



**COMMONWEALTH
KITCHEN**

2023 Annual Report



FOOD. PASSION FOR PEOPLE
EQUITY. LOVE FOR FOOD
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A BRIGHTER, MORE EQUITABLE FUTURE

Dear CWK Friends:

Someone very smart once said: “Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.” That’s how we tackled 2023 at CommonWealth Kitchen. It was a year filled with applying crucial lessons from prior years, embracing opportunities to innovate in the present, and planning for an even brighter and more equitable future.

Past years have taught us that creating access for our member businesses is key to building a sustainable and inclusive food economy:

- Access to store shelves.
- Access to contracts with big players in the food industry.
- Access to funding.
- Access to the spotlight.

2023 showed us that the opportunity to live for today can present itself in unexpected ways. When Haitian refugees began arriving in Massachusetts in unprecedented numbers, CWK members A Family Affair Catering, Fresh Food Generation, and Gourmet Kreyòl stepped up to lovingly provide thousands of culturally inclusive meals for families making their way in a new community. This work was never a part of these businesses’ plans for last year, but their drive to meet the needs of others and serve their neighbors in the here and now made for one of the brightest moments of 2023.

The growth, energy, and commitment to our North Star of building a food economy where all of us can participate and prosper has been at the root of 2023. The inspiring work from our business community,

strength of our industry and community partnerships, and generosity of spirit and support from our funders makes us deeply hopeful for tomorrow. True to form, CommonWealth Kitchen is facing some big questions, and we’re poised to respond because of supporters and partners like you.

As you read this annual report, we hope you will take a moment to reflect not just on the accomplishments of these past twelve months, but also on where CommonWealth Kitchen has been and where we can go.

Oh, and that very smart person? Supposedly it was some guy named Albert Einstein. Folks seem to think he knew what he was talking about.

With gratitude for all you do to help us build a more equitable food system—yesterday, today, and tomorrow...



Jen Faigel
Executive Director



Lesley Delaney Hawkins
Board Chair

ABOUT CWK

CommonWealth Kitchen is Boston's only nonprofit food start-up incubator. For over a decade, we've been working to build an equitable, sustainable food ecosystem rooted in our belief that inclusive entrepreneurship can change the world.



Our vertically integrated approach builds networks while addressing the human, social, and financial capital required for business success.

SHARED KITCHENS

Our commercial kitchen is bustling with nearly 50 businesses—from food trucks to caterers, bakers to product companies.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

Cranking out a delicious product is one thing. Knowing what it takes to launch and grow your business is another. That's why we provide a wide range of business education and technical support to hundreds of entrepreneurs annually.

SMALL-BATCH MANUFACTURING

For members that outgrow our shared kitchen, but are not quite ready to move to a large co-packer, CWK provides outsourced manufacturing to help our product companies scale. We also offer product development and processing for farms, and have our own line of products that we sell to institutional partners.

MARKET ACCESS

Think of CWK as a food business matchmaker. We forge industry partnerships in order to drive market access and sales for our businesses.





CORE EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

START A FOOD BIZ WORKSHOP

A two-hour workshop for aspiring entrepreneurs thinking about starting or about to launch their food businesses.

READY TO START

A four-week program that prepares food businesses to become members of our kitchen, equipping them with knowledge in business planning, opportunity analysis, marketing, entity formation, and budgeting.

READY TO LAUNCH

A 14-week cohort-based program that helps businesses in our kitchen with financial management and securing health permits before beginning operations.

READY TO GROW

Through our partnership with The Acceleration Project, we've complemented our programs with customized 1:1 support and access to industry networks to meet business owners where they are—particularly those who are ready to scale.

SANTANDER'S CULTIVATE SMALL BUSINESS

(in collaboration with Santander, Babson College, and ICIC—Initiative For A Competitive Inner City):

A tailored “mini MBA” that provides a food-focused curriculum, mentorship, and capital grants for diverse early-stage entrepreneurs who are building businesses in the food industry.



