



Cooking up Success:

Ensuring a Fertile Regulatory Environment for Food Business

February 20, 2020

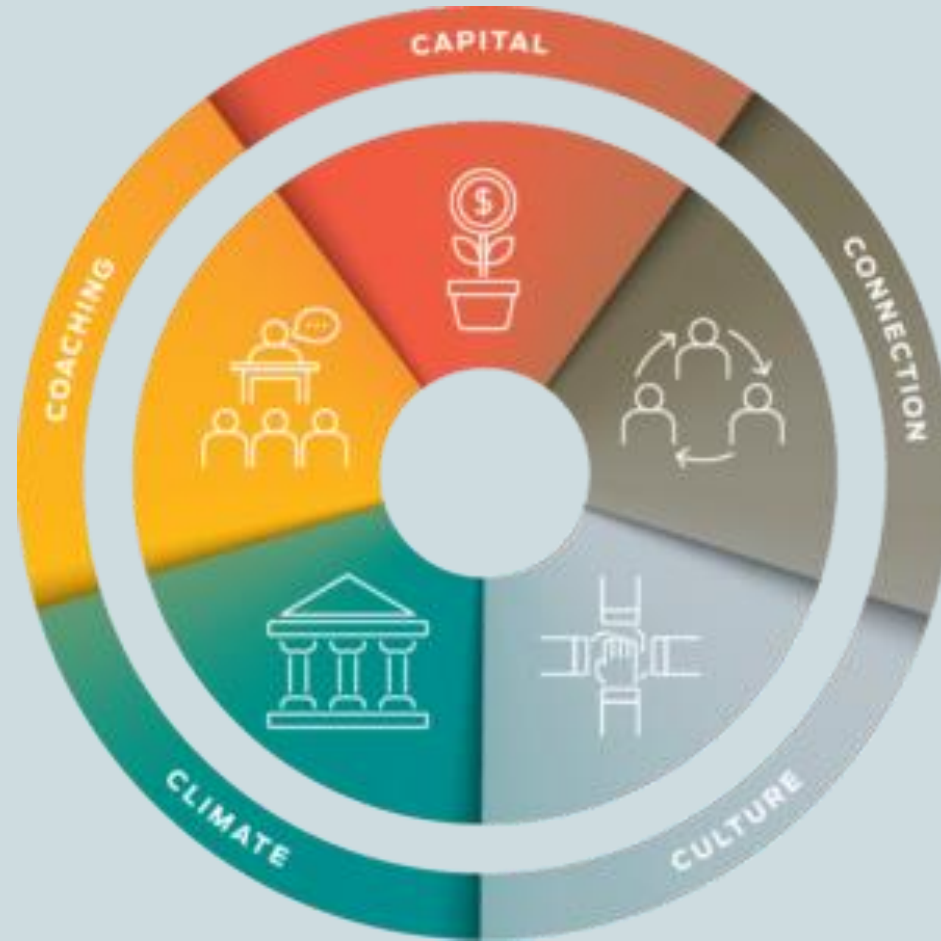




Introduction



Local Entrepreneurial Ecosystem





Agenda

- Introduction
- COOK Alliance and Inclusive Action
- Q&A Discussion
- Additional Resources

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HI, I'M LIZ ALLEN.

I'm the policy director for the COOK Alliance, the non profit that legalized the country's first home restaurants.

Our mission is to establish a just & people-powered home cooking industry.



2018



Founded COOK Alliance

In our first six months, our organizing efforts yielded 80k+ petition signatures and built a coalition of over 100 orgs, all in favor of legalizing home cooking.

2019



Legalized Home Cooking

Our work culminated with the passing of two California state bills, AB 626 & AB 377 - the first laws to allow for permitted sales of home cooked food in the United States.

2020



CA implementation & National campaign

Today, we're helping CA counties adopt & implement home restaurant permits while partnering with other orgs to pass legislation in CO and WA.



PASSING TWO-PART STATE LEGISLATION: WALKING THE WALK OF COLLABORATION



Our process for passing new state legislation was far from perfect, but we focused our strategy on winning the support and credibility we needed to involve all of the most important stakeholders - and we were willing to make compromises, do extra work, and be patient enough to bring everyone onto the same team.

THE GROUND GAME: EMPOWERING 58 GRASSROOT COUNTY CAMPAIGNS

MICROENTERPRISE HOME KITCHEN OPERATIONS

MEHKOS IN CALIFORNIA COUNTIES

4043 Lawton Ave, Oakland CA 94618
January 15th, 2020
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PRESENTED BY
COOK ALLIANCE

MEHKO PROBLEM

HOME COOKING MATTERS

California's counties work hard to ensure healthy, affordable food access and economic opportunities for all of its residents. Our home cooking regulations are a critical part of this effort.

The existing professional food industry represents only a fraction of the diverse and vibrant food culture in your county.

High barriers to commercial food business mean that many cooks, particularly those in underserved communities, already sell food informally to make extra income.

