COMMUNITY KITCHEN RESOURCE GUIDE

How to access, use, and host community kitchens

Produced by Kitchen Commons | Portland, OR
kitchencommons.net
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ABOUT KITCHEN COMMONS

Emerging from a community gathering in November of 2010, Kitchen Commons is an all-volunteer network of citizens and organizers working to foster a network of community kitchens in every neighborhood in the Portland, Oregon metro area. The role of Kitchen Commons is to support, develop, and promote these kitchen spaces. By fostering the development of many different kinds of kitchens, we can help meet evolving needs in different communities. We do this by connecting neighborhood kitchen organizers with resources, creating opportunities to network and share ideas, and advocating for policies that facilitate the development and use of community kitchens.

Kitchen Commons is an Oregon nonprofit organization and became a project of the Charitable Partnership Fund through their incubator program in 2011. More information on Kitchen Commons can be found at kitchencommons.net.

This resource guide was built to make it easier for groups to access, use, and host community kitchens by answering some frequently asked questions and compiling sample forms. It is a living document, and will continue to expand and improve as Kitchen Commoners learn more together.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Kitchen Commons would like to thank the organizations and individuals who have helped in creating this resource guide:*

- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) for adaptation of their Memorandum of Understanding from the Micro-enterprise Handbook © 2011
- Ben Duncan at the Multnomah County Health Department
- Sarah Schwab at the Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Diane Collins and everyone at Fresh Choice Kitchens in Vancouver, British Columbia, for their help with visioning and permission to refer to their manual while building our resource guide in Portland, Oregon
- Thanks to Diana Vinh, Leika Suzumara, and Anne Alfred at Community Kitchens Northwest for pointing us in the right direction and helping with research on liability and permits
FAQ’s

Does my kitchen need to be certified?

It depends on what you are doing and who is eating the food you are preparing. For the details, see Licensing and Permitting, p. 12.

What’s the difference between a commercial kitchen and a community kitchen?

Please see Glossary, p. 22.

Is my kitchen big enough for this?

Some community kitchens look like the inside of a restaurant and some look more like your Grandma’s kitchen. The truth is, only those who are going to use it can really determine if the kitchen is too small. For the most part, cooking groups will want a commercial-grade kitchen because many people can share the space and the food. Commercial-grade licensing is further covered in our Licensing and Permits section.

How do we handle availability? What if the kitchen is not available when we need it?

Start by tracking information on how the kitchen is currently used. When is the kitchen normally in use? For how long? How frequently? Once you have an idea of when your kitchen is available, you can come up with an Availability Schedule with the group who’ll be using the space (see p. 17 for an example).

What if the people using the kitchen do not keep it clean? What if the public does not put appliances back where they were found?

This is a common concern for a lot of kitchens, but it’s one that can be dealt with by having a good understanding of who is responsible for the cleanliness of the kitchen, which can be covered in a Memorandum of Understanding (see p. 21).

Could my organization be sued if someone gets sick or injured from activities in our kitchen?

We are still researching liability issues, but it is always a good idea to have the group using the kitchen sign a liability waiver and ask them to take on the responsibility for ensuring that each individual participant signs a liability waiver. A sample is on p. 18.
HELPFUL HINTS

• Community kitchens are places where neighbors of all ages and backgrounds come together to make and share meals, learn from each other about cooking and preserving the harvest, and nurture small food businesses. They can be hosted by faith organizations, schools, community and senior centers, businesses and nonprofits. They can be certified for particular purposes, but many activities don’t require certification or special equipment.

• It is common practice to charge a small flat fee or hourly rate for micro-enterprise using your space, and in some cases, it can make the relationship more formal. If you are hosting a cooking class or some other non-enterprise activity, however, consider offering the space as a donation. The less these groups have to spend, the more likely they will have success in increasing access to healthy, fresh, and well-prepared food.

• It is very good practice to get in touch with the health department as soon as possible. Transparency and communication with them will help you in the long-run, especially because they support community kitchens and want to see them grow. Talking with inspectors as you go through the process of opening your kitchen will make them aware of your presence and what you are trying to do, and will ultimately help you have more success.

• While it is not necessary for someone in a cooking group to have a Food Handler’s Permit, it is a good idea to ask that at least one person in each cooking group is familiar with safe food handling practices, outlined on the Multnomah County Health Department’s website.
The Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP), a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), created a handbook that focused on using the assets of local congregations to build local food systems and increase access to “fresh, locally and culturally appropriate food by people with low incomes.”


