

Incubator Program Application



La Cocina offers opportunities to qualified new business start-ups and existing small food businesses that can significantly benefit from affordable access to a licensed commercial kitchen space, technical assistance and training in food industry techniques and business operations.

La Cocina is looking for candidates that already have a food business or that have a viable business idea. The candidates should have:

- A desire to formalize and expand their food business and a plan for how to achieve that growth.
- Experience operating a food business, formally or informally, for at least 6 months and/or relevant work experience.
- A personal support network.
- An entrepreneurial spirit, enthusiasm and persistence.
- A vision for the business.

Admittance to La Cocina is a highly competitive process that takes into account many factors. Promising candidates will be interviewed by La Cocina and an advisory committee of industry professionals. There is limited space in the kitchen. As businesses move from pre-incubation to incubation and onto graduation spaces open up for new candidates.

Please fill out this form and email, mail, or drop it off in person to the address below.

Mail to: La Cocina
2948 Folsom Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

Email: apply@lacocinasf.org

Phone: (415) 824-2729 x303

Confidentiality Policy

We will ask you to share some personal information so as to be able to determine the impact of the program on its participants once they are admitted. The information you share with us will remain strictly confidential (we will never identify you by name or share your personal information without your signed permission).

I understand the confidentiality policy and hereby give permission to La Cocina staff to use my information for program evaluation and reporting purposes.

Full name

Signature

Date

**PART
1**

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Full name	Middle name	Last name	
Name you wish to be called (optional)	Home phone	Work phone	
Mailing address	City	State	Zipcode
Email	Website		

How did you hear about La Cocina?

**PART
2**

PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Date of birth (MM/DD/YY)

Current age

Born in the United States? Yes No

If not, country of origin: _____

Race and Ethnicity

Which best describes your race/ethnicity? (Mark ALL check boxes that apply)

Indigenous

American Indian/Native American
(Specific group: _____)

Indigenous from Mexico, the Caribbean,
Central America or South America
(Specific group: _____)

Other Indigenous: _____

Asian

Chinese Mongolian

Filipino Central Asian

Japanese South Asian

Korean Southeast Asian

Other Asian: _____

Latino

Caribbean

Central American

Mexican

South American

Other Latino: _____

Black

African

African American Caribbean, Central American,
South American or Mexican

Other Black: _____

Pacific Islander

Chamorro Native Hawaiian Samoan

Native Hawaiian

Samoan

Other Pacific Islander: _____

**Middle Eastern/West Asian
or North African**

North African

West Asian

Other Middle Eastern, West Asian or
North African: _____

White

European

Other White: _____

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

What is your gender? (Mark ONE)

Female Trans Female Not listed. Please specify: _____
Male Trans Male Decline to answer
Genderqueer Non-Binary

What are your preferred pronouns? (Optional)

She/Her He/Him They/Them Not listed. Please specify: _____

How do you describe your sexual orientation or sexual identity? (Mark ONE)

Bisexual Gay/Lesbian/Same-Gender Loving Pansexual
Questioning/Unsure Straight/Heterosexual Decline to answer
Not listed. Please specify: _____

Languages Spoken

Which languages do you speak at home?

How would you rate your fluency in English?

I am a fluent English speaker
I am comfortable speaking in English and I can read and write fairly well in English.
I am comfortable speaking and understanding spoken English, but not reading and writing in English.
I can understand spoken English, but cannot speak it myself or read and write in it.
Other. Please explain: _____

How would you rate your fluency in Spanish?

I am a fluent Spanish speaker
I am comfortable speaking in Spanish and I can read and write fairly well in Spanish.
I am comfortable speaking and understanding spoken Spanish, but not reading and writing in Spanish.
I can understand spoken English, but cannot speak it myself or read and write in it.
Other. Please explain: _____

Education

Did you graduate highschool? Yes No. Highest grade completed: _____

Highest degree received

Name of school

Disability Status

Do you have a disability that requires special accommodation? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Medical Status

Do you have any medical conditions that might affect your safety in a commercial kitchen (allergies, medications, etc.)? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

**PART
3**

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

A household can consist of a spouse or domestic partner, children (including stepchildren and foster children), parent and siblings who live together and share income.

