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# History of Shared-Use Commercial Kitchens: A Case Study Analysis of Kitchen Success

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History of Shared-Use Commercial Kitchens:  
A Case Study Analysis of Kitchen Success

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(ENVR 417) Community Engaged Research in ES  
Fall Semester 2015

**Table of Contents**

- I. Introduction.....3
- II. Indicators of Kitchen Success
  - a. Ownership and Management Structure.....4
  - b. Funding.....4
  - c. Facility Size and Features.....5
  - d. Membership and Usage.....5
  - e. Networking.....6
  - f. Community Impact.....6
- III. Case Study Analysis.....8
  - a. Dartmouth Grange.....8
  - b. Neighbor Made.....10
  - c. Athens Food Ventures.....11
  - d. Shaker Hill Kitchens .....13
  - e. Coastal Farms & Foods.....16
  - f. Blue Ridge Food Ventures.....17
  - g. La Cocina.....18
  - h. Union Kitchen.....22
- IV. Conclusion.....26
- V. Bibliography.....27

## **I. Introduction**

A shared-use kitchen is a legally licensed commercial kitchen space that is certified for the production of value-added food products. These spaces are most often used by local culinary entrepreneurs. Shared-use kitchens can create positive economic, environmental, social, and health effects for communities.

The purpose of this project is to determine the key features of a successful shared-use commercial kitchen, especially in areas demographically similar to the Lewiston/Auburn community. Since shared-use kitchen success is highly dependent on demographic considerations (population, racial diversity, per capita income, education level, non-English languages spoken), examining these features can exhibit how kitchens can best cater their development to specific populations.

Through analyzing literature focused on past kitchens, creating criteria based on key indicators of kitchen success, and conducting case studies on eight specific kitchens in the United States while keeping in mind community demographics, we have determined the following key aspects of success:

- a. Ownership and Management Structure
- b. Funding
- c. Facility Size and Features
- d. Membership and Usage
- e. Community Networking
- f. Community Impact

We hope that these findings will help the Grow L+A board with their evaluation on the feasibility of a shared-use commercial kitchen in the Lewiston/Auburn community.

## **II. Indicators of Success for Shared-Use Commercial Kitchens**

### **a. Ownership and Management Structure**

The ownership and management structure of a kitchen is a highly important indicator of its success. The owner or leader of the project must be passionate about the project and most importantly have patience, especially during the grant process. These same thoughts were reiterated by Mark Hews, a coordinator for the Threshold To Maine Resource Conservation and Development Area, in a phone interview, when he explained the importance of having an owner who is able to “persevere” throughout the duration of the lengthy kitchen planning and implementation process.

Just as important as having strong ownership, is the management structure of the kitchen. Kitchens like Adelante Mujeres (Forest Grove, OR) and Columbia Gorge Community College Commercial Kitchens (Hood River, OR) have management structures that have contributed to the overall success of the operations. It is important to have staff and supervisors to open and close the kitchen and to train kitchen users how to properly use and store equipment.

While these examples illustrate the importance of successful management in kitchen success, there are other examples that show how poor management can lead to kitchen failure. Made in the Methow (Twisp, WA) ran out of funding and was no longer able to pay their part-time manager. Likewise, the Local Agricultural Community Exchange (LACE) Community Kitchen in Barre, VT faced challenges with their private-public partnership, many of which stemmed from “miscommunications and misunderstandings.” LACE kitchen vendors also acknowledged that lack of clarity around onsite supervision also contributed to its failure. From these examples, it is clear that on-site management is a crucial piece to the success of a shared-use commercial kitchen, but it is also important to note that good management doesn’t come at a low price. Kitchens are often time-consuming to operate and manage, and in the case of Made in the Methow, much of the kitchen’s failure can be attributed to a lack of sufficient funding to support a management position. Nonetheless, while this cost is hefty, it is something that is quite necessary to address due to the immense value of having a strong ownership and management system.

### **b. Funding**

Funding is a critical, if not leading, indicator of success for shared-use kitchens. Since shared-use kitchens are expensive to establish and maintain, they are typically subsidized by revenue other than kitchen rental fees. Management and administration, overhead, and janitorial and repairs are all significant costs that kitchens should particularly take into account. With LACE, as original funding sources dried up, the nonprofit and business aspects of the kitchen struggled to overcome challenges and sustain operations. It is also highly important to recognize where the kitchens gain their financial backing.

In addition to a clear link between inadequate funding and kitchen failure, there is evidence to suggest that, even with enough funding, there is not guaranteed financial success due to poor funding allocation. The Columbia Gorge Community College Commercial Kitchen (Hood River, OR) has found that, despite the fact that they have funding from the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, they have never been able to break even and the college is considering whether to shut down the operation. This seems to be, in part, due to poor

financial management and expensive equipment and remodeling. In addition to this clear correlation between unsuccessful kitchens and poor funding or funding allocation, there is also evidence to support a correlation between successful kitchens and good funding. The Pasco Specialty Kitchen initially received funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), North American Developmental Bank, and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and is currently owned by the city of Pasco, Washington. Although the Pasco Specialty Kitchen has a yearly budget of \$96,000, rental fees make up less than 50 percent of the cost to operate. In addition to federal and state funding through programs and grants, the Pasco School District and the City of Pasco community/economic development fund provides extra support. This stable source of funding has proven to be crucial in the success of this kitchen as well as the previous examples.

### c. Facility Size and Features

When considering the appropriate size of a shared-use commercial kitchen, it is important to look at facility size in relation to community size and expected usage. We have found that the appropriate size of a facility is directly related to the success or failure of the shared-use kitchen. Pasco is one of the largest facilities in the United States, and serves over forty vendors. Funding and membership are both consistent with the size of the facility as well as that of the community.

