This paper discusses my role as an Expansion Fellow at Food Recovery Network, a non-profit that empowers college students to fight food waste and hunger by recovering surplus food from their dining halls and surrounding communities and donating it to people in need. The topic of food waste has garnered considerable interest in recent years due to its environmental impacts and potential to combat hunger. This paper provides an understanding of why mass food waste occurs in the United States and around the world, the environmental and social justice impacts of food waste, an overview of the organizations working towards eliminating food waste, solutions to the issue, and the outcomes of my fellowship at Food Recovery Network.
FIGHTING FOOD WASTE AND FEEDING PEOPLE AS A FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK FELLOW

Internship Report

Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Environmental Science
by
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Oxford, Ohio
2017

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This internship report titled

FIGHTING FOOD WASTE AND FEEDING PEOPLE AS A FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK FELLOW

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has been approved for publication by

The College of Arts and Science

and

The Institute for the Environment and Sustainability

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to:

Mika Weinstein, Mia Zavalij, and the entire staff at Food Recovery Network

Sarah Dumyahn, Miami University

Annie-Laurie Blair, Miami University

Peggy Shaffer, Miami University
SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ON FOOD WASTE

1.1 INTERNSHIP

The Institute for the Environment and Sustainability (IES) Master’s Program requires students to complete a professional experience in the form of an internship, practicum, or thesis. I chose to fulfill the internship requirement by accepting a nine-month fellowship with Food Recovery Network (FRN). FRN is a nonprofit that empowers students on college campuses to fight food waste and hunger by saving perishable food waste from their dining halls and surrounding communities and donating it to people in need. As of November 2017, FRN has a network of 230 chapters at college campuses across the country that have helped recover over two million pounds of food (FRN, 2017a).

My role at FRN was in the Expansion Department as a New Chapter Coordinator. The majority of my time was spent helping students who had applied to start an FRN chapter get their food recovery program up and running. At any given time, I worked with an average of 40 student representatives from 40 different schools across the country. Additionally, I was tasked with the project of expanding outreach for the entire organization with the goal of increasing the number of FRN chapters, maintaining and creating external partnerships, and promoting FRN’s status as the authority on food recovery in higher education.

This report describes my main projects and contributions to FRN National, as well as the issues of food waste that gave rise to FRN.

1.2 WHY DOES FOOD WASTE OCCUR?

All over the world, food is wasted at every stage of the supply chain from agricultural production to household consumption (Gustavsson et al., 2011; FAO, 2013). In developing countries, food loss occurs most often at the early stages of production between when the food is harvested and when it reaches the market (Gustavsson et al., 2011). These losses can often be attributed to a lack of financial and technical capabilities for harvesting, and inadequate storage and cooling facilities (FAO, 2016). In contrast, the majority of food waste in developed countries occurs in the later stages of the supply chain at the food service and consumer levels (Gustavsson et al.,
2011). These losses are largely caused by the behavior of food services and consumers in the developed world where many people tend to take the abundance of food available to them for granted (FAO, 2016). This is the case in the United States, where up to 40 percent, or 165 billion dollars’ worth of food goes, uneaten each year (Gunders, 2012). That amount of food waste is enough to fill the Rose Bowl football stadium every single day and equates to more than 20 pounds of food waste per person per month (Gunders, 2012; Lipinski, 2013). While there is a definite distinction between the main causes of food waste in developing versus developed countries, food waste occurs at every point in the supply chain from farm to landfill throughout the globe (Figure 1.1). The next section will focus on the causes of food waste in the United States.

![Figure 1.1 Consumer food waste vs. all other sources of food waste by country (FAO, 2016)](image)

**Farms**

Every year in the United States, six billion pounds of fresh produce never make it off the farm (Gunders, 2012). One reason there is so much food loss in farming is because farmers often plant more than consumers demand to offset any potential damage from weather, pests, and disease (Grace, 2016). Additionally, there are times when the market price of produce is higher than the cost of transportation and labor with the result of negative income for farmers. In these cases, farmers may choose to leave crops un-harvested. (Grace, 2016).
Because U.S. consumers have such high standards for appearance and uniformity of produce, retail markets feel pressured to exclusively display produce that meets those standards. Therefore, one third of the food grown on farms must be abandoned simply because it isn’t visually appealing (Stuart, 2012). Most grocery stores have strict guidelines that dictate acceptable color, size, weight, blemishes, and even sugar content in order to meet consumers’ expectations (Stuart, 2012). Produce that doesn’t meet these criteria (Figure 1.2) is discarded, with the result of supermarkets in the United States losing $15 billion every year from fruits and vegetables alone (Gunders, 2013).

![Image of rejected produce](image.png)

**Figure 1.2** Example of produce that would traditionally be rejected by grocery stores and consumers (NPR, 2016)

**Fishing Boats**

It is estimated that American commercial fishing boats throw away between 16 and 32 percent of all bycatch (Love, 2015). Bycatch is defined as harvested marine species that are not sold or kept for personal use, either for economic or regulatory reasons (NOAA, 2016).

**Manufacturing Facilities**

According to a study done by the Grocery Manufacturers Association, food manufacturing facilities produced 44.3 billion pounds of food waste in 2011 (BSR, 2013). Much of this waste
occurs when edible portions of food such as skin, fat, crusts, peels, and ends are trimmed off and discarded (Gunders, 2012). Overproduction, product damage, and technical malfunctions also contribute to food waste among manufacturing facilities (Gunders, 2012). Although the manufacturing sector produces a large volume of food waste, the majority of the waste, 96.4%, was saved from landfills for uses such as donation and recycling in 2011 (BSR, 2013).

**Transportation and Distribution**

Although we have the technology to properly transport and handle perishable foods that require cooling in the U.S., breakdowns or accidents involving food trucks do still occur. Food can also spoil while waiting on loading docks. This is especially applicable to imported products, which can sit for days while awaiting testing (Gunders, 2012). Another problem can arise if a shipment is rejected after it has already reached the grocery store or food supplier (Gunders, 2012). If another buyer cannot be found in time, the entire shipment may be tossed (Gunders, 2012).

**Retail Businesses**

Because the goal of most retail operations is to increase business, certain strategies are implemented to increase consumer purchases that also contribute to increased food waste. Among these strategies are overstocking product displays, and keeping prepared food out and fully stocked until closing (Gunders, 2012). Most retail stores assume that consumers prefer brimming displays of perfectly uniform food and feel that it is better business to keep displays full at all times rather than allow them to taper off towards the end of the day (Gunders, 2012). In 2011 retail and wholesale businesses created 3.8 billion pounds of food waste (BSR, 2013). However, unlike manufacturing facilities which are able to repurpose most of their food waste, only 55.6 percent of waste from retail operations was diverted from landfills in 2011 (BSR, 2013).

**Restaurants**

Before a dish even makes it to a consumer’s plate, four to ten percent of the food purchased by restaurants is wasted (Gunders, 2012). Food waste in restaurants can be attributed to increasingly large portion sizes, inflexibility of chain store management, lengthy menus, over-preparation of
food, improper storage methods, and discarding food scraps and trimmings (Gunders, 2012). Food waste can also occur in restaurants on the consumer end as diners leave 17 percent of their meals on their plates on average, although this can also be blamed on large portion sizes in the U.S. (Gunders 2012; Bloom 2010). According to Cornell University’s Food and Brand Lab, 55 percent of leftovers are not brought home with diners (Gunders 2012; Bloom 2010).

**Households**

In the United States, an estimated 40 to 50 percent of food waste can be attributed to consumers (Love, 2015; Gerlock, 2014). A family of four wastes 1,160 pounds of food on average every year, about 25 percent of their purchased food (National Geographic Society, 2014). About two-thirds of this waste occurs because food does not get used before it spoils (NRDC, 2014). The other third is caused by over-preparing by making and serving too much food (NRDC, 2014). Poor planning at the grocery store, overbuying, and purchasing promotional and sale items often associated with bulk, and impulse buys also largely contribute to food waste at the consumer level (Gunders, 2012).

One of the largest issues for consumers is confusion of date labels. A study by Harvard Law School and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in 2013 estimated that 90 percent of Americans get rid of food earlier than necessary because of misunderstanding over labels like “sell by”, “use by”, and “best by” (NRDC, 2014).

