



SB 1383 Food Recovery Spotlight

Fresno Metro Ministry Food to Share Program

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City of Fresno Population: 530,093 (2018 estimate)

Fresno Metro Ministry (Metro) is a non-profit organization that has served the Fresno region for nearly 50 years. The organization's Food to Share program offers a range of healthy food access initiatives for the community, including a program that recovers edible food from schools and retailers and redistributes it to families in need.

SB 1383 Requirement

"A food recovery organization or service that has established a contract or written agreement to collect or receive edible food directly from commercial edible food generators ... shall maintain records specified in this section: ... (2) A food recovery organization shall maintain a record of (A) the name, address and contact information for each commercial edible food generator that the organization receives edible food from... (B) The quantity in pounds of edible food received from each commercial edible food generator per month... (C) The name, address and contact information for each food recovery service that the organization receives edible food from for food recovery."

– California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 18991.5

Fresno Metro Ministry's Food to Share Program

Metro's Food to Share program recovers and redistributes edible food from more than two dozen schools within Fresno Unified School District. The organization also recovers edible food from four grocery stores. Food donor agreements are used to facilitate the donation process from retailers and all receiver organizations sign an annual contract to be part of the Food to Share Receiver Network. The food is picked up daily by paid Food to Share drivers and is delivered to a network of 49 food receiver organizations, such as churches and food pantries, which directly distribute the food to people in need. Currently, Food to Share recovers and distributes the food within the City of Fresno and the neighboring City of Clovis. Metro is able to offer this service to food recovery donors and food receiver organizations at no cost based on the grants, donations, and significant food receiver volunteer hours contributed.

Implementation Milestones

- 2014** Metro recognizes the need for a food recovery network that can prevent food waste from grocery stores, farmers markets, schools, and produce packers; planning for Food to Share program begins. Metro applies for CalRecycle Organics grant as a subcontractor. Metro is granted \$225,000 from CalRecycle. Metro develops infrastructure for Food to Share program.
- 2016** Metro utilizes CalRecycle 2014 grant funding to initiate Food to Share program. Metro partners with several local schools to recover and distribute surplus edible food. Metro initiates retail store recoveries.
- 2018** Metro, in partnership with Central California Food Bank, secures \$500,000 in grant funding from CalRecycle. Organization scales up food recovery capacity and network; additional edible food drivers are hired.
- 2019** Metro, in partnership with Central California Food Bank, secures an additional \$500,000 CalRecycle grant.

Lessons Learned

- During the initial years of the Food to Share program, Metro utilized its website as a platform to connect food donors with food receiver organizations. Interested food recipients could sign up to receive notifications of when donated food was available to pick up. Metro soon found that this type of digital network was not sustaining consistent participation. The main issue was inconsistency: donation amounts would vary as would edible food storage capacity. To address the issue, Metro purchased cargo vans and hired drivers that could consistently collect and distribute recovered edible food to a network of small food receiver organizations.
- Metro enters into food recovery agreements with its donors to ensure the parties have a clear understanding about the program and logistics. These agreements are instrumental in the success of their program.
- Metro has the capacity to engage with each of its food donors individually to address the donors' unique needs; this is a level of service that many food recovery organizations and services do not have the capacity to do.
- The Food to Share program works with each food-donating school individually. Metro says this one-on-one approach allows participating schools to have greater autonomy, greater buy-in, and helps the program succeed.
- When discussing the Food to Share program with stakeholders, Metro says it is critical to underscore the transformative power of edible food recovery initiatives. As Metro puts it, "economies once built on waste and depletion can be built on resource sharing and environmental stewardship."

Next Steps

- In anticipation of SB 1383, Metro anticipates scaling up their food recovery operation. They hope to extend their school-donation network so that it includes all 94 Fresno Unified Schools with food service. To expand its service, Metro expects to hire additional edible food collection drivers in the near future.
- Historically, Metro has raised operating funds through grants and donations and does not charge a fee for the food recovery services they provide; however, Metro says this model must change to a system that provides more reliable and predictable funding. Metro says they are interested in pursuing funding partnerships with local governments and franchise service providers.

- In collaboration with Stanford University's Sean N. Parker Center, Metro is pursuing a grant to fund a clinical study to demonstrate how consuming nutritious foods can help prevent or reduce diseases; the goal is to highlight how proactive food recovery efforts can sustain healthy communities.



Edible Food Donated to Metro's Food to Share Program. Photos: Fresno Metro Ministry

By The Numbers

Fresno Metro Ministry's Food to Share Program

1.8M

Pounds of food recovered since 2016

49

Food receiver organizations engaged in Food to Share's program

27

Number of Fresno Unified schools that donate edible food to Food to Share

10,000

Approximate number of people served by the Food to Share program thus far