

LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION



SHARE TABLES & FOOD DONATIONS IN SCHOOLS

Best Practices for Los Angeles County

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was created by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health (LACDPH) – Environmental Health Division as part of the LA County Food Redistribution Initiative (LACFRI) – www.SaveTheFoodLA.com, to address basic questions about share tables and donations as they pertain to local educational agencies in the County, especially in response to the enactment of SB 557 on January 1, 2018 and state waste reduction laws.

Schools are protected from liability under the federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act and the California Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, as are restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail food facilities. Information on these laws is provided in this guide.

Mandatory recycling laws for schools

- Effective July 1, 2012, the State's Mandatory Commercial Recycling law (AB 341) required all institutions, including schools, to arrange for recycling services.
- Beginning April 1, 2016, the State's Mandatory Organic Waste Recycling law (AB 1826) phased in requirements for institutions, including schools, that generate specified amounts of green waste to arrange for recycling services for that material.

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FOOD WASTE BASICS

HOW MUCH FOOD WASTE IS THERE?



30% OF FOOD NEVER GETS EATEN WORLDWIDE.



40% OF FOOD IS WASTED IN THE UNITED STATES.



1/3

In Los Angeles County, 1.7 million tons of food is sent to landfills per year¹.

This equates to about 5,000 tons of food per day.

- Los Angeles County contributes to about 1/3rd of California's total food waste stream.

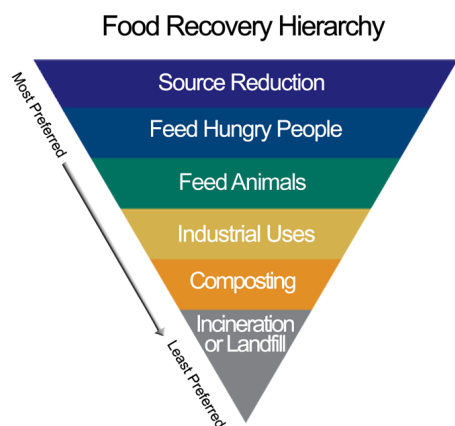
WHY DOES FOOD WASTE MATTER?

- Food rotting in landfills releases methane which significantly contributes to climate change. Methane is 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide.
- Wasted food wastes our resources! Wasted food consumes 21% of all freshwater, 19% of all fertilizer, 18% of all cropland, and 21% of all landfill volume².
- About 561,000 households (roughly about 1.68 million people) are food insecure in LA County³.

PRIORITIZING OUR SURPLUS FOOD

The US Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA) Food Recovery Hierarchy prioritizes actions organizations can take to prevent and divert wasted food. Each tier of the Food Recovery

Hierarchy focuses on different management strategies for your wasted food.



The top levels of the hierarchy are the best ways to prevent and divert wasted food because they create the most benefits for the environment, society and the economy⁴.

FEEDING PEOPLE

FOOD INSECURITY AND WASTED FOOD IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The second tier of the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy is “feed hungry people”. In Los Angeles County, over half a million households are food insecure, lacking enough food for an active, healthy life. With the average food insecure household composed of 3 individuals, **this equates to approximately 1,683,000 people** who could be suffering from food insecurity³. Approximately **1.7 million tons of food** is sent to landfills annually in Los Angeles County¹, which equates to about 5,000 tons of wasted food per day.

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO?

Schools can play a big part in keeping food away from the landfill and getting it to those who need it most by setting up share tables and/or food donation programs. These strategies can also become hands-on learning opportunities for students. Share tables and food donation programs in schools are officially allowed as a result of California Senate Bill 557 which was enacted January 1, 2018. This law is explained on the next page.

Note: Rules for donating surplus foods in schools differ from and are more restrictive than those for other food facilities (such as grocery stores, restaurants, etc.)

SHARE TABLES, DEFINED

Share tables are carts or tables where pupils, staff and faculty can place unconsumed food and beverage items (i.e., prepackaged food and beverages; unopened, wrapped food and beverages; or food items with a peel) that they choose to not eat or drink. These tables provide an opportunity for other pupils to take additional helpings of food or beverages at no cost.

FOOD DONATIONS

Surplus food from schools may be donated to any food bank or charitable organization that is tax exempt under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Title 26, United States Code, Section 501 (c)(3)) (From “Overview” section on the CDE’s page on share tables).

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/cnp022018.asp>



SENATE BILL 557 (SB 557)



WHAT IS SB 557?

SB 557 is a California law enacted on January 1, 2018 that amended both the [California Health and Safety Code](#) (“CalCode”) as well as the Education Code. It also required the California Department of Education (CDE) Nutrition Services Division to publish guidance information on share tables and food donation programs in schools.

The CDE published the webpages below in accordance with SB 557:

- “The Use of Share Tables” - <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbcnp032018.asp>
- “Guidance on the Donation of Leftover Food in Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs)” - <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/cnp022018.asp>

DOES SB 557 REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO SET UP SHARE TABLES AND FOOD DONATION PROGRAMS?

