Navigating the complex approval process for food entrepreneurs to start, run and grow their business in Chicago

Part 1/2
PROJECT REPORT

Communication Design Workshop
Fall 2018
Institute of Design
Illinois Institute of Technology
In partnership with Chicago Food Policy Action Council
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Navigating a rich and complex food approval system

An introduction

Food in Chicago

Chicago's vibrant food culture owes itself to much more beyond the food. While the city boasts 7,300+ restaurants\(^1\), 262 grocery stores\(^2\), 150+ summer food festivals\(^3\), 61 farmers markets\(^4\), and other food outlets, there are two additional factors that contribute to its vibrancy.

Chicago remains one of the world’s most diverse cities. The city is home to a still-growing array of ethnic and cultural groups. Each brings food from their homeland—whether to cook at home or to share with the community at large—adding to the cornucopia of Chicago’s dining table. Food is an easy entrée for these groups, by extending the production to deliver on a scale that can provide an economic source.

Chicago is entrepreneurial. Terms like ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘start-ups’ are currently in vogue, but small mom-and-pop shops and individually owned businesses have long been a mainstay of Chicago’s economy. Well before big box retailers, chain outlets and online stores, these entrepreneurially-spirited individuals brought with them creativity and ingenuity to Chicago’s streets and neighborhoods. This entrepreneurial approach to business development and ownership still flourishes in the food industry today.

Meanwhile, the local city government remains necessarily involved in the food business community as it works to ensure the safety of consumers while promoting the economic health of the city. Through the establishment and enforcement of food policy, these departments strive to protect the public while also educating entrepreneurs on good business practices so that their businesses may become enduring contributors to the local economy.

The reality is that, at times, these food entrepreneur behaviors and municipal requirements have come into conflict. On the one hand, the rules that govern the businesses’ commercial behavior are often presented in a form that is not easily accessible or understood, making compliance difficult. On the other, many unique, individual, and authentic or innovative styles of food preparation are not well understood by those writing the rules or enforcing them, resulting in cultural friction or the businesses abandoning Chicago for more progressive locations.
Our charge

The 2018 Fall Communication Design Workshop at the Institute of Design (ID) at Illinois Institute of Technology, in partnership with Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC), was initially charged to create visualizations of the food licensing, permitting, and certification processes to help food entrepreneurs more easily navigate the myriad pathways that exist to become compliant so that they may start a viable business. Students were tasked to research various participants of this ecosystem, learn about the processes, and ultimately translate from a text-based expression into a graphic representation—all with the goal of bringing clarity and simplicity to these licensing processes.

Through interviews with the various participants of this ecosystem, the team came to understand that the food business licensing process in Chicago ...

... is not a simple process, but rather a path involving many processes.

... often requires multiple licenses, each with its own prerequisite certificates and permits.

... involves interacting with not just one government entity, but likely several, each requiring different ways of interacting and points of contact.

... does not have a stable set of rules, but one that is constantly in flux.

... does not begin with a simple decision as to which license to obtain, but rather a complex set of decisions based on multiple business variables.

As a design effort, we are constantly learning how the world is so that we may provide solutions to what the world can become. In addition to the navigation maps, we will present in this document three models that emerged from our learnings that help us understand the larger context in which food licensing and food entrepreneurship lives.

By doing this, we are able to shift our understanding from what we know to what we can do as next steps. This shows the power of visualization which will be discussed in a later section.

References


Our design process

We leveraged our understanding of design in order to better visualize the paths and processes for a food entrepreneur to acquire various licenses in the City of Chicago. We went through many steps in the design process to create our maps and insights, and worked closely with the Chicago Food Policy Action Council along the way.

- **Secondary research & Benchmarking**: We began the process by gathering and analyzing data based on how other cities approached similar problems, looking at existing research on the Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) website and learning from our partners at the Chicago Food Policy Action Council. We used this information to begin the earliest prototypes of the license maps.

