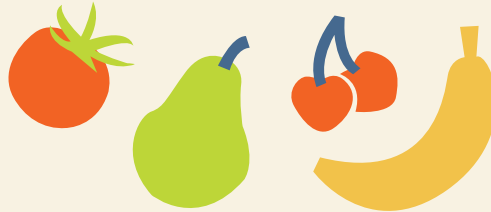




Use Food Well



Statewide behavior change campaign

Marketing plan

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Introduction and background

The “Use Food Well” campaign, a collaborative effort by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and PRR, targets food waste, a significant environmental concern in Washington State. With the ambitious goal of cutting food waste in half by 2030, this statewide social marketing campaign recognizes the critical need for both education and a cultural shift in how we view and address food waste. It aims to fundamentally reshape the attitudes and behaviors of consumers and businesses towards food waste and food supply chain management. This initiative is crucial not only for environmental sustainability, but also for enhancing economic well-being, and focusing on food waste prevention strategies that can transform our relationship with our food supply.

The social marketing interventions proposed in this plan address the most common barriers to food waste prevention, highlight the benefits of food waste prevention, and provide motivations to help audiences overcome barriers to reducing household food waste. Our proposed strategies are validated by market research and focus on the importance of knowing the cost of food waste and encouraging individuals to associate reducing food waste with saving money and being more financially savvy.

Social marketing and the behavior change continuum

The discipline of social marketing is centered around the ability to influence and change people’s behaviors. Although awareness alone does not lead to behavior change, people tend to change their behaviors when presented with a benefit or motivator. The purpose of the Use Food Well campaign is to build awareness around the issue of food waste and to motivate audiences to reduce their household and business food waste through preventative behaviors.

The behavior change continuum below illustrates the different stages of behavior when it comes to awareness, understanding, and action. Not all audiences will be at the same place when receiving messaging about food waste, so it is essential to recognize which stage audiences are at when communicating with them. From the research ([noted on page 8 of this plan](#)), we learned that most people understand that food waste is a problem but might not know how to take action to reduce their household food waste. The Use Food Well campaign will begin by introducing and encouraging several behaviors for audiences to try, with the goal that they will become loyal to those behaviors.

Behavior Change continuum



Campaign purpose, goal, and objectives

Campaign purpose

Why are we doing this?

To reduce the amount of food waste in the landfill, while enhancing economic well-being through food waste prevention strategies. The campaign will start by focusing on the consumer level and will expand in future phases to include the business audience.

Campaign goal

What impact will the campaign have?

Use social marketing to change consumer attitudes and behaviors toward using food well and preventing food waste.

Campaign objectives

What needs to happen to achieve the goal?

- Achieve a 10% increase in consumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviors about food waste reduction by June 2025.
- Achieve an average of 1,000 monthly unique visits to the website during months of active promotion.
- Engage at least 15 local partners in campaign implementation by September 2024

Campaign evaluation

- Number of monthly unique visits to the website per month.
- Number of individuals engaged in or receiving messaging (social media or other estimate of traditional engagement).
- Number of educational materials distributed (e.g., toolkits, handouts).
- Estimated number of possible impressions and views of campaign materials and messaging.
- Pre and post campaign survey responses about attitudes and behaviors regarding food waste. Suggested categories include:
 - Change in respondent perception of amount of food waste generated
 - Change in respondent perception of food waste behaviors
 - Change in respondent recognition of food waste reduction program/brand
 - Reduction in the percentage of people rating themselves as not good at buying the amount of food they are likely to use (e.g., reduction in responses that are a 6 or lower on a 10-point scale)

Campaign evaluation (Continued)

- Reduction in the percentage of people who respond “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” to the statement “I know how to reduce the amount of food that I waste.”
- Increase in the percentage of people who cite the Use Food Well campaign as their source of food waste information
- Changes in consumption/purchasing behaviors



Target audience overview

Priority audiences

Adults 18-54, who speak or consume media in English and/or Spanish languages.

The Use Food Well campaign prioritizes a diverse audience in Washington State, with a focus on individuals and households that exhibit behaviors leading to high food waste.