Household Composition

Are you the head of the household? Yes No

How many people, including yourself, live in your household and share income? _____

Number of adults (18 years or older, including yourself): _____

Number of children (below 18 years old): _____

Please list the names and birth dates for any children in your household (up to 8): (Month DD, YYYY)

How many other dependents (e.g. elderly relative and/or adult children) do you have? _____

Income & Expenses

Monthly Sources of Income	Yours	Other Adults in Your Household
Employment/Job	\$	\$
Income drawn from business and/or self-employment	\$	\$
Disability Payments	\$	\$
Unemployment Benefits	\$	\$
Social Security Benefits	\$	\$
Public Assistance	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$

Monthly Expenses

Rent/Mortgage	\$
Food	\$
Credit Card Payments	\$
Loan Payments	\$
Car Expenses (payment, insurance, maintenance)	\$
Child Related Costs (tuition, childcare, toys, books, child support, etc)	\$
Other (use additional sheet if necessary)	\$
Total	\$

Assets & Liabilities

	Assets (Current Value)	Liabilities (Money Owed)
Real Estate (home & mortgage)	\$	\$
Vehicles (car and car loans)	\$	\$
Cash (savings and checking)	\$	
Business assets and liabilities	\$	\$
Credit Cards		\$
Student Loans		\$
Other Liabilities		\$
Other Assets	\$	
	\$	\$

Proof of Income

La Cocina requires proof of income, please attach **CURRENT** proof of income (dated within the last 1-2 months) for each source of income listed on the previous page that you or anyone in your **ENTIRE** household receives.

YOUR APPLICATION WILL NOT BE REVIEWED UNTIL ALL PROOF OF CURRENT INCOME IS SUBMITTED.

Source of Income	Proof Required
	Copies of 1040s or tax return from most recent tax period
Salary/wages from a job	A minimum of two current pay stubs. If your hours vary please provide a minimum of 4-6 pay stubs.
Self-employment income	Signed documentation of income and business expenses itemized* for the last three months. (If income varies provide 6-12 months)
Help from family/friends	Signed letter from family member/friend specifying amount
Child Support	Current proof of child support payments
Unemployment Benefits	Current benefit stubs from EDD (min. of 2)
TANF (AFDC)	Current computer printout of benefits amount
General Ass. (GA)	Current computer printout of benefits amount
Social Security (retirement)	Current letter of benefit amount from SSA
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Current letter of benefit amount from SSA
Disability Benefits (SSDI, SSI, SSP)	Current letter of benefit amount from SSA
State Disability Insurance (SDI)	Current letter of benefit amount or payment stubs from EDD
Food Stamps	No proof required
WIC Benefits	No proof required
Other, please describe:	Itemized* statement signed by you or your employer of miscellaneous income (i.e. odd jobs) including earnings for the last three months (current income statements from worker's compensation, pension, bank account interest, rents, estates, educational assistance, etc.)

**PART
4**

CULINARY EXPERIENCE

Do you have any professional food industry experience? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Do you have any culinary training? Yes No

If yes, please describe. If no, please briefly describe how, when, and from whom you learned to cook.

Have you ever started a food business before? If so, describe.

**PART
5**

YOUR FOOD BUSINESS

Type of business (select all that apply)

Bakery

Consumer Packaged Good

Caterer

Cart Vendor (Food Truck)

Restaurant/Cafe

Other: _____

Describe what food product(s) your business will make.

Briefly describe what inspired you to begin your food business (what was the idea or conversation that made you want to sell your product(s)?).

Business Status

Pre-venture (ideation stage)

New (1st year)

Existing

Business start date

If “pre-venture,” please answer the questions on the next page.

If “new” or “existing,” please answer the questions on page 12.

Pre-Venture Information

If your business status is “pre-venture,” please answer the following questions:

Why have you not started your food business?

Please describe your business idea:

What do you think makes your concept unique?

Why do you want to be a business owner?

What are the three things that most excite you about starting this business?

What are three challenges you anticipate about starting this business?

Business Information

If your business status is “new” or “existing,” please answer the following questions:

of full-time employees

of part-time employees

Where do you cook for your business now?

What do you think are the main challenges facing your business now?

What do you enjoy most about your business?

How much have you already invested in your business? Please explain how much money and what types of items you have purchased.

Monthly average sales (\$)

Monthly overhead costs (e.g. rent, insurance, food, labor, etc):

Have you reached your breakeven point? No Yes

How do you know? _____

Do you have any financial statements? No Yes (please attach)

**PART
6**

BUSINESS TRAINING

What resources do you use to learn about business and entrepreneurship?

Have you taken any business training or courses?

Yes What kind of training have you completed? When and where?

What do you think is the most useful information you learned during that training?

Are you planning to take more classes/seminars in the future?

No Yes (if so, where and when): _____

No Why not?

**PART
7**

BUSINESS PLAN

Do you have a written business plan (full or partial)?

