



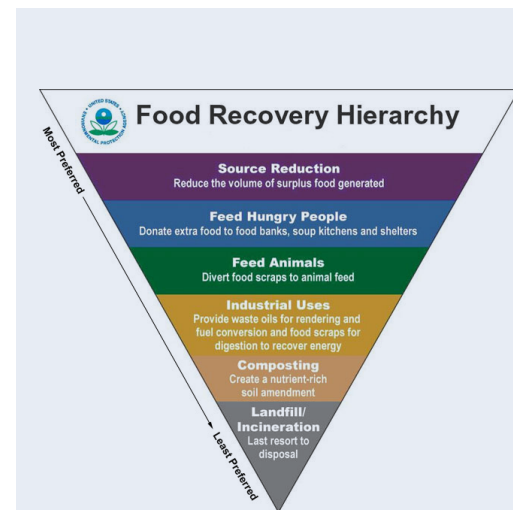
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Less Food to Landfill Toolkit

### How food waste reduction, landfill avoidance, and tracking can help reduce greenhouse gases

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, landfilled food waste produces methane, a greenhouse gas (GHG) that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. In March 2016, [Rethink Food Waste Through Economics and Data](#) (ReFED) released a roadmap for a 20 percent reduction in U.S. food waste by 2026, resulting in an estimated drop of 18 million tons of GHG emissions annually. According to ReFED, that's like switching off four coal-fired power plants every year.

More food reaches landfills and incinerators than any other single material in municipal solid waste. Fifty-two million tons of food is sent to landfills annually (equating to 21 percent of landfill volume), plus another 10 million tons is discarded or left unharvested on farms. According to [Feeding America](#), the largest domestic hunger relief organization, food service operations are responsible for 10.25 million tons of wasted food each year. Hospitals generate more than 29 pounds of waste per staffed bed per day. It is estimated that food comprises 10 to 15 percent of an average hospital's waste.



*“Let’s feed people, not landfills. By reducing wasted food in landfills, we cut harmful methane emissions that fuel climate change, conserve our natural resources, and protect our planet for future generations.”*

- Former EPA Administrator  
Gina McCarthy

## This toolkit will help you:

1. Get informed and create a project team, including food services, environmental services, and community benefit
2. Set a baseline and conduct an annual assessment for:
  - c. Pre-consumer food waste
  - d. Cafeteria and patient tray post-consumer food waste
  - e. Catering waste
6. Select a goal for food waste reduction
7. Assess and establish food waste collection parameters
8. Identify strategies to reduce and prevent food waste to make progress on the goal

### Toolkit resources:

Practice Greenhealth members have access to the full [Less Food to Landfill Toolkit](#) with health care-specific resources on:

- Get-started guide including suggested goals
- Posters and templates to help with communication strategies
- Purchasing guidance
- Case studies from Practice Greenhealth members working on food waste reduction strategies
- A five-part archived webinar series reviewing goals, tracking, and interventions
- Peer-to-peer learning and one-on-one support are available through Practice Greenhealth membership

The EPA provides general tools and resources in the [Food Recovery Challenge](#).



In 2015, Virginia Mason Medical Center reduced food waste from kitchen operations by 80 percent using the Virginia Mason Production System to improve their operations. The kitchen began to cook food from scratch and focus on just-in-time cooking, making just enough based on their census rather than preparing extra items. Scratch cooking involves more food prep, so the hospital started the WasteWatchers program, with each chef receiving a clear bin allowing them to monitor their food waste, which becomes compost at the end of the day. Virginia Mason estimates it reduced food waste by 14 tons in 2015 — a 60 percent reduction — by focusing on smarter food preparation processes.



Let Practice Greenhealth help you lead change in your hospital. To get started today, email [membership@practicegreenhealth.org](mailto:membership@practicegreenhealth.org).