**Lack of Public Awareness**

“Public awareness about food waste in the U.S. is limited and is a huge contributor to the problem” (Grace, 2015). Only recently has the issue of food waste been brought to light as more reports come out detailing just how massive the problem is. The first real call for Americans to start reducing food waste came in 2013 when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the U.S. Food Waste Challenge, which encouraged a fundamental shift in the way both the public sector and private industry manage food (USDA, 2013). Even so, awareness of food waste and efforts to reduce its impact so far seem only to reach those that are already environmentally conscious.
1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Many people are still unaware of the environmental impacts of food waste. Every day, Americans throw away purchased food they deem unsuitable to eat such as “ugly produce” and let food spoil before it can be consumed. It is important for us to understand that these seemingly inconsequential actions add volume to already limited landfill space, contribute to methane emissions and global warming, and signify a loss of energy and water resources.

1.3.1 LANDFILL SPACE

An alarming environmental concern associated with food waste is the space it occupies once it is thrown away. Food that is not sold, donated, or composted ends up rotting in landfills. According to the EPA, food waste was the single largest municipal solid waste stream in 2013, accounting for 21.1 percent of the total after recycling (Figure 1.3) (EPA, 2015). Of the 38 million tons of food waste generated in 2014, only 5.1 percent was diverted from landfills and incinerators (EPA, 2017a).

Figure 1.3 Total municipal solid waste discards after recycling and composting in 2013 (EPA, 2015)

1.3.2 METHANE

It is important to note that landfills are one of the largest sources of methane emissions caused by humans in the United States, accounting for 15.4 percent in 2015 (EPA, 2017b). Because
methane has a global warming potential that is 25 times greater than carbon dioxide, food waste is a large factor in accelerating climate change (EPA, 2017b). Scientists have agreed that reducing food waste is one of the keys to curbing emissions of greenhouse gases which would reduce the impacts of climate change (The Guardian, 2016). To put in perspective just how much food waste contributes to the ever-growing concern of climate change, if food waste were a country it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases behind the United States and China (FAO, 2013).

1.3.3 WASTED ENERGY AND WATER RESOURCES

Food waste contributes immensely to the loss of energy and water resources. Each year 2.5 percent of energy consumption in the United States is spent on food that is never eaten (Webber, 2012). When valuable resources are used to grow food that goes to waste, those resources are wasted as well. For this reason, around 300 million barrels of oil and over 25 percent of the total freshwater consumed in the United States is lost to food waste (Hall et al., 2009).

1.3.4 IMPACTS ON WILDLIFE

A less obvious environmental impact of food waste is the effect it has on wildlife. New evidence shows that some species are inadvertently benefitting from food waste even while the species they prey on rapidly deteriorates. As an example, in Monterey Bay, California a dam preventing steelhead trout from access to their breeding grounds has caused a drastic decrease in their species. However, the population of birds that prey on these fish has actually quadrupled in population in some areas after the birds turned to landfill garbage and fishery discards as their food source (Conniff, 2016). Unfortunately, because food waste is supporting animals that would have been weeded out by natural selection, the populations that seemingly thrive on food waste are actually sick with lung problems and disease (Conniff, 2016).

1.4 FOOD WASTE AND HUNGER

Food waste has not only created an environmental crisis, but has also become a serious issue of social justice. The comparison between wasted food and hunger in America is sobering. Currently, 41 million, or one in eight Americans struggles with hunger, while 40% of the food produced in this country goes to waste (Feeding America, 2017). Food insecurity is defined as
lacking consistent access to adequate food due to lack of money and other resources (USDA, 2015). Saving just 15 percent of food waste would feed more than 25 million Americans each year (Gunders, 2012).

1.5 FOOD WASTE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Recycling Works Massachusetts has put together a Food Waste Estimation Guide to help different industries that deal with food service estimate their food waste. Figure 1.4 can be used to calculate the average amount of food waste on a college campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Measurement</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meals Served</td>
<td>0.35 lbs/meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students [Residential]</td>
<td>141.75 lbs/student/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students [Non-Residential]</td>
<td>37.8 lbs/student/year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 Guide for estimating food waste on college campuses (RecyclingWorks Massachusetts, 2017)

This table assumes that each residential student consumes 405 meals from dining services per year and each non-residential student consumes 108 meals from dining services per year. If we estimate that a college like Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, has 8,000 residential students and 8,000 non-residential students, by this calculation the amount of wasted food produced each year would total just under 1.5 million pounds.

![Plate waste from one meal at Willamette University (Bloom, 2016)](image)
However, food waste can be difficult to estimate. One FRN Chapter at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, decided to put on a Weigh the Waste event to show their peers how much food is being wasted at every meal. At the end of their meal Willamette had collected 140 pounds of food waste from one dinner alone (Figure 1.4), which came out to approximately 0.2 to 0.25 pounds per person, slightly lower than the estimate from Recycling Works Massachusetts. Still, that is a large amount of waste to be incurring three times per day for the entire school year.

There are a few reasons for why the amount of wasted food is especially high on college campuses. One of the reasons food waste is such a problem at universities is simply because students take more food than they are able to eat. Many have never been taught to consider the consequences of throwing food away. Some students may be trying to “get their money’s worth” since an endless amount of food is offered in dining halls with an all-you-can-eat model. While student behavior is partially to blame, so is the behavior of colleges and dining providers. It is extremely difficult to cut down on food waste with buffet style dining because in order for dining halls to always have enough food to offer they must constantly have more than they need on hand (Bloom, 2016).

1.6 FOOD RECOVERY

Food recovery is the act of collecting wholesome food to be delivered to people in need (Bloom, 2017). The term “food recovery” or “food rescue” usually refers to the salvaging of prepared or perishable food items. This can mean gleaning fruits and vegetables that would have been wasted from farms, collecting perishable food from wholesale and retail venues, or prepared food from the food service industry (Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, 2017). While “food recovery” is usually a term reserved for the rescue of prepared and perishable food items, it will sometimes also be used to describe the donation of nonperishable and canned food items.

1.6.1 EPA HIERARCHY

The EPA endorses a food recovery hierarchy as a guide for the most sustainable way to handle food waste. The most efficient method for handling food waste is to eliminate it. However, this is not always possible. As mentioned above, in order for dining providers and restaurants to have enough food for everyone, they must constantly have too much. In other words, if dining services
have no food waste they probably don’t have enough food to go around which can be seen as bad for business.

In an attempt to be environmentally conscious about their food waste, some food businesses will compost leftover food and scraps. While this is much more commendable than sending that food to landfill, Figure 1.5 shows that composting should be one of the last options considered when handling food waste. From top to bottom, Figure 1.5 shows ways to divert food waste that provide the most benefits for the economy, the environment, and society.

![Food Recovery Hierarchy](https://example.com/food_recovery_hierarchy.png)

**Figure 1.5 EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy (EPA, 2017c)**

1.6.2 THE BUSINESS CASE FOR FOOD WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

ReFED has estimated that there is 1.9 billion dollars of annual Business Profit Potential from the revenue and cost savings of implementing the nine prevention and two recycling solutions found in Figure 1.6 (ReFED, 2017a). Business Profit Potential is defined as “the expected annual profits that the private sector can earn by investing in solutions after adjusting for initial investment required, differentiated costs of capital, and benefits that accrue to non-business stakeholders” (ReFED, 2017a). Simply put, businesses that deal with food have a monetary incentive to cut down on waste. The stakeholders that stand to benefit most are restaurants and
foodservice facilities like campus dining halls. Much of this profit opportunity lies in better waste tracking. One of the benefits of working with Food Recovery Network is that the types and pounds of food recovered are recorded, allowing dining halls to track and cut down on their waste.

![Annual Business Profit Potential graph](image)

Figure 1.6 Annual business profit potential by food waste solution (ReFED, 2017a)

Cutting down on food waste also pays off when it comes to waste hauling fees. Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology located in Terre Haute, Indiana, estimates that they pay approximately $1.60 in food waste removal for every pound of food they produce (Sanderson, 2015). FRN chapters recovered an average of 1,586 pounds of food each in the 2015 fall semester. If waste hauling fees were the same at every school that would mean that every FRN chapter saved their school, dining provider, or local restaurants an average of $2,537.60 in one semester simply by taking the food out of the dining hall for people in need instead of loading it on a truck and sending it to landfill. An additional benefit to businesses that donate excess food is that they can write off food donations as a deduction on taxes (USDA, 2017).

