



Fresh Rescue Champions Project

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In 2021, the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded the **Multiscale RECIPES for Sustainable Food Systems Network**, a five-year multi-disciplinary network of over 40 researchers and 15 institutions to conduct projects focused on addressing wasted food.

Housed within the RECIPES Network, for this project, **researchers from Johns Hopkins University (JHU) Bloomberg School of Public Health and Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) partnered with Albertsons with the primary goal to improve their “Fresh Rescue” Food Donation program at banner stores across the Mid-Atlantic.**



Fresh Rescue
Champions

Improve the Fresh Rescue donation program at Albertsons banner stores.

Explore whether an employee-cohort model would work for this project, as well as in other Albertsons divisions and stores across the US.

Challenge power imbalances that often occur in retail corporations that result from top-down decision making.



REVISITING OUR NDRMS

How have we been living up to this?

How have we not?

How can we achieve this?

FRESH RESOURCE CHAMPIONS

COMMUNITY NORMS

honest + respectful. Honesty and respect creates trust. Trust creates respect and the respect creates trust.

5 Connect + work as a team. Even though we come from different stores, organizations, backgrounds, we are one team. Build on the strengths of others and work together, not against each other.

6 Embrace flexibility and clarity. Things don't always go as planned. We may need to change directions.

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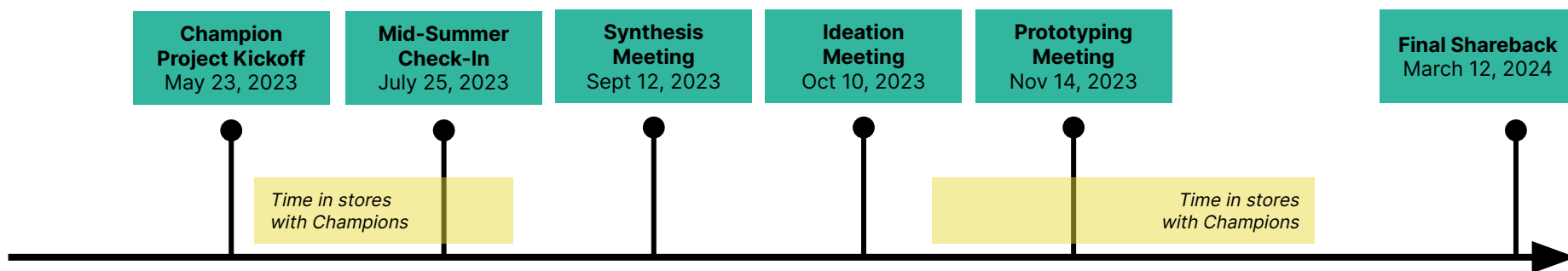
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Meetings with Champion cohort



Project process/timeline



Our Findings in Summary

Poor and inconsistent communication, mixed messages and expectations, and insufficient guidance from leadership creates anxiety, confusion, inconsistency, and skepticism amongst associates.

Lack of standardization, incentives, and low staff capacity leads to greater burden on some employees, increased loss, decreased donations, and an overall weak donation culture.


Corporate decision-making and limited Department Manager autonomy leads to more waste, fewer donations, and associate frustration.

Associates desire more transparency with and about their store's Donation Partners.



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Strategy 1: Conduct New Trainings for the Fresh Rescue Donation Program

Fresh Rescue Champions Project Strategy 1: Conduct New Trainings for the Fresh Rescue Donation Program

About this Training Guide

In the spring and summer of 2023, the Fresh Rescue Champions project used an associate-driven cohort model to explore the end-to-end process of food products entering and leaving Albertsons banner stores in the Mid-Atlantic region. Through the project, associates shared their experiences with and perspectives on existing practices, bright spots, and challenges in the retail setting that impact food donation and waste. The associates and Johns Hopkins/MDA team used this information to co-design strategies to strengthen donations.

Based on the associates' experiences, expertise, and recommendations, the Fresh Rescue Champions prioritized developing guides for all associates and leadership at Albertsons to be oriented about the Fresh Rescue Donation Program. The Fresh Rescue program's success requires associates and leadership to understand program procedures and their own roles within the program, and to appropriately and consistently know when items should be sold, donated, or discarded. Success may be further strengthened based on knowledge of the program's social benefits, which the training provides. Associates emphasize that it is important for leadership at all levels to be trained to create collective knowledge and buy in so that they can provide guidance to those who report to them. Cross-level training will also contribute to a more positive culture of food donations within the Albertsons companies, as everyone will share knowledge of the processes of food donation and its impact in the community.

Messages from leadership about their priorities make a difference. Store Directors prioritize what their District leaders prioritize. District leaders prioritize what their Division leaders prioritize, and Division leaders prioritize what their National leaders prioritize. It is clear that this is a priority to all levels of leadership, one that will ultimately impact the associates in stores who are making decisions about what is and is not donated.