No. SB 557 does not require school districts to set up share tables or food donation programs. It allows schools the option to do so.

SB 557’S CHANGES TO THE CA EDUCATION CODE

Article 13 (commencing with Section 49580) is added to Chapter 9 of Part 27 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, to read:

Article 13. Food Recovery Program

49580. For purposes of this article, the following terms have the following meanings:

- (a) “Food” has the same meaning as in Section 113781 of the Health and Safety Code.
- (b) “Food Bank” has the same meaning as in Section 113783 of the Health and Safety Code.
- (c) “Nonprofit charitable organization” has the same meaning as in Section 113841 of the Health and Safety Code.

SB 557’S CHANGES TO THE CA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

Section 114079 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read (in bold):

114079.

(a) Except as specified in subdivision (b), after being served or sold and in the possession of a consumer, food that is unused or returned by the consumer shall not be offered as food for human consumption.

(b) A container of food that is not potentially hazardous may be transferred from one consumer to another if the food is dispensed so that it is protected from contamination and the container is closed between uses, such as a narrow-neck bottle containing catsup, steak sauce, or wine, or if the food, such as crackers, salt, or pepper, is in an unopened original package and is maintained in sound condition, and if the food is checked periodically on a regular basis.

(c)(1) A local educational agency may do both of the following to minimize waste and to reduce food insecurity:

(A) Provide sharing tables where food service staff, pupils, and faculty may return appropriate food items consistent with subparagraph (B) and make those food items available to pupils during the course of a regular school meal time.

(B) Allow the food placed on the sharing tables that is not taken by a pupil during the course of a regular school meal time in accordance with subparagraph (A) to be donated to a food bank or any other nonprofit charitable organization.

(2) Donations of food or food made available to pupils during the course of a regular school meal time pursuant to paragraph (1) may include prepackaged, nonpotentially hazardous food with the packaging still intact and in good condition, whole uncut produce that complies with Section 113992 before donation, unopened bags of sliced fruit, unopened containers of milk that are immediately stored in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and perishable prepackaged food if it is placed in a proper temperature-controlled environment.

(3) When a local educational agency, pursuant to paragraph (1), makes food available to pupils during the course of a regular school meal time or donates food to a food bank or any other nonprofit charitable organization for distribution, the preparation, safety, and donation of food shall be consistent with Section 113980.

(4) For purposes of this subdivision, “local educational agency” means a county office of education, school district, or charter school.



SHARE TABLES

DEFINED

Share tables are carts or tables where pupils can place unconsumed food and beverage items (i.e., prepackaged food and beverages; unopened, wrapped food and beverages; or food items with a peel) that they choose to not eat or drink. These tables provide an opportunity for other pupils to take additional helpings of food or beverages at no cost. Share tables are also referred to as “food share table” or “sharing table.”

ARE SHARE TABLES ALLOWED BY THE LA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT?

Yes! The decision to set up share tables is ultimately up to individual schools or school district administrators. We can work with your school district’s Food and Nutrition Services staff and campus supervisors to improve your share table and answer questions not addressed in this guideline (see page 9). You can also view the CDE’s management bulletin, “[The Use of Share Tables](#)” for more information.

BASIC STANDARDS FOR FOOD ON SHARE TABLES

Per the CDE’s Management Bulletin, “[The Use of Share Tables](#)”

“When [a local educational agency] LEA makes food available to pupils during the course of a regular school meal time or donates food to a food bank or any other nonprofit charitable organization for distribution, the preparation, safety, and donation of food shall be consistent with CalCode, Section 113980 (see below).”

- Section 113980 of the California Health and Safety Code states, “All food shall be manufactured, produced, prepared, compounded, packed, stored, transported, kept for sale, and served so as to be pure and free from adulteration and spoilage; shall have been obtained from approved sources; shall be protected from dirt, vermin, unnecessary handling, droplet contamination, overhead leakage, or other environmental sources of contamination; shall otherwise be fully fit for human consumption; and shall conform to the applicable provisions of the [Sherman Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Law \(Part 5 \(commencing with Section 109875\)\)](#).”

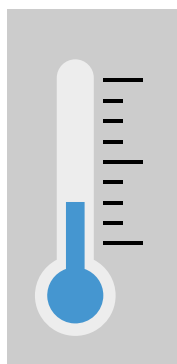
APPROPRIATE FOOD ITEMS FOR SHARE TABLES

According to Section 114079 (c)(2) of the California Health and Safety Code, the following items may be placed on share tables:

1. Prepackaged, nonpotentially hazardous food with the packaging still intact and in good condition (see Appendix A for definition of “nonpotentially hazardous food”)
 - For example: packets of mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, etc. Packaged granola, cookies, crackers, etc.
2. Whole uncut produce that complies with Section 113992 (which refers to proper washing) before reuse by food service operations as part of a reimbursable meal, served a la carte, or use in cooking. Refer to page 12 for more information.
 - For example: whole apples, oranges, bananas, etc. regardless of whether the peel is edible or not.
3. Unopened bags of sliced fruit.
4. Unopened containers of milk that are immediately stored in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

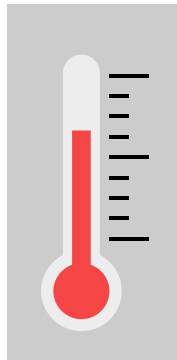
5. Perishable prepackaged food if it is placed in a proper temperature-controlled environment.

