resource data

Improving Food Rescue Data Across Washington

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The people below contributed to this document.

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Executive Summary

To increase food rescue in Washington, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and Resource Data conducted bench research and collaborator interviews from across the food rescue supply chain to identify actionable data strategies that deliver both near-term value and long-term impact for the state's food rescue system.

One key finding was that Washington rescued 36,982 tons (73,964,943 pounds) of food in 2024, nearly halfway towards the state goal to rescue 20% of edible food from the landfill for human consumption by 2025. Food rescue efforts also support Washington to make progress on its goal to reduce 50% of its edible food in landfills by 2030. Based on our results as of 2024, Washington is almost 19% of the way towards this goal.

To build a strong plan for securing food rescue data, the first step is to help food rescue groups share data by giving them targeted incentives and rewards. This report suggests the following ideas to improve food rescue data sharing:

- **Data Standardization via National Food Recovery Association (NFRA):** Partner with NFRA to adopt a national standard for food rescue data—to create a uniform food rescue data taxonomy and reporting framework.
- **Enhanced State Tax Deduction**: Establish a Washington-based tax benefit for food donations, modeled on the IRS deduction, to incentivize private-sector donors to grow their food donations while simultaneously capturing food rescue data on a regular cadence.
- **Carbon Credit Program**: Explore a certified carbon offset framework for food rescue activities so organizations can monetize their food rescue efforts through verified carbon credits eligible for use on Washington's regulated carbon market.
- **Support for Centralized Data Infrastructure**: Align with and invest in the Good Business Network of Washington's work to build a shared marketplace and data repository for food rescue organizations across the state.

These ideas can offer value to food rescue partners while helping the state reach the goals set in **RCW 70A.205.715**, which aims for a 50% reduction in food waste by 2030 (relative to 2015 levels). Using rewards to improve food rescue data is a way to collect better information that will inform stronger plans to rescue more food, keeping edible food out of the landfill.

This report includes a clear plan and a cost-benefit study to help Ecology and its partners take the next steps. The goal is to make smart investments that lead to useful data, stronger partnerships, and meaningful progress toward reducing edible food waste in landfills.

Key Data Partners

For a list of key data partners, please refer to Appendix I.

Introduction

Statewide food rescue data is essential for tracking progress toward Washington's goal under **RCW 70A.205.715**: reduce food waste by 50% by 2030 compared to 2015 levels. Ecology set milestones to rescue 20% of edible food for human consumption by 2025, and a 50% reduction in **edible** food waste in the landfill by 2030.

Better food rescue data is critical to identify strategic actions that will improve Washington's food rescue system and save more edible food from going to the landfill. But collecting this data takes a lot of time and resources for each group involved. The project showed that investments in data collection is needed to get more detailed food rescue data.

To accelerate the progress towards improved data collection and strengthen Washington's food rescue system, it is better to offer incentives for key data collection activities. Such rewards match what food organizations need and set up a system to gather better and more consistent annual data.

This report shares useful strategies and a clear plan to help Ecology, and its partners take the next steps in improving Washington's food rescue data, a lynchpin in designing improved long-term food rescue solutions.

Purpose

This report outlines the strategies that Ecology and Resource Data identified to help incentivize different food organizations engaged in food rescue. It also shares an update on the data collected so far and lists the signed Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) with Feeding America and its partners. These agreements are a key step toward tracking progress towards Washington's goals for food rescue and food waste reduction.

This report also includes estimated program costs and a plan to guide Ecology and other state agencies in advancing implementation efforts.

Current State

In the food system, there are three main ways to rescue edible food so people can eat it: selling it through salvage markets,[2] donating it, and gathering unharvested food on farms (called gleaning). Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) oversees on-farm activities, including gleaning. Due to jurisdictional authority between the agencies, the legislated food waste reduction goals only account for food waste *after* it's left the farm, therefore gleaning is not counted as progress towards food waste reduction goals. [3]

Salvage markets are a powerful way to keep food in the system, but they usually involve a two-sided transaction where money is exchanged. One player sells food at a lower cost to a willing buyer. The seller minimizes their risk of losing the entire value of the product, while the buyer receives a lower cost product. Most of the time, salvaged products are not bound for the landfill and would be donated if they are unsalable. Since salvage markets are used all through the food supply chain and involve private information, Ecology has difficulty regularly accessing this data.

This is why the best and most available data is from food rescued and distributed into the food donations supply chain. Ecology started by signing Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) with all Feeding America partner organizations in Washington. These agreements help provide data from the groups who rescue the most food across the state. In addition to Feeding America's data, other organizations that handle large amounts of rescued food for people to eat shared their data. These two groups of data were added together to capture a snapshot of total pounds of food rescue occurring in Washington.

As a result, this report and plan focus on food moving through the donation system. This targeted approach enables Ecology to develop a more immediate and actionable strategy around obtaining a more robust food rescue dataset.

Current Datasets

Based on 2015 data[4], Washington generates about1.2 million tons of food waste annually with 390,063 tons considered edible. Businesses are responsible for about 60% of all food waste, and households contribute 37%. To align with RCW 70A.205.715 and its food waste reduction goals,

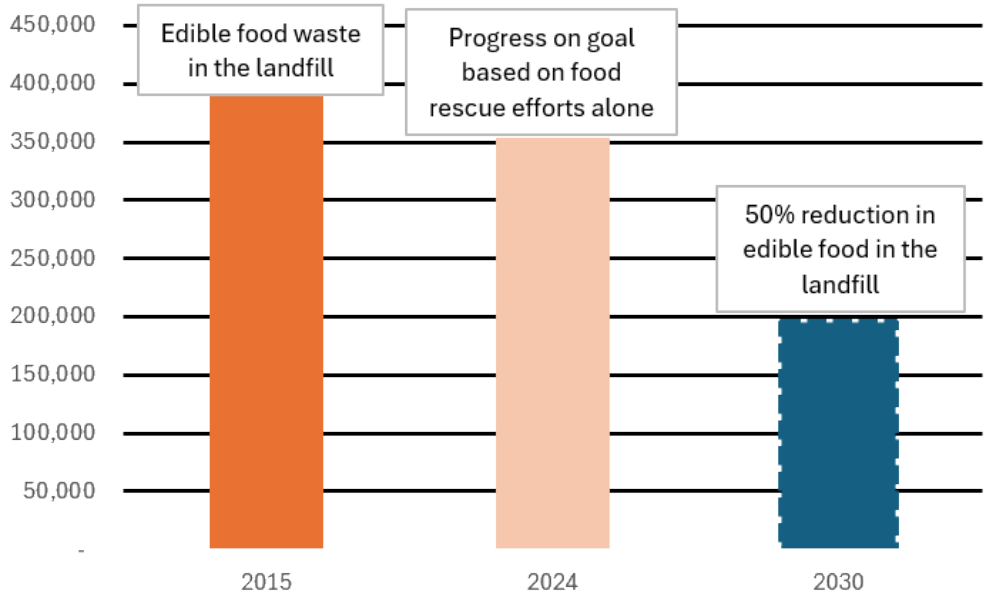
[2] Salvage market: A segment of the food supply chain that recovers, redistributes, and resells products that are safe for consumption but are unsellable through conventional retail channels due to cosmetic imperfections, nearing expiration dates, labeling errors, damaged packaging, or surplus inventory. These items are typically handled by food banks, discount retailers, nonprofit food recovery organizations, or specialized distributors, with the goal of reducing food waste and increasing food access.

[3] For more information about the authority of WSDA, please refer to Appendix J.

[4] Source: apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2107027.pdf (page 14)

Washington committed to halve edible food waste by 2030 and rescue 20% of the edible food for human consumption by 2025.

