



# next bites

*food  sustainability*

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## FOODSERVICE ORGANIZATION RESOURCE KIT

Next Bites is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability by empowering businesses and consumers to reduce our collective footprint, bolstering the health of our planet and its people. Next Bites achieves its mission through outreach, education and sustainability consulting services with a current focus on the foodservice and hospitality industry. We strive to deliver products and services that help foodservice industry members adopt and implement more sustainable, less impactful business practices.

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### OBJECTIVE

The Foodservice Organization Resource Kit is our way of making sustainability accessible for all kinds of foodservice operations, from bars and restaurants to hotels and stadiums. The kit lays out areas for businesses to target to make their operations more sustainable. These areas are habit restructuring, water conservation, waste management, energy, food sourcing, and green furnishings. Each area has the potential to significantly reduce a foodservice operation's footprint. Not only does the kit explain each of these areas and sustainable habits to adopt, but also recommends companies that can help and provide service. The kit is an easy-to-use guide on foodservice sustainability.

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### CALL TO ACTION

Foodservice operators and owners benefit from eco-conscious measures through increased customer satisfaction. In general, consumers have shown a preference for businesses that have made a commitment to reducing their environmental impact. Demonstrating environmental sustainability through energy and water conservation, waste efficiency and sustainable food sourcing, is a smart way to gain a competitive edge.

### SPECIAL THANKS

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## ENERGY

What does energy mean for your business? In terms of foodservice operations, energy use refers to everything from the lightbulbs in your bathrooms to the ovens in the kitchen.

According to [National Grid](#), restaurants in the United States spend an average of \$2.90 per sq. ft. on electricity and \$0.85 per sq. ft. on natural gas annually. An estimated 69-81% of these costs are from cooking, water heating, lighting and refrigeration.

### FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR ENERGY REDUCTION AND HOW TO IMPLEMENT THEM

Going 'green' in terms of energy use benefits the planet, *and* your bottom line. Financial incentives have been put in place across the globe to encourage foodservice operators to act in a more environmentally sustainable manner. Various loan programs, rebates and tax cuts are offered to make purchasing energy efficient technology more affordable.

- ComEd offers [free energy assessments](#) for businesses and various [incentives](#), including [instant discounts](#) on a variety of ENERGY STAR-certified appliances and lighting fixtures.
- Government sponsored initiatives such as [The Consolidated Appropriations Act](#) gives taxpayers up to 30% rebates on solar, water, and electric property.

## FURNISHINGS

### DISPOSABLE SERVING WARES

It is important to consider the materials that takeout and single-use wares are made of. Nowadays, with the shift to a more on-the-go lifestyle all restaurants are obligated to have readily-available takeout containers and cups. Because this is unavoidable, foodservice businesses can be more eco-conscious when stocking up on disposable wares.

- Use only recyclable or compostable plastic wares (not #6 plastics) and paper products
- Seek products made from post-consumer materials
- Use only hand-dryers in restrooms to avoid paper towel waste
- Ask customers to specify "for here" or "to go" to avoid unnecessary waste
- Use reusable lids in back of house wherever possible instead of plastic wrap
- Do not automatically give napkins, utensils, and bags unless requested by the customer

### FURNISH YOUR FOODSERVICE OPERATION SUSTAINABLY

If sustainability is important to you and your business, it should not only be represented in your food purchasing and maintenance habits, but design habits as well. The materials that the furniture is made from should be the main focus when choosing eco-friendly furniture.

- **Wood**
  - When purchasing furniture made from wood look for certified sustainable wood, such as urban lumber. [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) is a certification known for promoting proper working conditions as well as maintaining forest populations

