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Kroger Launches Initiative To Eliminate Food Waste And Hunger By 2025

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Over 42 million Americans across the country struggle with food insecurity. The problem is not that there isn't enough food to go around. In fact, millions of pounds of food wind up in landfills every year. Kroger, a grocery store chain, saw this paradox and decided to create a solution. The company recently announced their nationwide plan called Zero Hunger | Zero Waste, to end hunger and food waste in one swing.

Kroger's motivation ties back to its close relationship with hundreds of communities. The company was founded in 1883 when Barney Kroger opened the first store in downtown

Cincinnati and has expanded quite a bit over the past 130 years. Today, Kroger has 2,800 stores in 35 states and generates over \$115 billion every year. As a successful food company, Kroger has been able to give back to its communities and follow through on their commitment to Feed The Human Spirit. The Zero Hunger | Zero Waste initiative is the most ambitious goal the company has ever set.

Kroger's CEO, Rodney McMullen, explains why the company is so dedicated to feeding food insecure people, saying, "More than 40 percent of the food produced in the U.S. each year goes unconsumed, while one in eight people struggle with hunger. That just doesn't make sense. As America's grocer and one of the largest retailers in the world, we are committing to doing something about it."

So how does the plan work? Kroger created a \$10 million innovation fund dedicated to finding and incorporating food waste and hunger solutions. The company will work with a network of food banks across the country to provide more balanced meals and encourage everyone in the supply chain to take on better food waste solutions. Internally, Kroger will focus on eliminating all food waste within their own company.

While Kroger acknowledges this is a lofty goal that will almost certainly have challenges, they've recruited key partners to help them hit their targets. A crucial partner for Kroger is Feeding America, an organization which has a built-in network of 200 food banks across the country. This group has been able to feed over 46 million people through their nationwide program.

Feeding America's CEO, Diana Aviv, describes the importance of building partnerships when fighting hunger, "If we are to succeed in creating a hunger-free America, it will take the combined efforts of a variety of groups – policymakers, nonprofits, individuals and corporations

– working together with the 200 network member food banks. Kroger is stepping up to the challenge and we look forward to working with them on their Zero Hunger | Zero Waste plan.”

Kroger will also advocate for public policy solutions to help prevent waste from landfills and address hunger directly. To keep everyone in the loop, Kroger promises to have a transparent reporting system. The goal is to eliminate hunger and have zero food waste by 2025.

Kroger is also teaming up with the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) which is working to make sustainable food systems. WWF’s Senior VP, Sheila Bonini, hopes this program will create a positive environmental impact, explaining, “The production and consumption of food has the largest environmental footprint of any human activity. By wasting less food, we can reduce the environmental impact of food production while also conserving biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Kroger’s zero waste commitment sets a new standard for food waste reduction goals and will have a ripple effect across their supply chain and industry.”

Even with a dream team of large organizations set in place, Kroger is open to feedback from anyone who wants to join the battle against hunger and food waste. With a clear goal in mind, the company hopes that people across the country will come to the table with ideas to help meet that goal. To get involved, read more at thekrogerco.com or follow [#ZeroHungerZeroWaste](https://twitter.com/ZeroHungerZeroWaste).