Figure 1: Progress toward 50% Edible Food Diversion from the Landfill by 2030 goal (tons)[5]



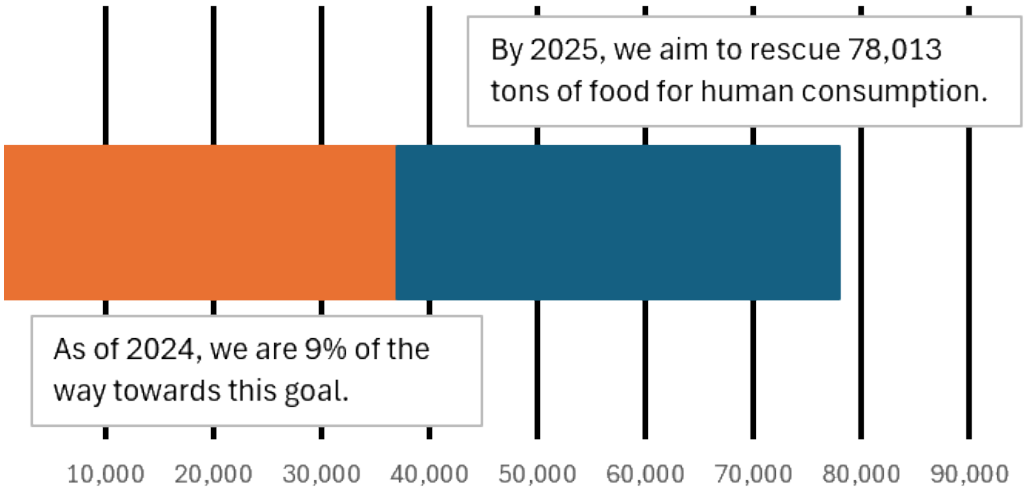
As of June 2025, Ecology signed DSAs with all Feeding America partners in Washington, including Food Lifeline, Oregon Food Bank (Clark County partner), and Second Harvest. Other groups like Too Good to Go (salvage), Cascadia Produce's Lettuce Help Center (salvage), Northwest Harvest, Food Donation Connection, Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council, and Feed Spokane provided additional data without formal agreements.

In 2024, Washington rescued about 36,982 tons (73,964,943 pounds) of food[6], which is about 19% of the state's goal to reduce edible food waste by 195,032 tons (i.e., 50%) by 2030. Likewise, Washington is nearly halfway towards its milestone of rescuing 78,012 tons (i.e., 20%) of edible food for human consumption by 2025.

[5] This chart tracks progress of the reduction of edible food in landfills against a 2015 baseline as directed by RCW 70A.205.715. The total edible food in landfills did rise against the 2015 totals based on the 2020-2021 Washington Statewide Waste Characterization Study, likely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for the purposes of tracking of annual metrics to measure progress towards the statewide food reduction goals, this graph is showing progress based on the 2015 baseline.

[6] Based on data provided by key data collaborations. Some assumptions have been made to the data received, please refer to Appendix B for more details

Figure 2: Progress toward the 20% Food Rescue Goal for Human Consumption by 2025 (Tons)



Food rescue volume from 2024 included some data from the salvage market (provided by Too Good to Go and Cascadia Produce's Lettuce Help Center). Out of the total 36,092 tons of food rescued in 2024, the salvage market contribution from these two organizations was 1,547 tons (3,095,292 pounds). Too Good to Go and Cascadia Produce operate in a niche part of the food salvage landscape.

Cascadia Produce manages loads of perishable foods at distribution hubs or transit points. Too Good to Go focuses on surplus prepared food from restaurants often with limited shelf life. While different, both operations focus on salvaged food that without timely intervention would go to a landfill. These approaches represent different scenarios than other large food distributors (ex., United Natural Foods Inc, Target, Walmart, etc.) who often sell shelf-stable or longer-dated items into the salvage market. For this reason, Ecology is including this data as part of the progress toward the food rescue goal under RCW 70A.205.715.

Based on the 2020-2021 data, Washington still has over 409,153 tons (902,027,960 lbs.) of edible food in the landfill[7]. To reach Washington's goal, we need more detailed data to understand seasonality of edible food waste, types of edible food waste, and why people dispose of edible food. This information will help find ways to scale up food rescue interventions and reduce edible food waste in Washington's landfills.

[7] Calculated by referencing Page 17 on the 20-21' WA Waste Characterization Study and food rescued in Year 2024

For more details on the datasets used, please see Appendix B.

Challenges and Opportunities in Food Rescue Datasets

Did you know?

In 2024 alone, Washington rescued about $142 million worth of edible food, based on the USDA's valuation of $1.92 per pound. This shows the economic and environmental value of redirecting food from landfills to people. It also illustrates how the cost of incentive-based programs is small compared to the potential savings and impact.

We divide our findings into challenges and opportunities to consider for policymaking and program decisions:

Challenges

Limits and Concerns about Data Sharing

Many organizations require formal data sharing agreements before they release information. Even with these agreements, groups hesitate to provide data with enough detail, especially itemized donation records. This reluctance may limit the availability of detailed data and subsequently, the ability to make more informed actions.

Food Organizations Collect Different Data

Interviews revealed that food rescue operations are diverse. They differ significantly in their set-up, goals, operational models, and data-collection practices. Most of their data only includes combined donated food weight without specific donation details. A uniform product name, product category (e.g. Produce, Dairy, Protein, etc.), reason for donation, etc. is not captured currently in food rescue data. This makes it harder to assess improvements in food rescue activities over time.

Not Enough Known about Rejected Food Donations

We lack understanding of which food items are rejected at loading docks and sent to the donation pipeline. This data is rarely captured in an organized way at critical points, such as

grocery loading docks or donation intake stations. Addressing this blind spot is essential for reducing waste and improving the efficiency of the food rescue pipeline.

Donation Decisions not Standard

The decision to accept or reject a donation, especially fresh produce, is often made without standardized criteria. This lack of consistency affects outcomes and limits traceability.

Challenges in Forecasting Food Supply

Groups emphasized that food supply from rescued pipelines is unpredictable, and this is a constant challenge. This unpredictability limited food rescue organizations from appropriately preparing for food rescue events. Due to the wide variability of surplus food availability, developing reliable forecasting models was seen as having low feasibility and limited cost effectiveness at this time.

Opportunities

Interest in Carbon Offset Credits

Interviews showed a strong interest in exploring carbon offset credits associated with food rescue. This concept was also supported by the Food Donation Workgroup.[8] Many support developing a method that recognizes the full chain of contributors—not just food donors but transporters, processors, and distributors too.

Lack of Usage for IRS Federal Tax Deductions

Few take advantage of enhanced IRS tax deductions for food donations. Only 25% of the organizations interviewed for this project used these credits. When asked, many thought the administrative burden was high and doubted the deduction would be worth the effort. More awareness and easier reporting processes may increase participation.

Need for Cross-Agency Collaboration

Achieving the state's food waste reduction goals requires state agency coordination. Strong collaboration between Ecology, WSDA, and the Department of Health will be essential for cohesive strategies and maximizing statewide impact.