The campaign calls attention to culturally diverse communities, ensuring inclusivity in messaging and approach. By understanding the specific needs, habits, and challenges of the following groups, the campaign aims to effectively guide and influence their food-related behaviors toward waste reduction:






- **Families:** Busy households juggling work and family life, often resulting in over-purchasing and food waste.
- **Budget-conscious consumers:** Individuals looking to stretch their grocery budget, potentially leading to bulk buying and food spoilage.
- **Busy professionals:** Working professionals living fast-paced lifestyles, often relying on convenience foods, leading to underutilization of purchased groceries.

Audience analysis and segmentation

This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the primary audience segments, their unique characteristics, and how best to engage them in the campaign.

For more information, review the [Audience Personas found in Appendix A.](#)

Persona	Demographics	Behaviors	Challenges and barriers	Motivators
<p>The Lopez Family</p> 	Adults 30-54, middle-class, multi-ethnic	Bulk buying, struggles with leftovers and properly storing food	Meal variety, portion control, food storage, limited time	Family health, cost savings, environmental responsibility
<p>Isabella</p> 	Adults 18-35, lower-income, retail manager	Bulk buying, especially discounted items	Food quantities, knowledge of how to properly store food, limited storage space	Budget stretching, maximizing food value
<p>Alex</p> 	Adults 25-40, urban, mid-to-high-income earners	Prefers convenience foods, is an irregular planner	Food under-utilization, busy lifestyle, is willing to pay for convenience	Time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, environmental responsibility

Research overview

PRR conducted three phases of research in 2023 to assist with the development of a benchmark and a better understanding of how people use and waste food. Included below is a summary of the three phases and key findings:

Phase I: Stakeholder interviews

PRR conducted a total of 21 individual and small group interviews with 26 experts (Feb-Mar 2023) to gather insights on food waste campaigns. A full summary of these interviews is available on request by emailing FoodCenter@ecy.wa.gov.



Key findings:

- Outreach should heighten awareness about food waste while being sensitive to the scarcity mindset.
- Businesses partnerships are challenging to establish but are effective when used.
 - Businesses either believe they don't waste food, or don't see an incentive to stop because it's built into their business model.
 - When grocery stores attempt food rescue efforts, they are likely to stop if they have a few bad experiences.
- Successful campaigns should be practical and inspiring, prioritizing audiences to reduce food waste, using an encouraging, positive, and humorous tone.
- Use practical advice linked to saving money and maximizing food storage.
- Maximize impact by leveraging established momentum through existing initiatives such as Food Waste Prevention Week.

Phase II: Quantitative research survey

PRR conducted an online survey with 1,512 respondents in August 2023. The survey focused on personal food waste awareness.

Key findings:

- There is widespread lack of awareness about how much food is wasted at home.
- Respondents are open to practical food waste reduction tips, particularly in food storage.
- Respondents showed a general interest in methods to extend food shelf life.
- Respondents showed a preference for convenient waste reduction steps, like in-store shopping tips and “eat me first” labels.
- Viewing food waste as a financial concern is a strong motivator for behavior change.

Phase III: Qualitative research study

PRR recruited 202 survey respondents to participate in a multi-faceted, qualitative research study. A total of 87 people participated in the English study and 17 participated in the Spanish study. The study asked participants to complete seven activities, most of which were open-ended questions asking them to describe their families’ food and cooking habits and their opinions on food waste.

Key findings:

- Participants who are more aware of environmental impacts tend to be more concerned about their households’ food waste habits.
- Participants associate wasting food with wasting money and are interested in strategies or concepts that speak to cost savings.
- Participants are interested in reducing their household’s food waste but are more willing to try strategies or concepts that support activities they already do.
- Participants are more focused on food waste while cleaning out their refrigerator or pantry or while cleaning up after a meal, and less focused on food waste while cooking or while dining at restaurants.
- Respondents see food waste as a collective action problem that can’t be solved by individual effort alone; they want to see institutions like supermarkets, restaurants, and government agencies play a greater role in incentivizing food waste reduction and/or reducing their own food waste.
- Household composition affects household food waste: Households with one or two people often throw away spoiled produce because the package was too big to finish, and households with young children often waste more food.