Yes Please attach a copy.

No Please explain why (i.e. have you been operating informally?)

**PART
8**

PRE-INCUBATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

The following exercise is a simulation of the questions that we are likely to ask at your potential interview. It's not important that you have a 'right' answer to the questions below, but, rather, that you have shown that you have taken the time to think about these very important questions, and that you have begun to think about how your business is going to grow and flourish.

These questions are born out of the biggest mistakes that we've seen businesses make, and honest answers are going to be the key to business readiness. So, here we go!

Your Business, Competition, and The Bay Area

1) Can you identify your 3 major competitors? Tell us as much about them as you can. Who are they? Where are they? Etc..

2) A competitive advantage is a business term that identifies difference between similar companies. That can be nearly anything, but it's important that you know what makes you different from someone else. What, if anything, do you think is your competitive advantage?

3) How many other businesses in the Bay Area sell what you sell? How did you find this out?

4) What's the average price point for your product?

Sales Channel

Sales channels, or distribution channels, are essentially the way that you will deliver your product to your customer. This is one of the most important things to think about, as it will shape everything about your price structure and business model. Please try and answer these questions critically.

Please note that La Cocina is a shared commercial kitchen space and we only allow business to business sales. We do not allow sales directly from La Cocina, or pick-ups, and most businesses must deal with deliveries, timing and other details. We mention this only so you can keep it in mind when planning your business. Finally, it's important to understand that while you may, for instance, want to open a restaurant, you will need to begin with sales from La Cocina. This means that you will have to think about your business in stages.

1) How do you plan to make your first sale from La Cocina? Describe in detail. Who are you going to sell this to? Where are you going to sell it? How much are you going to sell it for?

2) Will you need to deliver your product to your customers? If so, how are you going to be able to deliver your products?

3) Can you define wholesale and food-service?

4) How often (on a weekly basis) do you imagine that you will be delivering your product your first year?

Money

We know that this may be the hardest part. And, often, good cooks want nothing to do with finances. Unfortunately, the measure of a good business in our society is the money that it makes, and in order to know that you need to track your business finances. We would like you very much to think about that before you begin to invest money on this business. Please try and be honest with us, we'd all like to make millions of dollars, but we are looking for realistic visions in the application process.

1) In an ideal world, how much would you like to *pay yourself* per year through your business?

2) How much do you think this means that you will need to sell per year?

3) If you have additional income at what point (business sales) would you imagine leaving your other work and focusing entirely on this business?

4) How much capital do you think you will need to start a business? Please provide a detailed list of your start-up costs for your first year.

5) When will you reach your break-even point?

6) How long do you think it will take to reach your sales goal from question #2?

Long-term Vision

One of the hardest things to do in San Francisco is to start a business. We understand that. But, importantly, once you do start your business, you will also need to grow. In this section, we ask you to imagine yourself beyond the start-up phase and to think intently about how you will grow your business.

1) What are your 3 business priorities in your first year?

1.

2.

3.

2) What are your 3 business priorities in your second year?

1.

2.

3.

3) How will you measure success for your business? Please explain both personally and financially.

4) When would you anticipate hiring your first employee? What will they do? Importantly, how much do you think they will cost you monthly (please keep in mind both hourly wages and workers' compensation/benefits).

Exit Strategy

La Cocina is a business incubator. This means that it is a place to begin and grow your business, but also that at some point soon (within 1–5 years to be precise) you will need to fly out on your own. The following questions are intended to examine how, exactly, you imagine that flight might go. We understand that it may not happen exactly like this, but it's instructive to think about these things ahead of time.

1) What does 'graduation from La Cocina' mean to you? Please be as detailed as possible. (Where/How)

**2) What would you think achieving your final goal will cost you? (Think back to your answer for #1)
Where will you find the money?**

3) Do you imagine being a local business, a regional business or a national business?

4) How do you imagine transitioning out of the kitchen? What will you need? (Money? Real estate? etc.). How long do you think it will take for that to happen?

5) Do you envision continuing to support La Cocina once you graduate out of the program? How?

Thank you for applying to La Cocina's Incubator Program!

I understand that this application does NOT imply acceptance into the La Cocina program. I also verify that the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Full name	Signature	Date
------------------	------------------	-------------

Don't forget these required attachments to submit with your application:

Business plan

Financial statements

Cash flow projections

Tax return or other proof of income

Resume or employment history

Letters of recommendation (minimum of 2 from employers, clients, and/or people familiar with your products or business)

Other (examples: menus, promotional materials, sample labels, etc.)