Food Rescue Data Standardization

Throughout this project, it became apparent that Washington currently lacks standard practices for collecting, reporting, and interpreting food rescue data. Based on interviews with

[8] The Food Donation Work Group (FDWG) in Washington state is focused on enhancing food rescue from commercial sources and developing recommendations for increased food donation. The group prioritizes preventing food waste, rescuing edible food, and managing remaining material through recovery systems. It was formed according to Washington's Organics Management Law (OML) 2.0 and is facilitated by the Food Center at the Department of Ecology. The FDWG will report its recommendations to the legislature by September 1, 2025, according to the Washington Department of Ecology.

food banks, gleaners, logistics providers, and distributors, data collection methods vary widely across organizations in format, granularity, and purpose. Some groups collect detailed item-level data, while others track only aggregate volumes or report sporadically. This inhibits coordination between organizations as their inventory management systems don't use the same "language.". This lack of consistency limits the ability to track and assess food rescue activities and makes it difficult to get a statewide picture of progress toward food waste reduction goals.

The Road Ahead

The current data secured through data sharing agreements shows meaningful progress and a promising path toward building statewide food rescue efforts.

Even with this strong start, there is still a lot of edible food in Washington landfills. To keep progressing, we need more detailed and consistent data from across the system to better evaluate increased opportunities for food rescue. The message from interviews was clear: incentives are essential to driving deeper engagement and data sharing. The following is a set of programs designed to provide incentives to improve the standardization and accessibility of food rescue data.

Recommendations

Each of the four points below supports Washington's food waste reduction goals under RCW 70A.205.715 with actions to improve data tracking.

- Adopt the National Food Recovery Association's **standardized food rescue data** taxonomy for consistent, high-quality reporting through the food rescue system
- Develop a **state-level tax deduction program** to reward food donors for sharing their food rescue data, if using the standardized taxonomy
- Explore **a carbon credit offset** for those involved in food rescue, rewarding important work in connecting donated food with those facing hunger
- **Support the Good Food Exchange as a tool** to provide real-time options for donating and/or selling rescuable food and collecting transactional data simultaneously

Summary of Recommendations to Improve Food Rescue Data in Washington

The following table is a high-level summary of recommendations to be pursued by Ecology to improve statewide food rescue data. A more detailed description of each recommendation is provided on the following pages.

Recommendations	Estimated Cost	Key Benefits	Implementation Time	Complexity
National Food Recovery Association (NFRA)	$35k–$45k for collaboration, analysis and integration for supporting standards development (See Appendix H.)	Standardized national data taxonomy, enhanced interoperability, improved tracking of food rescue outcomes, integration with solutions database	Estimated to be ~24 months from the time NFRA officially launches (standards development and validation underway)	Moderate to high (requires national consensus, system alignment, partner adoption and platform integration)
Enhanced State Tax Deduction Program	$200k–$300k for an economic impact analysis, 2–3 years for administration, plus tech support. (See Appendix H.)	Private-sector participation, landfill diversion, tax equity	2–3 years (policy design, legislative process, Department of Revenue (DOR) integration, implementation)	Moderate (requires legislative support, DOR infrastructure, compliance tracking)
Carbon Credit Program	$2M+ over 3–4 years (rulemaking, staffing, verification)	Intersection of Ecology Program tools, utilizing a regulated carbon market to support food rescue, verified data for emissions tracking	3–5 years (feasibility, rulemaking, infrastructure, implementation)	High (requires protocol development, certification, interagency coordination)

Good Business Network of Washington (GBNW) Exchange Platform	$150k ($100k for customization, $50k for initial outreach)	Real-time food rescue matchmaking, accessible data, donor-recipient connectivity	Ongoing (platform live, support scaling within 12–18 months)	Low to moderate (existing platform, coordination needed for data alignment)

National Food Recovery Association Data Standards

A resilient and data-driven food rescue system in Washington means moving beyond high-level, aggregate reporting and toward a standardized and detailed data collection framework. Currently, differences in data types, reporting formats, and levels of detail make assessing food rescue trends statewide difficult. Shared practices would help measure program effectiveness and identify needs across regions and sectors.

Standardizing food rescue data, including what is collected, how it is defined, and the format in which it is reported is paramount for achieving statewide goals. Without clear and consistent standards, Ecology cannot evaluate programs, track progress, or design targeted policies that reduce waste and increase equity.

What NFRA Offers and Its Current Effort

The National Food Recovery Association (NFRA) is a nonprofit that supports and strengthens food recovery in the United States. Its mission is to create a collaborative, well-connected, and data-informed network of food rescue organizations to reduce food waste and alleviate hunger.

The NFRA is leading the development of a comprehensive food rescue data taxonomy (i.e., terms and definitions) and a standardized reporting framework. Thus, organizations in different regions and sectors will use the same data collection practices, establish comparable benchmarks, and easily share information. When finished in about two years, these standards can serve as the foundation for Washington's own data-tracking efforts. Using the NFRA standards makes sure food rescue data collected is credible, comparable, and can be used.

The NFRA is also developing a national "Solutions Database." They describe this as a real-time, digital platform designed to accelerate food rescue by connecting users to last-minute donation opportunities and surplus food. This tool will:

- Provide quick access to available food through location-based and time-sensitive alerts
- Track critical data such as food type, handling instructions, expiration timelines, and distribution needs
- Act as a resource to share and refer users, especially under-resourced organizations

By adopting tools like this, Ecology and its partners can leverage NFRA's Solutions Database as a data resource and best practice model. These tools enhance real-time decision-making and bolster food recovery across the state and region.

Cost Estimate

This recommendation requires Ecology's Organics and Food Center staff time to collaborate with NFRA during the data standardization process and ultimately drive the adoption of the data standard through Washington's food rescue ecosystem. The estimated investment is between $35,000 and $45,000. Appendix H has a detailed breakdown of the steps and cost estimates.

Next Steps

With a need for greater state and national consistency, Ecology will align its data collection practices with the emerging national standards being developed by NFRA.

Ecology will use this data collection standard as part of all future incentive programs. Requiring standard data collection attributes and leveraging technology platforms will ensure long-term transparency, comparability, and measurable impact. With consistent data collection, Washington will get insights on:

- Where to target public funds for food rescue infrastructure
- Where people have equitable access to food and underserved communities
- Emission models and policies like the proposed Carbon Credit Program
- Better reporting on progress toward the state's 2030 food waste reduction goal

Enhanced State Tax Deduction Program

This section outlines the recommendation to study a Washington Enhanced State Tax Deduction Program for organizations that legally own the food at the point of donation. This is a successful model in other states[9] and captures important food rescue data. A state tax deduction is a meaningful incentive to increase food rescue and collect data simultaneously.

Why Only Food Donors?

An enhanced state tax deduction program would incentivize donating surplus food to feed people instead of sending it to disposal. Federal tax law and national best practices limit the tax deduction to food donors only. This is the person that legally owns the food at the time of donation, such as growers, manufacturers, processors, wholesalers, and retailers. The donor bears the risk and responsibility for the donation. They are also the ones who lose money, so they are the rightful recipient for tax benefits.

[9] Refed provides a tool to explore the states that have an existing food rescue tax policy tool. More information can be found here: State Policy : ReFED | Rethink Food Waste.

By only offering the deduction to donors, there is a clear audit trail. While other actors in the food rescue system (e.g., transporters, food banks, and aggregators) play essential roles, they do not face a direct financial cost associated with donating. By keeping the eligibility to donors only, the program does not detract from upstream waste prevention. A state tax deduction program would provide fiscal accountability and drive measurable progress in food rescue across Washington.

Current State Enhanced Tax Programs

If created, Washington would join 13 other states with a state-level tax incentive aimed at promoting food donations. States use tax credits or deductions to encourage food donations. While each state's program is different in structure, eligibility, and benefit limits, several could inform Washington's policy development. Resource Data and Ecology were able to review three states' (California, Missouri and Pennsylvania) programs, as shown in Appendix C.

