

FOOD FOR PEOPLE, NOT LANDFILLS

2026 ANNUAL REPORT



Nevada Department of Human Services
Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Office of Food Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is estimated that 70 million tons of food are wasted each year, leading to a financial loss of \$380 billion. This food wasted has the potential to feed the 13% of Americans and 15% of Nevadans who are food insecure. Food security can improve health implications, nutrients, immune systems, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, and asthma. In 2019, to assist with food waste mitigation, the Nevada Legislature established the Food for People Not for Landfill Program through the [Nevada Revised Statute \(NRS\) 232.4969](#) (unfunded mandate). Shortly thereafter the Council on Food Security (CFS), in partnership with the Office of Food Security (OFS), began work to reduce food waste on efforts and a Food for People Not Landfills (FFPNL) subcommittee was established. **Add 2026 Accomplishments.**

BACKGROUND

Food insecurity is a critical issue faced by 13.3% of Americans and 15.0% of Nevadans.¹ Food insecurity has risk of related health implications such as nutrient deficiencies, weakened immune systems, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, and asthma.²⁻⁴ Reducing the amount of consumable food being sent to the landfill, a concept known as food waste, can enhance food security throughout Nevada. Agencies use a variety of terms when describing food waste. The Environmental Protection Agency uses the term “wasted food” and defines it as “food that was not used for its intended purpose and is managed in a variety of ways, such as donation to feed people, creation of animal feed, composting, anaerobic digestion, or disposal in landfills or combustion facilities.” ReFED utilizes the term “surplus food” and defines it as “all food that goes unsold or unused by a business or that goes uneaten at home including food inedible parts that are donated, fed to animals, repurposed to produce other products, and all destinations represented in food waste.”⁵⁻⁶

An estimated 29% or 70 million tons of food go unsold or uneaten in the United States with the majority (85%) being sent to landfills, incineration, down the drain, or left in the fields.⁶ This loss is estimated to be 114 billion meals or the ability to feed 150 million people.⁶⁻⁷ Each of those meals and individuals served could have been one less individual facing food insecurity. The largest contributor among sectors is residential (33.5%) followed by farms (24.2%) and among food types, it is produced (45.4%) and prepared foods (19.9%).⁶ In addition, there is a financial and environmental impact. The value of surplus food is estimated to be \$380 billion and cost a family of four approximately \$2,913 annually.^{6,8} On the environmental side, it is estimated that surplus food uses 15% of annual freshwater withdraws or 16 trillion gallons, emits the same amount of greenhouse gases as 50 million gas powered cars, and uses enough energy to power 50 million homes for a year.^{6-7,9} To assist in the improvement of these issues, the United States has established a target to reduce food loss and waste by 50% by the year 2030.¹⁰

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Due to the social and environmental impact, Three Square made it a legislative priority in 2019 to reduce food.¹¹ “Donating food for human consumption is a successful strategy to reduce food waste in landfills, increase food supply chain efficiency, and most importantly meet the needs of hungry people.” Their proposed solutions aimed at minimizing the quantity of edible food that is disposed of in landfills, as outlined below:

