

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND  
COLLEGE OF  
THE ENVIRONMENT  
AND LIFE SCIENCES

# FOOD RECOVERY FOR RHODE ISLAND

Cooperative Extension

## Amplifying Community-led Change in the Food System

Land and Water Conservation Summit – July 15, 2022  
Vanessa Venturini, MESM – Program Leader  
Amanda Missimer, PhD RD LDN – Nutrition Specialist  
University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension



# THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

***Bringing science-based  
University resources to Rhode  
Island communities since 1914.***

### **OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

- We are committed to improving quality of life, livelihoods, and the health of our natural environment through our work.
- We believe in social and environmental justice.
- We strive to deepen our cultural understanding and proficiency while building capacity to create inclusive experiences that address diverse community needs.

### OUR STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS



# FOOD RECOVERY FOR RHODE ISLAND



## Agenda

### **I. Food Recovery for Rhode Island Program**

### **II. Community Partner Panel**

Ella Kilpatrick Kotner – Program Coordinator, Harvest Cycle

Eva Agudelo – Executive Director, Hope's Harvest RI

### **III. Lessons + Q & A**





Do you  
compost at  
home?



Have you ever  
been to the  
landfill?



Do you eat your  
leftovers?



Have you ever  
taken food  
scraps home  
from vacation?