Cost Estimate

A senior business analyst, a tax attorney, a public finance economist and a project manager would be necessary to evaluate the economic impacts for a proposed enhanced tax deduction. We estimate this would cost between $200,000 and $300,000. Appendix H has a detailed breakdown of the steps and cost estimates.

Tax Deductions and Data Collection

Food donors would need to track and report specific metrics to receive the tax deduction. These metrics would need to be reported in a standard format that follows the NFRA standards. To develop the program, an analysis of the required reporting metrics, audit plan, and a review of the state fiscal impact would need developed. Ecology drafted a list of proposed data points to collect but will also need to align with the standards NFRA develops in the future. For more information, please see Appendix K.

Next Steps

The financial impact of an enhanced state tax deduction Program for food rescue on the Washington state budget must be determined. The next step is a feasibility study. This analysis would include the fiscal impact and general outline of how the program works.

Carbon Credit Program

This section considers the opportunity to reward food rescue efforts that mitigate methane emissions caused by food in the landfill. When edible food is destined for the landfill and instead is rescued to feed people, it is an important climate mitigation action. Washington can leverage its

own regulated carbon market to simultaneously promote food rescue and reward those doing the act of food rescue (getting the food to eaters.)

Only organizations who are directly engaged in diverting edible food to eaters would be eligible to receive carbon offset credits. This is in line with established carbon market rules. Awarded carbon offset credits can be sold on the carbon market. Thereby, this opportunity provides a powerful dual benefit: incentivizing food rescue and emission reductions, while improving the quality and availability of statewide food rescue data.

Why Only Food Rescue Organizations?

Food rescue organizations are the only eligible parties in the food rescue pipeline who could be awarded carbon offset credits. This aligns with two core carbon market principles: additionality and permanence.

Additionality means that carbon credits cannot be issued for activities already required by law or standard operating procedure. Since many surplus food donators (such as grocers or manufacturers) are already diverting food from the landfill due to state law (RCW 70A.205.545 and RCW 70A.205.540), they may not meet this threshold. Food rescue organizations are not subject to these legal requirements.[10] In other words, food rescue organizations are doing activities they are not required by law to do, but release in emissions reductions.

Permanence means that the activities that generate the carbon credits must be associated with greenhouse gas emissions reduction or removal that are permanent. Ensuring edible food doesn't reach the landfill and instead is consumed by eaters (humans or animals) does avoid generating methane and thereby reduces landfill methane emissions.

Value to Food Rescue Organizations

A carbon offset credit program allows food rescue organizations to generate performance-based revenue through their everyday operations. Food rescue organizations would track and submit standardized data about their food rescue outcomes. Data is converted into verifiable offset credits. Food rescue organizations can sell these offsets on carbon markets to make revenue. These credits have applicability in voluntary carbon markets and potentially also in Washington's Cap-and-Invest program, the state's regulated carbon market.

[10] This would need further vetting as some food rescue organizations in Washington may be required to comply with RCW 70A.205.540: Source-separated organic solid waste collection services—Fees—Exceptions—Rule making.

Current Carbon Credit Programs

Carbon offset credits for food rescue are an emerging opportunity in both voluntary and regulated carbon markets. Recently methodologies to calculate emission reductions from food rescue efforts have been developed. While other sectors like forestry have had offset protocols for a long time, organizations like Brightly have pioneered the development of an offset protocol for food rescue. As of 2025, Brightly has led the verification of the very first carbon credits issued from food rescue work, available for sale on the voluntary carbon markets.

Washington's Cap-and-Invest program does not currently include a protocol for food rescue. A protocol is the pathway by which total volume of food rescued is translated into carbon offset credits. To generate credits from food rescue efforts on Washington's regulated carbon market, the state needs to develop and adopt a food rescue protocol through an agency rulemaking.

Cost Estimate

Creating a carbon offset credit program for food rescue to use with Washington's regulated carbon market will require substantial planning, analysis, and policy development. Ecology's Climate Pollution Reduction Program, who currently administers the state's carbon market, says it will cost about $2 million over 3-4 years to implement this program. For more information, please refer to Appendix H.

Note: Costs are conservative estimates. Final totals may vary depending on staff classification, agency scope, and use of external contractors.

Next Steps

We recommend the following next steps:

1. Establish a cross-agency workgroup with Ecology, WSDA, Revenue, nonprofit food recovery organizations, and carbon market experts to define the scope and desired outcomes. Part of this effort should focus on encouraging food rescue organizations to participate in the voluntary carbon market with their existing food rescue efforts. Compliance markets typically only approve offset pathways that have been vetted on the voluntary market.
2. Contract for a feasibility study that includes studying the success of the food rescue carbon offset credits on the voluntary market
3. If the feasibility study supports, start the rulemaking process.

Good Business Network of Washington – Transactional Good Food Exchange Platform

The Good Business Network of Washington (GBNW), formerly the Seattle Good Business Network, helps people support local businesses by buying, making, and investing locally. The GBNW created

the Good Food Exchange, a free online platform that connects extra food from farms and businesses to groups that can use it – like nonprofits, meal programs, and food hubs. The goal is to cut down on food waste and improve community access to good food.

The platform started in 2023, with help from the Washington state Department of Commerce's Industrial Symbiosis program. Since then, the Good Food Exchange has helped redirect over 2.8 million pounds of farm surplus and 4.7 million pounds of other rescued food. Without this program, most of this food would have ended up in the landfill.

The current platform was built as a pilot, and it showed there was both value in the platform and a need for a stronger system. Based on the results of the pilot, an improved platform requires the ability to track food inventory and records the details of every transaction. This would help users know what food is available and ensure each transaction captures information like food type, amount, and where it came from. A secure, data-rich system would help GBNW and partners, like Ecology, understand food rescue patterns. This insight is key to saving even more edible food from being thrown away.

Therefore, as part of the roadmap to advance Washington's statewide food rescue goals, Ecology has a unique opportunity to collaborate with GBNW's flagship initiative that can serve as a key data and operational partner.

Offerings of the Good Food Exchange Platform

The Good Food Exchange Platform provides:

- A real-time matching system that connects food surplus with groups that need it
- A simple sign-up process for donors and recipients, so it is easy for small organizations
- An inventory management and transactional platform able to track data attributes that align with the NFRA data standards
- System integration potential with logistics and cold storage providers for more efficient food redistribution

How Ecology benefits from this partnership:

- **Better data tracking and reporting**
    - Use NFRA standards to collect the right data at each transaction.
    - Use the platform's data usage to supplement statewide food rescue metrics and identify areas with limited food recovery options.
- **Support for donor incentive programs**
    - Using the Good Food Exchange platform could make it easier for users to get tax deductions or earn carbon offset credits due to data captured needed to access incentives, streamlining compliance for food donors and food rescue organizations

Cost Estimate

It will cost about $150,000 to build the next version of the Good Food Exchange. This upgrade would include live inventory tracking and an initial outreach campaign to let more people know about the tool.

Next Steps

Support Good Business Network of Washington in getting the funding needed to build the improved Good Food Exchange.

Preventing Double-Counting Across Incentive Programs

As Ecology investigates new incentive programs to support food rescue, it is critical to prevent the same food donation from being counted more than once.

There is a risk that the same rescued food transaction could be reported multiple times across different channels. For example, a food donor could claim rescued food on a tax deduction form while the food rescue organization also claims it for a carbon offset credit. While each of these organizations are eligible for these incentives, a mechanism needs to be in place to not count this food rescue volume twice when totaling the state's aggregate food rescued. This double counting of data could lead to incorrect measurement of environmental impacts and harm credibility of the programs.

The following safeguards may prevent this double counting across incentive programs. A larger evaluation on this topic is strongly needed.