1.6.3 OVERVIEW OF OTHER U.S. AUTHORITIES ON FOOD WASTE AND HUNGER

While there are too many to mention each one individually, hundreds of organizations across the country are working to recover surplus food and deliver it to those in need. Each one has a unique model for saving food waste and some do so at a local level while others work nation-
The Campus Kitchens Project is an organization whose model is very similar to Food Recovery Network. By utilizing the power of student volunteers, they are able to gather canned goods and unused food from campus dining providers, grocery stores, food banks, and farmer’s markets, prepare nutritious meals out of that food, and deliver the meals to local hunger fighting agencies and families in need (The Campus Kitchens Project, 2017).

Many organizations have begun using the power of technology to connect surplus food to those in need. AmpleHarvest.org is one such organization which claims to be “the only program in America that is solving hunger and malnutrition by moving information instead of moving food” (AmpleHarvest.org, 2017). AmpleHarvest.org helps 42 million home and community gardeners fight food waste and hunger by enabling them to find one of 8,000 food pantries near them and providing the instructions for donating to that pantry. They also allow pantries to provide a list of store-bought items that are needed for donation during the non-growing season (AmpleHarvest.org, 2017). Food Rescue US runs a similar service, although it does not focus solely on gardeners and can be accessed through an app. The app allows restaurants, grocers, and other food services to list excess food that they want to donate while volunteers can see a schedule of food rescues and choose to join in on deliveries that work for them. Receiving agencies like food pantries can also post their needs and find donations that match (Food Rescue US, 2017).

While the organizations mentioned above work on a national level, there are also those that choose to focus on diverting food waste and fighting hunger locally. For example, DC Central Kitchen is a nonprofit that recovers food from grocery stores, restaurants, wholesalers, farms, and more in order to provide 5,000 meals to 100 homeless shelters and nonprofit agencies in the Washington DC area every day (DC Central Kitchen, 2017). Another organization that works locally in the DC metropolitan region is Hungry Harvest, a paid delivery service of surplus food from farms and wholesalers. For every bag of recovered produce sold, Hungry Harvest also donates one to a family in need (Hungry Harvest, 2017).

**Feeding America**

Feeding America is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. They have a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs that feed over 46
millions of people every year (Feeding America, 2017). Last year, Feeding America and their partners saved 2.8 billion pounds of food from being wasted so that it could be donated to those in need (Feeding America, 2017). Feeding America has also developed MealConnect, which is a technology platform that connects donors with surplus food to local Feeding America food banks (Meal Connect, 2017).

ReFED

ReFED was formed in 2015 to create the first ever national economic study and action plan for food waste reduction. They are a collaboration of over 300 business, nonprofit, foundation, and government leaders who are committed to reducing food waste in the United States (ReFED, 2017b). ReFED’s mission is to recover billions of meals annually and reduce water use and greenhouse gas emissions by unlocking new philanthropic and investment resources (ReFED, 2017b).

Food Waste Reduction Alliance

The Food Waste Reduction Alliance is an initiative of the Grocery Manufacturers Association, the Food Marketing Institute, and the National Restaurant Association. These three major industries are working together to reduce the amount of food waste and combat hunger in the United States. Their goal is to address the root causes of food waste within their own operations and determine ways to donate or recycle food waste that is unavoidable (FWRA, 2017).

NRDC

NRDC is working on several projects that will combat food waste and hunger. They have begun working with cities to create a long-term food waste reduction plan. For example, NRDC’s Nashville Food Waste Initiative is bringing people together to identify strategies to reduce food waste and amplify initiatives that are already in place. Their efforts in Nashville will serve as a model for cities across the country (NRDC, 2017a).

They have also launched a project in the pilot cities of Nashville, New York City, and Denver that will estimate the amounts and types of food being wasted at the city level. Having a complete understanding of the amount and type of food wasted in these cities, determining how
much is usable for donation, and identifying root causes of waste will help inform what kind of actions can be taken to combat the issue. Based on these findings NRDC plans on sharing tools and strategies that other cities will be able to implement to reduce food waste (NRDC, 2017a).

NRDC is also working to support federal efforts to prevent and reduce food waste. They have created a 10-point plan that highlights actions that the federal government can take to fight food waste. NRDC has also given testimony on Capitol Hill urging lawmakers to standardize food date labels and expand food donation laws (NRDC, 2017b).

1.7 RELEVANT U.S. LEGISLATION, POLICIES, AND GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGNS

Public policy offers an opportunity to decrease food waste and increase food recovery. Food waste policy in the United States currently exists at the federal, state, and local levels (ReFED, 2017c). This section focuses on federal regulations, both current and proposed, which stand to make the largest impact on food waste reduction in the United States.

Current Legislation, Policies, and Government Campaigns:

Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

In addition to lacking the space and resources to save and distribute surplus food, one of the most widely cited barriers to food recovery is the belief shared by many organizations that they would be liable if food they have donated were to cause illness. However, those wishing to donate food are actually protected from criminal and civil liability under the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act which was signed by Bill Clinton in 1996 in order to encourage food donation. As long as the food is donated in good faith without malicious intent and it goes to a non-profit organization, food can be donated without worry. Another benefit of this law is that it standardizes terms of liability across all 50 states so that interested parties do not have to investigate their own state laws and regulations (Congress.gov, 1996).

Food Safety

While those participating in food recovery efforts are protected from liability, they still need to follow certain guidelines to ensure that food is being handled properly. There are no specific
laws that cover food safety specifically for food recoveries, however, in 1998 the USDA and Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, worked with a committee formed by the Conference for Food Protection to develop complete food recovery guidelines (CFP, 2007). The document, called “Comprehensive Guidelines for Food Recovery Programs” includes important safety information for every step in the recovery process that should be followed by any organization that participates in food recoveries.

*Internal Revenue Code 170(e)(3)*

The Internal Revenue Code 170 (e)(3) encourages food donation to non-profits serving those in need by providing enhanced tax deductions to businesses that donate food (USDA, 2017).

*U.S. Federal Food Donation Act of 2008*

This act encourages federal agencies and contractors of federal agencies to donate wholesome surplus food to non-profits that provide food to people that struggle with food insecurity (USDA, 2017).

*The EPA and USDA Food Waste Announcement*

In 2015, The EPA and USDA joined forces to announce the United States’ first-ever goal to combat food waste. They are calling for a whopping 50 percent reduction by the year 2030. The EPA and USDA will work with private, government, nonprofit, academic, and faith based leaders in the food system to promote action and reach their goal (EPA, 2017d). This is not the first time the USDA and EPA have created an initiative to combat food waste. In 2013, they launched the U.S. Food Waste Challenge, a platform for organizations with a stake in the food industry to share best practices for food waste reduction, recovery, and recycling (USDA, 2015).

**Proposed Legislation:**

*H.R.4184 - The Food Recovery Act*

On December 7, 2015 Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, D-Maine, introduced a bill that aims to reduce food waste on multiple fronts. This act was written to make significant impacts on the issue of food waste in the U.S. by reducing waste at the consumer, farm, grocery store,
restaurant, school, and government levels (Chellie Pingree, 2017a). Unfortunately, the bill was not enacted. It was reintroduced by Pingree and Senator Richard Blumenthal, D-Connecticut, as the Food Recovery Act of 2017 (GovTrack, 2017).

_H.R.3444 - The Food Recovery Act of 2017_

This bill was introduced to the House of Representatives on July 27, 2017. As of November 2017, it has been referred to the Subcommittee on Health by the Committee on Energy and Commerce and is awaiting action (Congress.gov, 2017a). The Food Recovery Act would address food waste through five main areas:

1. Reduce wasted food at the consumer level
2. Reduce waste food on the farm, in grocery stores and restaurants
3. Reduce wasted food throughout the federal government, including Congress and the military
4. Reduce wasted food going to landfills
5. Reduce wasted food through research (Chellie Pingree, 2015)

_H.R.5928 - The Food Date Labeling Act of 2016_

On May 19, 2016 Congresswoman Pingree and Senator Blumenthal introduced legislation that would standardize food date labeling (Congress.gov, 2016). There is much confusion among consumers about food labels like “sell by,” “use by,” and “best by”. This confusion often leads to wasting food that is perfectly edible. Congresswoman Pingree and Senator Blumenthal hoped to mitigate this confusion, save consumers money, and reduce food waste by establishing a uniform national date labeling system (Richard Blumenthal, 2016). The system would have ensured that labels on food clearly distinguish between the date of peak quality, using the term “best if used by”, and the date when food may become unsafe to consume, using the term “expires on” (Congress.gov, 2016). Currently the terminology on date labels and the dates themselves are determined by the manufacturer (Dewey, 2017). While the bill was not enacted, on February 15, 2017 the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the Food Marketing Institute released voluntary industry standards that provide guidelines for date labeling. According to Pingree, “This is an important step as we seek to standardize date labels. But the only way to fully resolve inconsistent state date labeling laws across the country is to set a national uniform system for
date labeling” (Chellie Pingree, 2017b). Pingree plans on reintroducing her date labeling legislation (Chellie Pingree, 2017b).