VENDOR
MAMAN NATHALIE
Maman Muffins Party



Maman Muffins Party
Eat what your Mama gives you
The importance of eating healthy is often overlooked. It is the foundation of a healthy life. The Maman Muffins Party is a community-based organization that provides healthy, delicious, and affordable meals to our members. We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our members and their families. We are proud to be a part of the community and to support our members in their journey to a healthier life.



IMPACT

50+

Current Members

9

New Businesses Permitted

700+

Entrepreneurs Reached via Education Programs

90+

Vendors at Food Show

BIPOC-Owned Member Businesses



Women-Owned Member Businesses



BIPOC and/or Woman-Owned Member Businesses





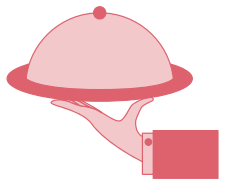
MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Gourmet Kreyòl, Boston's first Haitian food truck, was awarded a \$1M+ contract with the State of Massachusetts to feed refugees sheltering at hotels, allowing them to hire a dozen new staffers, including seven Haitian immigrants.



CWK collaborated with MassDevelopment to award a \$10,000 grant for a vendor-buyer partnership that was launched as a result of our food show. Congratulations to Roundhead Brewing Company!



Two CWK companies—Gourmet Kreyòl and Lord Dawgz—catered Harvard's Presidential Inauguration.



CWK curated, sold, and shipped 1,500 holiday gift boxes, filled with specialty products produced by our members.





JOSHUA REED-DIAWUOH | GRIA

“We started GRIA to support hard-working producers and give them a larger piece of the pie. We source all of our produce from West Africa Fairtrade, which means we pay an equitable price set by producer organizations and a premium on top of that to support farmers and their communities.”

Some key ways Commonwealth Kitchen helped GRIA: formalize their business operations, obtain the required food permits, and become “retail ready.”

THE DREAM

Support me and my family through our high-quality product and commitment to ethical sourcing.

FAVORITE FOOD

Rice balls and palm nut soup, a traditional Ghanaian dish.

FUN FACT

I love to play pool and am in a Boston billiards league!



GRIA sources only the best organic and fairtrade produce from the continent of Africa, supports agricultural development in the region, and brings delicious snacks directly to our customers. We offer a range of cashew snacks, from traditional favorites to bold and exciting flavors.



JACKIE SHARP | RAVENOUS ICE CREAM

“Since childhood, I’ve always been obsessed with two things: ice cream, and wacky flavor combos. In my 20s, I had a life-changing sundae from Bi-Rite Creamery in San Francisco: The Dainty Gentleman. It was honey lavender ice cream topped with blood orange olive oil and big flakes of sea salt. It totally expanded my understanding of what ice cream could be! During COVID, I started experimenting with making fun ice cream flavors at home, and was sharing pints with my friends, and then friends of friends, and voila! Ravenous Ice Cream was born.”

Jackie credits Commonwealth Kitchen being “a huge part of getting Ravenous off the ground.” From walking her through the complicated step of starting a food business to the Ready to Launch course that helped her “get a sense of what life will be like as I walk this path.”

THE DREAM

Sling my own ice cream cups around different farmer’s markets and parks around the neighborhood on my own solar-powered ice cream bike! Ultimately, find a brick-and-mortar store to rent!

FAVORITE FOOD

Anything I’ve never tried before!

FUN FACT

My last job was as a photo cook for America’s Test Kitchen—I got to make food for photoshoots that ended up in magazines, cookbooks, YouTube videos, and TV shows! My inner food stylist comes out when I package my ice cream and make marble patterns on top.

Ravenous Ice Cream is a Philly-style ice cream: egg free and ultra creamy! We exclusively use local cream from Hatchland Farm, and our flavors were created to be “Approachably Adventurous.” Our three flagship offerings are Matcha Chip, Apricot Coriander, and Banana Black Sesame. We are also a nut-free company.



