



November 2018

Useful Community Development... quick notes

Inside: Food Start-ups as Economic Development, Opportunity Zones Map and Update, Local Initiatives on Mental Health and Addiction

Visit us and explore at <https://www.useful-community-development.org>.

Why Supporting Your Local Food Start-Ups Makes Sense

This month we explore the very rapidly growing sector of non-profits organized to support profit-making and "value-added" food businesses. In this context value-added could be considered as making locally grown tomatoes into a gourmet tomato sauce, for instance.



Many types of communities, ranging from rural to urban, poor to rich, and mature economy to developing world, should be interested in strategies that both add value to locally produced food and expand choices for healthy but interesting eating.

Why do we think that the one-person food start-up is good for almost every community? It's a great way to make a food commodity generate more income. This tiny enterprise can bring money into your community, whether you are a well-heeled suburb, an isolated village in Africa, or a declining neighborhood in a major city. Some proportion of these food-prep start-ups have the potential to grow into businesses that actually employ others. But even if Grandma just figures out how to support herself with her pies or tamales, that too is a community success.

If your neighborhood falls toward the wealthy end of the spectrum, you can help support local food, organic farmers, and community economics while enjoying home-grown and homemade treats.

For an overview of options, page through this [slide show from the Wallace Center](#) that

will point to some resources and examples from [incubators](#) to accelerators, food hubs, and other types of organizations. Here we only have space to talk about shared kitchens.

Shared kitchens give entrepreneurs from your local community a huge advantage. Outfitting and maintaining a commercial kitchen suitable for licensing is expensive.

Commonly a shared kitchen charges its member businesspersons an hourly rental fee and a monthly storage fee. This allows the business person to take advantage of shared equipment and to scale up their expenses as their production expands.

Sometimes shared kitchens are constructed from scratch, but we also would encourage you to look for existing community kitchens. That term means places such as schools, community centers, and churches that may already have a commercial-grade kitchen or one that is close to the licensing standards. Rental of these community kitchens can be a win-win, providing the non-profit organization host with some revenue while also sparing the entrepreneur the large expense of meeting commercial kitchen standards.

A second approach to avoiding starting from zero on a shared kitchen is to find and rent space in an existing business or residential development kitchen that can be upgraded to commercial kitchen standards. Ask struggling event centers and non-profit organizations who already have rudimentary kitchens for internal use if they might be willing to lease facilities for shared kitchen use.

Note that leasing space from an existing organization to create a shared kitchen would then create two levels of leases--one between the owner and the shared kitchen operator, and one between the operator and the actual member businesspersons.

Or you can turn the tables and start from the beginning by leasing a space and building a commercial kitchen. Then you can become the landlord, and rent time not only to new businesses who are cooking and baking yummy things to eat, but

also to food trucks or caterers who have been in business for a longer time and may want to expand beyond their own kitchens.

For more detail on establishing a shared kitchen, we recommend the [Shared Kitchen Toolkit](#). If you get really serious, note that [La Cocina](#) in San Francisco, one of the organizations highlighted in the first linked article above, will do consulting.

Keeping Up with the New Opportunity Zones Program

The Trump Administration has initiated an opportunity zones program, which allows individuals who invest in these zones to avoid capital gains taxes. Governors designated the zones, and many chose primarily rural areas. So if you're reading this in a rural environment, be sure to check out this [map of the opportunity zones](#) to see where they are in your state. Fortunately it's zoomable.

For commentary on how these zones might relate to planning, see this [Congress for the New Urbanism](#) article.

Do Cities and Communities Need to Add Their Own Revenue to Funding for Mental Health and Substance Abuse?

Recently Denver voters opted to tax themselves in order to better fund mental health and addiction services. You can see the details in [this article](#).

A key point of the article is that state-level programs may lack consistency from county to county and may lack the focus that funding at a local community level can provide.

Our big takeaway for you folks at the neighborhood level though is that there aren't enough spaces in treatment programs and mental health facilities to meet the need, and at the neighborhood level you pay a tremendous price. Nuisance behaviors, domestic violence, prostitution, and burglaries and crime in general are some of the neighborhood results of our avoidance of mental health and addiction issues.

Our message is clear. Figure out how to treat these as neighborhood issues, as well as state and national problems. (You might want to see our website article on [community mental health](#) for some ideas.)

New on Our Website We answered these questions about [how to rezone residential property for more units](#), international perspective on [empowering illiterate women](#), [reporting a "no hunting" deed restriction violation](#), and someone [paid to rezone then city did blanket rezoning](#).

Copyright © 2018 Useful Community Development, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