- **Stakeholder Interviews**: We conducted 10 interviews that included speaking to 5 business owners, 3 consultants and 2 city officials. During these interviews we collected data by having participants complete stakeholder maps, journey maps and ecosystem maps.

- **Prototyping**: We continued to iterate on our maps as we learned more from our primary and secondary research.
We analyzed our interview data by recording insights, collecting quotes and using a few frameworks to help us organize our thoughts.

We synthesized our findings into insights and showed them in three ways.
- We shaped our insights into design factors and principles that could inform future directions for the process.
- We created a decision tree to help business owners figure out which license makes the most sense for them.
- We made a map that shows the existing relationships and all entities involved in the licensing process.

We presented our maps and insights to members of the Chicago Food Policy Action Council as well as various business owners, consultants and city officials whom we spoke with during the process.

Section authors: Divya Iyengar, Yuan Feng
What we learned about
CHICAGO’S
FOOD
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Supporting food entrepreneurs

A snapshot of the world of starting a new food business in Chicago

Overview

Starting a food business in Chicago is a great way to support and grow the local economy. It is important to keep in mind the institutions that need to be—and some that should be—in order to ensure that business owners are able to successfully launch and operate their businesses. Navigating the key relationships within the system is a critical first step towards that success.

Government Officials

Government Officials create and enforce the requirements and processes that need to be followed in order to start and run businesses.

Consultants and support organizations

Consultants and support organizations advise and guide new business owners through the correct processes they need to follow in order to fulfill the requirements associated with their specific business type.

Business owners

Business owners want to open their food business quickly, efficiently, and in the way that makes the most sense for the type of business they are opening.

Please note that not all entities (business owners, city officials, vendors, consultants, partners etc.) have been represented in this map. This map includes those who we have interacted with throughout the map development process.
Supporting food entrepreneurs

Section authors:
Vidya Mantrala, Cristina Tarriba, Divya Iyengar
**A web of relationships**

Within the Chicago food business landscape exists a web of complex interactions and flows of information. It must be navigated differently depending on everything from how food is prepared to where it is sold.

The success of a new food business ultimately depends on holistically addressing the needs and requirements of all of the community stakeholders involved.
How to read

- State of Illinois
- City of Chicago officials
- City official consultants
- Consultants
- Business owners

Descriptive relationships between entities
Optional relationships between entities
Relationships between entities
The business owner's perspective

Business owners are driven by a desire to start their business as quickly as possible, and they want to be able to sell their food in an authentic fashion. However, the process can be cumbersome and costly. Many factors influence the types of businesses they decide to start, as well as the types of guidance that they seek.
Supporting food entrepreneurs

Business owners are expected to know the technical details as soon as they start planning.

Think About:

What channels might be most accessible to different communities of business owners in Chicago for business planning information?

“I used LegalZoom. I shouldn’t have. I could have done it on my own. Like I had no idea what it took. I didn’t realize that you could go online and just incorporate at the beginning. I was so not savvy. I wish I wouldn’t have used LegalZoom in retrospect.”

— Business owner

“I think every food entrepreneur needs a consultant that knows what to look for and knows how to set things up, because, when the health inspector came in, I passed on the very first inspection and I’ve heard horror stories from other chef colleagues that it’s taken us three, four times before inspector helps give something.”

— Business owner

“They said ‘is your cart ready to be inspected by the public health department?’ And I said, ‘tell me what “ready” means.’ I need to know because there was nowhere that says what you need. So, the person who we sat down with a really did help us in terms of before even applying and paying for it.”

— Business owner
The government officials’ perspective

Government officials are interested in supporting new businesses, as they contribute to the local economy, however they are also interested in business owners complying with the current regulations. While the city does try to be flexible, their top concern is public health with regards to food safety.
Government officials have to both enforce rules and address changing community needs.

Think About:
What are ways that the city can co-create with new business owners to handle emerging business requirements?

