Case Study: Edible Food Recovery in Irvine

Executive Summary



The City of Irvine is required by California law to monitor and enforce the state's edible food recovery mandate. After struggling with limited capacity and a need for greater compliance expertise, the City of Irvine chose to contract with Abound Food Care (Abound) to improve the city's approach to edible food recovery compliance. In October 2023, Abound began providing targeted outreach, on-site technical assistance, and standardized tracking tools. These interventions help edible food generators (EFGs) better understand the mandate, facilitate EFG collaboration with local food recovery organizations (FROs), and streamline reporting processes for the city. As a result, Irvine's compliance has improved significantly, rising from 27% in 2023 to 84.2% today.

California Senate Bill 1383 Compliance

California Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383) was signed into law in 2016, establishing California's "Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy." SB 1383 mandates that 20% of excess edible food produced by qualified EFGs be donated to food recovery organizations to decrease methane emissions in landfills and increase the percentage of the food supply going to feeding people. All of a city's qualified EFGs must have comprehensive edible food recovery programs, which ensure that they have a partnership with a FRO that can receive and redistribute their excess edible food. Qualified EFGs include a range of food-serving organizations and businesses, from large-scale grocery stores to restaurants, stadiums, and public schools.

Irvine Chooses Abound Food Care

Because SB 1383 places the responsibility of compliance monitoring onto jurisdictions, many of them contract with experts, like Abound, to manage their SB 1383 implementation. The City of Irvine brought in Abound to increase their SB 1383 implementation efficiency. As a city that strives greatly to improve food security for its residents, it was essential for Irvine's SB 1383 implementation to maximize the safe donation of excess edible food.

Abound's Approach to Edible Food Recovery

To support edible food recovery in the City of Irvine, Abound:

- Reviewed and updated the city's list of qualified EFGs and developed a list of FROs available to recover excess edible food.
- Conducted outreach visits to confirm that qualified EFGs have all required documentation.
- Provided materials highlighting the benefits and requirements of compliance to all EFGs and materials outlining safe food handling processes to all FROs.
- Onboarded all EFGs onto a digital donation-management platform to coordinate donations and track relevant edible food recovery data.
- Conducted annual and follow-up compliance inspections of all EFGs.
- Documented all efforts in order to support reporting requirements for the city.

Beyond bringing qualified EFGs within the jurisdiction up to compliance, this work has facilitated the recovery of roughly 7.2 million pounds of food, providing essential support to local FROs serving food-insecure communities in the City of Irvine.



About Abound Food Care: As an insider with multi-sector experience, we have the unique skills and knowledge to solve complex food system problems to empower nonprofits to feed more people. We optimize the food system with our scalable solutions that align public, private, and nonprofit resources and stakeholders. Our solutions include edible food recovery, food donation coordination, solar powered refrigeration units, and regional programs and alliances. Regional programs can be tailored with additional services, including grant management and administration, enhanced procurement, coordinated logistics, and repurposing kitchens. Since our inception, Abound Food Care has empowered thousands of stakeholders to create healthier communities with better food access and less food waste.