EDWARD JEREZ & LEIDY PARRA | MAGIC EMPANADAS

“During the pandemic I decided to explore one of the skills that I am most passionate about—cooking. Corn empanadas are one of the most popular foods in Colombia. In our country, more than 12 million are consumed daily. We usually replace breakfast, lunch, or dinner with an empanada, and it was hard to find good empanadas in the area, so we decided to venture out and bring empanadas to Boston that represent a variety of Colombian flavors—savory and sweet!”

Winning Commonwealth Kitchen’s pitch competition for their Ready to Launch cohort helped Magic Empanadas save money and lower their costs.

THE DREAM

We want our brand to be recognized in the state, sell our products in stores, and have a brick-and-mortar place where our customers can enjoy our menu.

FAVORITE FOOD

Anything cooked on the grill!

FUN FACT

I am from Bogota, Colombia. I love running and singing. My last job was as a data analyst for a telephone company in Colombia.

Magic Empanadas is dedicated to delighting our customers with traditional Colombian products, such as empanadas and arepas, that are 100% gluten-free.



NANCY DANIELS | MADHRASI

“Feeling homesick after moving thousands of miles from Madras (a city in South India, Tamilnadu) to Boston, I looked for the perfect creamy spiced chai I grew up with, but couldn't find any. So I combined my engineering and culinary expertise to create a chai recipe with the right blend for that taste of home.”

Nancy credits Commonwealth Kitchen with helping her get her business off the ground and providing the information she needed to succeed. “Boston is a new place to me, where I barely know anyone in the business world. CWK made it so easy from the very beginning.”

THE DREAM

Establishing a network of cafes offering authentic South Indian cuisine, creating inviting spaces where customers can connect and build a sense of community. Much like the ubiquitous golden arches of McDonald's, I aspire to make the Madhrasi "M" a familiar symbol.

FAVORITE FOOD

I love food. So, I really can't be partial to one. I love any food done right. Perfectly cooked food with the right balance of herbs & spices or sugar & spice is always amazing.

FUN FACT

I started my career as a software engineer. It took me a few years to realize my love for food and then went to culinary school in Boston. Then, I worked in a few restaurants and cafes and then started my own cafe in Madras, India—“TOASTED.”

Madhrasi makes authentic chai concentrates...just add your milk of choice and enjoy this delightful Indian tea. My mission is to bring the flavor and warmth of South India to the US through food and community.



FEEDING OUR COMMUNITY

2023 took CommonWealth Kitchen's commitment to building a sustainable and inclusive food future to a place we never expected: member businesses fueling a massive effort to feed refugees.

As Haitian refugees made their way to Boston last year, the system designed to support those seeking a new home in our country struggled to keep up. That struggle included figuring out how to feed the thousands of families arriving here—people who had left everything they knew behind in search of hope and opportunity, and who desperately needed comfort and compassion. We're honored that one of the places they found that comfort and compassion was in the delicious, culturally-relevant, meals provided by CWK member businesses who stepped up to cook for them.

Gourmet Kreyol, Fresh Food Generation, and A Family Affair turned on a dime to support refugees in crisis, providing a nourishing and familiar welcome in a new city. Their work this year made the entire CWK community proud.



"We might not always be able to change the world, but every time I deliver food, I feel like I'm changing someone's world."

*- Jermaine Tulloch
Founder, Family Affair Catering*





THE FUTURE IS FRITTERS

As CommonWealth Kitchen works to feed the future, we are also investing in our planet. In 2023, CWK deepened its commitment to tackling the climate crisis and advancing sustainability.

The Field Fritter—Unsung Climate Hero!

The yellow field pea—once an unprofitable cover crop—is now wowing tastebuds at major institutions across Greater Boston. CWK co-developed a healthy and tasty new field pea fritter. Grown on a family farm in Maine, produced in-house, and paired with delicious sauces made by CWK businesses like Meal Mantra, FreshZen, and Mr. Tamole, our new signature Field Fritter can be found in hospitals and schools throughout the area.

Fighting Carbon Emissions by Upcycling Rescued Produce!

