

Stirring Up Success

2022 COMMUNITY IMPACT
AND ENGAGEMENT REPORT

THE  **COMMISSARY**
downtown kitchen incubator





DEAR FRIEND.

The food industry here in Rochester, NY, is full of energy, new ideas, and diverse flavors—but until a few years ago, it was missing one key ingredient: a space for budding entrepreneurs to make their dreams a reality.

In 2020, amidst enormous challenges and much uncertainty, our community came together to launch The Commissary and address this great need. We have grown since our founding and have gained 36 new members in 2022, and are now home to 60 member businesses.

The Rochester Commissary has been busy creating economic opportunities for our members, many of whom are women and people of color. These makers, bakers, and chefs are looking to legitimize their goals and food business ideas. At its core, our work helps break down the systemic barriers to access that many of our members face when entering the food industry.

As our members grow their businesses and connect with the community through food, we look forward to expanding our incubation services and strengthening our partnerships to elevate their successes. In 2023, we will continue to increase our offerings to meet the needs of our growing membership base.

We are proud to share this report that details what we've accomplished since our launch in 2020—alongside and in support of Rochester's dedicated food entrepreneurs. Thank you for sharing your time, your generosity, and your passion for our collective future.

With gratitude,

THE ROCHESTER COMMISSARY TEAM

REMOVING BARRIERS & BUILDING DREAMS

Food Business Incubation

Ingredients for Impact

-  **Food industry pioneers** with innovative visions for the next great restaurant, packaged food good, or catering business to emerge in Rochester.
-  **A warm, collaborative membership program** that supports entrepreneurs, from brand new business owners to seasoned chefs looking to try something fresh to realize their dreams.
-  **Entrepreneurs in residence** providing industry-specific business development guidance and culinary industry resources.

Recipe for Success

The Commissary's food business incubation services are at the heart of what we do. This core program provides aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools they need to build their businesses and prosper in their creative endeavors. Our members gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to start, grow, or adapt their food businesses. Our community's giving spirit directly drives food business growth in Rochester.

By the Numbers

60

TOTAL MEMBER
BUSINESSES

34

BIPOC
BUSINESSES

37

WOMAN-OWNED
BUSINESSES

“

Being here, they want to see you succeed. They made a payment plan for me to be successful and guided me to make sure those things are taken care of. From there, I didn't quit, I didn't stop. They didn't let me fail... When I once felt like there was a bottomless pit for me, now I'm on top.”




—RICHARD WILLIAMS (RICHIE'S GET-N-GO & RICHIE'S TASTE OF HEAVEN)



FUELING IDEAS & FEEDING THE COMMUNITY

Shared Commercial Kitchen

Ingredients for Impact

-  **A state-of-the-art shared Production Kitchen**, available 24/7 and fully licensed and insured, with a full line of commercial-grade equipment, dishwashing stations, free cleaning supplies, cold and dry storage, and plenty of room to grow.
-  **A public-facing Performance Kitchen and takeout window in the heart of Downtown Rochester.** Our accessible space is open to all, and perfect for hosting events, attending cooking classes, and ordering takeout from your favorite Commissary member.
-  **Essential equipment**, including iCombi ovens, ranges, convection ovens, a blast chiller, a dough proofer, a tilt skillet, a steam-jacketed kettle... and more!

Recipe for Success

Costs associated with space rental and equipment are often the biggest barriers to entry for food business entrepreneurs. Thanks to community supporters, The Commissary provides the resources necessary for even the biggest culinary ideas our members may have, with low entry costs and minimal risk. Members rent space in two well-equipped kitchens on a monthly or as-needed basis, so businesses of all sizes can find long-term success.

By the Numbers

14

PRODUCTION
KITCHEN
STATIONS

35

PIECES OF
PROFESSIONAL
EQUIPMENT

44

START-UP
BUSINESSES

“

A month after I started selling, I was part of an event where I was really hoping to sell maybe half of my bottles, but at a 5-hour event I sold out in 3 hours...I was blown away by the community and the amount of people who wanted to be in my corner and support me.”

