

5 Key Findings from the Food Equity Coalition's Inclusive Food Business Survey

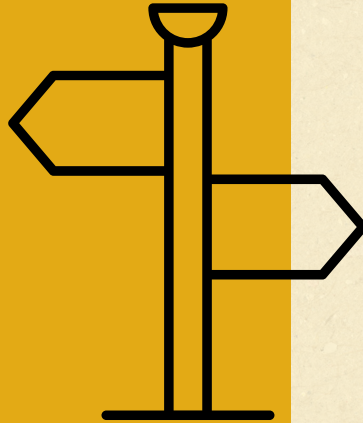


We asked 20 local entrepreneurs and food business experts how La Plata County can support greater diversity among our food businesses. Here is what we learned...



#1 Startup Guidance

Entrepreneurs are looking for more clarity and step-by-step guidance on the process of starting their food business in La Plata County. The local business network could be more cohesive, streamlined and easier to navigate.



#2 Cultural Inclusivity

There are limitations in language access, a sense of belonging and culturally-aligned resources, especially for immigrant-owned businesses.

Food safety training, business planning and general web-based resources were mentioned as limited to English only. There is a general lack of outreach to BIPOC and immigrant entrepreneurs.

#3 Food Business-Friendly Policy with an emphasis on Food Truck & Mobile Vendor Access

City codes make it challenging for food businesses to succeed in Durango. Brick and Mortar businesses struggle to find affordable spaces.

Food truck locations are restrictive and difficult to identify, while manufacturing space is hard to come by.



#4 Desire for Education

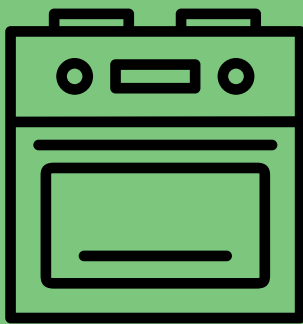
Food entrepreneurs are interested in building their business skills, specifically as it relates to marketing, financial management and understanding business taxes.



#5 Commercial Kitchen Access

Acquiring a permanent commercial kitchen in Durango is cost prohibitive so many entrepreneurs look for shared commissary kitchen spaces.

Those who were surveyed expressed how few commissary kitchens are available and the high costs and the lack of cold storage access as being major barriers to existing kitchens.



Language access and lack of clarity around how those kitchens operate were specific concerns for immigrant-owned businesses.

Other important findings:

Policy - County and city regulations are burdensome for small food businesses, not just for food trucks but for brick and mortar and manufacturing. There are further complications reported when a business takes over an existing location that is not permitted for their needs.



Supply Chain- Businesses report that there are financial and physical barriers to accessing specialized equipment.

Local Food - There is a strong desire among food businesses to utilize locally produced ingredients.

Food Equity Coalition's New Strategies Moving Forward

TOOLS:

- We are creating comprehensive, multi-lingual resources for La Plata County that will guide entrepreneurs step-by-step through the startup process
- A new GIS Food System Internship is launching this Fall 2022 in partnership with City of Durango, Fort Lewis College and Good Food Collective to provide a user-friendly mapping tool to reflect city zoning, food retail and food-truck friendly locations as well as commissary kitchen facilities.

POLICIES:

- We are partnering with the City's Community Development Department to better communicate and improve existing resources, such as permits and code, while also assisting the City with more food business-friendly practices.
- We're advocating for an improved permitting process for both mobile and permanent food business locations.

TO LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED:

GoodFoodCollective.org
FoodAccess@goodfoodcollective.org

PRACTICES:

- We will be facilitating food business "ecosystem" events, improving inter-organization communication, and providing education on equitable and inclusive practices.
- We plan to share materials that bring more awareness and support to BIPOC- and immigrant-owned food enterprises.