Food waste is a major driver of increased CO₂ emissions, contributing to the climate crisis and costing businesses and farmers money in lost revenue. We're addressing the problem head on by finding new (and, as always, delicious) ways to reduce waste and create new revenue streams for local businesses.

5K

pounds of butternut squash rescued by the Boston Food Hub to make soup for local hospitals.

7.5K

pounds of yellow field peas from Aurora Mills and Farm repurposed from a cover crop to make fritters.



A {SUPPLY} CHAIN REACTION

Developing and producing an irresistible product is only part of the secret to success for Commonwealth Kitchen businesses. Our member companies also need access to begin scaling their businesses, building wealth, and creating the equitable food economy we are all striving toward.

In 2023 CWK doubled down on opening doors for our member businesses to help provide sizable, reliable contracts and sales opportunities for businesses on the rise.

Building Equity, Opportunity, and Access with Colleges and Hospitals

We welcomed new partners to our kitchen, laying the foundation for multiple successful CWK relationships including Sodexo Healthcare (serving hospitals in the Beth Israel Lahey Health, Mass General Brigham, and UMass Memorial Health systems), MIT, Northeastern, Boston College, Brandeis, UMass Boston, and Boston University.

A Transformative Partnership with Gourmet Caterers

One of the largest and most highly-regarded caterers in the region committed to purchasing \$100,000 worth of product from Commonwealth Kitchen in 2023 and increased their investment for 2024! Their deep dedication to supporting diverse food suppliers has been a game changer for several of our companies.

For MIT's graduation catered by Gourmet Caterers, CWK member Clarke's Cakes & Cookies sold 150 sheet pans of vegan carrot cake and FreshZen sold 5,000 servings of Thai Chili Garlic Sauce.

Preferred Caterer Status with MIT

CommonWealth Kitchen, along with five CWK members and graduates have been designated as "Preferred Suppliers" with MIT. These caterers have multi-year contracts in place with MIT that feature negotiated pricing, terms, and conditions.

Catering contracts with big-name institutions like MIT are exactly the type of opportunities that so many of our entrepreneurs need to take their businesses to the next level.

Teaming up with Global Partners

We began a new strategic partnership with Global Partners to bring delicious, diverse food options to Alltown Fresh convenience stores across the region.

Another Successful Food Show!

On October 5th, thousands of industry professionals and food-loving community members flooded the SoWa Power Station to meet 90 food businesses, sample their goodies, and build relationships that will lead to future contracts and customers for our companies.



WHAT'S COOKIN' FOR 2024

2023 was one for the record books, but we have big plans for our equitable, sustainable, and inclusive food future in 2024.

