

# King County Solid Waste Division Commercial Food Waste Grant Final Report

Grant Information	
<i>Grantee:</i>	OSL
<i>CPA Number:</i>	5989737
<i>Project Title:</i>	Edible Food Recovery and Redistribution Program
<i>Report prepared by (name):</i>	Abid Choudhury
<i>Date report prepared:</i>	July 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2019
<i>King County Solid Waste Division Grant Manager:</i>	Karen May

Project Information
<p><i>Please provide an overall summary of the accomplishments of the project, based on project goals and objectives as outlined in the grant agreement. Include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>· a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the impacts of the project</i></li> <li><i>· internal and external factors that contributed to or impeded the success of the project</i></li> <li><i>· an assessment of the success of the Equity and Social Justice element of the project, if applicable</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Your grant manager will contact you if more information is needed.</i></p>
<p>The goal of this grant program was to add 26 new commercial food generators as food donors and rescue and redistribute 300,000 pounds from those generators that would otherwise be slated for the waste stream. To support this goal, grant funding for this program provided for additional drivers and the development of a software application (app) as a matching tool to identify and connect OSL's food rescue program with edible food generators and track the pounds of food recovered.</p> <p>Through the duration of this funding, OSL added 38 food generator donors located within King County but outside of Seattle and Milton.</p> <p>A Grand Total of <b>190,793 lbs</b> of Edible Food was rescued before it hit the waste stream and used to prepare and serve No-Cost meals we provide to those struggling with hunger. In 2018, these pounds helped us to serve 1,027,648 no-cost, nutritionally dense meals.</p>

A total of **931 lbs** of the food donations were composted after failing food quality standards. Prior to composting, **191,724 lbs** of food were collected and saved from the King County Landfill in total. We value the edible pounds conservatively at \$2.99 per pound; **\$570,471.07**.

The increased donations in edible produce from King County donors allowed us to save an additional \$24,000 from September 2018 to June 2019. Before these partnerships, OSL purchased \$1200 in produce weekly from Charlies Produce. Our current produce donations are in great abundance and organic or naturally grown.

From Jan 2019 – Mar 2019, The Meydenbauer Center donated **998 lbs** of food to OSL. After downloading our Second Helping app in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr, their donations increased **1483%** from Apr 2019- June 2019; a total of **15,795 lbs**. We were told that the ease of the new app motivated the donor to contribute rather than discard.

A Seattle area donor, Scrappy's Bitters, was also given the Second Helping app in March 2019. From Nov 2018- Feb 2019: **13,132 lbs** of fruit was donated on a weekly scheduled basis. After being given the app, from Mar 2019- June 2019: **25,570 lbs** of fruit was donated on a weekly basis consisting of 2 pickups per week for each posted donation. This is a **95%** increase in fruit donations due to the utilization of the app.

External/Internal Factors that contributed to the success of the project:

- *Dale Alekel: King County Green Schools-*  
Support from Dale ensured the acquisition of nearly 21 schools as regular donors of edible food. This effort produced **24,074 lbs** of edible food during throughout the grant period.
- *Jeanette Brizendine: City of Federal Way Public Works-*  
Jeanette initiated a conversation between the Asian food market sector in Federal Way and OSL to assist is future donations. Jeanette also connected OSL with Communities in Schools allowing OSL to contribute food donation to students in need. Jeanette passed along supplies in the form of Greens Pans and Insulated Food Bags which greatly help in the collection of food donations.
- *Compass Group: Microsoft Catering/Vending*  
Compass Group have been longtime partners of OSL. When expanding our partnership via the King County Food Waste Grant, Compass Group opened the opportunity to acquire their milk returns as donations. This accumulated to **74,762 lbs** of milk donations since the start of the grant period. Microsoft 83 accounted for more than **39%** of the collected food donations from out of the 35 donors in this partnership.
- Current Partnerships with Meydenbauer Center, Microsoft, and Food Lifeline helped OSL acquire partnerships meeting the geographic requirements as well as donors donors who provided large amounts of donated food. Examples include but are not limited to QFC, Whole Foods, US Foods, Microsoft 83, Safeway, and Pagliacci Pizza.
- The acquisition of another refrigerated vehicle during the grant period helped expand our reach to other donors in King County without relying on just 1 dedicated driver.