- Remember, the temperature danger zone is between 42°F to 134°F. Have a food thermometer handy to monitor food temperatures.
- Have food safety questions? Call LA County Dept. of Public Health – Environmental Health at (888) 700-9995



41° F
5° C

Cold foods: You can use a small refrigerator, cooler, ice baths, or ice sheets to keep cold prepackaged items (such as milk) at or under 41°F.



135° F
57° C

Hot foods: You can use a steam table to keep hot prepackaged foods at or above 135°F.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED ON SHARE TABLES

Food brought from home

Food items placed on the share table must come from the district meal service (school cafeteria) and cannot come from someone's home or from a lunch brought from home, even if the food is commercially prepackaged. **Items brought from home are not monitored to meet food safety standards or the outlined federal meal pattern requirements.** Federal guidance requires that food and beverage items placed on share tables come from reimbursable meals provided by the school nutrition program that meet specific meal pattern requirements outlined in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 210.10, 220.8, 226.20, and 225.16, respectively.

Discarded food

Food that appears to be in good condition but has been thrown into the trash should not be retrieved and placed on the share table nor donated. Your school can start a composting program with the help of local organizations to ensure that food that is no longer edible still goes to highest and best uses.

For more information on composting see page 20.

SUPERVISION

Kitchen staff, with support from custodians and cafeteria monitors, should supervise the food share table periodically throughout the meal period and at the end of the last meal service. Share table supervisors should make sure that students do not place unapproved food items on the share table. For middle and high schools, the responsible person overseeing the share table could be students who volunteer for the task.

SHARE TABLE BEST PRACTICES

Schools vary in how eating areas are designed, therefore some of these tips may be less feasible than others (there is no one-size-fits-all share table plan). If you would like feedback on how to best set up the share table to fit your schools' needs, call the LA County Public Health - Environmental Health general hotline at (888) 700-9995 during normal business hours.

SHARE TABLE LAYOUT TIPS

Clear signage

Clear signage at the start of the line encourages students to think about which foods they will leave at the share table. This provides them the chance to decide what to leave behind by the time they are at the end of the line. Do not depend on students to copy what other students are doing. You should also consider providing clear signage on the share table itself. You can [download and print a free share table sign here](#) (courtesy of StopWaste.org).

Consider separating food types

If you expect a large amount of food to be placed on the share table, consider setting up separate areas for cold items such as milk and yogurt, hot prepared entrees such as pizza and burritos, and items that do not need temperature control such as cookies, chips, crackers, etc. Organizing foods in this way will control temperatures, help students select food, and make cleanup and handling of surplus foods easier.

Recommendations for containers

Different types of containers can be used to collect food that does not require temperature control. Wire baskets, clear plastic tubs or other transparent containers are best because they allow students to see what is available.



INTRODUCING THE SHARE TABLE TO STUDENTS

Be thoughtful about introducing the purpose and rules of the share table to your students. Helping students understand that they are expected to eat the food items they choose will encourage them to select more carefully while in the serving line and set aside items they do not intend to eat for the food share table.

Common concerns about the share table

One concern that may arise is the potential for students to take unhealthy food or excessive portions of one food item to fill up on rather than eating a balanced meal. Another concern is that students may be aware that a food donation program exists and may feel morally obligated to place their food on the share table for charity. While well-intentioned, students must understand that the primary purpose of the share table is to reduce food waste. Both concerns can be reduced with adult monitors, signs, and gentle verbal reminders to students throughout the meal period.

WHAT CAN WE DO WITH SURPLUS FOOD ON THE SHARE TABLE AT THE END OF MEALTIME?

Reuse It or Donate It!

*Per the CDE's **Management Bulletin, "The Use of Share Tables"***

"Under certain circumstances, both state law and federal guidance allow food and beverage items to be reused by food service operations as part of a reimbursable meal, served a la carte, or used in cooking... Food or beverage items left on the share table may be served and claimed for reimbursement during another meal service (i.e., during an afterschool program when leftover from a school lunch), if the share table is supervised by the food service staff. **Food or beverage items left on the share table may also be used in another program's reimbursable meal and would be considered a donation to the other program.** Please keep in mind that this practice is only acceptable when in compliance with applicable state and local health and safety codes. *For further guidance and information, please contact your local environmental health department.*"

In response to this bulletin, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health – Environmental Health Division supports and echoes the CDE's message that food and beverage items from a share table may be:

- "...reused by food service operations as part of a reimbursable meal, served a la carte, or used in cooking... if the share table was supervised by food service staff members" and if the uncut surplus produce (with or without an edible peel) complies with Section 113992 of the California Health and Safety Code prior to reuse in the school (see next page).

