



SONOMA COUNTY WASTE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Meeting of the Board of Directors

August 20, 2026
REGULAR MEETING

Regular Session will begin at 9:00 a.m.

Estimated Ending Time 11:30 a.m.

City of Santa Rosa Council Chambers
100 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA

Meeting will also streamed via Zoom:
<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/92248855470?pwd=OFFVNUIiWVh5Wk5SSzVyWWdWbndjdz09>

Webinar ID: 922 4885 5470
US: +1 669 444 9171
Passcode: 157476

Meeting Agenda and Documents

ZERO WASTE SONOMA

Meeting of the Board of Directors

August 20, 2026

REGULAR MEETING

Regular Session will begin at 9:00 a.m.

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Note: This packet is 186 pages total



Zero Waste Sonoma

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PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public comment may be submitted via recorded voice message or email. Public comment may also be made by “raising your hand” using the Zoom platform.

Voice recorded public comment: To submit public comment via recorded message, please call 707-565-4432 by 5:00 pm Wednesday, August 19th. State your name and the item number(s) on which you wish to speak. The recordings will be limited to two minutes. These comments may be played or read at the appropriate time during the board meeting.

Email public comment: To submit an emailed public comment to the Board please email leslie.lukacs@sonoma-county.org and provide your name, the number(s) on which you wish to speak, and your comment. These comments will be emailed to all Board members and can be provided anytime leading up to and throughout the meeting.

COMMITMENT TO CIVILITY: The ZWS Board of Directors has a commitment to civility. To assure civility in its public meetings, the public is encouraged to engage in respectful dialogue that supports freedom of speech and values diversity of opinion. Board Members, staff, and members of the public are expected to establish and maintain a cordial and respectful atmosphere during discussions; and foster meaningful dialogue free of personal attacks. Members of the public must also adhere to the speaking time limit. Any commenters in violation of civility standards will be disconnected.



Agenda

Item

1. Call to Order
2. Agenda Approval
3. Public Comments (items not on the agenda)

Consent (w/attachments)

- 4.1 Minutes of the July 16, 2026 Regular Meeting
- 4.2 July, August, and September 2026 Outreach Calendar
- 4.3 Zero Waste Sonoma FY 2024-25 Audit of Financial Statements
- 4.4 Budget Adjustment to the FY 26/27 Budget for Rollover Projects from FY 25/26
- 4.5 Zero Waste Sonoma Regular Meeting Location Change

Regular Calendar

5. Presentation and Conclusion of the Food Service Ware Technical Assistance Project with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. [Pagal]
6. Final Report on the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grant Project [Tan]
7. Introduction to Senate Bill (SB) 54 – Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act [Lukacs]
8. Boardmember Comments – NO ACTION
9. Executive Director Report – VERBAL REPORT
10. Staff Comments – NO ACTION
11. Next ZWS meeting: September 17, 2026
12. Adjourn Meeting

Consent Calendar: These matters include routine financial and administrative actions and are usually approved by a single majority vote. Any Boardmember may remove an item from the consent calendar.

Regular Calendar: These items include significant and administrative actions of special interest and are classified by program area. The regular calendar also includes "Set Matters," which are noticed hearings, work sessions and public hearings.

Public Comments: Pursuant to Rule 6, Rules of Governance of the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency/Zero Waste Sonoma, members of the public desiring to speak on items that are within the jurisdiction of the Agency shall have an opportunity at the beginning and during each regular meeting of the Agency. When recognized by the Chair, each person should give his/her name and address and limit comments to 3 minutes. Public comments will follow the staff report and subsequent Boardmember questions on that Agenda item and before Boardmembers propose a motion to vote on any item.

Disabled Accommodation: If you have a disability that requires the agenda materials to be in an alternative format or requires an interpreter or other person to assist you while attending this meeting, please contact the Zero Waste Sonoma Office at 195 Concourse Blvd, Suite B, Santa Rosa, (707) 565-3788, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, to ensure arrangements for accommodation by the Agency.

Noticing: This notice is posted 72 hours prior to the meeting on the internet at www.zerowastesonoma.gov



To: Zero Waste Sonoma Board Members

From: Leslie Lukacs, Executive Director

Subject: August 20, 2026 Board Meeting Agenda Notes

Consent Calendar

These items include routine financial, informational and administrative items and **staff recommends that they be approved en masse by a single vote.** Any Board member may remove an item from the consent calendar for further discussion or a separate vote by bringing it to the attention of the Chair.

- 4.1 Minutes of the July 16, 2026 Meeting
- 4.2 July, August, September 2026 Outreach Calendar
- 4.3 Zero Waste Sonoma FY 2024-25 Audit of Financial Statements
- 4.4 Budget Adjustment to the FY 26/27 Budget for Rollover Projects from FY 25/26
- 4.5 Zero Waste Sonoma Regular Meeting Location Change

5. Presentation and Conclusion of the Food Service Ware Technical Assistance Project with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. At the August 21, 2025 regular meeting, the Board approved and authorized staff to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) to Conduct Technical Assistance for Education on Disposable Food Service Ware Ordinances in Sonoma County. The ZWS Board accepted staff's recommendation to award the contract to Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. at the October 16, 2025 regular meeting. The project was completed in June 2026. **Staff Recommendation:** Receive an informational presentation from Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. and their subcontractors.

6. Final Report on the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grant Project. Staff applied for the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction grant through the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) on September 1, 2022 and was successfully awarded \$298,500 on March 27, 2023. ZWS Executive Director signed short-form agreements with three grant partners: Daily Acts, Petaluma Bounty, and Zero FoodPrint (ZFP). The grant was completed in May 2026. **Staff Recommendation:** Receive an informational presentation on the completion of the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grant project.

7. Introduction to Senate Bill (SB) 54 – Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act. SB 54, the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act, was signed into law on June 30, 2022. The legislation establishes California's first comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for single-use packaging and plastic food service ware. As the regional agency responsible for coordinating waste reduction and recycling programs on behalf of Sonoma County and its nine incorporated cities, Zero Waste Sonoma has been actively engaged in both statewide and local implementation efforts. **Staff Recommendation:** Receive an informational presentation on Senate Bill (SB) 54, the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act



Minutes of July 16, 2026 Meeting

Zero Waste Sonoma met on July 16, 2026, at the City of Santa Rosa Council Chambers, 100 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa, California.

Board Members Present:

City of Cloverdale – Andrés Marquez
City of Cotati – Sylvia Lemus
City of Healdsburg – Larry Zimmer
City of Petaluma – Patrick Carter
City of Rohnert Park – Emily Sanborn

City of Santa Rosa – Mark Stapp
City of Sebastopol – Sandra Maurer
City of Sonoma – Jack Ding
County of Sonoma – Rebecca Hermosillo
Town of Windsor – JB Leep

Staff Present:

Counsel: Ethan Walsh
Staff: Leslie Lukacs, Thora Collard, Xinci Tan, Courtney Scott, Amber Johnson
Agency Clerk: Amber Johnson

1. Call to Order Regular Meeting

Regular session was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Introductions

2. Agenda Approval

Motion: For approval of the agenda.

First: County of Sonoma – Rebecca Hermosillo

Second: City of Sonoma – Jack Ding

Vote Count:

City of Cloverdale – Andrés Marquez
City of Cotati – Sylvia Lemus
City of Healdsburg – Larry Zimmer
City of Petaluma – Patrick Carter
City of Rohnert Park – Emily Sanborn

City of Santa Rosa – Mark Stapp
City of Sebastopol – Sandra Maurer
City of Sonoma – Jack Ding
County of Sonoma – Rebecca Hermosillo
Town of Windsor – JB Leep

AYES -10- NOES -0- ABSENT -0- ABSTAIN -0-

Motion passed.

3. Public Comments (items not on the agenda)

- None

4. Consent (w/attachments)

4.1 Minutes of the June 18, 2026 Regular Meeting

4.2 May, June, and July 2026 Outreach Calendar

4.3 Consideration of Merit Increase for Executive Director

Board Comments:

- None

Public Comments:

- None

Motion: For approval of the consent calendar.

First: City of Petaluma – Patrick Carter

Second: City of Healdsburg – Larry Zimmer

Vote Count:

City of Cloverdale – Andrés Marquez

City of Cotati – Sylvia Lemus

City of Healdsburg – Larry Zimmer

City of Petaluma – Patrick Carter

City of Rohnert Park – Emily Sanborn

City of Santa Rosa – Mark Stapp

City of Sebastopol – Sandra Maurer

City of Sonoma – Jack Ding

County of Sonoma – Rebecca Hermosillo

Town of Windsor – JB Leep

AYES -10- NOES -0- ABSENT -0- ABSTAIN -0-

Motion passed.

Regular Calendar

5. Authorization to Release a Request for Proposals for Construction Manager at Risk Services for the ZWS Household Hazardous Waste Facility Project

Board Comments/Action Items:

- Is Sonoma County Public Infrastructure (SPI) working in partnership on the proposal?
- Is the template used in the agenda packet SPI's standard template for CMAR?
- If the board authorizes the RFP, will the county provide a list of contractors to distribute the RFP to?
- Does CMAR include one individual or a team?
- How will the final interview panel be chosen?
- Can we revisit the solar panel conversation in the future?
- Suggestion to arrange a site visit for the board at Pruitt.

Public Comments:

- Has there been discussion regarding a single pitched roof vs a traditional roof for the main building to optimize natural cooling and potential use for solar panels?

Motion: To authorize the Executive Director to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Construction Manager at services for the Sonoma County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility Project at 5885 Pruitt Avenue and authorize the Executive Director to return to the Board

with a recommendation for contract award following completion of the competitive selection process.

First: County of Sonoma – Rebecca Hermosillo

Second: City of Sonoma – Jack Ding

Vote Count:

City of Cloverdale – Andrés Marquez

City of Cotati – Sylvia Lemus

City of Healdsburg – Larry Zimmer

City of Petaluma – Patrick Carter

City of Rohnert Park – Emily Sanborn

City of Santa Rosa – Mark Stapp

City of Sebastopol – Sandra Maurer

City of Sonoma – Jack Ding

County of Sonoma – Rebecca Hermosillo

Town of Windsor – JB Leep

AYES -10- NOES -0- ABSENT -0- ABSTAIN -0-

Motion passed.

6. Boardmember Comments

- Cloverdale is in the process of getting a recycling center.
- Cloverdale thanks ZWS for assistance with the compost giveaway.
- Go Green, Save Green for businesses will be held on August 1st at the Cotati City Hall.
- Cotati Accordion Festival is August 15th & 16th at La Plaza Park in Cotati.
- City of Sonoma is in the process of hiring a new city manager.
- ZWS will be attending the Rohnert Park farmers market in a couple weeks.

7. Executive Director Report – VERBAL REPORT

8. Staff Comments – NO ACTION

9. Next ZWS meeting: August 20, 2026

10. Adjourn: 9:25 a.m.

Submitted by: Amber Johnson



Agenda Item #: **4.2**
 Agenda Date: **8/20/2026**

ITEM: July, August, September 2026 Outreach Calendar

July 2026 OUTREACH

Start date	End date	Start time	End time	Event
7/7/26	7/7/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Santa Rosa - East)
7/8/26	7/8/26	5:00 PM	9:00 PM	Wednesday Night Market Recology Village (Santa Rosa)
7/11/26	7/11/26	10:00 AM	3:00 PM	Cotati Children's Day (Cotati)
7/11/26	7/11/26	10:00 AM	2:00 PM	Devils Darlin's 34th Annual Car Show
7/14/26	7/14/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Kenwood)
7/17/26	7/19/26	9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Petaluma E-Waste Recycling Event
7/18/26	7/18/26	9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Petaluma Mattress Collection Event
7/21/26	7/21/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Healdsburg)
7/22/26	7/22/26	5:00 PM	9:00 PM	Wednesday Night Market (Santa Rosa)
7/24/26	7/24/26	5:00 PM	8:00 PM	Rohnert Park Seasonal Farmers Market
7/25/26	7/25/26	2:00 PM	5:00 PM	Petaluma Seasonal Walnut Park Farmers' Market
7/25/26	7/25/26	8:30 AM	12:00 PM	Healdsburg Farmers Market
7/28/26	7/28/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Monte Rio)

August 2026 OUTREACH

Start date	End date	Start time	End time	Event
8/1/26	8/1/26	11:00 AM	1:00 PM	Graton Rancheria Repair Fair
8/4/26	8/4/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Santa Rosa - West)
8/5/26	8/5/26	5:00 PM	9:00 PM	Farmers Market (Santa Rosa)
8/7/26	8/16/26	10:00 AM	9:00 PM	Wednesday Night Market (Santa Rosa)
8/11/26	8/11/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Petaluma)
8/15/26	8/15/26	12:00 PM	3:00 PM	Petaluma Blacks for Community Development Annual Community Picnic
8/15/26	8/15/26	9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Oakmont Mattress Collection Event
8/15/26	8/16/26	9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Oakmont E-Waste Recycling Event
8/18/26	8/18/26	3:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Cloverdale)
8/22/26	8/22/26	9:00 AM	1:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (The Sea Ranch)
8/25/26	8/25/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Larkfield)

September 2026 OUTREACH

Start date	End date	Start time	End time	Event
9/1/26	9/1/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Sonoma)
9/8/26	9/8/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Oakmont)
9/15/26	9/15/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Sebastopol)
9/19/26	9/19/26	10:00 AM	1:00 PM	Repair Fair (Healdsburg)
9/22/26	9/22/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Windsor)
9/29/26	9/29/26	4:00 PM	8:00 PM	HHW Collection Event (Rohnert Park)



Agenda Item #: 4.3
Cost Center: All
Staff Contact: Collard
Agenda Date: 8/20/2026
Approved by: LL

ITEM: Zero Waste Sonoma FY 2024-25 Audit of Financial Statements

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION / ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board accept the FY 2024-25 Financial Statements and Auditors' Report.

II. BACKGROUND

Zero Waste Sonoma conducts an independent audit annually in accordance with the requirement contained in the Joint Powers Authority Agreement and compliance with Government Code section 6505. Zero Waste Sonoma entered into an agreement with Sorren CPAs P.C. to audit the Agency's FY 2024-25 Financial Statements.

III. DISCUSSION

Sorren CPAs P.C. concluded that Zero Waste Sonoma's financial statements accurately reflect the Agency's financial position as of June 30, 2025, and its financial changes for the year, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States. The audit comprises three sections; Independent Auditor's Report, Management's Discussion and Analysis, and Basic Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025.

IV. FUNDING IMPACT

The cost of the audit was \$32,070.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Financial Statements and Auditors' Report Year Ended June 30, 2025

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Independent Auditor's Report, Management's Discussion and Analysis,
and Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025



**Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025**

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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors
Sonoma County Waste Management Agency

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (the “Agency”), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2025, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Agency’s basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying basic financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the business-type activities of the Agency as of June 30, 2025, and the changes in financial position, and where applicable, cashflows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Agency, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Agency's ability to continue as a going concern for 12 months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Agency's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Agency's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis, as listed in the table of contents, be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with GAAS, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Sorren CPAs P.C.

Santa Rosa, California
March 27, 2026

**Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Management's Discussion and Analysis (Unaudited)
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025**

The Management's Discussion and Analysis provides an overview and analysis of the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (Zero Waste) financial activities for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025. We encourage readers to consider the information presented here in conjunction with Zero Waste's financial statements and the accompanying notes.

Financial Highlights

Zero Waste's net position, as of June 30, 2025, was \$16,080,086, an increase of \$3,287,840, in comparison with the prior year. Total revenues increased by \$1,234,681 and total expenses decreased by \$200,000 over the prior fiscal year.

Zero Waste's total capital assets increased by \$578,856, from June 30, 2024 to June 30, 2025, due to the commencement of the design phase for the future household waste facility site and from the purchase of three refrigerated trucks.

Overview of the Basic Financial Statements

This discussion and analysis is intended to serve as an introduction to Zero Waste's basic financial statements. Zero Waste's basic financial statements are comprised of two components: 1) basic financial statements and 2) notes to the basic financial statements.

Zero Waste accounts for its financial activity utilizing fund accounting, specifically enterprise fund accounting, to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements. An enterprise fund is a proprietary fund type used to report activities for which a fee is charged to external customers for goods or services provided. The focus of an enterprise fund is the determination of operating income, changes in net position (or cost recovery), and cash flows.

All activities are presented in the following three basic financial statements:

- Statement of Net Position
- Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position
- Statement of Cash Flows

The notes to the basic financial statements provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the basic financial statements.

Financial Analysis

Net Position - Changes in net position may indicate whether the financial position of Zero Waste is improving or deteriorating. Net position increased to \$16,080,086 during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, a change of \$3,287,840 from the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. A portion of Zero Waste's net position, \$3,620,552, reflects its investment in capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation and less related outstanding debts used to acquire those assets. The remaining balance of unrestricted net position may be used to meet Zero Waste's ongoing obligations to citizens and creditors. The following table summarizes the statement of net position for the current and prior fiscal year end:

**Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Management's Discussion and Analysis (Unaudited)
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025**

Financial Analysis (continued)

	June 30, 2025	June 30, 2024	Increase (Decrease)
Assets			
Current assets	\$ 14,512,222	\$ 13,254,107	\$ 1,258,115
Capital assets	3,620,552	3,041,696	578,856
Total assets	<u>18,132,774</u>	<u>16,295,803</u>	<u>1,836,971</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities	<u>2,052,688</u>	<u>3,503,557</u>	<u>(1,450,869)</u>
Total liabilities	<u>2,052,688</u>	<u>3,503,557</u>	<u>(1,450,869)</u>
Net position			
Net investment in capital assets	3,620,552	3,041,696	578,856
Unrestricted net position	<u>12,459,534</u>	<u>9,750,550</u>	<u>2,708,984</u>
Total net position	<u>\$ 16,080,086</u>	<u>\$ 12,792,246</u>	<u>\$ 3,287,840</u>

Change in Net Position - Total revenues for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025 were \$15,203,850, an increase of \$1,234,681, compared to prior year. Operating revenues increased by \$526,928 due to rate increases for tipping fees and surcharges. Nonoperating revenues increased by \$707,753 due to additional federal and state grant revenue and investment income. Zero Waste's operating expenses were \$11,916,010, a decrease of \$182,563, due to completion of projects funded through grants. Operating expenses were comprised of contract services, administration, and professional services. The following table summarizes the changes in net position for the current and prior fiscal year end:

	June 30, 2025	June 30, 2024	Increase (Decrease)
Revenues			
Operating revenues	\$ 12,532,923	\$ 12,005,995	\$ 526,928
Nonoperating revenues	<u>2,670,927</u>	<u>1,963,174</u>	<u>707,753</u>
Total revenues	<u>15,203,850</u>	<u>13,969,169</u>	<u>1,234,681</u>
Expenses			
Operating expenses	11,916,010	12,098,573	(182,563)
Nonoperating expenses	<u>-</u>	<u>17,437</u>	<u>(17,437)</u>
Total expenses	<u>11,916,010</u>	<u>12,116,010</u>	<u>(200,000)</u>
Increase in net position	3,287,840	1,853,159	1,434,681
Net position - beginning of the year	<u>12,792,246</u>	<u>10,939,087</u>	<u>1,853,159</u>
Net position - end of the year	<u>\$ 16,080,086</u>	<u>\$ 12,792,246</u>	<u>\$ 3,287,840</u>

**Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Management's Discussion and Analysis (Unaudited)
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025**

Capital Assets

Zero Waste's investment in capital assets for its business-type activities as of June 30, 2025, was \$3,620,552. This investment in capital assets includes land, construction in progress and machinery and equipment.

Major capital asset events during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, included the continued design and future construction of the household waste facility building. Construction in progress is \$291,994, as of the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025. In addition, three refrigerated trucks were purchased to lease to local food rescue organizations to recover edible food to be distributed to food banks and the food insecure. The following table summarizes Zero Waste's capital assets:

	Capital Assets (net of accumulated depreciation)		
	June 30, 2025	June 30, 2024	Increase (Decrease)
Land	\$ 3,027,059	\$ 3,027,059	\$ -
Construction in progress	291,994	14,637	277,357
Machinery and equipment	301,499	-	301,499
Total capital assets	<u>\$ 3,620,552</u>	<u>\$ 3,041,696</u>	<u>\$ 578,856</u>

Economic Outlook

Zero Waste's projected revenue is expected to cover expenditures for all planned future projects.

Request for Additional Information

This financial report is designed to provide our residents, taxpayers and creditors with a general overview of Zero Waste's finances and to demonstrate its accountability for the funds under its stewardship.

Please address any questions about this report or requests for additional financial information to Sonoma County Waste Management Agency, 2300 County Center Drive Ste. B-100, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Lukacs
Executive Director

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Statement of Net Position
June 30, 2025

Assets

Current assets:

Cash and investments	\$ 11,643,656
Prepaid expenses	22,205
Due from state and federal	209,780
Due from other governments	2,636,581
Total current assets	14,512,222

Noncurrent assets:

Capital assets	
Non-depreciable:	
Land	3,027,059
Construction in progress	291,994
Depreciable, net:	
Machinery and equipment	301,499
Total capital assets	3,620,552

Total assets	18,132,774

Liabilities

Current liabilities:

Accounts payable	961,370
Due to other governments	118,078
Unearned revenue	973,240
Total liabilities	2,052,688

Net position

Net investment in capital assets	3,620,552
Unrestricted	12,459,534
Total net position	\$ 16,080,086

The notes to the basic financial statements are an integral part of this statement.

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

Operating revenues	
Tipping fees and surcharges	\$ 12,188,670
Service agreements	344,253
Total operating revenues	12,532,923
Operating expenses	
Contract services	8,123,026
Administration	2,301,985
Professional services	1,485,889
Depreciation	5,110
Total operating expenses	11,916,010
Operating income	616,913
Non-operating revenues	
State grant revenue	1,970,310
Investment income	583,320
Federal grant revenue	117,297
Total non-operating revenues	2,670,927
Change in net position	3,287,840
Net position, beginning of year	12,792,246
Net position, end of year	\$ 16,080,086

The notes to the basic financial statements are an integral part of this statement.

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Statement of Cash Flows
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

Cash flows from operating activities	
Cash received from customers	\$ 12,953,369
Payments to suppliers	(10,638,716)
Payments for services provided by County of Sonoma	(1,640,724)
Net cash provided by operating activities	673,929
Cash flows from noncapital financing activities	
Noncapital grants received - state	1,000,637
Noncapital grants received - federal	(26,192)
Net cash provided by noncapital financing activities	974,445
Cash flows from capital and related financing activities	
Acquisition of capital assets	(583,965)
Cash flows from investing activities	
Investment income	583,320
Net increase in cash and investments	1,647,729
Cash and investments, beginning of year	9,995,927
Cash and investments, end of year	\$ 11,643,656
Reconciliation of operating income to net cash provided by operating activities	
Operating income	\$ 616,913
Adjustments to reconcile operating income	
to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Depreciation expense	5,110
Increase in prepaid expense	(3,056)
Increase in due from state and federal	(4,888)
Decrease in due from other governments	420,224
Decrease in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(470,793)
Decrease in due to state	(7,660)
Increase in due to other governments	118,078
Net cash provided by operating activities	\$ 673,929

The notes to the basic financial statements are an integral part of this statement.

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

1. Reporting Entity

The Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (Zero Waste) was formed in April 1992 by a joint exercise of powers agreement between the cities and towns of Sonoma County and the County of Sonoma (the County) to assist the cities and the County with the implementation of programs necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Assembly Bill (AB) 939, the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989.

Zero Waste is governed by a ten-member board of directors, with one member from nine Sonoma County cities and towns and one from the County.

Zero Waste's education, diversion, and planning activities include a regional composting program, household hazardous waste collections, and countywide efforts towards waste reduction and recycling. Zero Waste's activities are funded through garbage disposal tonnage and surcharge fees, charges for services and grants. The County, through Zero Waste, tracks each load of yard and wood waste entering the county disposal system. A tonnage tipping fee is collected to pay for operating costs of the composting program. A surcharge on the solid waste tipping fee entering the county disposal system is used to fund the other activities, such as household hazardous waste, education, diversion, and planning.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting and Financial Statement Presentation

The accounting policies of Zero Waste conform to the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as applicable to governmental units.

Zero Waste uses a proprietary (enterprise) fund to account for its activities. An enterprise fund may be used to report any activity for which a fee is charged to external users for goods or services. Enterprise funds are required for any activity whose principal external revenue sources meet any of the following criteria: (1) issued debt is backed solely by fees and charges, (2) the cost of providing services for any activity (including capital costs such as depreciation or debt service) must be legally recovered through fees or charges, or (3) if the government's policy is to establish activity fees or charges designed to recover the cost of providing services.

Zero Waste's financial statements are reported using the *economic resources measurement focus* and the *accrual basis of accounting*. All assets and liabilities associated with the operation of Zero Waste are included on the statement of net position. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met.

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Proprietary funds distinguish operating revenues and expenses from nonoperating items. Operating revenues and expenses result from providing services and producing and delivering goods in connection with the proprietary fund's principal ongoing operations. All revenues and expenses not meeting this definition are reported as nonoperating revenues and expenses.

Cash and Investments

Zero Waste's cash and investments are pooled with the County Treasurer (the Treasurer). The Treasurer also acts as a disbursing agent for Zero Waste. The fair value of the investments in the pool is determined quarterly. Realized and unrealized gains or losses and interest earned on pooled investments are allocated quarterly to Zero Waste based on its respective average daily balance for that quarter in the County Treasury Investment Pool (the Treasury Pool), an external investment pool.

In accordance with GASB Statement No. 31, *"Accounting and Financial Reporting for Certain Investments and External Investment Pools"* and GASB Statement No. 72, *"Fair Value Measurement and Application"*, investments are stated at fair value in the statement of net position and the corresponding changes in the fair value of investments are recognized in the year in which the change occurred. Zero Waste follows the practice of pooling cash and investments of all funds with the Treasurer. The fair value of investments is determined annually. Interest earned on pooled investments is allocated quarterly to the appropriate funds based on their respective average daily balance for that quarter.

For purposes of the statement of cash flows, Zero Waste considers all pooled cash and investments as cash and cash equivalents because the Treasury Pool is used as a demand deposit account.

Capital Assets

Capital assets include land, construction in progress and machinery and equipment. Assets that are purchased or constructed are reported at historical cost or at estimated historical cost if actual historical cost is not available. Capital projects spanning multiple years are recorded as construction in progress. Donated capital assets are valued at their estimated fair market value on the date of donation.

Maintenance and repair costs are charged to operations when incurred. Improvements to existing assets that significantly increase performance, change capacities or extend useful lives are capitalized. Upon sale or retirement of capital assets, the cost and related accumulated depreciation are removed from the respective accounts and any resulting gain or loss is included in the results of operations.

Capital assets used in operations are depreciated using the straight-line method over the estimated useful life.

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Capital Assets (continued)

The capitalization thresholds and estimated useful lives for capital assets are as follows:

	Capitalization Threshold	Estimated Useful Life
Land	\$ -	N/A
Land improvements	100,000	15 to 50 years
Buildings and improvements:		
Buildings	100,000	50 years
Building improvements	100,000	15 to 20 years
Machinery and equipment	5,000	5 to 20 years
Infrastructure	100,000	25 to 75 years
Intangible assets:		
Computer software	100,000	3 to 10 years
Temporary easements	-	Life of easement
Permanent easements	-	N/A
Right-to-use lease asset	100,000	Shorter of lease term or useful life of underlying asset
Right-to-use software asset (SBITAs)	100,000	Shorter of subscription term or useful life of underlying IT assets
Construction in progress	Projects expected to exceed the capitalization threshold for the applicable asset class	N/A

Unearned Revenue

Unearned revenue represents amounts for which asset recognition criteria have been met but revenue recognition criteria have not been satisfied. Zero Waste has three advance grants from the state of California: Oil Payment program, Local Assistance program, and Beverage Container program. Zero Waste receives the money in advance before earning the grant revenue. The grant revenue is earned when activity is performed that meets the grant requirements.

**Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025**

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Net Position

Net position is presented in the following components:

- **Net investment in capital assets** - This component of net position consists of capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation and reduced by outstanding borrowings that are attributable to the acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets.
- **Restricted net position** - This component of net position consists of constraints placed on net asset use through external constraints imposed by creditors (such as through debt covenants), grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments or constraints imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.
- **Unrestricted net position** - This component of net position consists of net position that does not meet the definition of “net investment in capital assets” or “restricted”.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is Zero Waste’s policy to use restricted resources first, then unrestricted resources as they are needed.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. Cash and Investments

Zero Waste follows the County's practice of pooling cash and investments with the Treasurer. The Investment Oversight Committee has regulatory oversight for all monies deposited into the Treasury Pool. The fair value of Zero Waste’s investment in this pool is reported in the accompanying financial statements at amounts based upon Zero Waste’s pro-rata share of the fair value provided by the Treasury Pool for the entire Treasury Pool portfolio (in relation to the amortized cost of that portfolio). The balance available for withdrawal is based on accounting records maintained by the Treasury Pool, which are recorded on an amortized cost basis.

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

3. Cash and Investments (continued)

Investment Guidelines

Zero Waste's pooled cash and investments are invested pursuant to investment policy guidelines established by the Treasurer and approved by the Board of Supervisors. The objectives of the policy are, in order of priority: safety of capital, liquidity and maximum rate of return. The policy addresses the soundness of financial institutions in which the County will deposit funds, types of investment instruments as permitted by the California Government Code 53601, and the percentage of the portfolio that may be invested in certain instruments with longer terms to maturity. A copy of the Sonoma County Investment Policy is available upon request from the Treasurer at 585 Fiscal Drive, Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California 95403.

Interest Rate Risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that changes in market interest rates will adversely affect the fair value of an investment. Generally, the longer the maturity of an investment, the greater the sensitivity of its fair value is to changes in market interest rates. As a means of limiting its exposure to fair value losses arising from rising interest rates, one of the ways that the Treasurer manages Zero Waste's exposure to interest rate risk is by purchasing a combination of shorter term and longer term investments and by timing cash flows from maturities so that a portion of the portfolio is maturing or coming close to maturing evenly over time as necessary to provide the cash flow and liquidity needed for operations.

Credit Risk

Generally, credit risk is the risk that an issuer of an investment will not fulfill its obligation to the holder of the investment. This is measured by the assignment of a rating by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization. The Treasury Pool does not have a rating provided by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization. It is the County's policy to purchase investments meeting rating requirements established by the California Government Code. The credit ratings of investments held and other information regarding the Treasury Pool for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025 are disclosed in the County's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Custodial Credit Risk

Custodial credit risk for deposits is the risk that, in the event of the failure of a depository financial institution, a government will not be able to recover its deposits or will not be able to recover collateral securities that are in the possession of an outside party. With respect to investments, custodial credit risk generally applies only to direct investments in marketable securities. Custodial credit risk does not apply to a local government's indirect investment in securities through the use of mutual funds or government investment pools (such as the Treasury Pool).

