

Organics Management Guide Submission

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Select the Primary Entity Type Please identify the category that best represents your project: Other

Other (please specify): Behavior Change

Questions:

- 1. Background: Provide context for the program, project, or policy — why it was developed, when it began, and the problem or opportunity it addresses.**

The context for the Wild About Saving Food (Hamilton, OH) wasted food reduction campaign stems from a need to reduce and prevent wasted food, noting that globally one third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted from the farm to fork annually. As a global answer to this problem, the UN SDG 12.3 calls for halving food loss and waste by 2030. Nationally in the U.S., consumers are the largest source of wasted food, with ReFED figures citing that 50% of wasted food is generated in the household.

Considering this context, WRAP established a citizen behavior change unit in the U.S. to tackle wasted food by reshaping consumer environments to influence behavior. WRAP Americas, as such, was established in early 2024; the first two city campaigns in Hamilton County and Denver took place from Fall 2025 through January 2026. Pre-campaign research in 2024 clarified the understanding of US household behavior around wasting food, identifying inventory-checking and meal planning as some of the main competencies that lead to wasted food. Both the Wild About Saving Food campaign (Hamilton County, OH) and the Camp Waste Not campaign (Denver, CO) center on working with communities and retailers to change consumer behavior to reduce or prevent wasted food. Both campaigns represent a structured, collaborative process grounded in behavior change evidence and shaped by local context. For this case study, we are focusing on the details from the Hamilton County, Ohio Wild About Saving Food campaign.

2. Summary: Briefly describe the initiative, including its goals, location, and primary outcomes.

The Wild About Saving Food campaign ran in Hamilton County, OH, from September 2025 through January 2026. The campaign focused on meal planning, “knowing what you have” (household food inventory management to use up items before buying more) and improved storage guidance for fruits and veggies— in the refrigerator, on the counter, or in a cool, dark place. A set of interventions were developed, including a fridge magnetic whiteboard to list items while inventorying, canvas bag imprinted with storage tips, fridge magnets intended to influence food use behavior in the household, and “use-it-up” tape for labeling refrigerator items to encourage them to be used first. These interventions intend to reduce reliance on memory, increase the visibility and usage of hidden food, and make planning around what is already owned easier than starting from scratch. An online microsite campaign was also developed and launched in October 2025 to host the campaign, including downloadable badges and posters, additional food storage tips, and information for the target behaviors on the magnets. The microsite also links to a recipe page from Love Food Hate Waste Canada (licensed by WRAP).

The interventions were evaluated via two strands of research: self-ethnography with 150 participants, and a retrospective online survey. The evaluation results show that the interventions and campaign succeeded in reducing self-reported food waste. Primary outcomes show the following:

92% of survey respondents reported that the intervention packs helped them reduce their food waste (22% indicated they wasted “a lot less”; 70% indicated they wasted “a little less”)

65% of survey respondents reported that their food lasted longer because of acting on the food storage tips

Between 20 November 2025 and 18 January 2026, the microsite recorded 771 page views from 434 distinct users. During this period, 42 resources were downloaded. The average session was 1 minute, 31 seconds.

Five LinkedIn posts were published on the WRAP account, whose following is mainly a corporate audience. These posts collectively generated over 10,000 impressions, achieved an average engagement rate of 3%, and drove 20 users to the microsite.

Campaign partners used multiple channels for social content (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google ads). Collectively, these had over 866,000 impressions overall (over 326,000 on social media and over 440,000 on Google).

Beyond these interventions and microsite, a Bus campaign featuring ads on bus exteriors, shelters and interior cards were launched and had a significant impact:

Bus ads (4 exterior) aim to reach 857,279 adults over 18 over the 2-month campaign

Shelter ads (2 bus shelters) will have over 1.6 million vehicles pass them over 2 months

Interior card ads (50 inside buses) will reach 281,792 people over 2 months

3. Percent of Overall Diverted Material: If available, include data or estimates on the portion of the community or organization's total diverted material no longer associated with the waste stream that this program or policy addresses.

We don't have these statistics or data.

4. Key Program Elements or Policy Provisions: Describe the structure and main components of your program or policy. Explain the investments origins (who, how much). Please include as many of the following elements as applicable: What types of materials are being managed? (e.g., surplus recoverable foods, food scraps, wasted food. How are these materials managed? Who is responsible for managing them? (Organizations, agencies, businesses, or other entities) What products are generated, and how are they utilized or managed? (e.g., compost, animal feed, energy products) Who funds the management of these materials? (Funding sources, grants, partnerships) Who generates these materials? (Identify the origin: households, institutions, businesses, etc.)