- **Donated** to a nonprofit. Information on donation is provided in the next section of this guide. Surplus food from the share table that is set aside for donation or reuse for another meal must be treated in the same manner as other food served in the school. We recommend labeling, dating, and tracking surplus share table food for record-keeping.
- **For food safety questions, contact us at (888) 700-9995.**

Surplus Whole Uncut Produce from the Share Table

Whole uncut produce (with or without an edible peel) that was placed on the share table and is still available after the meal period is over must follow Section 113992 of the California Health and Safety Code before reuse by food service operations as part of a reimbursable meal, serving a la carte, or using the surplus in cooking.

- *Section 113992 of the California Health and Safety Code states,*
“(a) Produce shall be thoroughly washed in potable water to remove soil and other contaminants before being cut, combined with other ingredients, cooked, served, or offered for human consumption in ready-to-eat form except as specified in subdivision (b) and except when intended for washing by the consumer before consumption.

(b) Chemicals used to wash or peel produce shall meet the requirements specified in **21 C.F.R. [Code of Federal Regulations] 173.315.**”

Questions about reimbursements and CDE requirements

Reimbursement-related information can be found on the CDE’s webpage on share tables - <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbcnp032018.asp>. You can also check with your school district administrators or contact the CDE for additional questions (see page 27).

RULES FOR RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS, SCHOOLS, OR AGENCIES SERVING FAMILY STYLE MEALS

From the CDE webpage on [share tables](#)

“Many agencies, including residential child care institutions, serve meals family style, where all food and menu items are placed on the table where students are eating, and students are allowed to serve themselves second helpings of food or menu items. When family style meals are served, all food items on the table must be discarded at the end of the meal service and not reserved as part of another reimbursable meal.”

DONATING SURPLUS FOOD

WHY DONATE?

Donating surplus food is a great way to help address the immediate nutritional needs of the local community. Schools should first take measures to prevent food waste (see page 18) and try setting up a share table (see page 8). Schools also have the option to donate food to 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

ARE DONATIONS OF SURPLUS FOOD ALLOWED BY THE LA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT?

Yes! The decision to set up a food donation program is ultimately up to individual schools or school district administrators. We can work with your school district's Food and Nutrition Services staff to help design or improve your food donation process for free and answer questions not addressed in this guideline. You can also view the CDE's management bulletin, "[Guidance on Donation of Leftover Food in CNPs](#)" for more information.

YOU ARE PROTECTED BY STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS

THE FEDERAL BILL EMERSON GOOD SAMARITAN FOOD DONATION ACT OF 1996

Provides liability protection to donors of surplus food (in this case, school districts) who donate in good faith to a nonprofit organization for ultimate distribution to needy individuals. The full text of the federal act can be found here: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ210/pdf/PLAW-104publ210.pdf>.

THE CALIFORNIA GOOD SAMARITAN FOOD DONATION ACT OF 2018

Provides additional protections to donors and creates a more comprehensive list of entities protected from liability. It also explicitly states that donation of past-date food is subject to liability protection and expands protection to food facilities that give food directly to individuals* (also known as direct donations).



*MAY SCHOOLS DONATE FOOD DIRECTLY TO END RECIPIENTS?

No. Donations must only go to 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

End recipients refer to individuals who consume the donated food. Though the California Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 2018 provides liability protection for “direct donations”, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service guidance for school food authorities that receive federal funding is stricter than state food donation legislation and must be adhered to when donating food from Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). Therefore, schools that wish to donate food may only give to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, not individuals, per the CDE.

BASIC STANDARDS FOR FOOD DONATIONS FROM SCHOOLS

Per the CDE’s Management Bulletin, *“Guidance on Donation of Leftover Food in CNPs”*,

“Donations of food or food made available to pupils during the course of a regular school meal time may include prepackaged, nonpotentially hazardous food (see definition on Appendix A) with the packaging still intact and in good condition, whole uncut produce that complies with the CalCode, Section 113992, before donation, unopened bags of sliced fruit, unopened containers of milk that are immediately stored in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and perishable prepackaged food (if it is placed in a proper temperature-controlled environment).”

“When [a local educational agency] LEA makes food available to pupils during the course of a regular school meal time or donates food to a food bank or any other nonprofit charitable organization for distribution, the preparation, safety, and donation of food shall be consistent with CalCode, Section 113980.”

- Section 113980 of the California Health and Safety Code states, “All food shall be manufactured, produced, prepared, compounded, packed, stored, transported, kept for sale, and served so as to be pure and free from adulteration and spoilage; shall have been obtained from approved sources; shall be protected from dirt, vermin, unnecessary handling, droplet contamination, overhead leakage, or other environmental sources of contamination; shall otherwise be fully fit for human consumption; and shall conform to the applicable provisions of the Sherman Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Law (Part 5 (commencing with Section 109875)).”