“We are advocates for business. We want entrepreneurs to succeed, and we don’t want it to be cumbersome to everyone.”
— Government official

“We are fighting misinformation and we are trying to get the information out the best way that we can.”
— Government official

“Everyone who is serving food has the same regulations applied to everyone. We don’t want people to get sick. The City gets blamed for this issue.”
— Government official
Supporting food entrepreneurs

The consultants’ and support organizations’ perspective

Business owners can approach multiple types of consultants to navigate the licensing processes:

- City consultants guide business owners through the process.
- Legal justice consultants empower underserved communities and help them navigate an inaccessible process. (Institute for Justice)
- Advocacy consultants care about achieving policy changes and clarifications to better serve all communities. (CFPAC, AVA)
- Entrepreneurship consultants provide business planning and legal resources to new business owners. (John Marshall Law Clinic, Good Food Accelerator)
Consultants and support organizations are liaisons and interpreters.

Think About:
How could all the different types of consultants work together to provide complementary services to new business owners?

“...The process can be a problem, certainly for individuals who are undocumented that are starting businesses. There’s nothing wrong with that, but the point is that a lot of folks won’t be able to navigate that if they’re starting their business on their own or they don’t necessarily have legal assistance or another individual who’s helping them in the process.” — Entrepreneurship Consultant

“...The process can be a problem, certainly for individuals who are undocumented that are starting businesses. There’s nothing wrong with that, but the point is that a lot of folks won’t be able to navigate that if they’re starting their business on their own or they don’t necessarily have legal assistance or another individual who’s helping them in the process.” — Entrepreneurship Consultant

“So then there are no permits for street sellers, because the procedure for them doesn’t exist. The procedure doesn’t exist because the old rules don’t apply, because there is a proposal for new rules. And we’re still stuck in limbo.” — Advocacy Consultant
Making research actionable

Abstracting data to principles

Design research is used to uncover the processes, behaviors, and biases of the people that live and operate in a given context. It allows designers to develop a holistic understanding of what is happening and why it is happening.

Features of this process include principles, statements, and factors generated from the detailed qualitative data we amassed through the interviews to provide interpretation and create meaning.

**Design Principle**
A design principle is a directive for action. It provides you with a simple set of rules to follow when creating solutions.

**Need Statement**
A need statement is a call to the issues in the system that need to be addressed.

**Factor**
A factor is an element of the system that, if addressed, will help solve for needs.

The model on the right—and details on the following pages—is a distillation of the interviews the team conducted with the various stakeholders. This helps us move from descriptive, narrative views of the food entrepreneurs’ experience to an actionable set of principles, needs and factors for designers. This guides designers to take action, for example by exploring possible areas of intervention, or facilitating conversations between stakeholders for alignment and improvement.

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"I have no idea how they could have helped us, especially if the department didn’t know what this processes is either. I think we were kind of the pioneers that helped determine the hot holding food process with city."

— Business owner

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**Design principles:**
*high level directive for action*

Exchange information through government resources and your network

Education and progress is rooted in the ability to leverage information and apply it in meaningful ways. Information for food entrepreneurs lives both in a static form—online or in print—and also dynamically, as it flows through people and their networks. Designing for communication processes will enhance the ability to access that information and promote system improvement.

Section authors:
David Pollack, Grace Goeun Lee, Kyungtae Kim
Developing a business requires entrepreneurs to embark on a journey of education and persistence. Since the food entrepreneurship ecosystem is organized by many stakeholders, the interactions and engagements that occur to advance a process must be seen as moments of co-production. All stakeholders are dependent on each other, and thus, all share the responsibility and accountability for creating and maintaining a functional system.

“\textit{What I’m interested in is making sure that people really actually have control over how their communities develop and that they have access to the things that they need.}”

— Consultant

Chicago’s history is complex. Its narrative derives from a network of experiences that relate to the individual, family, and community. Mindfulness—the act of remembering someone or something and considering them/it when you do something—is a critical element for shaping a new narrative. This concept is a core feature of designing for an improved future.