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

3. Cash and Investments (continued)

Fair Value Measurements

Zero Waste categorizes its fair value measurements within the fair value hierarchy established by generally accepted accounting principles. The hierarchy is based on the valuation inputs used to measure the fair value of the asset. Level 1 inputs are quoted prices in active markets for identical assets; Level 2 inputs are significant other observable inputs; Level 3 inputs are significant unobservable inputs. Zero Waste has a recurring fair value measurement for its investment in the Treasury Pool of \$10,632 as of June 30, 2025, which is valued using significant other observable inputs (Level 2).

4. Capital Assets

Capital asset activity for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025 was as follows:

	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Decreases</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
Capital assets, not being depreciated:				
Land	\$ 3,027,059	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,027,059
Consturction in progress	14,637	277,357	-	291,994
Total capital assets, not being depreciated	<u>3,041,696</u>	<u>277,357</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,319,053</u>
Capital assets, being depreciated:				
Machinery and equipment	43,459	306,609	-	350,068
Total capital assets, being depreciated	<u>43,459</u>	<u>306,609</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>350,068</u>
Less: accumulated depreciation				
Machinery and equipment	(43,459)	(5,110)	-	(48,569)
Total accumulated depreciation	<u>(43,459)</u>	<u>(5,110)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(48,569)</u>
Total capital assets, being depreciated, net	<u>-</u>	<u>301,499</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>301,499</u>
Total capital asset, net	<u>\$ 3,041,696</u>	<u>\$ 578,856</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 3,620,552</u>

5. Risk Management

Zero Waste is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; errors and omissions; and natural disasters. Zero Waste has insurance coverage through Great American Insurance Company with the following limits and deductibles: \$5,000,000 limit per occurrence and \$0 deductible for general liability, personal injury, errors and omissions and automobile liability. Zero Waste has a \$2,000,000 limit per occurrence and \$10,000 deductible for employment practices liability and a \$1,000,000 limit and \$0 deductible for property damage.

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025

6. Related Party Transactions

Zero Waste's staffing, occupancy, and support services are provided by employees of Sonoma County's Integrated Waste department. The County is a member of the Board of Directors. Zero Waste appoints an executive director who is a County employee through an at-will agreement. Additional staffing is provided by the County through a contract with Zero Waste. During the year ended June 30, 2025, expenses for these services totaled \$1,521,154.

7. Future Pronouncements

The GASB has released the following standards which may be implemented in future financial statements:

GASB Statement No. 103 – Financial Reporting Model Improvements

The objective of Statement No. 103, effective for fiscal year 2025-26, is to improve key components of the financial reporting model to enhance its effectiveness in providing information that is essential for decision making and assessing a government's accountability. This Statement also addresses certain application issues.

GASB Statement No. 104 – Disclosure of Certain Capital Assets

The objective of Statement No. 104, effective for fiscal year 2025-26, is to provide users of government financial statements with essential information about certain types of capital assets.

The impact on the basic financial statements of Zero Waste of these pronouncements which have not yet been adopted is unknown at this time.

GASB Statement No. 105 – Subsequent Events

The objective of Statement No. 105, effective for fiscal year 2026-27, is to improve financial reporting requirements for subsequent events by enhancing consistency in their application and better meeting the information needs of government financial statement users.

The impact on the basic financial statements of Zero Waste of these pronouncements which have not yet been adopted is unknown at this time.



Agenda Item #:	4.4
Cost Center:	Education
Staff Contact:	Collard
Agenda Date:	8/20/2026
Approved By:	LL

ITEM: Budget Adjustment to the FY 26/27 Budget for Rollover Projects from FY 25/26

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION / ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board authorize a budget adjustment to Education expenditure account 51249 in the amount of \$124,000 and \$79,000 for the grant revenue 42360. This item requires a Supermajority (8/10)

II. BACKGROUND

At the June 18, 2026 meeting the Board approved the contract with Compost Depot for compost workshops. The projected was funded using unused funds from FY25/26.

The FY 26/27 budget was approved on March 19, 2026. At that time staff had anticipated the Local Assistance Grants funds would be completed in the FY 25/26 year.

III. DISCUSSION

Since the compost workshops will be held in the current fiscal year, the contract amount needs to be recognized in the new fiscal year's budget. The contract award was for \$45,000.

The second round of the Local Assistance Grant was expended during FY 25/26. The official close of the grant is November 2, 2026. When the FY 26/27 budget was approved the residual grant amounts were unknown. The budget adjustment for \$79,000 needs to be approved in the current budget. A budget adjustment to recognize the grant revenue also needs to be approved for account 42360.

IV. FUNDING IMPACT

The Local Assistance Grant has offsetting revenue for the expenditures and does not affect the budget. The compost workshops are budgeted with unused funds from the prior grant year.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Budget Adjustment Resolution 2026-16

Dated: August 20, 2026

RESOLUTION OF ZERO WASTE SONOMA (ZWS)
ADOPTING ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FY 2026/27 EDUCATION BUDGET FOR ROLL OVER PROJECTS
FROM FY 25/26

WHEREAS, ZWS approved Zero Waste Sonoma Fiscal Year 2026/27 Budget on March 19, 2026; and

WHEREAS, ZWS approved a contract with the Compost Depot to provide composting workshops at the June 18, 2026 meeting ; and

WHEREAS, the Local Assistance Grant was not fully completed in FY 25/26; and

WHEREAS, the FY 26/27 budget needs to be amended to include appropriations for the grant expenditure and revenue; and

WHEREAS, the FY 26/27 budget needs to be amended to include appropriations for Compost Depot contract; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends increasing the Fiscal Year 2026/27 Education Fund Budget for Other Professional Services, 51249, in the amount of \$124,000 and 42360 in the amount of \$79,000; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of Zero Waste Sonoma does hereby approve the adjustment to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget.

MEMBERS:

- - Cloverdale	- - Cotati	- - County	- - Healdsburg	- - Petaluma
- - Rohnert Park	- - Santa Rosa	- - Sebastopol	- - Sonoma	- - Windsor

AYES: - - NOES: - - ABSENT: - - ABSTAIN: - -

SO ORDERED

The within instrument is a correct copy
of the original on file with this office.

ATTEST: DATE: August 20, 2026

Clerk of Zero Waste Sonoma
Agency of the State of California in and for the
County of Sonoma



Agenda Item #: 4.5
Staff Contact: Collard
Agenda Date: 8/20/2026
Approved By: LL

ITEM: Zero Waste Sonoma Regular Meeting Location Change

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION / ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board consider an amendment to the timing of the Zero Waste Sonoma Board of Director's meetings.

II. BACKGROUND

Meetings of the Board of Directors of Zero Waste Sonoma were established by resolution, which was done first by Resolution 92-001 (the first resolution passed by ZWS). Changing the time or location of Board of Directors meetings can be done by the passage of a resolution.

It has been requested the Board consider changing the location (but not the time) of meeting of the Board of Directors from 100 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa to 195 Concourse Blvd., Ste. B, Santa Rosa on the third Thursday of each month.

III. DISCUSSION

At its October 16, 2025 meeting, the Zero Waste Sonoma Board approved the purchase of an office building located at 195 Concourse Boulevard, Suite B, in Santa Rosa. Staff moved into the new headquarters on April 1, 2026, and the building has since been used for administrative and business operations. Renovations to the Boardroom were completed this month, and the space is now ready to accommodate ZWS Board meetings. Moving Board meetings to the new headquarters will allow ZWS to conduct its meetings in an Agency-owned facility specifically designed to support Board, staff, and public participation. Staff recommends that the Board approve an amendment to Resolution No. 92-001 to establish Zero Waste Sonoma's headquarters as the location for regular Board meetings.

IV. FUNDING IMPACT

There is no funding impact.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Resolution 2026-17

DATED: August 20, 2026

RESOLUTION OF ZERO WASTE SONOMA (ALSO KNOWN AS SONOMA COUNTY WASTE
MANAGEMENT AGENCY) AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 92-001 TO CHANGE THE LOCATION FOR
REGULAR MEETINGS

WHEREAS, the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Sections 54950 et. seq.) requires
that Zero Waste Sonoma (Agency) establish a time and place for regular meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Agency originally established a time and place for regular meetings by
Resolution No. 92-001, which time and place has been amended from time to time by the
Agency Board; and

WHEREAS, the Agency Board desires to amend the time for holding regular meetings.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that commencing after the adoption of this
Resolution, Zero Waste Sonoma Board of Directors shall hold the regular meetings of the Board
of Directors on the third Thursday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the Zero Waste Sonoma Board
Room located at Zero Waste Sonoma Headquarters 195 Concourse Blvd., Ste. B, Santa Rosa,
California.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall replace and supersede all previous
actions by ZWS Board of Directors to establish the time and place for its regular meetings,
including but not limited to Resolutions Nos. 92-001, 92-009, 2016-04, and 2021-04.

MEMBERS:

- - Cloverdale	- - Cotati	- - County	- - Healdsburg	- - Petaluma
- - Rohnert Park	- - Santa Rosa	- - Sebastopol	- - Sonoma	- - Windsor

AYES: - - NOES: - - ABSENT: - - ABSTAIN: - -

SO ORDERED

The within instrument is a correct copy
of the original on file with this office.

ATTEST: DATE: August 20, 2026

Clerk of Zero Waste Sonoma
Agency of the State of California in and for the
County of Sonoma



Agenda Item #: 5
Cost Center: Education
Staff Contact: Pagal
Agenda Date: 08/20/26
Approved By: LL

ITEM: Presentation and Conclusion of the Food Service Ware Technical Assistance Project with Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc.

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION / ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Board receive the presentation from Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. and their subcontractors.

II. BACKGROUND

At the August 21, 2025 regular meeting, the Board approved and authorized staff to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) to Conduct Technical Assistance for Education on Disposable Food Service Ware Ordinances in Sonoma County. The ZWS Board accepted staff's recommendation to award the contract to Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. at the October 16, 2025 regular meeting.

The project tasks and goals were:

- **Task 1: Project Management, Reporting, and Evaluation:** Provide project management, quarterly reporting, and a final report and presentation.
- **Task 2: Food Facilities TA:**
 - (a) Conduct an equitable selection of food facilities accounts in close collaboration with ZWS.
 - (b) Review and improve outreach materials.
 - (c) Contact 100 selected food facilities and support as many as possible to come into compliance with the ordinance and to make transitions toward reusables.
- **Task 3: Food Service Ware Providers TA:** Identify and contact 6 priority food service ware providers and give technical assistance to inform businesses about key aspects of the local ordinances, how they can comply as retailers, and how to support local food and beverage businesses in their compliance efforts.
- **Task 4: Case Studies:** Recruit 5 new food facilities to utilize the Reusables Mini Grant and produce visually appealing case studies about their transitions to inspire and inform a wide variety of other businesses in the future.

III. DISCUSSION

ZWS staff worked closely with Cascadia and their subcontractors, Soluna Outreach Solutions and Waste Sleuth throughout the project. Subcontracting with Soluna Outreach Solutions and Waste

Sleuth proved vital not only to reduce travel costs, but also to provide effective technical assistance to businesses. Both subcontractor staff live and work locally, and their knowledge and existing network within the community proved useful. Soluna's bilingual Spanish staff was able to provide assistance to native Spanish speakers.

Criteria for account selection placed a high priority on users of polystyrene foam, accounts consuming a large amount of disposable food service ware, food facilities recommended by haulers, 10% historically underserved, and a cluster approach. To assist 100 food facilities, the target number of accounts per jurisdiction was proportionate to population. In addition, six food ware vendors were also included in the project.

The Cascadia team surpassed the goal of assisting 100 food facilities, and ultimately supported 122 accounts, with a total of 439 outreach activities.

The results show that the vast majority of food facilities in Sonoma County, at the conclusion of this phase of the project, are partially compliant – 46% (in compliance for most food ware except for either or both straws and utensils) or compliant – 46% (using all appropriate food ware) with local food ware ordinances.

Some outreach observations from the 2023-2025 TA project carried through, and others had changed. The common challenges for food facilities included confusion around product labeling and local compliance, availability, performance, and cost of compliant products, especially straws and utensils, and vendors selling non-compliant products. At the same time, the team found there was rising awareness and rising positivity around the ordinances.

Soluna successfully engaged with six significant food ware vendors in Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park. The result was that while each vendor stocks compliant products, non-compliant items remain widely available. Because the local ordinances only prohibit the sale and use of polystyrene foam and products with added PFAS, the market is still free to sell non-compliant products such as bio-based plastic cups, containers, and utensils, poly-coated paper cups, and traditional plastic straws and utensils. Corporate decision making means some retailers are slow to change products.

In terms of the mini-grant for reusables, even with the increase from \$250 to \$600, interest and participation remained low, and only two case studies were completed. Most food facilities engaged for this project were either not candidates for reusables or BYO, did not have space for dishwashing machines, or were already practicing reuse where possible.

Despite some initial delays getting the project started due to custom form development and deployment in SMART 1383, working with Cascadia to continue the work started in 2023 was a positive experience and their team's professionalism, skills, and insights were invaluable to the Agency. ZWS and Cascadia will extend the contract for an additional 6 months working in as many of the recommendations from this project as possible.

IV. FUNDING IMPACT

Funding for this \$75,000 project came from the Agency's FY 25-26 regular budget. Cascadia completed the project within budget, with no remaining funds.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Final Report of the Technical Assistance Project

Presentation of the Completed Technical Assistance Project, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations

Case Study – Rainbow Bridge Montessori

Final Report

Zero Waste Sonoma

Food Service Ware Technical Assistance Project

JUNE 2026

CASCADIA CONSULTING GROUP



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1 Project Overview

1.1 Background

In 2018, Zero Waste Sonoma (ZWS), which is a joint-powers authority located in Sonoma County, developed the Disposable Food Service Ware and Polystyrene Foam Model Ordinance. The model ordinance was approved by the Agency Board of Directors and presented to city councils in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Jurisdictions each adopted modifications of the model ordinance¹, and most jurisdictions opted to delay ordinance enforcement until 2022 due to COVID-19.

In 2023, ZWS hired Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc. (Cascadia) to provide technical assistance (TA) to food facilities through May 2025. Cascadia led this project with Soluna Outreach Solutions (Soluna) and Waste Sleuth & Associates (Waste Sleuth) as outreach partners.

In October 2025, ZWS hired the same project team to continue providing technical assistance through June 2026. This project was funded through the Contingency Reserve, with \$75,000 allocated in the FY 2025–26 budget for this purpose.

Through an adaptable, inclusive, and multilingual approach, the project team provided technical assistance to help food facilities comply with the ordinance in Sonoma County and to encourage food facilities to transition from using disposable food ware to using reusables.

This report presents the results of the 2025-2026 technical assistance project.

1.2 Tasks and Goals

The project tasks and goals were:

- **Task 1: Project Management, Reporting, and Evaluation:** Provide project management, quarterly reporting, and a final report and presentation.
- **Task 2: Food Facilities TA:**
 - a. Conduct an equitable selection of food facilities accounts in close collaboration with ZWS.
 - b. Review and improve outreach materials.

¹ <https://zerowastesonoma.gov/news/disposable-food-service-ware-and-polystyrene-ordinance-update>

- c. Contact 100 selected food facilities and support as many as possible to come into compliance with the ordinance and to make transitions toward reusables.
- **Task 3: Food Service Ware Providers TA:** Identify and contact 6 priority food service ware providers and give technical assistance to inform businesses about key aspects of the local ordinances, how they can comply as retailers, and how to support local food and beverage businesses in their compliance efforts.
- **Task 4: Case Studies:** Recruit 5 new food facilities to utilize the Reusables Mini Grant and produce visually appealing case studies about their transitions to inspire and inform a wide variety of other businesses in the future.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Food Facility Selection and Equity

Cascadia worked closely with ZWS to select 100 food facilities while referencing the criteria presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Food Facility Selection Criteria

Priority	Food Facility Prioritization Criteria	Data source
High	1. Currently use <u>polystyrene foam</u>	Complaint submissions (2021-2025)
High	2. Currently use a <u>large amount of disposable food ware</u> - Defined as “Moderate” or “Extensive” preparation	Active Food Facilities list (November 2025)
High	3. Are <u>recommended by haulers</u>	Hauler recommendations (December 2025)
High	4. 10% of selection are <u>historically underserved</u>	CalEnviroScreen
High	5. “Cluster” approach - Such as all food facilities in a smaller town, a shopping plaza, or a group of food trucks	Team discussion and local knowledge
Medium	6. <u>Jurisdiction population size distribution quotas</u>	Census data (2020)
Medium	7. <u>Good reusables potential</u> - Dine-in service with washing facilities that could transition to reuse	Team discussion and local knowledge
Medium	8. <u>Diverse types of business or organizations</u> - 85% restaurants and cafés, 10% food trucks, 5% other (events, schools, or faith organizations)	Active Food Facilities list (November 2025)
Medium	9. Are <u>recommended by ZWS</u>	ZWS recommendations
Low	10. <u>Good BYO potential</u> - Takeaway services that could transition to BYO	Team discussion and local knowledge
Low	11. <u>Continuing TA</u> - Past project TA recipients still in progress	Project team recommendations (December 2025 – January 2026)

Table 2 shows the target number of food facilities by jurisdiction, which was calculated based on the 2020 Census population data. The table also shows by jurisdiction whether Soluna or Waste Sleuth were the outreach specialist team leading TA efforts in that area.

Table 2. Allocation of Target Food Facilities Based on Jurisdiction Population Size

Jurisdiction	Jurisdiction Population (2020 Census)	Percent of Sonoma County Population	Number of Target Food Facilities	Outreach Specialist Team
Santa Rosa	178,127	36%	37	Soluna
Unincorporated Sonoma County	134,056	27%	27	Waste Sleuth
Petaluma	59,776	12%	12	Waste Sleuth
Rohnert Park	44,390	9%	9	Soluna
Windsor	26,334	5%	5	Soluna
Healdsburg	11,340	2%	2	Soluna
Sonoma	10,739	2%	2	Waste Sleuth
Cloverdale	8,996	2%	2	Soluna
Cotati	7,584	2%	2	Soluna
Sebastopol	7,521	2%	2	Waste Sleuth
Total Sonoma County	488,863	100%	100	

The steps the project team followed to select food facilities were:

1. Start with Active Food Facilities list and mark relevant information included in this data source. (Criteria 2 and 8)
2. Use CalEnviroScreen to identify priority census tracts that are above the 60th percentile in the CalEnviroScreen CES composite scoring which includes poverty and linguistic isolation. Mark in the Active Food Facilities sheet all food facilities that fall within the priority census tracts. (Criteria 4)
3. Collect and compile data sources for all other key criteria and mark applicable food facilities in the Active Food Facilities sheet. (Criteria 1,3,5,7,9,10,11)
4. Using jurisdiction population size as a guide, select 100 food facilities that balance the relative importance of all the criteria. (Criteria 6)
5. Allow for some iteration between Steps 3 and 4 as information is collected.
6. Confirm final selection with ZWS.

After multiple rounds of review, Cascadia and ZWS selected a total of 100 food facilities for the prioritization list.

Over the course of the project, accounts were added to the list in the following cases:

- For food truck parks with multiple trucks, the additional trucks were added.
- Food service ware vendors, who also received compliance TA, were added.
- For accounts with multiple locations (such as a chain restaurant), the outreach specialist team added each relevant location.
- When there was an opportunity to provide TA to neighboring businesses while supporting selected accounts, the neighboring businesses were added.

As a result of these additional efforts, the outreach specialist team contacted 122 total accounts.

1.3.2 Food Service Ware Vendor Selection

Soluna proposed a list of 6 food ware vendors to prioritize for outreach based on past project knowledge, and ZWS reviewed and confirmed the selection.

1.3.3 Outreach Preparation

OUTREACH APPROACH

Cascadia worked with ZWS to adjust the outreach approach from the 2023-2025 TA project as needed. Each outreach specialist team led outreach within a specific geographical region to maximize efficiency during site visits and build consistency, trust, and rapport in the community. See Table 2 in the Food Facility Selection and Equity section for the outreach specialist teams assigned to each jurisdiction.

The outreach specialist teams provided technical assistance following community-based social marketing (CBSM) approaches and other methods, such as:

- Combined phone, email, and in-person visits as needed. Based on learnings from the 2023-2025 TA project, the project team prioritized site visits to establish initial contact but also reached out via phone and email as needed.
- Verified correct contact person, such as a store manager or business owner, and other relevant information
- Provided information and answered questions regarding the ordinance requirements, recorded the email and direct phone number of the contact person in SMART1383, and attempted to schedule follow-up meetings.
- Adjusted communication approaches depending on how each facility reacted to and interacted with the outreach specialist team. Specialists applied cultural

competency practices and adapted messaging to ensure accessibility and relevance for the facility.

- Used Spanish language skills as needed.
- Aimed to group outreach site visits to minimize travel costs.
- Designed data collection categories for the SMART1383 platform and logged all activities into SMART1383.

OUTREACH TOOLKIT

Cascadia worked with ZWS to confirm and update materials from the 2023-2025 TA project as needed.

The toolkit included:

- Flyer providing an overview of the ordinances to share with accounts
- Ordinance postcard
- Outreach guide including best practices for outreach
- Ordinance guide to help outreach specialists understand the complexities of the ordinances, terms, and acronyms
- Email templates
- Case study questionnaire
- Established list of vendors selling compliant food ware
- Flyer providing an overview of the Reusable Food Ware Grant offered by ZWS with a QR code linking to the application
- BYO reusables decal for businesses to put on windows

REUSE GRANT AND CASE STUDIES

ZWS offers \$600 mini grants to help businesses, nonprofit organizations, and community groups purchase reuse infrastructure and related services.

To support grant promotion and case study development, the project team focused on the following activities:

- Cascadia developed a case study outline and questionnaire to collect the qualitative and quantitative information needed to produce case studies.
- The outreach specialist team prepared to promote the grant and prioritized past grant recipients and potential reuse candidates for TA early in the project timeline.
- During TA, outreach specialists encouraged all potential candidates to consider transitioning to reuse.
- Outreach specialists explained that in addition to receiving available grant funding, food facilities that completed successful reuse transitions could be featured in visually engaging case studies.

2 Food Facilities TA



2.1 Results

Overall, the outreach specialist team was able to exceed the original task goals. The results are summarized in the following tables and charts. Table 3 compares the outreach goals established at the start of this task with what the outreach specialist team accomplished. The team achieved 122% of their food facility contact goal.

Table 3. Summary of TA Results

Metric	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Total Outreach Activities	N/A	439	N/A
Food Facilities Contacted	100	122	122%

Figure 1 below summarizes the final outreach status of all food facilities contacted. Food facilities defined as **compliant** are those that fully switched or purchased all compliant food ware after receiving TA or were already using fully compliant food ware. Food facilities defined as **partially compliant** are those that are in compliance for most food ware except for either or both straws and utensils. This status indicates the outreach specialist team has completed outreach, but the account may need an additional follow-up in the future.

Figure 1. Summary of Final Outreach Status

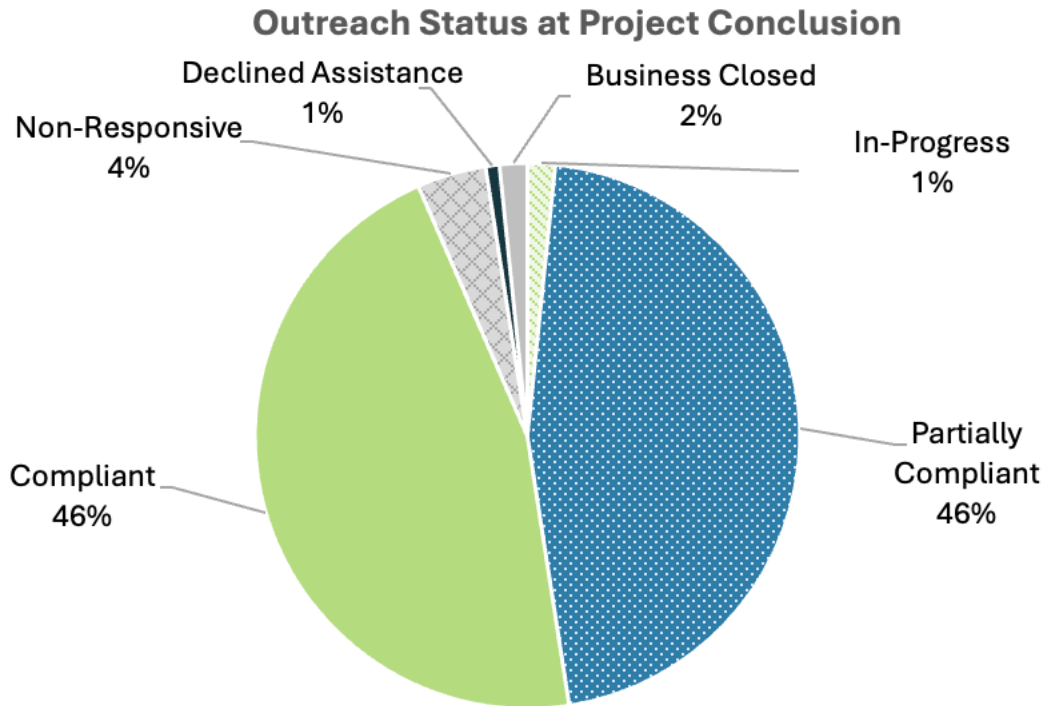
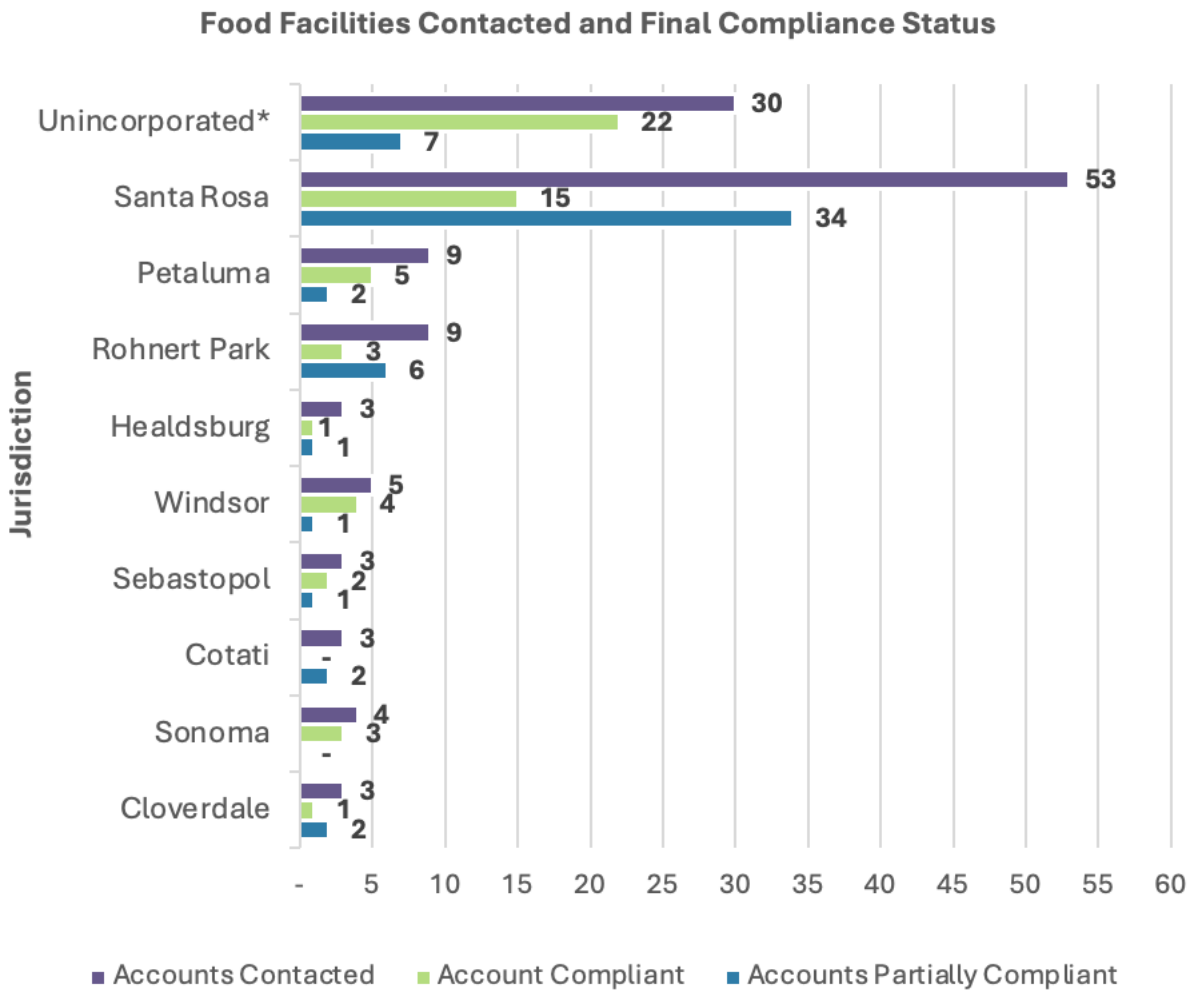


Table 4 and Figure 2 show the outreach results by jurisdiction. For both the table and figure, “Unincorporated” includes Forestville, Penngrove, Bodega Bay, Geyserville, and Occidental.

Table 4. Outreach Status at Project Conclusion by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	In-Progress	Non-Responsive	Partially Compliant	Compliant	Declined Assistance	Business Closed	Total # of Food Facilities Contacted
Santa Rosa	0	4	34	15	0	0	53
Petaluma	0	1	2	5	1	0	9
Sonoma	1	0	0	3	0	0	4
Rohnert Park	0	0	6	3	0	0	9
Cotati	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Sebastopol	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Windsor	0	0	1	4	0	0	5
Healdsburg	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Cloverdale	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Unincorporated*	0	0	7	22	0	1	30
Total	2	5	56	56	1	2	122

Figure 2. Food Facilities Contacted, Compliant, and Partially Compliant by Jurisdiction



2

² “Unincorporated” includes Forestville, Penngrove, Bodega Bay, Geyserville, and Occidental.

2.2 Outreach Observations

During the project, the outreach specialist team noted which accounts did or did not know about the ordinance and how they felt about the requirements. Throughout this process, the team observed themes, encountered barriers, made adjustments, and gathered insights. Because this project builds on the 2023-2025 project, the team was able to notice differences over time and apply learnings from the past project to this one.

Table 5 includes the key observations and notes from 2023-2025 and adds updated observations from technical assistance completed in 2026.