- Bamboo is one of the most versatile natural materials. It is known its fast growth rate and thus making it a more economical alternative. Bamboo also creates 35% more oxygen into the air compared to other trees and is less likely to require pesticide use since it can withstand extreme climate conditions. The [Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#) (SFI) is another North American 'forest certification standard' and program of SFI Inc., a non-profit organization. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative is the world's largest single forest certification standard by area & is a eco-label to look for as well.
- **Other Materials**
  - Old is new again; purchasing refurbished or reclaimed material has become very popular in the last few years. Not only is the practice sustainable but it offers a certain look that many operations desire.
  - As with reclaimed wood, it is important to look at recycled metals and plastics. Recycled aluminum chairs are quite popular these days, as is furniture made from recycled plastic. Contract Furniture Company's [Emeco Recycled Chairs](#) made from repurposed Coca-Cola bottles are just one example.
- **Choose Low-Toxicity and Non-Flame Retardant**
  - Many may not be aware that almost everything we purchase releases gases and other chemical compounds into the air around us. Not all of these gases are toxic to people, but flame retardants and formaldehyde are common Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) that have been shown to disrupt air quality inside a space and even lead to cancer and birth defects.
  - [Greenguard](#) is a reliable certification system that ensures furniture is low toxicity.
- **Choose Green Linens**
  - Choosing a linen company that uses less water, energy and harmful chemicals is important. When choosing a linen company, choose one that has all the latest equipment in their facility, allowing them to recapture energy from the cleaning process, energy efficient steam generating systems, hybrid transportation vehicles, etc.
  - Keep paper napkin use to a minimum, while focusing on reusable cloth linens.
  - Here in the Midwest, [Mickey's Linen](#), is one of the most popular linen companies committed to environmental sustainability. With a TRSA Clean Green Certification and partnership with The Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council they have many green practices in place that make them a good choice for linen and uniform services.

## PRINTING

Running a foodservice business often requires large amounts of printed materials, such as advertisements, business cards, menus, employment forms, etc. Although wood is a renewable resource, the processing it goes through to become paper and then the additional resources it needs to go through printing take a great toll on the environment.

It is best to source paper products from sustainably-grown forests and use printing services that have energy-efficient practices, such as [Consolidated Printing Company](#). They have fused exceptional print quality with an insatiable commitment to environmental sustainability. While providing full-service printing capabilities, state-of-the-art technology and a holistic system of unique green printing

practices that is committed to environmentally sustainable commercial printing practices without sacrificing print quality



- Eliminated the use of petroleum by using 100% vegetable-based inks
- Generates no hazardous wastewater
- They reuse/recycle 100% of their paper waste
- They use only paper from sustainably harvested forests
- They reduced overall energy consumption by 30%
- All manufactured in the USA

## COMMUNICATING WITH SUPPLIERS

### HOW TO TALK TO YOUR DISTRIBUTOR

When talking with distributors it is important to be clear and concise about what exactly the needs are of your foodservice operation. Building a good rapport with your distributor will take time, but once that relationship is established you will find communicating much easier. It is important to:

- Stay up to date with prices, as they can vary
- Ask your distributor questions i.e. what is good right now, how easily they can get certain vegetables or cuts of animal proteins, delivery minimums, etc. For example:
  - “Can you deliver in reusable/returnable containers (ie milk crates, bread trays) instead of cardboard?”
  - “Can you let me know when seconds, Ugly produce, or overstock is available?”
  - “Can you tell me what local, sustainable, or certified organic producers you work with?”
- Hold them accountable, have an evaluation system in line to keep all parties under agreement of what is acceptable and what isn’t

### FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

It is in your best financial interest to maintain a good relationship with food distributors. Food distributors are the one connecting foodservice operations to farmer and vice versa.

- Distributors have a wealth of knowledge as to the goods they are trying to sell you, asking for advice or recommendations when purchasing can save your business money in the long term
- Communication is also key when it comes to waste. Having an ongoing dialogue will create purchasing habits that lead to less food waste
- Ordering too much of something, or the wrong item, can have a negative impact on your operation’s food cost. Proper communication can help to mitigate the problem before it arises

## FOOD SOURCING

A big factor in ordering local produce as well as animal protein are the unseen costs of transportation. Almost 20% of all fossil fuel use in the US is spent on industrial agriculture ([Berkeley.edu](#)). Not all foods can be sourced locally, but it is important to be aware that our purchasing habits have a larger impact on the overall food system.

### WHY SOURCE LOCALLY?

Although CO<sub>2</sub> is a naturally occurring gas, large amounts emitted by human activity has made it a greenhouse gas we must now monitor in the face of climate change. Many do not realize, however, just how much of CO<sub>2</sub> comes from industrial farming and agriculture. Livestock and their byproducts account for an estimated 51% of all worldwide greenhouse gas emissions ([Hickman, Martin. "Study claims meat creates half of all greenhouse gases". Independent. November 2009](#)). Consuming less animal protein can save you money, as well as save the planet in the long term.