H.R.952 - The Food Donation Act of 2017

On February 7, 2017, the Food Donation Act of 2017 was introduced by Marcia L. Fudge, D-Ohio, Dan Newhouse, R-Washington, Chellie Pingree, and James McGovern, D-Massachusetts (Congress.gov, 2017b). This bill was proposed to expand on the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act by clarifying some of the content, promoting awareness of liability protection, and making the protection more applicable to modern food donation (ReFED, 2017d). As of November 2017, the bill has been referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and is awaiting action (Congress.gov, 2017b).

1.8 INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

In 2015, shortly after the U.S. EPA and USDA food waste announcement, The United Nations adopted a similar goal to cut food waste in half by 2030 as part of its Sustainable Development Goals (Food Tank, 2017). Many countries also have their own food waste reduction goals and hundreds of organizations working towards a future with less wasted food and fewer hungry individuals. While there are too many entities across the globe fighting food waste and hunger to name them all, below are a few that are well known in the food waste community for their accomplishments.

FAO

The goals of FAO, or Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, are to eradicate hunger, eliminate poverty, and the sustainable management of natural resources (FAO, 2017a). As an intergovernmental organization they are able to act as a neutral facilitator to help UN agencies, international organizations, and worldwide stakeholders coordinate their food waste reduction initiatives (FAO, 2017b).

FAO has also teamed with Messe Dusseldorf to implement a food waste reduction program called Save Food that will raise awareness about the impact of food waste, help the collaboration and coordination of world-wide food waste initiatives, develop policies on food loss, and support
food waste investment programs (FAO, 2017b). Save Food is developing strategies that are adjusted to the causes of food loss and waste in specific regions of the world. Their regions are Eastern Europe and Central Asia, European Union, Japan and South Korea, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East and North Africa, North America and Australia, South and East Asia and the Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2017c).

**Feedback**

Feedback campaigns to end food waste under four pillars. The first is a campaigning event called Feeding the 5000, where a feast made entirely of surplus food is fed to a crowd of 5,000 people (Feedback, 2017a). Feeding the 5000 events can be organized by anyone and have taken place around the world helping to spark action in the communities where they are held (Feedback, 2017a). The second is Gleaning Network, which allows volunteers to save thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables that would have been wasted on farms every year across Europe and the United Kingdom (Feedback, 2017b). Feedback also operates The Pig Idea, a campaign to feed pigs food waste instead of growing new crops to feed pigs that could have been used to feed humans (The Pig Idea, 2017). Finally, Feedback conducts extensive research into the causes of food waste (Feedback, 2017c)

**YieldWise**

YieldWise is an initiative of The Rockefeller Foundation that is working towards reducing food waste in Africa. Their goal is to meet the UN’s sustainable development goal of cutting food waste in half by 2030. YieldWise is focusing on fruit and vegetable crops in Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania, where up to half of all the food produced is lost by helping farmers access new technology and solutions to prevent crop loss, connecting gaps that currently exist in the supply chain from farms to markets, and creating tools for global businesses to measure and track food loss (YieldWise, 2017)

1.9 SOLUTIONS TO FOOD WASTE

ReFED has identified 27 solutions to food waste, each of which outweigh their cost. Figures 1.7 through 1.12 show each solution and their projected impacts. If implemented, these solutions could create $10 billion in economic value, 1.8 billion saved meals, 1.6 trillion gallons in water
savings annually, $5.6 billion in annual consumer savings, $1.9 billion in annual business profit potential, and save 18 million tons in greenhouse gas emissions annually (ReFED, 2017e).

Figure 1.7 The financial benefit of each food waste solution (ReFED, 2017e)

Figure 1.8 The amount of food waste that can be avoided for each food waste solution (ReFED, 2017e)
Figure 1.9 The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions per food waste solution (ReFED, 2017e)

Figure 1.10 Water saved by implementing each food waste solution (ReFED, 2017e)
According the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy, the best solution to food waste is to prevent it from occurring in the first place. Twelve of ReFED’s solutions eliminate food waste before it occurs, seven are recovery solutions meaning they redistribute excess food to people, and eight are recycling options which repurpose food waste for energy, agricultural, and other uses. Several of these solutions are also implemented by Food Recovery Network’s chapters. While FRN doesn’t put out education campaigns, FRN students do educate their peers through events they host on campus. Additionally, students are responsible for educating dining services at their school about food donation liability. FRN students also provide their schools with donation
storage and handling, and they keep track of the number of pounds and which types of food they recover which can help dining services improve their inventory management.
SECTION 2. NEW CHAPTER COORDINATOR

2.1 ABOUT FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK

The mission of FRN is to empower college students to fight food waste and hunger in their communities. Students participate in food recovery through FRN by starting or joining an FRN chapter at their college or university. These chapters recover surplus food from their dining halls, campus food stores, and sometimes nearby restaurants and deliver it to people in need. As of 2017, FRN has 230 official chapters at colleges in 44 states and the District of Columbia (FRN, 2017a).

2.1.1 ORGANIZATION HISTORY

The concept of FRN was formed in 2011 after students at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland, realized that good food from their dining halls was being thrown away at the end of the night. By the end of that school year, those students had helped recover 30,000 meals to shelters, soup kitchens, and other partner agencies in the DC metro area. The following year students at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, University of California Berkeley in Berkeley, California, and Pomona College in Claremont, California, started FRN chapters. In May 2013, the Sodexo Foundation, a charitable organization that has provided more that $17 million in grants to end childhood hunger in America, supplied FRN with funding to hire full time staff and become a professional non-profit (Sodexo, 2013). From 2011 to 2017, FRN chapters have recovered over 2 million pounds of food (FRN, 2017a).

2.1.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

FRN’s national office is located in College Park, Maryland. As of 2016, the organization was made up of four departments: Expansion, Member Support, Innovation, and Development (Figure 2.1).
2.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

As Figure 2.1 shows, 2015-2016 fellows at Food Recovery Network worked either in the Expansion Department, Member Support Department, or the Development Department. A fellow in the Expansion department is also known externally as a New Chapter Coordinator. A New Chapter Coordinator’s main job is to assist students who do not currently have an FRN chapter at their college or university with every step of creating one. This is done through weekly or bi-weekly phone check-ins with a designated student contact who provides updates on their chapter’s progress. During these calls New Chapter Coordinators would also coach students through the steps of assembling a leadership team of fellow students to run their chapter, locating partner agencies to donate recovered food to, finding a means to transport the food, negotiating the logistics of donating unsold food waste with their school’s dining services, and executing their first two recoveries. Once a chapter completes these steps and becomes official, that school is transferred to a Member Support fellow who continues to help the chapter grow and become more sustainable. The Member Support team also helps chapters stay active when members of a leadership team graduate. In some cases, it can be difficult to find replacements and that school will lose its status as an official chapter.
During the course of my fellowship I was able to help 24 schools establish their own FRN chapters (Table 2.1). As of August 2017, those chapters have recovered over 100,000 pounds of food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Pounds of Food Recovered As of August 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clemson University</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>No Longer Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of William and Mary</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>No Longer Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornerstone University</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>5,474.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlham College</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>945.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmhurst College</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>5,989.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fordham University</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>996.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia State University</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>15,089.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Point University</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>22,139.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas State University</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>9,693.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipscomb University</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>1,879.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth University</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>5,819.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Illinois University</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>870.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland Community College</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>484.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasadena City College</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>No Longer Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitzer College</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>4,371.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Sage College</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1,368.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Nazarene University</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>1,027.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity College</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>4,565.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC San Diego</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>4,807.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Central Oklahoma</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>2,612.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Dayton</td>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>13,521.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maine at Farmington</td>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington and Jefferson College</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1,050.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State University</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>1,750.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Schools I worked with to establish official FRN chapters (Brocker, 2017)
2.3 FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT STEPS

The following are the necessary steps for starting a new Food Recovery Network Chapter. Once the steps have been completed that chapter becomes an official part of FRN’s network. Through trial and error, FRN determined that completing each of these tasks in order is the most effective way to creating a strong chapter that will continue to grow and survive even when all of the founding members have graduated. It is the New Chapter Coordinator’s responsibility to make sure students understand how to complete each step and that the chapter continues making progress toward the goal of becoming an official chapter.