“They’ve probably never had corn on the cob and it’s just like, it’s so anti-, it’s just weird. Like - that would be a really weird way to give out this product culturally. They would never want the corn if it was packaged this way.”

— Business Owner
Network with peers
Personal networks can help provide a safety net for entrepreneurs. Don't limit this network to neighborhood friends, but extend it to professionals.

Network with governments
Government representatives and consultants are there to assist business owners. Build a relationship with them to earn trust and gain influence.

Be proactive
Networks don’t build themselves. Food entrepreneurs should seek opportunities to meet people who will help them reach their goal.

Network with associations
Non-for-profit organizations and other associations use their network to coordinate and streamline business processes. These pre-established networks can be utilized to speed up processes that business owners are struggling with.
Varying degree of inspector enforcement
Throughout the city of Chicago, food laws are enforced with different degrees of rigidity. This directly influences the cultural development of a neighborhood. Additionally, there is a gap between “legal documents and what is implemented in the world.”

Distribute responsibility for improvement across food ecosystem

Understand barriers and avoid violations
Financial concern
There are many ways to finance a business. Business owners should understand the opportunities available, and seek opportunities to work with others to do what is best for them.

Desire to be compliant
Food entrepreneurs often miss steps in the legal process because of a low desire to navigate the bureaucracy. This leads to city violations or innovative food businesses leaving the city.

Speed to sales
Licensing decisions are often made based on how fast it will allow entrepreneurs to sell their product.

Celebrate benefits to community
Economic stimulus
Food entrepreneurs provide economic stimulus to their neighborhoods and the city.

Cultural vitalization
Food entrepreneurship is an expression of culture and allows communities to enrich their identity.

Social fulfillment
Food entrepreneurs facilitate and support the social needs of the community.

Strive for equal enforcement of the law

Documentation of food preparation process
Documenting a process is often an easy way for entrepreneurs to show that they are working to become licensed.

Stakeholder key

Government officials
Consultants & support organizations
Business owners
Design principles detailed:
Need statements and factors, cont.

Engage with others by taking a mindful approach

Demonstrate flexibility

Learn from the others

Be cognizant of tension

Workable ordinances
Laws are open to interpretation and can apply to different business types and food production processes. This understanding of the law needs to be conveyed to food entrepreneurs.

Empathetic mindset
Cultural differences between populations are reflected in the legislation of regional areas. For example, corn husks are seen as suitable packaging for a tamale in Mexico, but in Chicago, they need to be in plastic bags. Be cognizant of this when working with populations that are new to an area.

Highlight opportunities to give feedback
Incorporating feedback is an easy way to make improvements and demonstrate that a relationship is being built. Showcase ways for business owners and consultants to give this feedback.

Sharing success
Entrepreneurs are experts in creating “the new.” Find ways to capture this information.

Education within community
Education programs within communities are essential to create leaders. Give ambitious entrepreneurs the tools they need to be leaders.

Legal workarounds as a signal for improvement
On occasion, business owners may use a workaround to get through the legal system. Use these workarounds to identify process breakpoints.

Cultural differences
Different populations carry different mental models of what is right and wrong. Adapt the way you communicate to demonstrate why the law is the way it is.

Law as provocation
Some laws can be seen as provocations toward the community. Try to understand and avoid them.

Historic tensions
Tensions between food entrepreneurs and government is embedded in the past. Show awareness of discomfort and work to make situations more comfortable.
Collaborating around design principles
How might we use design principles to have a conversation?

Card activity
To make the research more actionable, we designed a card deck to be a tool for conversation in meetings. The cards each contain design principles, need statements, and design factors.