- **Attestation forms**
  All groups reporting data must sign a form saying the food donation has not been reported in another incentive program, unless allowed. If it has, the group must disclose the other program.
- **Unique transaction IDs**
  Use a standard way to report data—like donation date, recipient, amount, source and a unique identifier for the organization. Ecology can easily search by unique ID, spot and fix any duplicate reports.
- **Coordination between programs**
  Create clear rules for how state agencies like Ecology, WSDA, and Revenue work together to check reports, stay transparent, and keep a single, trusted source for food rescue data.

By including these rules, Ecology can make sure the data is accurate, programs stay accountable, and everyone involved can trust the system.

Conclusion

Washington has a great chance to lead the nation in building a fair, climate-friendly, and data-driven food rescue system**.** There are four major actions recommended to improve food rescue data and subsequently inform actions to grow food rescue in Washington:

- **Use the National Food Recovery Association's (NFRA) standards**
- **Create a state tax deduction program for food donors**
- **Look into a carbon offset program namely appliable to hunger relief organizations**
- **Partner with the Good Food Exchange platform from the Good Business Network of Washington (GBNW)**

These actions can help bring in better data from across the state and be used to show where food rescue is working – and what areas need more help.

Ecology has already made progress by signing data sharing agreements with Feeding America partners. As of 2024, Washington has met 19% of its 2030 goal to reduce edible food waste in landfills. Washington is nearly halfway to its 2025 milestone goal of rescuing 20% of wasted food for people to eat.

Other helpful steps include raising awareness about federal tax benefits for food donations. Ecology can have a big impact by supporting groups like GBNW and NFRA, which are already developing the tools needed to track food rescue and generate critical data without too much administrative effort.

Still, to make more progress, Washington will need to create new incentive programs that get better data from donors and food rescue groups.

With smart program design, teamwork between agencies, and strong partner support, Washington can lead the way in showing how good incentive programs and data standards can drive food rescue, reduce waste, and fight climate change.

Appendix A: Resource Data and Ecology Scope of Work

Task 1: Research and identify the bodies of data that measure food rescue and food waste reduction in Washington

More needs to be understood regarding the food waste and wasted food data landscape to support Washington's food waste reduction goals. In consultation with Ecology staff, the Contractor will conduct a literature review and identify existing public and private food-related datasets. This work will be the foundation for the final deliverables (see Task 4).

Task 2: Provide an analysis of existing datasets and recommendations on data aggregation

This task will synthesize information gathered during Task 1. The main goal of this task is to present a data strategy. The data strategy will inform the final recommendations in Task 4.

Task 3: Conduct user research to identify best case use case of aggregated data

Armed with an understanding of available data from Task 2, the project is ready to understand how different user groups are interested in using this rolled-up food rescue and food waste reduction data.

At the close of Task 3, the contractor will provide an overview of common and unique themes across the user groups.

Task 4: Based on the results of Tasks 1, 2, and 3, propose a tool and/or general solution that meets the needs of stakeholders as represented by the user groups

Task 4 is the culmination of the previous three tasks. While the identification of existing data and data gaps in this space is important, more important is how stakeholders can improve their respective work outcomes with access to more robust and comprehensive food rescue and food waste reduction data.

Working with the Ecology team and related stakeholders, a tool and/or other solution will be recommended to provide stakeholders with this access. Key to this final solution is that Ecology will be able to meet their legislatively mandated goals to measure progress toward the statewide food waste reduction goals, including measuring edible food diversion for human consumption.

Appendix B: Current Dataset Information

Spreadsheet (in Excel) of Aggregated Data for Washington State.

Appendix C: Current Enhanced State Tax Deduction Programs

Below are three enhanced state tax deduction programs that Washington can learn from:

Feature	Missouri	California	Pennsylvania
Incentive Type	Tax Credit	Tax Credit	Tax Credit
Legal Authority	Mo. Rev. Stat. § 135.647	Cal Rev & Tax Code §17053.88.5 Cal Rev & Tax Code § 17053.12	72 P.S. Taxation cand Fiscal Affairs § 8904-A; Charitable Food Program
Eligible Donors	Individuals, corporations, partnerships	Agricultural producers, processors, distributors	Business entities donating to charitable food programs
Eligible Recipients	501c (3) food pantries in Missouri	Food banks and charitable orgs	Nonprofits distributing to food-insecure Pennsylvanians
Incentive Value	50% of the value of food or cash donations	15% of qualified donation value; 50% of qualified	55% of the lesser of fair market value or basis cost

		transportation costs	
Annual Cap per Donor	$2,500 (individuals); $5,000 (businesses)	No fixed donor cap; subject to overall budget cap	$5 million total program cap statewide per year
Carryforward Allowed	Yes – up to 4 years	Yes – for unused portions of the credit	Yes – up to 3 years
Documentation Required	Donation receipt; estimated value; 501c (3) status	Written statement from recipient; proof of FMV	Proof of eligible donation and valuation documentation
Notable Features	1) Applies to both food and cash donations 2) Relatively simple and accessible, making it attractive to smaller businesses and farmers, though the credit is capped at relatively low annual amounts	1) Includes transportation credit 2) More nuanced benefits, including a separate transportation cost credit, which is particularly useful for rural or low-access areas	1) High percentage credit and capped program-wide budget 2) Among the most generous percentage-based credits (55%) and is structured to prioritize charitable food distribution to residents in need.

Appendix D: Future Concerns for the Enhanced State Tax Deduction Program

Below are some future concerns for the enhanced state tax deduction program

Concern(s)	Description	Potential Mitigation
Verification & Documentation	Donors may struggle to accurately determine the fair market value or cost basis of donated food, especially for perishable, unsold, or repackaged items. This could potentially lead to audit risks, tax disputes, or abuse of the deduction.	Provide clear valuation rules and standardized templates aligned with IRS and state tax codes
Double Dipping	Donors or recipients may attempt to claim multiple benefits for the same donation (For example, a tax deduction, a carbon credit, and a grant subsidy, without disclosure)	Require donor certification of exclusive benefit claim or proper stacking declaration
Fiscal Impact to State	The cumulative value of deductions may result in higher-than-expected reductions in state revenue, particularly if large-scale donors participate aggressively	Set per-donor or program-wide caps; require regular annual program reporting to monitor trends

Low Uptake by Small Donors	Smaller farms or grocers may lack tax liability or staff to participate	Offer technical assistance, simplified forms, or allow credit conversion options for low liability participants
Data Gaps	Incomplete info on donation volume, type, location, or impact; weakens evaluation	Require basic data reporting with claims; invest in a central dashboard (i.e. Food Data Hub) via Ecology/WSDA
Agency Administrative Burden	Increased volume of tax filings and donation claims may create staffing and verification challenges for the Washington Department of Revenue (DOR)	Fund DOR staffing or digital tools to manage increased tax documentation
Legal & Policy Misalignment	Potential inconsistency with IRS rules or state agency definitions of eligible food, creating compliance ambiguity	Develop shared eligibility standards across IRS, DOR, WSDA, and Ecology
Equity & Access Gaps	Small/rural/orgs may lack the tools or capacity to access the deduction	Provide mini-grants or reporting support for under-resourced donors, pairing the deduction with capacity-building resources (For example, Food Donation Connection, Good Business Network of Washington) for small donors

Time Lag in Benefit Realization	Deductions apply post-filing, offering limited short-term financial incentive	Explore quarterly certification or combine with near-term incentives like grants
Alignment with Future Food Data Hub	Donation data collected through the tax deduction program may not initially be standardized or linked to the statewide data infrastructure under development.	Establish shared reporting standards and integration pathways to feed data into the future food rescue data hub managed by Ecology and partners

