



Sustainability Report

2025

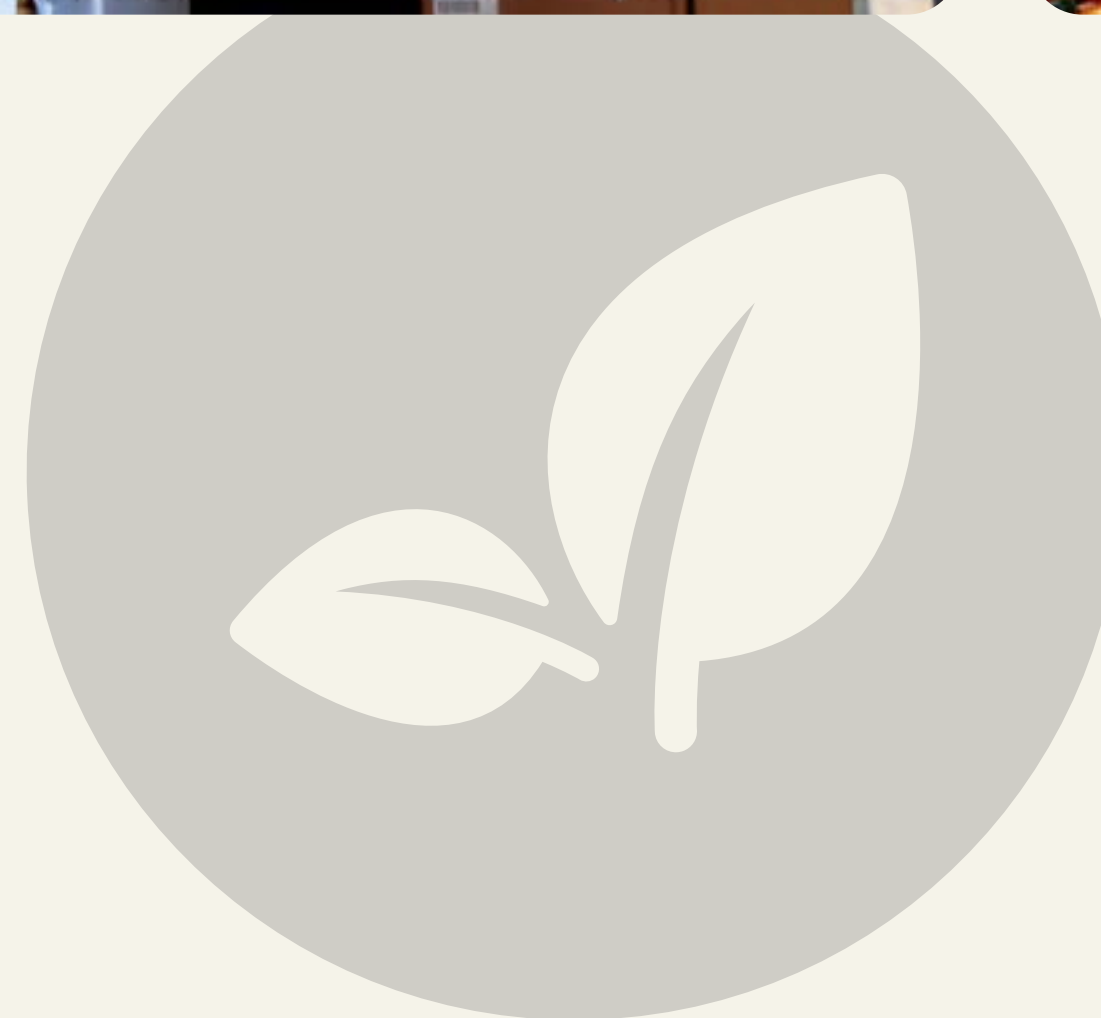


Sustainability has been a core element of our mission throughout our 27-year history.

Since 1998, we have rescued more than 53 million pounds of food from entering the waste stream. Our food rescue work is important to protect the environment and preserve the earth's natural resources, and we strive to do our work sustainably.

Read more to explore how we prioritize sustainability throughout our operations: through food rescue, other waste reduction efforts, prioritizing energy efficiency, and thought leadership.

