

Rescuing Leftover Cuisine

In the United States alone, 40% of the food produced is thrown away each year. At the same time, 1 in 7 individuals are food-insecure. Rescuing Leftover Cuisine (RLC) is a non-profit food rescue organization operating in 14 cities, headquartered in New York City, which is dedicated to eliminating food waste and hunger. RLC arranges pickups of excess food from cafes, restaurants, offices, and caterers, and delivers the donations to local shelters and soup kitchens to feed homeless and food-insecure individuals in our city.

Since 2013, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine has rescued over 1.4 million pounds of food in New York City! This translates to over a million meals served and over 250 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions that result from food waste in landfills prevented. Existing NYC restaurant and cafe partners include Blackseed Bagels, Sweet Chick, Ceci-Cela, Inday and Vineapple Cafe. In NYC alone, RLC is currently partnering with 194 restaurants, cafes and offices.

It is true that many environmental issues plaguing society today can seem out of our control. However, food waste and food insecurity are two intertwined issues that can be tackled at the local level with relative ease and with a direct, positive impact as a result. RLC enables its partners to track their impact and contributions over time by sending them monthly donation receipts which also highlight the number of meals served and pounds of pollution prevented. One of RLC's major partners, Dig Inn, has, to date, rescued over 37,000 pounds of leftover food. This translates to over 31,500 meals served to those in need and over 14,000lbs of pollution prevented!

Even in America, where the fear of litigation can make hospitality management hesitant to donate food, food donation is actually encouraged by the government. The 1996 Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act is a federal law that provides protection from legal liability to food donors who have donated in good faith. On top of this federal law, all fifty states have passed state level Good Samaritan Laws that may provide additional liability protection. In addition, IRC Section 170(e)(3) encourages donations with enhanced tax deduction which can reduce the after-tax cost of surplus food by 59%. On average, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine partners save \$3 per pound of food donated on taxes!

Aside from the positive social and environmental impact this initiative has in the NYC community, partnering with RLC can be beneficial for restaurant and cafe owners in several ways. The organization's 8,000+ volunteers in NYC alone mean that food donor partners can reach an environmentally-aware customer base and can increase customer loyalty through brand association with RLC and its social mission. RLC also organizes awareness-raising promotional events like the upcoming [Restaurant Rescue Week](#) in October; when volunteers are pledging to only eat and drink at partner establishments. Plus, reducing food disposal costs and saving money through receiving enhanced tax deductions allow for partners to contribute to the betterment of their neighborhoods without having to worry so much about their bottom line.

To fight food waste and partner with RLC, send an email to info@rescuingleftovercuisine.org.