Food is the material being managed; it is managed by reducing or preventing its waste through menu planning and food storage tips. Ultimately, consumers are responsible for wasting less food; however the behavior change prompts and interventions are managed by WRAP. WRAP generated the products for this campaign: WRAP did the digital ethnography, prompts, and collection of data through a 2-week process with participants. This project has been funded by grants from the Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh and the Laudes Foundation. The materials – food – is generated by farms and intersects with consumers at purchase points, such as farmers markets, restaurants and retailers / grocery stores. Consumers at the household level were targeted to waste less food.

- 5. Regulatory Impact: Describe how laws, policies, regulations, and/or code have affected your program or project. This may include positive, negative, or neutral impacts. Consider noting which regulations apply, how they influenced implementation or operations, any challenges or barriers encountered, and how compliance requirements shaped program decisions.**

These had no known effect on the project.

- 6. Measurable Increase in Supply: Include data or qualitative outcomes showing growth in collection, diversion, or reuse volumes if available.**

This is not applicable / we don't have this data.

- 7. Behavior Change: Describe whether the initiative resulted in measurable behavior change and explain how you determined this. If behavior change occurred, outline the strategies that proved most effective. Please include any available data or evidence that supports your findings.**

The key behavior change results observed are as follows:

92% of respondents in the survey reported that the intervention packs had helped them reduce their food waste (with 22% indicating wasting 'a lot less' and 70% 'a little less').

65% of respondents in the survey reported that their food lasted longer as a result of acting on the food storage tips.

- 8. Benefits and Impacts (Economic, Environmental, and Social): Describe the economic, environmental, and social sustainability impacts of the program, policy, or initiative. This may include both positive and negative outcomes. You may address impacts such as costs or savings, job creation, waste reduction, emissions, resource conservation, community engagement, equity, or public health. Please include data or qualitative observations where available and note any trade-offs or challenges.**

Positive social sustainability impacts:

- Increased household awareness and skills related to meal planning, food inventory management, and proper food storage, helping residents stretch food budgets and reduce avoidable waste.

- Delivered practical, easy-to-use tools (whiteboards, storage guides, magnets, “use-it-up” prompts) that supported daily behavior change across diverse households.
- Engaged residents through trusted community channels, including farmers’ markets, retail partners, and local organizations, strengthening credibility and uptake.
- Improved access to clear, actionable guidance for produce storage and food use, benefiting households with limited time and resources.
- Supported cost savings and food security co-benefits by helping families make better use of food already purchased.
- Built local practitioner capacity and cross-sector partnerships for future wasted-food prevention efforts.

Community engagement outcomes:

- Used place-based outreach and in-person distribution points to reach residents where they shop and gather.
- Encouraged two-way engagement through pilots and feedback loops that informed message and tool refinement.
- Leveraged local partners to tailor messaging and delivery to community context.

Challenges and limitations:

- Behavior-change adoption varied by household, requiring repeated exposure and reinforcement.
- Some tools required explanation or demonstration to ensure consistent use.

9. How Stakeholder Buy-In Was Achieved: Explain how the program gained support from key stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, businesses, residents, nonprofits).

Wild About Saving Food built stakeholder support from October 2024 through July 2025 through a structured series of online and in-person meetings with government agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and community partners. Outreach sessions explained program goals, expected benefits, and implementation needs, helping partners see clear alignment with local priorities. WRAP used a co-design approach — not a one-size-fits-all model — and worked closely with the local government client to shape interventions around the specific behavior changes they wanted to achieve. This collaborative design process strengthened trust, ensured local relevance, clarified partner roles, and increased cross-sector buy-in and participation.

10. Stakeholders' Perspectives and Dynamics at Play: Highlight collaboration dynamics, challenges, or differing stakeholder interests and how they were addressed.

Collaboration involved local government, community organizations, and retail partners, each with different priorities, timelines, and definitions of success. Local government focused on measurable waste reduction and public accountability, while community partners prioritized accessibility and resident trust, and businesses emphasized low operational burden. These differing interests were addressed through early co-design workshops, clear role definitions, and regular check-ins. WRAP facilitated alignment by translating program goals into partner-specific benefits (cost savings, customer education value, community impact) and by keeping interventions flexible rather than one-size-fits-all. Open feedback loops and iterative adjustments helped resolve friction and maintain shared ownership.

11. Lessons Learned: Share what worked well, what didn't, and recommendations for others seeking to replicate your approach.

What worked well

- Practical, behavior-focused tools (meal planning, “know what you have,” storage guidance) were easy for households to adopt.
- Co-design with the local government ensured interventions matched local priorities and increased partner buy-in.
- In-person distribution through trusted partners (markets, retailers, community groups) improved credibility and engagement.
- Simple prompts and visual cues supported daily behavior change.

What didn't

- In-person channels limited total reach.
- Some tools required explanation to ensure consistent use.
- Behavior change needed repeated reinforcement over time.

Recommendations for replication

- Use co-design, not one-size-fits-all models.
- Partner with trusted local messengers.
- Pair tools with demonstrations and follow-up messaging.

- Plan for reinforcement, not one-touch outreach.