Card decks contain the collective reported experience of people that we interviewed in our research, but not necessarily the biases of people that would use them in a workshop or conversational setting. These cards can be a good object for workshop participants to share their different perspectives and suggest new ideas. Cards will be a helpful tool for one to remove some of the subjectivity and start important conversations.
Use scenarios

Card decks can be used in many different scenarios: setting up an internal agenda, exploring new partnership opportunities, and exploring solutions. Try creating a clever way of using the card deck.

Look at the cards  Ask questions and create ideas  Determine area of focus

How to read

Need Statement:  Provide Clear Pathways for new business owners

Design Principle: Exchange information through government resources and your network

Front  
Government officials  Business owners  Consultants & support organizations

Back  
Factors:  Thinking ahead  Business owners need help to understand the future consequences of their business decisions (e.g. legal structure of business)  

Factors  Design Principles  Explanation

Exchange information through government resources and your network  Distribute responsibility for improvement across food ecosystem  Engage with others by taking a mindful approach
Chicago’s
FOOD LICENSE NAVIGATION MAPS
Simplifying and clarifying the decision-making process

The following decision tree helps Chicago food entrepreneurs define which license(s) they need to start their business in Chicago.

Perhaps you want to sell tamales but are not sure how to go about it. Maybe you want to start a food truck business but are not sure what kind of food to sell. This diagram can act as a guide to help you clarify your business vision and begin the process of making it legal in Chicago.

Section authors: Matt Impola, Yuan Feng, Fanny Tan
Chicago food license decision tree for Chicago food entrepreneurs

This diagram covers food-related licenses in Chicago only. It does not apply if...
... you are selling beverages or liquor.
... your business is from Chicago but is selling outside the city.

You will likely need multiples licenses and permits. Therefore you should follow any pathways that apply to your situation.

This diagram may not have all the answers you need. Requirements vary as policies change. In addition, each license may have additional requirements (approvals, permits, certificates, etc.). Check with the City of Chicago or BACP (Business Affairs and Consumer Protection) for the latest information.

The present information is based on interviews and online research. This is a starting point, but not an exhaustive document.

How to read

**CATEGORY**

**Questions**

**Options**

- Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP)
- Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)

End of process

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**ACTIVITY**

What does your business do?

- Provide a place to prepare food

**CLIENTS**

Who uses this space?

- Yourself
- Other operators

To whom do you sell?

- To businesses
- To the public

Where do you sell?

**SALE LOCATION**

- At an event or festival
- At a park/beach
- At a City Market
- At a neighborhood market
- At another public or private property
- On the street or on a sidewalk
- At a building

End of process
## Chicago Food License Decision Tree

### Purpose
This document covers food-related licenses in Chicago only.

### Activites/Options
- **Entrepreneurs** for Chicago Food

### Departments
- Department of Cultural Affairs and Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) for the latest information.
- Permits, certificates, etc.

### This Document
- May not have all the answers you need!

### What's Included
- Food-related licenses in Chicago.

### How to Read
- To identify the general requirement path for your food business.

### What does your business do?
- Determine your business activity, client group, and location.

### To whom do you sell?
- Identify the target group for your sales activity.

### Where do you sell?
- Identify the location of your sales activity.

### How do you sell?
- Determine the mode of sale for your sales activity.

### What do you sell?
- Identify the food you sell.

### Food preparation Location
- If you prepare food: Where do you do it?

### Permit Agreement
- Contact BACP for more information.

### Concession
- See map catalog.

### Registration
- Contact BACP for more information.

### Cottage Food
- See map catalog.

### Shared Kitchen
- See map catalog.

### Elk: Numerical Value
- 31

### Diagram
- Flowchart showing decision tree for food business licenses in Chicago.
Developing the process maps

The rationale of this work

Through our secondary research and field work, we discovered that the licensing process for food vendors was often quite difficult to navigate. The following areas stood out:

- Information is discrete and decentralized
- It is hard to keep pace with changing information
- Text is linear and hard to distinguish

**Information is discrete and decentralized**

BACP publishes fact sheets for various kinds of businesses, as well as fliers with updated information. There are also play lists of educational videos on the internet that are published by city departments that provide information as well as workshops conducted by the city. All of this content requires curation in order to access the necessary information. In the absence of this curated content, various third-party organizations may create workarounds to educate new business owners, however, this causes policy-makers to lose control of the information leading to tension and potential misinformation.

