



Sustainability and Waste Report

Durham Community Food Pantry, 2022



Durham Community
Food Pantry
A Program of Catholic Charities

Providing Help – Creating Hope – Serving All

Durham Community Food Pantry

distributes food to about 400 families each week in Durham County and eight surrounding counties during three weekly distributions and a monthly mobile pantry.



Each family receives three boxes: a box of non-perishable items, a mixed produce box, and a box of perishable items including bread, deli, meat, and dessert. While the non-perishable items are purchased or collected during community food drives, the rest of the food comes primarily from the Food Bank of Central & Eastern

NC and Interfaith Food Shuttle.

Roughly 85 volunteers spend 275 hours a week processing the donations.

Salvage Food Donations

Durham Community Food Pantry provides fresh, quality food to clients while minimizing waste. **The Durham Branch of the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC and Interfaith Food Shuttle** source most food donations from local grocery stores and food suppliers. Because the



majority of the food is salvage, meaning it is close to its expiration date or surplus and would otherwise be disposed of, the freshness varies.

Thanks to DCFP's incredible

volunteers, each week thousands of pounds of salvage food are processed



to ensure it is safe to consume and adequate to distribute. Processing includes checking dates to ensure perishable and non perishable items are within the guidelines provided by the Food Bank, sorting items by date so that items closest to their expiration are distributed first, and removing spoiling produce from an otherwise fresh batch. Because of our exceptional volunteer team, we are able to accept additional food pallets

from the Food Bank and Interfaith Food Shuttle. Salvage food donations comprise up to 88% of the food DCFP distributes. With the help of the Food Bank and Interfaith Food Shuttle, Durham Community Food Pantry processes **20,000** pounds each week of what otherwise would have been food system waste. We are grateful for our partners' efforts to reduce waste in the food system.



Along with salvage food donations from these partner organizations, DCFP also receives donations from

the local Durham restaurant, COPA. Using beans, rice, and vegetables that are frozen after each evening's dinner service, COPA donates 60 pounds of meals weekly to distribute to clients with their groceries.



Compost

Food that cannot be distributed is processed further and properly composted. Lewis, a local chicken farmer, picks up **729** pounds of compost per week on average. He uses the produce that cannot be distributed as food for his chickens

and to create compost for his local gardens. Any compost that is not produce or plain bread, such as meat, dairy, and desserts, is deposited in **CompostNow** bins. CompostNow, a large-scale compost service based in Raleigh, picks up **250** pounds from DCFP a week. Finally, a portion of spoiled produce is used to make compost for DCFP's garden, comprised of **18** organic produce beds. Because of these composting efforts, DCFP produces only about **100** pounds of trash per week.



Recycling & Reuse

While food comprises the majority of the pantry's waste, DCFP works to reuse and recycle to further minimize what goes into the trash. Recycling is

separated into the following categories: corrugated cardboard, aluminum cans, plastic wrap, and mixed recycling. DCFP separately recycles on average **330** pounds of corrugated cardboard and **20** pounds of plastic wrap each week to maximize their reuse.



Additionally, we reuse 800 boxes per week to distribute food by repurposing boxes from shipments of dry goods along with those containing unprocessed bread, desserts, and produce.

Sustaining Sustainability

Durham Community Food Pantry hopes to continue to expand their efforts to decrease waste. DCFP works to foster relationships with community members and organizations. It is because of our partners that we are able to divert food from landfills and increase the amount of food each family receives. The following partner organizations were mentioned in this report:

- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC](#)
- [Interfaith Food Shuttle](#)
- [COPA](#)
- [Lewis](#)
- [CompostNow](#)

Without the support of DCFP's volunteers, who are willing to sort the bad grapes from the good ones, our composting and recycling efforts would not be possible.