Table 5. Observations, Outreach Response and Notes

Documented Observation	Updated Outreach Observations: 2025-26 Current Project	Past Outreach Response & Notes: 2023-25 Project
Rising awareness of the ordinance	• More accounts were already aware of the ordinance than in the past project. • Professional in-person communication continues to be highly effective.	• Theme: Low awareness of the ordinance • Many accounts were unaware of the ordinance. • Outreach specialists provided ordinance details, compliance requirements, and informational materials. • Communicating information to busy owners and managers was most effective when it was clear, professional, in-person, and accompanied by high-quality informational materials.
Rising positivity	• While there still are frustration and negativity, more food facilities managers felt positively than in the past project.	• Theme: Varied initial reactions • While some food facility managers felt positively, initial reactions were often negative, and managers saw the rules as unnecessary. • Early outreach and discussions framing the ordinance as a positive and environmentally beneficial change helped shift attitudes.
Difficulty accessing compliant products	• The 2023-25 observations remain true. • The food ware types that food facilities are struggling the most to find compliant versions of are straws and utensils. • Food facilities purchase from local and non-local suppliers either online or in person.	• Theme: Difficulty accessing compliant products • Many local suppliers did not stock compliant items (such as unlined bowls and cups). • To comply, accounts may have to change suppliers or change business practices, which is not always possible or practical. • Recognizing supplier limitations is an important reality that should be considered in designing follow-up support or actions. • This is a systems change and transition process.

Documented Observation	Updated Outreach Observations: 2025-26 Current Project	Past Outreach Response & Notes: 2023-25 Project
Lack of clarity on alternatives	• Confusion about eco-friendly materials and the nuances of compost-ability continue to be a challenge. • The team used observations from the past project to improve clarity and helpfulness of materials and guidance.	• Theme: Lack of clarity on alternatives • Many accounts cited confusion about eco-friendly materials. • Providing clear information about product options, details, benefits, and environmental impacts reduces resistance and builds support for the ordinance.
Some concern about high costs	• While cost concerns continue to exist, food facilities showed more concern about the availability of compliant products. • In some cases, the team found that the concern about the availability of compliant products was unfounded, as the team was able to provide examples of affordable options. • Many facilities misunderstood the mini grant and wanted to use grant funds to support compliant disposables instead of reusables.	• Theme: Concern about high costs • One of the biggest concerns from food facilities was the cost of switching to new materials because compliant single-use/disposable take-out food ware, straws, and utensils are generally more expensive. • For dine-in reusables, the upfront cost was a concern for some. Outreach specialist team proposed the reuse grant in these cases.
Perceived inconsistency or inequity in enforcement	• The 2023-25 observations remain true.	• Theme: Perceived inconsistency or inequity in enforcement • Small businesses questioned why large chains and retail suppliers were still offering non-compliant products and wanted to know if those accounts were required to comply. (They are required to comply.) • Small businesses wished to see equal enforcement. Fairness and consistency in enforcement are important to small businesses. • Large chains were frequently non-responsive or unwilling to comply, or it is difficult to connect with a decision-maker

Documented Observation	Updated Outreach Observations: 2025-26 Current Project	Past Outreach Response & Notes: 2023-25 Project
		Engaging larger players is critical for broad compliance.
Suppliers sell non-compliant products	- Food facilities continue to be frustrated that non-compliant products are offered for sale. - The outreach specialist team worked with 6 food service ware vendors directly to explain the ordinance in detail. (See Section 3. Food Service Ware Vendors TA) for more details on this task.)	- Theme: Some accounts believed they were already compliant and felt frustrated that suppliers are allowed to sell non-compliant products. - Some supplier sales representatives confused and conflated “compostable” with compliant, and businesses bought these products, which were not always compliant. - Outreach specialists explained to accounts that local composters reject most bioplastics (such as PLA and PHA) due to contamination and inefficiency. - Outreach specialists explained to accounts that local government cannot fully regulate suppliers’ product choices, but this explanation was often not satisfying. - The outreach specialist team visited two local suppliers in Sonoma County and provided information on compliance requirements. At least one made initial changes to add compliant products but was still also selling polystyrene foam. Further follow-up was outside the scope of this project. - Engaging more suppliers and informing them of ordinance requirements would help reduce this confusion. - Direct conversations with decision-makers, sales staff, and purchasing staff are key. - Clear explanations about composting realities helped food facilities choose the right products.
Continued non-compliance despite technical assistance	- Outreach specialists found that more specific terms, such as “wood”, “bamboo”, and “fiber only”, did help significantly with improving clarity. - Some well-meaning businesses still bought non-compliant products after TA because of confusion	- Theme: Continued non-compliance despite technical assistance - In some follow-up visits, outreach specialists found that well-meaning businesses were still using non-compliant products. - Outreach specialists adjusted language from “compostable” to simplified terms like “wood”, “bamboo”, and “fiber only to improve understanding. - Even after receiving an accurate explanation, many people did not grasp the nuances of compostable vs. acceptable materials.

Documented Observation	Updated Outreach Observations: 2025-26 Current Project	Past Outreach Response & Notes: 2023-25 Project
	about products and were very frustrated. • Almost all “partially compliant” accounts are struggling with straws and utensils. Some common barriers include confusion about compostable plastic, the unavailability of compliant products, and some customers’ dislike of paper straws.	
Low interest in reusable grant	• Outreach specialists promoted the reuse grant and reuse transitions widely, but few food facilities showed interest. • Many that could transition are limited by space for dish washing machines. • The majority that can easily transition to reusables have already done so.	• Theme: Opportunities for grant support • Outreach specialists identified food facilities eligible for the reuse grant and encouraged them to apply. • Many accounts wanted to use grant funds for compliant disposable products or faced significant barriers to switching to reusables, such as a lack of a dishwasher or space for reusables storage. • Interest increased modestly when ZWS raised the grant funds to \$600.
Need for continued support	• Straws and utensils remain a tough area for full compliance. • Ongoing outreach, education, and assistance continue to be essential to maintaining, improving, and expanding general compliance over time.	• Theme: Need for continued support • Most food facilities eventually complied, but even those that received hands-on assistance in this task may still need help understanding, sourcing, transitioning, and maintaining the change. • Ongoing outreach, education, and assistance are essential to maintaining, improving, and expanding general compliance over time.

3 Food Service Ware Vendors TA

During the month of February, Soluna conducted technical assistance with key food service ware vendors and distributors in Sonoma County to support implementation of the Disposable Food Service Ware and Polystyrene Foam Model Ordinance.

The goal was to increase awareness of ordinance requirements, identify availability of compliant products, and engage vendors as upstream partners influencing purchasing decisions by restaurants, food trucks, and other food businesses.

Technical assistance for food service ware vendors included site visits and follow-up phone calls and emails. Each site visit included:

- Confirmation of site contacts
- Observation of inventory (including pictures notes etc.)
- Overview of ordinance requirements and applicability
- Identification of noncompliant vs. compliant products
- Distribution of educational materials and product guidance
- Offer of technical assistance and follow-up support

Follow-up emails and phone calls included product lists, ordinance summaries, and visual references and other information as needed.

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Vendors Engaged

- US Foods CHEF'STORE – Santa Rosa
- Restaurant Depot – Rohnert Park
- BradyPLUS (Fishman Supply) – Santa Rosa
- Myers Restaurant Supply – Santa Rosa
- Costco – Santa Rosa
- Smart & Final (ECOVA) – Santa Rosa

3.1.2 Key findings

- All vendors carry compliant product options
- Non-compliant items remain widely available (plastic cutlery, straws, lids)
- Vendor staff were receptive and cooperative
- Corporate-level purchasing decisions affect inventory
- Vendors influence compliance through product availability

3.1.3 Challenges

- Many site managers had the impression that they are not responsible for what the customers buy
- Continued availability of non-compliant products
- In some sites, corporate offices have control over inventory
- Confusion around product claims

3.1.4 Notable Outcomes

- Myers Restaurant Supply removed non-compliant items after outreach
- Corporate escalation initiated at CHEF'STORE, Costco, and Restaurant Depot (site managers mentioned that they have forwarded information to corporate office)
- Strong engagement from BradyPLUS and Smart & Final. Site managers seemed very interested and open to the information.
- Contacts confirmed across all locations

3.1.5 Overall Observations

- All vendors demonstrated willingness to comply, with no pushback observed.
- While compliant products are available, non-compliant items remain accessible, which may encourage continued use by food facilities.
- Corporate-level decision-making remains a key factor for larger retailers.

4 Reuse Case Studies

Uptake of reuse grant applications was low and progress was slow, despite early and sustained efforts. At the time of this report, one new food facility applied and was approved for the reuse grant. This facility and one additional facility that already had been approved for the grant before this project are featured in case studies that were produced by Cascadia and ZWS.

Table 6 shows the recipients of the reuse grant who were featured in case studies.

Table 6. Reuse Grant Case Study Participants

Reuse Grant Case Study Participants	Jurisdiction
Latino Service Providers	Santa Rosa
Rainbow Bridge Montessori	Cotati

Throughout technical assistance efforts, outreach specialists recorded reuse and bring-your-own (BYO) practices, potential for change, and level of interest.

The team found that most of the food facilities that were engaged for this project were either not candidates for reusables or BYO, did not have space for dishwashing machines, or were already fully employing these practices where possible.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 below show a rough breakdown of the statuses observed in the field. There is overlap between these status categories. For example, some accounts considering reuse transition are also considering BYO transition. While data collection in this area was imperfect, the “blank” category can be assumed to be mostly N/A as well. Overall, these charts present an accurate impression of the current state of reuse among these accounts.

Figure 3. Food Facilities Reuse Status

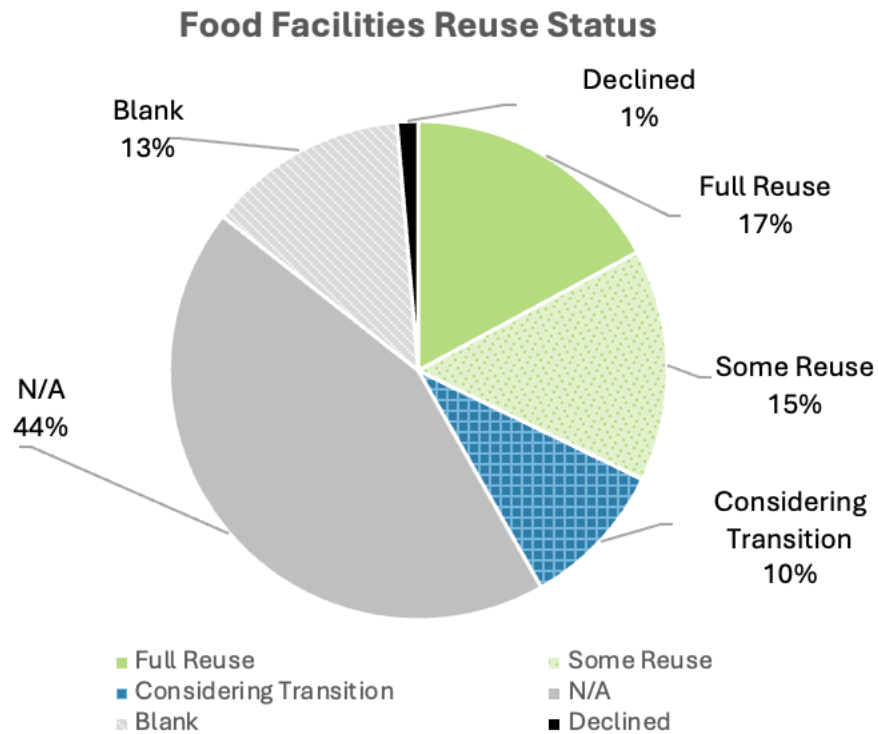
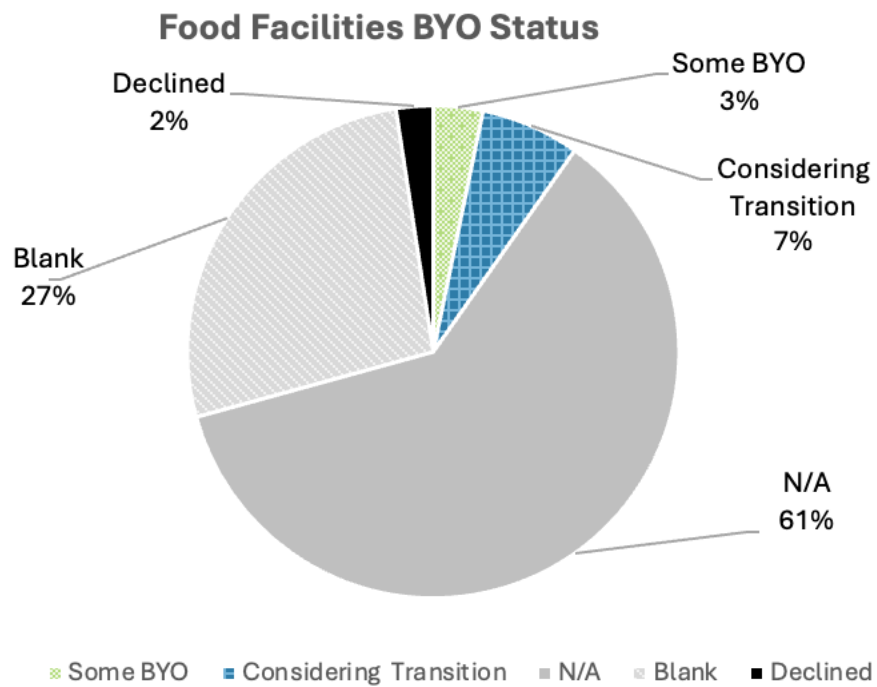


Figure 4. Food Facilities BYO Status



5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the current project's outreach results, vendor engagement, reuse case study findings, and field observations. They are intended to help ZWS maintain the progress achieved through this project, resolve remaining partial-compliance issues, and strengthen future reuse and upstream supplier efforts.

1. Consider Partial-Compliance Barriers

- **To achieve full compliance, prioritize straws and utensils.** Most partially compliant accounts are stalled on switching away from plastic straws and utensils.
- **Identify reliable sources for difficult items.** Straws, utensils, and other frequently misunderstood products should be highlighted in a maintained purchasing resource for both vendors and food facilities.
- **Create a small follow-up list for partially compliant and in-progress accounts.** Maintain a list of accounts needing only one or two product changes and determine the level of focus needed for follow-ups to ensure these products are replaced with compliant versions.
- **Continue documenting before-and-after examples.** Photos and notes in SMART1383 helped verify progress and can support future accountability, training, and success-story development.

2. Deepen Supplier and Vendor Engagement

- **Follow up with the six vendors contacted during this project.** Vendor staff were generally receptive, at least one vendor removed non-compliant items after outreach, and several larger vendors started corporate escalation. ZWS should build on that momentum with periodic follow-up and clear next steps.
- **Expand outreach beyond the vendors already contacted.** Future work should include additional vendors, including businesses that sell smaller quantities of food ware to restaurants, food trucks, caterers, community groups, and small operators.
- **Develop vendor-facing product identification tools.** A simple visual guide for sales staff, buyers, and store managers could help distinguish compliant products from non-compliant products, such as plastics, bioplastics, lined fiber products, and other commonly confusing items. Provide to all suppliers that do business in Sonoma County.
- **Expand outreach to corporate purchasing contacts.** For larger vendors, local managers may not control inventory. ZWS should prioritize corporate-level contacts at vendors where non-compliant products remain available and encourage reductions in non-compliant inventory over time.

3. Expand Business Technical Assistance and Promote General Awareness

- **Continue to expand technical assistance countywide.** Future TA should continue expanding to new food facilities while using vendors as upstream partners that can help shift purchasing norms countywide.
- **Use additional change mechanisms to reinforce vendor and food facility TA.** In addition to direct outreach, ZWS should consider direct mailing, social media messaging, partner newsletters, collaboration with chambers of commerce, business associations, pop-up tabling, and event-based engagement to normalize compliant purchasing and reuse practices across the county.
- **Support reusable systems through vendor and community partnerships.** Longer-term supplier engagement should not only focus on compliant disposable products but also explore how vendors, events, and community partners can support reusable food ware systems where operationally feasible.

4. Continue to Update Outreach Materials Based on Project Learnings

- **Use short, specific product language.** Continue using clear phrases such as “wood”, “bamboo”, or “fiber only” rather than relying on terms like “compostable,” which can be confusing and may lead businesses to purchase non-compliant products.
- **Revise materials to emphasize the most common remaining mistakes.** Updated materials should highlight common mistakes made related to straws, utensils, bioplastics, lined fiber products, and PFAS.
- **Add visual examples of compliant and non-compliant products.** Side-by-side visuals can help businesses and vendor staff recognize product differences quickly.
- **Maintain a current compliant product resource.** A frequently updated product list or purchasing guide would help reduce confusion and prevent well-meaning businesses from buying the wrong items.
- **Continue multilingual and culturally responsive outreach.** The project’s adaptable, multilingual approach should remain central, especially for businesses that may need additional support navigating requirements.
- **Use success stories to normalize compliance.** Highlight businesses that resolved common barriers, such as switching from plastic utensils or correcting mistaken “compostable” purchases.

5. Recalibrate the Reuse Grant

- **Consider developing and implementing a survey or other feedback mechanism.** Gather more feedback from food facilities that could transition to reusables but may be experiencing barriers.
- **Consider adjusting grant focus.** Address barriers gathered from both observations in this project and additional sources of feedback. Based on observations in this project, adjustments might include a focused attention on dishwashing infrastructure and space.
- **Continue to celebrate success stories.** Case studies are still a powerful concept, though it may take time to find eligible food facilities that could and are willing to make the switch to reusables. Feature examples that show practical, replicable reuse transitions and explain the operational changes that made them successful.

6. Pair Supportive Assistance with Clear Expectations

- **Maintain a supportive technical assistance tone.** The current project showed that professional, in-person assistance remains effective and can improve attitudes toward the ordinance.
- **Clarify when technical assistance ends and enforcement begins.** Businesses that remain non-responsive or partially compliant after repeated assistance may need formal written expectations and a clear timeline for next steps.
- **Address fairness concerns in any enforcement design.** Consider equity concerns raised regarding corporate chains, and frustrations around product availability.

Appendix A: Food Facilities Contacted List

Food Facility	Jurisdiction
Boathouse	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Bodega Harbour Homeowners Assn Snack Bar	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Capt Daveys	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Dog House, The	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Sea Flower Cafe	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Tides Wharf & Restaurant Market	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Tides Wharf & Restaurant Market	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Tides Wharf & Restaurant Snack Bar	Bodega Bay, CA 94923
Ginochios Kitchen	Bodega Bay, CA 94923-8600
Fishermans Cove Deli & Bait	Bodega Bay, CA 94923-9784
Colleens Coffee Shop	Bodega, CA 94922-9600
Cloverdale Citrus Fair	Cloverdale, CA 95425-3627
Wolf House Brewing	Cloverdale, CA 95425-3701
Zinis Diner	Cloverdale, CA 95425-4010
Acre Pizza	Cotati, CA 94931
Amys Chinese Kitchen	Cotati, CA 94931-4151
China Chef	Cotati, CA 94931-5109
Rotten Robbie #61	Forestville, CA 95436
Sams Market #14	Forestville, CA 95436
Russian River Pub M F F	Forestville, CA 95436-9365
Farmstand at Farmhouse Inn M F F	Forestville, CA 95436-9494
Tiny Town	Forestville, CA 95436-9686
Sunshine Coffee Roasters	Forestville, CA 95436-9688
Canneti LLC	Forestville, CA 95436-9689
Ciel Du Mel LLC dba Angelas Ice Cream	Forestville, CA 95436-9689
Forestville Bakery	Forestville, CA 95436-9689
Sonoma Pizza Co	Forestville, CA 95436-9689
NIGHTINGALE BREADS	Forestville
RUSSIAN RIVER VINEYARD, LLC	Forestville
Friends of Lake Sonoma (Steelhead Festival)	Geyserville
Dry Creek Kitchen	Healdsburg, CA 95448-4105
Pizzando	Healdsburg, CA 95448-4105
SAMS MARKET #17	Healdsburg
Occidental Community Farmers Market	Occidental, CA 95465

Food Facility	Jurisdiction
Odd Cookie Bakery	Penngrove, CA 94951
Tip Top Taco	Penngrove, CA 94951
Grateful Bagel	Penngrove, CA 94951-8206
Mama Js Pizzeria	Penngrove, CA 94951-8206
TWIN OAKS ROADHOUSE LLC	Penngrove
Petaluma Pie Company	Petaluma, CA 94952
Acre Pizza	Petaluma, CA 94952-1900
Petaluma Village Cafe	Petaluma, CA 94952-1999
Buffalo Billards	Petaluma, CA 94952-2818
Della Fattoria	Petaluma, CA 94952-2904
Angelas Ice Cream	Petaluma, CA 94952-2905
Stellina Alimentari (160 Main LLC)	Petaluma, CA 94952-2905
Wingstop	Petaluma, CA 94952-3329
PETALUMA PIZZA LLC	Petaluma
Wal Mart Market #2468 Main	Rohnert Park, CA 94928-1800
Wingstop Rohnert Park	Rohnert Park, CA 94928-2421
Juanita Market Bakery	Rohnert Park, CA 94928-3796
Sahni Fueling Inc	Rohnert Park, CA 94928-7905
Carmens La Hacienda # 2	Rohnert Park, CA 94928-7909
Nitro City Racing	Rohnert Park, CA 94928-7941
RESTAURANT DEPOT #668	Rohnert Park
FISHMAN SUPPLY	Rohnert Park
Santa Rosa Dia del Nido	Rohnert Park
Roseland Cinco de Mayo Celebration	Santa Rosa
Sam's Market #11	Santa Rosa
SAMS MARKET # 16	Santa Rosa
SAM'S MARKET #18	Santa Rosa
BILL'S MARKET	Santa Rosa
Taco Bell	Santa Rosa
BEST WESTERN GARDEN INN	Santa Rosa
HUMBOLDT MARKET & LIQUOR	Santa Rosa
WALLYS LIQUOR AND DELI	Santa Rosa
Luau Hawaiian BBQ	Santa Rosa, CA 95401
Wingstop	Santa Rosa, CA 95401-3673
Wingstop	Santa Rosa, CA 95401-4048
Daves Hot Chicken	Santa Rosa, CA 95403-3164
Baker Avenue Chevron	Santa Rosa, CA 95404-5402

Food Facility	Jurisdiction
Garden Inn	Santa Rosa, CA 95404-5428
Sams Donuts	Santa Rosa, CA 95404-5525
Subway Store #42669	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5053
Sky Dragon	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5054
Chicagos Pizza With A Twist	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5056
BI Buzz Cafe	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5413
Antojitos Mexicanos # 2 M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Culichi VIP Cuisine M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Doras Kitchen M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
El Asadero #1 M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Jovitas Tacos #1 M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Jovitas Tacos #1 M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
La Botanita M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Pupuseria & Antojitos El Salvador M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Tacos El Angel M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Tacos El Catrin M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Tacos El Pariente M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Xies Sushi Rolls M F F	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5803
Colores Ice Cream	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-5829
Del Valle Mexican Restaurant	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-6726
Pepes Mexican Restaurant	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-6813
Taqueria El Favorito #1	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-6823
La Fondita	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-6828
Tacos Al Carbon	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-6862
Golden Gate Bell LLC Taco Bell #30932	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-6864
Mitote Food Park	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-6928
PezCow	Santa Rosa
Lucha Sabina	Santa Rosa
La Churroteca Churreria	Santa Rosa
El Cora Mariscos	Santa Rosa
Gio y los Magos Mexican Grill	Santa Rosa
Delicias	Santa Rosa
Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-7130
Costco Wholesale # 41 Main	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-7621
Smart & Final #409	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-7627
La Hacienda Del Toro	Santa Rosa, CA 95407-8079
MYERS RESTAURANT SUPPLY	Santa Rosa

Food Facility	Jurisdiction
US FOODS (UFI)	Santa Rosa
Acre Pizza (Sebastopol)	Sebastopol
Two Dog Night Creamery	Sebastopol, CA 95472-3473
Hopmonk Tavern	Sebastopol, CA 95472-4222
Scandia Bakery	Sonoma
Amy's Peking Palace	Sonoma
Allikai (HAM DELLES)	Sonoma, CA 95476-6430
Broadway Market (Local Sonoma Investors)	Sonoma, CA 95476-7509
B A MACHADO EQUITIES	Windsor
Starbucks Coffee	Windsor, CA 95492-9282
Machado Burgers	Windsor, CA 95492-9347
Rough Draft, The	Windsor, CA 95492-9597
Fruity Moto	Windsor, CA 95492-9701

Zero Waste Sonoma Technical Assistance

Disposable Food Service Ware and Polystyrene Foam Model Ordinance Compliance

October 2025 – June 2026

Project Team



Agenda



Project Purpose, Goals & Results

Challenges & Successes

Recommendations

Questions

Project Purpose

Disposable Food Service Ware and Polystyrene Foam Model Ordinance

Technical assistance provided to Food Facilities to help comply with these local ordinances

- Understand ordinance requirements specific to their jurisdiction
- Hear best practices and success stories
- Comply with disposables and polystyrene foam ban for take-out
- Switch to reusables for dine-in even where not required

This project continues the work done in 2023-25 by this team.



Food Facility Selection

1.

Gather initial data

Sonoma County Active Food Facilities list

2.

Conduct equity analysis

to mark areas or businesses that have historically been underserved. CalEnviroScreen

3.

Collect and compile a variety of criteria,

weighed by importance, and use jurisdiction population as a guide to select 100 total food facilities. See written report for full criteria and relative weighting

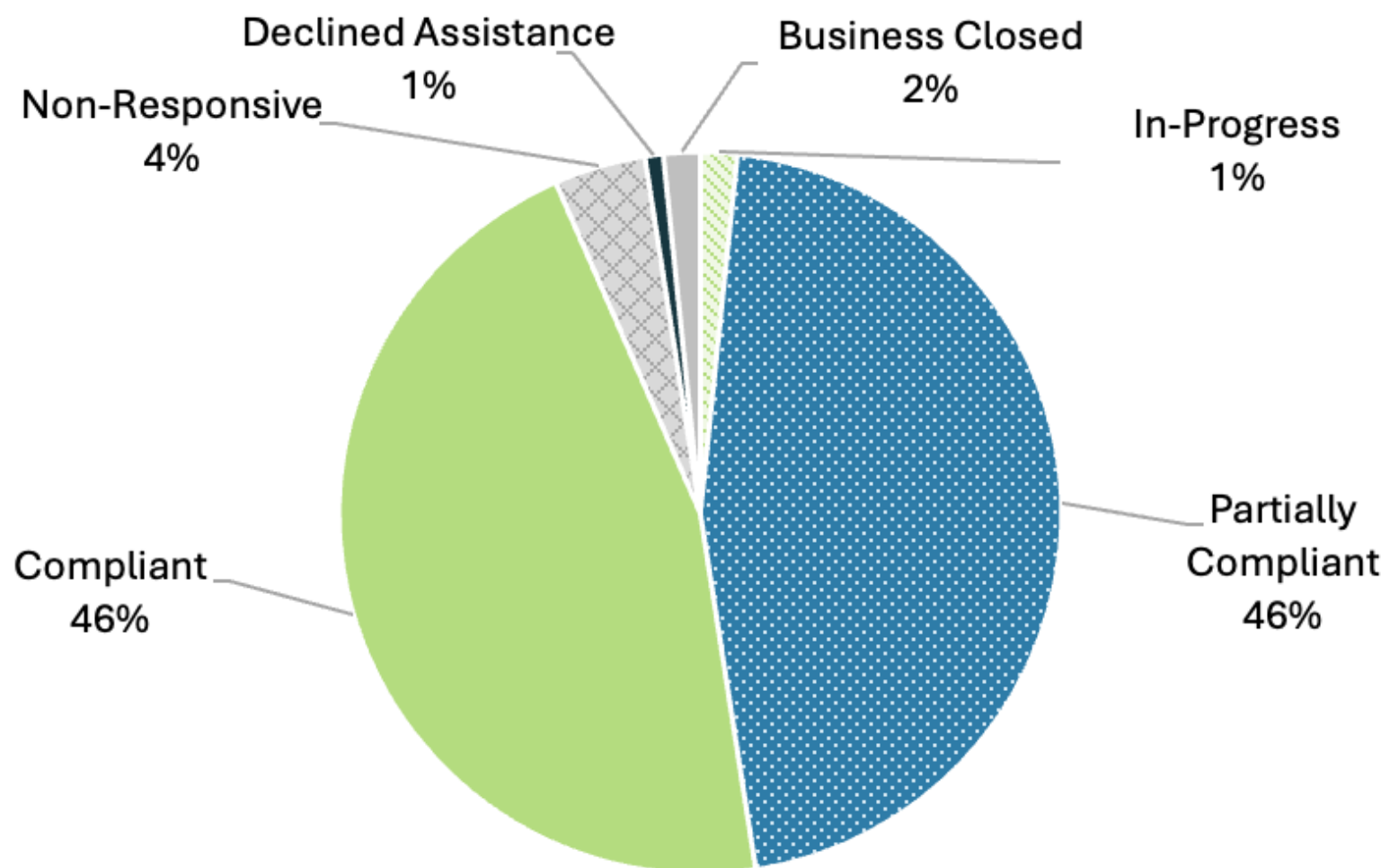
4.

Gather feedback and approval from ZWS

Selected a total of 100 food facilities for the prioritization list.