This document provides outlines of eight trainings programs adapted to the needs of associates at all levels of Albertsons companies (National Corporate, Division Corporate, District Corporate, Operation Specialists, Store Directors, Department Managers, Receivers, Cashiers/Courtesy Clerks). The trainings cover:

- The importance of the Fresh Rescue Food Donation program
- Donation food safety and quality
- Food donation processes (and challenges)
- Donation incentives
- Strengthening connections with Donation Partners
- Overview of roles and responsibilities, and chain of command
- Opportunity for QIA

DRAFT — 1

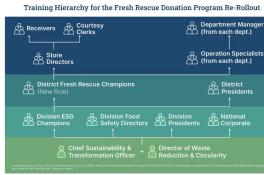


Figure 1: Training Hierarchy

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DRAFT — 3

Strategy 2: Utilize Updated Donation Guidelines with Posters and Detailed Handouts

Fresh Rescue Food Donation Program DONATING PRODUCE ITEMS

ITEM TYPE	TIPS	STORAGE
1. Pre-cut produce packaged prior to store arrival	1. Picked up or frozen within 24 hours post the date label.	1. Store at 41° F or less if pickup is within 24 hours. Otherwise freeze.
2. Key products and other refrigerated items like dressings and juices	1. Picked up or frozen within 5 days post the date label.	1. Store at 41° F or less if pickup is within 5 days. Otherwise freeze.
3. Shelf-stable items	1. Picked up within 7 days post the date label.	1. Store at room temperature.
4. Shortly produce sold individually or in bags at room temperature	1. Picked up within 24 hours post the date label. (if applicable)	1. Store at 41° F or less while awaiting pick-up. Do not freeze.

Softer produce sold or room temperature

- For produce sold in bags: If a few one bag, compare the best items, use the rest individually, or donate them if they cannot be sold.
- For produce sold in clamshell containers: If a few one bag, put the mostly items and either receive them to sell the full container or donate the partially full container. Store softer produce and yogurt parfaits for donation with other fragile items where they will not be damaged.

Temperature-controlled produce not yogurt parfaits

- Recovery Programs: Follow protocol for recovery programs before donating items. If a recovered item such as yogurt parbait did not sell, it can be donated.
- Vendor/Warehouse Credit: Always check if an item can receive vendor or warehouse credit before donating. Pickups do not receive on "donation" after it has been scanned for credit.
- Mispick: Donate mispick items that meet these guidelines.

DO NOT DONATE ITEMS IF THEY ARE:

- Discarded, moldy, or contains bugs
- Not in original or "store ready packaging"
- Refrigerated items not stored properly at 41° F
- Mixing product codes or date labels
- Leading fluid
- Dissolved in a recall
- Irregular or bad odor
- Damaged or soiled

*Individually wrapped items from a damaged package will be returned to you for reuse from our date labels.

For more detailed donation guidelines, please see the detailed Fresh Rescue Donation Guidelines Handout.

Fresh Rescue Food Donation Program DONATING DELI ITEMS

ITEM TYPE	TIPS	STORAGE
1. Items prepared in-store with hygiene safety or fresh ingredients	1. Picked up within 24 hours post the date label.	1. Store at 41° F or less, unless otherwise specified. Do not freeze.
2. Pre-packaged shelf-stable items	1. Picked up within 7 days post the date label.	1. Store at room temperature unless otherwise specified.
3. Hot and cold items, hot and cold pastas, soups, fresh ingredients	1. Picked up or frozen within 24 hours post the date label.	1. Store at 41° F or less if pickup is within 24 hours. Otherwise freeze items.
4. Pre-packaged refrigerated items	1. Picked up or frozen within 5 days post the date label.	1. Store at 41° F or less if pickup is within 5 days. Otherwise freeze items.

DO NOT DONATE ITEMS IF THEY ARE:

- Discarded, moldy, or contains bugs
- Not in original or "store ready packaging"
- Refrigerated items not stored properly at 41° F
- Mixing product codes or date labels
- Irregular or bad odor
- Damaged or soiled

Additional Donated Items: Food Donation Process

Donor Donation Process

- Inspect contents that are not on the department floor and call out items that are damaged, moldy, or contain bugs.
- Use the Food Donation Stations for your items based on inventory and the location of the items.
- Make sure to thoroughly inspect each item. Use, track, or other signs of damage, mold, or bugs are present. Do not donate items that are damaged, moldy, or contain bugs.
- Place items in the appropriate container. Use the "Donation" and "Store" labels to identify the items. The "Donation" label is used for items that are damaged, moldy, or contain bugs. The "Store" label is used for items that are not damaged, moldy, or contain bugs.
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Strategy 3: Strengthen Connections between Donation Partners, Associates, & Stores

Fresh Rescue Champions Program
Donation Partner Onboarding Form

Background Information

Your organization's name: _____

Organizer's mailing address: _____

Qualified 501(c)(3)? Yes No

Primary point of contact: Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Preferred mode(s) of communication: Email Text Phone Call

Delivery driver: Name: _____ Phone number: _____

Available days and times for pickup:

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Time							

Donation Preferences

Please indicate which of the following items you accept (check all that apply):

Produce **Reason for not accepting (if applicable)**

Flour, managers, pasta, gardening items
Canned goods
Over-the-counter medicine (ibuprofen, cough medicine, etc.)
Pet products (non-prescription vet supplies, pet food, pet toys, pet shampoos, etc.)
Home, health, and beauty products
Baby products (formula, diapers, etc.)
Food items (fresh, sealed, e.g., Dairy Matters) that do not meet, have expired (if in not present)
Hygiene products
Dry cleaning

Donation Partner Teach-In Visits

The purpose of this training opportunity is to educate the business's staff and guests on the value of the organization. This training is a key to the success of the partnership. The training will be provided to the business's staff and guests on the value of the organization.

