

# FOOD WASTE & RESCUE POTENTIAL IN ALBUQUERQUE

By tackling food waste, cities can rein in climate emissions, reduce municipal waste costs, and help relieve community food insecurity.

Through NRDC's Food Matters project, we have estimated a city-wide baseline level of food waste generation and assessed the potential for increased rescue of surplus food. This snapshot can help identify opportunities for policy, outreach, and interventions to achieve the city's goals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION IN ALBUQUERQUE



Together, households and restaurants likely contribute more than three-quarters of the food waste generated in Albuquerque. Engaging residents in educational outreach about food waste prevention should be a key element of food waste reduction efforts in the city. Additionally, food scraps collection from residences and consumer-facing businesses may pose some challenges but is a critical component of meeting food waste reduction and zero waste goals.



High visibility technical assistance could motivate restaurants or hotels to reduce food waste. Technical assistance in food waste prevention in these two sectors may prove to significantly curtail the amount of food going to waste in Albuquerque.



Small retail stores and corner markets are often less familiar with donation incentives, and fewer of them currently donate. When corner stores are located near one another or near last-mile food organizations logistical challenges may be surmountable. Food donation, food scrap recycling, and food waste prevention education could pair well with existing outreach efforts to these businesses.



Food wholesalers and distributors have business operations somewhat similar to retailers and though we were unable to quantify how much surplus food may be safe for redistribution, the sector may be an area of opportunity for food rescue.

## KEY FACTS

13%

food insecurity  
in Albuquerque

112K

tons of food waste  
in Albuquerque

40%

of all food in the  
U.S. is wasted

\$400B

of food waste each  
year in the U.S.

8%

of global greenhouse  
gas emissions come  
from food waste



ONE  
ALBUQUERQUE  
RQUE sustainability



DOWNLOAD THE FOOD  
MATTERS TOOLKIT

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ALBUQUERQUE  
EFFORTS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

<https://www.cabq.gov/sustainability>  
[swest@cabq.gov](mailto:swest@cabq.gov)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NRDC'S  
FOOD MATTERS INITIATIVE

[www.nrdc.org/food-matters](http://www.nrdc.org/food-matters)  
[foodmatters@nrdc.org](mailto:foodmatters@nrdc.org)

# FOOD WASTE IN ALBUQUERQUE

Though actual measurement of wasted food is optimal, waste audits can be costly, time-consuming, and sometimes impractical. The model for calculating these estimates using proxy metrics was identified from a range of national sources and NRDC's original research.

We estimate 112,600 tons of food waste are generated in Albuquerque each year. When the residential sector was included in our estimates, it is the highest food waste producing sector at nearly 52,000 tons of food waste per year. The largest industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) sector generating food waste is restaurants, totaling 38,000 tons, more than all other sectors combined.



- 46% RESIDENTIAL**
- 34% RESTAURANTS**
- 6% GROCERS & MARKETS**
- 4% HOSPITALITY**
- 3% WHOLESALERS & DISTRIBUTORS**
- 2% EVENTS & RECREATION**
- 2% HEALTHCARE**
- 1% K-12 SCHOOLS**
- 1% MANUFACTURING & PROCESSING**
- 1% CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**
- 1% COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**
- < 1% CITY KITCHENS**

# FOOD RESCUE OPPORTUNITIES

Donation of surplus food serves an important role in meeting the immediate needs of those facing food insecurity. The ambitious scenario used realistic assumptions and existing donation patterns to estimate an ambitious but attainable expansion of food donation efforts.

While restaurants represent a larger portion of overall wasted food, much of that waste occurs after the food is served and is unsuitable for rescue.

