

DC's Efforts to Reduce Food Waste in Restaurants

April 2024

Caroline Howe





Step 1: Plans and Legislation

2013 &
2018

- Sustainable DC (2013) and Sustainable DC 2.0 (2018): “Reduce Food Waste by 60% by 2032”

2018

- Save Good Food Act of 2018: Tax credits, liability protections

2020

- Zero Waste Omnibus Act (2020): Requires large business organics separation

Soon!

- Zero Waste DC Plan: Donation requirements and composting programs

Food Waste Innovation Grants: Overview

- **Goal:** Provide support to **restaurants, food manufacturers, shared commercial kitchens, and commercial corridors** to **minimize their food waste going to landfill and minimize urban rat populations.**
- **Mechanism:** Annual grants (10-25/year) up to \$300-500K (in total)
- **Manager:** DC's Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD)

Food Waste Innovation Grants **OPEN**

Deadline: December 22, 2022 at 2pm

The Food Waste Innovation Grants will support District small businesses by helping them to:

- Increase food security, productivity and economic efficiency
- Improve environmental impact & reduce rodents
- Cut businesses costs in purchasing & waste

Businesses have reported that \$1 invested in food waste reduction, returns \$6!

DSLBD DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

MLK DELI
PREMIUM SANDWICHES MADE FRESH DAILY



Food Waste Innovation Grants: Uses & Impacts

- Refrigeration and freezing infrastructure to reduce wastage;
- Equipment and staff training around waste reduction, including preparation and portioning to reduce waste;
- Food preservation tools like vacuum sealers, dehydrators, and freezers;
- Onsite food production to maximize freshness;
- Food transportation and technology to enable another business to upcycle or cross-utilize underutilized ingredients;
- Food donation programs, including packaging and collective refrigeration in shared kitchens to enable more efficient rescue operations;
- Waste programs that will compost food waste, compact non-biodegradables, and effectively recycle all that can be recycled.

Food Waste Innovation Grants: Partnerships and Outreach

Partnerships



- Latino Economic Development Center
 - Deep-dive technical assistance
 - Training for new businesses on food waste



- Agricity / Compost Cab
 - Free food waste assessments in multiple languages (with DC interpreters)
 - Compost Credits, or free food scrap collection for businesses (\$2,000 in first year)



- Food Rescue US

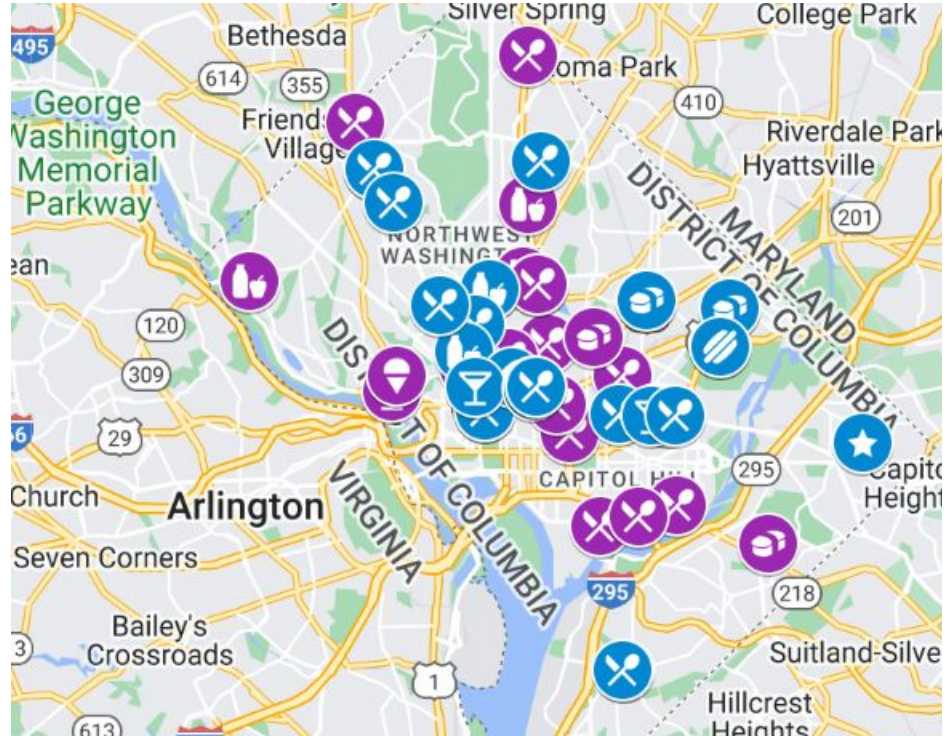
Outreach

- Trainings on food waste and potential projects in 6 languages, including ASL
- Outreach materials in 8 languages
- Door-to-door outreach with partner agencies
- Targeted rodent hot spots identified by DC Health

Food Waste Innovation Grants: Awards

Grantees

- All 8 Wards of DC
- Grants from \$650 to \$65,000
- Caterers, cafes, bars, restaurants, makers, commercial kitchens, cottage food
- Upcycling, diversion, donation, composting onsite & off



Food Waste Innovation Grants: Case Study

The Queen Vic

- Installed a vertical trash compactor to reduce garbage pickups
- Divert food scraps w/ Compost Cab
- Bilingual signage for staff instructions
- “The Dumpster” late-night menu

- Chef Ryan Gordon on food rescue initiatives



“
Just do it!
”



Impact

- 22 Grants awarded to fund innovative food waste reduction projects
- 57 Waste assessments delivered
- 20 Food businesses actively composting through FWIG Compost Credits
- 76k Pounds of food waste diverted from landfill
- 95 Tons of CO2 equivalent diverted
- 8 National and international fora addressed