Blog post from Little Pots & Pan with some advice for folks looking for a kitchen space:
littlepotsandpans.blogspot.com/2010/06/advice-for-renting-commercial-kitchen.html
Available Kitchens (green dots)
1. Alberta Abbey
2. Central Lutheran
3. Hollywood Senior Center
4. Project Grow
5. St. Michael’s Lutheran
6. Trinity Full Gospel Pentecostal

Works in Progress (yellow dots)
7. Redeemer Lutheran Church
8. Salvation Army Moore St. Community Center
9. St. Andrew Catholic Church

communitykitchens.crowdmap.com
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**Works in Progress**

**Kitchen Directory**
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Securing Resources for New and Remodeled Kitchens

This list is a just a jumping-off point to get started on your search for kitchen items. There are lots of places that might be able to help with your unique needs - just ask around and see what you find.

Boneyards Northwest
- [www.boneyardnw.com](http://www.boneyardnw.com)
- Online marketplace for used construction materials
- A free service of Metro, this organization focused on reducing waste by providing a place for sellers and buyers to connect over used construction materials. They don’t always have kitchen equipment, but it does come through and it’s a good idea to keep an eye on it.
  - **Contact**: Bryce Jacobson, Associate Planner
    - (503) 797-1663
    - jaconsonb@metro.dst.or.us
    - Metro Solid Waste and Recycling
    - 600 NE Grand Ave.
    - Portland, OR

The Rebuilding Center
- [rebuildingcenter.org](http://rebuildingcenter.org)
- Warehouse of used, salvaged, and reclaimed materials for sale or donation
- Request forms for donations are available online and are reviewed within two weeks. The Center asks that each organization only requests two donations per calendar year.
  - **Contact**: (503) 331-9875
    - 3625 N. Mississippi Ave.
    - Portland, OR 97227

Habitat for Humanity’s ReStore
- [www.pdxrestore.org](http://www.pdxrestore.org)
- Used building materials, appliances, furniture, and home improvement products below retail price
- The ReStore raises funds for Habitat for Humanity first and sells used items second, so they are probably a better bet for cheap goods rather than free. They do work with groups on a case-by-case basis, however, and might find a special deal for your kitchen group.
  - **Contact**: (503) 283-6247
    - 66 SE Morrison St.
    - Portland, OR 97214

For a sample letter to send to a company requesting in-kind donations of equipment or ingredients, see p. 19.
Portland Store Fixtures
- www.portlandstorefixtures.com
- Buy, rent, and sell used, new, and custom store fixtures
- Although this store is mostly for retail and grocery, they do carry the heavy wire shelving required of most commercial kitchens
  - Contact: (503) 232-4878
    110 SE Main St.
    Portland, OR 97214

Pitman’s Restaurant Equipment
- pitmanequip.com
- New and used restaurant equipment for sale
- This store is one of only a few go-to places for restaurant equipment in Portland. They don’t list donations as part of their services, but it never hurts to ask a business for help, especially if you know exactly what you need
  - Contact: (503) 238-0634
    1535 SE 3rd Ave.
    Portland, OR 97214

Rose’s Restaurant Equipment
- www.rosesequipment.com
- The other go-to spot in Portland; between Pitman’s and Rose’s they’ve got it all.
  - Contact: (503) 233-7450
    207 SE Clay
    Portland, OR 97214

Jim’s Jars, Bottles, And Canning Equipment
- portland.craigslist.org
- Jim runs a Craigslist ad every week with rotating cooking equipment at discount prices. Call for directions and to set up an appointment.
  - Contact: Jim, (503) 762-1060

Kitchen Share SE
- http://www.kitchenshare.org
- Library-style access to kitchen equipment that can be expensive and infrequently used
- This group was formed in the fall of 2011 and is just getting off the ground, but could be an excellent resource for future community kitchen needs
  - Contact: kitchensharese@gmail.com
    (503) 208-5706
    Located inside St David of Wales Church
    2800 SE Harrison
    Portland OR 97214
LICENSING AND PERMITTING

Keep in mind:

• This list is a starting point for anyone interested in getting a license for their space and a permit for those who are going to prepare food. It is not exhaustive, and should be treated as a guide. For specific questions, please contact the Multnomah County Health Department and the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

• Anyone who prepares food for public consumption (meaning anything outside of a private gathering) must have a Food Handler's Card, available at web.multco.us/health/food-handlers-test.