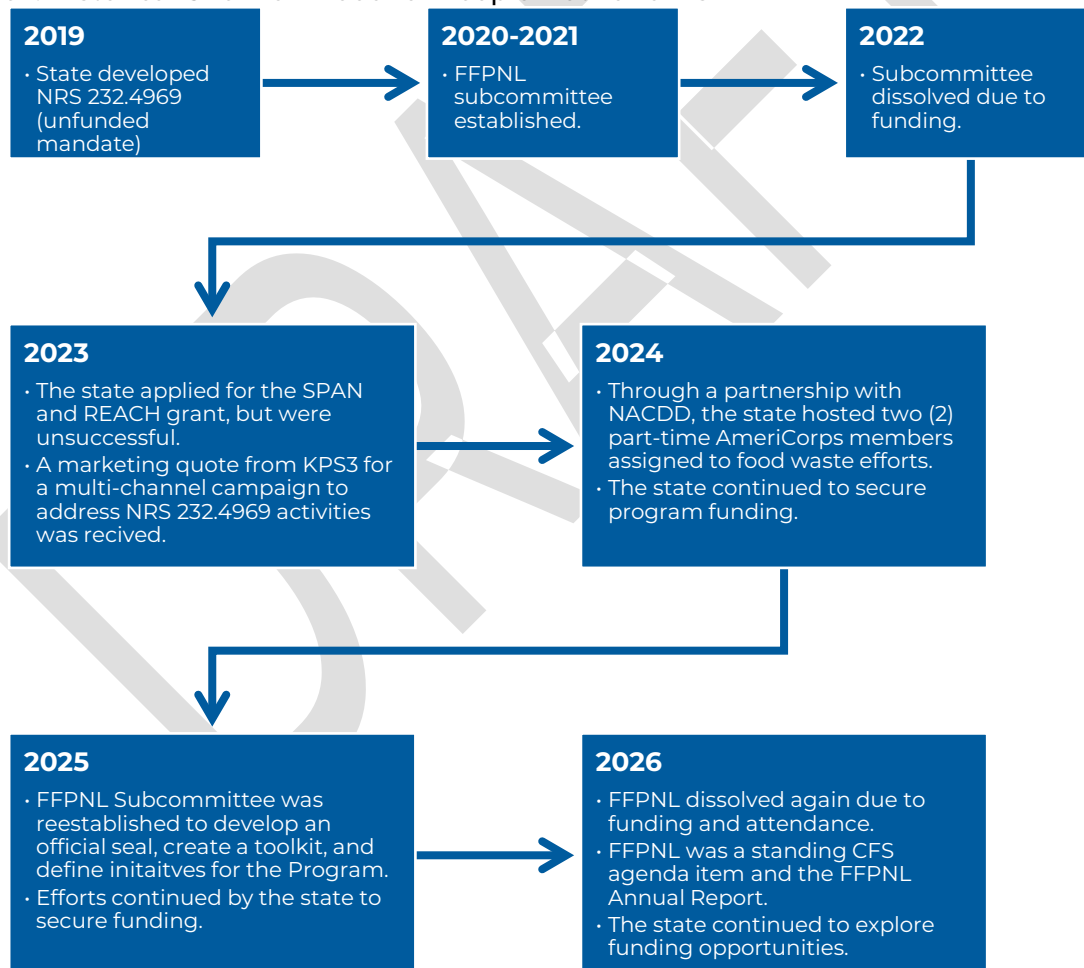
- Set a state objective of a minimum of 6 million pounds (equivalent to 5 million meals) annually and aim for 25 million pounds over a five-year period (with a scaling

approach), to enhance the food resources accessible to those in need by minimizing waste.

- Introduce non-financial incentives for the creation and execution of a waste reduction strategy that channels edible food resources to food banks.
- Monitor advancements towards the state objective via CFS.¹¹

In response, the State developed [NRS 232.4969](#) (unfunded mandate) called the Food for People, Not Landfills (FFPNL) Program to improve food security by decreasing food waste and diverting consumable food away from landfills. To assist with this program, CFS, with the support of OFS, established the FFPNL subcommittee to promote food waste initiatives and evaluate progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in [NRS 232.4969](#). An annual report is due annually detailing its achievements and the impact of the program to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB). An overview of tasks completed by FFPNL from its inception is found in Table 1.

Figure 1. Historical Overview Food for People Not Landfills



2026 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Need to provide 2026 FFPNL updates.

Table 2. Agencies identified by CFS for the FFPNL initiatives

Filled	Vacant
Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada	Northern Gaming Industry
Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada	Southern Gaming Industry
Food Bank of Northern Nevada	Retail and Grocery
Helping Hands of Vegas Valley	Representative from an organization that does farmers market buy back and/or food rescue from agricultural producers.
Three Square	Representative from food services.
University of Nevada Reno Extension Program	
Nevada Department of Agriculture	

2026 RECOMMENDATIONS

2027 GOALS

OFS and CFS will continue to explore funding opportunities to help Nevada reduce food waste across the state and explore partnerships to leverage resources. Goals and initiatives will include but are not limited to the following tasks:

- Establish meeting guidelines
- Develop program goals, initiatives, and objectives.
- Create a sustainability plan.
- Develop a financial plan and apply for funding.
- Gather and analyze food waste data.
- Review other state programs.
- Develop criteria for food donors to participate in FFPNL programs.
- Establish a list of food waste partners.
- Finalize the program seal.
- Determine how FFPNL food donors may display or use the program seal.
- Identify and finalize an FFPNL toolkit.

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