Campaign identity

Ecology and PRR used the research results to help define and test a campaign identity. The chosen umbrella campaign name, Use Food Well, was selected to tie into the larger food waste reduction initiative. The campaign identity was designed to encourage Washington residents to feel empowered with a bright, welcoming and approachable brand look and feel.

In addition to the umbrella campaign, an additional campaign message was selected:

Know the Cost.

This messaging aligned with research findings showing that the financial impacts of wasting food was overwhelmingly the strongest motivator for people to change behaviors.

The campaign will be designed with messaging and imagery that helps make the connection of the impacts of buying smarter, buying less, properly storing food, and using up the food you buy in new and creative ways.

Primary logo:



English

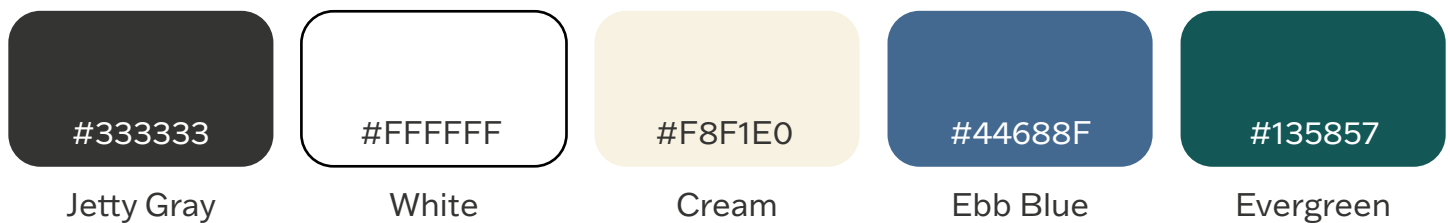


Spanish

Colors

All colors were selected from the existing Department of Ecology brand guide, with the addition of cream.

Primary



Secondary (used mostly in illustrations and as accents)



Behavior change and key messages

Desired behaviors

The Use Food Well campaign will build from research findings and provide consumers with simple, clear, and singular actions they can take to reduce food waste while also saving money.

The following behaviors are proven to have a high impact on food waste prevention and a high probability of behavior change and are informed by the research conducted by Ecology and PRR.

Behaviors	Rationale
'Use Food Well' by making a shopping list with quantities taking existing supplies into account	Food shopping routines are a strong predictor of wasting less food and can be an easy behavior for consumers to learn to adopt. In addition, recent concept testing work conducted by PRR showed a high level of interest in tips for “using food well” and benefits around making lists as part of smart shopping.
Eat or freeze leftovers	Leftovers/prepared meals are the second most wasted food category. Studies have noted that food being “lost” in the fridge is a top reason for throwing away food. This provides an opportunity to prompt people to remember to eat or freeze leftovers.
Properly store foods	Understanding how to properly store foods can vastly improve their shelf life, cutting down on how quickly they spoil.
Use up the food you buy	Using up the food that you buy can have large economic impacts, and research showed that people are interested in learning more about how to ensure they use up the ingredients they buy through smart planning, organization of the fridge and pantry, and creative recipes.
Understand date labels	Widespread confusion has been reported regarding understanding labels and people report food spoilage as a major reason they discard food. These factors likely lead to wasted food that is still consumable.



Smart shopping

Making strategic purchasing decisions based on pre-planned needs. Smart shopping involves assessing existing inventory and buying items in quantities that align with actual usage, thus minimizing waste and optimizing budget expenditure.






Efficient food usage

This concept refers to the optimal usage of purchased food items. It involves planning meals in a way that maximizes the use of all ingredients, minimizing leftovers and creatively repurposing them to reduce waste.



Effective food storage

This is the practice of preserving the quality and extending the shelf life of food items through proper storage techniques. It encompasses understanding the ideal storage conditions for different food types to prevent spoilage and waste.