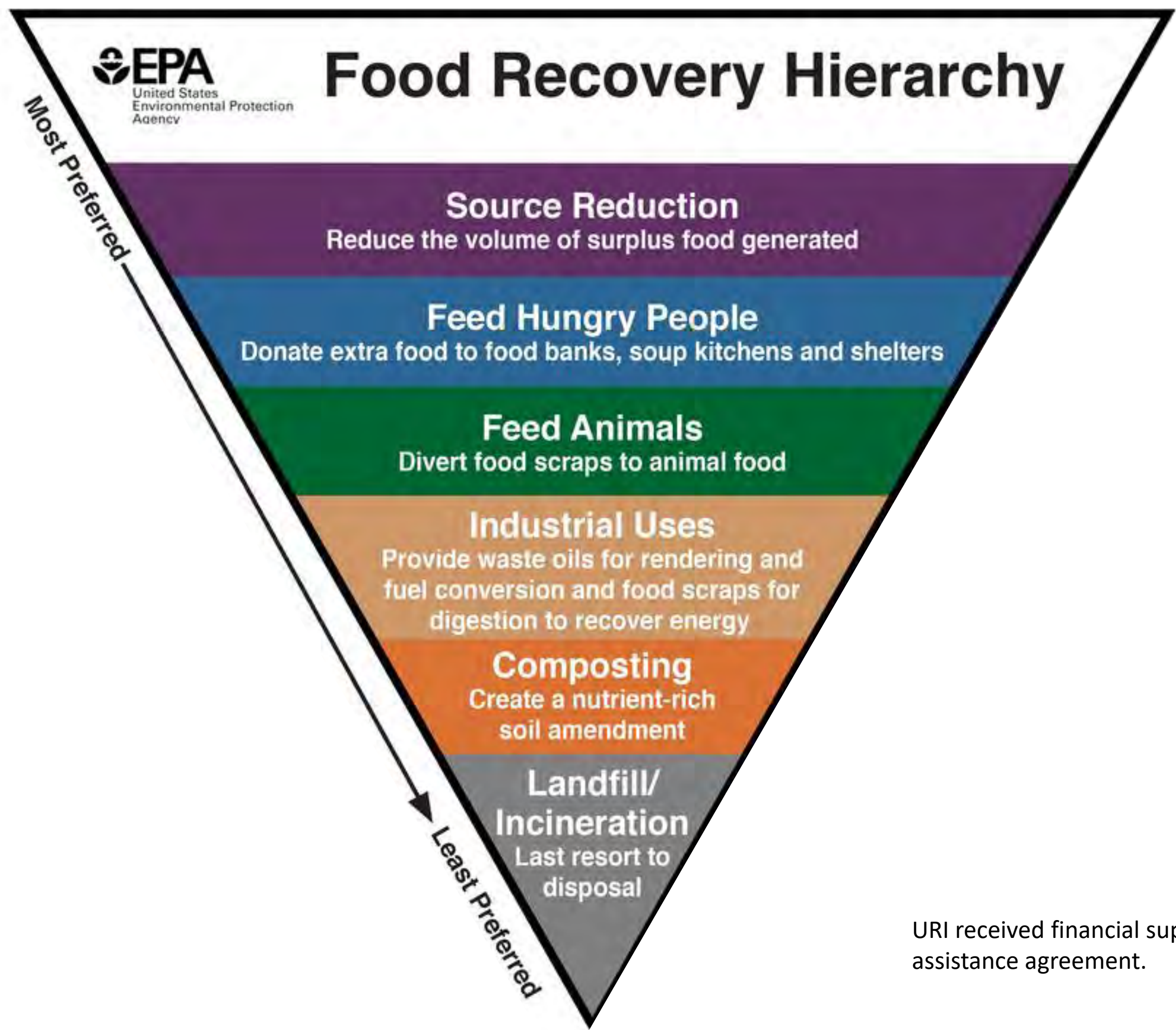


Have you ever  
reached in the trash  
to dispose of  
something  
properly?

