

SCHOOL FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM

WHAT IS A SCHOOL FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM?

A PTA-led initiative to collect and donate safe, uneaten, unopened, leftover foods from school cafeterias to qualified Food Recovery Programs in the community (food banks).

WHY CONSIDER A SCHOOL FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM?

The Food Recovery concept is a new idea that PTA's are considering to reduce the amount of food waste. For food safety reasons, school cafeterias do not allow food that has been purchased by students to be returned to the kitchen. This means that once food is on a student's tray, it must be eaten or tossed out.

WHY IS THERE LEFTOVER FOOD?

There are a lot of reasons kids don't eat everything on their trays. They either pack too much, don't like some of the items the cafeteria is serving, or their "eyes are bigger than their stomachs" when they went through the lunch line. While cafeterias work hard to find ways to make the food appealing so more is consumed and less is wasted, there is always a degree of left over foods - especially at the elementary school level where students are still learning how much food they need to take and eat to feel full.

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Interested persons who want to pursue food waste reduction efforts will need to speak with the school PTA and Building Administrator (Principal) to see if it is feasible.

- Gain approval by the Building Administrator and obtain PTA volunteers. This conversation should involve identifying a location to safely store recovered foods tagged for donation (due to storage issues, this cannot be the school kitchen)
- Work with the PTA to identify a 501(c)3 non-profit food recovery program such as a food bank or church who accepts food donations for charity
- Work with the identified food bank/charity to determine what foods they accept
- Coordinate PTA volunteers to regularly take acceptable food items to be donated

If it is determined that a Food Recovery Program will be undertaken at your school, please contact the Shoreline School District **Food and Nutrition Services Department** at 206.393.4209, so the process can be reviewed before plans move forward.