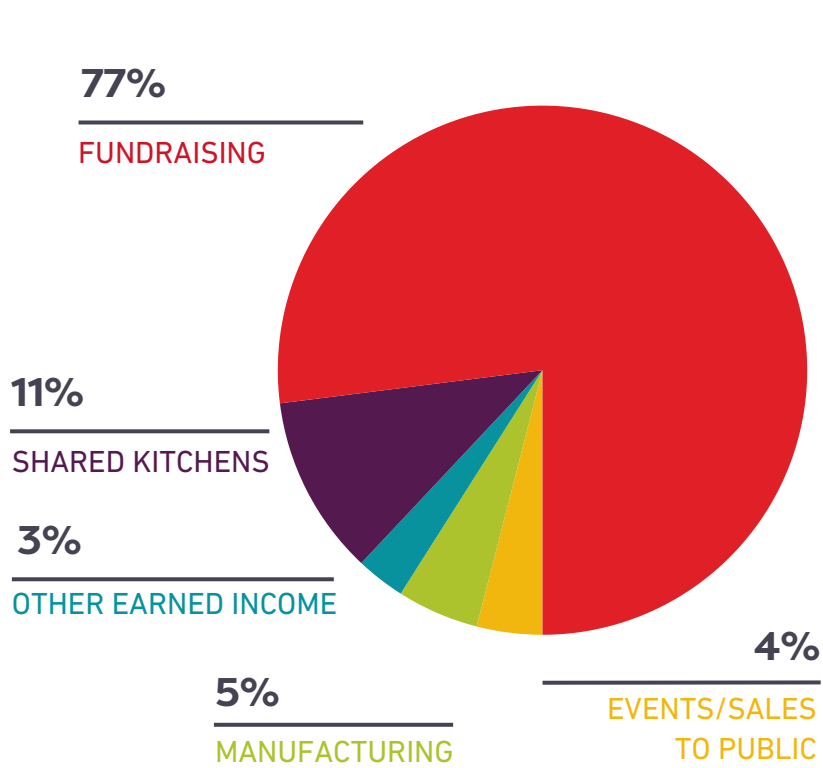
- Partner with Boston Public Schools to integrate CWK's signature Field Fritter into menus, along with CWK member products.
- Recruit, train, and launch even more diverse small food businesses through CWK's unique educational programming.
- Keep our shared kitchen and co-manufacturing facilities humming with growing local food businesses.
- Map out a strategy to expand our manufacturing operation within our walls now that we own our building.
- Integrate our Field Fritter and other CWK and member products into menu plans at hospitals and colleges regionally.
- Build on our Field Fritter model, developing and marketing new products like our seasonal soups for Sodexo Healthcare featuring additional locally-grown, sustainable crops.
- Bring products from more CWK businesses into major institutions throughout New England, giving our members the opportunity to succeed on an even bigger stage.
- Lock in plans for the use of our building. It's time to turn our big, bold vision for the space into a reality.



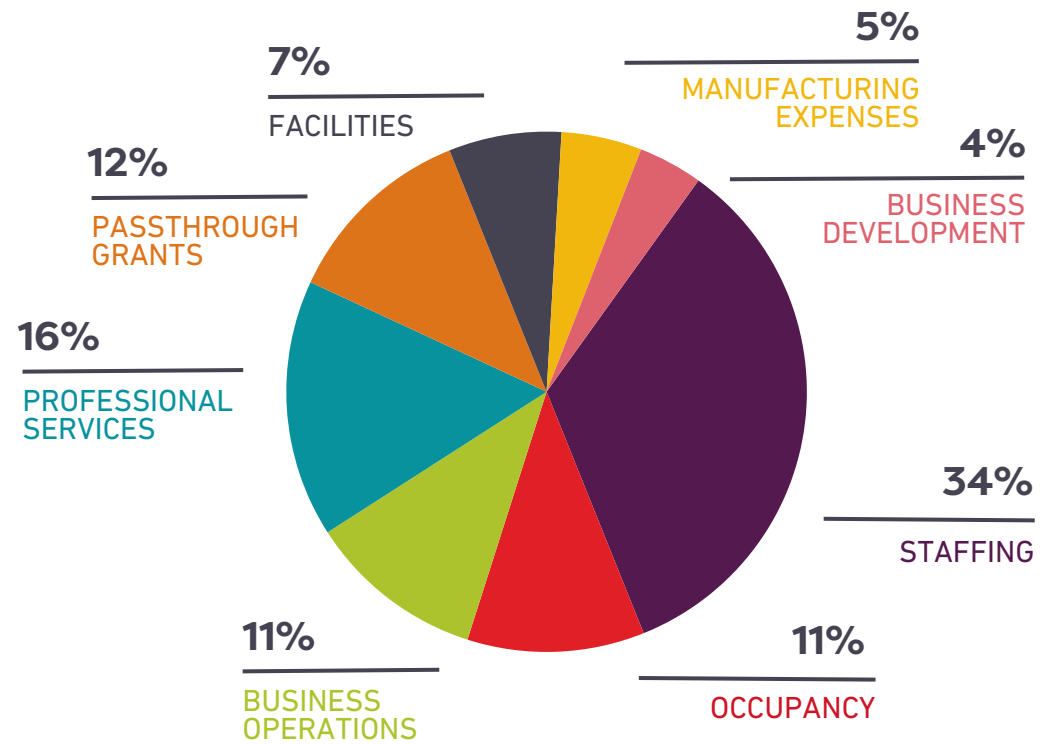


FINANCIALS

REVENUE: \$4,572,000



EXPENSES: \$4,722,000





OUR TEAM

The success of yesterday and today, and the hope we have for tomorrow, are because of the hard work and dedication of the CommonWealth Kitchen team.