### PRODUCE

- Purchase seasonally: When purchasing produce, it is very important to purchase what is in season. This will lead to cheaper produce, and produce that is of higher quality.
- Be flexible: Next Bites recommends that when purchasing produce, be open to potential changes. An example of this would be *you are looking for mesclun mix, your purveyor is out of locally sourced mesclun mix, but they have "x" mix for just about the same price*. Be willing to make on the fly adjustments in the name of overall quality.
- Staff Training: It is important to not only train staff members who will directly be involved with purchasing on best practices, but teaching employees who will be handling the food. Make sure staff members understand the importance of purchasing sustainable produce, as well as working with sustainable produce. Educate staff members on how to utilize produce in the most sustainable way possible (such as by making use of the entire product to minimize waste)
- Create a mission statement that employees will be held to: Outline specifically as a company what your goals are when it comes to ordering sustainable produce. This will give employees a clear understanding of what is expected of them when it comes to sustainability goals.

### ANIMAL PROTEINS

- Purchase locally: When purchasing animal proteins, it is very important to purchase what is local. One huge cost to producing meat is the energy required to transport it both before and after slaughter -- to reduce this energy waste try to purchase local when possible.
- Reducing red meat (beef, lamb) can reduce your food cost footprint.
  - Did you know 1 pound of beef protein emits the same amount of Greenhouse Gases as 5 pounds of protein from pork, or 10 pounds of protein from soy?  
(<http://www.wri.org/blog/2016/04/sustainable-diets-what-you-need-know-12-charts>)
- Be flexible: While not every menu allows for flexibility when it comes to animal protein purchasing, try to order the most sustainable option possible. Be transparent with guests, notify them that menu changes have been made to allow for a more sustainable product over all.

Create a menu that allows for flexibility when purchasing. *Exemptions:* While it is best practice to order the highest quality animal proteins possible, some cuts are not available in certain qualities when seeking the most sustainable option.

- Staff Training: It is important to not only train staff members who will directly be involved with purchasing on best practices, but teaching employees who will be handling the food. Make sure staff members understand the importance of purchasing sustainable animal proteins. Educate staff members on how to utilize product in the most sustainable way possible. In other words, using all parts of the animal to get the most bang for your buck and minimize waste.
- Create a mission statement that employees will be held to: Outline specifically, as a company what your goals are when it comes to ordering sustainable animal proteins. This will give employees a clear understanding of what is expected of them when it comes to sustainability goals.

## SEAFOOD

- Talk to Your Seafood Supplier(s): Let them know that you expect them to source seafood for you that is in keeping with your sustainability commitment and meets your expectations. Revisit as needed to ensure your purchasing staff supplier(s) are on the same page.
- Record and Track Seafood Purchasing: The Shedd recommends you do this through [Fish Choice](#).
- Monitor the sustainability of your seafood products and assess progress toward your commitment goals.
- Share Your Commitment with Staff and Guests: Make information regarding the sustainability of the seafood on your menu publicly available and report on progress against your sustainable seafood commitment. This helps your guests feel confident in and supportive of your commitment to conservation.
- Train Your Staff: Make sure your staff appreciate the importance of seafood sustainability, understand your commitment, and know the reason you select the seafood items that appear on your menu. Encourage staff to celebrate the commitment with your guests. Shedd Aquarium's sustainable seafood experts are happy to assist you with creating and implementing seafood training programs per request and resource availability.
- Celebrate Progress: Share progress toward our sustainability goals publicly. This not only provides reputational benefits and encourages guest loyalty; it also helps encourage further innovation and sparks passion within your staff in support of your sustainability goals.

