FOOD RECOVERY

- The Indiana State Department of Health and Indiana Department of Education have collaborated on guidance for implementing food recovery at school.
- As long as schools are planning and preparing meals with the intent to serve one reimbursable meal per child per day, schools that occasionally have unexpected meal or food surpluses may donate the leftover foods to food banks, food pantries, homeless shelters, and similar non-profit charitable organizations.

Basics

- Before starting any food recovery program, make sure to discuss these plans with your local health department.
- Connect with local non-profit charitable organizations and discuss the best methods for food recovery.
- Develop a system for freezing, labeling the food in a container or box as "recovered food for donation" and storing the prepared food separate from food that will be served to students.
- Figure out how the food will arrive at the organization. Will volunteers pick up the food once a week? Set up the right time and day that works best for the cafeteria managers and kitchen staff.

Food Safety

- Only food that has not been served or in an unopened original package and is maintained in sound condition can be donated.
- Allowable products include pre-packaged products (food bars, drinks, crackers, etc.), wrapped fruit and vegetables or fruit with a thick skin (bananas and oranges), and temperature controlled pre-packaged products like cheese and milk as long as they are placed in a cooler, refrigerator, or ice bath.
- Food that is contaminated by food employees, consumers, or other persons through contact with soiled hands, bodily discharges, or other means shall be discarded.
- All potentially donated food must be stored separately in a container or box labeled, "recovered for food donation" and dated.
- Develop a Standard Operating Plan (SOP) in the school's Food Safety HACCP Plan.

Liability

- Protected for liability under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, found in section 22 of the Child Nutrition Act and Indiana Code 34-4-12.5 “Immunity from Civil Liability for Gifts of Food to Charitable Entities.”
- Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55) provides clear statutory authority for current Food and Nutrition Service food recovery and donation policy in use by schools and institutions participating in the Child Nutrition Programs, NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP.

Best Practices

- Proper menu planning, utlizing production records, and implementing offer versus serve are the best tools to prevent excess leftovers. Contact the State or your Field Consultant to learn more.
- When possible, use leftovers in subsequent meal services, offer sharing tables or transfer food to other sites.
- Use a tracking log to monitor how much food is recovered from each school. This is another way to monitor student acceptability and make changes to future production.

Resources

- www.usda.gov/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf
- http://infohouse.p2ric.org/ref/40/39580.pdf
- www.foodrescue.net
- http://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/resources/K12_schools.html