

Resource Guide to Food Rescue

*for Food Establishments and Retail Food Stores
in the Quad Cities*



Feeding People, Not Landfills

Food Rescue: Easy as 1-2-3!

Three Simple Steps to Get Started

1. **Make contact.** Decide where you'll send food and arrange pickup. (Contacts on page 8)
2. **Select good food.** Start small. Select foods that are easy to manage. (Tips on pages 6 & 7)
3. **Keep tally.** Track donations so you can write them off— and brag about them! (Tax info on page 10)

Great Benefits for You

When you choose to rescue good food rather than throw it away, you'll reap excellent benefits!

- **Save money.** Reduce your trash, thereby reducing the number of garbage pickups by your waste hauler.
- **Get a tax break.** You can write off half the value of food you donate.
- **Be recognized.** Tout the fact that you rescue food to feed hungry people! Tell your patrons on menus, with posters in windows and at checkout areas, and on your website.
- **Take pride.** When you rescue food, you make a direct impact on the lives of hungry people and help solve a nationwide waste problem.

What about Liability?

Most food establishments say their number one concern about donating food is liability. There's good news!

The Good Samaritan Act protects you when you donate food to non-profit organizations (complete info on page 3). That's right. Your donation of good-to-eat food can't get you into trouble. You're protected from civil or criminal liabilities!

"If you really want to make a friend... eat with him... the people who give you their food, give you their heart."

— Cesar Chavez

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Am I Liable?

To encourage the donation and distribution of wholesale food and protect donors such as restaurants, caterers, and grocers from any civil or criminal liabilities, Public Law 104-210, also known as the Good Samaritan Act was signed into Congress in 1996. The Good Samaritan Act allows organizations like yours to donate unused and leftover food to non-profit organizations such as food pantries and shelters. Under this act, food related entities may donate if the food is suitable for consumption, meaning its quality, age, packaging, and condition is suitable to be consumed by those in need. In turn, the non-profit is also free from any civil or criminal liability when the food is donated, knowing that it was wholesale and in a suitable condition to be consumed by those in need. For more information on the Good Samaritan Act please visit, govinfo.gov.

Food goes unwasted by staying out of the landfill, cutting costs for restaurants, and hungry people are fed.

Everyone wins.

Why Food Rescue?

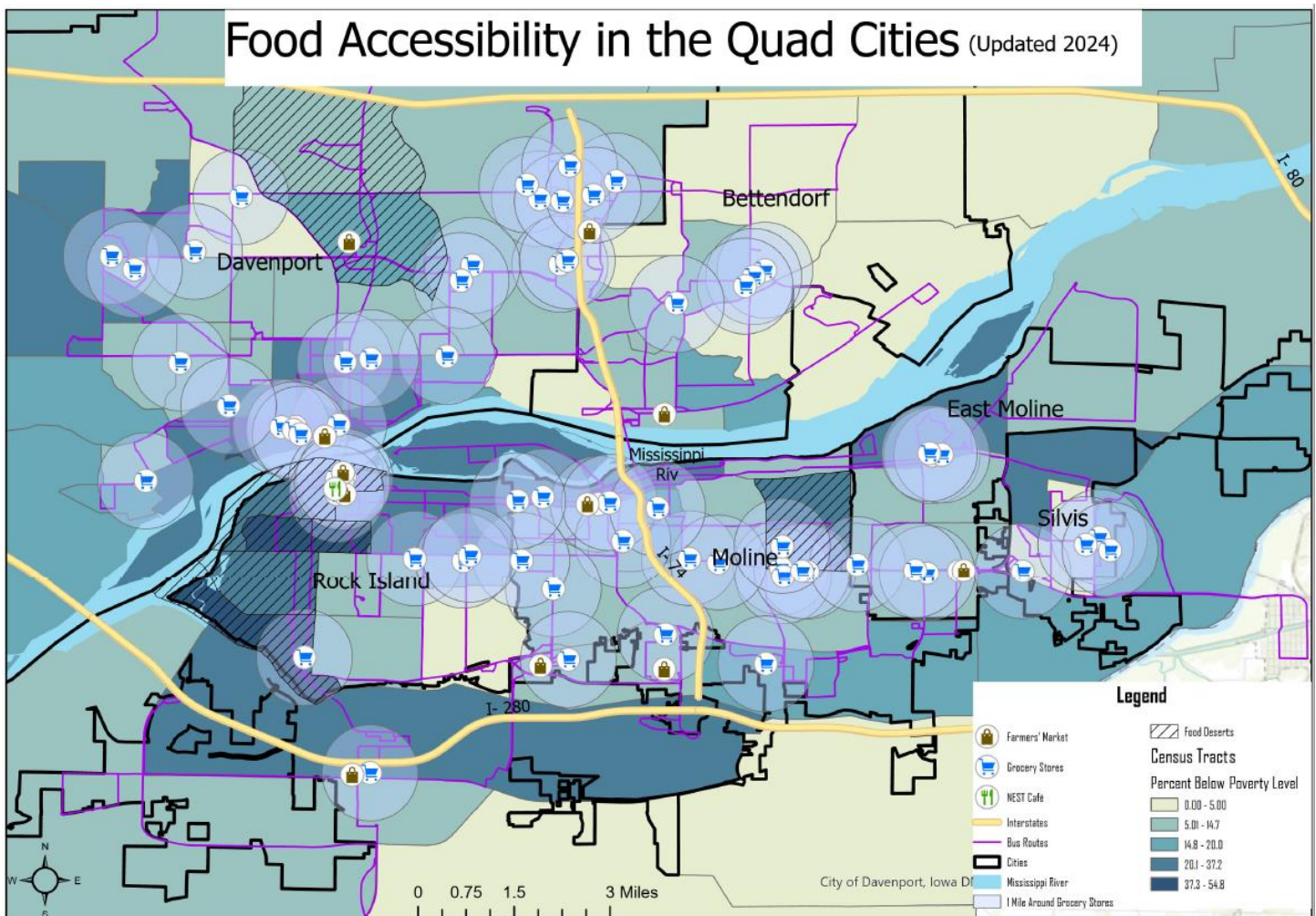
Here are some interesting facts:

