

# Reusable Trays Are A Better Choice for Meals on Wheels

WHETHER YOU CONSIDER COST OR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, REUSABLES WIN

## REUSABLES ARE CHEAPER THAN DISPOSABLES

- Reusable polypropylene trays cost between \$4.50 and \$9.50 per tray. Investing in 1,000 reusable trays at \$7 each, for a program that feeds 500 people 5 meals a week, will save \$32,000 in material costs the first year, compared to using a \$.30 disposable tray for each meal.
- A \$7 reusable tray will pay for itself after 23 uses and will last for at least 4 years.
- Some funding is available to help programs cover the up-front cost of shifting from disposable to reusable trays.



## REUSABLES ARE BETTER FOR THE PLANET

- While we prefer non-plastic reusables, materials such as glass and metal may not be practical for Meals on Wheels. Still, polypropylene reusable trays are environmentally preferable to disposables after just 10 uses.
- Using a reusable polypropylene tray 200 times saves 41 gallons of water and .45 cubic yards of landfill space.
- Switching to reusable trays for one year for a program that feeds 500 people 5 meals a week is the equivalent of taking 1.7 standard passenger vehicles off U.S. roads for a full year.



## REUSABLES LAST A LONG TIME

- Reusable trays are engineered to last at least 4 years, assuming 260 uses per year.
- Reusables can be safely washed and sanitized to be used over and over.



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## WHY SHOULD YOU SWITCH TO REUSABLES?

- Most disposable trays are made of plastic materials that may have a plastic liner or grease-proof barrier that could contain PFAS chemicals.
- Single-use trays are incredibly wasteful. A mere 8% of plastic is recycled, and only 2% of plastic is effectively recycled. Less than 5% of compostable materials are composted.
- Single-use plastics overwhelmingly end up in landfills, incinerators, or littered in the environment where they pollute our air, soil, and drinking water.
- Plastics are made from chemicals and fracked gas. Plastics often pollute our environment and contribute to climate change at every step of their lifecycle, as well as increasing environmental injustice and affecting human health.
- Reusable trays save money and are better for our environment, even with dishwashing factored in.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT REUSABLE TRAYS?

We're here to help Meals on Wheels programs learn more and provide assistance as you make the switch!

- Contact Alexis Goldsmith at [alexisgoldsmith@bennington.edu](mailto:alexisgoldsmith@bennington.edu)
- [Join our monthly Zoom meeting](https://actionnetwork.org/forms/reusable-meals-on-wheels/) to learn how you can help your local program switch to reusable containers. Register to receive the log in at: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/reusable-meals-on-wheels/>

