washington generates about 1.2 million tons of food waste, annually. More than 390,000 tons of that is edible food waste.<sup>1</sup> Washington must reduce food waste generation by 579,373 tons, including at least 195,032 tons of edible food waste, to achieve the 2030 food waste reduction goals set by the State Legislature.

To meet these goals, 30 actionable recommendations were identified through feedback from subject matter experts, collaboration with agencies, and direction from the law. The plan prioritizes public-private partnerships over regulations, and emphasizes the importance of data-driven decisions. The *Use Food Well Washington* recommendations include the following categories:

- Federal policy
- State policy
- Funding
- Public education
- Infrastructure development

Funding is the largest barrier to food waste reduction across most sectors, especially in the areas of hunger relief, food businesses, and local governments. Increasing investments in public education and infrastructure will be needed in addition to a coordinated effort to change federal and state policy. Motivation clearly exists to reduce food waste across the state.

The plan's 30 recommendations carry potential annual net benefits in excess of \$1 billion from reduced disposal costs, development of new markets and uses for waste, and avoiding unnecessary food purchases. Ecology's calculations show full implementation of the plan could also help Washington avoid more than \$150 million in annual costs associated with climate change – a benefit that increases each year.<sup>1</sup>

The [UFWW Plan](#) further details the 30 recommendations to reduce food waste, their impacts, and considerations moving forward from planning into action.



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<sup>1</sup> Washington State Department of Ecology [Ecology]. 2022. Use Food Well Washington: A roadmap to a more resilient food system. Publication 21-07-027. Washington State Department of Ecology, Olympia.