

Food Recovery for Child Nutrition Programs in Alaska

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The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development have collaborated on guidance for implementing food recovery at school-aged child nutrition programs including schools, outside school hour programs, and summer feeding programs. As long as program operators are planning and preparing meals with the intent to serve one reimbursable meal per child per day, programs that occasionally have unexpected meal or food surpluses may donate the leftover foods to food banks, food pantries, homeless shelters, and similar non-profit charitable organizations.

PLANNING FOR FOOD RECOVERY

- ◆ Before starting any food recovery program, discuss these plans with your state or local health department.
- ◆ Connect with local non-profit charitable organizations and discuss the best methods for food recovery.
- ◆ Develop a system for freezing, labeling the food in a container or box as "recovered food for donation" and storing the prepared food separate from food that will be served to students.
- ◆ Figure out how the food will arrive at the organization. Will volunteers pick up the food once a week? Set up the right time and day that works best for the cafeteria managers and kitchen staff.

FOOD SAFETY

- ◆ Only food that has not been served, or is in an unopened original package and is maintained in sound condition, can be donated.
- ◆ Allowable products include pre-packaged products (food bars, drinks, crackers, etc.), wrapped fruit and vegetables or fruit with a thick skin (bananas and oranges), and temperature controlled pre-packaged products like cheese and milk as long as they are placed in a cooler, refrigerator, or ice bath.
- ◆ Food that is contaminated by food employees, consumers, or other persons through contact with soiled hands, bodily discharges, or other means shall be discarded.
- ◆ All potentially donated food must be stored separately in a container or box labeled, "recovered for food donation" and dated.
- ◆ Develop a Standard Operating Plan (SOP) in the Food Safety HACCP Plan.

WHAT ABOUT LIABILITY?

- ◆ Protection for liability under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, found in Section 22 of the Child Nutrition Act.
- ◆ Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55) provides clear statutory authority for current Food and Nutrition Service food recovery and donation policy in use by schools and institutions participating in the Child Nutrition Programs, NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP.

BEST PRACTICES

- ◆ Proper menu planning, utilizing production records, and implementing offer vs. serve are the best tools to prevent excess leftovers. Contact Child Nutrition Programs to learn more.
- ◆ When possible, use leftovers in subsequent meal services, offer sharing tables or transfer food to other sites.
- ◆ Use a tracking log to monitor how much food is recovered from each site. This is another way to monitor student acceptability and make changes to future production.
- ◆ Ensure students do not feel pressured to participate in the food recovery program.

RESOURCES

- ◆ https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf
- ◆ http://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/resources/K12_schools.html
- ◆ USDA Policy Memo SP 11-2012, CACFP 05-2012, SFSP 07-2012, "Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs"

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