Refrigeration, driver availability, and operating costs are major factors on acquiring a donor.

- Leasing of the Cold and Frozen storage space in Tukwila from Uhaul helped relieve the burden put on the existing storage space within our kitchen spaces. The space alone is more than twice the size of any 2 kitchens put together. This allowed most of our King County donations to be stored for redistribution the following days after pickup.
- Management support from donors to want to provide donations for our Organization is pivotal and was always expressed in nearly every donation received. Though organizing donations take away from their main duties, being able to provide lifesaving products was a motivating driver for managers to their staff.

External/Internal factors that impeded the success of the project:

- 3 Drivers were hired and left OSL employment during the Grant Period. This meant that there were limited staffing to be able to cover newer donors and their associated routes as well as availability of managerial staff to: train new drivers, acquire new donors, train new donors, and manage our food rescue fleets deficiencies and problems.
- Storage shortages in an area as congested and expensive as Seattle caused difficulties with OSL food rescue operations. We had insufficient storage space for the larger amounts of recovered/rescued food. Until the lease of the Tukwila Cold and Frozen space was made, OSL had to limit the acquisition of large scale donors in order to prevent overloading operational storage space.
- The coding errors and problems with the availability of the volunteer software engineers regarding the Second Helping plagued the development within the original first year reporting phase. Due to the complex nature of the coding required to support this app, many volunteers had to break up their dedicated time to this app over a period of months in order to successfully operate the app. Once the app was operational, a coding error did not allow the app to prompt the registration of new users to the app. 8 Days were needed to find the error and correct the issue.
- Repairs on our refrigerated vehicles during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the grant period caused us to lose the ability to pick up several thousand pounds of recovered food.
- The reduction of milk purchasing from Microsoft 83 (Compass Group) equated to fewer milk returns being available for donations. They used the pounds recorded by our organization to reduce their waste by as low as 173% when compared to their highest donation from February 2019 to June 2019.
- The language barrier that existed between OSL/Federal Way Public Works and the Asian grocery markets in Federal Way slowed the progression of a viable and high producing partnership. The lack of education regarding proper food donation techniques, and what can/can't be donated greatly affected progression of the relationship. Even the first ever donation of product resulted in the disposal of the same product after it was revealed that the fish and crab were rotten and then re-frozen in preparation for our arrival. It cost us to dump the food.
- The immediate and frequent change-over of staff in new/current/potential donors via the Second Helping app made their use of the app difficult. Where the app was downloaded 3 times by staff, neither one would use the app before he/she left that job.

*An assessment of the success of the Equity and Social Justice element of the project:*

- All the edible food donations and non-food donations we received from each of our donors were used or shared by OSL to continue our efforts in promoting food equity. OSL serves those who struggle with hunger; children, individuals/families from all ethnic backgrounds, ages, genders, sexual orientations, health situations, and economically challenged. Those we serve are predominantly homeless, live in shelters and tiny house villages. Veterans with no employment options, college graduates, families living in vehicles working minimum wage jobs, elders who have been forgotten, displaced, or unnoticed, health challenged individuals who lost employment, foster children cut loose on their 18th birthday, unemployed welders, artists, musicians, chefs, teachers, technicians, single mom's/dad's, grandmothers, grandfathers. Some simply lost their job, got too old to work, got kicked out, got beat up by an abusive partner. Some contribute to their own difficulties, many do not.
- Organizations we partnered with include but are not limited to: Urban Hands, Noel House, Rose of Lima, Union Gospel Mission, Bread of Life, Millionaires Club, Communities in Schools, LifeWire, Tukwila Food Pantry, Queen Anne Food Bank, Ballard Food Bank, Boys and Girls Club of Bellevue, Navigation Center, The Bridge, PSKS, ACRS, Compass Housing Alliance and many others.
- The wide variety of produce, protein and dry good donations allowed OSL and partners agencies, to provide clients an assortment of foods that cater to their specific dietary needs; gluten Free, diabetic friendly, culturally appropriate, vegan, vegetarian, food sensitivities, etc.
- Equity was heavily supported by the introduction of the high quality of donated food from King County Donors which included organic products. This ensured that those who struggled with hunger were provided with quality meals with the best ingredients on the market. Whether already prepared or in raw form, these donations gave our clients equal access to healthy nutrition.
- Many of the Grab-n-Go items such as salads, apples, string cheeses, and deli Sandwiches from the Lake Washington School District (LWSD) and the grocery markets went to feed clients at our Outdoor Meal Site in Seattle. Founded by OSL, this is the only City sanctioned meal site, and OSL does not have any requirements for a non-cost meal. This differs from many shelters who may require preset conditions to be met in order to stay at the shelter and eat (age, gender, veteran status, housing status). The food from this grant ensured that these clients received a free nutritional meal and then had food to take with them after, whether it was to their home, tent, work, etc.