Results: Project Summary

Outreach Status at Project Conclusion



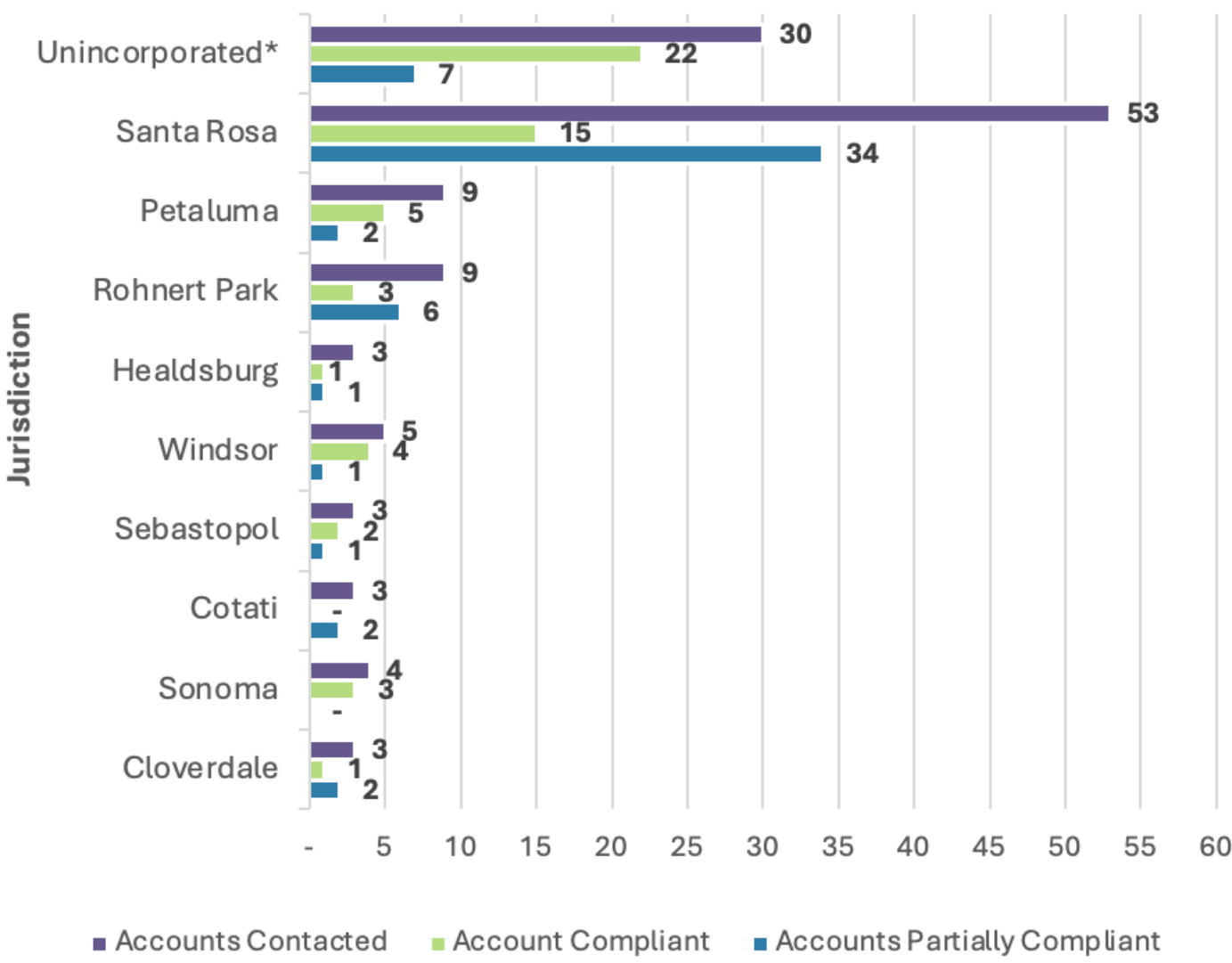
Metric	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Total Outreach Activities	N/A	439	N/A
Food Facilities Contacted	100	122	122%

Food facilities defined as **compliant** are those that fully switched or purchased all compliant food ware after receiving technical assistance or were already using fully compliant food ware.

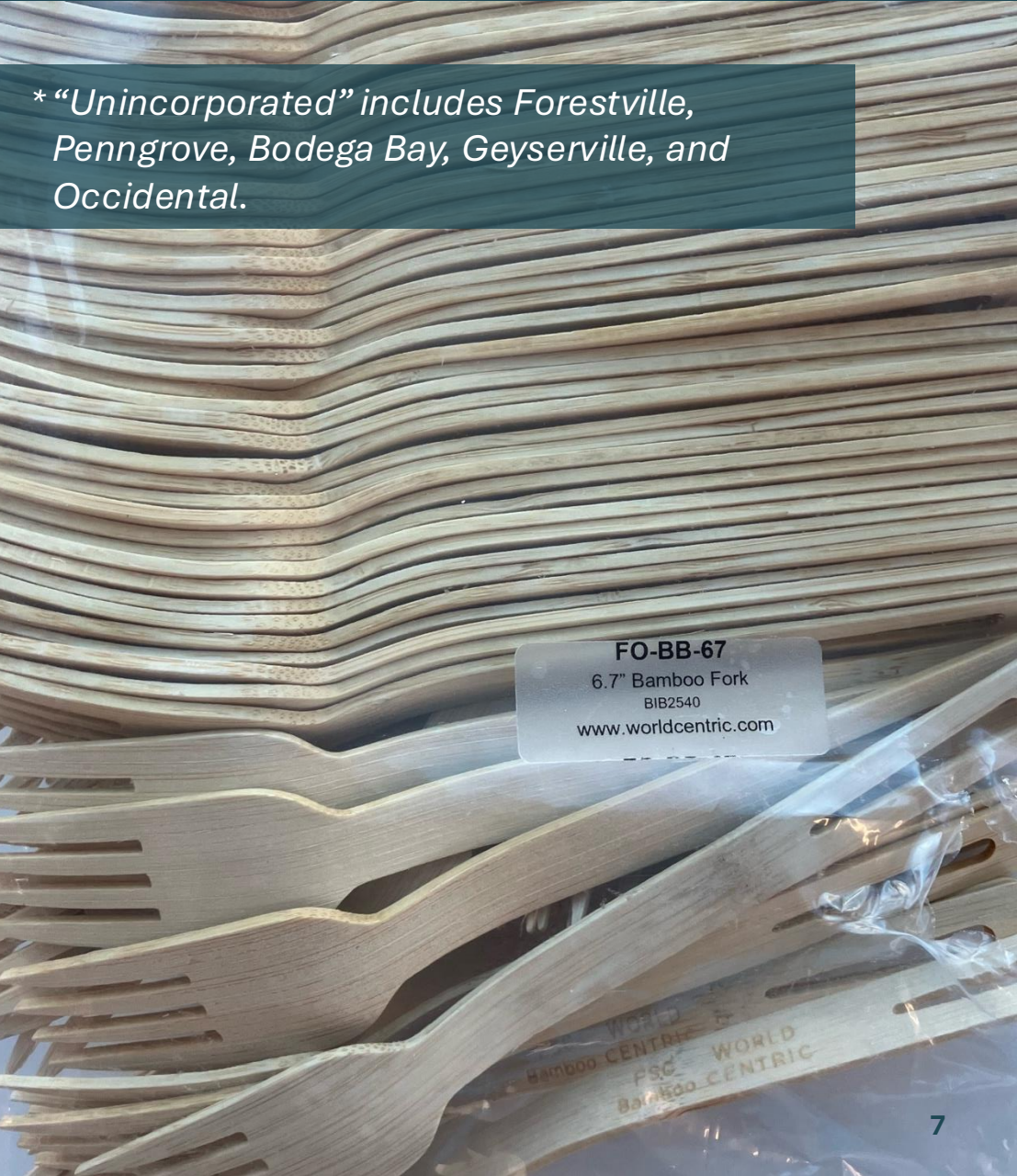
Food facilities defined as **partially compliant** are those that are compliant for most of their food ware except for either or both of straws and utensils. This status indicates the outreach team has completed outreach, but that the account may need additional follow-up in the future.

Results: Jurisdiction Summary

Food Facilities Contacted and Final Compliance Status



* “Unincorporated” includes Forestville, Penngrove, Bodega Bay, Geyserville, and Occidental.



Results: Jurisdiction Summary

Jurisdiction	In-Progress	Non-Responsive	Partially Compliant	Compliant	Declined Assistance	Business Closed	Total # of Food Facilities Contacted
Santa Rosa	0	4	34	15	0	0	53
Petaluma	0	1	2	5	1	0	9
Sonoma	1	0	0	3	0	0	4
Rohnert Park	0	0	6	3	0	0	9
Cotati	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Sebastopol	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Windsor	0	0	1	4	0	0	5
Healdsburg	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Cloverdale	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Unincorporated*	0	0	7	22	0	1	30
Total	2	5	56	56	1	2	122

* “Unincorporated” includes Forestville, Penngrove, Bodega Bay, Geyserville, and Occidental.

Food Service Ware Vendor Outreach

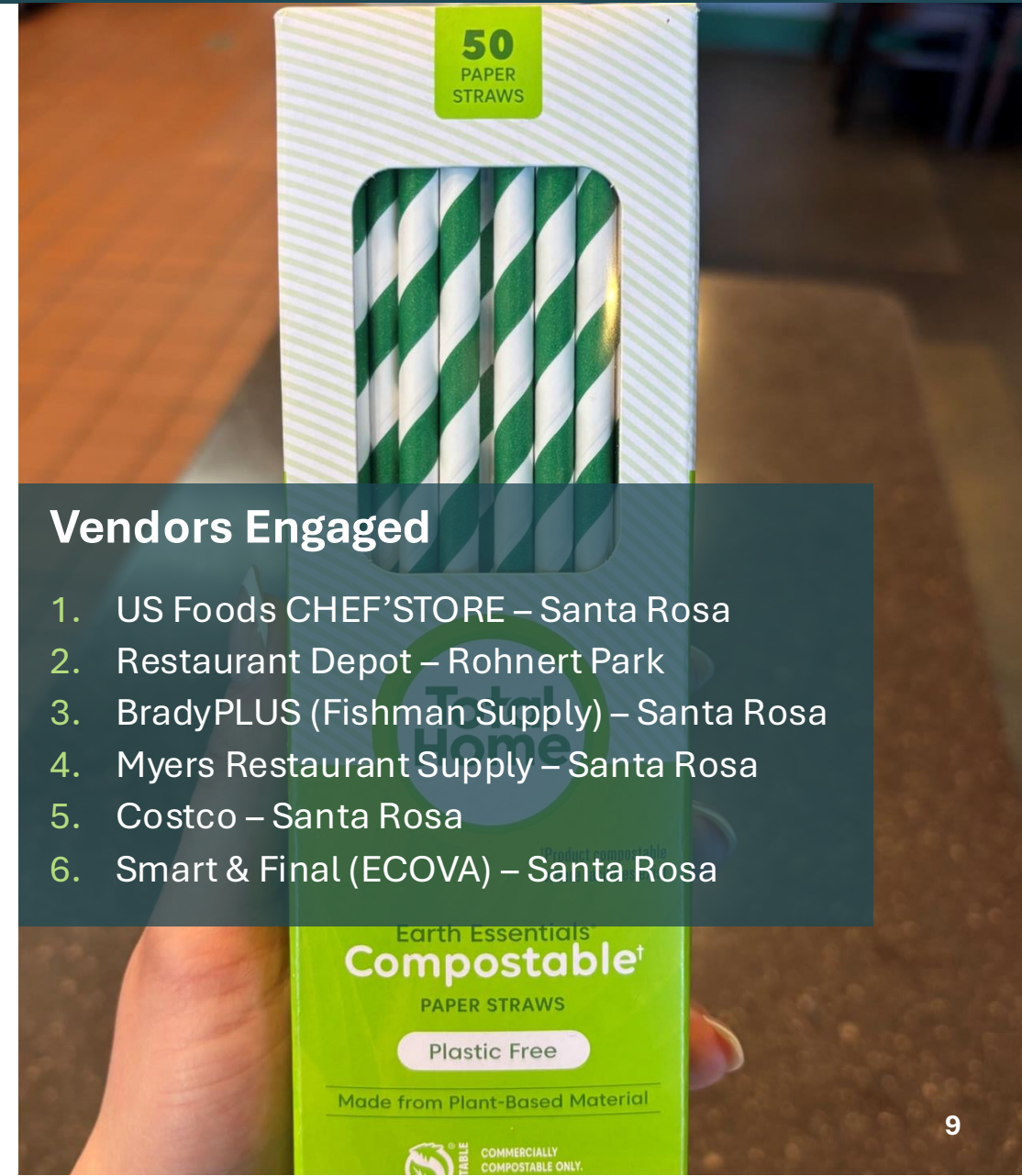
Goal: To increase awareness of ordinance requirements, identify availability of compliant products, and engage vendors as upstream partners influencing purchasing decisions food facilities

Overall Observations

- All vendors demonstrated willingness to comply, with no pushback observed.
- While compliant products are available, non-compliant items remain accessible, which may encourage continued use by food facilities.
- Corporate-level decision-making remains a key factor for larger retailers.

Vendors Engaged

1. US Foods CHEF'STORE – Santa Rosa
2. Restaurant Depot – Rohnert Park
3. BradyPLUS (Fishman Supply) – Santa Rosa
4. Myers Restaurant Supply – Santa Rosa
5. Costco – Santa Rosa
6. Smart & Final (ECOVA) – Santa Rosa



Reuse Case Studies: Goals and results

Goals and Results

Metric	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal
Reuse Mini-Grant Transition Case Studies	5	2	40%

- Outreach specialists promoted the reuse grant and reuse transitions widely, but few food facilities showed interest.
- The majority that can easily transition to reusables have already done so.
- Many that could transition are limited by space or infrastructure for dishwashing machines.

Reuse Case Studies: Participants

Participants

Participants	Jurisdiction	Changes Made	Projected Savings & Impact
Latino Service Providers	Santa Rosa	Purchased reusable plates, utensils, cups, cloth napkins, and a refillable 5-gallon water system	• Avoid 7,000 disposable items annually • Save \$1,200 annually • Take a first step toward building a reuse culture across the organization.
Rainbow Bridge Montessori	Cotati	Purchased reusable plates	• Avoid 350 disposable plates annually • Save \$100 annually • Make school gatherings feel more welcoming, intentional, and aligned with their values.



Challenges

- Confusion about eco-friendly products
- Specific difficulty understanding and accessing compliant straws and utensils
- Some concerns about high costs
- Large chains can be uncooperative or nonresponsive
- Reuse mini-grant not applicable to many food facilities



Successes

- Rising awareness and positivity around the ordinance
- Most want to use compliant products
- Some stopped or reduced usage of single-use products
- Easily available compliant products were often acquired
- Grant recipients appreciated financial support



Recommendations

1. Address partial-compliance barriers (straws & utensils)
2. Deepen supplier and vendor engagement
3. Expand business TA and promote general awareness
4. Continue updating outreach materials and recalibrating the reuse grant
5. Pair supportive assistance with clear expectations

These recommendations have informed the scope of work for the July – December 2026 project continuation



Questions?



REUSABLE FOODWARE CASE STUDY

“It shows we practice what we preach.”

Rainbow Bridge Montessori is a preschool in Sonoma County that seeks to instill in children self-confidence, a love for learning, empathy for others and respect for the environment. Through the Reuse Mini Grant, the school replaced disposable plates at events with reusable dinnerware.

“Our refreshments look more inviting and put together with real plates instead of paper.”

76

Interested in Making the Switch to Reuse?

The Zero Waste Sonoma Reuse Mini Grant supports reuse infrastructure and activities across Sonoma County with up to \$600 per eligible project.

**APPLY
NOW**



www.zerowastesonoma.gov

Why Reuse?

- Rainbow Bridge already promotes reuse through community coat drives, book drives, yard sale fundraisers, reusable lunch containers, and creative reuse in art and classroom activities. Students also learn environmental stewardship through gardening, waste sorting, litter cleanups, and farm-to-table learning.

- Staff meetings, celebrations, and parent events generate waste.

- The new plates reduce waste and make school gatherings feel more welcoming, intentional, and aligned with their values.



Reuse by the Numbers

- 50 new reusable Corelle plates were purchased.
- 350+ disposable plates are avoided annually.
- Approximately \$100 is saved annually with reusables.



“For us, reuse means encouraging gratitude, sharing, upcycling, and reducing what we throw⁷⁷away.”

Solving Challenges

- Plates are currently stored in their original boxes.
- Plates are washed by staff after events using their small on-site sink or at home.

Looking Ahead

“This grant helped us turn motivation into reality”

Next, Rainbow Bridge hopes to replace disposable cups and continue encouraging waste-free lunches and reusable containers.

www.zerowastesonoma.gov



Agenda Item #: 6
Cost Center: Organics
Staff Contact: Tan
Agenda Date: 08/20/26
Approved By: LL

ITEM: Final Report on the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grant Project

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION / ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.

II. BACKGROUND

Staff applied for the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction grant through the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) on September 1, 2022 and was successfully awarded \$298,500 on March 27, 2023. ZWS Executive Director signed short-form agreements with three grant partners: Daily Acts, Petaluma Bounty, and Zero FoodPrint (ZFP).

Daily Acts received \$20,500 to provide direct education to Sonoma County residents about the benefits of compost application in community and home gardens or landscaping. They primarily shared information through tabling events and workshops at existing events held by ZWS, the UC Cooperative Extension's Master Gardeners, the 10 member jurisdictions, and other partners.

Petaluma Bounty received \$115,500 and was tasked with assessing local needs and increasing food recovery. They first had to identify food recovery organizations in Sonoma County through a Request for Proposals process and redistribute grant funds to four organizations, which together would build a local Food Recovery Network. The Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund was chosen to lead efforts in Supervisorial District 1, Petaluma Bounty led in District 2, ExtraFood led in District 3, and Farm to Pantry led in District 4. Each of the chosen organizations was awarded \$20,000 to identify potential sources of food, form relationships with smaller pantries or organizations that could receive the food, and conduct needs assessments to understand what resources they required to improve operations. Since there were no applicants for District 5, the excess funds were reallocated for administrative costs.

ZFP received \$122,500 for carbon sequestration and regenerative farming projects. They established a goal to engage at least 20 businesses to commit ongoing monetary contributions, typically 1% of sales, for regenerative farming. ZFP also launched several time-limited campaigns on social channels and partnered with culinary influencers and chefs to amplify a "Table to Farm" message. The idea is to educate consumers that their food scraps are being composted, as required by the CA Short-Lived Climate Pollutants state law (SB 1383), but also encourage them to support participating businesses. The funds that ZFP collects are then distributed to local agricultural producers through what ZFP calls their Compost Connector program. A small portion of grant funds went to ZFP's subcontractors, the Sonoma and Gold Resource Conservation Districts, who provided agricultural producers with technical assistance, including calculating how much compost to apply, methods and equipment for spreading, and related information on regenerative farming practices.

such as no-till or dry farming.

III. DISCUSSION

The grant project was initially set to be completed in May 2025, but due to delays and challenges, staff requested and successfully received a 1-year extension from the USDA, completing the grant project in May 2026.

Since they had the smallest amount of funding, Daily Acts completed their project early in May 2025. They provided education about compost use and benefits to urban farmers, community gardens, and residents at 7 events and 17 activities to 3,632 people. Education was primarily focused on the importance of diverting food from landfills and using compost to mitigate climate change. Daily Acts shared existing resources from ZWS and the other grant partners, including information on how to build a backyard compost pile/worm bin, and outlets to donate food. The events Daily Acts attended include Recology Village at Santa Rosa Farmers, Soils Forum at Tara Firma Farms, Petaluma Blacks for Community Development Picnic, Sebastopol Produce Exchange, Cloverdale Citrus Fair, and the Cotati Climate and Reuse Fair.

Petaluma Bounty, Farm to Pantry, ExtraFood, and Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund collectively rescued and redistributed 553,400 lbs. (277 tons) of food, recruited and trained 266 new volunteers, and recruited 122 new food donors. Food donors include Oak Hills Farm, Jardin de Pueblo, New Leaf Bakery, Sutter Hospital, Parkside Recovery Center, Lepe's Foods, Fairmont Hotel, Coastline Distributors, Camacho Market, and residents with fruit trees.

Towards the end of the grant term, Petaluma Bounty unfortunately lost its fiscal sponsor. ZWS was given a 30-day notice of this change, and due to uncertainty over whether Petaluma Bounty would be able to continue the grant project, staff terminated the contract with them on October 31, 2025. The subcontractors Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund, ExtraFood, and Farm to Pantry were able to complete their projects and exhaust the grant funds budgeted for them, but Petaluma Bounty did not. Following guidance from the USDA, staff decided to contract with Sonoma Valley Catalyst to use the remaining \$25,000 of grant funds to conduct a comprehensive Food Recovery Gap Analysis and Implementation Roadmap. The Gap Analysis was conducted using connections built over the course of the grant, data from food donors and recipients, and an Edible Food Recovery Capacity Study that ZWS completed in 2022 through consultant Abound Food Care. The Gap Analysis evaluates current food recovery activities, identifies weaknesses in the system, and suggests steps past this grant project to increase and improve food recovery efforts in Sonoma County. The Gap Analysis report is attached below.

Zero FoodPrint raised \$169,054.35 in collective funding over the grant period, engaging over 360 businesses over five fundraising campaigns, including the 1% membership campaign, Holiday Gift Guides 2024 and 2025, Unfork the Planet 2025, and Dirty Drinks 2025. This facilitated the application of 5,673 tons of compost to 3,623 acres of Sonoma County agricultural land across 8 unique farm recipients. ZFP estimates this to be 20,677 tons of CO₂e reduction over the grant period. There were some challenges in procuring compost, including a period when Cold Creek Compost facility ran out of product, causing delays of 3-8 weeks for certain farm projects. Several businesses were also inconsistent in transferring funds to ZFP despite their commitment and participation in fundraising campaigns.

IV. FUNDING IMPACT

The USDA awarded \$298,500 in total grant funding.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Food Recovery Gap Analysis & Implementation Roadmap

Food Recovery Gap Analysis & Implementation Mapping

Final Report on the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction grant

2026

Gap Analysis & Implementation Roadmap



alchemy commons
COMMUNITY CENTERED CONSULTING

Prepared For :
Zero Waste Sonoma

By Elise Gonzales
Founder of Alchemy Commons

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Acknowledgements

This report reflects the collective work of organizations, agencies, volunteers, food donors, and community leaders across Sonoma County who are working every day to build a stronger, more equitable food recovery system.

Special acknowledgment goes to the community-based organizations and recovery partners who contributed impact stories, operational insights, data, and lived experience to help ground this analysis in the realities of the field. Your work demonstrates that food recovery is not simply about picking up food—it is about dignity, access, resilience, and community care.

A deep thank you to Redwood Empire Food Bank for its leadership in strengthening Sonoma County's food recovery ecosystem. Through investment in infrastructure, partner capacity, regional coordination, and distribution networks, Redwood Empire Food Bank has played a critical role in expanding the county's ability to recover and redistribute edible food at scale. Their commitment to supporting and strengthening partner organizations has helped build a more connected and resilient countywide system.

Recognition is also extended to the many food recovery organizations, volunteers, drivers, kitchen staff, and community leaders whose daily work moves food from surplus to tables. Whether through volunteer-powered distribution, direct service, new access models, or localized recovery efforts, these organizations continue to demonstrate the power of collaboration and community-rooted solutions.

Additional appreciation goes to the organizations and partners supporting data collection, compliance outreach, systems mapping, and infrastructure investment efforts—including those contributing to SB 1383 implementation, generator engagement, community access strategies, and countywide coordination.

Finally, this work would not be possible without the generosity of food donors across Sonoma County—including grocery stores, restaurants, institutions, distributors, schools, hospitals, farms and community partners who continue to participate in and strengthen the county's food recovery network.

Together, these partnerships are helping Sonoma County move toward a more connected, climate-conscious, and food-secure future.

The following terms are used throughout this report to support a shared understanding of the food recovery system.

TERM	DEFINITION
Access points	Locations where people can receive food, such as food pantries, community fridges, housing sites, non-profits and meal programs.
Underutilized capacity	Existing resources (e.g., vehicles, staff time, routes) that are not being used to their full potential.
Decentralized distribution	A model of food access where distribution occurs across multiple local sites (rather than a single central hub), improving accessibility and responsiveness to community needs.
Distribution	The process of delivering food to individuals or community-based organizations.
Food recovery	The process of collecting safe, edible surplus food and redirecting it to people in need instead of sending it to landfill.
Food recovery organization (FRO)	A nonprofit or entity that collects, transports, and distributes recovered food to the community.
Generators (edible food generators)	Businesses or institutions that produce surplus edible food that can be recovered and redistributed.
Operational threshold method	A methodology used to estimate recovery potential based on real-world performance of high-functioning local recovery systems, rather than theoretical models.
Opportunity gap	The difference between the amount of food currently being recovered and the amount that could realistically be recovered. Represents untapped potential in the system.
Route-based recovery	A coordinated system where food recovery vehicles follow scheduled pickup routes from multiple generators to maximize efficiency and volume.
SB 1383	California legislation that requires certain businesses to reduce organic waste and donate surplus edible food to food recovery organizations.
Throughput	The rate at which food is recovered and distributed, typically measured in pounds per hour, day, or year.
Tier 1 & Tier 2 generators	Categories of businesses required to comply with SB 1383. Tier 1: large food generators (e.g., grocery stores, distributors, wholesalers). Tier 2: smaller or more complex generators (e.g., restaurants, schools, hotels, hospitals).
Community map	A geographic data tool that overlays food access sites, edible food generators, and population-level data (e.g., income, age, demographics) to identify gaps and opportunities in the food system. Used to visualize where need is highest, where services exist, and where additional recovery and distribution efforts can be targeted.
Community Based Food Network/Food Recovery Network	A leadership model in every Sonoma County district collectively creating impact with emergency food and food insecurity.
Emergency food response system	A coordinated approach to distributing food during disasters or disruptions, which may include shelters, mobile distribution, and community-based delivery systems.

The opportunity is no longer just increasing recovery—it is optimizing how the system functions to reduce climate impact while ensuring more food reaches the communities who need it most.

Over the past four years, Sonoma County has made meaningful progress in building a more resilient and responsive food system. Foundational studies—including the 2022 Edible Food Recovery Study (Abound Food Care) and the 2024 Food Distribution System Assessment (Ag Innovations)—established a clear understanding of both the scale of edible food recovery opportunities and the broader challenges of food access, coordination, and equity.

The implementation of SB 1383, California’s Climate Pollutant Reduction law, has created both a mandate and an opportunity: to significantly increase edible food recovery while reducing organic waste sent to landfill. In Sonoma County, Zero Waste Sonoma (ZWS) has played a central role in advancing this work—investing in infrastructure, supporting food recovery organizations, and ensuring compliance across Tier 1 and Tier 2 edible food generators.

Together, these efforts have led to measurable progress. By 2025, Sonoma County surpassed earlier recovery targets projected by the Abound Food Recovery Study, demonstrating that the system has both the capacity and commitment to scale. Investments in vehicles, equipment, staffing, and partnerships have strengthened the foundation of the food recovery network.

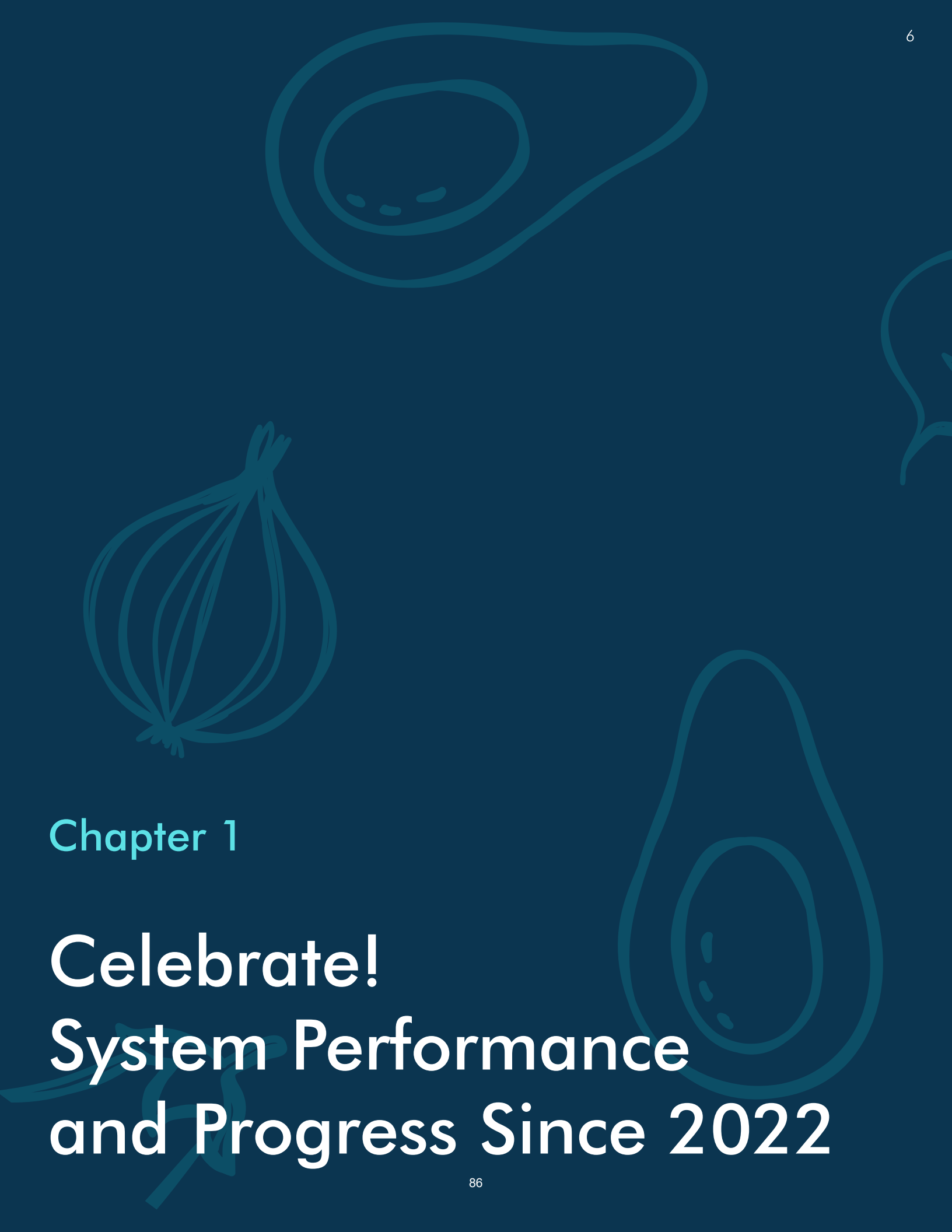
With this foundation in place, the system is well-positioned to evolve toward greater coordination, efficiency, and impact—expanding participation across generators, strengthening geographic coverage, aligning recovery with distribution pathways, and better coordinating across organizations, routes, and infrastructure.

The 2025 Food Recovery Gap Analysis & Implementation Roadmap represents the next phase of this work. It builds directly on prior studies and current system performance to define where the greatest opportunities exist today—and how to activate them.

Grounded in comprehensive 2025 recovery data and system-level analysis, this report:

- Evaluates current performance and quantifies remaining recovery opportunity
- Identifies priority areas for action across generators, geographies, and system functions
- Aligns with existing county strategies, SB 1383 requirements, and Zero Waste Sonoma investments
- Provides implementation-ready strategies and pilots to increase recovery and access
- Establishes a pathway toward a more coordinated, efficient, and equitable system

Sonoma County is now entering a new phase.