1. Apply to start FRN chapter.
   a. An interested student fills out application online to start a chapter at his/her school.

2. First phone call: informational session with New Chapter Coordinator (NCC).
   a. The student is given a rundown of all the steps to starting an FRN chapter. Once they understand the level of commitment needed to begin a chapter they can determine whether or not they would like to move forward with the next steps. If so, communication with the NCC continues via email and biweekly phone check-ins.

3. Recruit team of student leaders.
   a. The student recruits a team of three to seven people to help run the chapter and communicate with partner agencies, dining services, and volunteers

4. Find partner agencies
   a. Students determine at least one or two hunger-fighting agencies that will accept their surplus food

5. Determine method of transportation

6. Apply to become a registered student organization on campus
   a. Chapter may either initiate its own student organization or find an existing environmental, nutritional, or community service group that is willing to add FRN to their initiative. This allows chapters to receive funding from their school, gives them access to school vehicles if necessary, and helps establish their place in the campus community
7. Complete food safety training
   a. This is done over the phone. The NCC reviews the guidelines that must be followed in order to keep the food safe including the amount of food that can be left out or left in a refrigerator and still be donated, temperature requirements, and guidelines for handling the food and working in the kitchen, as well as which types of food can be donated.

8. Approach dining services
   a. This step is usually where students want to start; however, FRN has found that it is best to have done much of the work before approaching dining so they can show they are serious.

9. Recruit volunteers
   a. In addition to the leadership team, student volunteers are also needed to go on recoveries. The number of volunteers a chapter needs depends on how much food they are receiving from dining and how often they do recoveries.

10. Prepare logistics
    a. This step is when we help students determine what materials they will need for recoveries and get them ordered. It is also when students coordinate with dining services to determine when and how they will run their recoveries, which varies from school to school.

11. Complete first two recoveries
    a. Complete first two recoveries
    b. Fill out food tracking forms
    c. Send in signed agreement forms

2.4 CASE STUDIES FROM FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK CHAPTERS

The start of every new chapter brings a unique set of circumstances and, at times, challenges. The job of a New Chapter Coordinator is to guide students through the process and help them overcome any obstacles while encouraging them to take leadership of their chapter into their own hands. By helping students see themselves as leaders in the movement, it is the hope of Food Recovery Network that students will be able to continue the fight against food waste and hunger even after they have graduated.
2.4.1 EXAMPLES OF RECRUITING A LEADERSHIP TEAM

Many times, when a student applies to start a Food Recovery Network chapter they have heard about FRN through a news article or by word of mouth and want to get to work right away saving food on their college campus. FRN has found that one of the most important steps to making sure this student is successful is to find other students that also support the cause so that the necessary tasks involved in creating a chapter can be divided and the chapter has a core group of people invested in getting started. Some students simply recruit their friends to start the chapter with them while others take a different approach. Figure 2.2 is a student handout with leadership team requirements and suggested methods for recruitment.
STEP 1: RECRUITING YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The first step in starting your FRN chapter is putting together a team of leaders. Your chapter must include student leaders; staff, faculty and community members are welcome to join as advisers, leaders and volunteers. You must form your own student organization for your chapter or start it as a project of an existing campus organization.

You may organize your leadership structure however you like and use your own methods to recruit your team; below FRN national lets you know the requirements we have and offers a few suggestions.

Requirements:
- Include student leaders
- Start your own FRN organization on campus or make FRN a project of an existing campus organization
- Have a minimum of 3, maximum of 7 leaders
- Ensure that you have 1 Point Person to communicate & coordinate with each of the following:
  - Food Donor (Dining Hall/Restaurant/etc)
  - Partner Agencies
  - Volunteers

Suggested Leadership Structure:
- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Dining Hall/Restaurant Coordinator
- Partner Agency Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Event & Public Relations Coordinator

Suggested Recruitment Strategies:
- Speak about FRN at the end of other clubs’ meetings & at the end of classes
- Partner with other campus clubs, sports teams, fraternities and sororities
- Partner with campus sustainability, community service or nutrition departments
- Get professors on board, and have them help recruit students
- Send out recruitment e-mails over listserves you or friends have access to
- Create a facebook group for FRN on your campus; also post from your personal social media
- Hang up flyers in key campus locations

Figure 2.2 Guide to help FRN students form their leadership team (Food Recovery Network, 2014)
Russell Sage

One of FRN’s requirements before making a chapter official is that they must either be part of an official club on campus or at least have already applied to become an official club. This provides students with access to the school’s resources and solidifies their place in the campus community. Sometimes if students have trouble recruiting a team, their New Chapter Coordinator will encourage them to look into clubs that already exist on their campus that might be interested in adding food recovery to their agenda. These might be anything from nutrition clubs to environmental clubs to community service clubs or fraternities.

When a student at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York, applied to start chapter, she already knew she wanted to make food recovery an initiative of the existing nutrition club of which she was the president. She was able to delegate tasks to the nutrition club’s existing officers and the process of getting them ready to start food recoveries went very smoothly. My first conversation with Russell Sage occurred on August 25, 2016 and their first recovery (Figure 2.3) was completed on October 4, 2016. This is right in line with the six-week goal that FRN sets for a new chapter to be formed, however, when challenges arise it can take much longer.

Figure 2.3 Russell Sage Nutrition Club on their first FRN recovery (The Sage Colleges Nutrition Club Facebook Page, 2015)
**Parkland Community College**

Community colleges pose a unique challenge to getting an FRN chapter started because they are often made up of students that primarily commute to school and are less likely to have heavy involvement in clubs and other campus activities. The student who applied from Parkland Community College in Champaign, Illinois, was a non-traditional student and found it very difficult to recruit others that were interested in being part of FRN. I encouraged her to talk to a few professors who teach subjects relating to sustainability and the environment to see if they knew of any students who might be interested. I also suggested that she pitch the idea of FRN at the beginning of a few of her classes. She was able to find one interested student through this method and another through the school’s hospitality club. While some of the larger Food Recovery Network chapters may have dozens of volunteers, the three at Parkland Community College were able to complete recoveries and start bringing wholesome food to those in need. They have also started a garden that provides food for approximately 30 families (Figure 2.4).

![Figure 2.4 Corn from Parkland Community College’s Garden (Parkland College, 2016)](image)

2.4.2 EXAMPLES OF LOCATING PARTNER AGENCIES

The facility that receives FRN’s food donation and serves it to the community is called a partner agency. There are several requirements that partner agencies must meet in order to receive food from FRN chapters. They must be a certified non-profit and they must also be able to properly refrigerate and reheat the recovered food. They should also accept food at times that work with student and dining schedules, since many chapters will do their recoveries at night after the
campus dining halls have closed for the day. The relationship between an FRN chapters and their partner agencies is up to each individual chapter, but students are encouraged to create a meaningful connection with their partner agencies. While many chapters simply drop the food off, occasionally students will stay to help serve the food, as FRN’s chapter at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey, did in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Recipients of donations from Food Recovery Network at Monmouth University at their partner agency (Food Recovery Network at Monmouth University, photo provided by Susan Pagano, 2016)
COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PARTNER AGENCY

Below please find some talking points you can refer to when you call each agency. Please call agencies on the phone and visit them in person. E-mailing agencies is often not the most effective method of communication. It is difficult to solidify a partnership when you first contact the agency, as you have not yet ironed out the recovery details with your food donor. The goal of this initial conversation is to verify that the agency has the need for prepared food donations, that you will be able to have a main point of contact there to communicate about the structure and details of your program on an ongoing basis, and that the agency fills an important need within your community. Once you have confirmed these points, you can consider this place to be one of your partner agencies.

