

# Food Waste Audits

2023 NEW MEXICO RECYCLING & SOLID WASTE CONFERENCE: THE VALUE OF  
MATERIALS & RELATIONSHIPS

SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

# Office of Environmental Technical Assistance

- ▶ Our mission, “to promote, protect, and preserve tribal environments by assisting Pueblos and Tribes in building capacity to enhance tribal values, culture, lands, and health.”
- ▶ We assist the 19 Pueblos, Jicarilla Apache Tribe, Mescalero Apache Tribe of New Mexico and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso, Texas.
- ▶ Most Pueblos/Tribes have the following grants:
- ▶ GAP, CWA106, CWA Section 319, Air Quality,
- ▶ We assist with solid waste and recycling issues



# Food Waste Management Grant

- ▶ Direct Implementation in Indian Country (DITCA)
- ▶ Conduct Food Wastes at various Tribal programs (senior center, head starts, schools)
- ▶ Identify Target List (Pueblos, Tribes, Programs, Facilities); those that want to learn about Food Waste Management and are very interested in participating.
- ▶ Provide project update to IRAC (NM Pueblos and Tribes)
- ▶ Submit food waste findings to the Tribes and EPA
- ▶ Of the three, two are interested in food waste audits at their schools



# Food Waste Audits – why do them?

- ▶ **Goal** – Reduce the amount of food waste from tribal facilities such as tribal programs (Senior Centers), tribal schools (head start, day cares), and casinos, as well as cultural events such as Feast Days, thereby reducing the burden on tribal solid waste systems that must pay high fees to transport tribal waste to landfills.
- ▶ There will be a special emphasis on prevention and food donation.
- ▶ Tribal communities will benefit from the education and outreach provided by ENIPC, Inc.
- ▶ We've conducted waste audits at tribal Transfer Stations for various Pueblos in the state.

# Mescalero Apache Tribe

- ▶ 24 participants
- ▶ 5.56 lbs. of food waste
- ▶ Several elders did not like the nuts in the cucumber and beets salad.
- ▶ Three elders said the cucumber and beet salad needed fresher veggies.
- ▶ Two elders mentioned they were diabetic. One elder was diabetic and can't eat starches. They wanted the kitchen to use less salt and less starchy foods.
- ▶ Two elders wanted more traditional Native American foods. One elder suggested squash and potatoes.
- ▶ Two elders said the meat was too greasy.



# Taos Pueblo

Senior Center

18 participants

3.72 lbs of food waste

Reasons for not finishing foods: too full, didn't like what was served, center needs more variety.





# Pueblo de San Ildefonso

- ▶ 14 participants
- ▶ less than 2lbs of food waste
- ▶ Most elders ate everything on their plate.
- ▶ Several elders did not drink the milk due to lactose intolerance.
- ▶ Offer lactose free drink alternatives such as soy milk, similar nutrition profile, has no lactose, and a 75% smaller carbon footprint than cow's milk.
- ▶ Alternatives such as soy, oat, almond milk but are too pricey?



# Ways to reduce Food Waste

- Learn to properly store food in your refrigerator.
  - The refrigerator door is the warmest part of the fridge: store condiments here but not milk or eggs.
  - The lower shelves are the coldest part of the fridge so store meat, poultry, and fish here.
- Pantry organization: store grains in airtight containers and label the container with the contents and the date.
- Freeze food such as bread, sliced fruit, meat, or leftovers that you know won't be eaten in time. Label with the contents and the date.





# Additional tips

- ▶ Keep a running list of meals and their ingredients that your household already enjoys - that way, you can easily choose, shop for, and prepare meals that you are likely to consume.
- ▶ Look in your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry first to avoid buying food you already have. Make a list each week of what needs to be used up and plan upcoming meals around it.
- ▶ Plan your meals for the week before you go shopping and buy only the things needed for those meals.
- ▶ Make your shopping list based on how many meals you'll eat at home. Consider how often you will eat out, if you plan to eat frozen precooked meals, and if you will eat leftovers for any of your meals.



# What I learned during lockdown:

That boys eat a lot!

My role: teacher, principal, and lunch lady.

Did the drive-up food distributions, especially at the schools and community centers.

Bought in bulk to avoid multiple trips to the grocery store.

I tried to cook with everything we were given or I bought.

Had to get creative!



Thank you!