Persona	Message	Focus
<p>The Lopez Family</p> 	<p>Make more family time with less waste.</p>	<p>Tips on meal planning, food storage and serving sizes to reduce food waste and enhance family health.</p>
<p>Isabella</p> 	<p>Save more by buying less.</p>	<p>Strategies for smart shopping and maximizing food usage on a budget.</p>
<p>Alex</p> 	<p>Efficient food usage for a busy lifestyle.</p>	<p>Quick meal prep ideas and storage solutions for reducing food waste despite a hectic schedule.</p>

Strategy, phases, and tactics

Comprehensive strategy: Enhance public awareness and cultivate sustainable behaviors

The Use Food Well campaign will launch on April 1, 2024, in conjunction with National Food Waste Prevention Week. The statewide campaign will employ a multifaceted and multilingual approach focusing on awareness, behavioral change, and engagement. The strategy includes tactics to educate residents, foster partnerships, and leverage media to change attitudes and habits toward food waste.

Phase I: Campaign Development and Implementation (January 2024 — August 2024)

1. Leverage established momentum

- **Strategy:** Use existing awareness and enthusiasm around food waste reduction.
- **Tactic:** Align the campaign launch with National Food Waste Prevention Week, April 1 – 7, 2024 to capitalize on public interest and existing dialogue.

2. Digital engagement through website launch

- **Strategy:** Leverage owned media and digital platforms for content distribution and widespread education.
- **Tactic:** Design and develop usefoodwell.com, housed within Ecology's website, offering resources tips and interactive tools to educate Washington residents on reducing food waste, as well as access to toolkits for local government and business partners. Website will be available in Spanish and English.

3. Community collaboration via strategic business partnerships

- **Strategy:** Build community support through collaboration with strategic business partners that have similar missions/goals and priority audiences as the Use Food Well campaign. Business partners will have a history of collaboration and community involvement.
- **Tactic:** Form partnerships with local grocery stores, community groups, and environmental organizations to enhance message reach and impact. Partners may include:
 - Safeway
 - PCC or other smaller grocery stores
 - Washington State Food Industry Association
 - National Co-op Grocers Association
 - Sports teams/arenas throughout the state
 - Local government partners

4. Targeted communication through a statewide paid media campaign

- **Strategy:** Use a mix of media channels for targeted messaging.
- **Tactic:** Develop and implement a multi-channel advertising campaign that includes social media, digital, TV, radio, out of home, and print and is tailored to the identified audience segments.

5. Informative content creation

- **Strategy:** Educate and engage the audience through compelling, user friendly content.
- **Tactic:** Produce a variety of educational and advertising materials such as multimedia content (both video and audio), infographics, and social media graphics that provide practical tips on food waste reduction. Materials will be developed in both English and Spanish.

6. Influential advocacy through influencer collaboration

- **Strategy:** Amplify campaign reach through influential voices.
- **Tactic:** Partner with local Washington influencers, celebrities, chefs, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community leaders to share campaign messages, offering relatable and authentic endorsements. Use these partnerships in an event or activity during Food Waste Prevention week to elevate the Use Food Well campaign launch.

7. Public engagement through media relations

- **Strategy:** Garner public interest through storytelling.
- **Tactic:** Pitch human interest stories and successes from the campaign to media centered around the launch of the campaign and Food Waste Prevention Week.

8. Direct interaction at events

- **Strategy:** Engage the community through direct interaction.
- **Tactic:** Participate in farmers markets, tabling events, sporting events, and other public events to provide hands-on education and demonstrations related to food waste prevention.

9. Practical enablement by distributing tools

- **Strategy:** Empower residents with practical tools.
- **Tactic:** Distribute useful tools like reusable “eat me first” labels, storage guides, and meal planning templates at various touchpoints, including farmers markets, partner tabling events, and through the campaign website.

10. Toolkit development and distribution

- **Strategy:** Equip partners with resources to spread messaging to consumers.
- **Tactic:** Create comprehensive toolkits for partner agencies and businesses, providing them with materials and guidelines to support and amplify the campaign.

11. Engage businesses in food waste reduction

- **Strategy:** Encourage businesses to recognize and reduce their food waste contribution.
- **Tactics:**
 - **Awareness and Education:** Provide resources to help businesses understand their impact on food waste and give them five easy steps they can take to reduce their food waste.
 - **Practical Solutions:** Develop toolkits tailored for businesses, offering actionable strategies for food waste reduction at the source, such as inventory management, portion control, and waste tracking.