**It is hard to keep pace with changing information**

In July of 2018, the food code changed. Food business owners were suddenly required to meet new standards (including allergen certifications). In January 2019, more changes will go into effect with new food policies. If new business owners are unaware of these changes, they are likely to be caught in violation of something that they didn't even know they had to keep in mind.

This highlights the importance of a centralized, accurate and up-to-date information source.

**Text is linear and hard to distinguish**

Text based directions and rules tend to be overwhelming due to the fact that often the reading level is quite high, and it is difficult to distinguish the subtle differences between processes purely by reading through them. This leads to missed opportunities to be proactive about taking certain steps, and possible mistakes in the process as well.

This work was meant to take in the published information regarding different food licenses, permissions, certifications and requirements and codify them in a way that maintains their accuracy, while enhancing visibility and accessibility.

Section authors:
Vidya Mantrala, David Pollack
Developing the process maps

Fliers from BACP on starting a food cart business, English and Spanish translation

Resources provided by the AVA regarding starting a food cart business

July 2018 Chicago Food Code update

Flier from BACP communicating procedures on food truck operation

Posters on updates and ordinances at city hall
Evolving the information on food licensing
From legal codes to visual maps

As an entity, the government has processes to create products and provide them to the public. Their products range from law enforcement to health insurance, but at the core, their product is translating the will of the public into law.

The machines at work to create the law are our politicians, who must write laws that can be used by themselves first, and by the public second. Lawyers need to interpret law that is valid for the court system. They communicate the law to the public at a high level. However, in reality, the communication and practical application of the law to the public is left to middle and lower tier governmental employees. The work of this Communication Design Workshop was to bring clarity and simplicity to a
process which governmental employees, consultants, and food entrepreneurs all must understand and act upon.

Interviews that we conducted helped us understand the efforts of the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) employees and other city departments to communicate to the public. These employees are not trained in the art of communication, but are individuals who have the job of supporting the food entrepreneurship community in Chicago.

Yet, even without official training, they understand that new tools for interpretation need to be created. The following exhibits represent an evolution of understanding this information.

Exhibit 2
User Fact Sheet (Shared Kitchen Operator License)
Produced by: government employees
Produced for: government employees, consultants, food entrepreneurs

Obtain a Shared Kitchen Operator License
Any establishment used as a place of business for the exclusive or primary purpose of utilizing, leasing or renting its commercial kitchen space to individuals, or business entities, for food preparation, temporary extra production capacity, menu planning, training, taste testing, product development, food packaging, food storage or any other food-related purpose; and does not hold a valid retail food establishment license.

$330.00 per Long-Term Shared Kitchen User
$75.00 per Short-Term Shared Kitchen User

Fee is based on a two-year term; however, a fee is due for each two-year term, regardless of renewal.

- Register your business with the state of Illinois
- Collect recommended prerequisite documents
- Prepare to apply
- Apply
- Present application documents
- Check zoning interactive map and clarify zone
- Confirm zoning status with BACP business consultant

RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS
- Zoning review
- Business location floor plan
- State of IL file #
- EIN #
- EIN #
- IDOR #
- IDOR #
- Business location address
- Business location address
- Business location address
- Business location address
Codifying processes and actions

A new visual language

Regulatory information is hard to digest and differentiate in its current form

Portraying the licensing processes in a visual manner is very important in order to address the aforementioned challenges in a consistent and understandable way. Any visual standards need to be: clear, familiar, and repeatable across multiple agencies, licenses and permissions. After reviewing quick facts sheets of different licensing processes, patterns of activities were also discovered and needed to be revealed through the system of maps.