- Introduce yourself as a student from [name of your school]
- Let the person on the phone know that you are working on starting a Food Recovery Network chapter
- Tell them about Food Recovery Network and why you want to start a chapter
- Ask if you can speak with someone who handles their food donations
  - If that person is not in, find out when they will be, and call back during that time
  - If there is no main person who handles donations, ask who may be best for you to speak with
- When you have the right person on the phone, introduce yourself and Food Recovery Network again
- Ask if the organization is interested in accepting perishable food donations
  - If the answer is “no,” ask why they are not interested, then move on to your next potential partner agency
  - If the answer is “yes,” “I would like more information,” or anything else, move on to the below steps
- Say what exactly you are trying to do, how much you have done so far, and what you will do after getting your partner agencies on board
- Verify that the agency is a 501(c)3 non profit
- Verify that they have refrigerator or freezer space to store the food and can reheat food on-site
- Inform your contact that once you have a food donor on board, they can expect donations on a regular basis but that the quantity and types of food may vary each week depending on what is available
- If they are still interested and confirm that all of this information fits their needs, ask the following questions:
  - What times are you available to receive donations?
    - Are these times flexible?
    - Would it be possible to have someone come in late in the evening to receive donations?
  - How can we best follow up and stay in touch with you moving forward?
    - Who is the best contact person and what is their contact info? [Record phone # and email address]
    - What are your hours of operation?
- Confirm that you will follow up with more details once you have approval from a food donor
- Schedule a time to meet in person with the partner agency representative(s) and check out their space

Figure 2.6 Guide helping FRN students contact and communicate with their partner agencies
(Food Recovery Network, 2014)
Georgia State University

When talking a student through finding a partner agency, a New Chapter Coordinator will usually refer the student to the website Aunt Bertha. There they can search for food pantries, shelters, and churches in their area that have a program for feeding people in need. When the student has located a partner agency, they will set up a meeting to make sure it’s a good match. Usually this step is left to the students who can refer to the guide shown in Figure 2.6 and requires little guidance or intervention from a New Chapter Coordinator.

In the case of Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia, the Zero Waste Manager at the Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Sustainability had reached out to FRN’s national office and was very interested in helping the students at Georgia State get their FRN chapter started. Their hope was that the FRN chapter at Georgia State would be a model for the rest of the Atlanta colleges. The Zero Waste Manager connected me and my student at Georgia State with the Social Impact Director at the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, who is well connected with many nonprofits in the area. He was able to facilitate communication between Georgia State and several partner agencies in the Atlanta area.

2.4.3 TRANSPORTING RECOVERED FOOD

The vast majority of FRN chapters use student vehicles to transport food from dining halls to their partner agencies (Figures 2.7 and 2.8). I personally only worked with schools that chose this method of transportation, however there are a couple of other options. If a chapter is very close to their partner agency, students can choose to walk or bike the food over. Students that don’t have their own cars on campus may also choose to use university vans for recoveries. FRN also has several chapters in New York City, where it is usually more convenient for students to use public transportation than drive their own vehicles. A few of these chapters have found that using a car sharing service like Zipcar is their best option.
2.4.4 COORDINATING FOOD RECOVERY WITH DINING SERVICES

Convincing dining services to donate surplus food is often the most challenging step in the process of starting an FRN chapter and it is also the step that differs the most from chapter to chapter, depending on the response from dining services. Students are encouraged to set up an in-person meeting with the head of dining services at their school so they don’t immediately get turned down over email. Then the student will give a small presentation to dining services to help them understand the benefits of FRN, how it works, and explain that they are not at risk of
liability. Appendix A is a guide to help students navigate this initial meeting. If dining services is willing to work with FRN they can then work with the students on setting up the first recovery.

**Monmouth University**

A student at Monmouth University who had applied to start an FRN chapter brought the idea to the school’s Community Service Coordinator. After a couple of meetings with the Community Service Coordinator and other interested parties, including a professor, an arrangement was made to include a presentation for Monmouth’s dining services as part of the coursework for one of the professor’s classes. Although FRN provides students with a pre-made PowerPoint presentation that can be presented to dining services, the professor liked the idea of having the students research food waste and recovery more in depth and giving them each a role in the presentation. Dining services had a very positive response and Monmouth was able to get their recoveries started before the end of the semester (Figure 2.9).

![Figure 2.9 Students at Monmouth University with their recovered food in a dining hall kitchen](Food Recovery Network at Monmouth University, photo provided by Susan Pagano, 2016)

**Lipscomb**

In the case of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, they already had a food recovery program set up and wanted their existing program to become part of FRN’s network. I first had a call with the dining manager at Lipscomb, who gave me an overview of their existing program and expressed interest in FRN. He then connected me to a student volunteer, whom I worked
with to get all of their information into FRN’s database and handle the paperwork to make them an official chapter. The entire process only took a little over a week. In addition to organizing food recoveries, many FRN chapters also host events on campus to raise awareness about food waste and hunger. Lipscomb’s FRN chapter is very active on their campus and hosted a large hunger banquet in February 2016 that featured guest speakers who have benefited from the food Lipscomb’s recoveries Figure 2.10.

Figure 2.10 Lipscomb University’s FRN chapter hosting a hunger banquet open to the entire campus (Share Our Supper, photos provided by Jessica Wayda, 2016)

**Earlham**

Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, was one of the more challenging schools I worked with when it came to dining. Dining services only allowed students to recover food that “had not been on the line.” This means that the dining halls are set up buffet style and they did not believe it was safe to donate food that was self-serve. I talked to my student about handling this situation and asked her to explain to dining that there is no difference in safety between the last person served in the dining hall and the first person that receives it at the partner agency. This thinking is in line with the food safety guidelines all FRN chapters must follow that were developed with the help of Sodexo, a company that provides dining services to colleges across the country including many FRN chapters. Unfortunately, dining services was not willing to negotiate but Earlham was able to start recoveries using food that has never left the kitchen.
Schools that Recover Off Campus

As awareness about the cost and environmental impacts of food waste becomes more widespread some colleges have started cutting down on waste before it happens by becoming more aware of their purchasing needs and reusing food for the next day’s meals. Occasionally FRN will get a student interested in starting an FRN chapter at their school and find out dining services doesn’t have enough leftover food to donate. However, it is very rare for a school, especially large universities, to not have enough to bring to a partner agency. More often the reason for a school not wanting to participate in FRN is because they are worried about liability, even after the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act has been explained to them. In these instances where there are students interested in helping divert food waste to people in need in their communities, FRN will help them look for restaurants near campus that may be able to donate food. This was the case with FRN’s chapter at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, which recovers from their local Chipotle restaurant (Figure 2.11). Another school I worked with, University of Southern Nazarene in Bethany, Oklahoma, does recover from their dining halls but wanted to expand on the types of food they can bring to their partner agency. In addition to on-campus food they also recover from Panera Bread. Other FRN chapters have also worked with Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Jimmy Johns, Vitamin Cottage, Little Caesars, Einstein Bros Bagels, Starbucks, Panda Express, Taco Bell, Subway, Pizza Hut, Au Bon Pain, and Piccola’s Pizza.
2.4.5 COMPLETING FIRST TWO RECOVERIES

Recoveries are usually a pretty straightforward process. Students simply gather the food from dining services, transport it to their partner agency, and deliver it. At some schools, students actually go into the kitchen to package the food (Figure 2.12) while at others this step is done by dining services and the students simply have to transport it. Recoveries typically require three to five student volunteers, more than that and the kitchen can become overcrowded.

Materials for packaging the food can either be provided by the school or students can apply for a grant from FRN up to $350 to purchase materials for recoveries. Most schools start out with disposable trays and containers but are encouraged to switch to reusable once they have an idea of how much food they are usually recovering in order to cut down on waste.
2.5 TAKEAWAYS FROM MY ROLE AS A NEW CHAPTER COORDINATOR

Food Recovery Network uses the power of student volunteers to accomplish their mission of fighting food waste and feeding people. As a result, FRN is helping to establish a generation of young people that will graduate college with the know-how to fight food waste and hunger, as well as the attitude that sending good food to landfills while fellow Americans go hungry is unacceptable. The students that dedicate their time to this cause are the reason FRN has been successful in recovering over two million pounds of food since its founding. However, they do not act alone. As I detailed above, students receive one-on-one support from FRN staff. In addition, I noticed that support from students’ schools and especially support from dining services is a critical element that almost all of the most successful FRN chapters have in common. When the staff in the dining halls are as committed to the cause as the students are, chapters are really able to thrive.

Creating a strong dynamic between FRN students and the campus or dining hall staff that help coordinate recoveries was not part of the process of establishing a new chapter while I was at FRN. I would recommend that FRN includes this step in the process of creating a chapter and considers allowing schools and dining services to play a more active role as part of FRN. One
way to do this would be to set up a call with the student contact, a representative from dining services, and the New Chapter Coordinator to welcome dining services to the network, answer any questions they may have, and thank them for participating in food recoveries. I also think finding a way for dining directors at individual schools to connect with each other would be a great benefit for FRN. This would allow them to communicate, ask other schools how they worked through certain barriers, and extend the reach of FRN’s community. Additionally, I would suggest that FRN does more to recognize the staff at schools who also dedicate their time to helping students recover surplus food. This recognition could be done through FRN’s social media platforms, at the National Food Recovery Dialogue, or by sending schools a letter or small award for hitting a new milestone in terms of total pounds of food donated.
SECTION 3. SIDE PROJECT

In addition to their main responsibility of working with students, each FRN fellow was also assigned a side project to be worked on throughout their time at FRN. The purpose of the side project is to further each fellow’s personal and professional development and allow them to take ownership of an element of FRN’s programming while furthering FRN’s mission.