## WHAT DO ALL THE LABELS MEAN?

- **Certified Organic-** Product meets federal USDA organic standards. No synthetic fertilizers, chemicals or GMOs were used. Only organic feed can be used for livestock, and no hormones or antibiotics were used on the animal. There are currently no standards for organic wild caught seafood, but in some countries there are established standards for organic certifications for farmed seafood, these standards are primarily based on the feed and any additives to the system such as antibiotics. The United States Department of Agriculture is currently in the process of reviewing the proposed standards for organic aquaculture.
- **Certified Humane Raised & Handled-** No growth hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics used. Humane food, living, environmental and slaughter standards in place.
- **Fair Trade-** Sustainable, non-GMO. “Floor” price that protect small farms from market fluctuations. Producer and consumer direct relationship
- **Grass Fed-** No set USDA definition. The cow was fed grass or forage (hay) somewhere along the line, “grass fed, grain-finished” No standard for hormone use or living conditions
- **Grass Finished-** No set USDA definition. Cow can either be raised on a grass and forage diet or grain diet, but once cow reaches full maturity finished on grass prior to slaughter. Can be anywhere from 3-24 months
- **Pasture-Raised-** No claim as to what exactly the cow ate, rather where it ate. Indicates some grass feeding, though grain is also likely

Due to lax regulation or farmers not being financially able to get certification, be sure to ask your butcher or farmer the amount of time the beef was grass fed, conditions in which the cows lived and other general information.

- **Sustainable Seafood:** Seafood that has a healthy population in the wild, is from a well-managed fishery, and is caught or farmed using environmentally friendly practices.
- **Farmed Seafood-** The sustainability and health of a seafood farm is dependent on the species being raised, the location of the farm, as well as the practices and management taking place. Stay informed on where your seafood is from and what kind of farm it was raised in, this information is important in determining the sustainability and general health of the product. Look for products that have received “best choice” rankings by [Seafood Watch](#) or that have a credible third-party certification such as the [Aquaculture Stewardship Council](#) certification or [Best Aquaculture Practices](#) certification with two stars or more.
- **Dolphin Safe-** A label used to mark seafood products that have been caught using fishing methods that follow laws and policies designed to minimize dolphin fatalities during tuna fishing. Currently major tuna fisheries and processors across the world adhere to these standards.

There can be irresponsible practices with both wild seafood fisheries and fish farms; the sustainability and health of these systems are dependent on the management and the equipment used.

## WATER CONSERVATION

Water is the most important resource on earth. It makes up 97 percent of the Earth's surface, with only 2.5 percent being freshwater. However, only 1 percent of that 2.5 percent is accessible to humans, making it a highly coveted asset that is threatened by pollution and depletion. In the United States, commercial and institutional buildings use a large portion of municipally supplied water. [Industry estimates](#) suggest that implementing water-efficient practices in commercial facilities can decrease operating costs by approximately 11 percent and energy and water use by 10 and 15 percent, respectively. With foodservice operations, the direct cost of heating water for sanitary uses is obvious, but energy is also indirectly consumed to pump water from treatment facilities to the local area. Excessive amounts of water are also used to cool power plants. So, by conserving water you conserve energy and by conserving energy you conserve water.

The foodservice operation consists of many tasks that must be fulfilled daily, including the pre-rinse cycle of dishes. Approximately 30% of a day is used on the pre-rinse cycle, making water a heavily-used resource for food service industries. Spray valves traditionally hang over a basin for dishes to be easily rinsed while water pours from above, although valves from the 1990s tend to use 5 gallons per minute (GPM) and can cost companies \$1,500 annually from only using the valve for one hour a day. Current spray valves tend to use 3 GPM of water while low-flow spray valves use about 1.6 GPM. In comparison to the 300 gallons of water used by 90's spray valves or 180 gallons of water used by valves currently in place, one hour of a low-flow 1.6 GPM valve uses only 96 gallons of water, greatly increasing efficiency (<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/pre-rinse-spray-valves>).

Like many other goods offered in the United States, the low-flow spray valve comes in many different variations made by different companies. In addition to commercial companies, the Environmental Protection Agency partnered with the WaterSense certification program to make more sustainable products to conserve water. There are 25 current options for low-flow spray valves certified by the WaterSense program, all consisting of different GPM and PSI combinations to make a more water and energy efficient valve. While the federal government sets the max flow rate for valves at 1.6 GPM, the WaterSense program sets the max GPM at 1.28 for certification. According to EPA "replacing a pre-rinse spray valve with a WaterSense labeled model can save a typical commercial kitchen more than 7,000 gallons of water per year," which is "equivalent to 5,000 racks of dishes."