The maps need to be modular. Pieces can fit together to describe particularly complex interactions. Many of these licensing processes are not just one process, but paths with multiple processes. Some processes are optional, while others are required. Some are dependent on each other, while others must happen simultaneously. There are multiple steps and sub-steps—and sub-steps may have an additional list of requirements that need to be met—before a new business owner can proceed. The visual maps address some of these issues by focusing on the steps and requirements of acquiring a specific license. They also reveal interactions between agencies.

We imagine this system of visual modules be used as building blocks. There are repeated common actions, and the visuals can be mixed and matched to suit the particular process that needs to be represented. Each map can be useful by itself, but they will all make sense as a whole body of work as well.
... that create a family of maps to help navigate complex processes.

### Obtain Mobile Food Preparer License

A "Mobile Food Preparer" is any person who, by traveling from place to place upon the public ways, prepares and serves food from a mobile food vehicle.

- **$1,000**
- **Valid for 2 years**

#### Key

- State of Illinois
- Dept of Public Health (DPH)
- Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP)
- Chicago Fire Dept (CFD)

#### Steps & substeps

1. City debt must be resolved prior to issuance of any business license
2. Register business with State of Illinois
   - EIN/TIN
   - Business registration
3. Meet w/ BACP Business Consultant
4. Complete Business Information Sheet (BIS)
   - [pdf](https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/bacp/businfo/BACP-Mobile-Food-Vendor-License.pdf)
5. Obtain Valid Food Sanitation Manager Certificate
   - [Fulfilling Food Safety Requirement Map](https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/bacp/busi/sheets/bacp-Mobile-Food-Vendor-License-Sheet_V-10-06-2016.pdf)
6. Obtain inspection report from within the last 90 days from the state or local health authority where the food source or commissary is located
7. Consult with Health & Fire Depts
   - Complete health consultation
   - Meet with Department of Public Health Sanitarian to review the following:
     - Proposed menu including a list of all food items the applicant intends to serve
     - Specification sheets on equipment installed and used within the MFV
     - Blueprints (Plans) of the MFV
   - Obtain inspection report from within the last 90 days from the state or local health authority where the food source or commissary is located
8. **Does your truck use propane or natural gas?**
   - Yes
     - Obtain Certificate of commercial general liability insurance
   - No
     - Go to the next step
9. **Submit licensee application @ BACP**
   - $100 fee
10. **Consult with Health & Fire Depts**
    - Complete health consultation
    - Meet with Department of Public Health Sanitarian to review the following:
      - Proposed menu including a list of all food items the applicant intends to serve
      - Specification sheets on equipment installed and used within the MFV
      - Blueprints (Plans) of the MFV
    - Obtain inspection report from within the last 90 days from the state or local health authority where the food source or commissary is located
11. **Does your vehicle use a gasoline, diesel or electric generator, propane or compressed natural gas, type II exhaust hood or fire suppression system?**
    - Yes
      - You need to apply for Fire Safety Permit
      - Submit a completed "MFV Fire Safety Permit Application" to the Chicago Fire Department
    - No
      - You don't need a Fire Safety Permit
12. **Does your truck use propane or natural gas?**
    - Yes
      - Obtain Certificate of commercial general liability insurance
    - No
      - Go to the next step

#### CERTIFICATES:
- Initial Retail Health Inspection
- Food Safety

#### GUIDELINES:
- City markets vendor guidelines

#### REGISTRATIONS:
- Cottage food operation

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In a companion piece to this report (Part 2/2 Navigation Map Catalog), you will find a collection of process maps representing several different types of food business licenses and certificates. It is a representative, but not exhaustive view of the varied and complex licensing processes for different types of food vendors in Chicago. The maps available in this catalog are:

- **LICENSES:**
  - Mobile Prepared Food Vendor License
  - Mobile Food Preparer License
  - Mobile Food Dispenser License
  - Mobile Prepared Food Vendor License
  - Shared Kitchen Operator License
  - Shared Kitchen Supplemental License
  - Shared Kitchen User License