Chapter 1

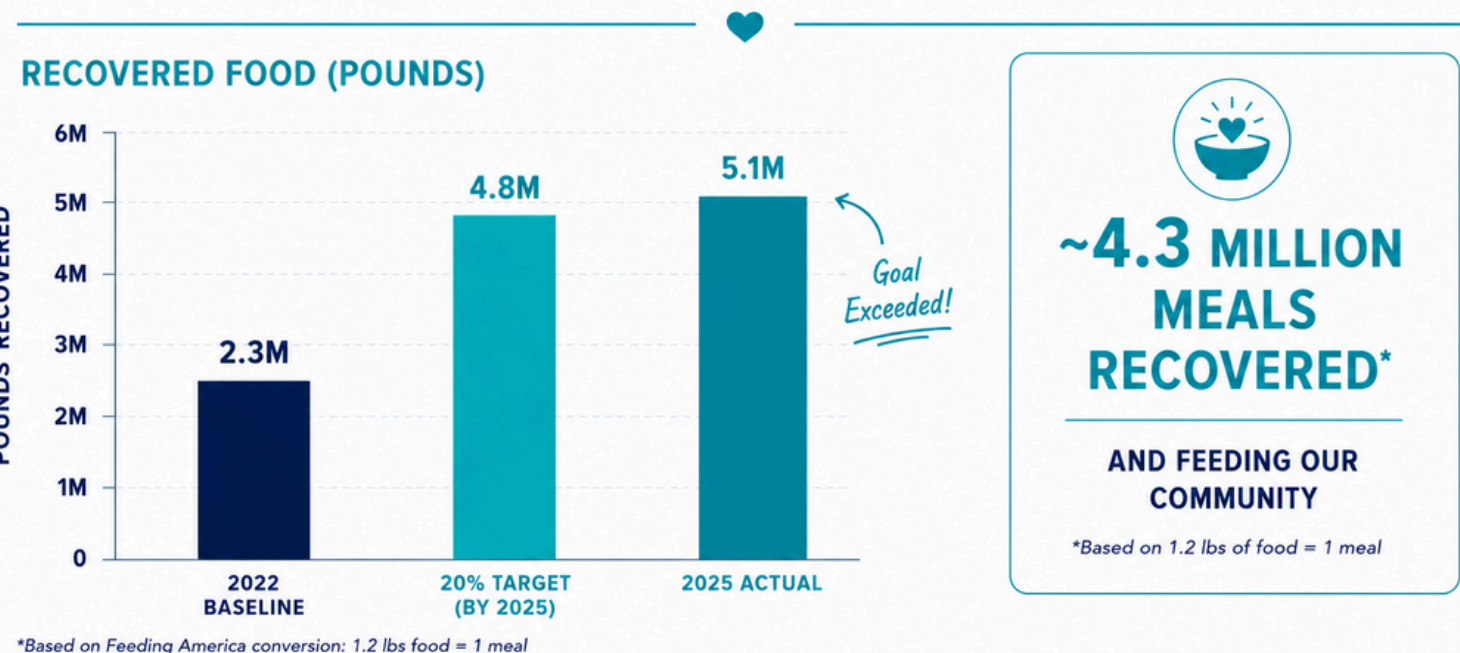
Celebrate! System Performance and Progress Since 2022

CONTEXT

The 2022 Abound Edible Food Recovery Study established a clear baseline for the county's edible food recovery system, identifying approximately 2.3 million pounds of food being recovered annually and outlining the need to increase recovery to over 4.8 million pounds to meet SB 1383 requirements. In 2025, food recovery in Sonoma County **hit 5.1 million recovered pounds.**

The study also highlighted key gaps in infrastructure, coordination, and capacity. Since that time, Zero Waste Sonoma and its partners have made significant progress in responding to these recommendations—expanding recovery efforts, investing in infrastructure, and strengthening partnerships across the ecosystem.

The following highlights reflect the collective accomplishments that have contributed to the growth of the county's edible food recovery system.



CLIMATE & RESOURCE IMPACT OF FOOD RECOVERY



EMISSIONS IMPACT

2,725
METRIC TONS CO₂e
AVOIDED

- Equivalent to 6.93 million passenger vehicle miles
- Reduced methane emissions from landfill disposal



WATER PRESERVED

389.79
MILLION GALLONS
SAVED

Equivalent to approximately 590 Olympic swimming pools of water preserved.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$785,270
SOCIAL COST OF CARBON
AVOIDED

Estimated future economic damages prevented through avoided emissions.

Climate, water, meals, and emissions calculations were generated using the ReFED Impact Calculator.

Let's Celebrate!

SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS SINCE 2022



\$457,000

Invested by Zero Waste Sonoma

CATALYZING SYSTEM GROWTH



24+

Organizations Strengthened
and Supported

EXPANDING INFRASTRUCTURE
AND BUILDING CAPACITY



SYSTEM SHIFT

From Limited Recovery Efforts
to Sustained, High-Volume Operations

STRONGER INFRASTRUCTURE.
GREATER IMPACT.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY INVESTMENTS



3

Electric Food
Recovery Vans

131,628 lbs

Recovered Using
New EV Vans



5 + 5

Commercial
Refrigerators
+ Freezers



1 + 1

Food Storage
Container +
On-Farm
Cooling Shed



Kitchen
Equipment
and
Operational
Supplies



Drivers,
Kitchen Staff,
and
Operational
Support



Food Safety
Training and
SB 1383
Reporting
Systems



GENERATOR ENGAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE EFFORTS HAVE EXPANDED

Outreach Conducted by
Cascadia Consulting Group

194

Tier 1 & Tier 2
Generators
Contacted

111

Generators
Confirmed Compliant
with Food Recovery
Requirements



DATA SYSTEMS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED SYSTEM VISIBILITY



1,346,510 lbs

Tracked Through
Careit Platform



2,090

Donations Recorded



122

Edible Food
Generators Onboarded



49

Food Recovery
Organizations Using
the System



VOLUNTEER-POWERED MODELS ARE SUPPORTING SYSTEM GROWTH



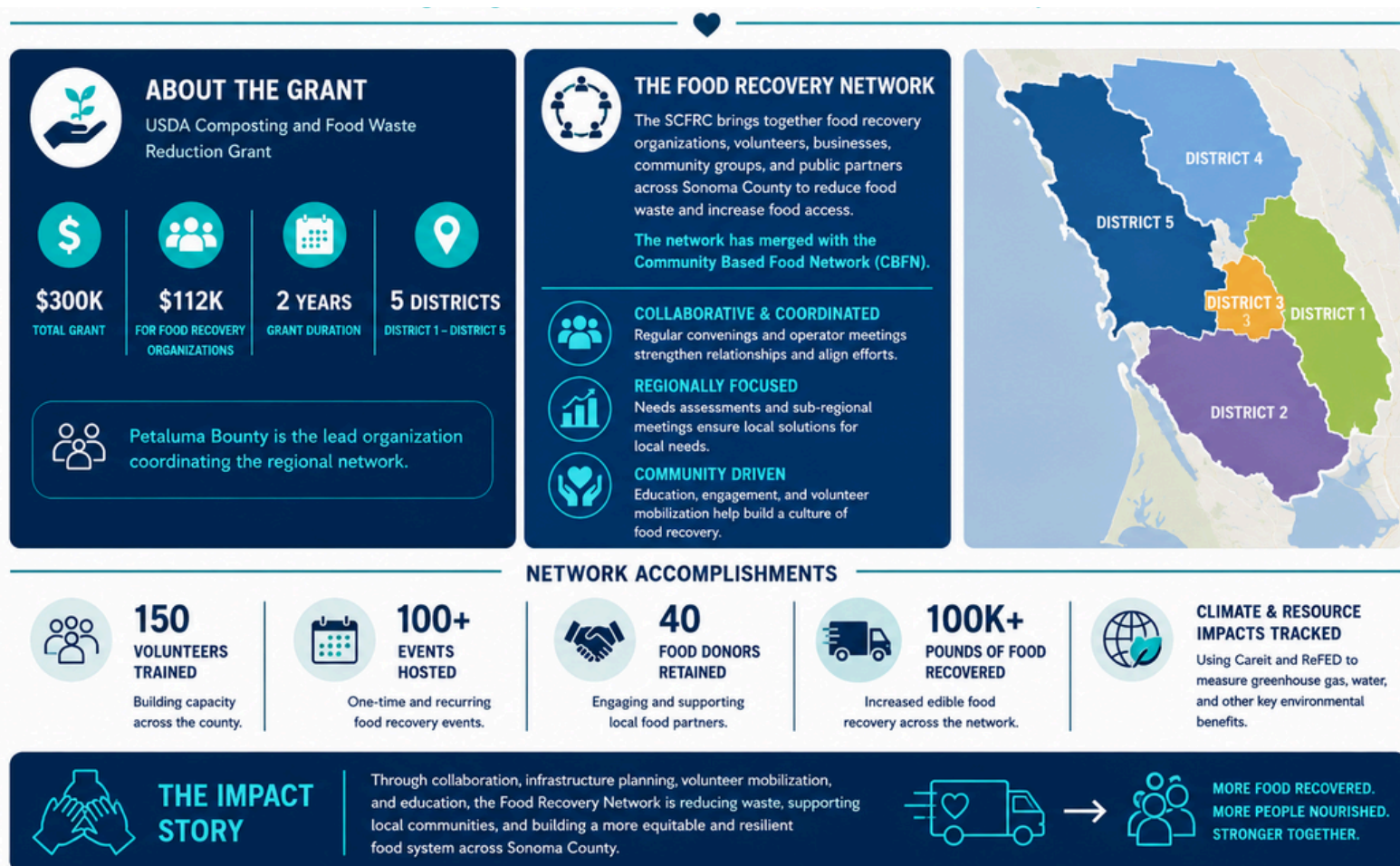
100+

New Volunteers
Driving Our Food Recovery

Food Recovery Network

Sonoma County

The Sonoma County Food Recovery Coalition (SCFRC), led by Zero Waste Sonoma through a USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grant, has strengthened regional collaboration, infrastructure planning, and community education efforts across Sonoma County's edible food recovery network. The two-year, \$300,000 grant includes approximately \$112,000 dedicated to supporting food recovery organizations across five regional zones (Districts 1 - 5), with Petaluma Bounty serving as the lead coordinating organization. Through the coalition, partners conducted regional needs assessments, hosted sub-regional convenings, expanded volunteer recruitment and training, supported outreach and engagement with Tier 1 and Tier 2 food donors, and developed community education campaigns focused on food waste reduction, food preservation, and safe food handling. The network also contributed measurable system impacts, including increased food recovery events, expanded donor engagement, volunteer mobilization and strengthened coordination between recovery organizations working collectively to expand equitable food access across Sonoma County.



FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT
FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT
FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT
FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT
FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT

DEEPER INSIGHT

While these metrics tell a story of scale, the deeper story is one of community.

Food recovery in Sonoma County is not just a system—it is a network of people caring for one another, of organizations rooted in place, and of communities reclaiming food as a shared resource. Behind every number are hands that transport, organize, and distribute—ensuring that food moves with intention, dignity, and connection.

The following impact stories bring this work to life—showing how investment becomes action, and how action becomes impact within communities across the county.

Impact Story: Una Vida



222,000 lbs
Recovered in 2025



117.56 metric tons
of CO2e avoided



12 Tier
1, 2 & 3 Donors



183,333 Meals
Added to the
System Annually



2+ new
Access Points

Over the past two years, Una Vida has built a consistent and growing food recovery operation, recovering approximately 222,000 pounds of edible food annually from 12 donor locations. As a volunteer-run organization, Una Vida operates with a core team of 11 volunteers who support weekly recovery, sorting, and distribution efforts.

Food is recovered multiple days per week and routed into targeted distribution channels, including weekly Saturday community distributions serving approximately 100 individuals, mid-week distributions in partnership with Redwood Empire Food Bank, and direct delivery to senior housing communities.

Monday recovery routes specifically support approximately 50 low-income seniors at Vintage Chateau, ensuring consistent access to fresh food.

This model demonstrates how a relatively small, volunteer-driven organization can operate as a high-impact recovery partner when supported with infrastructure and system alignment. By connecting multiple donor sites to consistent community access points, Una Vida contributes to both increased recovery volume and localized food distribution.

“The Food Recovery Program has elevated Una Vida's food distributions by providing fresh, high-quality food to community members who may not otherwise be able to afford it. Providing ready-to-eat options is an appreciated feature of our program for visitors, ensuring that even those without access to cooking or heating can still receive and enjoy nourishing food.

This full-circle cycle between food providers and our distribution visitors keeps people fed while also reducing the environmental impact of food waste.”

April Lofgren
Director of Development & Communications, Una Vida

Impact Details	
ZWS Investment	Organizational Capacity Support
Aligned Abound Recommendation	Increase Food Recovery Organization (FRO) capacity through infrastructure investment
Food Distributions Assessment Strategy	Strengthen coordination across food distribution partners, Expand community-based, localized food access models, Support volunteer-driven capacity and community engagement



Impact Story: Building a Coordinated Food Recovery System



300,000 lbs
Recovered in 2025



160.31 metric tons of
CO2e avoided



10 Tier 1,2&3
donors



250,000 Meals
Added to the System
Annually



6 new
access points



Impact Details	
Organizations	Burbank Housing, ExtraFood, Sonoma Family Meal Unity Kitchen, Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley, St Leos Church, Sonoma Home Meals, Homeless Action Sonoma
Investments	Zero Waste Sonoma, infrastructure and capacity-building grants (community fridges, equipment, vehicle), CalFresh HEAL (County of Sonoma): coordination funding, Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund: pilot investment to expand food recovery through ExtraFood (vehicle, staffing, and program implementation)
Food Distribution Assessment	Establish coordinated leadership and staffing structures to support countywide food system efforts, Strengthen coordination across food distribution partners, Expand community-based, localized food access models, Convene cross-sector partners to align efforts and resources

Through a phased and collaborative investment approach, Sonoma Valley significantly expanded its edible food recovery system by aligning coordination, recovery, and infrastructure over time.

Initial investment from Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund supported a pilot to bring ExtraFood into Sonoma Valley, funding a dedicated vehicle, staffing, and program operations for two years. This enabled the expansion of food recovery from grocery stores, hospitals, and the school district—

establishing a consistent and reliable flow of recovered food. In parallel, coordination funding from CalFresh HEAL supported system-wide implementation, including the development of a community fridge network and the alignment of partners across the valley.

Zero Waste Sonoma then provided infrastructure investments through micro-grants, funding community fridges, food recovery equipment, and ultimately a permanent vehicle to sustain and scale recovery efforts.



GAP ANALYSIS & IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Impact Story: Building a Coordinated Food Recovery System

These layered investments allowed multiple organizations—including Burbank Housing, Sonoma Family Meal aka Unity Kitchen, Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley, and others—to expand distribution capacity and serve as access points for recovered food.

Together, this approach created a fully connected system—from donor recovery to community distribution—demonstrating how coordinated investments across agencies can move beyond isolated efforts to build an integrated and sustainable food recovery network.

"The residents love having food available right at our complex. Some can't drive or walk, so this alleviates a lot of stress.

Most of them rely on this to survive."

Community Fridge Captain
Village Greens, Burbank Housing

Impact Story: Buckelew Program and The Living Room



133,050 lbs
Recovered in 2025



71.10 metric tons
of CO2e avoided



9 new Tier
1, 2 donors



110,875 Meals
Added to the
system annually



2+ new
access points

Through Zero Waste Sonoma’s investment in electric food recovery vehicles, both The Living Room and Buckelew Programs were able to significantly expand their capacity to recover, transport, and distribute food across Sonoma County. What began as an infrastructure investment quickly became a catalyst for deeper community impact.

For The Living Room, the vehicle fundamentally shifted how food could be sourced and distributed. Recovered food replaced previously purchased items—reducing food costs while increasing the quality and quantity of meals and pantry offerings. This allowed the organization to expand services to an additional 250 clients, while also increasing support to partner organizations across the region, including F.I.S.H., Elisha’s Pantry, and the Redwood Gospel Mission. Beyond numbers, the vehicle strengthened relationships with local businesses and enabled safer, more reliable food transport—ultimately expanding both reach and dignity in service.

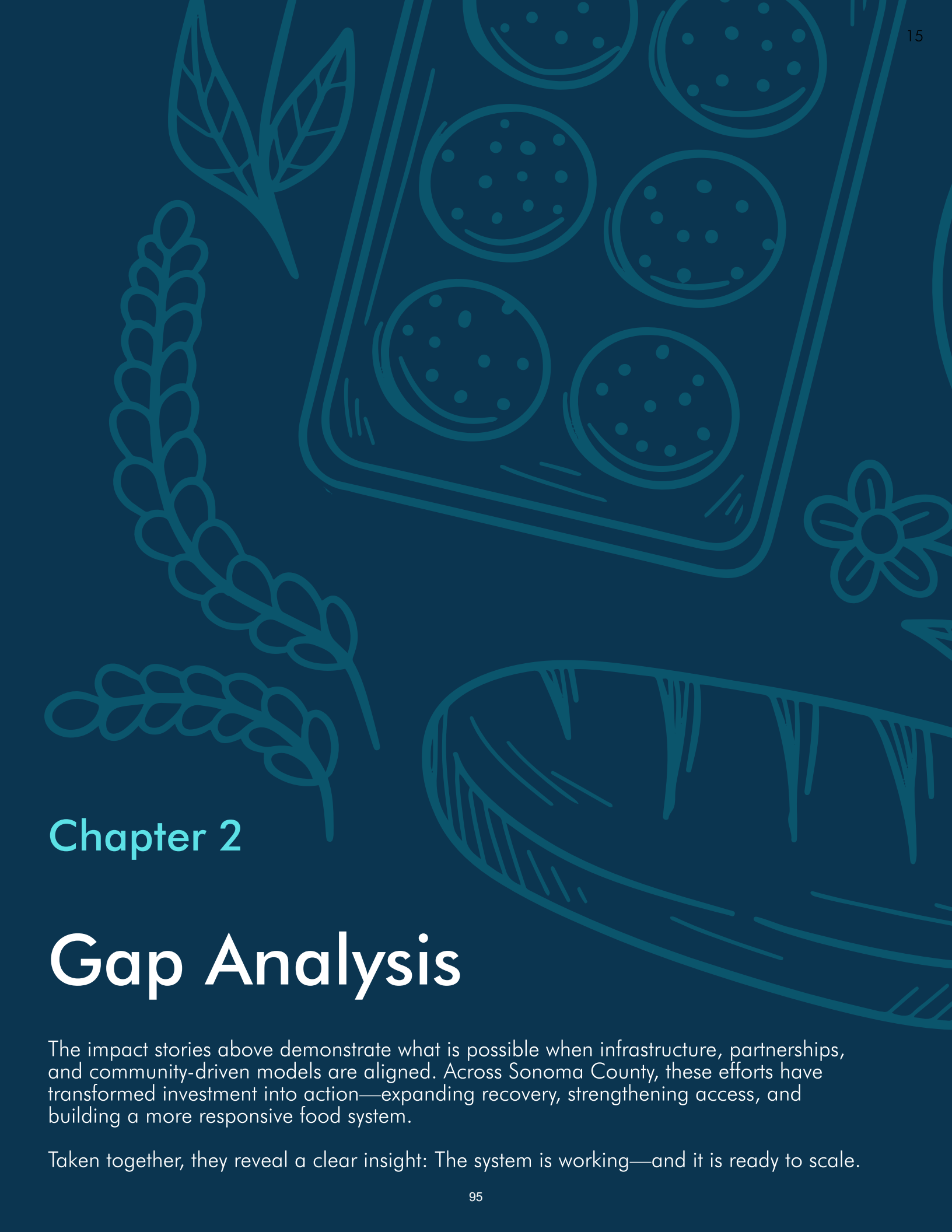
For Buckelew Programs, the vehicle expanded both geographic reach and operational flexibility. Staff were able to deliver larger quantities of food directly to multiple housing sites, including Tamayo Village, Orenda Center, and Athena House—ensuring that residents had consistent access to groceries where they live. The van also made it possible to coordinate bulk pickups and maintain a reliable backstock of pantry items, supporting ongoing distribution and reducing food insecurity across their programs.

Together, these organizations demonstrate how targeted infrastructure investments can unlock both operational efficiency and deeper community impact—transforming food recovery into a reliable, responsive system of care.

Impact Details	
ZWS Investment	Purchase of electric food recovery vehicles
Aligned Abound Recommendation	Strengthen coordination and expand transportation capacity to improve the efficiency of edible food recovery and distribution
Food Distributions Assessment Strategy	Strengthen coordination across food distribution partners, Improve logistics, transportation, and distribution efficiency, Expand community-based access through aligned distribution networks



"The van has greatly increased our capacity and range for food pickup and delivery... we're now able to bring large quantities of groceries directly to our housing sites, easing the food burden for our clients in a way that simply wasn't possible before." -Veronica Gray, Buckelew



Chapter 2

Gap Analysis

The impact stories above demonstrate what is possible when infrastructure, partnerships, and community-driven models are aligned. Across Sonoma County, these efforts have transformed investment into action—expanding recovery, strengthening access, and building a more responsive food system.

Taken together, they reveal a clear insight: The system is working—and it is ready to scale.

Methodology

This gap analysis uses the 2022 Abound study as a baseline reference, while applying a separate 2026 operational threshold method to estimate current recovery opportunity.

Abound's methodology:

The Abound study used multiple estimation methods to assess edible food recovery capacity. One method was a top-down disposal-based estimate, using CalRecycle disposal data and waste characterization factors to estimate total potentially donatable food. Another was a business-based estimate, which identified Tier 1 and Tier 2 generators and estimated food waste using sector-specific pounds-per-employee waste generation factors. Abound then applied an edible/recoverable food percentage to estimate recoverable food potential.

This analysis does not recreate Abound's methodology model. Instead, it uses current 2025 recovery data and observed local performance from generators and recovery organizations to estimate realistic, actionable opportunity. This includes Zero Waste Sonoma reporting data, Redwood Empire Food Bank recovery data, and ExtraFood operational benchmarks.

Why the methods differ:

Abound estimates systemwide recoverable food capacity based on modeled waste generation. This 2025 analysis estimates practical recovery opportunities based on current performance, inactive or underutilized generators, and what local recovery partners have demonstrated is operationally achievable.

Insufficient Data:

"Insufficient data" within this report does not necessarily indicate low recovery performance, but rather reflects incomplete or unavailable reporting at the time of analysis, including missing self-reported 2025 recovery data or limited tracking visibility across certain generators and partners.

Recovery potential for Tier 1 generators was estimated using operational thresholds grounded in observed local performance, with category-specific adjustments to reflect variability in scale and recoverability. This methodology emphasizes activating underutilized generators and improving coordination across existing infrastructure, rather than estimating theoretical maximum recovery.

Recovery potential for Tier 2 generators was estimated using category-specific benchmarks based on observed local performance, reflecting operational realities such as staffing, liability, and participation constraints.

Generator Category	Optimized Lbs this generator is able to produce annually	Conservative lbs this generator is able to produce annually	Description of Methodology
Grocery Store	50,000 lbs	30,000	Based on consistent performance from established recovery partnerships in Sonoma County.
Food Distributors	100,000	25,000	Total estimates on the next page are based on activation of non-participating sites, rather than increasing recovery from already engaged generators. Optimized and conservative pounds in this category are base on performance averages as distributor business sizes are considerably different.
Wholesale vendors	60,000	12,000	Total estimates on the next page are based on activation of non-participating sites, rather than increasing recovery from already engaged generators. Optimized and conservative pounds in this category are base on performance averages as distributor business sizes are considerably different.
Schools (Local Education Agencies)	500	2,600	Based on Windsor Unified School District performance
Hosptials	30,000	25,000	Based on ExtraFood Marin recovery data. Reflects recovery from cafeteria and prepared food at hospitals.
Hotels & Large Venues	Insufficient data	Insufficient data	Current data indicates limited excess generation and minimal remaining opportunity
Restaurants	Insufficient data	Insufficient data	Based on the current dataset, there are no remaining Tier 2 restaurant generators with identifiable, scalable recovery opportunities under existing conditions.

Sonoma County has the potential to recover an additional 1.3 million–3.4 million pounds of food annually using existing infrastructure and partnerships.

Countywide Food Recovery Gap Analysis

Applying this methodology to 2025 recovery data provides a clear, system-wide view of both current performance and unrealized potential across Sonoma County.

The table below compares actual recovery with conservative and optimized potential estimates across Tier 1 and Tier 2 generators, illustrating where additional recovery can be unlocked through improved coordination, generator activation, and more efficient use of existing infrastructure.

The findings reinforce a central insight of this report: The primary opportunity is not building new systems—but more fully activating and aligning the one already in place.

Tier 1	Category	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Potential Recovery lbs (Conservative)	Potential Recovery lbs (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)
1	Grocery Stores 10,000+ Sq Ft	2,470,904	3,425,173	4,374,742	954,269	1,903,838
1	Food Distributors	1,432,349	1,682,349	2,432,349	250,000	1,000,000
1	Wholesale	1,141,268	1,201,268	1,441,268	60,000	300,000
2	Restaurants	71,476	insufficient data	insufficient data	insufficient data	insufficient data
2	Schools (LEAs)	15,055	48,055	186,655	33,000	171,600
2	Hospitals	20,653	80,000	100,000	59,347	79,347
2	Hotels / Venues	11,391	insufficient data	insufficient data	insufficient data	insufficient data
	Total	5,163,096	6,436,845	8,535,014	1,356,616	3,454,785

Countywide Insights from 2025 Recovery Data

The countywide analysis reveals several key patterns in how edible food recovery is currently functioning—and where additional opportunity exists.

- Recovery volume and remaining opportunity are highly concentrated within Tier 1 generators, particularly large-format grocery stores. This category represents both the largest contributor to current recovery and the single greatest opportunity for additional volume.
- The data highlights a distinction between optimization and activation opportunities across generator types. Grocery recovery is already well-established and presents opportunities for increased efficiency and volume, while categories such as food distributors and wholesale vendors show opportunity through activation of currently non-participating or underutilized sites.
- Tier 2 generators—including schools, hospitals, and other institutional sites—represent a smaller share of total recovery volume, but remain important contributors to localized access and targeted distribution to specific demographics in need.
- Underutilized generators, particularly within distributors and wholesalers, may represent smaller volumes, collectively they contribute meaningful additional recovery potential
- Restaurants and large venues—show limited remaining opportunity within the current dataset, reflecting both operational constraints and lower volumes of recoverable surplus, making it a lower priority in comparison to other categories



Taken together, these findings suggest that Sonoma County's food recovery system is no longer in an early stage of development. With significant infrastructure, participation, and recovery already in place, the primary opportunity moving forward lies in better aligning and activating the existing system to unlock additional impact.



District Level Food Recovery Analysis

While the countywide analysis provides a system-level view of recovery performance and opportunity, it does not fully capture how these dynamics vary across Sonoma County.

To better understand where opportunity exists geographically, the analysis below breaks down recovery performance at the district level—highlighting differences in generator participation, recovery activity, and remaining capacity across regions.

Key Patterns Across Districts

Across Sonoma County, several consistent patterns emerge when examining recovery opportunity at the district level.

- Tier 1 grocery stores remain the dominant source of opportunity across all districts, consistently representing the largest gaps between current recovery and achievable potential.
- Opportunity varies more by level of participation than by geography—districts with similar generator types show very different outcomes depending on whether sites are fully activated, partially utilized, or not engaged.
- Districts with more mature recovery systems (e.g., District 1) show diminishing returns, where gains are driven by optimization, while others (e.g., Districts 3 and 4) present clearer opportunities for volume growth through activation.
- Tier 2 opportunities remain secondary but strategic, contributing to localized access and targeted distribution, particularly for vulnerable populations, rather than large-scale volume increases.

District 1

District 1 shows moderate remaining opportunity, with recovery already relatively strong across several grocery sites. The largest opportunity is concentrated in select high-performing grocery stores that still have room to increase volume, while others are nearing optimized recovery levels. Overall, this district reflects a more mature recovery landscape, where gains will come from targeted optimization rather than broad activation. Additional opportunity could reside in Tier 3 generators such as farms, gleanings and farmers markets.

District 1 Opportunities							
Name	Opportunity Level	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)
OLIVER'S MARKET	HIGH	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Redwood Gospel Mission, Buckelew	10,553	39,447	19,447
SAFEWAY #713	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	NA	28,394	21,606	1,606
GROCERY OUTLET	Low	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Friends in Sonoma Helping (FISH)	35,863	14,137	0
Tier 2 Opportunities	Sonoma Mission Inn SS, Oakmont Gardens						

District 2

District 2 reflects moderate-to-high opportunity, with a mix of active recovery and underutilized high-volume generators. Several grocery sites are already participating but remain below optimized recovery thresholds, while others show clear potential for increased engagement. The district is well-positioned for both optimization and targeted activation, particularly by strengthening coordination between existing partners and expanding recovery at partially engaged sites

District 2 Opportunities

Name	Opportunity Level	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)
LOLA'S MARKET INC.	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Iglesia Cristiana SE	488	49,512	29,512
PETALUMA GROCERY OUTLET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Una Vida	365	49,635	29,635
RALEY'S #329	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		4,848	45,152	25,152
WHOLE FOODS #10138	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		1964	48,036	28,036
PENNGROVE MARKET	Incomplete Data	Grocery Store	Una Vida		Incomplete Data	TBD	TBD
PETALUMA MARKET	Incomplete Data	Grocery Store	Una Vida		Incomplete Data	TBD	TBD
Tier 2 Opportunities	AMF Boulevard Lanes, Cotati Food Service, MC NEARs Saloon and Dining House, Sonoma Mountain Foods, Dairy delivery and Miyoko's Kitchen.						

District 3

District 3 presents significant remaining opportunity, particularly concentrated among Tier 1 grocery stores. Several sites show substantial gaps between current recovery and achievable thresholds, indicating strong potential for increased volume through improved coordination and route alignment. While some mid-tier sites are performing steadily, the district overall would benefit from focused activation and scaling of existing recovery relationships.

District 3 Opportunities							
Name	Opportunity Level	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)
LOLA'S MARKET INC GARB-FOOD	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Iglesia Cristiana	insufficient data	50,000	30,000
RANCHO MENDOZA SUPER MERCADO	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
RANCHO MENDOZA SUPERMERCADO INC	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
RUGALS MARKET GROCERY OUTLET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
SANTA ROSA COMMUNITY MARKET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
FOOD MAXX	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		14,879	35,121	15,121

District 3

District 3 Opportunities

Name	Opportunity	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)
LOLA'S MARKET INC	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Iglesia Cristiana SE	3,390	46,610	26,610
TRADER JOE'S 178	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Redwood Gospel Mission	13,450	36,550	16,550
SAFEWAY #918	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		24,542	25,458	5,458
WALMART #2468	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		17595	32,041	12,405
SMART & FINAL #409	Low	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		31,355	18,645	-1,355
TARGET STORE #852	Low	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		33,900	16,100	-3,900
Tier 2 Opportunities	Lepe Meat Co						

District 4

District 4 Demonstrates high recovery opportunity, with multiple large-format grocery stores showing substantial unrealized potential. Recovery activity is present but uneven, with several high-opportunity sites currently operating well below achievable thresholds. This district stands out as a strong candidate for coordinated activation and route optimization, particularly given the concentration of high-volume Tier 1 generators.

