

San Bernardino Investment Playbook

Project Details: Food Entrepreneurship Hub

The Food Entrepreneurship Hub will provide much-needed assistance and resources for area residents interested in opening a food-based business. The Hub will connect entrepreneurs with comprehensive programming and support aligned to the particular needs of food-based companies. Local community organizations will support the Hub in providing technical assistance and programs in English and Spanish for food entrepreneurs in the region. It will either be integrated into the Entrepreneurial Resource Center (ERC) or will remain a standalone project in a nearby facility downtown.

The Hub will feature a commercial kitchen that can be rented by the hour or by the day on a sliding-scale basis to ensure access for economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs. This affordable production space will help food entrepreneurs expand their businesses. A temporary food hall nearby (either a container park or a designated food truck parking lot) will provide low-cost retail space for new food businesses.

RATIONALE

The successful launch and growth of a food-based business can provide an important path to wealth-building for low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs. The Inland Empire currently has a number of programs designed to support would-be entrepreneurs as they plan, launch, and grow their food-based businesses. While these programs have produced positive outcomes, lack of coordination limits their accessibility and impact. In addition, San Bernardino has little in the way of affordable commercial kitchen space or retail space for food businesses that are starting out.

OBJECTIVES

- Support the success of local food-based businesses
- Intensify programmatic impact by leveraging and encouraging collaboration among existing programs offered by National Latina Business Women Association Inland Empire (NLBWA-IE), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship (IECE), and other organizations
- Expand retail and dining options in downtown San Bernardino

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

The Food Entrepreneurship Hub will be an 8,500-ft² facility that is a mixture of shared kitchen space (10 spaces at 200 ft² each—five free and five for rent), cold storage (1,500 ft²), dry storage (1,500 ft²), private office space (five spaces at 200 ft² each), retail and dining space (1000 ft²), a training kitchen (1000 ft²), training room (600 ft²), and wash area (600 ft²). It will have a staff of 10-12 employees.

COST

- \$1.5M Commercial kitchen facilities (pricing will vary depending on location and equipment)

- \$750K SBDC Eats Program – Six-week program that prepares participants to start and run a food-based business, coupled with follow-on counseling specific to food operations that together help participants gain all the information and skills to start a food business. Fifty participants per cohort, two cohorts per quarter (\$150K per year)
 - \$625K Marketplace and Farmers' Market Program – Assists food entrepreneurs as they move from initial idea to launch and provides access to sales channels via the Hub Food Hall and ongoing Farmers' Market. Twenty-five per cohort, two cohorts per quarter (\$125K startup costs plus \$100K per year)
 - \$500K Technical assistance and counseling– Dedicated business counselors and food business experts staffed by partner organizations such as NLBWA-IE, Association de Emprendedor@s, and SBDC will provide specific, focused support for aspiring food entrepreneurs and existing food-based businesses
 - \$500K Food Hall – flexible retail space for early-stage food businesses
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\$3.875M TOTAL over five years

POTENTIAL FUNDING

Federal

Economic Development Administration (US Commerce)
 Small Business Administration (US Commerce)
 US Department of Agriculture

State

Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF)
 Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)
 Microenterprise home kitchen operation (MEHKO) grant program
 State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) Technical Assistance Funding

Philanthropic

Kauffman Foundation
 San Manuel Foundation

Other

Commercial kitchen rental fees
 Food Hall and Farmers' Market space rental fees

LEAD ORGANIZATION

Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship (IECE) and School of Entrepreneurship (SoE)
 at CSUSB

Michael Stull, Director, IECE and SoE

Paul Nolta, Program Director, Small Business Development and Director,
 Inland Empire Small Business Development Center (IESBDC)

National Latina Business Women Association Inland Empire (NLBWA-IE)

Maria Solano, executive director, NLBWA-IE

SIMILAR PROJECTS ELSEWHERE

[La Cocina](#) (San Francisco)

[Portland Mercado](#)