



Population Health Trust March Newsletter

Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health

March 26, 2024

Food waste happens for many reasons. Maybe it was the multipack of lettuce that went bad, the soup that you tired of eating, or the take-out container you overlooked in the back of the fridge. We know that throwing food in the garbage is not great, but often struggle with knowing what to do instead.

Nationwide about 40% of all the food produced in the United States is wasted. Food waste happens at all levels, on the farm, during transportation, at the grocery store, and in our homes. No matter the reason, food waste is harmful for our planet, local economy, and our communities.

When food is wasted, the land, water, and other resources used to produce, process, transport, prepare, store, and dispose of the food are also wasted. Not only that, when food breaks down in the landfill it produces methane - a greenhouse gas even more potent than carbon dioxide. Wasting food comes at an economic cost, too. The average family of four spends \$1,200 per year on food that does not get eaten. That is about \$100 per month! [1]

That is a lot of wasted food that could go to people that do not have sufficient access to food. According to 2019 estimates by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), approximately 11% of Skagit County residents experience some level of food insecurity. [2] Recovered food could provide an additional source of nutritious food for individuals experiencing food insecurity.

Food surplus and waste is an important part of our current Food Security Plan. As a Food Policy Council, our goal is minimizing food waste and redirecting surplus to building a thriving, sustainable local food system. We are collaborating with community organizations to raise awareness about this important issue during National Food Waste Prevention Week.

Food Waste Prevention Event

April 6 @ 9:00am - 12:00pm

WSU Extension Office
11768 Westar Lane, Burlington 98233

- On Saturday, April 6 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, community members can join in a day of learning about food waste prevention at the Skagit County WSU Extension office (11768 Westar Lane, Burlington).
- Event attendees will learn a variety of ways they can reduce waste through cooking demonstrations, seeing a worm bin in action, and gathering information from organizations committed to reducing waste.
- Not able to attend the event? You can still support local efforts by taking a pledge to reduce food waste in your home. Learn more about food waste, the event, and sign the pledge [here](#).

Thank you for your partnership in keeping Skagit County healthy!



The Population Health Trust was founded in 2015 and is the Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health. For more information, check out our [website](#).

Population Health Trust

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References:

1. *Home: Food waste prevention week*. FW Prevention Week. (2024). <https://www.foodwastepreventionweek.com/>
2. Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, E. Engelhard, M. Strayer & L. Lapinski. Map the Meal Gap 2021: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2018. Feeding America, 2022.