Thank you for your interest in being part of the FIN Food Business Incubator program at Spice Bridge!

Spice Bridge is the home to our Food Business Incubator program, which provides commercial kitchen and business support for enrolled business participants. Spice Bridge also provides a community hub — a space where people can gather to learn about and celebrate the community’s rich food traditions.

While we are currently not accepting applications, interested participants typically need 6-9 months to work on our business ready requirements to apply. Here is information about eligibility requirements, the application process and other important information:

Who can use the Spice Bridge kitchen?

We do not currently offer commercial kitchen space to individuals or businesses who are not part of our program.

What is the Food Business Incubator?

Our two-year incubator program supports entrepreneurs in launching their food business by providing affordable commercial kitchen and retail kiosk space, as well as connections to market channels and building necessary skills and experience to grow a stable business. Incubator participants are part of a business network—they meet regularly with other participants, have shared responsibilities in maintaining the shared kitchen space, and work regularly with a business coach. Once accepted into the program, entrepreneurs receive help with required permits, licenses and insurance, marketing needs, and a basic business plan.

What types of food businesses can apply?

Our kitchen and support services support businesses wanting to do: catering, farmers market/festivals, personal chefs, packaged goods, and food kiosks at Spice Bridge. Our kitchen would not work well for a food truck. We are open to learning about new business ideas, and want to make sure our business support and kitchen are a good match for your business idea.
Who is eligible to apply?

- You must live in South King County
- We prioritize low-income residents who are immigrants and refugees.
- You must meet our ‘business ready’ requirements.

What are the ‘business ready’ requirements?

To help you launch a successful business, it is important you have done some business preparation and planning. This means:

- You must provide a certificate to an 8-week basic business course by Ventures or Business Impact NW (details below). They have a sliding scale fee and are online. We can help you enroll in one of these business courses.
- Meet with a business coach at least once. When you are accepted into the program you will meet with a business coach regularly. We can help connect you with a business coach.
- A written menu with pricing. The business training and coach will help you figure out your menu and pricing.
- A food handler’s card. This is to ensure you have basic food safety knowledge.

How do I apply?

We have a 3-step application process. After you complete the three steps, our team will review and notify if you are approved for the next opening in the program.

Step 1: Complete the business ready requirements, including the 8-week basic business course with one of our community partners.

Step 2: Submit (by paper or electronically) an application sharing about your business, menu, business course certificate, and food handler’s card. Applications are currently not available.

Step 3: We will notify you if you move to Step 3, which is a food presentation or a “taste test” of your dishes.

When do I apply?

Our program is currently full. We may start accepting applications (Step 2) in spring 2021. We highly encourage you to begin working on Step 1. Please sign up for our email list to stay informed on program news, updates and trainings.

When can I start using the kitchen?

Once you have completed the 3-step application process and have been approved, entrepreneurs start working with us 6-9 months before they are ready to use the commercial kitchen. During this time, we work with you on required permit/licenses, marketing, recipes, accounting, and other business planning and operations. A business must be permitted by Public Health and insured to use the kitchen.
What are my next steps?

- Contact Njambi Gishuru so we can meet you. Please know she works part-time and may need a couple weeks to schedule a call. Please email Njambi Gishuru or call her at 206-291-7407.

- Work on becoming business ready – enroll in a Ventures or Business Impact NW business course. Njambi can introduce you to staff at these organizations to get enrolled.

- Sign up for our email list to get info on events, training, updates and learn about our work.

Other things to know:

- **If you have never worked in a commercial kitchen**, consider joining a program like Project Feast to gain these important skills.

- **If you are not sure if you are ready to pursue your business idea**, consider StartZone’s Reality Check workshops or business coaching services.

- **If you are not comfortable speaking and writing English**, please consider signing up for ESL classes at a community college such as Highline College.

- **If you are not familiar with basic computer skills**, such as writing and responding to email, keeping an online calendar, using the internet to research, or filling out forms online, look into taking classes through the King County Library System or The Seattle Public Library.