



Foodnet.org

REBUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



Meal preparation at Foodnet Meals on Wheels

OVERVIEW

Foodnet Meals on Wheels is a nonprofit with the mission to provide meals and other nutrition services that promote dignity, well-being, and independence for older adults and other persons in need in Tompkins County. An important contributor to food security, they deliver approximately 10,000 meals each month, cooking from scratch using as many fresh ingredients as possible. Their recently renovated facility includes space for meal prep, distribution, and administrative offices.

OPERATIONS

Prior to working with the ReBusiness Team, Foodnet Meals on Wheels had an efficient system for managing surplus food by freezing extra meals for future deliveries. Additionally, their cooks substitute ingredients into meals to optimize freshness and reduce waste. In May of 2025, the Foodnet Meals on Wheels team requested a ReBusiness consultation to explore composting, recycling, and further waste reduction opportunities.

Following a site visit, Foodnet Meals on Wheels began separating food scraps and setting out for weekly collection by TCRMM. The collected food scraps are brought to the Tompkins County Recycling and Solid Waste Center and then processed by Cayuga Compost in Trumansburg.

*“Some of our staff have mentioned that this program has **taught them lessons that they now use in their personal lives**, like putting paper towels in the compost.”*

Thinking through where waste is generated in a facility can play a crucial role in staff adoption. To facilitate collection, 5-gallon buckets are placed near prep stations and by the dish sink. To enhance collective buy-in, staff opted to make bringing food scraps buckets outside at the end of the workday a shared responsibility.



IMPACT

In their first year of collection, between July of 2025, and July of 2026, Foodnet Meals on Wheels staff have diverted approximately 4,524 lbs. of food scraps from landfill.



For more information about ReBusiness, visit: tcgov.co/ReBusiness



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