Appendix E: Future Concerns for Carbon Credit Program

Concern(s)	Description	Potential Mitigation
Double-Counting Risk	There is potential overlap between the carbon credit program and enhanced tax deduction for the same donation event	Require single-claim attestations from participating food rescue organizations and design interoperable data systems to cross-check reported donations
Eligibility Clarity	With eligibility restricted to food rescue organizations, confusion may arise among donors, distributors, or logistics partners who are integral to the rescue	Develop clear public-facing eligibility guidelines and facilitate structured partnerships between donors and eligible food rescue

	chain but do not qualify to claim credits directly	entities to ensure shared value
Data Standardization	Inconsistent data formats and definitions across organizations could limit integration into Ecology's future food data hub	Align carbon credit data reporting with National Food Recovery Association (NFRA) standards and the broader state roadmap for data harmonization
Verification and Data Complexity	High costs and technical complexity of verifying food rescue volumes, calculating avoided methane emissions, and validating carbon impacts	Build tiered verification systems with simplified methods for small-scale actors, and invest in data aggregation tools
Equity in Participation	Larger corporations may dominate credit issuance; small orgs may lack capacity to engage	Offer startup grants or administrative support for historically underserved entities to engage in the program equitably
Regulatory Alignment	Risk that WA-specific credits may not be recognized by national or international registries (For example, Verra, Gold Standard)	Engage early with Verra and other registries; consider co-developing protocols that meet both state and voluntary market standards
Delays in Credit Realization	Verification and issuance processes may take months or	Explore interim credits or upfront stipends tied to verified data submissions

	longer, reducing near-term incentive	
Long-Term Program Sustainability	Without dedicated funding or strong demand, the program may be unsustainable	Develop a cost recovery model (For example, admin fees, credit sales, transaction fees) through public-private partnerships, or integration with WA's Climate Commitment Act (CCA) linked emissions markets
Credit Market Uncertainty	Voluntary market protocols like Verra's must be adapted or recognized within Washington's regulated carbon market framework	Pilot a carbon offset protocol using Verra's methodology as a foundation while Ecology works toward formal rulemaking under the Climate Commitment Act
Alignment with Future Data Hub	Food rescue data collected through the carbon credit program (For example, volume, type, recipient, emissions avoided) needs to be integrated into future statewide data infrastructure	Establish shared data standards early; ensure credit program data is interoperable with the Food Donation Working Group's envisioned data hub

Appendix F: Collaborator Interviews (Full List)

Below is a high-level list of all organizations Ecology and Resource Data interviewed or attempted to reach out to as part of the Food Data Hub project.

Organization	Description	Data Accessibility	Interviewed?	Obtained Dataset?
Feeding America (FA) – Feeding Washington	A nonprofit organization that coordinates large-scale food sourcing and distribution efforts between agricultural producers and food banks across the state. By aggregating and delivering surplus produce to hunger relief partners, it helps reduce food waste and improve access to fresh, healthy food for underserved communities	Private	Yes	Yes
FA – Food Lifeline (Western)	A nonprofit organization based in Western Washington that sources surplus food from farmers, manufacturers, and retailers to distribute to a network of food banks and meal programs. As a Feeding America affiliate, it plays a key role in reducing hunger and food waste by rescuing and redistributing millions of pounds of nutritious food annually	Private	Yes	Yes

FA – Second Harvest (Eastern)	A nonprofit food bank serving Eastern Washington and North Idaho, dedicated to fighting hunger and feeding hope through partnerships with food donors, volunteers, and community organizations. As a Feeding America affiliate, it distributes millions of pounds of nutritious food annually, it supports a network of food pantries, meal sites, and mobile markets to reach individuals and families in need	Private	Yes	Yes
Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA)	A state agency responsible for supporting Washington's agricultural industry, ensuring food safety, and promoting sustainable farming practices. WSDA also plays a key role in hunger relief and food access through programs like the Farm to Food Bank initiative and the Washington Gleaning Network	Private and Public	Yes	No
Careit	A nonprofit food donation platform that connects food donors with local nonprofits to safely and efficiently redistribute surplus food. Through its user-friendly app, Careit facilitates real-time	Private	Yes	No

	tracking, compliance, and coordination of food rescue efforts to reduce waste and address food insecurity			
Too Good to Go	A mobile app that connects consumers with restaurants, grocery stores, and bakeries offering surplus food at discounted prices to prevent it from going to waste. Operating in cities around the world, the platform empowers individuals to take part in reducing food waste while enjoying affordable meals	Private	Yes	Yes
Divert	A U.S.-based technology and infrastructure company that partners with retailers and food industry stakeholders to reduce food waste through data analytics, waste-to-energy solutions, and sustainable diversion practices. By converting unsellable food into renewable energy and actionable insights, Divert supports both environmental sustainability and corporate ESG goals Also has a legislative tracker that tracks all the food waste laws mandating each state	Private	Yes	No

ReFED	A national nonprofit dedicated to ending food loss and waste across the U.S. food system by providing data-driven insights, innovative solutions, and strategic guidance. Through tools like the Insights Engine and partnerships with policymakers and industry leaders, ReFED helps drive measurable progress toward a more sustainable and equitable food future	Public	Yes	Yes
Cascadia Produce (Lettuce Help)	Assembles wholesale food boxes under federal, state, county, and local food bank programs	Private	Yes	Yes
Safeway	A major American supermarket chain and subsidiary of Albertsons Companies, offering a wide range of groceries, household goods, and pharmacy services. Safeway participates in community-focused initiatives, including food donation programs and sustainability efforts to reduce waste and support local hunger relief. Use three different avenues to reduce waste: 1) 3rd party waste reducers, all trash depending on the	Private	Yes	No

	jurisdiction gets dumped into landfills through 3rd parties 2) Partners with Divert 6-7 years to collect food that would otherwise be wasted 3) Scans out for food donations at the facilities themselves, produce is the general product			
WA Ecology Data Team (existing landfill data)	WA Ecology's team that manages the existing landfill data that Ecology already reports on	Private and Public	Yes	Yes
Leanpath	A food waste prevention company that provides technology solutions and analytics tools to help commercial kitchens track, measure, and reduce food waste at the source	Private	Yes	Yes
Harvest Against Hunger	A Washington-based nonprofit that connects farmers, produce suppliers, and transportation partners with hunger relief organizations to recover and distribute surplus fruits and vegetables. Through innovative gleaning, farm-to-food bank, and supply chain programs, it works to reduce food waste and improve access to fresh,	Private	No	No

	healthy food for communities in need			
Starbucks	A global coffeehouse chain headquartered in Seattle, Washington, known for its specialty coffee drinks, community-focused stores, and widespread retail presence. In addition to its core business, Starbucks is actively involved in sustainability and social impact initiatives, including ethical sourcing, food donation programs, and efforts to reduce waste across its operations	Private	No	No
Washington Gleaning Network	A statewide collaboration of volunteers, farmers, and hunger relief organizations that harvest surplus produce from farms and orchards for distribution to food banks and community programs. Coordinated by the WSDA, the network helps reduce food waste while increasing access to fresh, nutritious food for those in need. Has 45 gleaning partners with 17 farms and orchards, 28 backyard growers	Private	Yes	Yes
Food Rescue Hero	A platform that enables a scalable impact in the retail sector	Private	Yes	No