1. **40% of all the food produced in the United States is NOT consumed** ([Natural Resource Defense Council](#))
2. **500,900 tons of food enter Iowa landfills each year** ([Iowa Department of Natural Resources](#))
3. **1.2 pounds of food is equivalent to 1 meal** (United States Department of Agriculture)
 - *That's 834,833,333 meals in Iowa alone!*
4. **38.5% of Quad Citizens surveyed are food insecure** ([Community Health Assessment](#))
 - *Food insecure: lacking reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food*
5. **15.2% of Quad Citizens have low food access** ([Community Health Assessment](#))
6. **25.5% of Quad Citizens surveyed have difficulty buying fresh produce** ([Community Health Assessment](#))
 - *Quad Citizens with health disparities by social determinant risk are 16 times more likely to have difficulty buying fresh produce*
7. **Food waste is the #1 material disposed of in Iowa landfills** ([Iowa Department of Natural Resources](#))
 - *The average Iowan disposes of 200 pounds of food per year.*
 - *About ¼ of that was thrown away in its original packaging.*



People in the Quad Cities Need Food

Census tracts qualify as food deserts if they meet low-income and low-access thresholds. **Low-income communities** have a poverty rate of 20% or greater, or a median family income at or below 80% of the area's median family income. **Low-access communities** have at least 500 people and/or at least 33% of the census tract's population living more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store. In the case of non-metropolitan census tracts, 10 miles from a supermarket or large grocery store.



Augustana College volunteered to assist with a variety of Food Rescue Partnership projects; created the logo, implemented a data collection questionnaire for professional food establishments, and created the above [GIS map](#). Augustana College propelled the Food Rescue Partnership forward on its mission to rescue food!

What's Safe to Donate?

While certain food may not be desirable to serve to your guests, it could still be safe, edible, and nutritious food for people living in hunger. The Food Rescue Partnership understands it may be difficult to know where to draw the line on what food is safe or not, so below is a table separating safe food from the not safe food, according to the Scott County Health Department and Rock Island County Health Department.