Additionally, kitchens are tailored to the needs of community members. Some commercial shared-use kitchens offer additional business consulting services such as legal advice, product development, and marketing strategies. Additionally, some shared-use kitchens are equipped with expensive commercial kitchen appliances that tailor to the needs of its members.

### d. Membership and Usage

Well-established kitchen use and ongoing membership are essential to the longevity of a shared-use commercial kitchen. Number of members clearly ranges and depends heavily on the the business structure (nonprofit or for profit) and the size of the facility and can range from less than 10 to more than 100. One of the most significant obstacles to success is for the kitchen to establish a usage structure that is dependent on the seasonality of its vendors. For example, the season of the highest anticipated use is often during the months of September to November, therefore, the kitchen organizers need to create a usage structure that is dependent on this seasonal change in vendors. Furthermore, kitchen members themselves play a critical role in its success. Some kitchens have benefited from a well-established screening process when accepting new members, since the success of an incubator depends on the performance of its tenants, and applicant screening processes help create a community of dedicated entrepreneurs within an incubator. Part of Nuestra Culinary Venture's (NCV) failure was due to a lack of kitchen members and failure to collect enough membership fees to contribute significantly to the costs of operation. This kitchen is a clear example of a problem with membership that many other kitchens struggle with in the startup phase and highlights the importance of building a strong user-base from the very beginning.

#### e. Community Networking

Community networking is another essential indicator of success of shared-use commercial kitchens. Successful kitchens provide networking opportunities both within the kitchen community and beyond. In the case of the Common Kitchen, a shared-use commercial kitchen located inside Southern New Hampshire University's culinary building, there is a clear emphasis on the importance of community networking. Students foster relationships with Common Kitchen staff members by working as both supervisors and employees. Additionally, the Common Kitchen has been able to develop a unique connection with the First Methodist Church of Manchester, which led to the creation of a bakery that employs homeless people in the area. Additionally, with Starting Block kitchen in Hart, MI, the importance of strong community networking is apparent. The Starting Block kitchen board includes members representing the six counties in the region and a range of professional affiliations, such as a community college president, to represent the incubator's educational objectives; a farm cooperative director; a community member active in urban areas that suffer from a lack of supermarkets and other fresh food sources; local government officials; a certified public accountant; and a grower association director. In fact, the director of Starting Block states that, "key" to the success of Starting Block has been "extensive networking at each step." This range of examples clearly suggests that community networking plays a very important role in shared-use commercial kitchen success.

#### f. Community Impact

A shared-use commercial kitchen can play a critical role in developing a healthy, safe, and secure local food supply. A range of findings strongly suggest that a kitchen can be a key piece in building economic opportunity, emphasizing environmental sustainability, increasing sense of community, and advocating for human health.

Previous literature suggests that a shared-use commercial kitchen can have many positive local economic impacts on the community. Since all parts of the food system are dramatically affected by the creation of a shared-use kitchen (farmers, suppliers, marketers, printers, packagers, buyers, and consumers), the economy is impacted in all parts of the process. Thus, successful kitchens have the potential to have a very positive impact on the local community. Local farmers often struggle to produce goods that require a commercial kitchen because such kitchens are expensive to establish and maintain.

In addition to clear economic impacts of a shared-use commercial kitchen, there are also many positive environmental impacts. The implementation of a food hub and shared-use kitchen can help bridge the gap between the two vital environmental entities of food and farming that have been increasingly "fragmented". Additionally, when farmers can process their crops in a kitchen, they can avoid waste since processed products last longer, and processing helps keep usable food out of landfills.

A shared-use commercial kitchen can also heighten social well-being and emphasize the importance of local public engagement. These kitchens can increase food security by making locally grown foods available year round. Since locally produced products are likely to be fresher and less processed, increasing community access to these foods is better for human health. These kitchens can also provide work opportunities for community members in need.

Evidently, shared-use commercial kitchens can be extraordinarily fruitful in building economic opportunity, emphasizing environmental sustainability, increasing sense of

community, and promoting human health. Since these impacts are most striking in successful shared-use commercial kitchens, it is essential to work towards the implementation of a successful kitchen that will maximize these impacts.

### III. Case Studies

#### Introduction

The following case studies were selected based on a set of categories that were constructed in order to highlight a variety of kitchens and emphasize certain aspects that are especially comparable to L/A. The categories for our eight case studies include: four kitchens that could be considered very successful (anywhere in the U.S.), two kitchens that were considered failures (anywhere in the U.S.), two kitchens that were close proximity to L/A, and one that is in a community that is demographically comparable to L/A.

Very Successful	Failure	Close in proximity to L/A	In demographically comparable area to L/A
Dartmouth Grange	Neighbor Made	Shaker Hill Kitchen	Athens Food Ventures
Blue Ridge Food Ventures	Coastal Farms & Foods, Inc		
La Cocina			
Union Kitchen			

*Figure 1.* Illustration of categories used to select kitchens for case study analysis.

Case study information was largely collected from online websites, available contacts, and news sources. The analysis below utilizes the indicators gleaned from the previous section to inform kitchen success and gives each indicator a letter grade to show relative success. Since there was so much variety between cases, comparing indicators in relation to one another within a case as opposed to comparing indicators across cases was most useful for analysis. Additionally, due to lack of information in some cases, assigning a grade was not possible.

a. Dartmouth Grange (Dartmouth, MA)

Dartmouth Grange Kitchen is part of a larger establishment that was founded in the years following the American Civil War and aims to improve the lives of rural farm families in the area. The kitchen was opened in 2007 to meet the needs of small-scale food production and is ideal for canning, baking, and preparing meals for catering and on-site services. The kitchen is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for a fee that is dependant on the equipment used. The annual fee is low, compared to other kitchens in the area. The mission of Dartmouth Grange is to support the agricultural community and to increase economic stability.