District 4 Opportunities							
Name	Opportunity	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)
LOLA'S MARKET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
MOLSBERRY MARKET I	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
SHELTON'S NATURAL FOODS MARKET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Healdsburg Food Pantry	insufficient data	50,000	30,000
SUPER CHAVEZ MARKET	High	Grocery Store	NA		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
SUPER MARKET RANCHO MENDOZA	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
GROCERY OUTLET Windsor	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		6,023	43,977	23,977

District 4

District 4 Opportunities

Name	Opportunity	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)
LUCKY #775	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		3,169	46,831	26,831
PACIFIC MARKET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		1,139	48,861	28,861
WHOLE FOODS #10370	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Food For Thought	11,477	38,523	18,523
BIG JOHN'S MARKET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Healdsburg Food Pantry	8,202	41,798	21,798
GROCERY OUTLET Cloverdale	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	Clovedale Food Pantry	17,863	32,137	12,137
RALEY'S #341	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		26,543	23,457	3,457
SAFEWAY STORE # 1562	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		20,762	29,238	9,238

District 4

District 4 Opportunities							
Name	Opportunity	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap (Conservative)
WALMART	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		19,357	30,643	10,643
TRADER JOE'S	Low	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	FISH of Santa Rosa	35,400	14,600	0
RAYS FOOD PLACE #42 COMP	Low	Grocery Store	Conservation Corps North Bay	Cloverdale Food Pantry	35,405	14,595	0
Tier 2 Opportunities	Coddington Mall LLC, Brookdale Pauline Creek (senior living facility), Kaiser Hospital* and WM / Brookdale Chanate.						

*Working in collaboration with Sonoma Food Runners . Please see page 37.

District 5

District 5 shows emerging opportunity, with a mix of early-stage and moderately active recovery across grocery sites. Several high-opportunity generators are currently underutilized or not fully integrated into consistent recovery routes. While some sites demonstrate stable performance, the district overall would benefit from increased participation and strengthened coordination to unlock additional volume.

District 5 Opportunities							
Name	Opportunity	Category	Food Recovery Entity	Recovery Subcontractor Partner	Actual Recovery 2025 (lbs)	Opportunity Gap lbs (Optimized)	Opportunity Gap lbs (Conservative)
PACIFIC MARKET #14	High	Grocery Store	Food Pal		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
COMMUNITY MARKET SEB	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
WHOLE FOODS #10137	High	Grocery Store	Food Donation Connection, Redwood Gospel Mission, Food for Thought		insufficient data	50,000	30,000
FIRCREST MARKET	High	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	NA	1,451	48,549	
Lucky's #777	High	Grocery Store	Windsor Presbyterian Church	NA	3,738	46,262	26,262
OLIVER'S MARKET	Medium	Grocery Store	Redwood Empire Food Bank	COTS, Windsor Presbyterian Church, New Hope Market Cotati, Redwood Gospel Mission	21,161	28,839	8,839

Infrastructure Capacity Analysis: Zero Waste Sonoma Investments

Across Sonoma County, investments in food recovery vehicles have significantly expanded the system's ability to recover and distribute food. Analysis of these assets reveals that existing infrastructure has not yet reached full capacity—and that additional recovery can be achieved through a combination of better utilization of staffed routes and expansion of volunteer-supported models.

Two distinct capacity models are currently operating within the system:

01. Staffed Capacity Model (ExtraFood)

Fixed capacity with underutilized hours

- Current recovery: 25,000 lbs/month
- Throughput: 150 lbs/hour (based on 40 hrs/week paid driver)
- Unused capacity: 25–30% of paid weekly hours (~10–12 hrs/week)

Additional Potential (within existing staffing): +70,000–90,000 lbs/year

Even with a fully staffed vehicle, not all available operating hours are currently utilized. This indicates that additional recovery can be achieved immediately without increasing staffing or infrastructure, by expanding routes or adding pickups within existing time blocks.

02. Volunteer Capacity Model (Buckelew Programs + The Living Room Vehicles)

Flexible capacity that scales with participation

- Throughput: 150 lbs/hour (aligned with ExtraFood vehicle average)
- 2-hour volunteer shift: 300 lbs recovered
- 4-hour volunteer shift: 600 lbs recovered

Illustrative Capacity Growth:

- 5 volunteers/week (4-hr shifts): 150,000 lbs/year
- 10 volunteers/week: 300,000 lbs/year

Unlike staffed models, volunteer-based systems are not limited by fixed schedules. Recovery capacity can expand significantly with relatively small increases in participation, making this a highly scalable and cost-effective pathway for system growth.

Together, these models reveal a critical finding:

Sonoma County's food recovery system contains both underutilized staffed capacity and highly scalable volunteer capacity—creating a significant opportunity to increase recovery without major new infrastructure investment.

Increasing recovery across Sonoma County does not require building new systems, but rather:

- Filling unused hours within staffed routes
- Expanding volunteer participation to scale flexible recovery models
- Aligning generators, routes, and partners to better utilize existing capacity
- These findings directly inform the following strategies, which focus on activating and aligning current infrastructure to achieve greater scale and impact.



Chapter 3

Strategies, Action Plan, Pilots, Activities

From Local Opportunity to System Activation

The district-level analysis reinforces a clear and consistent finding.

While edible food recovery is active across Sonoma County, significant opportunity remains concentrated within existing generators, infrastructure, and partnerships.

These opportunities are not the result of missing resources, but of systems that are not yet fully aligned or activated at scale.

Across districts, the data highlights the same core needs:

- Stronger coordination between donors, recovery organizations, and distribution partners
- More efficient use of existing transportation and recovery routes
- Consistent engagement and activation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 generators
- Better alignment between where food is recovered and where it is most needed

These findings directly align with several key recommendations from the 2022 Abound study that, while advanced, are not yet fully realized:

- Strengthen coordination across the recovery system
- Develop shared logistics and improve route efficiency
- Address operational barriers to consistent participation
- Build a coordinated, countywide system with shared responsibility

The following strategies build on these recommendations—refining them through the lens of current system performance, local data, and demonstrated success models across Sonoma County.

Rather than introducing new systems, these strategies focus on activating what already exists—aligning infrastructure, partners, and recovery flows to unlock the next phase of system-wide impact.





STRATEGIES SYSTEM LEVERS

Core levers that drive system-wide impact.



ACTION PLAN

SOLUTION / IMPLEMENTATION

System-wide convening to align partners, assign roles, and activate strategies.



PILOTS

TARGETED IMPLEMENTATION

Focus on high-opportunity sectors to test, refine, and scale solutions.



DATA STRATEGY SYSTEM FOUNDATION

Power the system with real-time data for visibility, decisions, and impact.



STRATEGY 1

MAXIMIZE UTILIZATION OF EXISTING RECOVERY INFRASTRUCTURE

Fully activate vehicles, routes, storage, and operational capacity to increase recovery.



STRATEGY 2

STRENGTHEN COORDINATION ACROSS THE RECOVERY SYSTEM

Align generators, recovery organizations, and distribution partners for greater efficiency and reach.



COUNTYWIDE RECOVERY ACTIVATION CONVENING (THE SOLUTION / ACTION PLAN)



Share data & opportunity by district and generator



Align partners around shared goals and expectations



Match generators with recovery partners, routes & capacity



Assign roles, responsibilities & commitments



Establish ongoing coordination, tracking & accountability



PILOT A

LATINO MARKET RECOVERY & COMMUNITY DISTRIBUTION

Activate underutilized Latino markets and connect recovery directly to culturally relevant community distribution.



PILOT B

HOSPITAL RECOVERY FOR PREPARED MEAL DISTRIBUTION

Expand recovery from hospitals and align prepared food with senior-serving and vulnerable population programs.



PILOT C

SCHOOL-BASED RECOVERY MODELS

Develop and test flexible recovery models that address operational barriers within school systems.



STRATEGY 3: BUILD A COUNTYWIDE RECOVERY DATA SYSTEM (FOUNDATION FOR ALL STRATEGIES)



Integrate data from multiple sources (REFB, Careit, ExtraFood, Replate, Copia, etc.)



Create centralized dashboard for real-time tracking of pounds recovered, donations, and participation



Calculate opportunity gaps by generator, category, and district



Use data to inform route planning, generator engagement, investments & performance tracking



Three Strategies. One Coordinated Approach. Greater Impact.

Maximizing infrastructure, strengthening coordination, and using data to ensure more good food reaches more people while reducing climate impact.



Strategy 1: Maximize Utilization of Existing Recovery Infrastructure

Goal: Increase total recovery by fully activating existing transportation and logistics infrastructure funded through Zero Waste Sonoma and partner investments.

Significant investments have already been made in vehicles, staffing, and operational capacity across Sonoma County. However, analysis shows that a meaningful portion of this infrastructure remains underutilized—representing one of the fastest and most cost-effective opportunities to increase recovery.

This strategy focuses on optimizing how existing assets are deployed across the system.

Key actions include:

- Aligning recovery routes across organizations to reduce overlap and increase efficiency
- Redesigning routes to better utilize available vehicle hours and capacity
- Expanding shared-use models to allow multiple organizations to leverage existing infrastructure
- Deploying unused capacity into districts and generator categories with the highest remaining opportunity

By maximizing existing infrastructure, the system can increase recovery volume without requiring significant new capital investment.

Activities

1. Consolidate overlapping geographies in high-density areas
 - a. Align operations between The Living Room and Buckelew Programs in Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa to reduce duplication and increase efficiency OR
 - b. Each van takes on more donor opportunities coordinated in specific districts
2. Redesign shared routes to maximize vehicle capacity
3. Coordinate pickup schedules so organizations operate complementary routes (e.g., alternating days), allowing a single vehicle to scale toward full utilization (3–400k lbs annually vs. current ~50k per org).
4. Establish shared delivery model across organizations
5. Structure routes so recovered food can be distributed across both organizations' sites, increasing flexibility and total absorption capacity.
6. Reallocate freed vehicle capacity to underserved areas
7. Redirect underutilized or newly available vehicle capacity to more rural geographies currently lacking consistent recovery coverage.



Strategy 2: Strengthen Coordination Across the Recovery System

Alignment of Generators, Recovery Organizations, and Distribution Partners

Goal: Improve system performance by aligning partners, clarifying roles, and enabling coordinated action across the county.

While Sonoma County has a strong network of recovery organizations and partners, coordination is not yet fully systematized. As a result, opportunities remain to better align generators, routes, and distribution channels—particularly at the district level.

This strategy focuses on moving from informal collaboration to structured, ongoing coordination.

Key actions include:

- Establishing clear alignment between generators, recovery organizations, and distribution partners
- Coordinating recovery efforts geographically to improve coverage and reduce duplication
- Formalizing partnerships and agreements where needed
- Creating mechanisms for ongoing communication, coordination, and accountability
- Strengthening coordination is essential to unlocking the full potential of existing infrastructure and ensuring that recovered food is efficiently routed to communities in need.



Strategy 3: Build a Countywide Recovery Data System

Real-Time Visibility, Tracking, and Decision-Making

Goal: Enable a unified, data-driven approach to managing recovery, identifying gaps, and guiding system expansion.

Currently, recovery data exists across multiple platforms and organizations—including Redwood Empire Food Bank, Careit, ExtraFood, Copia and others. While this data is valuable, it is not yet fully integrated or consistently used to drive system-level decisions.

This strategy focuses on creating a centralized data dashboard/spreadsheet that provides real-time visibility into recovery performance and remaining opportunity.

Key actions include:

- Integrating data sources across recovery organizations and platforms through API connections or shared reporting systems
- Creating a centralized dashboard or spreadsheet to track pounds recovered, generator participation, and geographic distribution
- Calculating opportunity gaps by generator, category, and district

Using data to inform route planning, generator engagement, and investment decisions

A unified data system will allow Sonoma County to move from retrospective reporting to proactive system

Action Plan for Strategy 1 & 2: Countywide Food Recovery Activation Session

Convert identified recovery opportunities into active routes, schedules, and partnerships in a single coordinated session.

Potential Lead / Host

- Redwood Empire Food Bank with facilitator support
- Community Based Food Network with facilitator
- Or co-hosted by both, with facilitator support

Structure: One large, multi-hour countywide activation session OR Smaller district level meetings with:

- Shared review of countywide recovery opportunity
- Full-group training sessions on how to increase donations from Tier 1 & 2 donors
- District-level breakout rooms
- Real-time route, donor, and pickup coordination

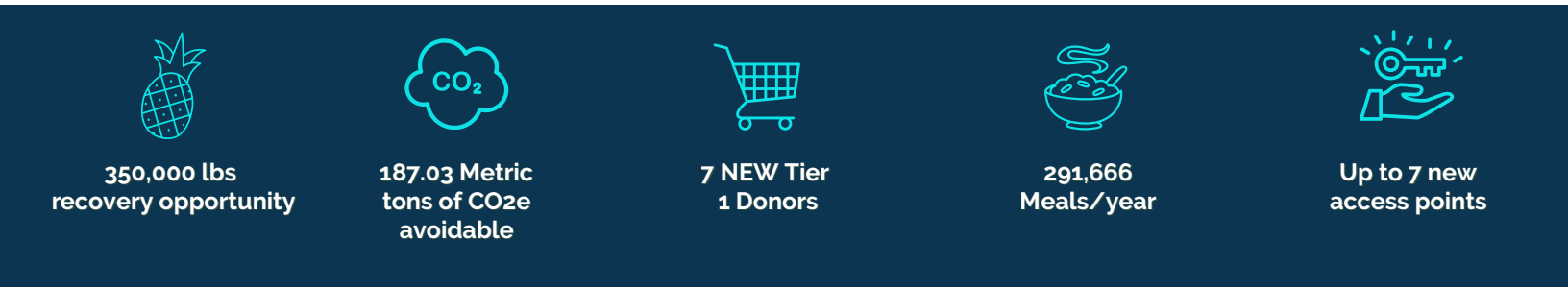
Activities:

- Open with countywide recovery opportunity. Present the total unrecovered food opportunity, including priority Tier 1 and Tier 2 generators.
- Provide shared training for all participants. Train organizations on donor relationship-building, increasing donation volume, scheduling, communication, and food safety expectations.
- Break into district-level working sessions. Organizations meet by district to review local donor opportunities, available routes, vehicle capacity, and distribution capacity.
- Assign routes, days, and recovery responsibilities. Participants collaboratively determine which organizations can take on specific generators, pickup days, and delivery destinations.
- Close with documented commitments. End with clear next steps, assigned partners, route plans, and follow-up accountability.



PILOT A: Latino Market Recovery → Community Housing Loop

Effort: Medium | Budget: Approx \$70,000 for fridges, staff and coordination time



Activate currently unrecovered Latino supermarkets and route food directly to Latino and farmworker housing through on-site access points.

Planning and alignment could occur during the Countywide Activation Summit or through a separate, targeted effort led by Redwood Empire Food Bank, Community Based Food Network, Burbank Housing or partner organizations. Because Burbank Housing has already done this pilot in district 1, their understanding is integral.

Pilot Concept

Create a closed-loop recovery and distribution model where food recovered from Latino supermarkets is delivered directly to nearby Burbank Housing sites serving Latino and farmworker communities, using community fridges or micro-pantries.

Strategy Alignment Supports:

- Generator activation (Tier 1 underutilized sites)
- Direct-to-client access expansion
- Culturally aligned partnership development

Potential Core Partners

- Redwood Empire Food Bank
- Zero Waste Sonoma Vehicle Organizations serving Districts 2, 3 & 4 (recovery + logistics)
- Community Based Food Network
- Burbank Housing (distribution site + community partner)

Activities

- A. Target and engage priority Latino supermarkets. Focus on the six currently underutilized or non-participating markets located in Districts 3, 4, and 5.
- B. Conduct culturally aligned outreach and onboarding to Latino supermarkets. Lead engagement with bilingual, bicultural representatives from partner organizations to build trust and communicate both compliance requirements and community impact. Frame participation as a direct way to return food to Latino farmworker families and households in Sonoma County, strengthening relationships and increasing willingness to donate.
- C. Establish direct recovery-to-community routing. Design routes where recovered food is delivered directly to housing sites, minimizing handling and increasing speed of distribution.
- D. Install on-site community fridges or micro-pantries. Utilize community rooms at Latino low income housing sites to create accessible, consistent food distribution points.

PILOT B: Hospital Meals → Senior Nutrition Loop

Effort: High
Budget: Low -logistics and coordination support, volunteer or van support



100,000 lbs
recovery opportunity



53.44 Metric
tons of CO2e
avoidable



4 enhanced
Tier 2 Donors



83,333
Meals/year



More delivered
meal access

Activate underutilized hospital food recovery and route prepared meals directly to senior-serving programs.

Pilot Concept

Increase recovery of prepared meals from hospital cafeterias and patient services and route them directly to Council on Aging programs or COA partners, where high nutritional standards align.

Strategy Alignment

- Tier 2 generator activation (hospitals)
- High-quality meal recovery and targeted distribution
- Strengthening direct generator-to-service partnerships

Core Partners:

- Hospital systems (4–5 sites)
- Council on Aging of Sonoma County (primary distribution + program alignment)
- Food recovery organizations with existing vans or Council on Aging volunteer drivers (pickup + delivery)
- Sonoma Food Runners

Activities

- A. Identify and prioritize underperforming hospital sites
 - Target 4 hospital sites currently under-recovering food (~10,000 lbs total vs. ~30,000 lbs per site potential).
- B. Establish direct recovery-to-senior distribution routes
 - Use existing Zero Waste Sonoma recovery vans/organizations or train Council on Aging volunteers to create consistent pickup and delivery schedules.
- C. Formalize hospital → Council on Aging partnerships
 - Create clear agreements to support consistent, ongoing meal recovery and distribution.



PILOT C: School Campus Recovery → On-Site Community Access Model

Effort: High | Budget: Medium

Unlock school food recovery by keeping donations on campus and shifting operations to non-school staff and volunteers.



50-100,000 lbs
recovery opportunity



26.72
Metric tons of
CO2e avoidable



Potential for all
School Sites Engaged



40,000+
Meals/year



1-2 school pilots

Pilot Concept: Redirect surplus cafeteria food directly into on-campus micro pantries, shelves, or community refrigerators that can be accessed by students, families, and after-school programs. To reduce operational and state school requirements for school food, food transport from the cafeteria to the access point would be managed by partner food recovery organizations volunteers (or on site staff would become volunteers of an organization to avoid legal hiccups) rather than school staff.

Core Insight (Why a New Strategy Is Needed)

- Previous school recovery efforts have struggled due to:
- Union labor constraints (school staff cannot take on additional duties)
- Liability concerns around food handling and redistribution
- Time burden on already stretched cafeteria teams and school administrators
- Logistical friction of off-site pickup and transport

Result: very low participation despite clear food surplus

Strategy Alignment

- Tier 2 generator activation (schools / LEAs)
- Removes operational and labor barriers
- Expands direct, localized access

Core Partners

Keep food on campus and shift responsibility from cafeteria staff to:

- School site (principal + cafeteria awareness, not responsibility)
- After-school program staff / site coordinators
- PTO members / parent champions
- Student clubs (environmental, leadership, etc.)
- On-site family resource centers or community space

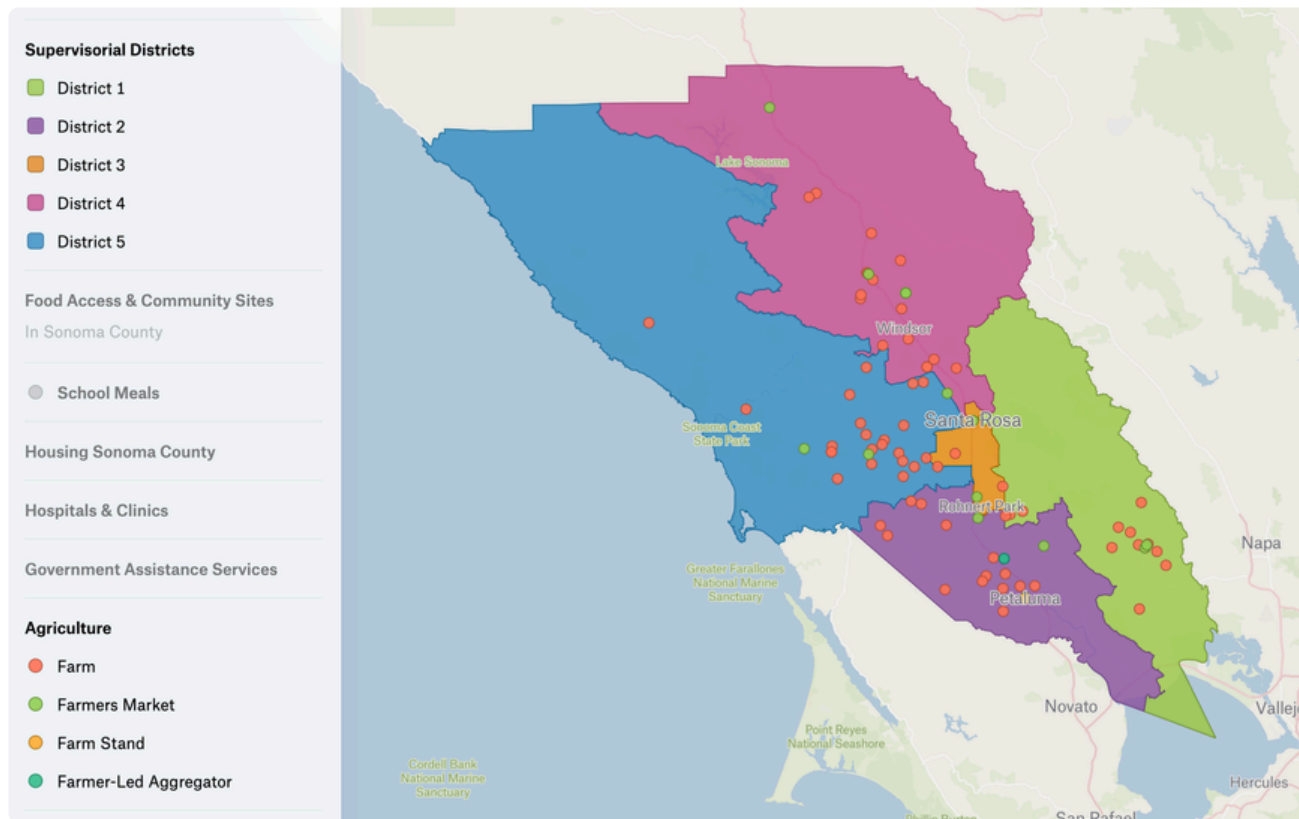
Activities

- Select 1–2 pilot schools with strong on-site partners**
 - Prioritize sites with after-school programs or existing family resource infrastructure. Community schools could be a perfect first fit
- Establish on-campus micro-distribution point**
 - Install a micro-pantry, fridge, or designated distribution area within walking distance of the cafeteria OR an easy pick up location for rec staff
- Shift operational responsibility off cafeteria staff**
 - Train after-school staff, volunteers, or student leaders to manage collection and redistribution in collaboration with a recovery organization.
- Develop clear liability and food safety protocols**
 - Create simple, approved guidelines to reduce district concerns and standardize participation.
- Identify and empower site-level champions**
 - Recruit PTO members, parents, or program staff to lead and sustain the effort locally.
- Document and evaluate pilot performance**
 - Track pounds recovered, participation, and operational feasibility.
- Scale through district-level adoption**
 - After pilot success, present a model at district meetings to implement across multiple schools simultaneously.

Additional Recommendations 1: Tier 3 Generators (Agricultural Recovery & Gleaning Coordination)

While SB 1383 focuses on Tier 1 and Tier 2 edible food generators, Sonoma County has a significant, largely untapped opportunity within Tier 3 generators—including farms, farm stands, and farmers markets.

Community mapping reveals that these agricultural assets are widely distributed across all five supervisory districts, yet recovery efforts remain fragmented and largely opportunistic. This presents an opportunity to build a more coordinated, place-based approach to agricultural food recovery.



Proposed Approach: District-Based Gleaning Coordination

Establish a district-level coordination model to systematically engage agricultural producers and expand gleaning efforts countywide.

This model would:

- Assign district-level responsibility for farm outreach and coordination
- Partner with organizations such as FEED, Farm to Pantry, ExtraFood, and other gleaning partners
- Develop recurring gleaning opportunities rather than one-off efforts
- Align gleaning schedules with existing recovery routes and distribution networks

Key Objectives

- Increase recovery of surplus produce directly from farms
- Strengthen relationships between growers and recovery organizations
- Improve consistency and predictability of gleaning operations
- Expand access to fresh, locally grown food through community-based distribution sites

This approach also supports climate goals by reducing methane emissions from decomposing food, preserving the water and energy embedded in food production, and reducing transportation emissions through local distribution.



Additional Recommendations 2: Emergency Food Response Integration

Sonoma County's food recovery network—including Zero Waste Sonoma-funded vehicles and community-based partners—represents an underutilized asset within emergency food response planning.

During disasters, many residents—particularly seniors, people with disabilities, and those in rural or underserved areas—may be unable to access centralized shelter or distribution sites. Integrating existing food recovery infrastructure into emergency planning would enable mobile, decentralized food distribution through the Community Based Food Networks.

This approach would:

- Utilize existing recovery vehicles as emergency food transport assets
- Activate trusted community-based organizations already embedded in vulnerable communities
- Leverage existing routes, relationships, and access points to reach populations outside traditional shelter systems
- Enable rapid deployment of food during wildfires, power outages, heat events, and other emergencies

This model strengthens both equity and climate resilience by leveraging existing infrastructure investments, reducing food waste during disruptions, and creating a more adaptive, community-centered emergency response system.

The next phase of this work is not simply about recovering more pounds of food. It is about continuing to design a recovery system that is coordinated, equitable, resilient, and capable of meeting both everyday community needs and future challenges ahead.

The findings of this report make one thing clear: Sonoma County does not have a shortage of strong community. The challenge ahead is how to continue strengthening the systems, partnerships, and infrastructure needed to move food efficiently, equitably, and consistently into communities.

Over the past several years, Sonoma County has built the foundation for a highly coordinated recovery ecosystem. Investments in vehicles, refrigeration, staffing, data systems, and community-based partnerships have already resulted in measurable system growth—surpassing the county’s original recovery targets while simultaneously expanding localized food access.

Yet the analysis also demonstrates that significant opportunity still exists. Underutilized infrastructure capacity, gaps in generator participation, fragmented coordination, and uneven geographic access all point toward the next stage of system development: activation.

The recommendations within this report are intentionally practical. Rather than proposing entirely new systems, they focus on maximizing and connecting existing assets already operating throughout the county. Whether through coordinated activation sessions, expanded district-level partnerships, strengthened data integration, school-based pilots, agricultural gleaning, or emergency food resilience planning, the opportunity is to build a more connected and adaptive network from the infrastructure already in place.

Importantly, this work extends beyond food recovery alone. It represents an opportunity to simultaneously address climate impact, food insecurity, emergency preparedness, and community resilience through one interconnected system.

At its core, Sonoma County’s food recovery network is a reflection of community collaboration. The organizations, volunteers, agencies, schools, farmers, businesses, and recovery partners highlighted throughout this report demonstrate what is possible when food is viewed not as waste, but as a shared community resource.

The next phase of this work is not simply about recovering more pounds of food. It is about continuing to design a recovery system that is coordinated, equitable, resilient, and capable of meeting both everyday community needs and future challenges ahead.



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FELT

SB1383

Community Mapping



alchemy commons
COMMUNITY CENTERED CONSULTING

Prepared For :

Zero Waste Sonoma

By Elise Gonzales
Founder of Alchemy Commons

Community Map

A Tool for understanding need, assets, and opportunity

The Sonoma County Community Map was developed to bring critical community, food access, housing, demographic, and edible food recovery data into a single interactive platform. Built using FELT GIS, the map allows users to visualize where residents in need live, where community resources are located, and where opportunities exist to strengthen Sonoma County's food recovery and food access systems.

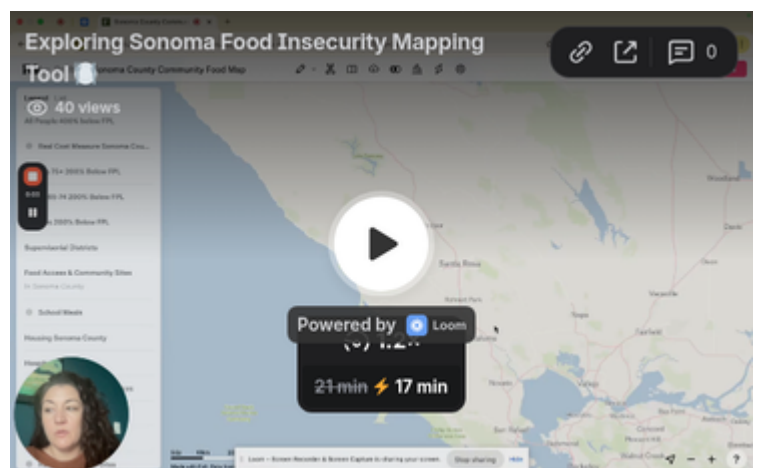
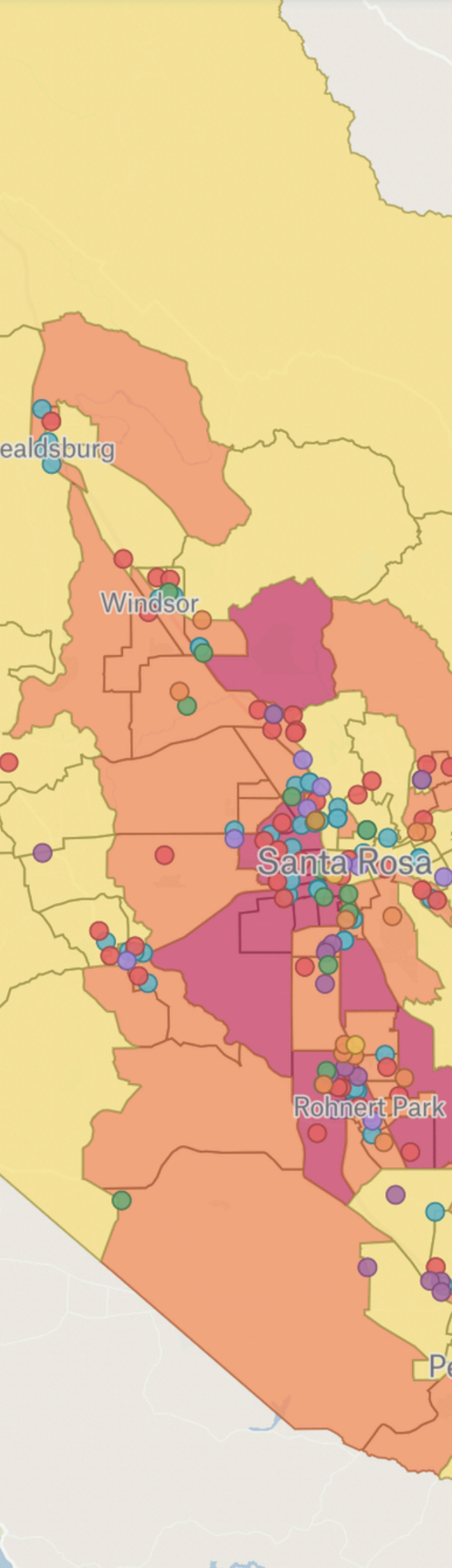
How can this map be used?