Climate Pledge Arena	A carbon-neutral sports and entertainment venue located in Seattle, Washington. As the world's first arena certified as net zero carbon, it serves as a global model for sustainability in large-scale events, integrating renewable energy, zero waste initiatives, and environmentally responsible operations	TBD	No	No
UW Mapping Project Team	A research initiative led by the University of Washington that focuses on identifying and visualizing gaps and opportunities within Washington state's emergency food system. By integrating geospatial data with stakeholder input, the project helps inform more equitable and effective strategies for food distribution and access.	N/A	Yes	N/A
Chelan Douglas Community Action Council (CDAC)	A nonprofit organization serving Chelan and Douglas counties in Washington, providing programs that address poverty, food insecurity, housing, and energy assistance. Through initiatives like food distribution and community partnerships, CDCAC	Private	Yes	Yes

	works to empower individuals and strengthen local communities Partners with NW Harvest, 2nd Harvest, WSDA, local farms, local grocery stores			
Good Business Network of Washington	A nonprofit organization that fosters a sustainable and equitable local economy by connecting businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders. Through initiatives like the Good Food Exchange platform, it supports local food systems, reduces waste, and enhances food access across Washington state	N/A	Yes	No
NW Harvest	A food justice organization in Washington state building partnerships in communities across Washington to get food where it's needed most. Provides an average of two million meals each month through our statewide network of more than 350 food banks, meal programs, schools, and community-based organizations. Part of a justice-centered movement, it advocates to change inequitable policies, practices, and	Private	Yes	Partially

	institutions that perpetuate hunger and poverty. It tries to ensure communities across our state can access the nutritious food they want and need to thrive.			
UNFI	North America's premier grocery wholesaler delivering the widest variety of fresh, branded, and owned brand products to more than 30,000 locations throughout North America, including natural product superstores, independent retailers, conventional supermarket chains, ecommerce providers, and food service customers	Private	Yes	No
CrunchPak	A leading fresh produce company based in Washington state, specializing in sliced and packaged apples and other ready-to-eat fruit snacks. The company focuses on convenience, quality, and food safety, supplying healthy snack options to retailers, schools, and foodservice providers nationwide	Private	Yes	No
Brightly	A U.S.-based climate tech startup focused on decarbonizing food systems by generating verified carbon credits from	Private	Yes	No

	food rescue activities. Using AI-driven models and national datasets, Brightly quantifies avoided methane emissions from surplus food redirected to people and partners with Verra to issue high-quality, transparent offsets in the voluntary carbon market			
Feed Spokane	A nonprofit organization that coordinates the recovery and redistribution of surplus prepared and perishable food to hunger relief agencies throughout the Spokane area. By partnering with restaurants, grocery stores, and institutions, Feed Spokane helps reduce food waste and increase access to nutritious meals for food-insecure individuals and families	Private	Yes	Yes
Puget Consumers Co-op (PCC) Community Markets	A member-owned food co-op based in Washington state, known for its commitment to organic, sustainable, and locally sourced products. As the largest consumer-owned food cooperative in the U.S., PCC supports community well-being through ethical sourcing, environmental	Private	Yes	No

	stewardship, and food access initiatives			
Charlie's Produce	A leading independent produce distributor in the Pacific Northwest, supplying fresh fruits, vegetables, and perishable goods to restaurants, grocery stores, and institutions. The company is known for supporting local growers, sustainable sourcing practices, and food rescue partnerships aimed at reducing waste across the supply chain	Private	Yes	No
Good Roots NW	A Washington-based organization focused on strengthening local food systems by connecting surplus produce from farms with hunger relief efforts. Through collaborative partnerships and community-driven distribution models, Good Roots NW helps reduce food waste while improving access to fresh, nutritious food in underserved areas	Private	Yes	No
Meta Food Service	Meta's (Global technology company also known as the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp) Global Culinary program is an in-house operation that manages café services, micro-	Private	Yes	No

	kitchens, and food hospitality across its global offices, focused on delivering consistent, high-quality dining experiences.			
Harborview Hospital	A public hospital in Seattle, Washington, operated by UW Medicine and owned by King County. It serves as a regional trauma and safety-net hospital, providing comprehensive healthcare services with a focus on underserved and vulnerable populations across the Pacific Northwest	Private	Yes	No
WSU Food Service	Operated by Washington State University's Dining Services, it provides on-campus dining options and nutrition services for students, faculty, and staff. It emphasizes sustainability, local sourcing, and food waste reduction through programs that promote responsible consumption and surplus food management	Private	Yes	No
Food Donation Connection (FDC)	A national organization that facilitates the donation of surplus prepared food from restaurants and food service providers to local nonprofit hunger relief agencies. By managing	Private	Yes	Yes

	logistics, compliance, and tax documentation, FDC helps businesses reduce food waste while supporting community food access

Appendix G: Collaborators Interviewed (Task 3)

Below is a list of user groups Ecology and Resource Data interviewed during Task 3.

User Groups	Collaborators
Ecology	WA Ecology Team: Gretchen Newman, Jade Monroe, Chery Sullivan, Cullen Naumoff
Retail (Grocery)	PCC (Puget Consumers Co-op) Community Markets
Food Distributors	Cascadia Produce (Lettuce Help Center), Charlie's Produce
Food Access	Good Roots NW
Food Service/Catering	Meta, Harborview Hospital, WSU Food Service, Lumen Field
Value Chain Coordinators	Good Business Network of Washington, Food Donation Connection, Feed Spokane, Divert

Appendix H: Cost Estimates

The following is a rough breakdown of the NFRA cost estimate:

NFRA Cost Estimate Detail

This is the estimate for the costs related to an Ecology collaboration with NFRA and to incorporate the developed NFRA standard into Ecology's food rescue data policies. This would be an internal ecology business analyst, as this estimate does not include oversite. This assumes limited collaboration with NFRA at the end of their two-year standard defining process.

Phase #	Task Name	Role	Hours	Rate	Cost
	Phase 1: Understand Business Context				
1.1	Define Objectives	Sr. Business Analyst	6	$125	$750
1.2	Data Inventory and Document Review	Sr. Business Analyst	11	$125	$1,375
1.3	Stakeholder Alignment	Sr. Business Analyst	11	$125	$1,375
Phase Total			**28**		**$3,500**
	Phase 2: Data Set Analysis and Integration				
2.1	Collaboration with NFRA - Standards Creation	Sr. Business Analyst	66	$125	$8,250
2.2	Data Analysis	Sr. Business Analyst	44	$125	$5,500
2.3	Data Integration	Sr. Business Analyst	11	$125	$1,375

2.4	Documentation	Sr. Business Analyst	22	$125	$2,750
Phase Total			**143**		**$17,875**
	Phase 3: Documentation				
3.1	Compose Report	Sr. Business Analyst	44	$125	$5,500
3.2	Presentation	Sr. Business Analyst	22	$125	$2,750
3.3	Handoff to Ecology	Sr. Business Analyst	6	$125	$750
Phase Total			72		$9,000
All Phases Total			243		$30,375
Contingency			88		$11,000
Project Total			**331**		**$41,375**

The following is a rough breakdown of the State Enhanced Tax Program cost estimate:

State Enhanced Tax Program Estimate Detail

This is the estimate for how much it would cost to create an economic impact for a state enhanced tax deduction program for food rescue.