#### DISCLAIMER
The navigation maps are for reference purpose only. The information can change with updated city ordinances and procedures. Anyone applying for a license or permit should contact the relevant city departments directly for current and additional information.
NAVIGATION MAPS
A collection of these maps can be seen in full size in the companion document, Navigating the complex approval process for food entrepreneurs to start, run and grow their business in Chicago: Part 2/2 Navigation Map Catalog.
### How to read

**Key**
- Xxxxx

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Inspect food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How to apply

1. **Register a Business**
   - Contact the Department of Public Health
   - Obtain a mobile prepared food commissary

2. **Gather Required Documents**
   - City of Chicago Food Protection Department Services
   - A copy of City of Chicago Food Protection Department Services

3. **Submit Registration Documents**
   - Pay $8-$15 fee
   - Fax: 312-603-5800
   - Phone: 312/744-3315

4. **Follow City Markets Vendor Guideline**
   - [http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html)

5. **Attend a Class**
   - Pay $15 fee
   - See details on the citation

6. **Take Class & Pass Exam**
   - Temporary proof of attaining certification
   - Receipt from training class can be used for inspection

7. **Schedule Inspection**
   - Where you'll need to have inspection
   - Certificate available

8. **Obtain a Mobile Prepared Food Commissary**
   - Where you'll need to have the first inspection

9. **Obtain User License**
   - In a shared kitchen
   - Required tasks or documents
   - $100 fee

10. **AFTER APPROVAL**
    - See details on the citation
    - The colors of the path tell you which inspection to take
    - Get a citation
    - End of process
    - Make sure you understand what to fix, when and how if applicable
    - How to read

11. **Prepare for Inspection**
    - How to read
    - End of process
    - Make sure you understand what to fix, when and how if applicable
    - How to read

### Sources
- Small Business Center: [https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html](https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html)
- Department of Public Health: [https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html](https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html)
- Chicago Department of Public Health: [https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html](https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html)

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**Chicago Department of Public Health**

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

- [http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html)
- [http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/FoodProtection/ProviderList_SituationsWhenYouDecideOutofSeveralChoices.html)
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**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

**DEFINITION**

- The Chicago Board of Education of the City of Chicago, District 29, the District 29 Employees' Retirement System, and the Chicago Public Schools Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) define cooperative as follows:
  - **Cooperative** = a farmer-to-farmer relationship, as defined in the Illinois Consumer's Cooperative Act, where 100% of the products sold by the cooperative must be grown or produced by the farmers involved in the cooperative.

**Requirements for Becoming a City of Chicago Aggregator**

- To become a City of Chicago Aggregator for a market, the cooperative must be a farmer-to-farmer relationship, as defined in the Illinois Consumer's Cooperative Act.
- 100% of the products sold by the cooperative must be grown or produced by the farmers involved in the cooperative.
- The cooperative must be a farmer-to-farmer relationship, as defined in the Illinois Consumer's Cooperative Act.
Institute of Design
Illinois Institute of Technology

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DISCLAIMER
The navigation maps are for reference purpose only. The information can change with updated city ordinances and procedures. Anyone applying for a license or permit should contact the relevant city departments directly for current and additional information.
**Production notes:**
(not for printing,
for reference purpose only)

**Printing:**
Color
pg 1-28 Letter size double sided
pg 29-32 Tabloid double sided
pg 33-40 letter size double sided

**Folding/trimming:**
For pg 29-32 tabloid pages:
First, fold in half to create gatefolds, resulting in 8-1/2 x 11”.
(The license decision making tree should be inside.)
Then, trim 1/2” of outer left and right edge of spread to accommodate binding when folded.

![Diagram of folding and trimming]

**Binding:**
Incorporate the folded tabloid pages.
Flip over last page (back cover) so the printed side faces outward.
Spiral or wire-o bind on left edge.