

# Food Recovery Partners Guidelines

A program of Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy

Food Recovery Partners (Partners) is a program of Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) that helps to divert edible food from the waste stream to people who need it. Partners are responsible for implementing ongoing food recovery and gleaning programs and initiatives within Ramsey and Washington counties. According to July 2025 waste sorts at R&E, 28.4% of commercial waste arriving at the facility is. <sup>1</sup> About 62% of the food that is wasted in Minnesota is still edible. <sup>2</sup> The Food Recovery Partners program was developed as a strategy to consistently recover and redistribute significant amounts of food to its intended use—feeding people. Partners enter into a yearly agreement with R&E to recover and divert an agreed-upon poundage of edible food from entering the waste stream. Through this program, R&E can prevent significant amounts of food from being wasted and redirect it to programs that provide critical nutrition support to some of Ramsey and Washington counties' most vulnerable residents, including those who are unhoused and acutely low-income.

Food recovery is defined as the collection of edible, surplus food from grocery stores, distributors and other sources for redistribution to people in need. Gleaning is defined as the harvest and/or recovery of edible, surplus produce from farms and/or farmers' markets for donation to people in need. The Partners program is specifically focused on upstream food waste prevention, meaning that surplus food is being reduced. Downstream food waste processing, such as food-to-hogs and composting programs, are not eligible for the Partners program.

## Partnership Types

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### Food Rescue Partners

Food Rescue Partners may be awarded up to \$40,000 based on their minimum annual food rescue poundage and an additional \$10,000 in incentives for a maximum total of \$50,000 annually. All organizations must also agree to the Food Recovery Partners Requirements as found in this document. Food Rescue Partners engage in food recovery (see definition above).

Annual funding tier	Minimum annual food rescue (lbs)
\$10,000	100,000
\$20,000	200,000
\$30,000	350,000
\$40,000	500,000

### Incentives

All Food Rescue Partners are eligible for the following incentives up to \$10,000. Gleaning and Food Bank Partners are not eligible for incentive funding. Available incentives are as follows:

- \$2,000 for tracking and reporting food waste to R&E
- \$1,000 per distribution site that operates with a client choice model, for a maximum of three sites or \$3,000

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<sup>1</sup> [R&E Waste Sort Data Tables\\_Final.xlsx](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Preventing wasted food | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#)

- Note: Only sites in Ramsey and Washington counties are eligible for this incentive
- \$1,000 per partnership that is maintained with cultural grocers and/or farmers/farmers' markets in Ramsey and Washington counties, for a maximum of five partnerships or \$5,000
  - Partners must maintain consistent pick-ups and/or drop-offs at a minimum frequency of once every two weeks
  - Farm and/or farmers' market pick-ups and drop-offs can follow the growing season (i.e., no deliveries over the winter)

### **Gleaning Partners**

Gleaning Partners may be awarded up to \$50,000 annually based on amount of food recovered. To be eligible for partnership, organizations must glean at least 35,000 pounds of fresh, surplus produce annually from farms and farmers' markets in Ramsey and Washington counties. All organizations must also agree to the Food Recovery Partners Requirements as found in this document. Gleaning Partners engage in gleaning (see definition above).

### **Food Bank Partners**

Food Bank Partners may be awarded up to \$15,000 annually for food recovery work in Ramsey and/or Washington counties. All organizations must also agree to the Food Recovery Partners Requirements as found in this document.

## **Eligibility and Requirements**

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### **Eligibility**

Eligible organizations include food shelves, food banks and gleaning organizations. To qualify for partnership, organizations must:

- Demonstrate three consecutive years of food recovery or gleaning activities.
- Food Rescue and Food Bank Partners must recover a minimum of 100,000 pounds annually in Ramsey and/or Washington counties.
- Organizations with physical locations must collect food waste via organics recycling, food-to-animals and/or onsite composting.
- Be in "active/good standing" status with the Minnesota Secretary of State.
- Provide a current W-9 or have a fiscal sponsor that can do so.
- Maintain active and appropriate Environmental Health food license(s), if applicable, for services being conducted.
- Approved Partners are not eligible to receive additional funding through BizRecycling's Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Grant.

### **Requirements**

- All food recovery and gleaning associated with the service agreement must take place in Ramsey and/or Washington counties.
- Collected food must be distributed for free to people in need in Ramsey and/or Washington counties.
- Gleaning Partners *only* must offer farmer payment for produce.
- New and renewing Partners must submit an annual workplan to R&E by November 1<sup>st</sup> detailing what they plan to accomplish in the upcoming calendar year.
- Partners must submit quarterly reports every three months detailing the amount of food recovered and distributed in the previous three-month period.

- A minimum of one representative from each Partner organization must attend biannual (twice per year) convenings twice per year to share knowledge and best practices and identify additional ways to collaborate with R&E and other Partners.
- Partners agree to participate in food recovery training. Annual training will not exceed five hours.
- Partners must participate in biannual Partnership check-ins with R&E staff through a mix of virtual and on-site visits.
- Returning Partners must demonstrate a reduction in collected organics/food waste year-over-year.

## Reporting Requirements

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Food Recovery Partners will submit a quarterly report every three months. Each report will include the following information broken down by month and county:

- Pounds of food gleaned/donated (if a donating organization)
- Pounds of food received/collected (if an organization that receives/collects donated food)
- Pounds of food distributed (if an organization that receives/collects donated food)
- List and locations of organizations where food was gleaned or collected
- List and locations of organizations where food was distributed or donated
- Description of how weights were measured or estimated

Quarterly reports are due on the following dates:

- Quarter 1 (for work completed January-March): due April 30<sup>th</sup>
- Quarter 2 (for work completed April-June): due July 31<sup>st</sup>
- Quarter 3 (for work completed July-September): due October 31<sup>st</sup>
- Quarter 4 (for work completed October-December): due January 20<sup>th</sup>

## Fund Dispersal

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- Partners will provide quarterly invoices to R&E that include clear documentation of work completed in the form of receipts or a description of services, dates of work, and contract number. Invoices will be due on the same schedule as quarterly reports (see “Reporting Requirements” section above).
- R&E will pay each invoice within thirty days of receiving it. If the invoice is incorrect or work was not performed as specified, R&E will notify the Partner within ten days of receiving the incorrect invoice. Upon receipt of the corrected invoice, R&E will make a payment within thirty days of receiving it.
- Payments for incentives verified by R&E will be provided with the Q4 invoice each year.

Please refer to the Food Recovery Partners Reporting and Invoicing Instructions document for additional details.

## Definitions

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- Client Choice: a food distribution model where people seeking food assistance decide which food they would like to receive. Food shelves that use client choice models are often set up like grocery stores, but this is not the only way for an organization to offer client choice.
- Cultural Grocer: a retail store that sells food products and ingredients that are desirable to specific cultural or ethnic identities.
- Food Bank: a nonprofit organization that stores food in bulk for delivery to local food distribution programs such as food shelves, food pantries and meal locations.
- Food Recovery: the collection of edible, surplus food from grocery stores, distributors and other sources for distribution to people in need.
- Food Shelf: a nonprofit organization that collects, stores and distributes food to people in need.

- Gleaning: the harvest and/or recovery of edible, surplus produce from farms and/or farmers' markets for donation to people in need.
- Gleaning Organization: an organization that harvests and/or recovers surplus produce from farms and/or farmers' markets for donation to people in need.