#### *Community Demographics*

	<b>Population</b>	<b>% White Alone</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor's</b>	<b>5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home</b>
<b>Lewiston</b>	36,299	86.8%	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
<b>Auburn</b>	22,912	93.7%	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
<b>Dartmouth</b>	34,415	92%	\$30,049	80.7%	27.7%	20.8%

*Ownership and Management Structure (Grade: A)*

The kitchen is owned and operated within the existing organizational structure of the Dartmouth Grange which is a national organization of the Patrons of Husbandry. There is an on-site manager, but it is unclear of the frequency of her attendance.

*Funding (Grade: N/A)*

This information was not available, though it is a part of the Dartmouth Grange organization which has existed for more than 100 years.

*Facility Size and Features (Grade: B)*

The size of the kitchen was not available. This list details what equipment is available.

**Features:**

- 6-burner range with flat top and two conventional ovens
- Double-stacked convection ovens
- 40 gallon tilting braising/skillet pan
- 40 gallon tilting steam kettle
- Commercial mixer with 20 and 40 quart attachments
- 2 reach-in freezers
- 2 reach-in refrigerators
- 4 quart commercial food processor
- 40 quart immersion blender
- Automated filling machine for packaging
- Vegetable wash and prep areas

*Membership and Usage (Grade: A)*

Members of Dartmouth Grange Kitchen pay an annual fee of only \$100, and fees for each usage depend on number of hours and equipment used. There is no monthly minimum, which makes it more accessible to occasional users as well. Most people use this kitchen for canning because the facility has a jar-filler that can fill hundreds of jars at a time. In addition, there are other pieces of equipment intended for large batches such as an oven that can bake 400 muffins in just two hours. The Dartmouth Grange kitchen is aimed at helping small business entrepreneurs as well as supporting local agriculture.

*Community Networking (Grade: A)*

The Dartmouth Grange kitchen is part of a larger entity, which is “dedicated to improving the quality of life for families and the community by building an equal opportunity program of fellowship, service to others, and unity of action within a framework of fraternalism” (grange

website). This is accomplished by investing time and money into organizations that advance economic growth, promote public education, maintain agriculture, and invest in young people.

*Community Impact (Grade: A)*

Many renters are local farmers who wish to add value to their farm products. Dartmouth Grange hopes to “open new markets, create recognition for a farm and expand the market season” for farmers in the area. By making this kitchen available to rent, Dartmouth Grange hopes to gain support in order to promote farming in the community. The Grange also encourages citizens to “be a voice for agriculture, buy local, help foster sustainable business, and vote and/or volunteer.”

*Concluding Remarks*

Dartmouth Grange is successful largely because of its low cost to use and a wide variety of kitchen equipment. We also found that being part of a larger organization (the Dartmouth Grange), enhanced the kitchens community networking because it was already part of a well-known group. The success with community networking could be mirrored by L/A due to the similarity of an existing community organization (Grow L+A).

b. Neighbor Made (Keene, NH)

Neighbor Made kitchen was located in Keene, NH, but unfortunately was shut down in the last few months due to financial instability. It was a fully-equipped kitchen aimed at helping local specialty food entrepreneurs produce and distribute their goods at a larger scale. The kitchen also offered business coaching to assist new entrepreneurs with difficulties such as pricing.

*Community Demographics*

	Population	% White Alone	Per Capita Income	25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma	25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor’s	5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home
<b>Lewiston</b>	36,299	86.8%	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
<b>Auburn</b>	22,912	93.7%	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
<b>Keene</b>	23,034	95.3	\$26,641	92.4%	37.3%	3.9%

*Ownership and Management Structure (Grade: F)*

Neighbor Made was owned by Matt Degrosky and Steven Ryder, who opened the commercial kitchen to produce True Nuts, a product that focuses on local ingredients. They later saw the potential to help other start-up food businesses and opened the kitchen to the community. It was not evident if they had on-site management to oversee the day-to-day functions of kitchen

use. Their goal was for all of their clients to be successful in producing and distributing products in the area.

#### *Funding (Grade: F)*

It is clear that a lack of sufficient funding contributed to the closure of the kitchen, but the details were not disclosed.

#### *Facility Size and Features (Grade: B)*

The size of the kitchen was not explicitly stated. While a complete features of the kitchen was not available, a video tour showed canning equipment, packaging equipment, and a barbeque pit. The equipment was large so that business owners could increase their production.

#### *Membership and Usage (Grade: B)*

The majority of clients at Neighbor Made were either start-up business owners in need of space and assistance or small business owners looking to expand their production. Many of these owners had previously sold their goods at local farmers markets and sought a kitchen to bring their products to the shelves of nearby stores. The kitchen was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

#### *Community Networking (Grade: N/A)*

The kitchen was located near Hannah Grimes Marketplace which sold all local food products. Due to the kitchen's closure, there is limited information about networking.

#### *Community Impact (Grade: N/A)*

A majority of vendors of this kitchen were able to grow their business to a larger scale, and distribute their products to stores in the area. The goal of this was economic growth in the community, but due to the kitchen's closure, this information was unavailable.

#### *Concluding Remarks*

While there was limited information about this kitchen, our group determined that a weak ownership structure, which lead to poor allocation of funds, was a leading cause of the kitchen's closure. It is important to note here the significance of the ownership and management structure, especially with allocating funds.

### c. Athens Food Venture Center (Athens, Ohio)

#### *Case Background*

The Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet) is a community-based economic development organization serving the 32 counties of Appalachia, Ohio. This organization aims to build the capacity of these communities to network in order to create a sustainable economy with opportunities for all. In 1993, ACEnet began developing the Food Ventures Center-- a specific business incubator focused on the needs of companies producing specialty food products. The Food Ventures Center provides licensed commercial kitchen space for entrepreneurs to develop and produce their products without the burden of paying individually for licensing. The center works to fill educational gaps for entrepreneurs entering the highly regulated food industry and creates a setting for established food businesses to thrive.

