

STEP-BY-STEP PLAYBOOK

The Disaster Relief Playbook for Shared and Commercial Kitchens

A step-by-step playbook any commercial kitchen can use to
activate underutilized space as a food distribution operation
during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

Created in partnership with



*Oside Kitchen
Collaborative*



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The Disaster Relief Playbook for Shared and Commercial Kitchens

A Model of Success

How O'Side Kitchen Collaborative is Feeding Thousands from Their Commissary Kitchen

O'Side Kitchen Collaborative (OKC) is a 501c3 nonprofit based in Oceanside, California that's best known for rescuing surplus food from farms and organizations and finding ways to feed people.

When Mike Perez, Director of Operations at OKC, attended a restaurant meetup at the start of the COVID-19 crisis in California, he realized that restaurants experiencing low sales or temporary closures were still fully stocked with food nearing expiration.

Mike had the commercial kitchen. Restaurants had fresh food. Thousands of at-risk people now confined at home were hungry and increasingly unable to make ends meet. The potential opportunity was becoming crystal clear.

The OKC could assist the fight the COVID-19 from three sides:

- Purchase ingredients from restaurants to mitigate business loss
- Hire service workers who find themselves out of work
- Provide local organizations with prepared meals to feed vulnerable people

Within a week, the OKC was receiving food and preparing meals. Two days later, the OKC had served over 1,000 meals to the elderly or immunocompromised in isolation, children on free lunch programs, and people experiencing homelessness.

This playbook will guide you through the key actions the OKC took to transform their commercial kitchen into a highly-efficient food preparation and distribution hub that benefits the local community in multiple ways.



O'side Kitchen Collaborative



Getting Started

Preparing Your Kitchen

If you're a nonprofit looking for a commercial kitchen partner for this initiative, you can locate shared kitchens in your area using The Kitchen Door.

If you operate a shared kitchen that's licensed to produce food by your local health department, there are a few preparations that need to be made.

- Consolidate or remove any unusable or privately-owned ingredients in storage
- Establish Facility Access SOPs with your team
- Create a dedicated area to facilitate administrative work and organizing
- Set up all your extra tables and clear all working surfaces—you're going to need them
- Prepare a donation receiving area with clear guidelines for first-in/first-out
- Clean and sanitize everything

“You need an area to accept donations, space for cooking, tables that work as an assembly line, and an area where organizations pick up the food. It's really about getting down to the bare necessities of what you actually need to accomplish the mission.”

Sourcing Food

How to Find and Pay for Food

In an emergency, there's no time to secure funding then source food. To get up and running quickly, it needs to happen the other way around.

For Mike at OKC, this meant reaching out to restaurants impacted by COVID-19, asking for donations, and offering to pay later if he was able to secure funding.

"I called local restaurants and told them we didn't have money, but if we were able to get it—and I couldn't make promises—we would happily pay for any food they could donate immediately. We let the restaurants handle the itemizing, and those IOU's are ready for when we get government funding. Several restaurants just donated the food outright."

When you're looking for local food and supplies partners, consider reaching out to...

- Restaurants that have closed or heavily-reduced hours
- Foodservice distributors
- Institutions that have closed, like elder care centers, colleges, or schools
- Businesses that have closed, like zoos, theme parks, or sports arenas
- Caterers and non-commercial foodservice providers
- Food banks that are seeing an increase in funding and donations
- Local online business communities
- Your extended network

You never know who has resources or valuable connections. The most important thing is to get on the phone and start calling.



Fundraising

Onboarding Donors and Accessing Government Funding

Fundraising takes time to materialize, so efforts should begin immediately. Connect to:

- Financially-secure and non-impacted businesses
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Local governments and city council members
- Local emergency or disaster funds
- Community crowdfunding platforms
- Federal programs and stimulus, like the 2020 CARES Act

Government bodies reserve disaster relief funding for times like this. Call city council members as soon as possible and pitch a manageable, tangible result: 500 meals per day, for example.

“If you can get them to fund 500 meals per day, it’s a pretty easy sell to move up to 2,000 meals per day after you demonstrate you can efficiently handle the money. Plus, what city government wants to deal with the negative press of saying ‘no’ to feeding more people in times of crisis?”

Although the rules have yet to be written, the 2020 CARES Act in response to COVID-19 provides a number of food- and agriculture-related benefits, including aid for nutrition assistance and emergency feeding programs. \$9.5 billion is set aside to assist specialty crop producers; producers who support local food systems such as farmers markets, schools, and restaurants; and livestock producers, including dairy. Specifically, farmers who donate commodities to charity could deduct up to 25% of their value from their income, an increase from the current limit of 15%.



Petite Madeline Bakery supporting OKC to provide food to the community

Sourcing Labor

Gathering the Right Mix of Workers and Volunteers

Your kitchen likely already has a core team and established workflows for food receiving, prep, cooking, and cleaning. To scale to an emergency response operation, you'll need to find both experienced talent and capable volunteers.

For skill-driven work, like menu planning and cooking, ask owners of closed restaurants to send trusted employees to be interviewed. These experienced workers are accustomed to the kitchen environment, can easily be placed in different positions, and require less oversight.

The OKC used existing resources to hire a small list of workers at first, then scaled to include more skilled help when funding was secured.

"We just didn't have time to interview a bunch of people, so I asked restaurants not to send out mass emails. We needed people we could rely on from the get-go, people with the emotional stability that disaster relief work demands."

For repetitive tasks, like meal prep and assembly, volunteers can be recruited by leveraging personal and professional networks, the local nonprofits who will be distributing your food, and faith based organizations. Workforce development agencies, culinary schools, and other local training programs may have workers you can leverage.