Safe	Not Safe
• Commercially prepackaged food • Prepared food less than 7 days old • Freezer food that is properly frozen • Properly cooled hot food • Cold food 41 degrees F or below • Properly labeled food • Fruits and Vegetables	• Food that has been out on a self-service buffet, catered, or prepared at home • Prepared food over 7 days old • Severely dented cans • Food with compromised packaging • Unlabeled food • Spoiled produce

For specific questions on food safety, please contact your local health department:

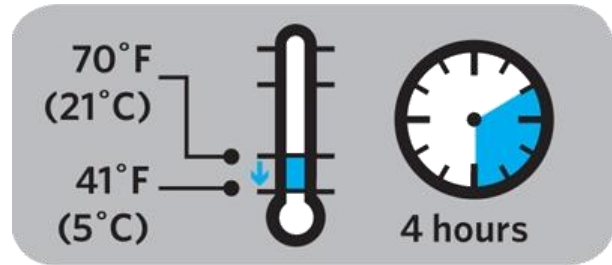
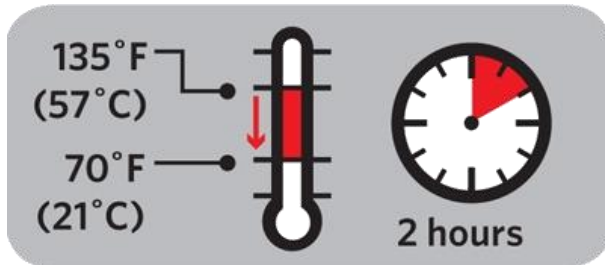
- Scott County, IA 563-326-8618
- Rock Island County, IL 309-558-2840
- City of East Moline, IL 309-752-1510
- City of Moline, IL 309-524-2373
- City of Rock Island, IL 309-732-2910

Please see page 13 for food that is not safe to donate for human consumption.

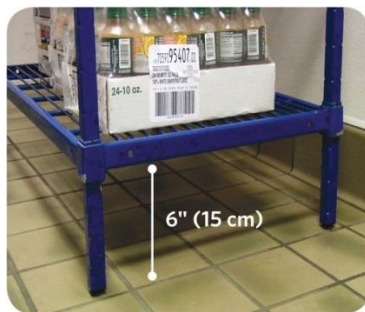
Tips to Keeping Food Safe

Now that you have established a baseline of what food is safe to donate, how do you keep it safe until it's time to turn it over to the recipient agency? Here are some tips from the Scott County Health Department and Rock Island County Health Department:

- Properly cool and maintain food temperatures.



- Prepared food should be stored above raw meats.
- Food should be stored at least 6 inches off the floor.



- Food should be properly covered.
- Food should be properly labeled.



Who Accepts Food Donations?

There are a wide variety of non-profit hunger-relief agencies throughout the Quad Cities that will happily accept food donations. To ensure the integrity and safety of the entire food donation process, the Food Rescue Partnerships encourages food donations to the agencies below.

ChefyBear on Wheels



Yolanda Jefferson attended culinary school right out of high school and has been professionally cooking for 35+ years. She has opened restaurants and trained in many areas of food. Yolanda fostered an extraordinary passion to reduce food waste from Blckpearl Catering, a full-service catering company, by donating excess food to non-profits in the Quad Cities. Yolanda knows many people struggle financially and now she leads a community project, ChefyBear on Wheels to fill belly's by accepting food donations and preparing meals. Please contact Yolanda at 309-631-1776 or blckpearlcatering@gmail.com to make a food donation of any size.

Churches United of the Quad City Area



Churches United of the Quad City Area oversees 29 food pantries, and 1 hot meal site. If you have a food donation of any amount please contact Taelor Denton at tdenton@cuqca.org or call (971) 832-0364. For all other donations, including hygiene items, clothing/blankets, or monetary donations please contact Rev. Jay McCowan at jmccowan@cuqca.org or call (563) 332-5002.

Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry



The Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry, located in Geneseo, Illinois, has been reinventing their food pantry one meaningful action at a time. In addition to food, they offer clothing, small household items, and provide emergency financial assistance for their guests. They have implemented a guest advisory board, offer nutrition education from local dieticians, connect guests with community resources, and host workshops on topics as diverse as healthcare to canning produce. Please contact Michael Sigwalt at geneseopantry@gmail.com or 309-944-3165.