*Community Demographics*

	<b>Population</b>	<b>% White Alone</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor's</b>	<b>5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home</b>
<b>Lewiston</b>	36,299	86.8%	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
<b>Auburn</b>	22,912	93.7%	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
<b>Athens</b>	64,713	89.4%	\$17,019	89.4%	28.2%	4.8%

Athens, Ohio has a population of 64,713. Similar to the Lewiston and Auburn communities, Athens is largely white (89.4% white alone). Additionally, the majority of residents speak English, and only 4.8% of residents speak a non-English language at home. The mean household income in Athens is \$33,823, and the annual per capita income is \$17,019. Furthermore, 56.6% of Athens residents own a home, 89.4% have high school degree or higher, and 28.2% have bachelor's degree or higher.

*Ownership and Management Structure (Grade: B+)*

The Food Venture Center is owned as part of ACEnet and is managed by ACEnet staff. The center staff uses a surveillance system to ensure the security of the facilities and of users' equipment and products.

*Funding (Grade:A)*

Schaller states that, since many start-up businesses are home-based, a huge draw for the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks is that individuals have the opportunity to start out with low costs to see if their business idea would work. Licenses prove to be a huge issue for individuals, and the plethora of licenses (Food Service Operation License, Certificate of Bakery Registration, Commercial Cannery License, Cold Storage Warehouse License, Frozen Food Establishment License, and Boiler Certificate of Operation) that the Food Venture Center has, is extraordinarily helpful for users. The Food Venture Center is funded by the Center for Economic Networks and supported by the many kitchen tenants.

*Facility Size and Features (Grade: A)*

The 12,000-square-foot center contains a retail area, office space, a thermal processing room and a central commercial kitchen. Additionally, the 3,200-square-foot warehouse contains a dry storage area, an automatic labeling machine, two walk-in freezers and a walk-in cooler. The facility itself is worth about \$1.4 million.

***Central Kitchen Equipment List:***

- 5 Stainless Steel Tables
- 1 Cutting Board Table
- 3 Wooden Bakery Tables
- Conventional Oven with 10 Burner Stove (Volkan Timber)
- 2 Slicers (Hobart)

3 Manual Can Openers (#2 Edlund)  
Blast Chiller  
Cool Down Room (6' x 10')  
9 Convection Ovens (Volkan and Snorkled)  
2 Sanitizing Stations containing 3 bay sinks  
80 Quart Mixer (M 802)  
60 Quart Mixer (Univex)  
10 Quart Mixer (Hobart D300)  
10 Quart Mixer (A-200f7)  
2 Scales up to 30 lb (Pinn Cm)  
Packaging & Labelling Room (containing four 8' stainless tables)

***Thermal Processing Room Equipment List:***

3 Bay Sink  
3 Stainless Steel Tables  
Automated 20 PS Boiler and Condensate Return System  
3 Steam Jacketed Kettles Totalling 200 Gallons  
Vertical Chopper  
Buffalo Chopper (84186 Hobart)  
Electric Tilt Skillet (TS-106)  
Automatic Can Opener (Edlund 610)  
Twin Head Simplex Volumetric Piston Filler

***Warehouse Equipment List:***

Walk-in Coolers  
Walk-in Freezers  
Warehouse Storage Cages  
Distribution Space  
Pallet Jacks  
Drive-up Loading Docks

***Membership and Usage (Grade: B)***

Since the Food Venture Center opened, 280 tenants have been incubated in the facility. Schaller claims that about 50 to 100 businesses use the space and the services every year. She states that, while some eventually “graduate” into their own space, others use the shared kitchen, storage areas, and other services on a long-term basis. One user that plans on using the center as a transition point is Maureen Burns-Hooker, owner of The Herbal Sage Tea Company. Burns-Hooker states that she plans on building her own facility in about two years, and that “it’s very cost-effective for me to be at [the center] right now.” Since many of the customers who come through Food Ventures must overcome zoning and code issues, especially for home-based farmers and food growers who live in the city, the Food Venture center can be used for offside processing to make sure the food meets health requirements.

***Community Networking (Grade: A+)***

The Food Venture Center is clearly tied to ACEnet, but additionally, is connected to several other community groups such as local farmers markets, schools, and a collaborative group working to increase healthy food access for vulnerable populations in Athens.

***Community Impact (Grade: A)***

The Athens Food Venture Center creates a positive community impact in a variety of ways. As business developer for Food Ventures project, Leslie Schaller, explains, “we focus on

harnessing the economic ownership and wealth derived from keeping food more local,” and “we create more economic opportunities for locally owned businesses and give the public more options to buy local food.” One such business is the award-winning Milo’s Whole World Gourmet, which provides wine-based pasta sauces and salad dressings to the community. Jonathan Leal has run Milo’s out of the Athens Food Venture Center since its inception, and uses the center for the production, manufacturing and storage of his goods.

*Concluding Remarks*

Athens was tied to a community-based economic development organization which allowed for an enormous amount of financial stability. This stability led to many networking opportunities and a large community impact that furthered kitchen success. The case of Athens is similar to Lewiston/Auburn because it shows that there is potential to connect the shared-use kitchen to local schools and social programs to increase community impact. Athens was successful

d. Shaker Hill Kitchens (Saco, Maine)

*Case Background*

Shaker Hill Kitchens was opened in 2008 as part of the York County Shelter Programs. In 2012, Shaker Hill closed its doors, and in 2013, after a period of restructuring, the facility reopened. Today, the facility offers breakfast, lunch, and many baked goods and treats for the general public. Additionally, it offers full on and off-site catering services. All profits from Shaker Hill go to supporting the York County Shelter Programs and their programs throughout the region. The atmosphere is cozy and inviting and the space is an increasingly popular destination for local residents. Shaker Hill rents out space to individuals and entrepreneurs to produce their own culinary dishes. Thus far, the kitchen has enabled users to produce everything from cupcakes to salsas to cookie dough to specialty dog treats.