What are the objectives? _____

Who will be attending? _____

When will the training occur? _____

Additional Comments: _____

Donation Partner In-Store Events

The purpose of these events is to educate associates, customers, and staff members about the value of the organization. The events will be held at the organization's store and will be held at the organization's store and will be held at the organization's store.

What are the objectives? _____

Who will be attending? _____

When will the event occur? _____

Additional Comments: _____

Fresh Rescue Champions Program
Immersive Training at Donation Partner Site

The purpose of this training is to educate associates, customers, and staff members about the value of the organization. The training will be held at the organization's store and will be held at the organization's store.

Preparing for the Training: _____

Time to Train: _____

What has to happen? _____

Who makes it happen? _____

Additional Considerations: _____

What resources are needed? _____

Strategy 4: Run a Donation Incentives Contest

Fresh Rescue Champions Program
Food Donation Incentive Contest: 12 Consecutive Weeks

Fresh Rescue Champions Program
Food Donation Incentive Contest: Quarterly

These forms contain detailed rules and regulations for the donation incentive contests, including eligibility criteria, prize structures, and contest duration.

Recommendation: Enhance Communications & Feedback Mechanisms

Recommendation: Enhance Communications and Feedback Mechanisms

Associates spoke a great deal about challenges related to **information about and timely responses to their question** regarding food donation policies and processes; and about perceptions of **limited opportunities for and receptivity to ideas, input, and feedback**.

Increasing the openness, clarity, timeliness, and accessibility of communication and feedback loops will improve the Fresh overall and each of the interventions, and will also create benefits for associates' work more broadly.

- Valuing a culture of ongoing, interactive, communication and feedback where associates' ideas, input, and suggestions are intentionally sought out, encouraged, and welcomed, where they feel heard, feel safe in sharing (without fear of recourse), feel their ideas and input are respected and acted upon, and feel themselves appreciated, validated, and recognized as experts;
- Developing clear processes, spaces/opportunities, and points of contact for associates to raise questions, share ideas and input, provide feedback, and ensure accountability, responsiveness, and follow through;
- Providing associates with access to appropriate and accessible technology (e.g., phones, iPads, computers) to enable ongoing and timely communication and feedback (including an option for anonymity).

Fresh Rescue Champions



CHAMPIONS BEFORES & AFTERS

Benefit of donating

SHRINK is SHRINK if we can donate Food instead of going in the land fill it is not only better for the people but, better for the planet.

The end come of donating & not throwing away Good Food.

The amount of people that come out for the Food donations (volunteer)

Seeing Donation partners in action put in perspective just how impactful this is.

LEARN How impactful OUR DECISIONS AT STORE LEVEL ARE.

Food insecurity

Seeing the Food Donation pictures. The long line of people waiting for food.

LEARNED How impactful FOOD DONATIONS ARE to the community is.

How important donations is to Food store residents.

How Important FOOD DONATIONS ARE.

everything!

It has changed Everything from the Start! Thanks

Differences between Stores

LEARNED How Different EACH STORES Daily operation is.

How much can be donated

How much Starbucks actually can donate
What's allowed vs not

What we can donate vs what we cannot donate

FUN/REWARDING EXPERIENCE

How you can actually have fun while working

This was a meaningful experience

How Great of an Experience this has been

Optimism about change

This Process has changed my optimism for impacted change.

Process changed donation process completely - Starbucks

That couldn't wait to work with this

About the experience and the importance of their expertise...

“We are all valuable to this donation operation.”

“How important our knowledge is.”

“Learning how impactful our decisions at store level are.”

***“How important this is. Don’t let it die down.
Everyone plays an important role.”***



Fresh Rescue
Champions

"We gotta leave our kids with something. And we can wait for somebody else to fix it or we can take the initiative and do it. I think we are in a position for change and I think we can do that."



"...the hard part is over. We did the research and it was a lot...so now we kinda leave it in y'all's hands and we trust that y'all will do the right thing, because I think it will be impactful more than any of us in this room will ever understand."



About the experience and the importance of their expertise...

First champion: "I think everybody feels the energy... I think everybody is excited to be a part of something. In 25 years, this is probably one of the biggest, most exciting things that I've been involved in."

Second Champion: "I can second that and it's been 30 years."



Fresh Rescue
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About the experience and the importance of their expertise...

"...the place that we donate is a place that I came up in as a child. So seeing [that] I said, 'Wow, that's back home. That's my own community.' So it's full circle. So I think we, as Department Managers, [can] be proud of what we do. Because...we are impacting our community in more ways than one."



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Thank You



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Champions