• In our area, the licensing body for all food related activity, except restaurants and caterers, is the Oregon Department of Agriculture. This means that any food product that is not meant for immediate consumption will probably be regulated by the ODA, whereas any food considered ready-to-eat (think restaurant-style) will be regulated by the Multnomah County Health Department.

• It is permissible to bake cookies, cakes and other shelf stable foods for fundraising purposes without a permit if it is done less than three times in a calendar year.

• Licensing can be confusing, but there are agencies available to answer questions:
  o Multnomah County Health Department: Restaurants
  o For general information: web.multco.us/health/restaurants
  o For benevolent organizations: hweb.multco.us/sites/default/files/health/documents/benevolent_organization_brochure.pdf
  o Hotline number: (503) 988-3400
  o Oregon Department of Agriculture Food Safety Division: www.oregon.gov/ODA/FSD/contact_us.shtml
CERTIFICATIONS

Cooking classes:
• A group of people who want to get together and learn to cook, with one or more instructors. The only people eating the food are those who helped prepare it or who were present in the class.
• Certification: None
• Because this is a private function, it is not necessary to have any certifications. It is a good idea, however, that at least one person present has been through the food safety course offered by the county, just to be safe. It is also a good idea to keep a list of those present whenever food is being cooked for a group.

Cooking for a private function:
• A small group that convenes regularly for shared cooking and eating. This function is not advertised to the public; the only people eating the food are those who helped to prepare it, or personal guests of those who helped to prepare it.
• Certification: None
• When a private group convenes for food consumption, even if a commercial space, they do not need a license as long as the food they prepare is not going to be consumed by the public.

Preparing food for a fundraiser/donation
• Food being prepared for immediate consumption
• Certification:
  o For one-time use: Temporary Event License
  o On-going use: Limited Food Service Operation License
• Certifying Body: Multnomah County Health Department
• Any time you prepare hot food for immediate consumption, you at least need a Temporary Event License. If the process is on-going and not meant to be a one-time thing, consider applying for a Limited Food Service Operation License.
Preparing Food Grown in a non-Licensed Venue

- Food grown in a community or personal garden to be sold to the public
- **Certification:** None
- **Certifying Body:** Oregon Department of Agriculture

In January 2012, a law passed in Oregon creating an exemption from food inspection laws, allowing limited sales of certain processed food made in home kitchens. It includes fruits, vegetables, and herbs; sales of shelled and unshelled nuts; shell eggs; honey; and whole, hulled crushed or ground grains, legumes and seeds that are cooked before consumption. Growers are required to follow Oregon labeling laws, with labels stating that the products are made in uninspected and unlicensed venues.

Canning/Preserving

- A group or individual that cans or freezes food for later consumption, either as a donation, fundraiser, or sale
- **Certification:** Food Processing License
- **Certifying Body:** Oregon Department of Agriculture

The ODA gives the education and license for food processing on an individual basis. That means that the certification goes to the person who takes the course (a lot like the Health Department’s Food Safety Card) and not to the kitchen itself. If the product is not going to be refrigerated (meaning the processor considers it shelf stable), it will be tested for pH and water activity. If it is considered an acidified food, the individual must attend a four-day course on processing at OSU or other participating universities.

Fermentation and Acidifying

- A group that wants to can fruits or pickles, sauerkraut, etc.
- **Certification:** Food Processing License
- **Certifying Body:** Oregon Department of Agriculture

Fermentation and acidifying is included in the canning category in terms of regulation with the ODA.
LOCAL TEACHERS

A few local folks willing and able to teach kitchen classes

Monique Dupre
$35/person, with an option to receive free tuition if hosting a workshop.
Sustainable living on a budget, homemade dairy products, fermented foods and condiment making, whole grain bread making.
www.sustainablebudget.com
sustainablebudget@gmail.com

Judith Yamada
$35/hour
Cooking demonstrations, group cooking, traditional and vegan baking, kitchen coaching, and kitchen aromatherapy.
judith@portlandhomecooking.com
(503) 239-1989
portlandhomecooking.com

Jon Roschke
Volunteer
Jon’s has taught cooking classes for the Oregon Food Bank and is especially interested in working with youth, single parents, and those cooking on a budget.
jonroschke@yahoo.com
(503) 679-3386

Chris Musser
Volunteer
Chris, who owns Lost Arts Kitchen, teaches cooking, canning and food preservation classes professionally.
mcmusser@gmail.com
(503) 253 7331
lostartskitchen.wordpress.com