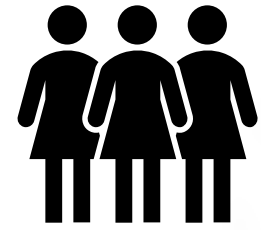




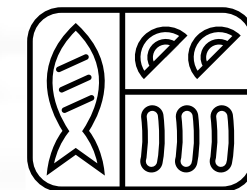
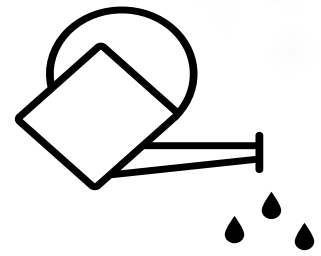
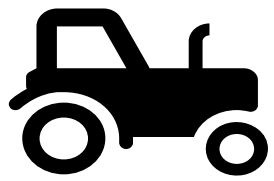
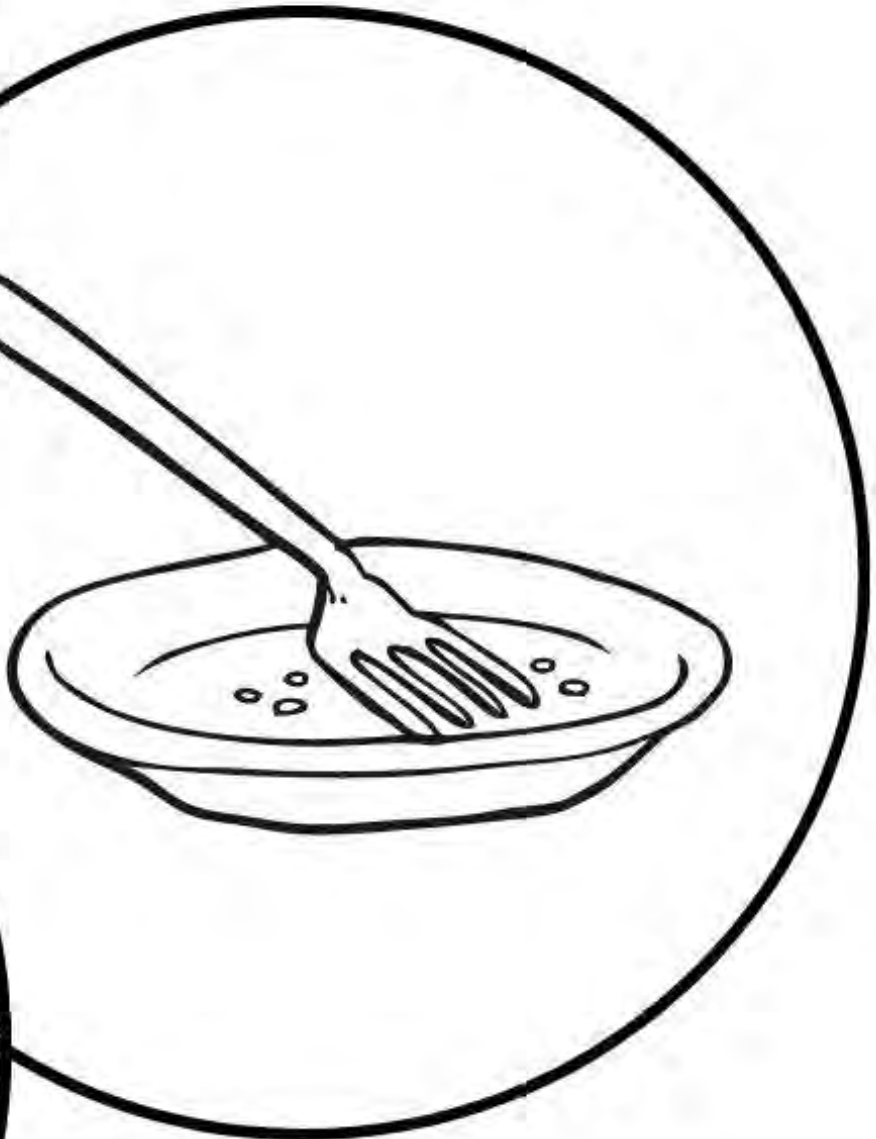
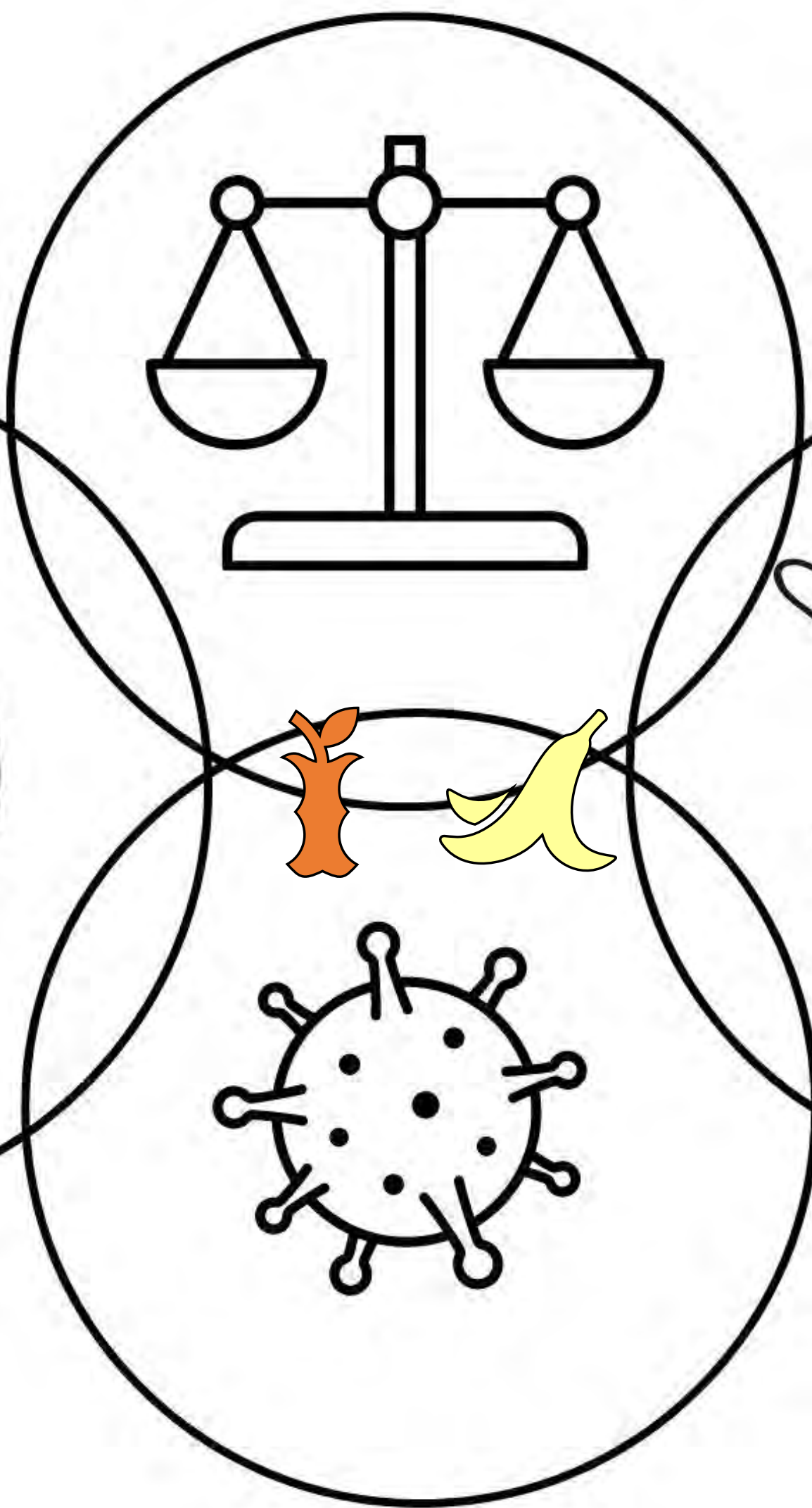
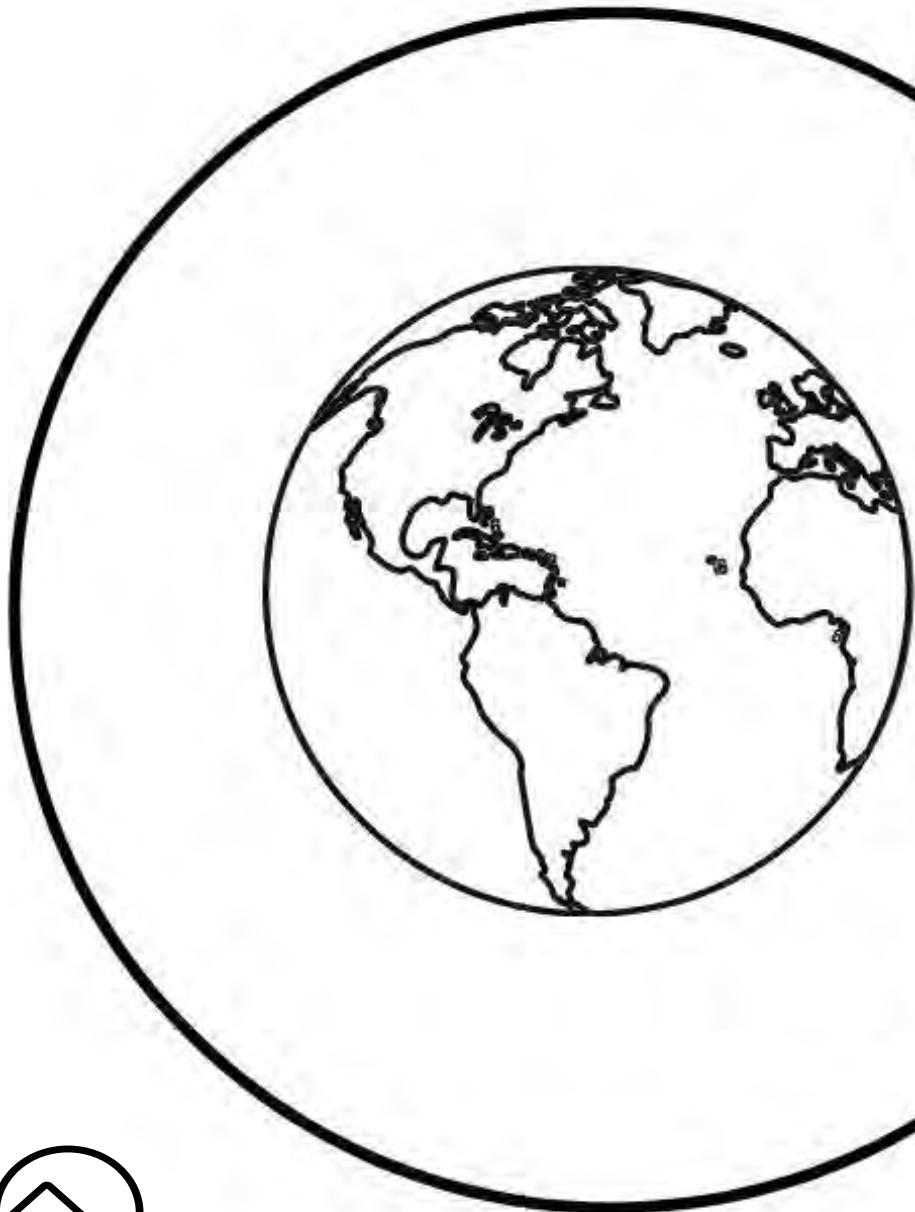
Who here feels  
guilty when the  
topic of wasted food  
comes up?



