



Spotlight on Hope & Main: Nurturing Culinary Dreams & Sustainability

Nestled in Warren, Rhode Island, [Hope & Main](#) is a nonprofit culinary incubator with a vision to transform the local food economy. An incubator kitchen gives a boost to small food businesses by providing a space for food prep that is certified and affordable. This unique initiative provides shared-use commercial kitchens and a maker's market, creating fertile ground for budding food entrepreneurs to flourish.

Hope & Main's mission is to empower an inclusive community of entrepreneurs and foster a more just, sustainable, and resilient local food economy. They are not only dedicated to supporting small businesses and nurturing their growth but are deeply committed to improving waste management and sustainable practices in their operations. To this end, Hope & Main has been proactive in examining and implementing waste reduction programs, with a readiness to invest in these initiatives. Taylor Rash of Hope & Main acted as liaison to various stakeholders and to CET to roll out new programs. After conducting a waste assessment of Hope & Main Downtown Makers Marketplace and Cafe, located in downtown Providence, CET staff identified options and improvements for increased waste reduction including: establishing a food scrap diversion program starting with back of house and eventually expanding to front of house; adding waste bin signage; providing additional staff training; and removing barriers to better mixed recycling programs. Hope & Main Downtown Makers Marketplace spearheaded this review of CET recommendations to further improve existing waste reduction programs and to implement new initiatives.



Hope & Main's dedication to reducing waste is also reflected in the prevention strategies they already have in place. In their Providence market and café, Hope & Main creatively repurposes surplus products into in-café meals, reducing wasted food. The market showcases and sells products from their community of entrepreneurs, enhancing visibility and sales opportunities for these local small businesses. With CET's support, they have established a back-of-house food scraps recycling program and began collecting material in May of 2024. [Remix Organics](#) picks up a 48-gallon cart of kitchen scraps each week and brings it to either an Anaerobic Digester or a commercial composting site. In a year, this equates to about 4.9 tons of food material diverted from disposal, and 2.6 to 3 metric tons avoided CO2 emissions (calculated using the [EPA WARM Model](#)), depending on the end site. Additionally, Hope & Main uses CET waste bin signage to help educate staff and guide source separation practices within their operations. Hope & Main's next goal is to extend this food scrap collection effort to the front-of-house spaces.

Hope & Main uses certified [BPI compostable containers](#) for takeout and reusable foodware for dine-in customers. With CETs' support, they aim to shrink their trash volume to prevent unintended charges and reduce the frequency of pick-up. Conversations to expand their existing cardboard only recycling are ongoing.

Hope & Main sets an example for aspiring food entrepreneurs and is a local leader of sustainable practices. Their dedication to nurturing small businesses and commitment to environmental responsibility make them an innovative model for other food communities to emulate.



If your Rhode Island business is interested in no-cost waste reduction assistance, contact CET at (888) 813-8552 or wastedfood@cetonline.org.



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