Phase II: Building Momentum (September 2024 — June 2025)

1. In-depth audience Research

- **Strategy:** Deepen understanding of audience segments.
- **Tactic:** Conduct post-campaign research to identify whether we have moved the needle on awareness and food waste prevention behaviors.

2. Review and adapt

- **Strategy:** Optimize campaign based on feedback and results and make changes as needed.
- **Tactic:** Analyze Phase 1 results to refine strategies.

3. Enhanced messaging

- **Strategy:** Evolve and add communication to align with audience insights.
- **Tactic:** Develop and introduce new key messages based on research findings.

4. Website multilingual update

- **Strategy:** Increase accessibility and inclusivity.
- **Tactic:** Expand language options on the website.

5. Ethnic media engagement

- **Strategy:** Broaden reach within diverse communities.
- **Tactic:** Use ethnic media channels and CBO partnerships for targeted communication.

6. Partnership expansion

- **Strategy:** Strengthen community and business alliances.
- **Tactic:** Form new partnerships and maintain and/or strengthen existing partnerships, including those with CBOs.

7. Business outreach expansion

- **Strategy:** Enhance engagement through partnerships with food businesses including grocery retail and food service sectors.
- **Tactic:** Increase efforts to educate businesses on food waste reduction.

8. Toolkit distribution extension

- **Strategy:** Provide more educational resources for behavior change.
- **Tactic:** Broaden the distribution of tools and educational materials.

9. Sustained advertising

- **Strategy:** Maintain public education and awareness.
- **Tactic:** Continue with a statewide multi-media advertising campaign.

10. Evaluate and plan for future phases

- **Strategy:** Ensure continuous improvement and scalability.
- **Tactic:** Regularly evaluate the campaign and plan for future phases.

Evaluation plan and timelines

Evaluation plan

Activity	Lead
Paid and earned media impressions	<i>PRR</i>
Website visits	<i>Ecology</i>
Social media engagement	<i>Ecology</i>
Awareness research	<i>PRR</i>
Partnerships	<i>PRR</i>
Toolkits and tool distribution	<i>Ecology/PRR</i>
Actions resulting from campaign messages	<i>Ecology/PRR</i> (self-reported with research)

Timeline - Phase I



Timeline - Phase II



Appendix A: Personas

Understanding the family household: Persona insights

The Lopez family (Parents 30-54)

Meet the Lopez family: Emily and Michael, both in their late 30s, living in a bustling suburban neighborhood with their two children, Ava (9) and Max (6). Emily works as a schoolteacher, and Michael is an IT consultant. Their life is a whirlwind of school runs, extracurricular activities, and balancing work with family time. The Lopezes try to provide the best for their family, which includes healthy, nutritious meals. But amidst their hectic schedules, meal planning can be challenging. They often find themselves buying groceries in bulk, aiming for convenience and savings. However, this sometimes leads to more food than they can consume, and they struggle with leftovers and food going bad before they get a chance to use it.



Key characteristics

- **Age Group:** 30-55 years
- **Location:** Suburban areas
- **Family structure:** parents and 2+ children
- **Occupation:** Both parents work
- **Income:** Middle-class
- **Ethnicity:** multi-ethnic household (bi-racial relationship)

Food-related lifestyle and habits:



Shopping habits: Tend to buy groceries in bulk to cater to the whole family.



Cooking: Regular meal preparation, with a focus on family-friendly meals.



Food preferences: Diverse, catering to different tastes, including children's preferences.



Challenges: Managing picky eaters, dealing with leftovers, and balancing meal variety.



Behavior influencing food waste:

- **Over-purchasing:** Buying more than needed, leading to unused food items.
- **Portion control issues:** Cooking in large quantities can result in excess food.
- **Storage knowledge gap:** Uncertainty about how to properly store bulk purchases to maximize freshness.
- **Busy schedules:** Changing schedules and children/family needs and activities can make it difficult to plan.

