

City New Haven	
Country	United States of America
Population	129,585
Title of policy or practice	Micro Food-Based Business Ordinance
Subtitle (optional)	
URL video	https://soundcloud.com/new-haven-independent/morning-sync-crossover-cooking-with-change (radio show)
Category	Social and Economic Equity
SDGs	SDGs: 1, 5, 8, 9, 10.
Brief description	<p>Shared kitchens play a unique and vital role in food and entrepreneurial ecosystems in New Haven. Shared kitchens are licensed commercial spaces that provide a pathway for food entrepreneurs - ranging from chefs, caterers, food truck operators, and bakers, to value-added producers and packaged food and beverage makers - to launch and grow their businesses. By renting space in a shared kitchen on an hourly, daily, or monthly basis, businesses can produce food in compliance with regulatory requirements without needing to invest in their own facility during a stage when capital and cash flow are a challenge. By providing entrepreneurs, producers, and food access programs with affordable space, shared kitchens can help strengthen local food systems and build community prosperity. Because of this, shared kitchens are being embraced as tools to achieve a wide variety of community impact goals, from job creation to workforce training, healthy food access to nutrition education, farm viability to localizing the food economy, and from neighbourhood revitalization to tourism.</p> <p>Our ordinance amendment includes language into the Code of General Ordinances to define these shared kitchen spaces, their users, and specifically micro-food businesses (those grossing less than 250K USD/yr). This proposal came out of the experience of a local businesswoman who found the process of renting a kitchen space overly cumbersome given the size and scale of her enterprise. Collaboratively, we addressed the obstacles she experienced through successful policy change. Currently, the licensing process in New Haven presents both financial and regulatory barriers for some shared kitchen users, such as micro-food businesses, to access and use a shared kitchen. Ultimately, we were able to lower the licensing fee for micro-food businesses and reduce the regulatory burden of inspections for these small enterprises, which now allows for a lower barrier to entry for small-scale food entrepreneurs.</p>
Date of start and state (ongoing/completed)	04/2019 Ongoing
Actors and stakeholders involvement	A local businesswoman initiated the process with support from community advocates and an Alder. The new Food System Policy Director subsequently became involved in drafting the legislation in collaboration with the relevant City Departments (Fire, Planning & Zoning, Building, and Health), the Water Pollution Control Authority, and the New Haven Food Policy Council. Input from all interested parties led to the final ordinance language that was successfully passed by the City's Board of Alders.
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept 2018: Local businesswoman submits proposal to Board of Alders (BOA); • January - February 2019: Desk research conducted; Chicago identified as good example; • Mar 2019: Review by BOA Legislation Committee; many speak in support of ordinance change, and encourage thorough research; • March - April 2019: Food System Policy Director conducts additional research and collaboratively drafts legislation;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2019: Draft legislation submitted to BOA; BOA approves Director's ordinance language.
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>Geographically, to the best of our knowledge, we are the only city in the USA who has specifically defined a micro-food business as a business grossing less than 250K USD/yr and who has passed local legislation using this term. As part of the research process, the City's Food System Policy Director reached out to larger cities that had an active shared kitchen scene. However, the Director found that there were very few legal precedents for a micro-food business law. New Haven is using a novel legal approach to create an enabling environment in an attempt to lower the barriers for these very small food enterprises and entrepreneurs to access valuable resources. Namely, we are aiming to utilize the many shared commercial kitchen spaces in New Haven to create non-farm, low-skill urban employment opportunities while creating unique value-added products. By creating this enabling environment, we are also creating the possibility that more small food entrepreneurs will relocate to and stay in New Haven. Methodologically, through this unique legislation, we are localizing the approach to the SDGs related to poverty, gender equality, inclusive economic growth, innovation and infrastructure, and reducing domestic inequalities - all through urban food policy. This demonstrates the cross-cutting nature of food systems - not just in relation to the global food system, but also in terms of local food systems. Specifically, we are addressing SDG 2.3, 5.1, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6, 9.3, 10.2, and 10.3.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Investments in shared kitchens offer inclusive economic opportunities. A 2016 survey of kitchen incubators by American Communities Trust found that 53% of kitchen renters were women and 28% were people of colour. The shared commercial kitchen has become an important tool for overcoming obstacles entrepreneurs with limited resources face when entering the food industry, especially people from historically marginalized communities and neighbourhoods, and of a lower socioeconomic status.</p> <p>The City's Food System Policy Division and the New Haven Food Policy Council are committed to the continuous review and revision of food- and agriculture-related ordinances. Monitoring will include tracking the number of licenses registered through this new licensing process (available through the regulatory body - the Health Department). This will include data such as gender identity and race of the licensee and the type of value-added product they aim to create. MUFPP indicators 21 (# of fair-wage jobs created), 22 (# of additional shared kitchens utilized), 23 (any additional related policies developed), and 24 (increase in # of learning and leadership opportunities through micro-food business operation) will also be tracked.</p> <p>Most importantly, this ordinance enables more equitable access to needed resources for food entrepreneurs.</p>
<p>Inclusion</p>	<p>This ordinance change was an exercise in thematic and territorial inclusion. As the Food System Policy Director, it was my first time working with the Fire Department and Building Department. These are not departments that I imagined I would work with, despite having a very cross-sectoral view of urban food systems. However, it was necessary that we worked together and reached a common understanding since they are part of the regulatory process for licensing commercial kitchens in New Haven. Additionally, since I was also new to my position at the time of this ordinance proposal, it was my first opportunity to work with the Planning Department and Health Department. I continue to work with Planning on other large projects, and am beginning to work with Health Department, though more slowly. I also had to work and reach agreement with the Water Pollution Control Authority, which is a regional sewer authority, who also regulates commercial kitchens.</p> <p>Civil society actively provided input during the drafting of the ordinance through venues such as the New Haven Food Policy Council's Policy Advancement Committee and other community advocate meetings.</p>

Ultimately, building trust across several City departments, among residents and community advocates, and with Alders was key in the process of developing, drafting, and passing the micro-food business ordinance.

Adversity coefficient

New Haven is a challenging municipal environment for food policy change. Administrative conditions such as the lack of resources and lack of leadership and capacity within and between departments act as barriers to effective change. There is currently very little internal awareness around urban food systems and food policy in the local government. Even with a Food System Policy Director in place, much of the work that is expected of this position focuses on charity and emergency food assistance, with little focus on systems-level or root-cause solutions.

For example, departments that were contacted regarding the micro-food business ordinance were initially confused as to why the Food System Policy Director was reaching out to them. After an extensive explanation, the conversation became more productive. Many do not understand the importance of, for example, supporting a thriving food economy through economic development, creating an enabling environment for urban agriculture through zoning amendments, or the cross-cutting issues between food and health. This lack of awareness is not limited to within the local government, but is also prevalent in the Board of Alders, and among many New Haven residents.

However, relative autonomy for the Food System Policy Director/Division provides an opportunity for collaboratively defining a new food systems vision and priorities for New Haven. This is inching toward reality. Other barriers, such as having been allocated zero dollars for the new budget season, and having no support staff and disengaged supervisors introduces additional administrative hurdles for the coming year(s) in this mid-sized city.