- Sarah Baptiste, Program Associate
- Rodney Beldo, Maintenance Crew Member
- Alden Cadwell, Director of Business Development
- Yonan Cruz, Lead Contract Manufacturing Crew
- Kevin Doherty, Director of Culinary Operations
- Jennifer Eno, Chief Operating Officer
- James Farrell, Shared Kitchen Manager
- Kay Ford, Finance & Administrative Associate
- Jen Faigel, Executive Director
- Errolyn Gary, QA/QC Food Safety Manager
- Paul Garberson, Director of Facilities
- Nicole Gunn, Purchasing Coordinator
- Malcolm Hall, Shipping & Receiving Operations Team Member
- Jorge Matias, Contract Manufacturing Crew Member
- Linda Moulton, Chief Strategy Officer
- Cristian Pena, Manufacturing Crew Member
- Edward Pena, Manufacturing Crew Member
- Bonnie Rosenbaum, Director of Communications
- Ericca Sadler, Administrative Associate
- Fabiana Silva, Manufacturing Production Crew Member
- Nick Schonberger, Senior Entrepreneurship Manager
- Lee Ann Song, Director of Institutional Giving
- Daquan Straw, Contract Manufacturing Crew Member
- Sherie Theriault, Director of Member Success

& BOARD

- Lesley Delaney Hawkins, Chair
- Helene Solomon, Treasurer
- Jason Allen
- Magnolia Contreras
- Raul Fernandez
- Sheldon Lloyd

Thank you to our outgoing board members

- Lori Smith Britton, former Chair
- Antoinette Coakley
- Yves Nau
- Kara Fagan-Rayner



FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

Thank you to our kitchen helpers—we couldn't do what we do without all these cooks supporting our work.

CHEF DE CUISINE (EXECUTIVE CHEF)

- Ajana Foundation
- Amalgamated Foundation: Growing Justice Fund
- City of Boston*
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
- Cummings Foundation
- Eastern Bank Foundation*
- Fidelity Foundation
- Gourmet Caterers
- Henry P. Kendall Foundation
- Klarman Foundation
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- New England Food Vision Prize
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Santander
- The Boston Foundation

CHEF DE CUISINE (DEPUTY CHEF)

- 1434 Foundation
- Barr Foundation
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation
- Capital One
- Claneil Foundation
- Findlay Family Foundation
- Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC) *

SOUS CHEF (STATION CHEF)

- A Catered Affair*
- Boston Properties (BXP)*
- Global Partners Foundation
- Goodwin Procter LLP*
- Meet Boston*
- M&T Bank*
- Northeastern University*
- Ocean Spray*
- PNC Bank
- Quin Impact Fund
- TD Bank*
- TOAST.org
- Trefler Foundation*
- Whole Foods Market*

COMMIS (JUNIOR) CHEF

- Baker Tilly*
- Blue Hub Capital*
- Boston Red Sox & Red Sox Foundation*
- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute*
- e-Cratchit*
- Effie's Homemade
- Gordon Food Service*
- NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association
- Rockland Trust Charitable Giving
- Tufts University*
- Walden Mutual Bank*

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Amplify LatinX
- Black Economic Council of MA (BECMA)
- MCCI + Foundation for Business Equity
- Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR)
- The Acceleration Project (TAP)

**Food Show Sponsors*

THANK YOU

to everyone who supported us with individual donations, purchased a gift box, or gave business to our member companies! Your support benefits our community of businesses and helps us build an inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable local food economy.








PASSION FOR PEOPLE.
HUNGER FOR EQUITY.
LOVE OF FOOD.



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