—BRENNA MULTALA (KOMBUCHARISTA)



COOKING UP CONNECTIONS

Community Building and Industry Resources

Ingredients for Impact

-  **Readily available staff** to help members navigate the complexities of industry licensing and all aspects of the food business development process.
-  **Frequent, community workshops** led by local organizations and experts in their field. Workshops cover a range of critical food business development topics such as financing, legalities, marketing, packaging and operations management.
-  **Real-world opportunities & partnerships** that offer vital resources such as access to business loans, culinary training, legal services, and more. Our collaborators include Foodlink, Ibero-American Action League, Just Cause, The Geva Theatre, Rochester Public Market, & more.

Recipe for Success

The Commissary provides members with the professional and interpersonal resources needed to build something truly special. Together, we're creating vital connections to help members bring their skills beyond the walls of our shared kitchen, graduate from our incubation programs, and ensure their long-term sustainability and future success.

By the Numbers

28

DEVELOPMENT
WORKSHOPS

12

HOSTED
EVENTS

09

PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS

“

The Commissary has helped me overcome doubt. Being here and being able to work a lot and work on my craft has helped me gain extra confidence.”

-TERRELL MCLEAN (BUBBY'S BBQ)



DIG IN

How You Can Help

Community support nourishes the dreams of Rochester's entrepreneurs.

At The Commissary, our members, many of whom are women and people of color, are traditionally underrepresented among business owners. **Together, we're changing that.**

Your contributions fuel the fire so that Rochester's new and innovative food businesses can follow their passions. Our members—who range from brand-new business owners to industry veterans, BBQ buffs to kombucha connoisseurs—have access to state-of-the-art equipment and collaborative business development services. None of this would be possible without a generous community of supporters.

The Commissary is ready to meet our members' needs whether providing marketing support, mentor relationships with established business owners, or a tilt skillet used to make Rochester's next



delicacy. Through our incubation services our members have evolved to hire staff, and scale to purchase food trucks and more.

We envision an impact that reaches beyond the kitchen walls and even outside of our city—together, we're building a scalable model for food business incubation in mid-sized cities like ours. **We encourage you to join our community.**

WAYS TO GIVE



Donate to The Commissary

Local food businesses are an essential piece to any vibrant, thriving community. With a gift to The Rochester Commissary, you help create jobs, strengthen our local economy, and develop equitable opportunities for budding business owners. Supporters like you make our dreams for Rochester's food industry a reality.



Donate Time! We are always looking to connect our entrepreneurs with seasoned food industry experts. Host a workshop series on behalf of your organization, or provide one-on-one expertise to current members.



Donate Equipment! The Commissary is always looking for professional kitchen equipment. Your donation provides our members with the tools they need to expand their businesses.

“

Being a member at The Commissary gives me so much **access** to different opportunities and a very **diverse market**... My days weren't always bright but I finally made it to the other side. It's only up from here. **GrillBae gave me a real purpose and I'm just getting started.**"

- DALLAS CLINTON (GRILLBAE)

**SUPPORTING THE
COMMISSARY IS**

**FUN.
EASY.
DELICIOUS.**

-  Bring a friend down to our location at 250 E. Main St. for a bite
-  Hire a member to cater your next dinner party or office event
-  Host your next party or event at The Commissary
-  Tell friends and family or other potential food businesses about us
-  Follow our members on social media
-  Follow us on social media @RocCommissary





Together We Are Reimagining the Future of Rochester's Food Industry.

The Rochester Commissary Downtown Kitchen Incubator | Sibley Square 250 E Main St, Rochester, NY 14604
rochestercommissary.org/support | [@RocCommissary](https://twitter.com/RocCommissary)

Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC) is the parent organization of The Commissary;
both corporations are 501(c)(3) not-for-profits