*Community Demographics*

	<b>Population</b>	<b>% White Alone</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor’s</b>	<b>5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home</b>
<b>Lewiston</b>	36,299	86.8%	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
<b>Auburn</b>	22,912	93.7%	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
<b>Saco</b>	19,014	95%	\$28,896	91.1%	27.9%	10.2%

Saco, Maine has a population of 19,014. It is largely white (95.0% white alone) and the majority of residents are English-speakers, and only 10.2% of residents speak another language besides from English at home. There is a 66% homeownership rate, the per capita annual income is \$28,896, and the median household income is \$55,524. Saco is approximately 50 minutes south of Lewiston.

### *Ownership and Management Structure (Grade: B)*

Shaker Hill is a non-profit that is maintained by York County Shelter Programs. Shaker Hill has several full time staff members as well as a few seasonal workers. Additionally, the kitchen is very reliant on volunteers.

### *Funding (Grade: B-)*

One of the key reasons that Shaker Hill was forced to close its doors in 2012, was due to poor funding. When the café first opened, the hope was that it would be “self-sufficient, and perhaps even generate revenue,” but it soon became clear that this was not working. It seems as though this funding issue was mostly due to poor marketing of the facility. In the restructuring process, administrators carefully reevaluated the operation to see if it could be made more profitable. Today, the Shaker Hill café increasingly targets a more upscale population by featuring dishes such as quiche, crepes, sandwiches with the shelter’s homemade bread, and soups, such as sweet potato with braised kale. The kitchen hopes that producing these products will bring in a steadier flow of revenue.

### *Facility Size and Features (Grade: B)*

Shaker Hill is a very small facility on Thornton Ave in Saco, ME. The café is open three days a week, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, from 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

### *Membership and Usage (Grade: A)*

Shaker Hill rents out its kitchen to professional cooks and community organizations alike. While Shaker Hill has a significantly smaller membership base than The Athens Food Venture Center previously mentioned, because it is a nonprofit that works through a larger organization and donates all proceeds, it is not as essential for it to have extremely high membership to self-sustain. Those presently using the kitchen include Four Star Private Chefs, who make homemade pasta to sell at local farmers markets, and Perfect Peanut Brittle. In addition, several other people who bake and sell their products at local farmers markets are also now using the kitchen, including Rosie’s Cupcakes.

### *Community Networking (Grade: B)*

Shaker Hill works mainly through the York County Shelter Programs.

### *Community Impact (Grade:A)*

Shaker Hill appears to have an extraordinarily positive community impact. All Shaker Hill proceeds support the facility and programs offered at the shelter, including a food pantry, housing for the homeless, and more.

### *Concluding Remarks*

The success of nonprofit Shaker Hill can be clearly measured through its tremendous community impact, in the form of local hunger alleviation. Its reliance on a committed volunteer staff and its constant use by a range of members (from professional chefs to community members) also contributed to its success.

e. Coastal Farms and Foods (Belfast, ME)

*Case Background*

Coastal Farms and Foods, Inc. (CFF) was a shared-use kitchen that opened in Belfast in 2011. It was a large processing facility that served the Belfast area and Coast of Maine for two years before it closed its doors in 2013. The goal of the kitchen was to bridge the gap between local farms and small businesses and vendors in the Coastal Maine area. After years of planning and fundraising for the project, the closure of CFF was a devastating blow to the Belfast community and the people who were involved with the project.

*Community Demographics*

	Population	% White Alone	Per Capita Income	25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma	25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor's	5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home
<b>Lewiston</b>	36,299	86.8	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
<b>Auburn</b>	22,912	93.7	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
<b>Belfast</b>	6,677	96.7	\$21,238	89.0%	39.0%	7.1%

Though the population of Belfast is currently only around 6,660 people, CFF was intended to serve a larger population up the coast of Maine. The kitchen was meant to target towns and cities as far as Camden, Rockland, Bucksport and the Bangor area, where there is a population of more than 32,000 people.

*Ownership and Management Structure (Grade: A-)*

Though the project was spearheaded by its co-owner, Jan Anderson, she collaborated with local businessmen, Tony Kelley and Wayne Snyder, both of whom had years of experience with local food and economic development in the Belfast area before this project. Jan Anderson spent years developing the idea for the kitchen and was highly involved with its operation.

*Funding (Grade: B+)*

Together, the founding members of CFF spent years recruiting private investors to get involved with the venture and had raised more than two million dollars by its opening in 2011. The piece of the organization that involved the freezing and storage of blueberries was a big factor in attracting investors.

*Facility Size and Features (Grade: C)*

The facility for CFF was housed in the former manufacturing facility for Moss, Inc. and its vendors had more than 50,000 square feet of space for processing, which is a significantly larger size than comparable kitchens of its scope. At the time of its closure, there were only about 15 business owners who used the facility that could have easily accommodated more than 100 vendors. The venue included a large commercial sized kitchen with freezing and cooling processing capabilities and additional cool and dry storage space. During its lifespan, the facility hosted produce from more than 50 farms in the area, but still had plenty of extra storage

space. Although it was a newly renovated and modern space, its unsustainable size may have contributed to its premature closure in 2013.

#### *Membership and Usage (Grade: C)*

During the period before it closed, CFF was hosting around 15 tenants in its facility that ranged from blueberry processors to tofu producers. There were a number of clients who exclusively used the facility for the freezing and storage of blueberries. The implementation of the kitchen included a range of features to appeal to these customers and bring in a significant revenue, but this investment was not as lucrative as they had planned due to unexplained reasons and was a factor that led to CFF's premature closure.