River Bend Food Bank



**RIVER BEND
FOOD BANK**



If your donation is from a retail store or large enough to require a forklift or box truck, please contact Gretchen Nollman at gnollman@riverbendfoodbank.org or call 563-345-6490. For smaller donations, or for prepared food that needs to be consumed in a timely manner, the Food Bank will likely match you up to one of their agency partners who will make the pickup(s) (at no charge to the agency). To connect with an agency, please contact Danielle Tisor at dtisor@riverbendfoodbank.org or Jarrod Connor at jconnor@riverbendfoodbank.org.

Transportation for Food Donations

The Food Rescue Partnership surveyed professional food establishments and non-profit hunger-relief agencies to find out what could be improved to increase food donations in 2016 and 2018. Both years, one of the top identified needs is transportation.

In January of 2023, Food Rescue U.S. Quad Cities began as a volunteer-led initiative to engage the community in food recovery efforts. With massive community support that initiative grew, and as of January 2025 it is an official program under Churches United of The Quad Cities Area.

Churches United is now a licensee of the Food Rescue U.S. app which is an integral part of the organization's Hunger Relief Ministry. The free use of the Food Rescue U.S. web-based app enables Churches United to be effective in the work of eliminating hunger and food waste. They engage volunteers to transfer nutritious excess foods from local businesses directly to non-profit hunger-relief agencies serving the food insecure.



There are three ways you can help the Hunger Relief Ministry through food recovery:

1. **[Food Donor](#)** - Any business that has excess food that may otherwise go to waste.
2. **[Recipient Agency](#)** – Any non-profit hunger-relief agency that provides meals or groceries to clients.
3. **[Volunteer](#)** – Any individual with access to a vehicle who is willing and able to pick up donated food and drive it to a recipient agency.

All services are free of charge. Please contact Taelor Denton at tdenton@cugca.org or call 971-832-0364 to learn more and be the rescue!

Sample Policy and Procedures

Don't be surprised or alarmed! Everyone knows that the secret to sustainability is in well written and executed policies and procedures. Talk to these organizations that shared their food rescue policy and procedures with the Food Rescue Partnership and your organization:

- **Hy-Vee** 563-391-0761 and ask for Paul Scheibelhut, Manager
- **Panera Bread** 319-365-9093 and ask for John Kauffman, Marketing & Public Relations Manager
- **Red Lobster** 563-359-7185 and ask for Jill Nau, General Manager

The sample policy and procedures are included as appendices at the end of this resource guide. If you have any questions, feel free to give the establishment a call, they'd be happy to help!

Tax Deductions

Professional Organizations

In 1976, United States Congress enacted Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code to encourage donations by allowing organizations to earn a tax deduction for donating surplus property, including food. The Internal Revenue Code grants organizations the ability to claim tax deduction on properly saved and donated food that is equal to half of the food's appreciated value. There is a limitation that the total deduction amount cannot exceed twice the donated food's basic cost. The tax deduction is calculated from the donated food's Fair Market Value (FMV) and basic food and labor cost. FMV is evaluated by the Internal Revenue Service on a case-by-case basis. For more information on tax deductions for professional food establishments, please visit [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

Farmers

In 2013, Iowa Legislature approved the Farm to Food Donation Tax Credit program that allows farmers who donate food to earn a tax deduction. This program establishes that an amount equaling the lesser of \$5,000 or 15% of the value of the donated commodities during the tax year can be claimed. For more information on the Farm to Food Tax Credit program, please visit tax.iowa.gov/farm-food-donation-tax-credit.



Members of Food Rescue

In 2016, the Food Rescue Partnership launched the Food Rescue Recognition Program to recognize businesses and organizations throughout the Quad Cities for their exemplary food rescue efforts. As a Member of Food Rescue, businesses and organizations receive a recognition letter, certificate, promotional window cling, and are promoted on the Food Rescue Partnership website and Facebook page for their efforts to reduce food waste and hunger in our community!

Join those already recognized throughout the Quad Cities!

