

Interfaith Neighbors & The Business Development Center

Food Entrepreneurship Program Handbook

The “Food Entrepreneurship Program” (FEP) is a partnership between Interfaith Neighbors and the Rutgers Food Innovation Center, the goal of which is to assist emerging food entrepreneurs with financial and technical assistance in order to help them achieve their business goals.

This document will serve as a guide for individuals with an interest in developing food products for wholesale and retail markets.

Step 1 - Submit a Request

Introduce yourself by sending us an email. Please enter in the subject line “Interested in FEP Program” and provide the following basic information in the body of your email:

- Name
- Phone Number and best time to reach you
- Description of your food product
- Any relevant work experience that you feel will help you succeed in the Program
- Have you saved any funds to help you launch your new business?
- Do you have a sample of your product you can bring?

You will then receive a copy of the Food Entrepreneur Business Sketch, an online form that collects further details about your product and business plan. Please fill out this form for consideration in the program.

Step 2 - Initial Meeting

If selected, you will be contacted to schedule an initial meeting with Interfaith Neighbors staff. Please bring any product or packaging samples that you have, as well as any other relevant materials to this meeting. During this meeting, we will review and discuss with you the information provided in your Food Entrepreneur Business Sketch. This meeting will also serve to review the FEP Agreement and ensure that all parties are in agreement regarding costs and financial details.

Entrepreneur, once accepted, will be responsible for the following financial costs:

- 10% of the \$950 fee for each test day the entrepreneur uses Rutgers' facility and personnel. Interfaith Neighbors will provide a 0% interest loan to the Entrepreneur for the remaining fee of \$855 for each test day.
- Repayment of all 0% interest loans from Interfaith Neighbors.

Step 3 - Determine Acceptance or Denial

Present finished Food Entrepreneur Business Sketch and discuss details. Send Work plan document to client once accepted.

Step 5 - Execute Program Agreement & Develop Work Plan

Once your business sketch is determined to be feasible, Interfaith Neighbors and the Business Development Center will work with you to develop a work plan in accordance with our experience and your needs as an entrepreneur.

Step 6 - Bench-scale Testing Day at Rutgers

When the initial steps of your work plan have been completed, Interfaith Neighbors will schedule a day to travel to the Rutgers Food Innovation Center in Bridgeton, NJ. At this time you will produce a small batch of your product along with Rutgers staff, who will record necessary details of your recipe and help you to determine how best to scale-up. **Outcome is a Scheduled Process Document.**

Step 7 - Sensory Testing & Continuation of Work Plan

Continue your tasks as outlined in your work plan. Review results from your day at Rutgers with Interfaith Neighbors and Business Development Center staff. Begin drafting a "tasting survey" for you to test customer reaction to your product.

Step 8 - Scale-up Production

Interfaith Neighbors will schedule a second trip to the Rutgers Food Innovation Center for you to produce your first commercial batch! Make sure all necessary items of your work plan have been completed ahead of this date.

Step 9 - Test Marketing

Start marketing your product, obtaining feedback from potential customers and making adjustments as necessary. Revisit your Food Entrepreneur Business Sketch and see where improvements can be made.

Step 10 - Evaluation and Plan Adjustment

Meet with Interfaith Neighbors and the Business Development Center to assess efforts to date and plan for further production of your product.

Step 11 - Selling Your Product

Continue your business while meeting the repayment schedule as agreed upon by you, Interfaith Neighbors and the Business Development Center.