From Recommendation to Implementation:

Tennessee’s Process for Developing a Statewide Food Waste Reduction and Recovery Program
Overview of Presentation

- 2016 Stakeholder Event and post-event recommendations
- Whitepaper on food recovery in Southeast
- Evaluation of EPA Food Recovery Challenge as a platform for a state recognition program
- Development of Get Food Smart TN
- Overview of Program
Plan was adopted in April 2015

Acts as TDEC's strategic roadmap containing broad objectives and ideas to reduce disposal and increase recycling in Tennessee.

– The 2025 Plan itself does not change or modify Tennessee statutes or rules.

Objective 4 of the Plan: Increase Diversion of Organics – encourage the reuse, composting, and beneficial use of organics, as well as implement source reduction efforts, to decrease the disposal of these materials.

Initial tangible actions:

– In 2016, TDEC awarded 5 composting grants totaling $2,486,303.
– TDEC identified several state parks where composting should be prioritized; Henry Horton and Natchez Trace State Parks.
– TDEC’s new composting regulations went into effect on July 7, 2016.
On October 6, 2016 TDEC held a roundtable discussion in Nashville, TN to engage:

- Local governments
- Private business and industry
- Educational institutions
- Non-profits

Goal: Identify opportunities and obstacles to food waste reduction, recovery and diversion in middle Tennessee.

~40 participants representing an eclectic mix of organizations, which included:

- Bridgestone Arena
- Mayor’s Office
- TN Chamber of Commerce
- Waste Management
- State Hospitality Association
- Whole Foods
October 6 - Nashville Public Outreach Event

- On the same day as the roundtable, TDEC also held an education and outreach event in cooperation:
  - Nashville Metro Government
  - Nashville Farmers Market
  - Mayor's Office
  - Second Harvest
  - The Nashville Food Project
  - NRDC
  - The Compost Company

- Event was held at the Nashville Farmers Market downtown and featured a screening of the film *Just Eat It*, local exhibitors, announcements, and food waste reduction demonstrations.
Recommendations from the TDEC-Sponsored Roundtable Meeting on Food Waste Reduction, Recovery, and Diversion

- Report is available on the TDEC website at:

- Areas of focus/recommendations
  1. Infrastructure
  2. Education
  3. Reduce Cost
  4. Develop a Directory of Opportunity
  5. Create a Recognition Program
  6. Be Residential Consumer Focused
  7. Target Schools
  8. Develop a State Steering Committee
• Early October 2016, TDEC authored overview of current efforts in Southeastern States regarding food waste reduction upstream of composting.

• Findings indicated majority of food waste reduction efforts in Southeastern States are being undertaken by non-governmental groups, such as local food banks and charitable organizations, as well as local businesses and institutions of higher education.

• Very few formal food waste efforts that are currently being led by state or local government agencies.

• Provided 9 recommendations for TDEC to consider to address food waste upstream of composting.
Encouraged by Objective 4 of the 2025 Plan as well as the 2016 roundtable event, TDEC began developing an Organics Management Grant for early 2017.

- First of its kind grant for TDEC’s Division of Solid Waste Management – was open to both public and private.
- Funding was available for everything from food waste awareness and education to recovery and diversion.

Awarded nearly $3.8 million in grants

- Country Music Hall of Fame for food scrap collection
- Several composting projects
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle TN for new distribution center
- Society of St. Andrew – statewide gleaning operation
Investigation of FRC for TN Recognition Program

A recommendation from 2016 roundtable was that the state should develop a recognition program:

• TDEC began investigating this in late 2016/early 2017.
• Initial thought was to piggyback EPA’s FRC platform
  – Hope was TDEC could leverage FRC platform to administer a state program with it – such that TDEC also had access to data being reported, co-branding FRC with TDEC for state program, etc...
• After investigating FRC and discussing with EPA Region 4 and HQ staff, identified a number of barriers:
  – Convoluted process to provide data access to TDEC
  – No FRC logo, EPA logo is not allowed for co-branding purposes
  – Quantitative nature of FRC seemed exclusionary of some organizations
• TDEC staff reached out to additional state environmental agencies participating in program as endorsers (AZ DEQ, WA Dept. of Ecology, and Mass DEP).
  
  – All three agency officials that we spoke to had not requested FRC data and only promoted FRC as a component of larger presentations on food waste related issues.

Based on this assessment it was recommended that TDEC develop its own statewide recognition program.
Throughout 2017 we worked internally within the state of TN:

- Received branding exception to develop unique logo
- Permission to develop dedicated website
- Created program framework
- Provided stakeholder input opportunity (roughly 1.5 months)

  - Comprised of 12 questions
  - Received 62 responses
  - Biggest takeaways:
    - Recommended 5-10 criteria as required for acceptance into program.
    - Recommended 4 categories of entities to recognize.
    - Criteria should be a mix of quantitative and qualitative actions.
    - Develop annual award – “Tennessee Food Smart Organization of the Year”.
Get Food Smart TN seeks to promote using food wisely and enhance the sustainability of Tennessee’s food resources.
Get Food Smart TN Promotion

TDE Announces Inaugural Food Waste Initiative Participants
Tuesday, May 8, 2018

APSU part of state’s inaugural Food Waste Initiative
By ClarksvilleNow.com | May 14, 2018 4:02 pm

Prescott schools divert food waste from landfill
Get Food Smart TN Website

getfoodsmarttn.com
getfoodsmarttn.org

Promoting using food wisely and enhancing the sustainability of Tennessee's food resources.

The Get Food Smart TN campaign is leading the charge of addressing food recovery in Tennessee. We want Tennesseans to buy what you need, eat what you buy, and share what you don't. From farmers that grow our food to prepare it, all Tennesseans benefit from reducing food waste.

Governor Haslam

Recognize: Apply

Get Food Smart TN seeks to promote using food wisely and enhance the sustainability of Tennessee's food resources.
Recognition Program

- Organization must satisfy at least 5 of up to 30 criteria under their category.
- The four categories are:
  - Schools
  - Restaurants
  - Government Entities and Non-Profit Organizations
  - Grocers, Industry, Agriculture, and other Private Entities

getfoodsmarttn.com
Benefits of Recognition Program

- A door placard, to place at your businesses to show others you participate in the program
- Press Releases and Company Highlights on the OPSP “Get Food Smart TN” News Portal
- Access to a peer network of organizations with a common interest in reducing food waste and the opportunity to share best practices
- Technical Assistance regarding food waste reduction strategies and technologies
- Featured on the Get Food Smart TN Recognition Program Webpage:
  - Program introduction
  - Link to website (optional)
  - Success stories
  - Contact information
- Eligibility for an end of the year award for Tennessee Food Smart Organization of the Year
Outlook for Program

• Now through October 2018
  – Promote recognition program and encourage enrollment and develop sector-specific resources

• November/December 2018
  – Host stakeholder workshop to seek tips for how to enhance Get Food Smart TN and its programming.

• February 2019
  – Award 2018 Tennessee Food Smart Organization of the Year
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