

Reducing Food Waste In Emergency Food Organizations

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BACKGROUND

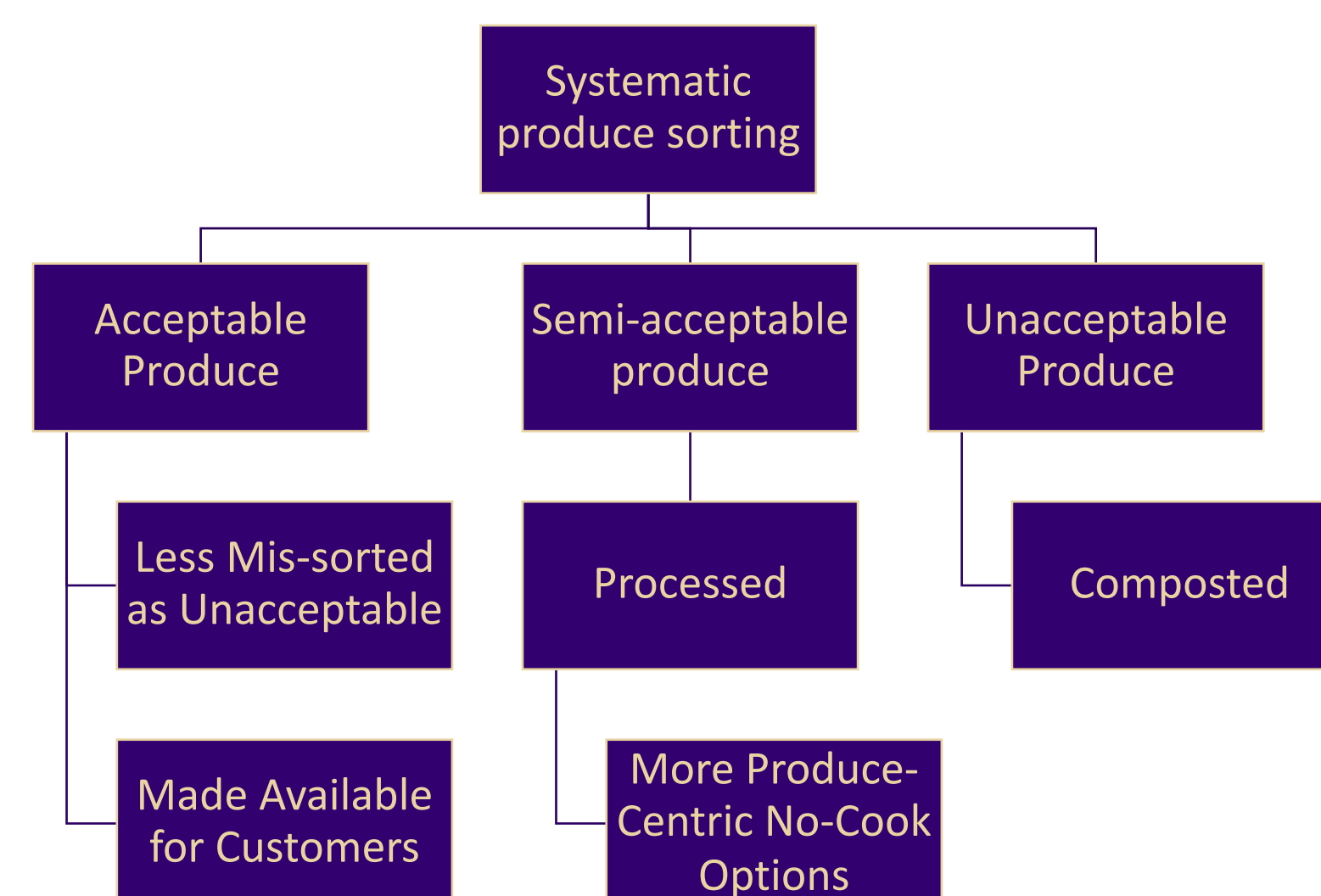
It is imperative for emergency food organizations to reduce their food waste production as policy efforts focus on increasing perishable donations and donation volume. The University District Food Bank has decided to reduce their food waste production via improved produce sorting systems and creation of a value-added processing program using visually unappealing and excess produce.

OBJECTIVES

This project sought to systematize produce sorting and support implementation of a value-added processing program by:

- Creating volunteer resources on the produce sorting process using food safety best practices
- Evaluating the effectiveness of produce sorting guidelines and resources
- Exploring the feasibility of a value-added processing program
- Determining the necessary steps and develop resources for program implementation

Food Waste Reduction Approach



METHODS

Develop volunteer survey

- Assessed current sorting practices and guideline effectiveness

Research donation sorting best practices

- Utilized USDA, WA DOH, Food Lifeline, and other food bank resources

Create sorting guidelines and posters

- Electronic and printed version available

Consult with local food banks & food safety officials on feasibility of a value-added processing program

- Researched best practices

Develop program implementation reference document

- Created timeline
- Determined necessary resources, equipment, and staffing
- Developed recipe master document

LESSONS LEARNED

- Food waste is a multifaceted issue to be addressed through collaboration among city and state government, institutions, retailers, and food rescue organizations
- There is room for improvement in reducing food waste at the state, city, and organizational levels
- Building an appropriate and effective program requires communication, stakeholder buy-in, and community engagement

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION



Training Visuals

ACCEPTABLE
Pristine
Minor Bruising & Discoloration
Oddly Shaped
Greens with wilted layers that are removed

SEMI-ACCEPTABLE
Large Dents & Bruises
Overripe
Mushy & Mealy
Discolored

UNACCEPTABLE
Molded
Rotted
Broken Apart or Squashed

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