Inventory and Production

Producing Food from Donated Ingredients

Due to perishability, inventory loss is common with donated food, so a precise and controlled intake system is essential for minimizing waste. In fast-changing environments, pen and paper are a recipe for mismanagement and inefficient planning.

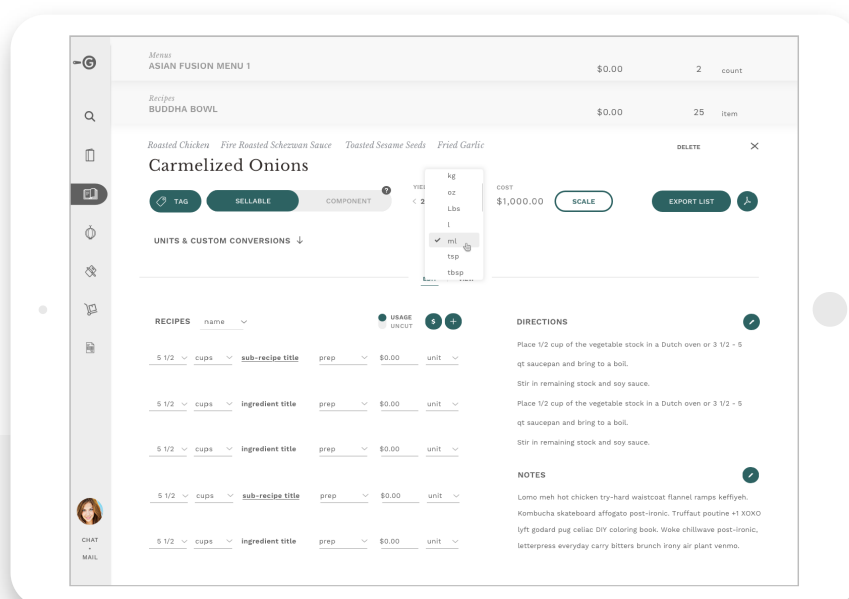
As food arrives, insert it into Galley's food production software before storing. Galley allows you to quickly build recipes from your existing stock, then iterate those recipes as your inventory changes. It also generates production guides from your menu that batch prep and cooking tasks, which simplifies instructions for your team and keeps everyone moving efficiently.

"Galley has provided wonderful support throughout this time. Due to the nature of all this inventory loss and the need for inventory control and tracking, Galley's software is so useful and helpful specifically for what we're doing."

*Galley is offering a no-cost starter package for food businesses in crisis. To get your kitchen using Galley, please contact Jonathan@GalleySolutions.com.

Planning recipes is an exercise in creative problem-solving. When working with donated, diverse foods, start with your most abundant or perishable ingredients, then slowly build a menu using less-plentiful ingredients. This enables you to use minimal funding to purchase smaller amounts of ingredients you lack to complete dishes.

Using Galley-generated production guides, your food teams can maximize productivity while volunteers assemble and package meals. Finished meals should either be refrigerated or frozen until pickup.



Distribution

Getting Meals to People in Need

There are two ways to distribute meals.

Plan A: Deliver Via Existing Organizations

Connect with local, trusted organizations that already have established food programs aimed at helping vulnerable groups, including:

- Senior citizens
- Disabled / homebound residents
- Immunocompromised
- Prisoners
- Low income families
- Homeless

Some nonprofits can handle the logistics of last mile delivery. To accept orders, you only need three things: (1) how many meals, (2) what time they'll pick them up, and (3) if there are any specific diet restrictions.

“We have a tent set up outside and a few people taking calls. They get how many meals are needed and when they'll arrive. That's it. Doesn't really matter what organizations get what—all we need to start producing is a number.”

Plan B: Drive-Up Distribution

It might be possible to transform a driveway, parking lot, or partner restaurant into a distribution or pick-up center. With potentially hundreds or thousands of people arriving each day to pick up food, it's essential to take more precautions. The more consolidated these operations can be, the better. Other items to consider obtaining are:

- Clear signage indicating where to enter and exit
- Protective gear for volunteers distributing meals to drive-up vehicles, including gloves and facemasks
- Rigid hands-free and cleaning procedures for volunteers distributing meals
- On-site security

Resources

Get the Help and Tools You Need

The Kitchen Door: Find Local Shared Kitchens

Find licensed, commercial kitchens to partner with in your area using the largest shared kitchen database in the United States. The platform is completely free to use.

Logan Square Kitchen: Facility Access SOPs

LSK has created specific Standard Operator Procedures that are designed to minimize the spread of infectious diseases, like COVID-19. They're clearly outlined, easy to understand, and meant for use in any commercial kitchen.

2020 CARES Act

Created in response to the coronavirus crisis, this stimulus provides a number of opportunities for food-related businesses to get the funding they need to survive and continue to employ staff.

Qwick: On-Demand Staffing

Qwick is a staffing platform that allows businesses to request service professionals in minutes. Identify the variables that matter to you, like skill sets and pay rate, and Qwick works to find on-demand professionals that are a good fit.

Galley: Modern Food Production Software

Galley helps food organizations master their entire operation with real-time inventory intelligence, flexible recipe creation and menu management, efficiency-boosting production guides, and a platform that scales with you.

Zume: Sustainable Packaging For Food Delivery

Packaging supplies can be hard to come by during times of crisis. Galley and Zume have partnered to create a reliable packaging supply chain for Galley users and nonprofits.

Take Action

Summary of Next Steps

- Prepare your kitchen space
- Create calls for funding
- Source food donations
- Find experienced workers and volunteers
- Plan recipes that maximize donations
- Produce and package food
- Partner with organizations that can distribute

