

## 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 DC private, residential kitchen. There are specific restrictions and requirements for a Cottage Food Business. Applicants should familiarize themselves with Title 25-K of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) which pertains to Cottage Food Businesses.

### WHAT YOU NEED

- Home Occupancy Permit from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) Office of Zoning: (202) 727-6311 <http://dcoz.dc.gov/>
- Proof of calibrated scale(s) if your food will be sold by weight from the Office of Weights and Measures at DCRA. Maintain documentation of calibration and approval for your inspection: (202) 698-2130 <http://dcra-oiwm@dc.gov>
- Nationally Accredited Certified Food Protection **Manager's** Certification (CFPM) with passing scores attached. Go to [dchealth.dc.gov](http://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. The application can be found at <https://dchealth.dc.gov/node/1405511>
- Submit a Cottage Food Business Registry Application to DC Health at 899 North Capitol, St. NE, Washington, DC 20002
- Submit a Registration 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

DC Health will approve or deny your properly completed registry application within thirty (30) business days. If approved, DC Health may conduct a preoperational inspection of your premises within fourteen days (14) days of the registry approval. We make every effort to review applications in a timely manner. Incomplete applications could delay our review period, please include all required information in your application so we may expedite the review process.

If your registry application is approved, you will be issued a Cottage Food Business Registration Certificate. The Cottage Food Business Registration Certificate will list the cottage food products for which you are approved to produce and sell and will be valid for a period of two (2) years. If, after two (2) years, you wish to continue to operate as a Cottage Food Business, you must submit a new registry application and fee to DC Health for review. If a registry application is denied, DC Health will provide you with a reason for the denial and actions for you to take to qualify for a registration.

### APPROVED FOOD ITEMS

Only food products that do not require refrigeration once prepared will be allowed to be processed from a Cottage Food Business. A list of approved food products and processes can be found (1) in the Cottage Food Regulations published in Title 25-K of the DCMR 103.5, (2) on our website at <https://dchealth.dc.gov/node/1364336>, and (3) in the application registry.

If you request to produce, package, or sell a recipe or food product that is not on the approved list, you will be required to submit confirmation of the food product's pH value and water activity from any state accredited laboratory to the Department for review. 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 registry application has been approved and you are in operation, you will be required to submit a new application with the required Registration 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 Cottage Food Business Registration 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 business from DC Health Cottage Food Business Registry.

### **YOUR INSPECTION**

DC Health may conduct a preoperational inspection emergency. 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- K of the DCMR. You may also find helpful guidance documents on our website at <https://dchealth.dc.gov/node/1350071>.

We may also inspect the premises of your cottage food business in response to a foodborne illness outbreak, consumer complaint, other public health, or whenever DC Health has reason to believe a cottage food business is operating in violation of the Cottage Food Regulations in Title 25-K of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations or is operating in an unsanitary manner. These inspections will be conducted during normal business hours or at other reasonable times.

### **YOUR COTTAGE FOOD BUSINESS REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE**

Once your registry application has been reviewed and approved, you will be issued a Cottage Food Business Registration Certificate with the following information: (1) Registry Identification Number; (2) Your name and/or trade name, (3) A list of approved food items submitted by you, and (4) An expiration date. The Cottage Food Business Registration Certificate will be emailed to you and may also be mailed to you, at your request.

Remember, your Cottage Food Business Registration 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 forty-five (45) days in advance of the expiration of your current Cottage Food Business Registration Certificate.

### **QUESTIONS?**

Please send questions you may have via email to [food.safety@dc.gov](mailto:food.safety@dc.gov) and someone will be glad to assist you.