APPROPRIATE FOOD ITEMS FOR DONATION

- Surplus food from a share table
- Surplus food from the kitchen

Note: According to the CDE, donated food cannot be claimed for meal reimbursement.

CAN I DONATE PAST-DATE / “EXPIRED” FOODS?

Yes. With the exception of infant formula and baby food (which are required by federal law to have date labels), contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of “expired” foods do not represent a safety hazard. “Sell by”, “Use by”, “Best by”, “Enjoy by”, “Freeze by”, “Best if Used by”, etc. are labels set by the manufacturer to denote quality, not safety, and are not regulated by the government. The quality of perishable products may deteriorate after the date passes but the products should still be wholesome if not exhibiting signs of spoilage. Schools should evaluate the quality of the product prior to its distribution and consumption to determine whether there are noticeable changes in wholesomeness.

As mentioned previously, the California Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 2018 provides liability protection to food facilities (schools included) that donate perishable and nonperishable food past the expiration date if a good faith evaluation is made that the food is wholesome. The law purposefully left the term “wholesome” undefined to preserve the protections of the Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act.

While most date labels are not regulated, the California Health and Safety Code does require the following to have use by dates and these dates must be checked before donation:

- Infant formula – California Retail Food Code, Section 114094.5
- Baby food – California Retail Food Code, Section 114094.5
- Labeled products within a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan – California Retail Food Code, Section 113801
- Reduced Oxygen Packaging (ROP) products – California Retail Food Code, Section 114057.1

501(C)(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

According to the CDE, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service guidance for School Food Authorities (SFAs) that receive federal funding is stricter than state/local food donation legislation and must be adhered to when donating food from Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). **Thus, donations from CNPs must go to a charitable non-profit organization with Section 501(c)(3) tax exemption status.**

- To verify whether an organization is a 501(c)(3), use the [Internal Revenue Services’ \(IRS\) Exempt Organizations Select Check tool](#).
- If you cannot find the charity in this tool, [please read this page on the IRS website for more information](#).
- A list of suggested nonprofit directories and food rescue nonprofits in LA County can be found on page 16.

SFAs that have students and families with high needs can work with local non-profits to ensure that their donations are utilized in the local community before being distributed elsewhere. The CDE recommends working with local non-profits to establish these types of partnerships, especially in school districts that serve a large food insecure population. For additional questions regarding organizations eligible to receive donated food please contact the CDE’s Nutrition Services Division – see page 27 for contact information.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH A RECIPIENT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Call and meet with the organization in advance

Avoid last-minute donations, call the organization and develop a partnership in advance. Page 16 provides some potential organizations and directories of nonprofits to help get you started. Some school districts may decide to write a food donation program agreement with the partner nonprofit organization.

To see an example of a food donation program agreement, visit the LAUSD webpage on [food donations \(https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/847\)](#) or [view the document here](#). Schools are **not** required to submit their food donation program agreement to LA County Department of Public Health.

Establish standard operating procedures and tracking

Determine logistics (such as frequency of donation, pick-up/drop-off, types of food) and make a plan.

Decide who will pick up or drop off surplus food, and where. Be aware that some organizations do not have the infrastructure to transport food. It is therefore important to determine the type and maximum quantity of food that the nonprofit is willing to accept and to establish a consistent schedule. You may choose to use or adapt the optional form (see Appendix B) for your records. Keep track of how many and what types of food are often set aside for donation and adjust future orders accordingly.

FINDING A NONPROFIT IN LA COUNTY

Directories of Food Pantries, Food Banks, & Soup Kitchens

- Sustainable America - <http://sustainableamerica.org/foodrescue/>
- Food Oasis - <http://foodoasis.la/search/>
- Ample Harvest - <http://ampleharvest.org/find-pantry/>
- LA County Department of Public Works – <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sbr/find-recycler.aspx> or call (888) CLEAN LA / (888) 253-2652

Get free help for a waste consultation and/or donation program – LA County Public Works

If your school is in LA County, you might be eligible for a free waste consultation and/or food donation program assistance by LA County Department of Public Works. To learn more, visit <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sbr/request-consultation.aspx> and select “school recycling” or call 1 (888) CLEAN-LA / 1 (888) 253-2652

Food Rescue Nonprofits

These nonprofit organizations may help to arrange food pick-ups for other nonprofits. Please call ahead of time to determine capacity, requirements, logistics, etc.

Name	Contact Person	Phone Number	Email	Website
Food Bus	N/A	N/A	N/A	www.foodbus.org
Food Finders	Chris Wong	(562) 283-1400 ext. 105	cwong@foodfinders.org	www.foodfinders.org
LA Regional Food Bank	N/A	(323) 234-3030 ext. 129	N/A	www.lafoodbank.org
Waste Not Want Not Now (Hollywood area only)	Martha Fearnley	(818) 434-1877	info@wastenotwantnotnow.org	www.wastenotwantnotnow.org

SUCCESS STORIES: SHARE TABLES AND DONATION PROGRAMS IN LA COUNTY

FOOD WASTE PREVENTION AND SHARE TABLES

Burbank Unified School District (BUSD)

The City of Burbank Recycle Center partnered with BUSD to reduce food waste in elementary schools. BUSD adopted the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) "Choose What You Want, Eat What You Choose" campaign to remind students about their role in food waste prevention.