Penny Ammon
Volunteer mentor and consultant
Classes on cooking toward a whole-food based diet, delicious everyday family-friendly foods, shopping tips, cooking classes.
pennyammon@gmail.com
(503) 887-4501

Katherine Deumling
Author, Cook With What You Have
Classes inspired by our local produce and a cook-with-what-you-have approach that builds confidence, creativity and fun in the kitchen. Simple, delicious whole food with global inspiration and local sourcing.
www.cookwithwhatyouhave.com
(503) 715-7697

The Oregon Food Bank offers cooking classes in a workshop setting throughout the year and may be able to direct you to further resources. Go to www.oregonfoodbank.org/Our-Work for more information.
KITCHEN ASSESSMENT

Before deciding to open up your space, do an assessment of the kitchen to determine what kind of services you can provide. Here’s a basic list of equipment to look for when doing a walk-through.

Large Equipment
- Commercial Stove
- Commercial Refrigerator
- Triple Sink
- Refrigerator Storage
- Pantry Storage
- Dishwasher
- Sanitizer
- Oven
- Grill

Although a fully-stocked kitchen is a thing of joy, it’s not always possible with time and budget constraints. Start with the basic list and add more over time, utilizing donations, discounts, and wholesale prices.

Small Equipment
- Chopping knives
- Serving spoons
- Roasting pans
- Cookie sheets
- Baking pans
- Stock pots
- Frying pans
- Wire cooling racks
- Timer
- Meat thermometer
- Oven mitts
- Aluminum foil / plastic wrap
- Aprons
- Hair nets or hats
- Kettle
- Sauce pans
- 2 sets of measuring spoons and dry measuring cups.
- 2-4 rolling pins
- Knives
- Oven mitts
- Dish cloths
- Rubber gloves and first aid kit
- Storage totes

Thanks to Fresh Choice Kitchens in Vancouver, BC for sharing their equipment list at www.communitykitchens.ca/main/CKToolkit - GettingStarted
Consider using a table like the one shown below to schedule community kitchen use. Post it in the kitchen so that all users can see when the kitchen is available.

### Community Kitchen Availability Schedule

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WAIVER FORM

To be completed prior to using host kitchen or participating in group activity.

PARTICIPATION WAIVER

I, _____________________________________, acknowledge that host kitchen/group is not responsible for any injury or illness that might be a direct or indirect result of my participation in cooking classes/micro-enterprise at this address, including but not limited to: cuts, burns, slips, falls, allergic reactions, and other injured as a result of activities and products used. I release host kitchen and its agents, representatives, employees, volunteers, and sponsors from any and all damages, causes of action, claims and liability that might arise from my participation in this kitchen.

INFORMATION WAIVER

I, ________________________________, consent to and allow any use of any and all photographs or videos taken of me and my child(ren) during my participation at this activity. I understand that Kitchen Commons or host kitchen will own the photographs and videotape and the right to use or reproduce such photographs and videotapes in any media, as well as the right to edit them and prepare derivative works.

Name

Address

Phone Number Email

Emergency Contact Phone

Food Allergies / Dietary Restrictions

Other information/health concerns

Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if under 18)
Donation Solicitation Letter

Your Kitchen’s Address
City, State
Postal Code

Mr./Mrs. Last Name
Position/Title
Company Name
Company Address
City, State
Postal Code

Date

Dear Mr./Mrs Last Name,

I am writing to ask for support for our Community Kitchen Name. We are a congregation/community center that hosts micro-enterprise/cooking classes/specific service you provide to provide a space where groups can cook healthy food at a low cost by sharing resources. When our groups cook together, they eat healthier foods at a lower cost than could be afforded if they cooked individually. Additionally, the kitchen provides a place for the community to come together and share skills and ideas.

In our kitchen, we lack the following resources:

- Each item should have a name, description, and $ amount
- Another item
- Another item

Supporting our kitchen is supporting the families who use it to increase their health and involvement in their community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at number and email address. I will contact you soon to discuss the project in greater detail.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Name
Dear Mr./Mrs Last Name,

On behalf of Your Community Kitchen, I would like to thank you for your generous gift of Amount or in-kind item. Your commitment to helping our community kitchen succeed is sincerely appreciated.

With your generous donation, we are able to include this many number of participants or this many number of small business start-ups. Insert as many details here as you can about the effect of your kitchen: if you have statistics on the hunger rates in the neighborhood, use them, and if not, explain anecdotally the difference you see happening as a result of the community kitchen’s presence.

The goal of congregation/community center is to continue to make a difference in the cause in your particular case. With the help of donations from supporters like you, we will continue to watch our program grow and meet the needs of the community around us.