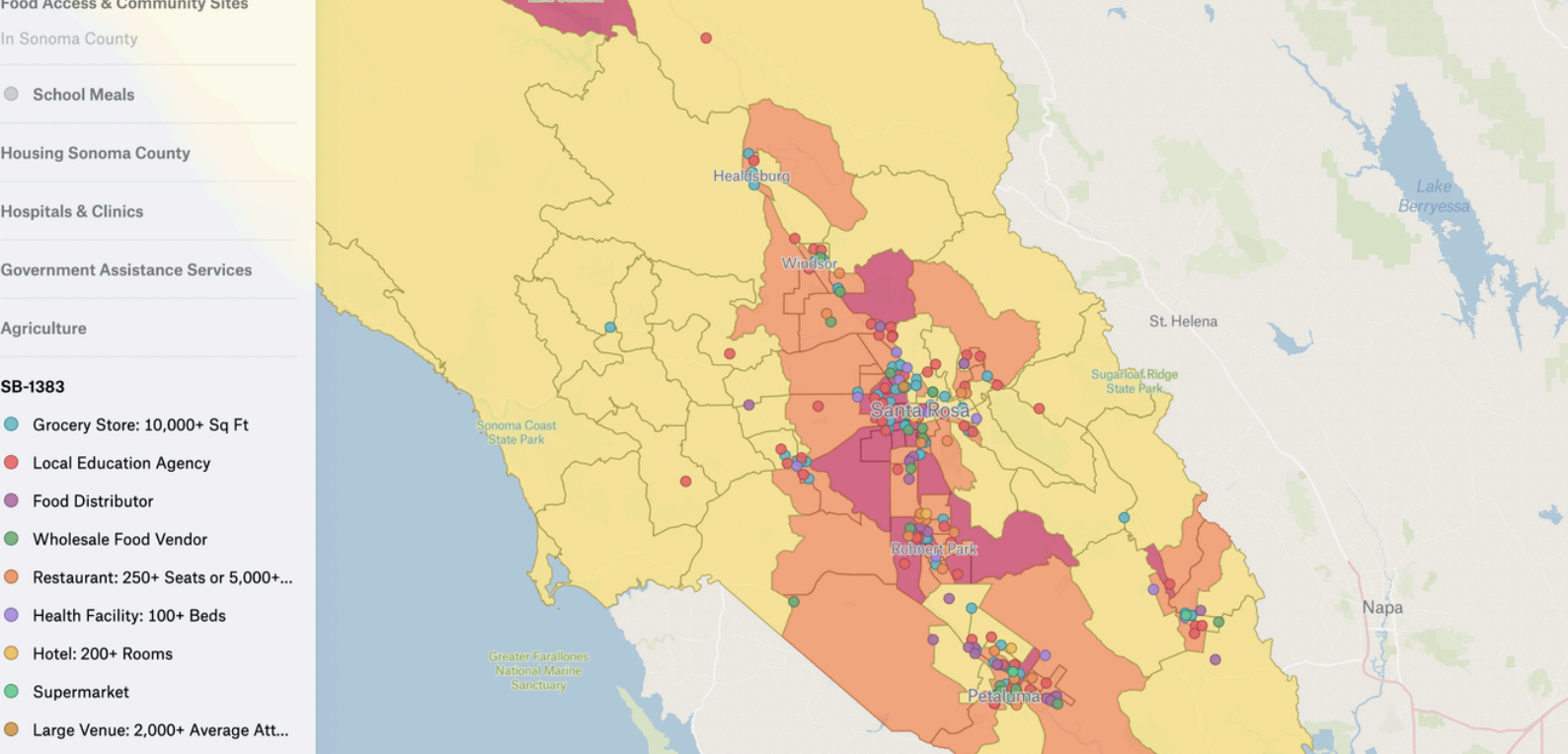
- Identify areas with high concentrations of need
- Locate existing food access and community resources
- Evaluate edible food recovery opportunities and gaps
- Support funding, planning, and policy decisions
- Strengthen collaboration between organizations and sectors
- Guide future investments in food security and community well-being

Watch the video

Watch the video overview to learn how to navigate layers, access site-level data, and use the map to support planning, partnership development, and community impact.

[Link to Explainer Video](#)



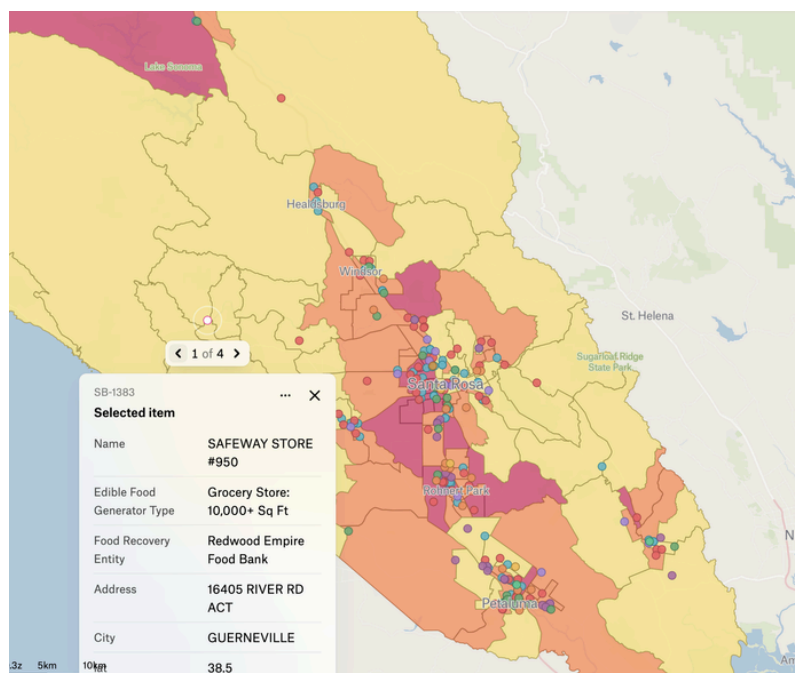


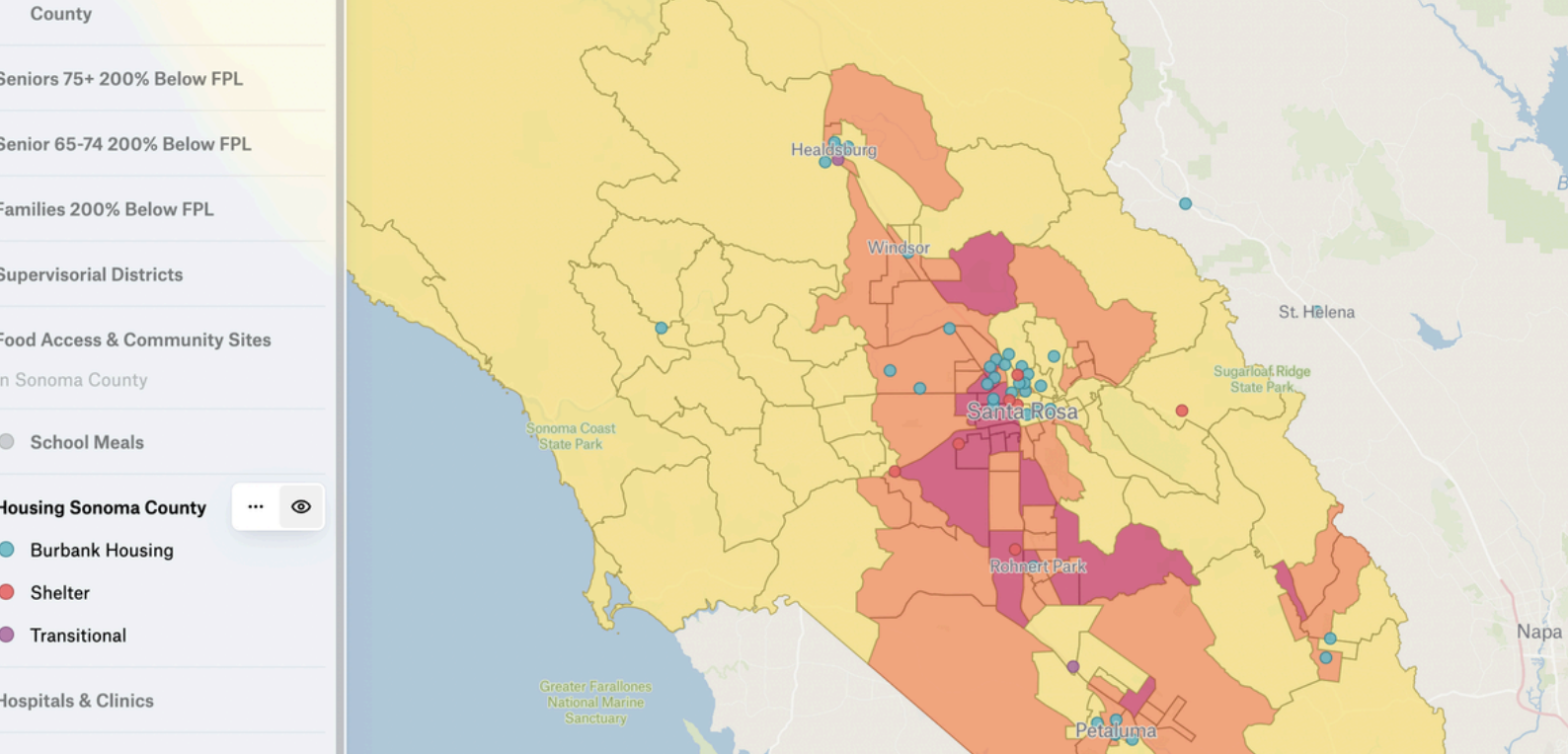
SB 1383 TIER 1 & 2 GENERATORS In Sonoma County

The SB 1383 generator layer includes grocery stores, supermarkets, local education agencies, restaurants, hotels, health facilities, wholesale food vendors, food distributors, and large venues subject to edible food recovery requirements. Displayed as color-coded points, each generator is mapped alongside population and service-area data to help identify recovery strengths, service gaps, and opportunities for expanded partnerships, transportation routes, and recovery capacity. Through the FELT platform, each point contains detailed site-level information—including generator type, business name, food recovery partner, address, and operational data—allowing users to move from a countywide systems view to individual site analysis and recovery planning.

SB-1383

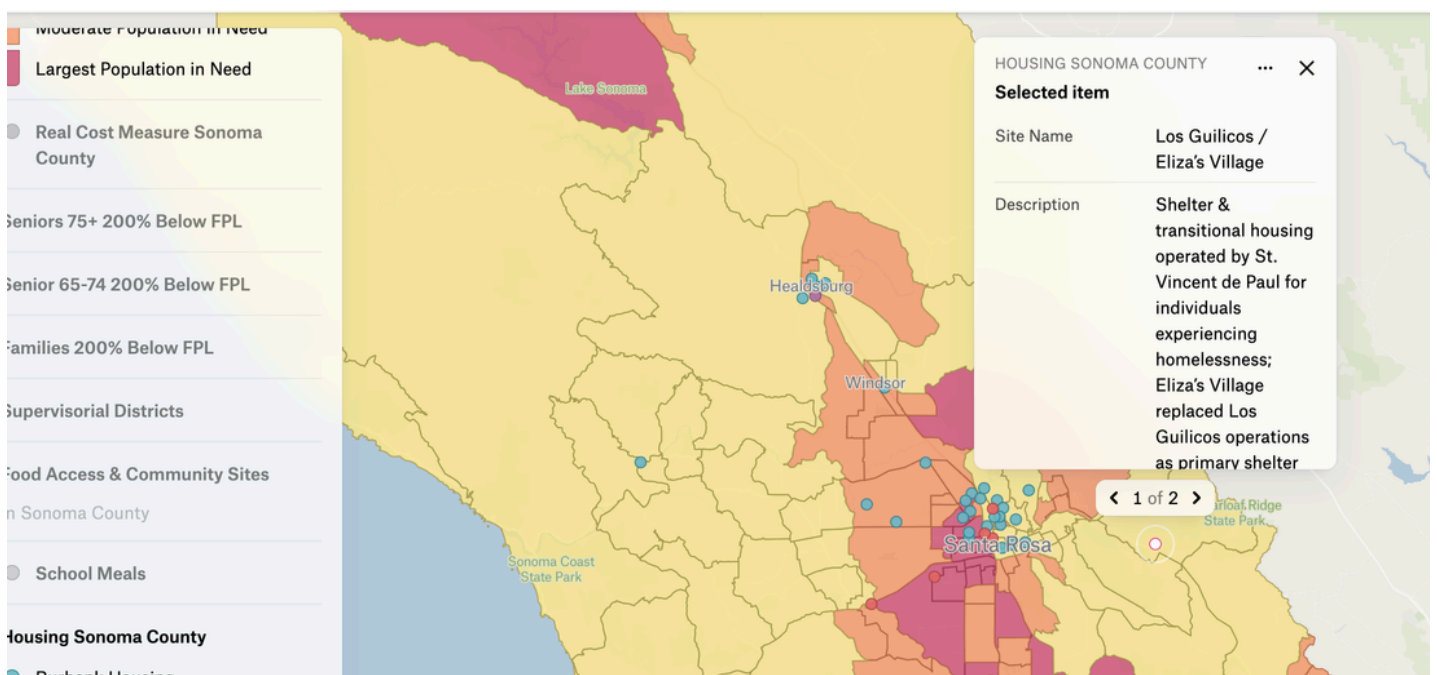
- Grocery Store: 10,000+ Sq Ft
- Local Education Agency
- Food Distributor
- Wholesale Food Vendor
- Restaurant: 250+ Seats or 5,000+...
- Health Facility: 100+ Beds
- Hotel: 200+ Rooms
- Supermarket
- Large Venue: 2,000+ Average Att...

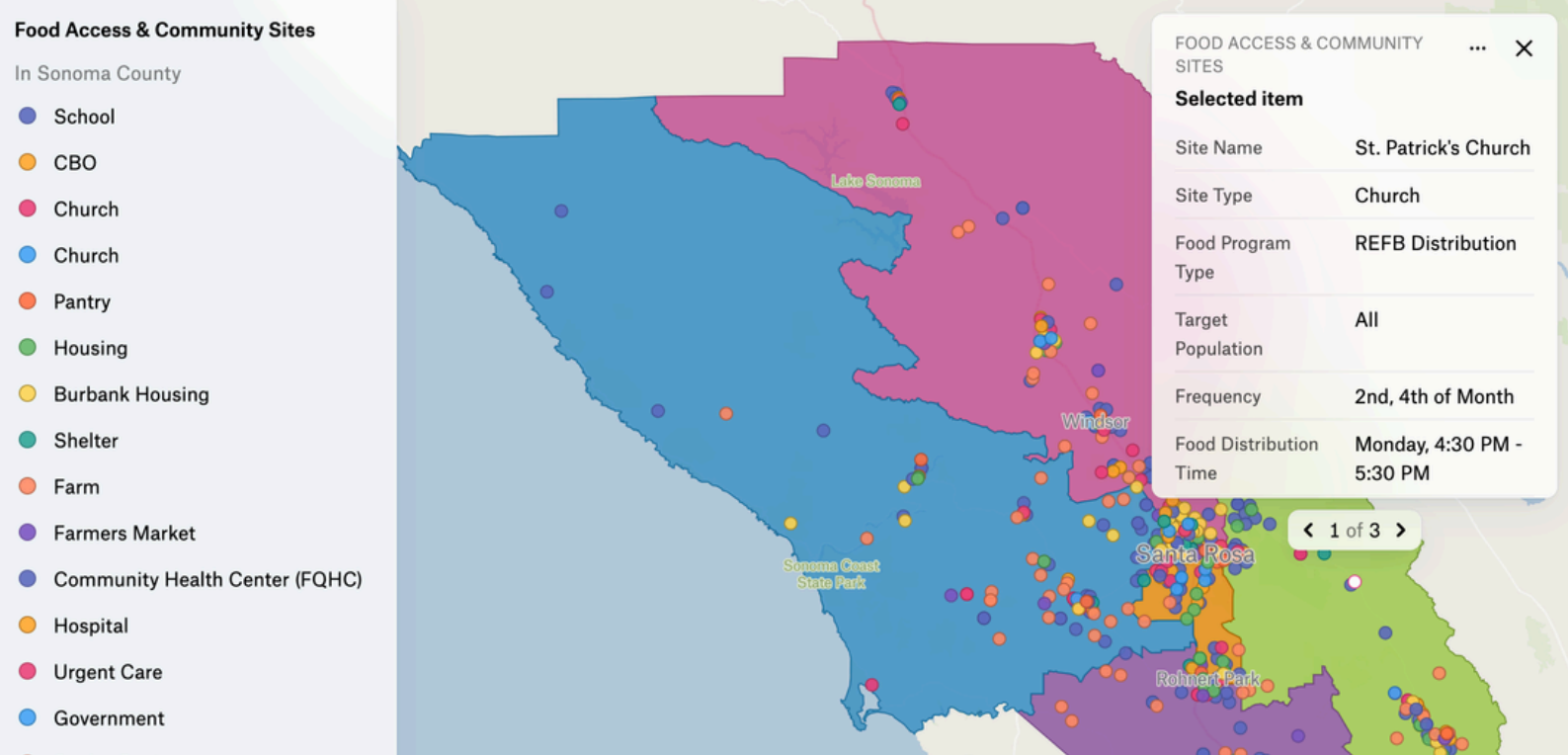




LOW INCOME HOUSING In Sonoma County

The Low-Income Housing layer maps affordable housing communities, shelters, and transitional housing sites throughout Sonoma County, providing a spatial view of where vulnerable populations are concentrated. When viewed alongside demographic data, the map highlights areas with higher concentrations of residents living 400% of the Federal Poverty Level and helps identify where housing and food access needs intersect. Through the FELT platform, each housing site contains detailed information—including site name, housing type, operator, and program description—allowing users to explore individual locations and better understand opportunities to strengthen food access, service delivery, and community support within affordable housing communities.



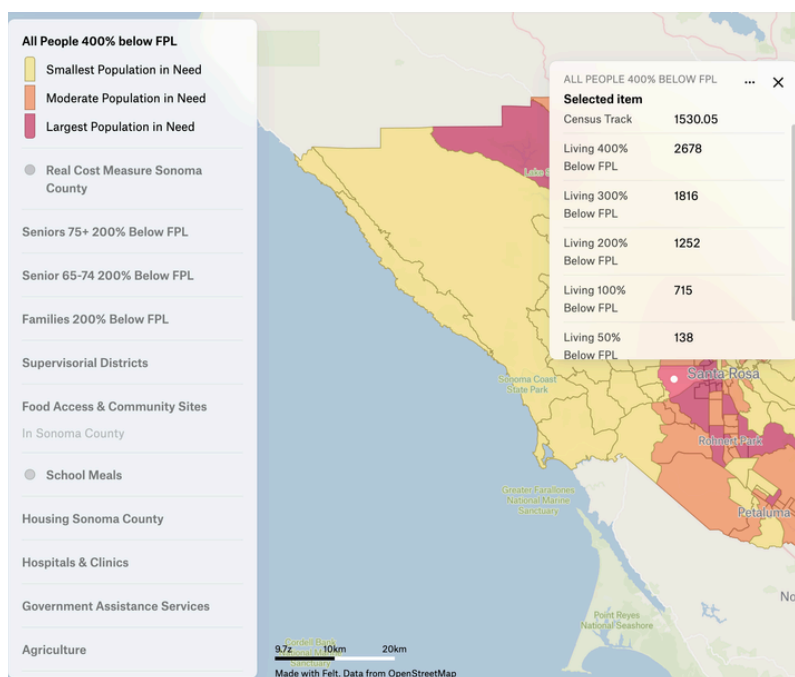


Food & Community Access Sites

The Food & Community Access Sites layer provides a countywide view of the diverse network of organizations and programs that support community well-being throughout Sonoma County. The map includes food distribution sites, schools, churches, community-based organizations, housing sites, shelters, farms, farmers markets, health centers, hospitals, senior centers, resource centers, government services, and community gathering spaces. By visualizing these assets together, the map reveals both the strengths of the existing support network and geographic areas where additional services may be needed. Each point contains detailed site-level information—including site type, services offered, target population, distribution schedules, and operating details—allowing users to explore resources at both a systems level and an individual site level. This layer serves as a foundational tool for identifying partnerships, improving service coordination, and strengthening food access across Sonoma County.

Census Layer

The Census Layer visualizes concentrations of residents experiencing economic hardship across Sonoma County, using indicators such as households living at 400% of the Federal Poverty Level, seniors living at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and families facing financial insecurity. Each census tract contains detailed demographic data, allowing users to identify areas of greatest need and align food access, recovery, and community resources with the populations they are intended to serve.





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FINAL REPORT ON THE USDA COMPOSTING AND FOOD WASTE REDUCTION GRANT

XINCI TAN AND KRISTEN SALES

WHY APPLY FOR THE GRANT?

- SB 1383 food recovery requirements
- SB 1383 procurement requirements
- Sonoma County Climate Action Goals
- Zero FoodPrint approached ZWS staff with project idea
- Applications to federal grants are more successful with more partners



**Office of Urban
Agriculture and
Innovative
Production (OUAIP)**

3 PARTS TO THIS GRANT PROJECT



Compost education targeted
at residents

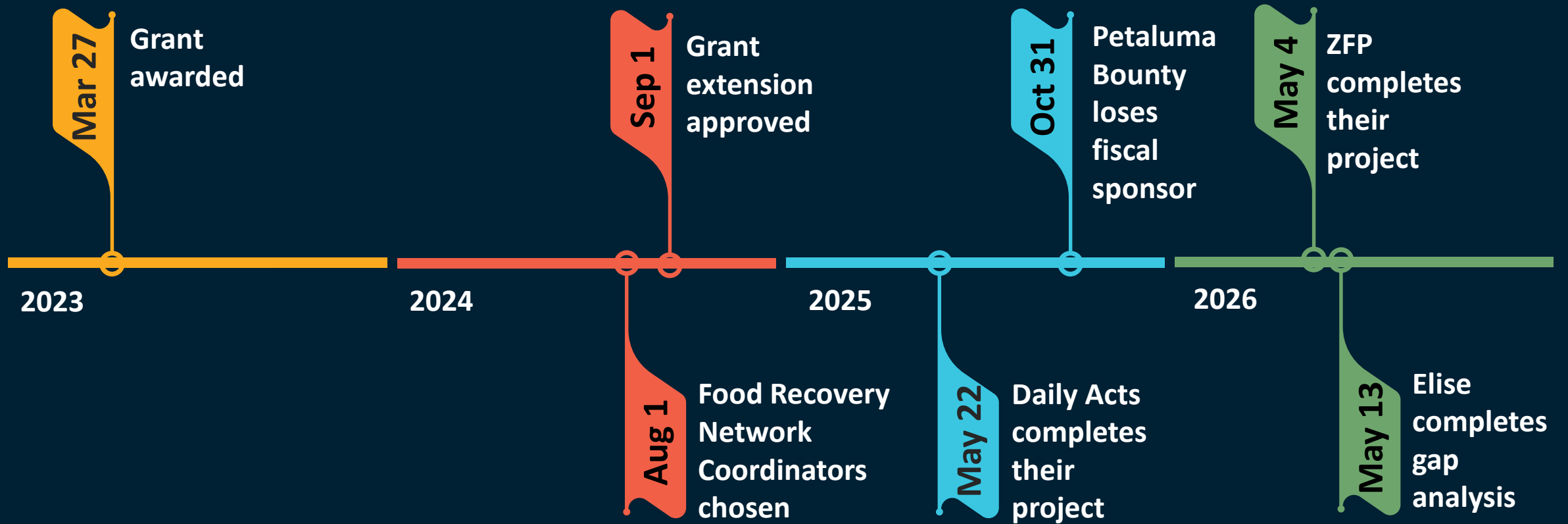


Business recruitment to fund
compost application on
agricultural land



Food recovery from
businesses to feed people

USDA grant timeline



DAILY ACTS



- Provide education about compost use to urban farmers, community gardeners, and residents
- Focus on climate benefits of composting food scraps instead of landfill AND applying compost for carbon sequestration
- Promoted existing resources from ZWS and other grant partners, including home composting and worm bin guides
- Completed 17 activities
- Reached 3,632 people
- Sample of events attended:
 - Analy High School Zero Waste and Compost Clubs
 - Cloverdale Citrus Fair
 - Cotati Climate and Reuse Fair
 - Petaluma Blacks for Community Development picnic
 - Recology Village at Santa Rosa Farmers Market
 - Singing Frogs Farm – Digging Deep workshop
 - Tara Firma Farms – Soils Forum



ZERO FOODPRINT



- Recruit local restaurants and businesses to commit ongoing monetary contributions
 - 1% of sales
 - Dirty Drinks Campaign
 - Holiday Gift Guide
 - Unfork the Planet
- Compost Connector – farms can apply for funds for regenerative farming
- Subcontractors Sonoma RCD and Gold Ridge RCD provided technical assistance



Your impact IS YOUR BUSINESS

Give your customers the climate action that they're looking for. Zero Foodprint is on a mission to combat climate change by making it easy for the food and beverage industry to support regenerative agriculture. With deep restaurant experience, we've designed simple solutions that ensure every dollar contributed by your business goes directly to helping farmers improve soil health and remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. Join the movement to restore our climate by choosing the impact that is right for you.



1

Collective action campaigns

Participate in one of our short annual campaigns to generate collective funds for regenerative farming across the country.

2

Business memberships

Commit to give a small percent of sales and empower your customers to invest in climate action with every purchase.

3

Bespoke contributions

Want to add a round up, host a dinner, or sell a side of climate action? We welcome any creative way to raise funds for farms.

DiRTY DRiNKs

A bar & bev campaign raising glasses
(and funds!) for healthy soil.

AUG 25 - SEP 1



See participating businesses:
zerofoodprint.org/DiRTY



HOW DO YOU DiRTY A DRiNK?

From agave to rye, citrus to coffee berries, the best sips start at the farms that prioritize soil health. From Aug 25 – Sep 1, Zero Foodprint invites drinkmakers to serve up a creative twist on a dirty drink to raise a glass (and funds) for healthy soil. Whether it's a little olive juice in a martini, an espresso shot in a chai, or a compost-inspired libation, a dirty drink includes a \$1 contribution for farmers turning dirt into healthy soil!



Zero Foodprint

UNFORK THE PLANET

Sonoma
County
Mar 31 –
Apr 6



Zero Foodprint

"Being a part of the Holiday Gift Guide this year was extremely rewarding for my business this year . . . It made me want to focus more on a mission and support an organization whose work I greatly admire."

FULL CIRCLE GHEE
2024 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE PARTICIPANT



Learn more and sign up at:
zerofoodprint.org/HOLIDAY



Zero Foodprint

Zero Foodprint

Farmers Businesses Eaters About Impact

Donate

Holiday *Gift Guide*

Giftable eats, drinks, and wares from brands generating climate-smart farming grants.

Browse All

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Video: https://drive.google.com/file/d/11Q5Guw2z_k-wJctPjyp4T-dotC_1ocCi/view?usp=drive_link

Zoom Workplace

Meeting

View

Edit

Window

Help

Wed Feb 5 10:22 AM

Meeting

Jami Witek's screen

Recording... View

Compost

- If standard CDFA application rate, apply as above
- If Ryals & Silver rate (15 tons/acre on rangeland) no need to use COMET
- If applying for a Custom Application Rate, you'll use Compost Calculator linked in app
- Purchased compost in CA must be purchased from a Cal Recycle-approved facility



Remove pin



Zero Foodprint

Participants (100)

Search

AM	Andres Mendez		
AF	Andrew Furlong		
BS	Bailey Smith-Helman-UCCE Santa Cruz		
BA	Becky Ahmadi		

F From Frederique to everyone
Is it the same list as the compost co...