BUSD also launched a supervised share table at their elementary schools, encouraging students to reduce food waste. The Burbank Recycle Center also helped BUSD arrange school assemblies to help build excitement about the share table and raise awareness about food waste and environmental issues.

FOOD DONATION PROGRAMS

Palmdale School District (PSD)

PSD is one of many school districts throughout LA County that have partnered with local nonprofits to rescue surplus food. PSD partners with Food Bus, Inc. to distribute food to nonprofits such as South Valley Emergency Services (SAVES) and the Grace Resource Center in Lancaster. In 2016, PSD donated about 22,000 lbs. of food which equals roughly 18,300 meals. To see their donation program in action, watch the following YouTube video from 2017 titled, "Food Waste in Palmdale" (<https://bit.ly/2HmIvGI> – starts at minute 2:20).

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

LAUSD established their food donation program following the passage of their "Healthy Students, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities" resolution in 2011. To learn more about LAUSD's Food Donation Program, visit: <https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/847> or call (213) 241-2993 (email: FoodDonation@lausd.net)



PREVENTING SURPLUS FOOD

“Source Reduction” is the first tier of the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy. While beyond the scope of this guide, it’s important to remember that there are always options to prevent surplus food from occurring in the first place.

CONDUCT A STUDENT WASTE ASSESSEMENT!

You cannot demonstrate improvements in food waste reduction without first measuring a baseline. Doing so will help you decide which strategies are best and show improvements in food waste reduction. This might also support your case for establishing a share table or a food donation program at your school.

GET STARTED

Use the Guide to Conducting Student Food Waste Audits (PDF) - A Resource for Schools by the USDA, EPA, and the University of Arkansas to get started [Guide to Conducting Student Food Waste Audits \(PDF\) - A Resource for Schools](#)".

JOIN THE US EPA’S FOOD RECOVERY CHALLENGE!

Join the [US EPA’s Food Recovery Challenge](#) and get free technical assistance in the form of webinars, an online database, and resources to help you plan, implement, and track your activities. Gain visibility and earn recognition for your school district through awards and social media. To learn more about the EPA Food Recovery Challenge, contact the local EPA Region 9 district office at (213) 244-1813.

GET FREE HELP FOR A WASTE CONSULTATION AND/OR DONATION PROGRAM

If your school is in LA County, you might be eligible for a free waste consultation and/or food donation program assistance by LA County Department of Public Works. To learn more, visit <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sbr/request-consultation.aspx> and select “school recycling” or call 1(888) CLEAN-LA / 1(888) 253-2652.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT SURPLUS FOOD

- [Scheduling recess before lunch can reduce plate waste by as much as 30%.](#)
- [Extending lunch periods from 20 to 30 minutes reduced plate waste by one-third.](#)
- Giving foods creative names and placing foods strategically in the cafeteria can facilitate healthy choices and increase fruit and vegetable consumption by up to 70%.
- [Slicing some fruit such as oranges and apples can increase students’ selection and consumption of fruit.](#) This might be more effective for younger students, who may find it difficult to peel or eat large fruit.
- [Conduct student taste tests.](#)

- Use the USDA's Offer vs. Serve (OVS) provision. From the [CDE's page on Share Tables](#).
 - OVS is a provision with two major goals: (1) reduce food waste in Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs), and (2) permit children to select only the foods they want to consume. OVS allows students to decline components during a breakfast, lunch, or supper service. The number of components that can be declined at each meal service is contingent on the CNP the agency operates. OVS is only permitted under some circumstances in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP agencies should contact their specialist to determine if they are eligible to implement OVS.
 - While OVS is required for lunch at the high school level for the National School Lunch Program, it is optional for all other grade levels. Implementing OVS is intended to decrease the amount of food and beverage waste; therefore, decreasing the amount of food on share tables.

For more tips and resources about school food waste prevention, visit the CDE's [Plate Waste Prevention in Child Nutrition Programs webpage](#) or use techniques listed on the [Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard](#).



ANIMAL FEED AND COMPOSTING

Animal feed and composting are the 3rd and 5th tiers of the Food Recovery Hierarchy, respectively. While beyond the scope of this guide, it's important to remember that there are always options to send surplus food to animals or to make compost for a school garden.

