

HAMILTON
BUSINESS
CENTRE.



A *launchpad* FOR TURNING CULINARY
PASSION INTO A THRIVING BUSINESS

Food incubator. Retail shop. Creative space.

[HAMILTONBUSINESSCENTRE.CA](https://hamiltonbusinesscentre.ca)

COMMON HOUSE CAFÉ

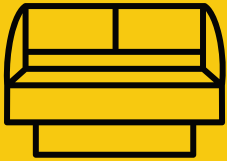
A Local Food Business Program

Starting a food business is hard, especially if your goal is to get your product into retailers. Shelf space is limited, premium listing fees apply, your product must compete against larger national brands and their advertising resources, and commercial kitchen space is hard to come by. At the Hamilton Business Centre, we understand the obstacles when starting a food business and believe everyone deserves the chance to showcase their delicious goods to the world.

Common House Café is an exciting new initiative that invites licensed food businesses in the startup or expansion phase to join a collaborative and inclusive artisan food incubator, retail shop, and creative space designed to be the perfect backdrop a business's growth. **Here, local foodpreneurs can access essential kitchen equipment, showcase their products, receive training and mentorship, and network with fellow foodpreneurs.**



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



Provide product showcase opportunities to promote business growth and awareness



Business and food specific training and mentorship



Networking and collaboration



Provide resources and opportunities for business expansion



Transition to Brick-and-Mortar or similar



Provide essential kitchen equipment required for success



Create employment opportunities



Provide coffee and food services for City Hall staff, visitors, and surrounding residents

VENDOR SUPPORTS



Essential Kitchen Appliances:

64" Refrigerated Deli Cooler, 3 Bay Hot Food Well, 28" Refrigerated Sandwich Prep Station, 2 Commercial Coffee Makers, Pop Fridge, 2 Soup Kettles, Commercial Conveyor Toaster, 96" Stainless Steel Prep Tables, Infrared Thermometers, Hot Water Tower and More!



Prime Location:

Located on the 1st floor of City Hall, Common House Café is a freshly updated, licensed and inspected facility with a large open concept design and seating for 40+ guests. Operating between the hours of 8 am to 4 pm.

VENDOR SUPPORTS



Marketing Support:

In-house marketing support from Hamilton Business Centre consultants, community partners, internal partners, and a managed café website and social media accounts to promote vendor success.



Training & Mentorship:

In-person and virtual training in business operations, finance, pricing, hiring, bringing commercial packaged goods to market, and 1-1 mentorship and consultation with legal and industry experts.



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Primary Vendor

The primary vendor is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the café and can access any of the essential kitchen appliances provided.

The primary vendor must:

- Be in the start-up or expansion phase of their business
- Have a valid licensed and inspected food business in Hamilton
- Have the ability to operate Mon-Fri from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Commit to a minimum lease term agreement of 10 months
- Be able to provide basic breakfast, lunch, and coffee services
- Have the ability to provide catering services
- Participate in HBC training and mentorship for 6 months to support business success

Note: Only 1 primary vendor is permitted each lease term (currently waitlisted).





PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Secondary Vendor

Secondary vendors provide prepacked food items that are displayed and sold in the café daily. Food items can include: baked goods, hot sauces, mustards, and more!

Secondary vendors must:

- Be in the start-up or expansion phase of business
- Have a valid licensed and inspected food business in Hamilton
- Be able to provide food item(s) prepackaged
- Commit to providing food item(s) for a minimum of 3–6-months on consistent basis as needed
- Participate in HBC training and mentorship for duration of food item being sold

Note: A maximum of 3-5 secondary vendors is permitted in the café at any given time.

TRAINING & MENTORSHIP



Virtual & In-Person Training:

Food specific: Introduction to The Food and Beverage Industry, Packaging and Labelling Your Food Product, Making Your Food Product More Attractive to Retailers, How to Approach and Secure Retailers, Supporting In-store Sales, Scaling Your Food Business.

Business specific: Sales, Record Keeping, Market Research, Business Model Canvas, Key Business Practices, Time Management, Building Teams and Organizational Culture, Contracts and Leases, Hiring Employees vs Self Employed Contractors, Understanding Financial Statements, Intellectual Property, Business Planning, Cashflow, Marketing Messaging, Marketing Analytics.

Mentorship:

1-1 mentorship and consultation includes meeting with: legal experts, food product expert experts, business operations experts, and ongoing support and mentorship from the Hamilton Business Centre.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Step #1

Call-to-action:

Social media campaigns (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) were launched, both organic and paid, inviting eligible businesses to apply.

Step #2

Prescreening:

Applications were screened based on the questionnaire. Businesses without a valid municipal license or those not meeting basic eligibility were disqualified. Further screening evaluated their ability to provide essential food services and the need of an overhead hood range.





PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Step #3

Interview:

Selected applicants were invited to tour the facility, learn program specifics, discuss their business model, service offering, ability to provide the required services consistently, and the rules and expectation of operating a business within a municipal facility.

Step #4

Selection:

Applicants were selected based on a developed rubric with a focus on commitment, readiness and delivery, business stage and compliance, comprehension of the program and it's objectives, enthusiasm, and ability and willingness to participate in all required training and mentorship.

The Café