URI received financial support from the EPA under an assistance agreement.



**One in four households** in Rhode Island lacks adequate food.





Are there ways to simultaneously address all of these issues?













# COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE



A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a dark polo shirt, stands smiling in a greenhouse. The greenhouse has a curved metal frame and a translucent covering. In the background, there are rows of green plants in black trays and a large industrial fan hanging from the ceiling. The lighting is soft and even.

# PEER EDUCATORS

West Elmoood Housing Development Corporation's  
Sankofa Initiative



PEER EDUCATOR  
A Beautiful Day

# GOALS

- 1** Educate and Train 120 Food Recovery Volunteers who then educate 2,500 people
- 2** Divert 60,000 lbs Food Waste from the Central Landfill
- 3** 40,000 lbs of food for families in Rhode Island
- 4** Establish 5 service projects that support food recovery at the community level



# FOOD RECOVERY FOR RHODE ISLAND

## *Community Scale Solutions to Food Waste and Access Issues*

The mission of Food Recovery for Rhode Island is to come together around the issues of food waste, food security and the environment, learn something new, engage in dialogue, and volunteer to support community-driven change.





# Zero Waste Providence Restaurants

Zero Waste Providence/ Harvest Cycle  
Compost Drop Off Sites





Zero Waste Providence/ 15  
Minute Field Trips  
Youth + Schools





Rescuing  
Leftover  
Cuisine

**Up to 40% of food feeds landfills.**

Meanwhile, thousands of individuals and families in Massachusetts and Rhode Island are homeless, hungry and food insecure.



**FEED PEOPLE, NOT LANDFILLS.**

Volunteer as a Food Rescuer.

Donate excess food as a business.

Receive food as an organization.

[rescuingleftovercuisine.org](https://rescuingleftovercuisine.org)



A photograph showing two women at an outdoor market. The woman on the left is wearing a beige hijab and a black niqab, looking down at fresh produce on a table. The woman on the right is wearing a white face mask, a white and grey striped shirt, light blue jeans, and a teal backpack, looking towards the produce. The table is covered with a floral patterned cloth and has various fresh vegetables like green onions, leafy greens, and tomatoes. In the background, there is a grassy area, a sidewalk, and parked cars.

Sankofa at West Elmwood  
Housing Development  
Corporation



Harvest Cycle  
At Groundwork RI



# Hope's Harvest RI

Next Session - September 2022

# FOOD RECOVERY FOR RHODE ISLAND COURSE





## 6-week Food Recovery Course

Online Education



Field Experience



Graduates receive  
certificate of completion

**40-HOUR VOLUNTEER INTERNSHIP  
COMMUNITY-DRIVEN FOOD RECOVERY**



**Certified URI Food Recovery Volunteer**

# Course Principles

- *Meeting people where they are:*
- Allowing people to choose their own practices and try them out
- *Solutions-based (not guilt!)*
  - Blend of research-based, practical, ancestral knowledge
- *Equity focus*







# 1. The Challenge: Food Waste and Food Insecurity

## Tour of the Landfill

A man in a black polo shirt is speaking to a group of people at an outdoor event. He is gesturing with his right hand. The background shows a group of people, some in blue shirts, standing near a wooden structure. The scene is set outdoors with a brick building and trees in the background.