ANIMAL FEED

Animal feed might be a less feasible option for LA County schools than composting and school gardens. However, if you'd like to learn about animal feed laws and resources, visit:

CalRecycle: <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/ReduceWaste/Schools/Food/>

Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic's "Leftovers for Livestock" guide: https://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Leftovers-for-Livestock_A-Legal-Guide_August-2016.pdf

Pig/hog farms near LA County: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/links-and-resources-about-food-recovery-los-angeles#animals>

COMPOST

Composting is the 5th tier of EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy. Even when all actions have been taken to use your wasted food, certain inedible parts will still remain and can be turned into compost to feed and nourish the soil. Like yard waste, food waste scraps can also be composted. Composting creates a product that can be used to help improve soils, grow the next generation of crops, and improve water quality. Learn more at:

US EPA – Compost Basics: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/reducing-impact-wasted-food-feeding-soil-and-composting>

State regulations for school composting in California. "FAQs for schools and other small-scale food composters" by CalRecycle - <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/publications/Documents/1563/201601563.pdf>

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN LA COUNTY

LA County Dept. of Public Works offers these great programs for free to all public and private schools in Los Angeles County.

Call 1 (888) CLEAN-LA / 1 (888) 253-2652 for more information.

- **Generation Earth:** The **Generation Earth Program** empowers students in grades 6-12 in Los Angeles County to take action and address environmental waste and water issues. They provide support for environmental service learning projects happening at your school, including personalized assistance that connects students and teachers with opportunities to learn content, and project resources such as community partners, toolkits, guides, and a free bus for project-related field trips, and funding opportunities. Generation Earth is a free program offered to all public and private schools in Los Angeles County. <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/ge/>
- **Environmental Defenders:** The **Environmental Defenders Program** educates and empowers students in grades K-6 in Los Angeles County to protect the environment through a free, 30-minute, high-energy school assembly. To book, visit <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/defenders/schedule.asp>
- **School Garden Program:** The **School Garden Program** provides an opportunity for students in grades K-12 and teachers to work together, learn how to grow their own food, get exercise, and eat healthy. This instills pride in themselves, the community, and the environment. The gardens are an outside classroom where skills in math, science, art, health, physical education, and social studies come together for a fun learning experience. For more information, visit <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sg/school.cfm> or call Bonitto Housen (626) 458-3571 – bhousen@dpw.lacounty.gov

Other organizations that work with schools – recycling, composting, school gardens, educational programs, consulting

- 301 Organics - <https://www.301organics.com/>
- US Environmental Protection Agency – Region 9 Field Office – (213) 244-1813
- Food Forward’s – “**kNOw Waste Program**”
- Garden School Foundation - <http://gardenschoolfoundation.org>
- Grades of Green – <https://www.gradesofgreen.org>
- Kiss the Ground - <https://kisstheground.com>
- LA Compost - <https://www.lacompost.org>
- Netiya – <http://netiya.org>
- Tree People - <https://www.treepeople.org/action/for-schools>
- Contact your waste hauler. Ask your waste hauler if they offer organics recycling services.
- Contact your city. Check with your city government/city public works department to see if they offer community programs for composting or school gardens.
- Contact the LA County Department of Public Works for assistance. Visit <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sbr/schools-getting-started.aspx> or call (888) CLEAN LA / 1 (888) 253-2652

Information about school gardens

- California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/education/gardens/>
- Collective School Gardens Network – Steps to a School Garden: <http://www.csgn.org/steps>

APPENDIX A – NONPOTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD, DEFINED

Prepackaged, nonpotentially hazardous food with the packaging still intact and in good condition are allowed on share tables.

“Nonpotentially hazardous food” defined:

CalCode Section 113871 (c): “Potentially hazardous food” does not include any of the following:

- (1) A food with an aw value of 0.85 or less.
- (2) A food with a pH level of 4.6 or below when measured at 75°F.
- (3) An air-cooled, hard-boiled egg with shell intact, or an egg with shell intact that is not hardboiled, but has been pasteurized to destroy all viable salmonellae.
- (4) A food in an unopened, hermetically sealed container that is commercially processed to achieve and maintain commercial sterility under conditions of nonrefrigerated storage and distribution.
- (5) A food that has been shown by appropriate microbial challenge studies approved by the enforcement agency not to support the rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic micro-organisms that may cause food infections or food intoxications, or the growth and toxin production of *Clostridium botulinum*, such as a food that has an aw and a pH that are above the levels specified under paragraphs (1) and (2) and that may contain a preservative, other barrier to the growth of micro-organisms, or a combination of barriers that inhibit the growth of micro-organisms.
- (6) A food that does not support the rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic micro-organisms, even though the food may contain an infectious or toxigenic microorganism or chemical or physical contaminant at a level sufficient to cause illness.

