

# FOOD RECOVERY IN SCHOOLS | 2026 ANNUAL SURVEY

May 2026

## OVERVIEW



**528**  
SURVEYS RECEIVED



**911**  
NSLP FEEDING SITES

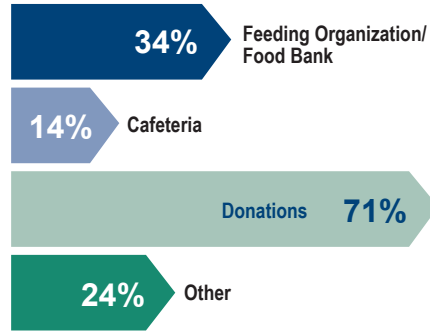
**45** PARTICIPATING COUNTIES

### TOP 3 PARTICIPATING COUNTIES:

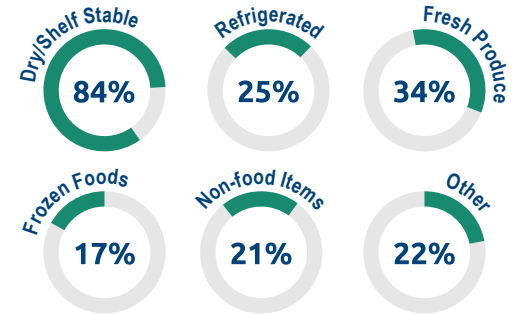


**250** SCHOOL FOOD PANTRIES

### PANTRIES SOURCED BY:

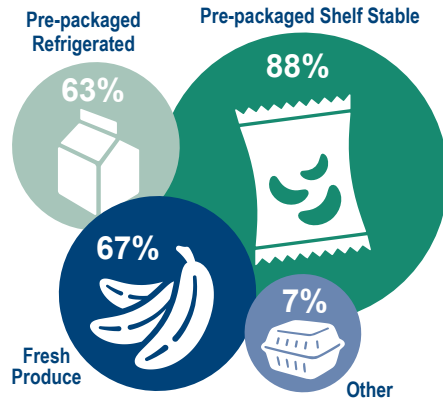


### PANTRIES ARE STOCKED WITH:

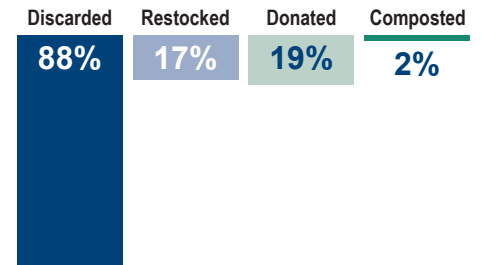


**1,214** SHARE TABLES

### SHARE TABLE ITEMS INCLUDED:



### LEFTOVER SHARE TABLE ITEMS ARE:

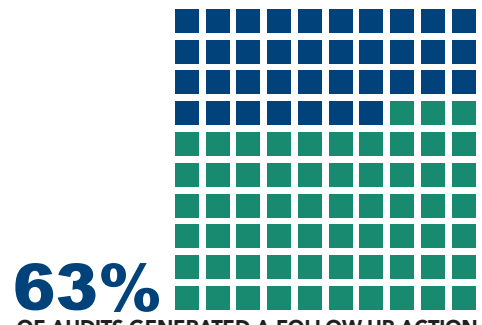
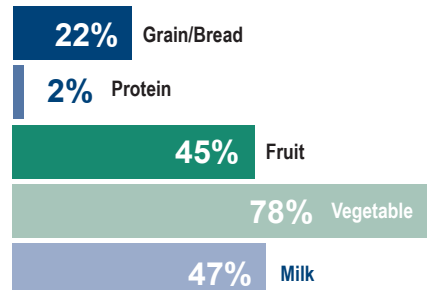


**90%**  
OF SHARE TABLES ARE MONITORED



**55** FOOD WASTE AUDITS

### TYPES OF FOOD THAT GO UNEATEN:



Source: 2026 Food Recovery in Schools Annual Survey; Division of Food Nutrition and Wellness, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

# A YEAR OF FOOD RECOVERY

The purpose of the survey is to encourage the implementation of food recovery practices in schools including food pantries, share tables, food waste audits, and composting systems. The survey was distributed among all Florida Food Service Directors participating in NSLP. Responses were received from cafeteria managers, bookkeepers, and administrative assistants at the site and district level.

## KEY TERMS:



### SCHOOL FOOD PANTRIES:

School food pantries are designated areas that offer shelf stable foods, fruits and vegetables to students, faculty, and staff at no cost.



### SHARE TABLES:

Share tables are designated stations where children may return unopened cafeteria food or beverages for other students at no cost.



### STUDENT FOOD WASTE

**AUDITS:** Student Food Waste Audits collect data on which foods go uneaten in the school cafeteria and why, within a given time frame.



### COMPOSTING SYSTEMS:

Composting piles/bins are designated areas where a school gathers organic material, such as yard clippings and produce.



**NSLP:** National School Lunch Program

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### ON FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS:



Florida schools have a special role in reducing and recovering food waste. Schools can help fill that role by implementing a food recovery program. The primary goal of a school food recovery program is to increase consumption and reduce food waste. This allows students to get the maximum nutritional benefits from school cafeteria meals.



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[FDACS.gov/FoodRecovery](https://FDACS.gov/FoodRecovery)



**Florida Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services**

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