



# Conservation Kitchens: How Meeting Planners Can Prevent Food Waste

The production and consumption of food is the biggest environmental threat to our planet's biodiversity and resources. Eliminating waste and shifting diet patterns represent our biggest opportunities to establish sustainable and regenerative food systems. Addressing food waste is critical – from field, to fork, to landfill.

**Use this checklist to ensure reducing waste is part of your company culture and all events you plan. More resources can be found on [HotelKitchen.org](https://www.hotelkitchen.org).**

## Request Measurement:

- Ask hotels, conference centers and caterers (event managers) to separate and measure food waste, if possible including what's recoverable, reusable, or inedible from prep to post-service.
- Request a waste report that you can use to inform future planning.

## Prevention When Possible:

- Ask hotel event sales staff for low-waste menus options and full-product utilization recipes.
- When possible opt for plated meals, rather than buffet, as a waste avoidance option.
- Provide attendee data earlier and more frequently, and explore ways to understand your event's "eater profiles".
- Re-examine portion sizing and overset contract terms, as many contracts often include a built-in 3% overage that will often lead to wasted food.

## Donate Edible Surplus Food:

- Ask hotel event sales staff if they have active food recovery programs with community partners.
- If your venue is not actively donating surplus food, ask to support a pilot program with recommended partners.
- Put food recovery plans into contract terms.
- Encourage awareness of the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act.

## Divert Inedible Waste:

- Ask hotel event sales staff to divert unavoidable food waste (i.e., plate waste and food that has become no longer food safe) away from landfills, for example to local composting or anaerobic digestion facilities.
- Propose secondary donation options, such as animal feed for scraps inedible for people.

## Waste Prevention Culture:

- Ask hotel event sales staff if they have a training program for food waste education and practices for staff. Free training programs are available at [HotelKitchen.org/training](https://www.hotelkitchen.org/training).
- Ask hotel event sales staff to provide signage on the buffet to encourage conscious consumption in line with the property's food philosophy. Examples can be found at [HotelKitchen.org/resources](https://www.hotelkitchen.org/resources).
- Start an awareness campaign within your own company to create a prevention culture.
- Share this resource with fellow meeting planners to ensure these principles become standardized across the industry.