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF WORK

The side project I was originally assigned was called “Targeted Outreach.” Up until the point when I was assigned my side project, Food Recovery Network had been expanding organically through word of mouth and positive publicity. However, in order to guarantee sustained growth, the leadership team at FRN felt it was important to develop effective outreach strategies to manage their own expansion and target specific schools for new chapters.

My supervisor provided the following instructions and deliverables for my side project:

- Work with contacts provided by supervisor to do outreach to sustainability directors at targeted schools
  - Oversee monitoring of schools that we get through sustainability directors
- Work with dining providers to do targeted outreach to their schools
  - Sodexo target markets
  - Chartwells outreach
  - Bon Appetit Management Company (BAMCO) targeted outreach in collaboration with BAMCO fellows
  - Increase collaboration with smaller regional dining providers
- Develop additional outreach strategies based on the outcomes from the targeted outreach meeting

(Demarais, 2015, personal communication)
Throughout the course of the fellowship my side project evolved and changes were made to accommodate the number of schools I was working with as a New Chapter Coordinator. The following sections detail my main contributions to expanding outreach at FRN.

3.1.1 NEW CHAPTER FLURRY

The New Chapter Flurry was an outreach campaign that I led as part of my side project. The outreach campaign worked with students actively involved in FRN chapters. Over winter break these students shared their experiences with friends from other schools to see if they would be interested in starting their own FRN chapters.

The Flurry ran from December 14\textsuperscript{th} to January 14\textsuperscript{th}. Any new students that applied during that time after hearing about FRN through the Flurry campaign, as well as the chapters that referred them, were eligible to win prizes ranging from FRN apparel to money toward professional development and travel to the National Food Recovery Dialogue.

![Figure 3.1 New Chapter Flurry graphic. This was created during my fellowship with FRN using Adobe Photoshop (Brocker, 2015)](image-url)
I was responsible for overseeing the entire project from start to finish. This included creating graphics (Figure 3.1), writing the script that fellows used to pitch the campaign for their students, writing the follow-up email with more detailed information about the campaign, keeping track of which chapters had participated and which new students applied through the campaign, and determining and distributing the prizes (Figure 3.2).
3.1.2 OUTREACH TO DINING SERVICES

Chartwells

Chartwells is a nationwide dining provider that serves many of FRN’s chapters. In an effort to add more Chartwells schools to FRN’s network I had several calls with Chartwells’ Director of Student Success. Chartwells employs student interns to work in the dining halls at some of their schools and during my calls with the Director of Student Success we discussed having these interns start FRN chapters on their campuses. In order to help interns become acquainted with the process of starting an FRN chapter, I created a checklist for interns (Figure 3.3). The idea was that the Director of Student Success would send this checklist to Chartwells interns, who would then apply to start a chapter.
CHECKLIST FOR STARTING YOUR FRN CHAPTER

Check off the steps below as you complete them. Now you can keep track of how far along you are in the process of starting your program and when you will be considered an official FRN chapter! You will only become a chapter once all of these boxes are checked off.

☐ Attend an info session call with your FRN National Point of Contact.
☐ Recruit your leadership team.
☐ Begin the process of becoming an official campus club (optional, but encouraged).
☐ Find at least 2 Partner Agencies (1 is acceptable if there are no others in your area).
☐ Figure out transportation.
☐ Get trained in food safety.
☐ Get approval from at least one food donor (dining hall, restaurant, or farmers market).
☐ Make sure you have all of the necessary supplies for your first recovery.
☐ Make sure you have at least 5 volunteers and/or at least 2 student groups signed up to send volunteers.
☐ Schedule first recovery with your Dining Hall and PA.
☐ Ensure all parties are prepared for the first recovery and will follow necessary food safety procedures.
☐ Go on first recovery, take pictures and fill out food tracking form!
☐ Go on second recovery, take pictures and fill out food tracking form!
☐ Submit the Logistics forms (Official Chapter Agreement, PA Agreement, and Website Info Form).

Figure 3.3 Chartwells intern checklist for starting a chapter (Brocker, 2016)
**Sodexo**

Sodexo is another large dining provider that serves a significant number of FRN schools. I worked directly with Sodexo’s Vice President of Business Development to add new FRN chapters in key markets that Sodexo had identified. From there I began communicating with a Sodexo regional manager who works with schools in Alabama. I also gave a separate phone presentation to Sodexo marketing coordinators.

### 3.1.3 OUTREACH FOR NFRD

The National Food Recovery Dialogue (NFRD) was a four-day conference hosted by Food Recovery Network at the University of Maryland. The event gathered over 400 students from FRN’s chapters across the country and leaders in the food recovery and food justice movement. As part of my side project I worked on outreach for the conference. One of my responsibilities was to help write a press release about the conference (Appendix B).

Another outreach approach included identifying sustainability listservs that reached college students in the Mid-Atlantic Region. I compiled a list of 12 relevant listservs and drafted an email inviting students to NFRD. I sent information about NFRD and how to register to schools in DC, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and New Jersey that did not have FRN chapters at the time. It was my hope that by having non-FRN students attend the conference they would be inspired to start their own chapter. In addition, I assisted the Development Department in securing funding for NFRD. I helped assemble a list of potential donors and was assigned a portion of that list to reach out to for donations.

### 3.2 TAKEAWAYS FROM MY SIDE PROJECT

At the end of my side project I took time to reflect on my work. I also discussed with my side project supervisor what worked, what did not, and what I would have done differently moving forward. The following sections describe some of the lessons I learned and my suggestions for the person that takes on outreach at FRN in the future.
New Chapter Flurry

The goal I had set for the number of new chapter applications FRN received through the New Chapter Flurry campaign was 75. However, at the end of the Flurry FRN only received six new applications as a direct result of the campaign. I held a debrief to discuss the Flurry after it was over and discussed this result with the FRN team. The takeaway from the debrief was the six new chapter applications was still a great outcome. Each of those six new chapters has the potential to recover thousands of pounds of food in the future and those are six chapters FRN would not have had the opportunity to work with otherwise. I also realized that starting up a new FRN chapter is a big undertaking for a student and not every student reached by the campaign has the time to start a project like that. This helped me learn an important lesson about realistic goal setting. In my future endeavors I will put much more thought into making sure the goals I set for myself are reasonable.

Although the Flurry was somewhat successful, in the end I don’t think the amount of effort that went into the Flurry was worth the overall result. In the future I would switch from a month-long campaign to an ongoing incentive for anyone that applies to start a new chapter. One way I think FRN can utilize students in active chapters for outreach is to have students give presentations about their work with FRN at nearby schools. For example, The Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Sustainability talked to student leaders at Georgia State’s FRN chapter about going to the rest of the Atlanta schools to talk about FRN. FRN could also implement a reward system for every FRN student that garners a new application by going to speak about FRN at a school that does not have a chapter. Based on my experience I think this initiative would be a more effective replacement for the Flurry campaign.

Outreach to Dining Services

Calls made to dining providers helped to increase awareness of FRN, but did not result in many new chapters. One important takeaway is that specific follow-up and next steps are needed when making these outreach calls. FRN is the expert on food recovery, but for many of these calls we left the planning and how to move forward up to the dining providers. I think FRN should come up with more specific goals for what they hope to accomplish from these calls, create tasks based on those goals, and clearly define how and when the follow up will happen.
In addition, I noticed that some of the dining providers have a hard time getting information from their corporate office to individual schools. I think it would be helpful to ask regional managers at Sodexo to identify one to three schools in their region to focus on at a time. Then FRN could organize conference calls with the regional manager and dining director at the chosen schools. That way the calls are specific and targeted and more likely to result in a new chapter.