Motivation to reduce food waste:

- **Family health and nutrition:** Desire to provide healthy meals and reduce processed food consumption.
- **Budget consciousness:** Looking to manage household expenses effectively.
- **Environmental responsibility:** Teaching children about sustainability and reducing environmental impact.
- **Emotional connection to food:** Food is meant to be shared as a family, and its preparation is seen as an act of love.

Education tips:

- **Proper storage techniques:** Tips on how to store different types of food, especially in bulk.
- **Creative leftover use:** Recipes and ideas to turn leftovers into new meals.
- **Involve kids in meal planning:** Making meal prep a family activity to help cater to everyone's tastes.

Relevant media channels and content:

- Parenting blogs and websites.
- Family-oriented social media groups, especially on Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram.
- Local community events and school programs.



Cultural considerations: Different cultures have unique family dynamics and mealtime traditions. For example, in some cultures, large family gatherings are common, impacting food preparation and consumption. *Consider using imagery and language that reflect diverse family structures and meal practices, emphasizing the universal value of family time and healthy eating.*

Understanding the budget conscious consumer: Persona insights

Isabella (Adults 18-35)

Meet Isabella, a savvy shopper always on the lookout for the best deals. Living on a modest income, Isabella navigates the challenges of balancing a tight budget with the need for nutritious meals. Bulk purchases and discounted items are staples in her shopping routine, but they often lead to more food than can be consumed. Isabella's goal is to maximize the value of every food item purchased, reduce waste, and stretch the household budget as far as it can go.

Key characteristics

- **Age Group:** 27, single and living with roommates, active social life
- **Location:** Urban dweller
- **Occupation:** Retail Manager
- **Income:** Lower-income bracket
- **Other:** Price sensitive, likely lives in a neighborhood with easy access to discount grocery stores

Food-related lifestyle and habits:



Buys in bulk, especially discounted items.



Faces challenges in managing food quantities and storage.



Cultural considerations: Economic factors can vary significantly across cultures, influencing purchasing power and shopping habits. Cultural norms may also dictate the types of foods that are considered necessities versus luxuries. *Consider offering budget-friendly tips that are culturally sensitive.*

Behavior influencing food waste:

- Over-purchasing due to discounts.
- Inadequate storage leads to spoilage. Might not have enough storage space for proper storage.

Motivation to reduce food waste:

- Stretching the budget.
- Maximize the value of food purchases.

Education tips:

- Smart shopping strategies.
- Effective food storage methods.
- Understanding food labels.

Relevant media channels and content:

- Discount apps and websites.
- Social media, especially TikTok and Instagram.
- Community forums like Reddit and NextDoor.



Understanding the busy professional: Persona insights

Alex (Adults 25-40)

Meet Alex, a high-energy professional immersed in bustling city life. With a demanding job and a packed schedule, Alex often opts for convenience in meals, leading to irregular eating habits and overbuying groceries. Despite the time constraints, Alex is increasingly aware of the environmental impact of food waste and seeks practical, quick solutions to reduce waste without disrupting their busy lifestyle.



Key characteristics

- **Age Group:** 33
- **Location:** Urban dweller
- **Occupation:** Marketing/Ad Manager
- **Income:** Mid- to high-income brackets
- **Other:** Fast-paced, time constrained

Relevant media channels and content:

- Social media, especially LinkedIn and Twitter.
- Podcasts and news apps.

Food-related lifestyle and habits:



Relies on convenience foods.



Eats out most of the week.



Irregular meal planning due to a busy and ever-changing schedule.

Behavior influencing food waste:

- Underutilizing purchased food (purchases takeout and groceries).
- Overbuying groceries.
- Knowledge gap in understanding how to re-heat or re-use leftovers.

Motivation to reduce food waste:

- Time efficiency.
- Cost-savings.
- Environmental consciousness.

Education tips:

- Quick meal prep ideas.
- Importance of a shopping list.
- Freezer-friendly meals.
- How to properly store food in a freezer.

Cultural considerations: work-life balance norms may vary by culture. Some cultures prioritize longer hours at the office, while others value time at home. Cultural preferences in food types and meal customs can influence their purchasing and consumption habits. *Consider tailored messages to reflect diverse work environments and acknowledge varying cultural attitudes towards meal preparation and consumption.*