- Asbury Methodist Church Garden Ministry
- Bettendorf Community School District
- Blckpearl Catering
- Churches United of the Quad City Area
- Crawford Brew Works
- Dairy Queen
- Davenport Community Schools
- Davenport Elk's Club
- Donuts & More
- Happy Joe's Pizza Grille
- Imperial Vending
- Jumer's Casino & Hotel
- Kwik Trip, Inc. / Kwik Star
- NEST Café
- Panera Bread of Iowa
- Pleasant Valley Community School District
- Popcorn Charlie and Company
- Tapestry Farms
- Target
- The River Center / The Adler Theatre
- Village Corner Deli
- Word of Life Food Pantry
- YWCA Quad Cities

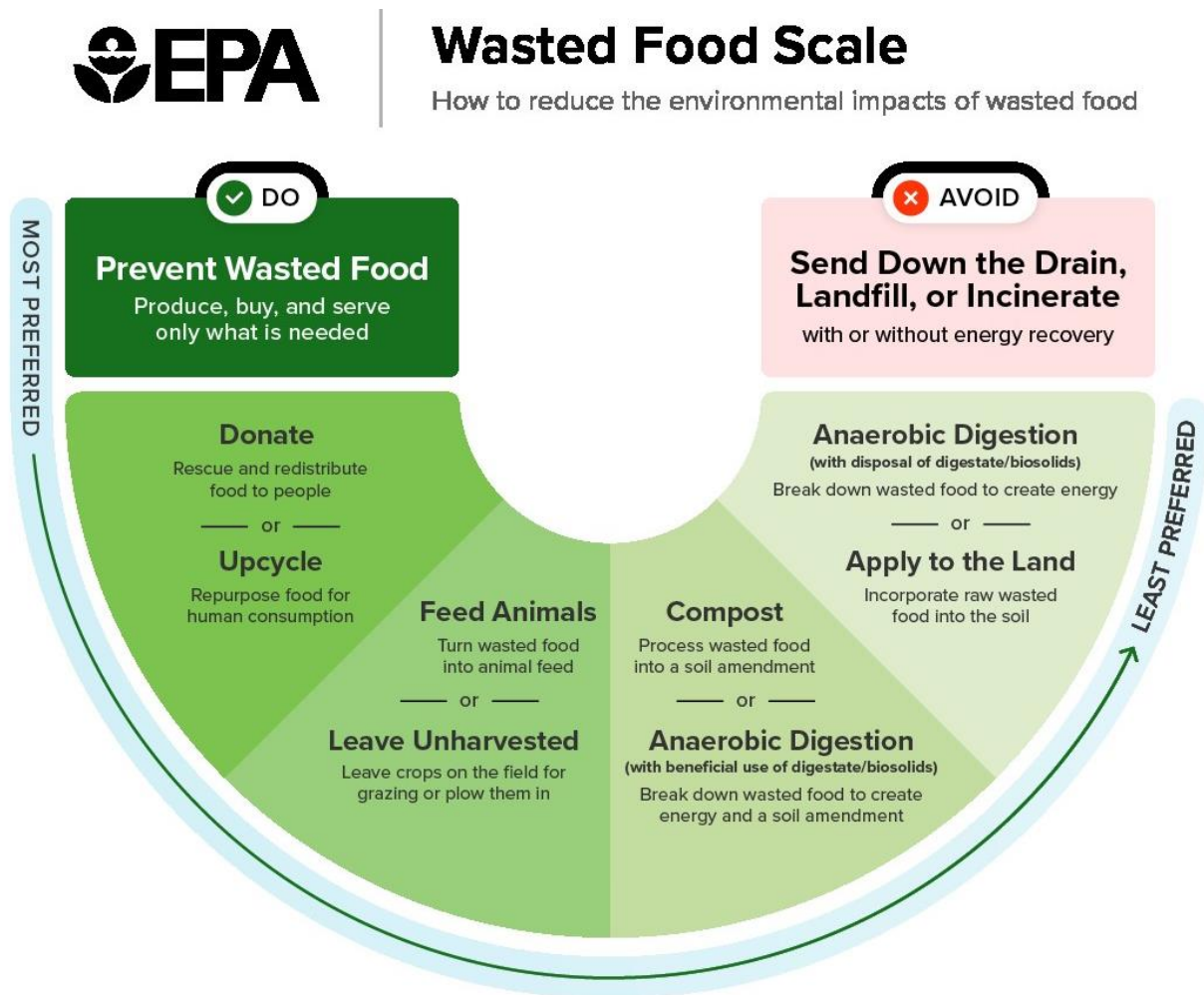


To become a member, complete the Member of Food Rescue assessment online at foodrescueqc.org/donor-recognition-program/apply/.