#### *Community Networking (Grade: N/A)*

Though CFF may have had multiple connections with local organizations, they had a well established relationship with Get Real, Get Maine, which is a sector of the Maine Department of Agriculture to promote eating local.

#### *Community Impact (Grade: N/A)*

The central aim of the kitchen was to give local farmers a space to store their produce and to connect with local vendors. After a feasibility study was done in the years prior to the opening of the kitchen, it was concluded that “area farmers curtailed production because of a lack of climate-controlled storage and food processing facilities.” This meant that local farmers were cutting back on their production, despite their potential for more produce. This was partially because before CFF the community did not yet have a processing facility, storage space, or small businesses to make value-added products with the local produce. The pioneers of this project saw CFF not only as the solution to this environmental food wasting problem for the Belfast area farmers, but also a space that would begin to shift Belfast into becoming a food hub for the state of Maine. Additionally, the space became a business incubator that drew innovators who were creating value-added products to the Belfast area. The economic developer for the city of Belfast was hopeful that the project would draw small business owners to not only grow in the facility, but also establish a home in Belfast and stimulate the economy.

#### *Concluding Remarks*

CFF was largely a failure because of the unsustainable size of the facility and the investment in blueberry freezing that did not succeed. Though they had a committed owner, proficient start up funds, the venture was ultimately unsuccessful. The L/A community might consider not only having an appropriate financial plan, but additionally a reserve in case of unforeseeable financial insecurity.

#### f. Blue Ridge Food Ventures (Candler, NC)

##### *Case Background*

Blue Ridge Food Ventures is an organization in Candler, North Carolina that houses both a shared-use kitchen and a natural products manufacturing facility. It has served the mountain community of Buncombe County, North Carolina and beyond since 2005. It offers both the facilities and marketing and product development resources for a variety of small businesses in the area. As a facility that has features of a shared-use kitchen, a culinary incubator and a food

hub, Blue Ridge has had great success in economic, environmental and social impact on the surrounding community.

*Community Demographics*

	Population	% White Alone	Per Capita Income	25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma	25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor's	5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home
Lewiston	36,299	86.8	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
Auburn	22,912	93.7	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
Asheville	87,882	79.3	\$26,912	90.2%	43.3%	9.0%

Blue Ridge is located in the small mountain community of Candler, NC, which sits on the outskirts of the larger city of Asheville. Additionally, it serves the greater population of Buncombe County which has more than 250,000 residents.

*Ownership and Management Structure (Grade: A)*

Blue Ridge is part of a larger economic development group called AdvantageWest, which is a nonprofit regional economic development partnership that was established in 1994 and caters to 23 counties of western North Carolina. It has initiated a number of economic development projects that aim toward job creation and have achieved “a reputation as one of the most innovative and diversified economic development organizations in the country.”

*Funding (Grade: A)*

AdvantageWest began the project for the Blue Ridge Food Venture project in 2005 with funding from a variety of foundations that have supported the project. AdvantageWest is a nonprofit that sources their funding from grants, donations and some state funding.

*Facility Size and Features (Grade: A-)*

Though the facility can cater to more than 60 clients, the facility is only 11,000 square feet. This facility not only includes a large commercial kitchen with bottling and canning capabilities, but also marketing and business management facilities.

*Membership and Usage (Grade: A+)*

Blue Ridge has served more than 235 clients since its opening in 2005. Currently, they host around 60 clients who use the facility year round, ranging from Kombucha producers to food truck prep workers to fine mustard producers. Each of the clients is offered not only the processing facility, but also regulatory compliance assistance, product development and process development, training programs and branding consultation. The Blue Ridge program assists their clients throughout the whole process of their small business incubation in order to achieve the maximum success from their resources.

In order to make it affordable for their new clients, especially those who are just beginning a small business, they made the initial fee for a client \$75 and around \$30 per additional hour. This price is kept low and affordable for a variety of diverse clients who are looking for an affordable space to complete their small business ventures.

### *Community Networking (Grade: A)*

Blue Ridge partners with a number of organizations in the Buncombe County in North Carolina including: Appalachian Regional Commission, Appalachian Sustainable Agricultural Project, Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, Golden LEAF Foundation, the NC Department of Agriculture and The Fresh Market. Blue Ridge has well established connections with the surrounding rural community and specifically with the mountain ridge community.

### *Community Impact (Grade: B+)*

Though they offer a variety of resources for local business entrepreneurs, they additionally support local agriculture and the rural farming community. They provide a program called Winter Sun Farms CSA, where produce from a local North Carolina farm is frozen during the harvest season and kept in freezer facilities for individuals and small businesses to utilize in the off-season. Additionally, they have well-established connections with local farms, who they connect with their vendors depending on need and specificity. Furthermore, Blue Ridge is best known for their resources available for their clients involving product development and marketing design and giving support for their clients to overcome the maze of government regulations. The supportive framework that they establish for their clients and the surrounding community has let to their enduring success as a shared-use kitchen in the Buncombe County community.

### *Concluding Remarks*

Blue Ridge can attribute their success over time to their establishment with the economic development group, AdvantageWest. This has allowed them to take risks in their business that benefit vendors without having to worry about the financial implications in the future. Though this may not be an option for the L/A area, the extensive business support and product development support that Blue Ridge has offered has been a productive model for similar ventures.

### g. La Cocina (San Francisco, CA)

#### *Case Background*

La Cocina is San Francisco's first non-profit food incubator kitchen. It opened in 2005 and has been in operation since then. In 1999, the non-profit organization, Women's Initiative for Self Employment (WI), collaborated with other local economic development nonprofit groups to conduct a feasibility study. This study was conducted because many entrepreneurs from WI were not able to successfully launch their food businesses. The feasibility study indicated that there was a shortage of affordable commercially licensed kitchen spaces, and the idea of La Cocina emerged as a result of this finding. La Cocina opened as a community kitchen primarily catering to food businesses of low-income Latin American immigrant women. Currently, users can rent the kitchen space at low rental fees and sell their products. Executive director, Caleb Zigas, states that the mission is "to cultivate low-income food entrepreneurs as they formalize and grow businesses by providing affordable commercial kitchen space, industry-specific technical assistance and access to market opportunities."

