

# UPDATE ON ISRAEL'S FOOD DONATION POLICY LANDSCAPE

Israel's new *Food Donation Encouragement Law (Amendment), 2024* mandates that public institutions donate surplus food, marking a significant shift in food waste reduction efforts.<sup>1</sup> The law requires government bodies, local authorities, and state-owned companies to establish food donation partnerships with recognized food distribution organizations, ensuring that surplus food is diverted from waste streams to those in need.<sup>2</sup>

## SYNOPSIS OF PRIOR FOOD WASTE DETERRENCE POLICY

This new law amends Israel's 2018 *Food Donation Encouragement Law*, which focused on encouraging donation by providing liability protection for food donations along with recognition incentives. The 2018 *Food Donation Encouragement Law* shielded food donors as well as food distribution organizations (FDOs) from criminal or civil liability, provided the food was donated in good faith and met safety standards, and was not donated or distributed negligently.<sup>3</sup> The law also encourages businesses to donate food by requiring the Ministry of Health to award businesses that donate to FDOs signs of appreciation annually.<sup>4</sup> However, food donation remained voluntary, and there was no legal obligation for private businesses or public institutions to donate, leading to substantial amounts of edible surplus food being discarded.

## DETAILS OF THE UPDATED LAW

In 2024, Israel enacted an amendment to the *Food Donation Encouragement Law*, incorporating a mandatory food donation requirement for public institutions.<sup>5</sup> This law applies to government ministries, municipalities, public agencies, and state-owned enterprises that provide at least 500 meals per workday. These entities must now partner with FDOs to facilitate the collection and redistribution of surplus food.

*Key provisions of the law include:*

**Obligation to Donate:** Public institutions that serve meals—including government ministries, local municipalities, state-owned enterprises, religious councils, security institutions, and publicly funded agencies—are now required to donate their surplus food instead of discarding it.<sup>6</sup> This obligation applies to any public institution providing at least 500 meals per workday, either directly or through a contracted catering provider.<sup>7</sup> Institutions cannot “unreasonably refuse” a request from a FDO to create an agreement for surplus food collection, nor can they unreasonably refuse to continue an engagement once created.<sup>8</sup> Public bodies subject to the law must respond to such a request within 60 days.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the law extends to state-affiliated catering providers, ensuring that food service companies contracted by public bodies also comply.<sup>10</sup> The donating public institution bears no financial responsibility for the food collection process, meaning that FDOs must arrange transportation and logistics for food pickup.<sup>11</sup> This provision ensures that financial or operational concerns do not become a barrier to participation.

CURRENT  
MODERATE  
POLICY



PREVIOUS

NO  
POLICY

**Food Safety Compliance:** To receive surplus food, food distribution organizations must certify compliance with food safety standards under the Food Law, 2015.<sup>12</sup> They must submit a signed affidavit confirming they have internal procedures in place to ensure food safety, storage, and handling, covering the types of food accepted, temperature control, and contamination prevention.<sup>13</sup>

**Mandatory Reporting and Transparency Measures:** To improve tracking and oversight, recipient food distribution organizations must submit an annual report to the donating public institution and its catering providers (if applicable) by January 31 of each year.<sup>14</sup> This report must include:

- The total quantity of food collected in the previous calendar year
- The percentage of donated food that was successfully used
- A breakdown of how the food was utilized (e.g., direct redistribution to food-insecure populations, repurposing for meal programs, etc.)<sup>15</sup>

**Regulatory Oversight and Security Considerations:** The law grants the Minister of Finance the authority to regulate agreements between public institutions and food distribution organizations, ensuring standardized implementation across government bodies.<sup>16</sup> Security institutions, such as the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the Israel Police, and the Israel Prison Service, must also comply with the law, though special exemptions may be granted on national security grounds for limited, renewable one-year periods.<sup>17</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The passage of the *Food Donation Encouragement Law (Amendment), 2024* marks a milestone in Israel's fight against food waste and food insecurity.<sup>18</sup> By transitioning from voluntary to mandatory food donation for public institutions, the law ensures a steady stream of surplus food reaches food-insecure populations instead of being discarded. This initiative aligns with global best practices, reinforcing Israel's commitment to sustainable food management and social responsibility.

## → MODERATE POLICY

**For more best practices related to donation requirements, please see FLPC's [Food Waste Deterrence Policy Issue Brief](#).**

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Food Donation Encouragement Law (Amendment), 2024* [https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25\\_ls2\\_5173009.pdf](https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25_ls2_5173009.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> 2018: *Food Donation Encouragement Law 1-2(a)-(b)*, [https://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_Isr\\_518938.pdf](https://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_Isr_518938.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* 2(b)

<sup>5</sup> *Food Donation Encouragement Law (Amendment)*, *Supra* Note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* Amendment of Section 1. 2(4))

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(a)(1))

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(a) and 2A(b)

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(b)

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(e)

<sup>11</sup> Addition of Section 2A(a)(3) "The collection of surplus food shall not impose a direct additional cost on the public body."

<sup>12</sup> *Food Donation Encouragement Law (Amendment), 2024*. Amendment of Section 1. 2(3)

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* 2A (a)(3)

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(d)

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(d)

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(g)

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* Addition of Section 2A(f)(2)

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