*Please provide any other information that the grant manager should know about this project.*

OSL was able to reuse a vast majority of the donations from Microsoft 83. Even though they utilized our data to eventually reduce their purchasing of the milk being donated, it does in the spirit of Reduce-Reuse-Recycle make great approaches to reduce food waste.

The second Helping app is proving to be useful for food rescue efforts in and out of Seattle but within King County. It was shown the ability to track food waste that was not donated but rather, "Thrown Out" for one reason or the other. When an infrastructure is built to support multiple recipients of donations, OSL will share this tool with other organizations.

The Worm Compost Bin was successful in not only providing proof that Worm Composting is beneficial, but it educated the owners of the bin of its usefulness. During its usage, roughly 80 lbs of inedible food was fed to the worms. The feeding process was slow and affected heavily by the cold winter months. The types of food given to the worms included mostly, if not all, vegetables and egg shells. The bin was stored at an OSL employees front yard which made feeding and analysis quick and efficient. The bin was given back to Enactus after the 1-year project test was over. They utilized the data we collected to begin finding a suitable recipient of a large scale worm composting operation within Seattle.

As per our discussion via email, OSL accepts prepared food as donations. Via the Second Helping app or not, these donations are treated the same as raw product. Interurban Hotel in Tukwila provides premade entrees such as soup and Baked Chicken. The only stipulation to these types of prepared food is that they be frozen inside a donation bag (we provide) or in an aluminum pan. This make transportation easier and ensures food quality and safety. Grocery markets such a QFC and Whole Foods provide prepared meals in containers which do not need to be frozen due to the stability of the container they are in, but are kept at temperature in our refrigerated vehicles.

OSL and other Meal Programs greatly benefit from large scale prepared food donations.

*Please provide feedback on your experience with this Commercial Food Waste grant program. Do you have suggestions for how to improve the program?*

Our experience with the Commercial Food Waste Grant Program has shown it to be greatly beneficial to, not only our organization and our donors, but to those we serve. The food waste grant has allowed our organization to have access to a larger field of donors and a wider array or available ingredients that we would have ultimately purchased if it weren't for this partnership.

Though a projects scope of work may not include being partnered with other organizations or entities that qualify for the same grant, being connected and informed of other grant recipient contact information could potentially benefit both parties involved. For instance, our organization was unaware of the other grant recipients or of how to find out who they were. We then encountered 2 of them: *Federal Way Public Works* (who reached out to us) and *Divert*. Our eventual partnership with Federal Way Public Works lead to a beneficial relationship with them for this grant period and beyond. Our encounter with Divert also affected our donation totals by an unknown margin.

We believe that being connected after winning the grant proposal could benefit both parties even though our scope of work may not immediately include each other. This could result in unknown benefits as two or more entities combine efforts or assist each other in goals, whether it be a symbiotic relationship, or a Pay-It-Forward effort.

King County is a large and respected government agency with a massive amount of information and data. We believe that additional information gleaned from other grant recipients may benefit the entire system. An example would be Karen May sending us information about other Grants and projects related to Food Rescue. This information was beneficial to our food rescue efforts in and outside the grant aimed towards waste reduction.