Wasted Food Scale

What about food that is not suitable for human consumption? Food that cannot be donated to feed hungry people can still be rescued from landfill disposal. Providing animal feed, processing the food to obtain nutrient value, digesting the food to recover energy, and composting the food are some of the ways that foods can be utilized once it is no longer suitable for human consumption.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Wasted Food Scale prioritizes steps that food manufacturers, businesses, organizations, and people at home can make to prevent and redirect food from the landfill.



For more information on the Food Recovery Hierarchy, visit epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/wasted-food-scale. For more information on rescuing food in the Quad Cities by composting, waste-to-energy, and feeding animals, please contact Lindsey Given Egli at the Iowa Waste Exchange at 319-289-0520 or email: Lindsey.GivenEgli@ecicog.org.

Tips to Reduce Food Waste at Home

Everyone can make a difference and help reduce food waste! Here are 8 tips to reduce food waste at home:

1. Inventory your fridge before shopping.
2. Store food properly to keep fresh.
3. Eat old foods first.
4. Eat leftovers for lunch the next day.
5. Freeze fresh foods and leftovers to be used later.
6. Repurpose leftovers into new recipes. Stale bread makes great croutons!
7. Dates on the labels often refer to peak freshness, not food safety.
8. Start a compost pile.

Contact Kristin Bogdonas at the University of Illinois Extension at 309-756-9978 or kmbogdo@illinois.edu if you're interested in learning more.

About the Food Rescue Partnership

The Food Rescue Partnership is a dynamic group of experienced and knowledgeable stakeholders and community partners suited to achieve our mission with purpose and passion. The Food Rescue Partnership's vision is a Quad Cities – a community dedicated to eliminating food waste, which is accomplished through our mission to promote rescuing food for its best possible use.

Active stakeholders include:

- Blckpearl Catering/Chefy Bear on Wheels
- Churches United of the Quad City Area
- Community Members
- Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry
- River Bend Food Bank – and its network of Agency Partners
- Rock Island County Health Department
- Scott County Health Department
- St. Ambrose University
- True Lifestyle Medicine Clinic, LLC
- University of Illinois Extension
- Waste Commission of Scott County
- YWCA Quad Cities



Community Partners include:

- Augustana College
- Community Health Care
- Fresh Films
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Hunger Coalition
- Iowa Waste Exchange
- Iowa Waste Reduction Center
- Quad City Bank & Trust
- Tapestry Farms
- Trinity Lutheran Food Pantry

About the Food Rescue Partnership Board

Food Rescue Partnership Stakeholders nominate and elect Board members to oversee the continued efforts and mission of the Food Rescue Partnership.

Christina McDonough, Board Chair



Christina McDonough works at the Scott County Health Department and has been involved with the Food Rescue Partnership since its onset in 2013. Each year, Christina helps the Food Rescue Partnership establish a community action plan to promote rescuing food for its best possible use. Christina is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa where she majored in Health Promotion and is a Certified Health Education Specialist. Her passion for food rescue has carried over into her personal life, where her kids love “left-overs night” when they can put any combination of food together for dinner!

Rachel Evans, Vice-Chair



Rachel Evans is the Communication Coordinator for the Waste Commission of Scott County. Rachel is a graduate of Valparaiso University (B.A.) and Drake University (M.P.A.). Rachel joined the Food Rescue Partnership in 2023 but has had a passion for food-related causes since volunteering at a food pantry in high school. Volunteering at River Bend Food Bank’s backpack parties reignited her interest in helping those facing food insecurity and sparked her interest in diverting food from the landfill. At home, Rachel uses her planning skills while deciding what meals to make each week to limit food waste in her own kitchen.

Amy Schaefer, Board Secretary



Amy Schaefer is the Executive Director of YWCA QC's Empowerment Center, where access to food is paramount to the success of clients. At the Empowerment Center, it is YWCA's goal to ensure that each client who is served leaves feeling empowered and supported. Amy was connected to the Food Rescue Partnership in 2024 through a grant that YWCA was applying for, and quickly found like minded individuals to connect with! Her personal goals include reducing her own food waste, as well as across all YWCA programming.

Larry Linnenbrink, Board Treasurer



Larry Linnenbrink worked at the Scott County Health Department for 44 years as an environmental health specialist and environmental health coordinator before retiring in 2015. He became interested in the Food Rescue Partnership after attending an Iowa Environmental Health Conference where there was a session he attended on Food Rescue Initiatives at the University of Northern Iowa. He has been involved with the Food Rescue Partnership since then, and now serves as a community member. His interest is in seeing food rescued and delivered to those individuals who are food insecure.

