

Important Information for Cottage Food Business Registry Applicants

Becoming a Cottage Food Business in the District of Columbia will allow you to prepare and process foods from your private, residential kitchen and sell them at farmers markets and public events within the District of Columbia. Internet sales and wholesale are not permitted. There are specific restrictions and requirements for a Cottage Food Business. Applicants should familiarize themselves with Title 25, Section K of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations which pertains to Cottage Food Businesses.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Home Occupancy Permit from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)
- Proof of calibrated scale(s) if your food will be sold by weight from the Office of Weights and Measures at DCRA
- Certified Food Protection **Manager's** Certification (CFPM). Go to dchealth.dc.gov for a list of approved providers
- DC-Issued Certified Protection Manager ID-Card, Issued by DC Health based on your CFPM Certification
- Submit a Cottage Food Business Registry Application DC Health at 899 North Capitol, St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002
- Submit an application review fee of \$50.00 to DC Health in the form of check, money order, cash, or credit/debit. Make checks payable to *DC Treasurer*.

TIMELINE

Your complete application will be reviewed within thirty (30) business days. Once your application has been reviewed and approved, you will be contacted to schedule a pre-operational inspection within fourteen (14) business days. We make every effort to review applications in a timely manner. Please note, that incomplete applications may delay our review period. Please be sure to include all required information in your application so we may expedite the process.

Once you have been approved to begin operations, you will be issued a Cottage Food Business Registration Identification Number and a Health Certificate. The Health Certificate will list the food products for which you are approved to produce and sell, and will be valid for a period of two (2) years. You must post this certificate at all public events and farmers markets where you are selling your food. If, after two years, you wish to continue to operate as a Cottage Food Business, you must submit a new application and fee for review by DC Health.

APPROVED FOOD ITEMS

A list of approved food products and processes can be found in Title 25, Section K of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations. These regulations can be found on our website at dchealth.dc.gov under the Food Safety and Hygiene tab.

The application also lists the approved food items. Should you wish to process food that is not on the list, the Department may require the recipe and/or a product analysis from a certified laboratory that indicates the pH and water activity of that product at levels which inhibit microbial growth and render the product shelf-stable. Only food products that do not require refrigeration once prepared will be allowed to be processed from a Cottage Food Business.

ADDING FOOD ITEMS

If you wish to add food items to your business after your application has been approved and you are in operation, you will be required to submit a new application with review fee. All food products processed in your Cottage Food Business must be reviewed and approved by DC Health prior to sale and distribution. The addition of food products is not permitted unless an application is submitted, reviewed, and approved by DC Health prior to the sale of those items. All food products which have been approved will be listed on your Health Certificate. Failure to comply with this and any requirement in Title 25-K of the DCMR may result in the suspension and/or removal of your Cottage Food Business from the Registry.

YOUR INSPECTION

Your pre-operational cottage food inspection will be an announced, scheduled inspection. Please secure any pets in advance of our arrival. Two (2) Sanitarians will attend your Cottage Food Business at the time of the inspection. You will be asked to demonstrate some portion or all of your food processing operation for the inspectors during the inspection. Please familiarize yourself with the regulations in Title 25, Section K of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations. You may also find helpful guidance documents on our website at dchealth.dc.gov under the Food Safety and Hygiene tab.

We may also attend your Cottage Food Business at other times where there may be a public health risk such as a foodborne illness or a complaint. These inspections will be announced and scheduled. DC Health also has the authority to inspect your Cottage Food Business Products at the point of sale in farmers markets and public events.

YOUR HEALTH CERTIFICATE

Once your application has been reviewed and approved, and you have passed your pre-operational inspection, you will be issued a Cottage Food Business Registry Identification Number (CFBRID). DC Health will generate a Health Certificate with the following information: The CFBRID number, your name and/or trade name, a list of approved food items, and an expiration date. This Health Certificate will be printed at DC Health at 899 North Capitol St. NE, Washington, D.C. 2002. You will be notified when the Health Certificate is ready for pick-up. This certificate may also be mailed to you, at your request.

Remember, your Health Certificate will automatically expire after two years. If you wish to continue to operate as a Cottage Food Business, you must submit a new application and fee to DC Health for review. Submit your application at least thirty (30) days in advance of the expiration of your current Health Certificate.

QUESTIONS?

Please send questions you may have via email to Food.Safety@dc.gov or call (202) 535-2180 Extension 8 and someone will be glad to assist you.