Low-flow spray valves not only save water and water costs, but charges to waste water (depending on location) and gas, which is used to heat the water. If a commercial kitchen replaced its current valve, 6,400 cubic feet of natural gas could be saved annually, which is "enough energy to run its convection oven 12 hours a day for three weeks". The ConServe group stated that one hour of a low-flow spray valve could save approximately 60 gallons of water and waste water a day, 0.5 therms per day, and \$300-350 per year.

With washing dishes, public restrooms, and general daily cleaning, restaurants may find water conservation difficult. In most cases, more than 50 percent of the water used by a foodservice operation comes from the kitchen and dishwashing, so it is important to begin water conservation from there. Integrating water efficiency into employee training and company policies set a tone that the business is committed to sustainability and conservation. Most water conservation practices require simple, low or no cost changes by staff and management that quickly integrate into employee's daily routines.

### A FEW SIMPLE WAYS TO CONSERVE WATER:

- Let dishes soak in a tub of water before washing to make sure all food comes off in the first wash
- Do not use running water to melt frozen products, instead plan ahead to defrost products in a refrigerator overnight
- Watch out for and repair leaks
- Serve water to customers upon request only
- Get a water audit from your water utility
- Swap out faucet and toilets with low-flow aerators/valves
- Install (and get an incentive for) a new energy-efficient dish machine
- Check water bill for unexplained peaks
- Replace gaskets regularly

Water conservation practices along with efficient plumbing fixtures and equipment – many of which are eligible for cash incentives – can save foodservice operations millions of dollars nationwide.

[EPA's WaterSense program](#) rates and qualifies water efficient plumbing fixtures and provides the resources and rebates to make it easier for businesses to obtain:

- Faucet aerators
- Pre-rinse spray valves
- Toilets and urinals
- Landscape irrigation services
- *Energy Star*, although known for rating energy appliances, also certifies a few appliances that conserve water:
  - Steam cookers (use 90% less water than standard machines)
  - Dishwashers
  - Water purifiers/filter machines

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

[According to the EPA](#), 60 to 80 percent of garbage produced by foodservice operations is food waste. By composting, you can reduce your environmental impact by keeping waste out of the landfill, lower your waste hauling and disposal costs, and find a new way to connect with the people in your community.

### FOOD RECOVERY

Food recovery is also another important piece of waste management for operators.

[Sustainablefoodservice.com](#) provides the following great insight to foodservice operators about food donations:

Feeding America, a nationwide food bank organization, provides a [food donation guideline](#) that details packaging, storage, acceptable food conditions and the donation process at most food banks." Feeding America's website also has a [food bank database](#) that lists food bank and soup kitchen organizations throughout the country.

## FOOD DONATION LIABILITY

The federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act was passed in 1996 to encourage food donation. The act does a few things:

- It reduces the liability of donors who donate food items to a non-profit organization
- Protects donors from civil and criminal liability in cases of tainted food
- Sets a liability standard for those donating in various areas of the country
- Created a definition of "gross negligence" and "intentional misconduct" pertaining to food and grocery donation

## ADDITIONAL FOOD WASTE RESOURCES

Food Donation - A Restaurateur's Guide ([www.p2pays.org/ref/12/11907.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/12/11907.pdf))

Food Waste Focus Blog ([www.foodwastefocus.com](http://www.foodwastefocus.com))

Three great guides to source reduction & food waste management (email input required): (<https://www.leanpath.com/free-resources>)

## COMPOSTING

Composting is the process of breaking down food scraps and other organic waste like grass clippings and certain paper and cardboard items using heat, moisture, agitation, air-flow and sometimes even earthworms (a process known as vermicomposting). It's hard to imagine, but all of the organic waste that looks unappetizing when it leaves your foodservice operation can actually be turned into rich, dark soil through the process of composting. This soil can then be used to fertilize and enrich the land for local farmers and gardeners. Most food waste ends up being thrown in the trash, having the potential to give back valuable nutrients to soils that can replace synthetic chemical fertilizers. When these chemicals are used in soil to grow fruits and veggies, we end up ingesting them. Synthetic fertilizers also runoff during rainstorms and affect local wildlife. Using compost in place of chemical fertilizers yields healthier produce and has a less negative effect on the environment.

Composting can also have economic benefits. With most of your business's waste being composted, you can reduce the number of trash pickups your establishment requires and therefore lower your waste removal bill. Also, if your restaurant grows its own produce, then you can use your compost instead of purchasing expensive fertilizer.