Phase #	Task Name	Role	Hours	Rate	Cost

	Phase 1: Understand Business Context				
1.1	Policy Vision - Impact to Constituents	Sr. Business Analyst	50	$125	$6,250
1.2	Stakeholder and User Analysis	Sr. Business Analyst	50	$125	$6,250
1.3	Identify IRS Materials and Summarize	Legal Researcher	25	$150	$3,750
1.4	Identifying Benchmarking States and Research	Legal Researcher	50	$150	$7,500
1.5	Design Data Collection and Collect Data	Sr. Business Analyst	50	$125	$6,250
1.6	Select Options to Research	Sr. Business Analyst	13	$125	$1,625
1.7	Document All Vision Work, Research, and Promising Options into a Memo	Sr. Business Analyst	50	$125	$6,250
Phase Total			**288**		**$37,875**
	Phase 2: Solution Modeling and Analysis				
2.1	Build Financial Impact Model 1	Public Finance Economist	50	$250	$12,500
2.2	Build Financial Impact Model 2	Public Finance Economist	50	$250	$12,500
2.3	Build Financial Impact Model 3	Public Finance Economist	50	$250	$12,500
2.4	Analyzing Options' Compatibility with Washington Tax Code	Tax Attorney	50	$300	$15,000
2.5	Compare and Rank Options	Tax Attorney	50	$300	$15,000
2.6	Identify Recommendations	Sr. Business Analyst	100	$125	$12,500
Phase Total			**350**		**$80,000**

	Phase 3: Draft, Review, and Finalize Report				
3.1	Draft Report	Sr. Business Analyst	100	$125	$12,500
3.2	Peer Review Report	Sr. Business Analyst	50	$125	$6,250
3.3	Edit Report	Technical Writer	50	$65	$3,250
3.4	Present Report to Collaborators	Sr. Business Analyst	50	$125	$6,250
Phase Total			**250**		**$28,250**
	Phase 4: Project Management				
4.1	**Project Management**	Project Manager/Sr. Analyst	133	$140	$18,620
Phase Total			**133**		**$18,620**
All Phases Total			1021		$164,745
Contingency			731		$118,075
Project Total			**1,752**		**$282,820**

The following is a rough breakdown of the Carbon Credit Program cost estimate:

Carbon Credit Program Estimate

This is the estimate for how much it would cost to a Carbon Credit Program:

Phase	Description	Estimated Resources/Timeline	Estimated Annual Cost	Complexity

Phase 1: Working Group Formation	Establish a multi-agency and cross-sector working group to explore the feasibility of food rescue as a recognized emissions reduction activity	1 Full Time Employee (FTE)/6–12 Months	$175,149	Low to moderate
Phase 2: Feasibility Study	Contract with an external firm to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study that evaluates carbon accounting methodologies, data availability, legal authority, and implementation pathways	N/A	$250,000 (Based on costs of a comparable feasibility study: Co2 Removal Project Standards Analysis)	Low
Phase 3: Protocol development	Develop a protocol that qualifies food rescue as a carbon offset in a voluntary or compliance offset market	2–3 FTEs/3 years	$525,447 for 3 FTEs; ~$1.58 million total for over 3 years	Moderate to high
Total Estimated Cost			**~$2 million over 3-4 years**	

Appendix I: Key Data Partners

Below is a summary list of key partners or collaborators that participated in providing data or is part of the roadmap.

Data Partners	Significance
Feeding America – Oregon Food Bank	As an affiliate of Feeding America in Washington, a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) has been signed with Ecology to provide aggregated future food rescue data annually up to 2030.
Feeding America – Food Lifeline	As an affiliate of Feeding America in Washington, a DSA has been signed with Ecology to provide aggregated future food rescue data annually up to 2030.
Feeding America – Second Harvest	As an affiliate of Feeding America in Washington, a DSA has been signed with Ecology to provide aggregated future food rescue data annually up to 2030.
NW Harvest	Helps to rescue a large amount of food in Washington. Rescue data has been provided for up to 5 months in the year 2024, but a DSA has not been reached.
Feed Spokane	Food rescue data for 2024 was provided.

Cascadia Produce	Food rescue data for 2023 and 2024 were provided at an ideal level of granularity and for the food salvage market.
Too Good to Go	Food rescue data for 2021–2024 was provided.
Food Donation Connection	Food rescue data for 2022–2024 was provided and they are experts in tax deduction programs.
Good Business Network of Washington (GBNW)	A key player leading an effort in developing a food exchange platform as part of the roadmap toward the 2030 food reduction goal
National Food Recovery Association (NFRA)	A key player leading an effort in developing food rescue data standards and a “solutions database” as part of the roadmap toward the 2030 food reduction goal

Appendix J: Jurisdiction in Washington

Below is more information about the jurisdiction of food waste in Washington:

Jurisdiction of Food Waste in Washington State

In Washington state, food waste management is governed by a coordinated approach between Ecology and the WSDA. While Ecology is the lead agency for waste reduction and environmental protection policies, WSDA focuses on agricultural viability, food safety, and surplus food rescue. Together, they implement strategies aligned with the state's goal to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030.

Department of Ecology: Regulatory and Environmental Jurisdiction

Ecology oversees the regulatory framework for food waste as it relates to solid waste management, composting operations, climate impacts, and waste diversion infrastructure. Its authority stems from the Solid Waste Handling Standards (Chapter 173-350 WAC); the Waste Not Washington Act (*RCW 70A.205*); and its role in administering the statewide Food Waste Reduction Plan. Ecology regulates compost facilities, supports local governments in managing organic waste, and promotes methane reduction through landfill-diversion efforts. It also provides grants, education, and technical assistance for composting and anaerobic digestion projects.

Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Recovery and Food Safety Jurisdiction

WSDA has jurisdiction over the recovery and redistribution of surplus food within the agricultural and retail food systems. Through programs like Farm to Food Bank and its partnership in the Washington State Food Assistance Program, WSDA facilitates the donation of safe, edible surplus food from farms to hunger-relief organizations. WSDA also enforces food safety standards relevant to donated and recovered foods and offers technical guidance to producers, processors, and gleaning organizations to ensure regulatory compliance and quality assurance.

Collaboration between Ecology and WSDA

While Ecology plays a lead role in managing and regulating the environmental impacts of food waste, gleaning activities fall outside of Ecology's regulatory jurisdiction.

Gleaning is defined as the collection of surplus agricultural produce from farms, fields, or packing houses for donation or redistribution. It is not considered a regulated waste-handling or disposal

activity. Instead, gleaning is recognized as a food recovery and hunger relief effort; therefore, it falls under the purview of the WSDA and nonprofit food-assistance networks.

Ecology supports the goals of gleaning in its ***Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Strategy***, but it does not regulate gleaning activities, nor does it impose permitting, reporting, or environmental compliance requirements on gleaners or farms participating in donation efforts. As such, any policy development, funding coordination, or liability clarification related to gleaning should be directed through WSDA or appropriate food safety authorities, rather than Ecology.

Resource Data and Ecology recognize the potential in obtaining data from gleaning activities. It is acknowledged that while gleaning plays a valuable role in food recovery, data on the scale and impact of gleaning activities remains limited and underreported. Continuing to partner with WSDA, food banks, gleaning networks, and academic institutions may support a more comprehensive understanding of food recovery in Washington state. Gleaning organizations should be more engaged in statewide data initiatives, with resources allocated for capacity building, digital tracking tools, and standardized reporting frameworks.

Appendix K: Drafted Standard Data Fields by Ecology

Data Field	Examples
Item	Tomato, Apple
Food Category	Produce, Dairy, Protein, Dry Ingredients, Prepared Food, Packaged Snacks
Food Item	Tomatoes, Cherry, Lettuce, Oak
Unit	8 pints per flat (cherries)
Number of Units	1,2,3
Total Weight	Per unit basis, multiplied by the number of units; 18 pounds
Rescue Program	Grocery Retail, Restaurant, Catering/Events, Farm Gleaning

Reason for Rescue	Surplus Supply/Bumper Crop, Nearing Expiration, Dock Rejected: Less than Grade A, Dock Rejected: Temperature Check Failure