## 2. Wasted Food Solutions: Farms, Schools, Communities

Tour of Sankofa

### 3. Inclusive Community Engagement



## 4. Nutrition and Food Preservation



A woman wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat and a light blue cardigan stands in the center of a large, circular compost pile. She is gesturing with her hands as if speaking to a group of people. The compost pile is composed of various organic materials, including straw, wood chips, and leaves, and is situated on a dirt path. Several people are visible around her, some looking towards her. In the foreground, the back of a woman with white hair tied in a bun, wearing a maroon t-shirt, is visible. To the right, a woman with long dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a light-colored shirt and a denim skirt, is also looking towards the speaker. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a field or garden area.

## 5. Composting: Large Scale

Composting: Small/Mid Scale





## 6. Volunteerism

### Gleaning

# OUTCOMES

- ✓ Educate and Train 120 Food Recovery Volunteers who then educate 2,500 people  
650+ hours volunteered (so far!) which equates to \$19,000 of value
- ✓ Divert 60,000 lbs Food Waste from the Central Landfill
- ✓ 40,000 lbs of food for families in Rhode Island
- ✓ Establish 5 service projects that support food recovery at the community level







“This course really impacted the course of my academic career and my life...I’m studying political science and sociology and this course helped me understand why we’re motivated to make change.

I learned about how much work is already done to reduce food waste and how I can partner with and support those already existing nonprofits in order to mitigate my impact. Partnering with organizations is powerful because you don’t need to reinvent the wheel every time you want to help the earth.”

- – Caroline, FRRF Class of Fall 2021, URI undergrad



“I would have to say I enjoyed this class I liked everything about it. I learned a lot and I'm thankful for everything that I learned. I think with the busy schedule I did pretty well. I learned a lot and I don't have to prove to anybody how much I want because it will show with my compost in my garden and I **have saved a lot of money while shopping.**”

-FRRI Class of Summer 2022  
Participant

“The thing that has made me so happy is it showed me how many programs are out there and how hopefully I am that the problems that exist are not being ignored. That this new generation is picking up the ball and going forward with it. And that **gives me hope** for the whole world.”

– Christine Grevstad, FRRRI Class of Fall 2021



# Future Directions

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- Culturally relevant content
- Partnerships - food pantries, school systems
- Expand volunteer services
- Professional development
- Future train-the-trainer programs in complementary areas (land conservation, etc.)





Ella Kilpatrick Kotner  
Harvest Cycle  
Coordinator



Eva Agudelo

Founder & Director of Hope's Harvest RI



# LESSONS LEARNED

What did you learn that you'd like to share with our workshop participants?

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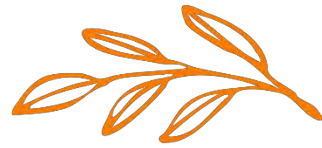
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# COMMUNITY PARTNERS



SANKOFA



HOPE'S HARVEST RI

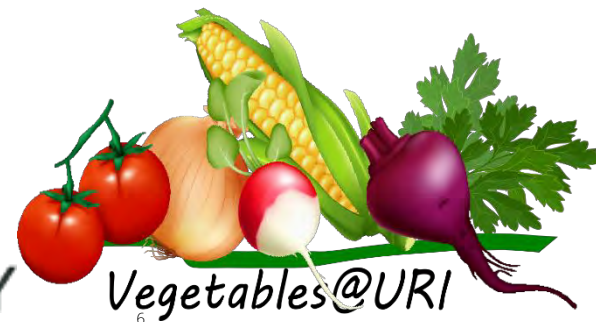


Rescuing  
Leftover  
Cuisine



# COLLABORATORS

Nutrition and Physical Activity  
Promotion in Underserved Communities  
Research Group





FOOD RECOVERY FOR RHODE ISLAND

# THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?



<https://web.uri.edu/coopext/foodrecovery/>  
Next course in September!

- Vanessa Venturini – [vanessa@uri.edu](mailto:vanessa@uri.edu)
- Amanda Missimer – [amanda\\_missimer@uri.edu](mailto:amanda_missimer@uri.edu)

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