Thank you for all the ways you support Second Helpings' mission. Fighting hunger sustainably is a community effort.



We rescue food every day.

What Is Food Rescue?

We work with partners in the food service industry—wholesale distributors, grocery stores, caterers, restaurants, and others—to safely and efficiently collect surplus and perishable food that may have been headed for the landfill. Five days each week, we send out refrigerated trucks and vans to rescue bread, produce, meat and much more from local donors.

We Rescued Over 3.7 Million Pounds Last Fiscal Year

In our 2023-2024 fiscal year, our team rescued 3,740,422 pounds. That was an increase of 300,000 pounds, or 8%, over the year before. Rescuing 3.7 million pounds of food saves 1.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions from entering the atmosphere, the equivalent of 4.69 million miles driven by an average gas-powered passenger vehicle (according to ReFED's Impact Calculator).

We Re-Distribute Surplus Ingredients

Our food rescue team is so efficient that we rescue more food than we need for the 1+ million meals we send into the central Indiana community each year. In our 2023-2024 fiscal year, we re-distributed 2,441,575 pounds of bulk food to local pantries and other partner organizations. This further extends the reach of our Hunger Relief program, allowing Second Helpings to work with many partners who share food but may not need a hot meal for the people they serve.





We are improving energy efficiency throughout our building and operations.

Benefits of Electricity

Electric appliances and vehicles consume less energy to produce the same output as gas appliances. Electric systems also often have lower maintenance costs and fewer safety hazards.

What's Next?

As tilt skillets, vehicles, and other equipment require replacement, we are prioritizing finding more efficient replacements. We are also exploring whole building automation to connect all of our large systems together and shut down appliances like HVAC and electricity overnight. This change has the potential to save us 30% on those utilities each month. We are also planning to conduct a facility energy assessment later this year to explore other opportunities to reduce our energy use.

Recent Improvements

- Building display screens automatically shut off after business hours
- Lights automatically shut off in our flex space and break room
- Two of our tilt skillets are fully electric
- We added an electrical back-line for all four of our tilt skillets
- Our first electric vehicle just hit the road this spring
- We replaced an old, propane powered forklift with an electric one



We reduce waste across all of our operations.

We Reduce Waste In Our Hunger Relief And Culinary Job Training Kitchens

We teach our volunteers and students to use as much of the ingredient as possible, and to compost any unusable pieces.

We started using donated fruits to make our own jams, which helps us make more sandwiches (our largest growth area) and adds nutrition (less sugar, no preservatives).

Our In-House Events Are Designed To Be Zero-Waste

Whether it's at our annual Souper Bowls event or smaller donor or volunteer appreciation dinners, we prevent waste in a variety of ways, using compostable or reusable serveware, composting food waste, and recycling all drink containers.

We Revamped Our Waste Management Procedures

Twice a week, RecycleForce picks up pallets of plastic and metal from Second Helpings to recycle. Since February 2024, we have recycled over 12,000 pounds with them.

We've also expanded our composting program with Green with Indy. In 2024, Second Helpings composted 58,911 pounds of fruit, vegetables, and other food scraps through our partnership.

To further mitigate waste, we've also installed a reusable water bottle filler. Since October 2023, it has provided the equivalent of over 11,600 single-use water bottles.





We expand our community's understanding of sustainability through thought leadership.

We Are Expanding Our Own Staff Capacity

In the summer of 2024, Second Helpings was approved to work with a McKinney Climate Fellow through the Environmental Resilience Institute at Indiana University. We look forward to bringing another Fellow onto our team this summer. Check out this video of our first Sustainability Fellow Hannah's presentation about recycling and other sustainability procedures at Second Helpings.

[Check Out Video](#)

We Are Teaching Other Organizations What We Know

For the last year, we have partnered with La Soupe in Cincinnati on their Rescue Kitchen Network, an accelerator program to teach other organizations how to start or scale up their own food rescue and hunger relief programs. Four programs completed the first cohort in the summer of 2024, and three organizations are currently working through this program with us.





Want to be part of our sustainability efforts? Join us as a volunteer!

You couldn't be doing more important work. No matter the role you choose, you are supporting our sustainability efforts by being on our team.

[Check Out Volunteer Opportunities](#)