



DECEMBER 2021

THE CASE FOR

CommonWealth Kitchen

GREATER BOSTON'S NONPROFIT FOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR

At **CommonWealth Kitchen**, we believe in the power of inclusive entrepreneurship to change the world. In fact, we prove every day what is possible when we remove barriers and level the playing field: talented, passionate individuals from all backgrounds are able to pursue their dreams and together move society to be more equitable, resilient, and just.

Our food economy has been built on the backs of too many who have been overlooked, undervalued, and systematically excluded. At CommonWealth Kitchen, we are reimagining our food economy as a driver of equity, resilience, and community—where all people are valued, opportunity is distributed, and we acknowledge the real cost of food.

We've seen firsthand that when we align resources with values, and combine intention

with action, our impact multiplies far beyond the food entrepreneurs in our network and the walls of our shared kitchen.

This is the work of fixing a broken system from its foundation.

Our powerful network of diverse businesses, community partners, and industry allies share a passion for people, a hunger for equity, and a love of food. **Together, we are unstoppable.**



IMPACT

250

DIVERSE COMPANIES LAUNCHED
including food trucks, caterers, bakers, restaurants, and product companies. More than 65% of them are still in business.*

Who owns our member companies?

75%
BIPOC

70%
WOMEN

35%
IMMIGRANTS

500

NEW PERMANENT JOBS
created by our network of food businesses generating over **\$65M ANNUALLY** in combined gross revenue.*

Paulette Ngachoko, founder of Hapi African Gourmet
PHOTO BY KAREN GOWEN

*pre-COVID

More than a kitchen – a home.

CommonWealth Kitchen is an entrepreneurial nonprofit social enterprise that is transforming the food industry in Boston. We provide a powerful launchpad for aspiring food businesses, serve as trusted advisors and advocates, and work alongside our businesses throughout their journey from start-up to established company. We provide essential infrastructure, practical resources, and valuable industry networks, including our shared kitchen facilities, outsourced manufacturing, custom business education, technical training, and coordinated access to markets and capital. We open doors that have historically been closed; forge partnerships based on shared values; and expand the table so that everyone has a seat.

For our emerging business leaders, CommonWealth Kitchen is their home. This is their movement—and all of us are key to their success.

By investing in CommonWealth Kitchen and the diverse entrepreneurial business community we nurture, you are helping build a more equitable, resilient food economy and a society truly grounded in racial, social, and economic justice.



Opening Doors. Building Powerful Networks.

Building an equitable food economy takes imagination, creativity, persistence, and determination. But the results are impressive.

The **CommonWealth Kitchen Launchpad at MIT**, which opened in September 2021, sets up three of our BIPOC-owned food businesses—Bibim Box, Las Palmas, and Carolicious—with their own retail kiosks inside MIT's busy student center. Students are able to use pre-paid meal plans to purchase delicious arepas, rice bowls, and other treats. To pull this off, we worked closely with each business to develop custom menus and staffing plans geared toward a student population, while also working through complex business and legal terms with MIT's procurement team. It's classic CommonWealth Kitchen—identifying meaningful market opportunities and then creatively reimagining strategic partnerships that work for the benefit of all involved.

Similarly, our pre-COVID work with Harvard Dining Services integrated sauces from three of our product companies—FreshZen, Mr. Tamole, and Hapi African Gourmet—into their cafeteria menus providing a high volume, reliable sales channel for these diverse businesses. The complex project required identifying companies and offerings that could be integrated into their menu plans, negotiating pricing and payment terms, and sorting out ordering and distribution. Additionally, it required coaching businesses on pricing and helping adjust recipes, plus several rounds of tastings; development of marketing materials; working through distributor on-boarding; etc. Put on hold due to COVID, this work should resume in early 2022, and will be replicated at Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Colleges of the Fenway in partnership with Sodexo. It is a project with real potential to fundamentally shift procurement dollars toward more local, diverse, and sustainable purchasing with an eye toward systems change.

Owners and staff of Las Palmas at MIT
PHOTO BY TORY PRESTON-DJAMBOE



Unprecedented Opportunity.

As the world slowly reopens, CommonWealth Kitchen is at a crucial inflection point. There is urgent work required to help our hard-hit food business community recover from the past 20+ months, and we fear a wave of closures coming without additional government relief and technical support. Much of our core program work for the next year will necessarily focus on equitable recovery.

We also find ourselves positioned for some exciting and unprecedented opportunities for growth and more importantly, impact. Projects on the horizon include:

- Development of a CommonWealth Kitchen food hall in Roxbury and another in Cambridge
- Replication of our MIT Launchpad at another college campus
- Launch of a CommonWealth Kitchen-branded end cap to feature our packaged goods companies at a regional grocery chain
- Creating a custom New England-grown veggie burger for several institutional food service partners

Also in 2022, we are preparing to launch an expanded CommonWealth Kitchen Food Show aimed at showcasing our diverse restaurants, food trucks, caterers, and product companies to help drive sales and spur business recovery.



We Need You.

In order to effectively pursue these new opportunities, we first need to secure our base, which means purchasing our Dorchester food manufacturing facility.

With support from the City of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and generous funders, we will purchase the 36,000 SF property this January. With your help, we can invest in a variety of building repairs to address deferred maintenance, improve production efficiency, and lower fixed costs through various energy improvements. The total cost for this initial phase is \$10M, and so far, we have raised \$8.5M. A second phase, focused on expanding our production and training space and adding a retail component, is also in the works.

All of this work takes time and resources. That's where you come in!

A GIFT TO COMMONWEALTH KITCHEN changes the lives of the entrepreneurs we nurture, strengthens our food economy, and creates a more equitable, sustainable, and just economy and society for all of us. Your generous support enables CommonWealth Kitchen to take bold, ambitious action in pursuit of this vision. Together, we can reach the goal of a truly vibrant and inclusive society and a robust food economy where all of us can participate and prosper.

We simply cannot afford the status quo any longer.

To learn more about CommonWealth Kitchen, please contact Jen Faigel, Executive Director, at 857-231-1863 or jen@commonwealthkitchen.org.

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