Food Donations

Did you know that 1 in 8 people in Orange County experience hunger or food insecurity on a regular basis, and that 1 in 5 are children?

Recovering consumable food and moving it to hunger relief organizations has proven to reduce these numbers and positively impact the lives of millions of people across America. Numerous organizations, both governmental and private, are involved in this vital work.

The safety of food throughout this recovery process is of critical importance. The population served by hunger relief organizations has a higher percentage of vulnerable individuals. Compounding this concern is the diversity of organizations and agencies acting to ensure food safety standards are consistently met.

So how can you help reduce insecurity?

Instead of disposing of excess food from your business, consider donating to a hunger relief organization.

Why should I donate food?

There are many benefits to donating food, below are a few to consider:

- Saves the business money by:
  - Potential tax deductions for donating safe and wholesome food
  - Assists in complying with waste reduction mandates found in Cal Recycle’s Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling (AB 1826) [http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Recycle/Commercial/Organics/]
  - Reducing the number of trash hauling services
- If donating through the Waste Not OC coalition, it provides recognition to the business
  - A Waste Not OC window decal
- Follows the food industry’s Food Waste Reduction Alliance goals [http://www.foodwastealliance.org/]
- Employee Engagement

Frequently Asked Questions

The following is a list of Frequently Asked Questions that may assist you in deciding to get involved and help end food insecurity!

Q: What foods can be donated?
A: Almost anything you serve or sell can be donated. There are a few exceptions: baby food and formula that has exceeded its expiration date cannot be donated.

Q: Who can I contact if I have questions on what food can be donated?
A: If you have any questions related to the safe donation of food, please contact Environmental Health at (714) 433-6000.

Q: How do we ensure the food is safe for distribution?
A: It is important to maintain the foods that will be donated in the same safe and reasonable manner which you hold other foods intended to be sold. A toolkit for donation is available at wastenotoc.org for detailed information on how to handle foods to be donated safely. You can always contact your health inspector if you have any questions regarding safe food handling measures.

Q: Can I be held liable for donating food?
A: The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act offers protection.

Q: What is Waste Not OC?
A: Waste Not OC is a coalition of food banks, restaurants, food distributors, community leaders and Orange County’s Health Care Agency’s Environmental Health Division dedicated to meeting the nutritional needs of the community by facilitating the donation and distribution of wholesome surplus food.
Are there other organizations that can I can donate food to?

A growing number of organizations – both charitable and for profit – are working to recover wholesome excess food to provide low or no-cost meals to families in need. There are thousands of organizations helping to feed the hungry. For a list visit www.usda.gov\oce\foodwaste\resources\donations.htm.

By donating food instead of throwing it out, we are not only helping the lives of hungry families, we are also saving valuable resources for future generations that went into producing that food as well cutting harmful greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Ready to Donate?

Great! Pick up the phone and contact our Waste Not OC coalition partner at (855) 700-9662 or visit www.Wastenotoc.org for more information on who needs your help, where you can donate and how you can be a part of ending hunger in Orange County. Donating food is easier than you think!

The Art of Hand Washing

Did you know that improper handwashing accounts for 89% of all foodborne illness outbreaks?* Hand washing is the most important way to reduce the spread of bacteria from the hands of food workers to food. With this fact in mind, Environmental Health will be initiating a handwashing campaign.

The Art of Hand Washing Campaign consists of innovative educational materials to reinforce the importance of hand washing for food facility operators and food employees. These educational materials are comprised of new hand washing signs, an oral culture storyboard, and instant recognition. The colorful hand wash signs mimic artwork from well-known artists and serves as a visual reminder for food employees to properly wash their hands. The oral culture storyboard illustrates the “dos and don’ts” of hand washing and is available in multiple languages. Positive recognition will be reinforced with food employees who demonstrate excellent hand washing practices during inspections.

The campaign is focused on stimulating conversation and increasing awareness of the importance of handwashing. Orange County Environmental Health inspectors have observed over 1200 handwashing violations per year. The goal of this campaign is to reduce the number of hand washing violations observed at food facilities by 10%. This in turn will hopefully reduce the number of foodborne illness outbreaks and aid in making Orange County a safe, healthy, and fulfilling place to live, work, and play.

* http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/fast_facts.html#three

For more information, please visit ocfoodinfo.com or contact us at (714) 433-6000 or ehealth@ochca.com.