The Illinois Food Scrap Coalition ([IFSC](http://ifsc.org)) created a handy toolkit for foodservice businesses to start composting. [The Restaurant Compost Toolkit](#) includes:

- Spotlights of restaurants that compost so you can learn what works and what doesn't
- EATS: A How To Guide that shows how to set up a successful compost program
- Frequently Asked Questions that address basic questions and sprinkles in best practices along the way

For questions, contact [illinoiscomposts@gmail.com](mailto:illinoiscomposts@gmail.com)

The easiest option for composting is using a local waste collector's composting services. These systems simply involve source separating organic material from garbage in your facility as you would recyclables.

- [Collective Resource](#) is a commercial composter serving the North Side of Chicago.
- [Nature's Little Recyclers](#) is a vermicomposting organization serving the South Side
- BioCycle Magazine runs a [search engine](#) to find composting services near you

## GREASE RECYCLING

The U.S produces more than 2.5 billion gallons of spent cooking oil each year ([Ace Grease, 2017](#)), which makes proper oil and grease disposal a major issue. There are **numerous environmental and economic benefits** for foodservice operations, households, hospitals, and hotels to properly recycle their used cooking oil. While many people believe draining their commonly used cooking oils down a kitchen sink is a proper disposal method, they are polluting the same town or city they call home. When vegetable oil, fish oil, bacon grease, chicken fat and pork fat is not properly recycled or disposed of, it results in clogged plumbing, sewer blockage and groundwater contamination.

- Keeping grease and cooking oil out of sewer systems benefits both businesses and municipalities by reducing the costs associated with oil and grease build-up in the systems
- It can be recycled into a renewable energy source — biofuel — that can power a variety of services that foodservice businesses depend on, such as farming equipment and freight trucks.
- The use of biodiesel drastically reduces emissions of greenhouses gases, giving citizens the chance to prevent climate change from affecting their relatives of future generations
- Not only is biodiesel made from used cooking oil less harmful to the environment, it is a more cost-effective way to produce biodiesel, resulting in a greater supply of a sustainable, clean burning fuel

Although it is better to dispose of your leftover cooking oil in the trash rather than the sink, the most environmentally and economically efficient way is to contract a grease recycling company that offers used cooking oil pickup, usually at no cost to the client.

## RECYCLING

The City of Chicago provides bi-weekly collection of recycling to low-density households (single family homes & buildings with 4 dwelling units or less), but does NOT provide recycling services to multi-dwelling buildings, commercial and office buildings, or foodservice operations and bars. Per the Chicago Recycling Ordinance, such property/building owners or managers must provide recycling services. Because Chicago uses a [single stream recycling system](#) for residents, all recyclable materials are collected and transported together. Recyclables are picked up and transported in specially designated recycling trucks to avoid contamination with regular garbage.

Materials are taken to a city-approved recycling center where they are sorted into separate materials (commodities), then baled or packaged for delivery to manufacturers who reprocess or reuse the materials to make new products (*from* [City of Chicago](#)).

Some commercial haulers will offer source-separated containers for paper/cardboard and cans/bottles. All commercial establishments and multi-unit dwellings are required to:

- Contract with a private hauler, for the provision of source-separated recycling services;
- Maintain an ongoing education program to communicate to residents, tenants, and employees about which materials the program accepts and how to prepare the materials for recycling; and
- Post signs in common areas identifying the materials to be recycled and the location of the material collection points.

Before you contract for your recycling program, here are a few questions you should ask:

1. What does your current service include?
2. Do they provide single stream recycling collection?
3. What is the schedule for collection?
4. Will they provide educational material for distribution?
5. What size container can they provide?
6. Do you require the recyclables to be loose, not bagged in the recycling container?

## HABIT RESTRUCTURING

### RETRAINING YOUR STAFF

People are often reluctant to change their behavior, but it can be both simple and incredibly beneficial for the environment. Take the time to learn about how your current habits can harm or help the environment and even your bank account. Relay this information to your staff and set up a clear and well-motivated plan to rework your operations. Habits of individuals, whether individual foodservice operations or just individual staff members CAN, with the right plan, make an impactful difference.