Past Board Members

- Lindsey Adams, Outback Steakhouse – Vice-Chair (2015-2016)
- Lea Hensel, Iowa Waste Reduction Center – Vice-Chair (2016-2017), Secretary (2019-2021)
- Liz Hogan Wells, Community Member – Vice-Chair (2017-2018)
- Mike Miller, River Bend Food Bank – Treasurer (2015-2018)
- Pete Vogel, Community Member – Chair (2015-2019), Vice Chair (2019-2021)
- Cheryl True, True Lifestyle Medicine – Vice-Chair (2021-2023)
- Colleen Doak, St. Ambrose University – Secretary (2021-2024)
- Kristin Bogdonas, University of Illinois Extension – Secretary (2018-2019), Vice-Chair (2023-2025)

Our History

In 2013, the Scott County Health Department completed a comprehensive food system assessment for Scott County and engaged stakeholders throughout the community to evaluate the findings. Stakeholders from a wide variety of backgrounds came together and selected one food system indicator to address through a community action plan; “Percentage of food waste (industrial/commercial)” was selected. This led to the formation of the Food Rescue Partnership, with a core mission to promote rescuing food for its best possible use.

A food system is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as “food production, process, distribution and consumption to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a participate place.” The Food Rescue Partnership then selected one indicator to address through a community action plan. The “Percentage of food waste (industrial/commercial)” indicator was selected.



To learn more, visit the Food Rescue Partnership’s online resources; foodrescueqc.org and facebook.com/foodrescueqc.



Feeding People, Not Landfills

Hello:

Did you know that 40% of food in the United States is thrown away? With hunger as prevalent as it is, food should remain a valuable resource. With the help of an engaged group of stakeholders and partners, the Food Rescue Partnership is committed to making a difference.

The Food Rescue Partnership's vision: Quad Cities – a community dedicated to eliminating food waste, which is accomplished through our mission to promote rescuing food for its best possible use. We aim to do so by establishing partnerships between community stakeholders to rescue food for its best possible use and providing food rescue education and awareness to the community-at-large.

Whether you have questions or already know you want to join, email frp@foodrescueqc.org and we will be in touch!

Thank you,

Christina McDonough
Board Chair
Scott County Health Department
Phone: 563-326-8618 ext. 8897

Rachel Evans
Board Vice-Chair
Waste Commission of Scott County
Phone: 563-386-9575

Amy Schaefer
Board Secretary
YWCA Quad Cities
Phone: 563-340-4602

Larry Linnenbrink
Board Treasurer
Community Member
Phone: 563-940-5314

"If you really want to make a friend... eat with him... the people who give you their food, give you their heart." – Cesar Chavez

Website: foodrescueqc.org ♦ Facebook: facebook.com/foodrescueqc ♦ Email: frp@foodrescueqc.org

Additional Resources *for food safety, waste, and rescue*

I. Apps:

- a. [Food Keeper](#)
- b. [Food Rescue U.S.](#)

II. Articles & Research Studies:

- a. [Food Waste Prevention & Management Study](#) (2025 Iowa DNR & HDR)
- b. [Iowa Landfill Materials Analysis](#) (2022 Iowa DNR)
- c. [Keeping Food Out of the Landfill: Policy Ideas for States and Localities](#) (2016 Harvard)
- d. [Surplus, Salvaged, and Donated Foods: Safety Tips](#) (FDA)
- e. [Wasted Food Scale](#) (EPA)
- f. [Wasted: How America Is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill](#) (2012 NRDC)

III. Books:

- a. Hunger in the Heartland: A Resource Guide for Alleviating Hunger in Your Community, No Matter Where you Live
- b. Servsafe Essentials

IV. Videos:

- a. [Food wastage footprint](#)
- b. [Love Letter to Food](#)

V. Websites:

- a. ampleharvest.org
- b. epa.gov/sustainable-management-food
- c. fda.gov/Food
- d. foodrescue.us
- e. foodsafety.gov
- f. iowadnr.gov
- g. map.feedingamerica.org
- h. nrdc.org
- i. usda.gov