



**National Commission on Hunger Public Hearing
June 15th in Oakland, CA**

My name is Dana Frasz and I'm the Founder and Director of Food Shift. Food Shift is an Oakland organization working with communities, businesses and governments to develop sustainable solutions to wasted food and hunger. Through research, network building, and innovative program development we work to ensure full bellies and empty dumpsters.

Food Shift exists because of the knowledge that 40% of all food produced in this country is wasted and the belief that no one should be hungry in a nation of such abundance. Like hunger, the costs of wasted food are often hidden but significant. The US spends \$165 billion each year on food that just gets thrown away and then pays \$750 million each year for its disposal. Wasted food is a disaster for the environment too as it wastes valuable resources like water and energy and is the third largest greenhouse gas emitter globally behind China and the US. By trimming waste and diverting food loss we can alleviate hunger, create jobs, cut costs for businesses and municipalities, combat climate change, conserve natural resources, and cultivate more sustainable communities.

Food recovery groups exist all across the country yet both food and people are still falling through the cracks. For the past 4 years Food Shift has been working to understand the gaps and challenges in the food rescue sector and to better understand where there are opportunities for innovation. We've spoken with a broad range of stakeholders throughout the food system including local and national experts, food assistance organizations, and food businesses. Most recently we compiled a report and recommendations for Santa Clara County.



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Based on our research we've pulled out a few key recommendations that revolve around infrastructure, investment, and innovation:

- **Hire a food rescue coordinator.** We recommend hiring a full-time two year coordinator who would be responsible for bringing together a cross-sector working group of stakeholders to discuss, prioritize, track, and ensure implementation of food rescue solutions.
- **Establish a food rescue working group.** The working group and its actions will be strengthened by having diversity and participation from a broad range of sectors including: local officials, food service businesses, technology companies, food rescue and assistance groups, academia, waste management, community representatives, public health, environmental groups, and foundations. Collaboration is key.
- **Establish a grant program to increase the capacity and infrastructure of food rescue and redistribution efforts.** The results are clear - the desire to collect and redistribute surplus food exists but investment in the infrastructure and capacity is necessary in order for groups to adequately make use of and distribute increased donations of rescued food. A grant program for food assistance agencies to support operations and capacity will allow them to improve and expand their feeding programs to better meet community needs.
- **Support and enable food recovery.** An active program involving industry and supported by the US government could catalyze actions, as was the case in the mid 1990s when the USDA had a dedicated coordinator of food recovery and gleaning. Stronger tax incentives could also incentivize more recovery. Developing a paid food recovery service sector as an extension of our current waste management system would create jobs in the green economy.

These are just a few of our recommendations. Ultimately, we know we can't keep doing the same thing and expecting different results. It's time to work collaboratively, develop innovative and financially sustainable solutions, and invest in food recovery rather than incur all the costs of food disposal. We know that food alone won't solve hunger but while we work towards systemic solutions, a coordinated and professional food rescue sector is a critical component of a sustainable food ecosystem and one that will allow us to reduce waste, feed the hungry, and create jobs.

For any questions or to receive a copy of Food Shift's Food Rescue Report and Recommendations for Santa Clara County please feel free to contact me at dana@foodshift.net or 202-460-5210



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