- Educate staff on why it's important to change habits in a way relatable to them (instant/long term gratification)
  - [Tragedy of the Commons](#) example – individuals CAN make a difference
  - Certain foods could stop becoming available because of the many changes to the environment that humans are causing, directly and indirectly
  - It is easier than most think to make changes that would make a difference
- Come up with “green goals” and make it be a group effort
- Engage your staff on a "green team" to solicit ideas and reward positive behaviors
- Motivate your staff, adults also respond to competition or “turning it into a game”
- Work with Next Bites & get a customizable staff training handbook
- Set physical reminders to encourage conservation (i.e. posters)

### PROJECTING TO CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS

It is important to relay environmental awareness and goals for sustainability to your clientele to not only promote yourself as doing good for the environment, but also to promote the same habits in others.

If clientele see that their favorite coffee shop or local foodservice operation is aiming toward more sustainable practices, they may be interested in why and how that works, ultimately having the potential to influence others to take on a greener lifestyle.

Businesses can portray their sustainability goals in many creative ways:

- Mentioning sustainably-sourced food items in menus
- Have posters at tables and restrooms stating waste-minimization goals with disposable napkins and water conservation
- Promoting local food vendors
- Visibly placing and labeling separated waste bins for compost, recycling, and landfill waste.
- Making sustainability and eco-consciousness a theme of the business
- Creating digital marketing campaigns that highlight sustainability

Please look to the *National Restaurant Association's* [ConServe](#) program for further ideas and tools to achieve a sustainable business.

## SUSTAINABILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Next Bites' Sustainability Assistance Program is shaped to guide restaurants to plan for and increase operational efficiency and environmental sustainability. A final report with recommendations will contain multiple levels of commitments possible to allow restaurants to make the changes at a rate that is economically sustainable to them.

### The process:

1. Initial meeting to discuss restaurant goals
2. Next Bites site visits for facilities and mini-trash audit
3. 3rd party energy audit/free efficiency resources install
4. Next Bites writes and presents final report on potential sustainable changes

### We will need access to:

- Information about/invoices for
  - Energy bills
  - Food orders
  - Waste removal
  - Disposables orders
- One day's trash
  - For one day, we will need all to go through all the trash before it is taken out
- Your facilities, to document:
  - Lighting
  - Appliances
  - Water efficiency

### **What to expect in the recommendations report:**

The final recommendations report will contain a sliding scale of potential changes the restaurant can take to become more sustainable, depending on the level of commitment and funds available. This will include the changes necessary for the restaurant to reach the standards for a Green Seal certification.

Once the final report is delivered, it is up to the restaurant to take action on these changes. Next Bites can orchestrate connections between the restaurant and our partners to ensure a smooth transition and the best pricing possible. If the restaurant wants Green Seal or Green Restaurant Association certification, Next Bites can help them connect & develop a plan to assist them with the process. Please note that completion of our Sustainability Assistance Program is not the same as getting the certification.

## **NEXT BITES WORK**

Next Bites is proud to have had partnerships with stakeholders from all industries touching foodservice and education. Our past work includes the Sustainable Chicago Sports Project with City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District, Levy Restaurants, the Bulls, Blackhawks, Cubs, Sox, United Center, Wrigley Field, Guaranteed Rate Field & Soldier Field (aka #Green Chi Sports), partnership with the Chicago Department of Aviation on the Sustainable Airport Manual and Green Airplane Rating implementation at O'Hare International Airport & Midway Airport, sustainability assistance with Savor at McCormick Place, Sustainable Seafood Education & Outreach with The Shedd Aquarium and a longtime, fruitful partnership with Environment, Agriculture & Food Group & the Program on the Global Environment at The University of Chicago (including 3+ practicum course supported projects).

Foodservice partners include Uncommon Ground, One Off Hospitality, Frontera Kitchens, Food For Thought Catering, and more than 150+ restaurants, caterers and other Foodservice operations. Next Bites has been successful in partnering with many of Chicago's finest higher learning institutions in recruiting, training, and providing unique learning opportunities to student intern since 2011.

Projects Next Bites has conceived of & endeavored in have resulted in pioneering environmental research, the creation of a national sustainable foodservice standard and an award for outstanding achievements by the internationally recognized environmental standards organization Green Seal.

## **CONTACT US**

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