Audio

Video

Participants 100

Chat 15

React

Share

AI Companion

Apps

Recording

ZFP - Wine Marketin...ged).pdf



Sip and Snack with Zero Foodprint

Tuesday • 6:00 PM

Troubadour Bread & Bistro

Check ticket price on event



In Person Outreach:

February 2025/2026

Snail of Approval Awards and Lunchette Visit



Business Members and Collective Funds Campaign Members				
<u>1% Campaign</u>	<u>Holiday Gift Guide 2024</u>	<u>Unfork the Planet 2025</u>	<u>Dirty Drinks 2025</u>	<u>Holiday Gift Guide 2025</u>
Belfare	Black Pig Meat Co	Bloom Cameros	Guiso Latin Fusion	Ethic Cider
Bloom Cameros	Bloodroot Wines & Reeves	Corner Project	Fern Bar	Flying Goat Coffee
La Bodega (Sonoma Wineshop)	Breathless Wines	Farmhouse Inn	Little Saint	Gary Farrell Winery
Little Saint	Capo Creek Winery	La Bodega (Sonoma Wineshop)	Lo & Behold Bar + Kitchen	Iron Horse Vineyard
Lunchette	Gary Farnell Winery	Little Saint	Ramen Gaijin	Land + Local
Madrona	Head High Wines	Luna Bar & Eatery		Travel Agent Apparel
Troubadour Bread & Bistro	Inman Family Wines	Stockholm Restaurant		Troubadour Bread & Bistro
Woody's	Iron Horse Vineyard	Street Social		Woody's
	Lambert Bridge Winery	Taste of Tea		
	Martha Stoutmen	Troubadour Bread & Bistro		
8	10	10	5	8





Restore Grant Award Recipient List							
	Name	Practices	Project Cost	Acres	Compost Tons applied	Projected CO2	Project Status
1.	Deniz Diary	Compost Application,Range Planting	\$25,000	1098	655	1483	Completed 7/31/24
2.	Correia Family Dairy	Compost Application,Range Planting	\$25,000	672	400	1327	Completed 2/3/26
3.	Travis Moreda Dairy	Compost Application,Range Planting	\$25,000	326	872	1728	Completed 1/3/25
4.	Diamond M Valley Dairy	Compost Application,Range Planting	\$25,000	254	654	1561	Completed 11/17/25

5.	Moretti Family Dairy	Compost Application,Range Planting	\$25,000	200	620	1419	Completed 12/11/25
6.	Beretta Family Dairy	Range Planting, Compost Application	\$25,000	200	800	1597	Completed: 3/31/26
7.	Terevana	Tree/shrub, cover crop, mulching	\$23,100	207	0	7089	In Progress: Started 5/20/25 1st payment sent
8.	Moreda Valley Dairy	Compost Application,Range Planting	\$25,000	362	1208	2185	In Progress: Started 4/21/25 2nd payment sent
9.	Deniz Dairy 2	Compost Application,Range Planting	\$25,000	144	464	995	Completed 1/3/25
10.	Travis Moreda Dairy 2	Compost Application, Range Planting,Hedgerow planting	\$25,000	160	640	1307	In Progress: Started 12/2/25 1st payment sent

PETALUMA BOUNTY



Subcontractors:

- Establish Food Recovery Network (FRN) for better efficiency and emergency preparedness
- Identify where food is wasted and potential outlets to accept the food
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Purchase supplies and equipment like scales and crates



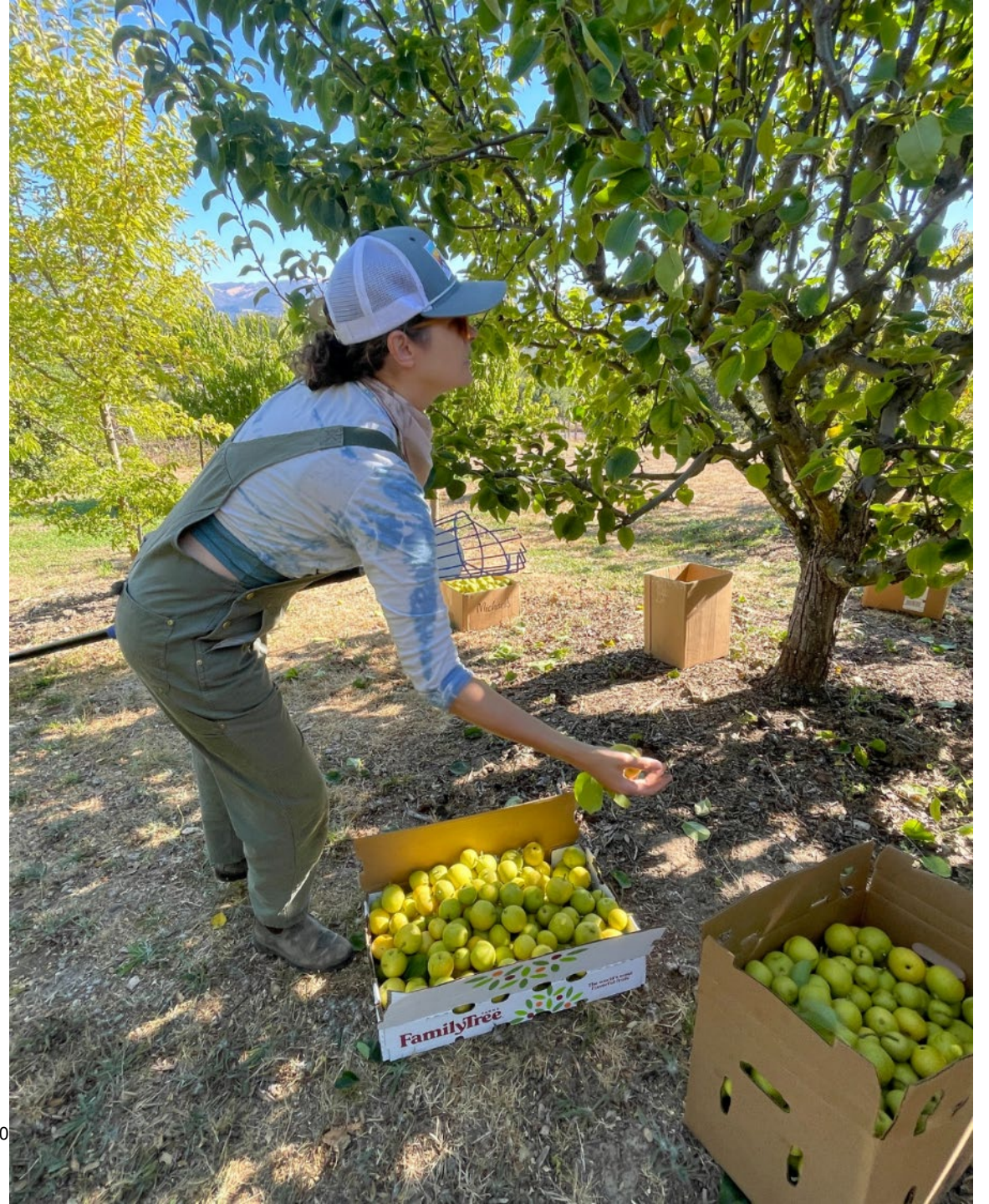
Farm to Pantry
Cultivating Community through Healthy Food



S O N O M A V A L L E Y
(C A T A L Y S T
F U N D

PETALUMA BOUNTY + SUBCONTRACTORS

- Rescued 553,400 lbs of food
- Recruited and trained 266 new volunteers
- Recruited 122 new food donors
- Food donors included:
 - Oak Hills Farm
 - Jardin de Pueblo
 - New Leaf Bakery
 - Sutter Hospital
 - Parkside Recovery Center
 - Lepe's Foods
 - Fairmont Hotel
 - Coastline Distributors
 - Camacho Market
 - Residents with fruit trees













A LAST-MINUTE PIVOT

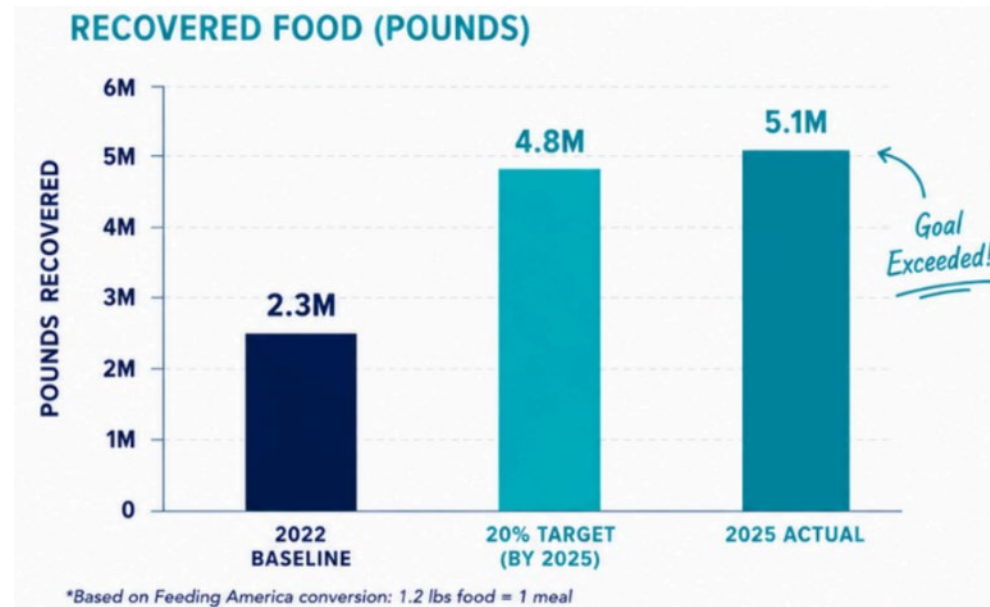
- \$25K remaining in USDA CFWR Grant after sunset of Food Recovery Network (FRN) Coordinators
- Timeline: February – May, 2026
- Hire consultant = Alchemy Commons (Elise Gonzales)
 - analyze progress made by FRNs
 - evaluate annual food recovery data & assess gaps
 - create a food recovery map
 - suggest future pilot programs



SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE & PROGRESS

CONTEXT

The 2022 Abound Edible Food Recovery Study established a clear baseline for the county's edible food recovery system, identifying approximately 2.3 million pounds of food being recovered annually and outlining the need to increase recovery to over 4.8 million pounds to meet SB 1383 requirements. In 2025, food recovery in Sonoma County **hit 5.1 million recovered pounds.**



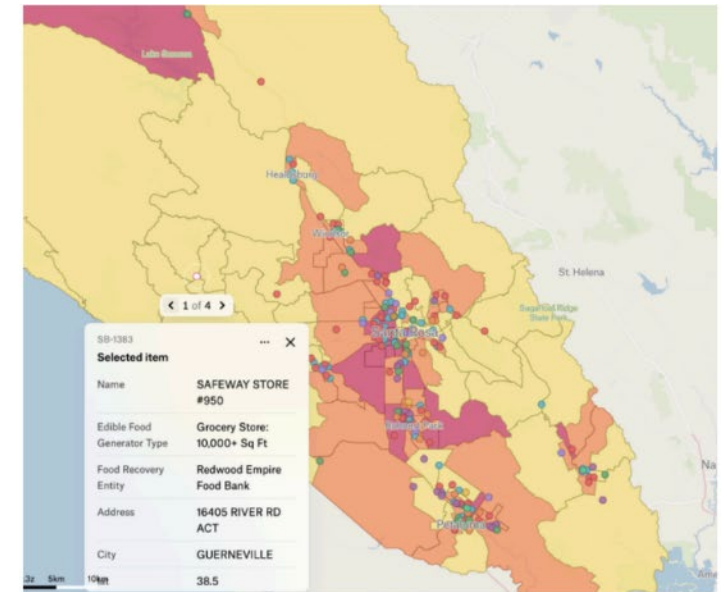
GAP ANALYSIS & MAP

Sonoma County has the potential to recover an additional 1.3 million–3.4 million pounds of food annually using existing infrastructure and partnerships.

Methodology: EFG food recovery data from Food Bank, 2022 – 2025, calculated by District

SB-1383

- Grocery Store: 10,000+ Sq Ft
- Local Education Agency
- Food Distributor
- Wholesale Food Vendor
- Restaurant: 250+ Seats or 5,000+...
- Health Facility: 100+ Beds
- Hotel: 200+ Rooms
- Supermarket
- Large Venue: 2,000+ Average Att...



Map includes EFG info, low-income housing, food access & community sites, census data

STRATEGIES & ACTION PLAN



STRATEGY 1

MAXIMIZE UTILIZATION OF EXISTING RECOVERY INFRASTRUCTURE

Fully activate vehicles, routes, storage, and operational capacity to increase recovery.



STRATEGY 2

STRENGTHEN COORDINATION ACROSS THE RECOVERY SYSTEM

Align generators, recovery organizations, and distribution partners for greater efficiency and reach.



COUNTYWIDE RECOVERY ACTIVATION CONVENING (THE SOLUTION / ACTION PLAN)



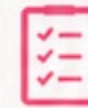
Share data & opportunity by district and generator



Align partners around shared goals and expectations



Match generators with recovery partners, routes & capacity

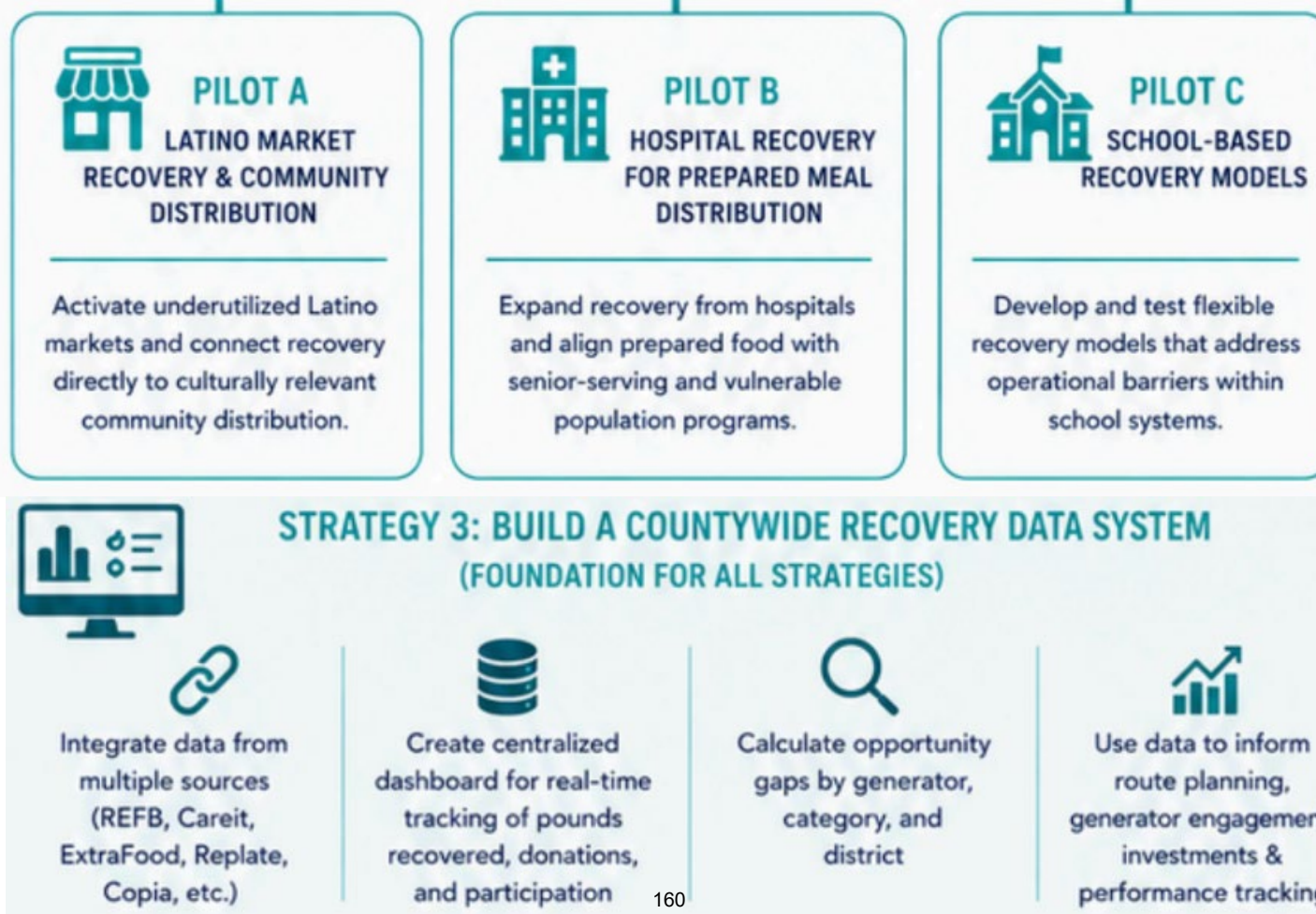


Assign roles, responsibilities & commitments



Establish ongoing coordination, tracking & accountability

STRATEGIES & ACTION PLAN (CONTINUED)



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Across districts, the data highlights the same core needs:

- Stronger coordination between donors, recovery organizations, and distribution partners
- More efficient use of existing transportation and recovery routes
- Consistent engagement and activation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 generators
- Better alignment between where food is recovered and where it is most needed

At its core, Sonoma County's food recovery network is a reflection of community collaboration. The organizations, volunteers, agencies, schools, farmers, businesses, and recovery partners highlighted throughout this report demonstrate what is possible when food is viewed not as waste, but as a shared community resource.

The next phase of this work is not simply about recovering more pounds of food. It is about continuing to design a recovery system that is coordinated, equitable, resilient, and capable of meeting both everyday community needs and future challenges ahead.

QUESTIONS?

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KRISTEN SALES

KRISTEN.SALES@SONOMACOUNTY.GOV

(707) 239-1453



Agenda Item #: 7
Staff Contact: **Lukacs**
Agenda Date: **8/20/26**
Approved By: **LL**

ITEM: Introduction to Senate Bill (SB) 54 – Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION / ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION

Receive an informational presentation on Senate Bill (SB) 54, the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act

II. BACKGROUND

SB 54, the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act, was signed into law on June 30, 2022. The legislation establishes California's first comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for single-use packaging and plastic food service ware.

Historically, local governments and ratepayers have borne the responsibility and cost of collecting, recycling, composting, and disposing of packaging waste. SB 54 shifts much of that responsibility to producers by requiring them to design more sustainable packaging and finance the systems necessary to collect, process, recycle, compost, and properly manage covered materials. A producer is defined as the brand owner, manufacturer, importer, or distributor who sells, offers for sale, or distributes single-use packaging and plastic food service ware in the state.

The law establishes several statewide performance goals to be achieved by 2032, including:

- All covered packaging and plastic food service ware must be recyclable or compostable.
- A 25% reduction in single-use plastic packaging and food service ware.
- A 65% recycling rate for single-use plastic packaging.
- Producer funding for collection, processing, recycling, composting, education and outreach, litter mitigation, and recycling infrastructure.

To implement the law, producers formed the Circular Action Alliance (CAA), the Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), which is responsible for developing and implementing California's statewide producer responsibility program. CAA submitted its draft Program Plan to CalRecycle in June 2026. Following review by CalRecycle and the Producer Responsibility Advisory Board, implementation of the program is anticipated to begin in January 2027.

III. DISCUSSION

SB 54 represents one of the most significant changes to California's recycling and packaging system. While producers will finance the program, successful implementation requires close coordination among producers, local governments, service providers, recyclers, compost facilities, retailers, and consumers.

Implementation of SB 54 will occur over several years as CalRecycle reviews and approves the CAA Program Plan, adopts final regulations, and oversees implementation of the producer responsibility program.

As the regional agency responsible for coordinating waste reduction and recycling programs on behalf of Sonoma County and its nine incorporated cities, Zero Waste Sonoma has been actively engaged in both statewide and local implementation efforts.

Through Zero Waste Sonoma's representation on the SB 54 Producer Responsibility Advisory Board, staff reviewed and provided recommendations on the CAA Program Plan and represented the interests of California jurisdictions during implementation. Staff also participate in monthly statewide coordination meetings with representatives from CAA, Joint Power Authorities, Jurisdictions and other stakeholders to discuss implementation issues affecting local governments.

Zero Waste Sonoma has also been providing regular SB 54 updates during jurisdiction meetings with its member agencies. These discussions have focused on implementation timelines, reimbursement opportunities, producer responsibilities, infrastructure planning, education and outreach, reuse systems, covered material exemptions, and other issues that will affect local governments. Staff will continue working closely with member jurisdictions to share information, coordinate implementation efforts, and identify funding opportunities as additional guidance becomes available.

One of the more immediate implementation activities is review of the Covered Material Category (CMC) List. Covered materials generally include single-use packaging and plastic food service ware, such as bottles, containers, cardboard packaging, cartons, flexible packaging, cups, lids, and trays. Certain covered materials may qualify for exemption from SB 54's recyclability, compostability, and recycling-rate requirements based on unique compliance challenges, subject to CalRecycle approval. Jurisdictions must review the CMC List and submit information regarding materials they believe meet the exemption criteria to CalRecycle by December 30, 2026. Zero Waste Sonoma is working with its member jurisdictions and service providers, as well as other JPAs throughout California, to evaluate the CMC List and develop a coordinated approach for determining which materials should be recommended for exemption.

In addition, Zero Waste Sonoma chairs a quarterly Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Executive Directors collaborative, bringing together regional waste management agencies from throughout California to discuss implementation challenges, share best practices, and coordinate local government perspectives on SB 54. Recent meetings have included presentations from the CAA regarding implementation specific to Joint Powers Authorities.

FUNDING IMPACT

This item is informational only and has no direct fiscal impact.

IV. ATTACHMENTS

Presentation: Introduction to SB 54 – Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act



Introduction to Senate Bill (SB) 54 – Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act

Leslie Lukacs
Executive Director

WHAT IS SB 54?

Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act

- Creates California's first statewide packaging EPR system
- Shifts costs and responsibilities from local governments to producers
- Establishes packaging reduction and recycling targets
- Requires packaging to become recyclable or compostable
- Creates a statewide producer-funded recycling system



IN CALIFORNIA, BY 2032:



100% of single-use packaging and plastic single-use food ware will be recyclable or compostable



65% of plastic single-use packaging and food ware will be recycled

30% by 2028 | 40% by 2030



25%* of plastic single-use packaging and food ware will be source reduced by weight and unit

10% by 2027 | 20% by 2030

**10% must be achieved through reuse/refill*

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

CalRecycle

- Adopt regulations
- Approve stewardship plans
- Enforcement and compliance
- Auditing and reporting
- Determine covered materials
- Review reimbursement systems

PRO (Producer Responsibility Organization)

- Administer statewide program
- Reimburse eligible costs
- Develop stewardship plans
- Coordinate implementation



Local Governments

- Continue collection and public education roles
- Participate in consultation and planning
- Coordinate on infrastructure and contamination reduction

Producers

- Fund the system
- Meet reduction targets
- Join the PRO
- Submit data/reporting
- Ensure products are recyclable/compostable by responsible end markets
- Educate consumers on recycling practices



SB 54 IS INTENDED TO:

- Build transparency into recycling system
- Build consistency, simplify packaging, and reduce consumer confusion
- Ensure recycling at responsible end markets
- Reduce the volume of plastic sold in the state and invest in reuse and refill systems
- Clean up existing plastic pollution through a \$5 billion mitigation fund

****All paid for and implemented by producers***

IMPROVEMENTS IN RECYCLING/COMPOSTING SYSTEMS

- Potential reimbursement for eligible recycling costs
- Improved recycling infrastructure
- Standardized statewide education
- Packaging redesign improvements
- Reduced contamination
- Expanded recycling markets
- Greater producer accountability



ZWS'S OBJECTIVES

Support member agency compliance and cost reimbursement under SB 54

Improve consistency in Sonoma County jurisdiction acceptability lists to reduce consumer confusion and improve public messaging

Recycling Guide

Thanks for recycling these items! All items must be empty and dry.



Following the guidelines of what is allowed in your recycling bin saves natural resources, reduces pollution and creates jobs.



Scan for: العربية, 繁體中文, हिन्दी, 한국어, Русский, Af-Soomaali, español, Tagalog, українська, tiếng Việt.

Plastic



Bottles, tubs, buckets, and rigid plant pots
Caps OK if screwed on. All items must be 2 inches by 2 inches or larger.

Metal



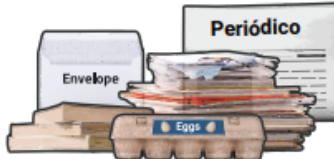
Aluminum and steel cans and scrap metal
Less than 10 pounds and 18 inches.

Cardboard and Cartons



Flattened cardboard, packaging boxes, food and beverage cartons
Pizza boxes must be empty with no food residue.

Paper



Newspaper, magazines, office paper, egg cartons, mail, paperback books, bags, and non-metallic gift wrap

No!



No bagged recyclables



No batteries



No food or liquid
(empty all containers)



No plastic bags or stretchy plastics
(store or depot drop-off)



No hoses, cords, or wires



Oregon's statewide recycling guide

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ROLE OF ZWS

- Coordinate implementation with member jurisdictions
- Serve as a liaison with CAA, the Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO)
- Represent jurisdiction interests on the SB 54 Advisory Board
- Coordinate with regional JPAs and statewide partners
- Assess local and regional infrastructure needs
- Support contamination reduction and recycling system improvements
- Coordinate public education and outreach
- Support recycling system data collection and sharing
- Identify and pursue reimbursement opportunities

ZWS/JURISDICTIONS POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Franchise Agreements & Contracts – coordination with existing service agreements

Collection Systems – potential changes to accepted materials and services

Education & Outreach – coordination of statewide and locally tailored messaging

Contamination Reduction – increased focus on improving material quality and recovery

Reporting & Data – potential new data-sharing and documentation needs

Infrastructure – assessment of local and regional processing needs

MRF & Processing Upgrades – potential investments to increase material recovery

Producer Reimbursement – opportunities to recover eligible collection, processing, education, infrastructure, and implementation costs

KEY TIMELINE

- **May 1, 2026:** Permanent SB 54 regulations became effective.
- **June 15, 2026:** CAA submitted its California Program Plan to the SB 54 Advisory Board.
- **January 1, 2027:** 10% source reduction in single-use plastic, including a 2% reuse/refill or plastic-component-elimination component.
- **January 1, 2027:** Producers begin funding the \$500 million annual Plastic Pollution Mitigation Fund, totaling \$5 billion over 10 years.
- **January 1, 2027:** CalRecycle is scheduled to publish its next updated Covered Material Categories List.

LOCAL JURISDICTIONS MUST



- ✓ Collect covered materials deemed to be recyclable or compostable effective upon approval of the producer program plan (by Jan 1, 2027)



TWO COMPLIANCE PATHWAYS FOR JURISDICTIONS

A.

**Add the material to
collection programs**



Funded by producers

B.

**Apply for an exemption
from CalRecycle**



Reviewed by producers

EXEMPTION ELIGIBILITY

Exemption requests may be submitted for the following local conditions, circumstances, and challenges:

- Program efficacy
- Technological or economic limitations
- Legal restrictions or requirements
- Effects on the environment
- Environmental justice
- Worker health and safety
- Public health
- Hazardous waste generation
- Transportation safety
- Absence of a responsible end market (jurisdictions not responsible for providing REMs)



**Exemptions are effective for 2 years*

RECYCLABILITY DETERMINED BY SB 343

- Truth in labeling law
- To be deemed recyclable and use the chasing arrows symbol
- Materials must be collected by programs serving at least 60% of the state's population and sorted by at least 60% of facilities



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SB 343

Accurate Recycling Labels



Oct 2026

COMPOSABILITY DETERMINED BY AB 1201

- Meet ASTM standards (biodegrade at least 90% w/in 180 days)
- Do not contain PFAS
- Distinguishable from non-compostable products
- Starting July 2027: Only feedstocks accepted by the USDA for organic agriculture will be defined as compostable under AB 1201

AB 1201 Accurate Labels for Compostables



July 2027

2026 COVERED MATERIAL CATEGORY (CMC) LIST

- 56 (out of 95) recyclable and/or compostable CMCs
 - 45 recyclable
 - 21 compostable
 (14 recyclable and compostable)

Category ID	Material Class ¹	Material Type ¹	Form ^{2,3}	Recyclable ⁴	Compostable ⁴	Recycling Rate ^{5 6 7}
25_M1N	Metal	Aluminum	Non-aerosol container w/o plastic component	Y		<39%
25_M1P	Metal	Aluminum	Non-aerosol container w/ plastic component	Y		
25_M4P	Metal	Aluminum	Aerosol can w/ plastic component	Y		
25_M2N	Metal	Aluminum	Foil sheets w/o a plastic component	Y		<9%
25_M2P	Metal	Aluminum	Foil sheets w/ a plastic component	Y		
25_M3N	Metal	Aluminum	Foil Molded Containers w/o plastic component	Y		
25_M3P	Metal	Aluminum	Foil Molded Containers w/ plastic component	Y		
25_M5N	Metal	Aluminum	Other Forms w/o plastic component	Y		
25_M5P	Metal	Aluminum	Other Forms w/ plastic component	Y		
25_M6N	Metal	Tin/Steel/Bimetal	Non-aerosol container w/o plastic component	Y		<45%
25_M6P	Metal	Tin/Steel/Bimetal	Non-aerosol container w/ plastic component	Y		
25_M7P	Metal	Tin/Steel/Bimetal	Aerosol can w/ plastic component	Y		
25_M8N	Metal	Tin/Steel/Bimetal	Other Forms w/o plastic component	Y		
25_M8P	Metal	Tin/Steel/Bimetal	Other Forms w/ plastic component	Y		

The law is intended to regulate nearly all single-use packaging and plastic food service ware sold or distributed in California unless specifically exempted.

CMCS BY JURISDICTION: A WORK IN PROGRESS

#	Category ID	Material Type	Form	Examples (from CalRecycle's CMC Reporting Guidance, Sept 2025)	ZWS Links (need to be updated)	Notes	Statewide Recycling Rate	Recyclable	Compostable	Current Acceptance Rate in SoCo	Jurisdict ions (prelimin ary)	Recommended Action (Add, Exempt, TBD, or N/A)
18	25_PF8N	Waxed cardboard	w/o plastic	Produce boxes made with natural wax	Cardboard - Waxed		0%		Y			including it complicate public messaging (no plastic-lined paper, how can they tell if it's wax vs. plastic)?
19	25_PF9N 25_PF9P	OCC Cardboard	w/o & w/ plastic	Boxes, honeycomb pads, corrugated wrap, trays, and box dividers	Cardboard	Recycled, not composted	68%	Y	Y			N/A - Compliant (for recycling)
20	25_PF10N 25_PF10P	Paperboard	w/o & w/ plastic	Food boxes such as cereal, pasta, and frozen food boxes; packaging; inserts; and jewelry gift boxes	Paperboard Boxes/Tubes	Recycled, not composted	30%	Y	Y			N/A - Compliant (for recycling)
21	25_PF11N 25_PF11P 25_PF12N	White paper + other mixed paper	Paper w/o & w/ plastic	White envelopes (used as packaging), white expandable packing paper, non-plastic based waxed paper bags and liners, and glassine envelopes	Envelopes - Paper	Compliance may vary within the CMC (e.g. jurisc	71%	Y	Y			N/A - Compliant (for recycling)
22	25_PF12P	Other/mixed paper	w/ plastic	Waxed paper bags and liners, glassine envelopes, meat absorbent pads, and butter wrappers	Wax & Parchment Paper	Compliance withing CMC varies. Recology accepts Wax Paper in compost. No guidance online for other haulers. Butter wrappers, meat absorbent pads are G across SoCo	71%	Y	Y			restrictive importing markets; unclear how plastic residuals are handled; no plastic wanted in compost
23	25_PF16N	Paper small format	w/o plastic	2 or more sides 2" or less. Examples: crinkle paper cushioning, sugar packets, and wrappers for food	Paper - Shredded	Re:Source does not distinguish w/ and w/o plastic. Small paper with plastic not advisable in compost.	Insufficient		Y			Add to Compost
24	25_PF16P	Paper small format	w/ plastic		Paper - Shredded		78%		Y*			No plastic wanted in compost
25	25_P1P	PET #1	Clear & colored bottles	Clear jars, bottles for food, and bottles for household products and personal care	Plastic Bottles, Jugs &		16% - 5%	Y				

POSSIBLE EXEMPTION REQUESTS

CMC	Exemption Request
Kraft paper, poly-lined (one side) (25_PF1P)	Often food-soiled; limited responsible end markets and challenges managing plastic residuals.
Other mixed paper with plastic (25_PF12P)	Includes meat absorbent pads and butter wrappers; often contaminated with no viable end markets.
Small-format metal without plastic (25_M12N)	Too small for effective MRF recovery; may require MRF retrofits or secondary sorting and is currently screened out.
Poly-lined paper (25_PF14P, 25_PF17P, 25_PF7P)	Plastic lining contaminates the organics stream and can contribute to microplastics in finished compost; not accepted by OMRI-certified composters.
Compostable plastic – rigid & film (25_P44P, 25_P45P)	Considered plastic contamination in the organics stream; can contribute to microplastics in compost and is not accepted by OMRI-certified composters.
Small-format paper with plastic (25_PF16P)	Plastic component creates contamination in the organics stream.

CAA PROGRAM PLAN

June 15, 2026: CAA submitted the Program Plan to the SB 54 Advisory Board.

June–August 2026: Advisory Board review and development of formal comments and recommendations.

August 14, 2026: Public comment period closes. CAA will consider Advisory Board and public comments and revise the Plan before submitting it to **CalRecycle for review and approval.**

CalRecycle will ultimately approve the Program Plan and oversee implementation



SB 54 is not limited to what is recyclable today.

It is intentionally designed to force producers to redesign packaging and finance systems so more materials become recyclable, compostable, and reusable over time.

QUESTIONS?

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