#### *Community Demographics*

	Population	% White Alone	Per Capita Income	25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma	25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor's	5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home
<b>Lewiston</b>	36,299	86.8%	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
<b>Auburn</b>	22,912	93.7%	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
<b>San Francisco</b>	852,469	48.5%	\$48,486	86.3%	52.4%	45.5%

The city is ethnically diverse. The second largest population is Asian followed by Latinos. Almost half of the population speak a language other than English at home. 13.5% of people are below the poverty rate.

*Ownership and Management structure (Grade: B+)*

La cocina is a non-profit organization. The idea emerged from a feasibility study conducted by San Francisco’s nonprofit organizations, most importantly Women’s Initiative for Self- Employment. Since its creation La cocina has stood as its own independent non profit. The kitchen, currently, employs eight full time staff and seven part time staff. The position titles include: Executive Director, Programs & Development Manager, Business Development Manager, Operations & Events Manager, Retail & Catering Manager, Culinary Manager, and Administrative Office Manager. Additionally, the organization has a 12 member board.

*Funding (Grade: B)*

As a nonprofit organization, the kitchen’s success is heavily dependent on private donations. The first contribution was made by an anonymous individual. The donor allowed the kitchen to be housed in her building as well as paying the “shell” of the building. Since, the same building owner remains La Cocina continues to pay rent that is significantly lower than market rates. Before opening the establishment the original executive director fundraised a total of \$1 million dollars which was used to furnish the space with commercial kitchen appliances. Their principal income comes from fundraising, corporate (JP Morgan, Wells Fargo, Whole Foods Market, and more) and individual sponsors.

*Facility Size and Features (Grade: B+)*

The commercial shared- use kitchen is a total of 4,400 square feet. It houses four preparation stations; multiple members can use the space at the same time. The kitchen also features dry, refrigerated and freezer storage.

***Equipment includes:***

- Tilting Skillet: 30 gallon, gas, tilting braising skillet
- Steamer: convection steamer
- Convection Ovens: 2 double-stacked, natural gas ovens
- Broiler: heavy- duty, char-type, gas-fired broiler

6-Burner Range: gas range with salamander and 24 inch griddle  
Fryer: heavy-duty gas floor model  
Mixer: 60 quart Hobart mixer

***Each of the four preparation areas has access to:***

Stainless steel work-tables and sinks  
Stainless steel shelves  
Pan racks  
Sheet Pans  
Mobile stainless steel worktables  
Slicer  
Food processor and blender  
Ice machine  
Bunn coffee maker  
Small-wares  
Dishwasher

***Membership and Usage (Grade: A+)***

La Cocina has an incubator program which local food entrepreneurs can apply to if they meet the qualification criteria. Applicants must be of low-economic status, business ready, and currently operate a micro-business. The kitchen does not have a yearly capacity of members but the screening process is highly selective. Potential members must complete an extensive written application along with supplemental forms such as proof of income and a concrete business plan. The second phase of the application process includes interviews with the kitchen's staff and advisory committee. After being accepted into the program members must comply with federal and state licensing before using the kitchen. Additionally, they must be responsible for obtaining insurance. Kitchen users are required to pay La Cocina a \$500 dollar deposit fee and attend orientation and training meetings, all before using the kitchen.

Kitchen users have access to a fully equipped commercially licensed kitchen as well as dry and refrigerated storage facilities. The kitchen can be rented hourly or monthly. The hourly rental fees vary between \$25.50 per hour to \$45.50 per hour depending on the amount of space and equipment needed. The space can be reserved up to three months in advance through an online scheduling system that works on a first- come- first- serve basis. The kitchen is open from 6 am to 10 pm everyday of the week except Wednesdays when they close at 5 pm. There are currently 26 active members that take part in the incubator program. Since the kitchen's opening in 2005, 14 business have graduated. Graduated businesses have completed the kitchen's incubator program. These businesses have a quality product and business knowledge to settle their own establishment outside of La Cocina.

***Community Networking (Grade: B+)***

The organization has events that promote networking within the kitchen's members and with the community through group dinners, festivals, galas, and conferences.

***Community Impact (Grade: A)***

La Cocina aims to provide the resources to empower and make immigrant women from low income communities economically independent. During the 2014-2015 period, the kitchen hosted 36 members, 32 of which were female entrepreneurs. Since the majority of La Cocina's

participants are female, the organization is meeting their goal of empowering women led businesses.

*Concluding Remarks*

La Cocina can be considered a successful commercial shared-use kitchen because it has managed to stay in operation for ten years. The kitchen’s narrowed target group helped organizers tailor the kitchen to the needs of a specific community. When considering a commercial shared-use in Lewiston/ Auburn, project leaders should think about ways in which the kitchen can meet the needs of the African immigrant population.

h. Union Kitchen (Washington, D.C.)

*Case Background*

Union Kitchen is a privately owned food incubator located in Washington D.C. Union Kitchen was founded in 2012 by Jonas Singer and Cullen Gilchrist. The owners had a cafe and bakery storefront called The Blind Dog. After outgrowing their baking kitchen space, Singer and Gilchrist looked for an additional establishment. They came across a location that was too big for their needs and there emerged the idea of Union Kitchen. The owners were aware of the risks food entrepreneurs face when entering the the food industry. Singer and Gilchrist opened the food incubator with the goal of lowering “the barriers to entry” by offering small local food entrepreneurs a commercial shared-use kitchen and business support and advice. At the same time, they want to contribute to the growing economic development of Washington D.C by supporting local products.