**Outreach for NFRD**

One of my suggestions for future NFRD outreach would be to create a flyer with information about the conference and send it with outreach emails so that they can be printed out and posted around schools. In retrospect, I also wish I had come up with a way to keep track of how speakers and people outside of FRN’s network heard about NFRD so FRN knows which avenues are worth pursuing and where their outreach efforts should be focused. Additionally, I would recommend putting more emphasis on securing media and send out the press release at least one to two weeks before the conference.
SECTION 4. REFLECTION

The classes I took and projects I was part of through the Institute for the Environment and Sustainability (IES) helped prepare me for my fellowship at FRN. While in the IES program I was part of a required client-based group project with the goal of making local food a more prolific part of everyday life in the City of Hamilton, Ohio. I had become interested in sustainable food and agriculture as an undergraduate at Miami University so I found it exciting to be involved in a project where I could gain first-hand experience with those issues.

During this Professional Service Project, I learned how to communicate with various types of stakeholders, work as a team with my peers, and prioritize tasks while working on a deadline. I also gained insight into our food system and the challenges of connecting local producers with local restaurants. I believe that the Professional Service Project in IES allowed me to gain invaluable experience working for a real client and prepared me for my role at Food Recovery Network.

When I first heard about Food Recovery Network and learned about the opportunity to continue working in the realm of sustainable food, I knew it was something I wanted to be part of. I learned so much during my nine-month experience at FRN and feel that it was a great, albeit challenging, introduction to working at a non-profit.

Food Recovery Network went through many changes while I was there and continues to change as the organization grows. I learned how to adapt to these changes and be a reliable team player. Because the scale of our work grew every day, fellows had the opportunity to take on major projects that were important to accomplishing FRN’s mission. I had the opportunity to assist with the planning of a large-scale event and speak to a room of four hundred people. I worked with executives from major dining services. I instilled knowledge from my own leadership experiences during college in the students I talked to every week. I learned about database management, and had the opportunity to apply project management skills that I developed in IES. I was able to build on my experience in IES during my time at FRN and feel that both experiences will help me succeed in the future.
APPENDIX A

FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK

TALKING TO DINING SERVICES

Opening Dialogue:

- **What is FRN?** Food Recovery Network unites students at colleges and universities to fight food waste and hunger by recovering perishable food that would otherwise go to waste from their campuses and the surrounding communities and donating it to people in need.
- **Tell them why you want to bring FRN to your school.**
- **Note that having excess food on a college campus is common due to the high volume of students being served and the number of options provided. Students and dining services are working together across the country to further reduce food waste!**
- **FRN has national partnerships with Sodexo, Bon Appetit and Chartwells, and a working relationship with Aramark.**
- **Explain what you have already done to prepare for this:**
  - Built a Leadership Team
  - Found Partner Agency/Agencies
  - Set up transportation for donations
  - Taken part in Food Safety Training (designed by Sodexo and Bon Appetit)
- **Ask:** Is dining open to collaborating with you?

When dining agrees to collaborate, work together on the following:

- **When can we get started?**
  - Make sure to set a date that gives your team and dining services enough time to get organized and ready!
- **What day(s) of the week?**
  - Will you be recovering more than once a week?
- **What time of day?** (Morning, afternoon, or evening?)
- **Will your team be packaging the food for donation or will dining services be doing it?**
- **What materials can dining services provide?**
  - Is there a scale you can use to weigh the food?
  - Are there containers you can use to transport the food?
  - Are there thermometers, gloves, hairnets you can use?
- **Can dining services store food for you?**
  - Ask if they have fridge or freezer space to store food during the week so you can maximize the amount of food donated.
Common Questions and Hesitations From Dining (and Suggested Solutions):

- **Liability:**
  - Tell them there’s nothing to fear! Provide them with the document on protection from liability (Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act) and inform them there has never been an instance of a lawsuit.

- **No food waste (or not enough to donate):**
  - Acknowledge their efforts and decision to reduce food waste.
  - It is almost impossible to be completely waste free when you are providing food for so many people.
  - Every pound of food helps a community member in need!
  - Ask if you can do a trial run or waste audit and see how much food can be recovered.

- **Composting excess food:**
  - Show them the EPA’s Food Recovery Hierarchy and explain that all edible food should be redistributed to people rather than being composted.

- **Already recovering and donating the surplus food:**
  - Inquire more about their donations:
    - How often? How much food? Where does it go?
  - Ask if you can be involved!
  - Tell them you are more than happy to take on any responsibilities (packaging, carrying, transporting).
  - Describe the benefits of joining FRN...[funding, national connections, good PR]!

- **Recovering from catering events or on an on-call basis:**
  - These are not great options because it is very difficult for students to organize for last-minute donations.
  - Regular recoveries (at least once a week) are preferred!
  - Push for a trial run for regular dining hall donations in addition to catering/on-call recoveries.
  - If you agree to do both, make sure they can give you ample time (more than a day) to prepare for a catering/on-call recovery.
    - Ask for a schedule of the semester’s catered events, and make a plan to recover from them.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students, professionals convene for National Food Recovery Dialogue to discuss food waste, justice issues

COLLEGE PARK, Maryland, March 31, 2016 - Food Recovery Network is hosting the inaugural National Food Recovery Dialogue on April 2nd and 3rd. This event will assemble 450 student leaders and professionals from across the food recovery, food justice, policy and environmental spaces at the home of the first FRN chapter. Attendees will participate in various workshops, panels and presentations to inspire and promote continued efforts to tackle the problems of food waste and hunger with practical solutions.

This year’s Dialogue includes a notable lineup of key speakers, including:

- Jenny Rasmussen, Filmmaker and Producer, Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story
- Jeremy Kranowitz, Executive Director, Sustainable America
- George Jones, CEO, Bread for the City
- Lana Suarez, Acting Chief, Chemicals Management Branch, US Environmental Protection Agency
- Amy Schober, Program Analyst, US Department of Agriculture
- Valerie Ervin, Montgomery County Council Member, Montgomery County Council

“Food Recovery Network is bringing together passionate and energetic young leaders for a weekend of movement-building, learning, teaching and celebration. Our students are fighting waste and feeding people in 200 communities in 41 states every day, and the chance to all be in the same physical location will continue to raise the profile of food recovery as a viable and necessary solution to both food waste and hunger,” says Sara Gassman, FRN’s Director of Member Support and Communications.

Highlights of NFRD 2016 include:

- Not Really Expired: How Confusing Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America -- Christina Rice of Harvard Food Law & Policy clinic will examine the legal and policy regime surrounding expiration dates on foods and discuss the ways attendees can help reform expiration dates, thus decreasing the amount of wasted food.
- Ugly Produce: A Market-Driven Approach to Fighting Food Waste -- According to NRDC, farms are the number one place food is going to waste. In this interactive breakout session, Ben Simon, FRN Founder and CEO of Imperfect Produce, will discuss the recent ugly produce trend within the food waste movement. He'll also talk about his successes and challenges running Imperfect, America’s leading ugly produce company.
- This Recovered Life -- Six students from the frontlines of FRN will share their inspiring food recovery stories. Paul Sherman, University of Denver; Brandon Denney, Maryville College; LeAnne Young, University of Maryland; Sarah Diamond, Lawrence University; Shadi Ahmadmehrabi, Case Western Reserve University; Shewa Shwani, Syracuse University/SUNY-ESF
- Lobby Day -- Lobby Day will give FRN student leaders, who are predominately Millennials/Gen Z and thus make up the largest voting bloc in the 2016 election, the chance to meet with Senators, Representatives, and Congressional staff on Capitol Hill to discuss issues related to FRN’s mission of fighting waste and feeding people. The press release with more information can be found here: 2016 NFRD Lobby Day.
Food Recovery Network would like to extend a thanks to the NFRD 2016 sponsors: Chartwells Higher Education, Sodexo, Walmart Foundation, Burness Communications, Darden Restaurants, Zenful Bites, Hampton Creek, Café Mam, MidAtlantic Farm Credit, Honest Tea, Community Plates and Hungry Harvest.

About Food Recovery Network
Food Recovery Network unites and supports college students to fight food waste and hunger by recovering surplus food from their campuses and local restaurants that would otherwise go to waste and donating it to hungry Americans. FRN has nearly 200 chapters in 41 states. For more information about Food Recovery Network, visit www.foodrecoverynetwork.org. Follow us on Twitter @FoodRecovery and Instagram @FoodRecovery and like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FoodRecoveryNetwork.

More details about the NFRD can be found here: www.foodrecoverynetwork.org/events. Members of the media who are interested in attending can join us at the BioSciences Research Building at the University of Maryland, College Park on 9 a.m. April 2nd and April 3rd.

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National Food Recovery Dialogue Press Release (Food Recovery Network, 2016)
REFERENCES