Thank you again for your support of our efforts to reiterate the goals of your particular kitchen and those who use it.

Best wishes,

Your name

Signature

When people or organizations make a donation, they like to know exactly how their contribution helped the cause you work on. Give them specifics, and they’re more likely to give again in the future.
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

KITCHEN AND GROUP
FROM DATE TO DATE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to establish a mutually beneficial agreement between host kitchen and community kitchen group.

Services and Responsibilities of Group/Micro-entrepreneur:
- Obtain and provide a copy of a Food Handler’s card, insurance, and proper licenses
- Coordinate renewal of permits as necessary
- Keep host kitchen safe and clean during use
- Coordinate schedule with host liaison and communicate any changes in a timely fashion
- Adhere to the host’s rules and regulations and treat the space with respect
- Pay any rent or dues on time and in full

Services and Responsibilities of Host:
- Provide the space, at the agreed upon rate, for the duration of the time offered
- Ensure that the group/person has adequate and safe storage
- Communicate any changes in personnel or policy that affect the group/person
- Provide and file a waiver that requires the group/person to hold their own insurance and food handler’s permit
- Provide a list of rules and regulations
- Ensure that the kitchen has proper commercial/food processing permits
- Coordinate inspections as necessary

Each member of this agreement must adhere to the above principles and, in the case of disagreement, communicate them in an open way. If mediation is required, both parties must agree to seek and use mediation services.

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Adapted with permission from the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) Micro-enterprise Handbook © 2011.
**Glossary**

**Community kitchen:** Different people use this term in different ways. Kitchen Commons defines a community kitchen as kitchen space that is explicitly being opened to the public on a regular basis, for a wide range of community activities.

**In-kind donation:** A donation given in goods or services instead of in cash.

**Commercial kitchen:** A kitchen set up to sell food to the public or for use by a group; requires inspection by a health authority before it can be used for commercial purposes.

**Community food security:** According to Mike Hamm and Anne Bellows of the Community Food Security Coalition, community food security is a “condition in which all residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”

**Food Handlers Permit:** A card, issued by the State of Oregon, that demonstrates the holder has taken a class and passed a test on safe food handling practices.

**Micro-enterprise:** A type of small business having fewer than five employees and requiring seed capital of not more than $35,000.

**Micro-enterprise incubator:** Any organization or program that provides space or services to small start-up businesses.
APPENDIX

A. Additional sources of information on Community Kitchens

**Fresh Choice Kitchens**
A Vancouver, BC-based project that promotes the ideas of community kitchens, helps groups set them up, provides leadership training and serves as a center for information exchange.
www.communitykitchens.ca/main/?en&CKToolkit - Evaluations

**Community Kitchens Northwest**
A hub of community kitchen activity in Seattle, WA, Community Kitchens Northwest strives to provide information, support the exchange of ideas and share resources in support of shared kitchen spaces.
www.communitykitchensnw.org/resources

**Cowichan Community Kitchens**
Another great example of a community kitchen in action, this website includes a manual for starting community kitchens from the group’s perspective, which is helpful to understand if you are considering becoming a host site.
www.cowichancommunitykitchens.org/index.html

**Articles on Community Kitchens**
A compilation of research articles on community kitchens and their roles in addressing different socio-economic and health-related issues.

B. Guides and manuals on community kitchens

**Raven Song Community Health Centre**
Another model for running a community kitchen in a shared living space.
communitykitchens.ca/ckfinder/userfiles/files/pdfs/Raven_song_all_together_version2.pdf

**Winnepeg Cooks Together**
A how-to manual for groups hoping to start a community kitchen. Written from the perspective of those looking for a space, rather than for those who are considering hosting a group, but a helpful resource for understanding shared desires and concerns.

**Guelph-Wellington Food Round Table**
A start-up guide for groups who want to find a community kitchen host.
Creating Opportunity through Micro-enterprise: Faith Kitchens as Micro-business Incubators
The Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP), a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), created a handbook that focused on using the assets of local congregations to build local food systems and increase access to “fresh, locally and culturally appropriate food by people with low incomes.”

C. Information on licensing and permits

Oregon Department of Health Food Sanitation Rules Handbook
The official rules on food sanitation, including inspection and licensing procedures, food service facilities, and information about general sanitation practices. A very good source if there are questions for your kitchen not answered in this resource guide.
public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/FoodSafety/Documents/foodsanitationrulesweb.pdf

D. Works Cited