APPENDIX B – SCHOOL FOOD DONATION DELIVERY FORM (DOUBLE-SIDED)

DONOR INFORMATION

Name of School		School District	
Address		() - Food and Nutrition Services Phone #	
School Staff Member Overseeing Donation (Print Name)			

TRANSPORTED BY (IF OTHER THAN DONOR OR RECIPIENT, SUCH AS A FOOD RESCUE 501C3)

Name of Organization			
Address		() - Phone #	
Delivered by (Print Name)			

DONATED TO (IF A FOOD RESCUE ORG. WAS USED, THIS MIGHT BE UNKNOWN TO DONOR)

Name of Organization			
Address		() - Phone #	
Delivered by (Print Name)			

DONATED FOOD ITEMS

Prepackaged Nonpotentially Hazardous Food		
<u>Food Item(s)</u>	<u>Quantity (lbs. or # units)</u>	<u>Accepted by Receiver?</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>

Whole Uncut Produce		
<u>Food Item(s)</u>	<u>Quantity (lbs. or # units)</u>	<u>Accepted by Receiver?</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>

Unopened Bags of Sliced Fruit		
<u>Food Item(s)</u>	<u>Quantity (lbs. or # bags)</u>	<u>Accepted by Receiver?</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
		<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>

Perishable Prepackaged Food (Including Milk)						
<u>Food Item(s)</u>	<u>Quantity (lbs. or # units)</u>	<u>Donor: Temperature at Holding</u>	<u>Donor: Time Taken</u>	<u>Receiver: Temperature at Receipt</u>	<u>Receiver: Time Taken</u>	<u>Accepted by Receiver?</u>
						<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
						<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
						<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
						<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>
						<u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>

I acknowledge that the food item(s) listed above meet the temperature holding requirements for potentially hazardous foods, as defined in Section 113871 of the California Retail Food Code.

DONOR SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

RECIPIENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX C – SIMILAR DOCUMENTS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Some of the following documents helped inform this guideline.

NOTE: School share table and food donation policies vary state by state.

- Alaska – “Food Recovery for Child Nutrition Programs in Alaska” (2017) by the AK Dept. of Education and Early Development, AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Municipality of Anchorage Food Safety and Sanitation Program
- Arizona – “Considerations for Use of Share Tables” (2016) by the AZ Dept. of Education
- California – “The Use of Share Tables” (webpage 2018) and “Guidance on Donation of Leftover Food in CNPs” (webpage 2018) by the CA Dept. of Education
 - Alameda County – “Food Share Table Step by Step Guide” (2016) and “School Food Donation” (2016)
 - San Diego County – “Share Tables at Schools” (2015) Dept. of Environmental Health
- Connecticut – “Operational Memorandum No. 6-16, The Use of Share Tables in Connecticut Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs)” (2017) by CT Dept. of Education
- Indiana – “Sharing Tables” by IN State Dept. of Education and IN State Dept. of Health
- Iowa – “Food Waste Reduction in School Meals Programs” by IA Dept. of Education
- Maine – “Food Sharing Tables – Guidance for Schools” by ME Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Missouri – Food and Nutrition Services January 2016 issue - “Sharing Tables’ and Recycling Milk” and “Being Food Safe with Sharing Tables” by MO Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
- New York – “Sharing Tables – Food Safety at Sharing Tables” by the NY State Dept. of Education and NY State Dept. of Health
- Ohio – “Guidance for School Share Tables” by Ohio Dept. of Agriculture and Ohio Dept. of Health
- Oregon
 - Washington County - “Guidance Document – Preventing Food Waste in the School Kitchen Setting” by Oregon Dept. of Education and Washington County Solid Waste and Recycling and Environmental Health Departments
- Vermont – “Food Sharing Tables – Guidance for Schools” by VT Agency of Education, Agency of Natural Resources, and Department of Health
- Wisconsin – “Fact Sheet for Sharing Tables - Schools Participating in the School Nutrition Programs” by WI Dept. of Public Instruction

ENDNOTES

1. California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) – Waste Characterization (<https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization>)
2. ReFED – “A Roadmap to Reduce US Food Waste by 20 Percent” (2016) (<http://www.refed.com>)
3. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology, Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County, September 2017 (<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/>)
4. US Environmental Protection Agency – Sustainable Management of Food (<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food>)

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California Department of Education – Nutrition Services Division
City of Burbank Public Works – Burbank Recycle Center
City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation – Food Waste Task Force
City of Palmdale – Public Works Department
City of Pasadena – Public Works Department
Food Finders
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health – Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works – Environmental Programs Division
Los Angeles County Food Redistribution Initiative (LACFRI) – Working Group
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles Food Policy Council – Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Working Group
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Los Angeles Unified School District
National Health Foundation
Palmdale School District
Republic Services
TreePeople
US Environmental Protection Agency

CONTACT INFORMATION

CDE POLICIES

California Department of Education (CDE)

Nutrition Services Division

SNPinfo@cde.ca.gov - (800) 952-5609

- Ashley Osterman, Child Nutrition Consultant (CNC)
California Department of Education, Northern SNP Unit
AOSterman@cde.ca.gov - (916) 445-1261
- Lori Porter, Child Nutrition Consultant (CNC)
California Department of Education, Southern SNP Unit
LPorter@cde.ca.gov - (916) 322-1454

FOOD SAFETY QUESTIONS - SHARE TABLES AND DONATIONS

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Environmental Health Division

General Hotline

(888) 700-9995



SHARE TABLES & FOOD DONATIONS IN SCHOOLS

Best Practices for Los Angeles County

www.SaveTheFoodLA.com

