



Program frequently asked questions.

What if I only have an idea?

This program is designed for food entrepreneurs who have an existing food product that is ready to be developed and brought to market right now. Please consider applying for a future cohort date if you do not have a food product that you are currently developing.

I submitted an online application. What happens next?

Once your application is received, we will review it to determine if you and your business meet the program eligibility. **This is a competitive process with a limited number of spots available. Only those who are the strongest applicants will be notified and invited to participate in a short virtual meet and greet to introduce their food product.**

During the virtual meet and greet, food products will be evaluated by Hamilton Business Centre staff and a local food product expert for their growth potential, scalability, and market readiness. Selected candidates will then be notified if they have been accepted into the program.

What if I am not selected to participate in the program?

If you are not selected to participate in the program, your name will be put on a list for future cohort dates and you will be notified when applications reopen. Selection of your business for a future program is not guaranteed should you choose to reapply.

How should I prepare if I have been chosen to participate in a virtual meet and greet to introduce my product?

The virtual meet and greet is a short, 10-15 min informal discussion about your product. Consider focusing on the following when talking about your product:

- Sales/orders to date if any
- Place(s) your product is currently being sold if any
- Want/need in the marketplace
- Your experience preparing food products
- Reason for wanting to pursue your food product venture

Please have your product on hand and ready to be shown during the discussion.

What day/time are the training sessions?

A training schedule will be released in as much advance notice as possible. Tentatively, training days are scheduled on **every Wednesday from 10-11:30 am and are set to begin mid-late January 2024.**

***Please note:** Dates and times are subject to change. All participants will be notified as early as possible if scheduling changes are required.*

Where will the training sessions be held?

Most training sessions will be delivered virtually via Zoom, but 1-2 in-person training sessions will be scheduled. Each participant accepted into the program will be given all training session links in advance and a reminder will be sent out a few days prior to the actual respective event dates. In-person sessions will be conducted at City Hall, 71 Main St W, Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5 (Rooms 192/193, First Floor).

What if I miss a training day? Can I do a make up session? Will the training sessions be recorded?

Training sessions will not be recorded nor can they be made up. Refunds cannot be issued for missed session(s).

How does payment work?

The cost for each participant accepted into the program is \$99.00 plus HST. **Payment is due prior to starting the first training session.** Payment can be made directly to the Hamilton Business Centre via Visa, Mastercard, or direct debit in-person at 71 Main Street W, First Floor or by calling (905) 540-6400 Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm.

What do I get with the 1-on-1 mentorship session?

Participants who miss **no more than one training session** are eligible to schedule a virtual 30-minute 1-1 mentorship session with Nicole Haney at the end of the 7-week program. Participants can use this opportunity to get expert advice on their specific product or stage of their food product journey.

I live in another municipality. Can I still apply?

This program is open to Hamilton residents only.

**** Last updated 11/7/2023***