*Demographics*

	<b>Population</b>	<b>% White Alone</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least H.S diploma</b>	<b>25+ yrs w/ at least bachelor’s</b>	<b>5+ yrs speaking other language than English at home</b>
<b>Lewiston</b>	36,299	86.8%	\$20,978	85.6%	15.4%	19.4%
<b>Auburn</b>	22,912	93.7%	\$27,064	90.4%	24.9%	11.5%
<b>Washington D.C</b>	658,893	43.6%	\$45,290	88.4%	52.4%	15.8%

According to the Census Bureau the Black or African American population is 49.0%, slightly more than the white population. Median household income \$69,235 and persons living below poverty level, 18.2%.

*Ownership and Management Structure (Grade: A)*

Union Kitchen is a privately co-owned incubator kitchen. They employ 42 full time staff members and several part-time advisors. Advisors hold office hours for members and they include a lawyer, labeling product advisor, and payroll assistance.

*Funding (Grade: B+)*

Although the kitchen is privately owned, the establishment is still supported by grants. The owners are still in debt but they make enough money to pay off their monthly debt and still make a revenue.

*Facility Size and Features (Grade: A+)*

The original Union Kitchen is 7,300 square feet. It currently serves 42 members. The newest location is in Ivy City neighborhood and it is 16,000 square feet, more than twice the size of the original. Ivy City Union Kitchen houses 34 members and counting.

***Facilities Services:***

Waste management (trash, compost, recycling)  
Facilities managements, preventative maintenance of equipment  
Utilities (gas,water, electrical)  
Towel and apron service  
Use of Union Kitchen as delivery location and business address  
Cleaning staff

***Supplies and Equipment:***

Plastic Wrap 18”	Hotel Pans for Roasting
Parchement Paper	Half Sheet Trays
Non-Latex Gloves	Full Sheet Trays
Garbage Bags	Saute Pans
Cleaning Supplies	Stock Pots
Convection Ovens	Small Pots
Gas Stoves Stock Pot Burner	Induction Saute Pans
Grill	Induction Pots
Flat Top Grill	Induction Burners
20qt, 40qt, and 60qt Mixers	Food Processor
Dough Sheeter	Colander
Smoker	Mixing Bowls
Tilt Skillet	Attachments for Mixers
Jacketed Steam Kettle	Cutting Boards
Deck Oven	Fridge Carts
Rolling Rack Oven	Speed Racks
Ice Cream machine	Deep Fryer
Hardening Cabine	Meat Slicer

*Membership and Usage (Grade: A +)*

Union Kitchen receives a lot of membership requests due to the easily accessible online application, but only a few are selected. They do not have a limit of members accepted annually but they select businesses with a unique marketable product combined with a clear business plan. Union Kitchen’s Development Manager, Davita Louie, states that they will accept businesses that desire to expand, make a profit, and will take full advantage of Union Kitchen’s services. Currently, the kitchen hosts 54 members and in a little over two years they have helped 15 businesses open their own storefronts. Once a business is accepted, there are three types of memberships to choose from: full time members, nights and weekends, and pod kitchen members.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Price/month
Full Time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$1,295
Nights and Weekends	6pm-7-am	6pm-7-am	6pm-7-am	6pm-7-am	6pm-7-am	✓	✓	\$1,095
Single- Pod*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$2,000
Double- Pod*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$4,000

- ✓ - Kitchen members have 24hr/7 days a week access to facility
- \* - Pod memberships are only available at the new Ivy City location

Single -pod members receive 5 shelves of storage and one 10’ by 8’ non-hooded production space. Double- pod members receive 15 shelves of storage, two 10’ by 8’ production spaces, and the option of a customizable hood and parking spot.

*Community Networking (Grade: A)*

Union Kitchen partners with local grocery stores to bring their members’ products to the market. Their partners include: Yes! Organic Market, Whole Foods Market, Mom’s Organic Market, and Glen’s Garden Market. Additionally, Union Kitchen offers catering. Their members’ products are marketed in venues such as: weddings, corporate events, galas, and concessions. Community networking also occurs within members. It is not unusual for multiple businesses to create an event together. This past summer 2015, the companies Undone Chocolate, Capital Candy Jar and Ruby Scoops worked together for National S’more Day. They produced their products and distributed them to a local flower delivery startup and local grocery store.

*Community Impact (Grade: B)*

Union Kitchen hopes to foster a collaborative and creative space for food entrepreneurs. In this space, businesses can share ideas and work and network to improve their businesses. Members strongly affiliate themselves with Union Kitchen even after moving out. For example, one of Union Kitchen’s alumna decided to return to Union Kitchen and rent out a pod space in the Ivy City location. This particular business owner greatly valued the direct network opportunities available in the kitchen that she decided to return.

The food incubator also affects the surrounding community. Thriving local businesses affect the food landscape of Washington D.C. 13 Union Kitchen’s members sell their products in the grocery store, Whole Foods.

### *Concluding Remarks*

Union Kitchen has performed exceptionally well in creating a community network among the food entrepreneurs affiliated to Union Kitchen. This has helped build the “Union Kitchen” brand and affiliated kitchen members reap the benefits of the company. If the Grow L+A board decides to implement a kitchen in Lewiston/ Auburn, they must establish relationships with potential members, local community organizations, and state organizations in order to ensure the kitchen’s long term success.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Through analyzing literature focused on past kitchens, creating a criteria based on key indicators of kitchen success, and conducting case studies on eight specific kitchens in the United States while keeping in mind community demographics, it is evident that ownership and management structure, funding, facility size and features, membership and usage, networking, and community impact are all significant indicators of success.

We recommend that Grow L+A should take these indicators of success into consideration when determining the feasibility of implementing a shared-use commercial kitchen in the Lewiston/Auburn community.

Additionally, due to lack of information in some cases and inherent variability across all cases, overarching claims about success were difficult to make.

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