These cooks should be able to both legally and safely share home cooked meals with their neighbors, without fear of criminal penalties.

Counties who opt-in as early adopters of this groundbreaking new law will demonstrate leadership in innovating to improve public health, food access, and economic opportunity for their residents.

The current reality:

- Accessible professional food industry opportunities remain out of reach for many— particularly single parents, underserved minorities, & low-income residents.
- Public health risks to consumers are going unchecked in the existing informal economy due to lack of access to resources or food safety guidelines.

• Home cooks selling food are currently being criminalized - from church fundraisers, to school bake sales, even lemonade stands. This type of criminalization is often concentrated in immigrant or lower income communities & food deserts where home cooked foods are some of the only healthy & affordable food options.

\$400,000
Average startup cost for a brick & mortar food establishment

\$50,000
Average startup cost for a food truck

\$45,000
Average annual rent for a commercial kitchen

<\$1,000
All-in cost to launch a MEHKO

MEHKO IMPACT

WHO THIS LAW WILL HELP

The Entrepreneur:
Legalizing home cooking lowers barrier to entry for food entrepreneurship and decriminalizes previously informal businesses.

Cyriel, 32 - Youth food educator, food access advocate, and culinary school graduate

The Community Pillar:
Home cooking mitigates gentrification pressure by helping established local residents earn income while offering new neighbors warm food & welcome.

Renee, 68 - Active church member, retired professional baker, & grandmother of six

The At Home Parent:
Home cooking can be accessible income that meets parents where they are, works around their schedule, & lets them prioritize family values.

Shane, 46 - IT organizer, mother of two, cook & chicken noodle soup entrepreneur

The Newcomer:
Home cooking provides immigrant security & decolonizes food trends, allowing people to be the faces & benefactors of their own cultures.

Mel, 50 (B partner Joe), Vietnamese immigrant Saigon restaurateur, pop-up dinner host



Faced with an impossibly decentralized county-by-county opt-in process, we decided to lend our strategy and credibility to a network of county lead volunteers who each represented different communities, perspectives, and motivations for championing home restaurants. Our county packet was sent to every county supervisor in California, putting their offices and staffers on the same page before our county leads started taking meetings and organizing actions.



THANK YOU

A kitchen scene featuring a red Dutch oven, a blue vase with red and white flowers, a round of cheese, a lemon in a white bowl, and a blue bowl on a teal table.

Say hello: liz@cookalliance.org

Resources for cooks, counties, & organizers: cookalliance.org/resources


Our values & manifesto: cookalliance.org/manifesto

Join the movement (and our newsletter): cookalliance.org

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Several states have already started modeling bills on our California legislation & we expect nation-wide adoption within a decade. We've published model legislation, an equity framework, advocacy toolkit, & are providing technical assistance nationwide to ensure that legalization benefits cooks & their communities.


cookalliance.org/policy



LEGALIZE HOME COOKING

a framework for building equity, community, & sustainable food systems in neighborhoods across the United States

C.O.O.K. Alliance, 2019



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WHY WE WROTE THIS

What if we told you that a single change to the law could expand the local food scene, improve public health, create jobs, strengthen communities, and mitigate the impacts of gentrification on marginalized groups?

That is what can happen when we legalize home cooking — when people make food in their own homes and sell meals to neighbors. Home cooking increases the availability of fresh, healthy foods at affordable prices and with high convenience, even in areas that are otherwise labeled food deserts. Home cooks are often people who are otherwise excluded from the food industry or experience discrimination there. Put simply, home cooking is a beautiful practice that brings neighbors together, a win-win for everyone.

But right now, people who make and sell food in their own kitchens are treated like criminals across most of the United States. Criminalization does nothing to improve food safety and instead creates an avenue to further disenfranchise those who are already fighting to survive on the margins.

This paper is a guide for how to legalize home cooking, based on the C.O.O.K. Alliance's experience passing the groundbreaking legislation that made home cooking legal in California. We have written it in response to inquiries from groups across the United States that want to formulate similar legislation. This is intended to be a broad overview of legalizing home cooking based on our experience.

If you want to read more about our policy and advocacy, please email us for our Legislative Toolkit.

We welcome feedback. You can find us at cookalliance.org or reach out to us directly at hello@cookalliance.org.

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Inclusive Action for the City

About



POLICY ADVOCACY & CONVENINGS

- LA Street Vendor Campaign
- Adopt-A-Lot
- Planning and Land Use Strategies Summit (PLUS2)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- Semi'a Fund
- (Re)Store Fund
- COMPRA Foods
- Community Owned Real Estate (CORE)
- Micro Business Accelerator (MBA)

LA Street Vendor Campaign



LOCAL LEVEL

- Street vending was legalized! The City is now administering permits for both merchandise and food vendors.
- 10 Years of Advocacy
- Cross-Disciplinary Team
- Advocacy has changed now that it is legal

LA Street Vendor Campaign

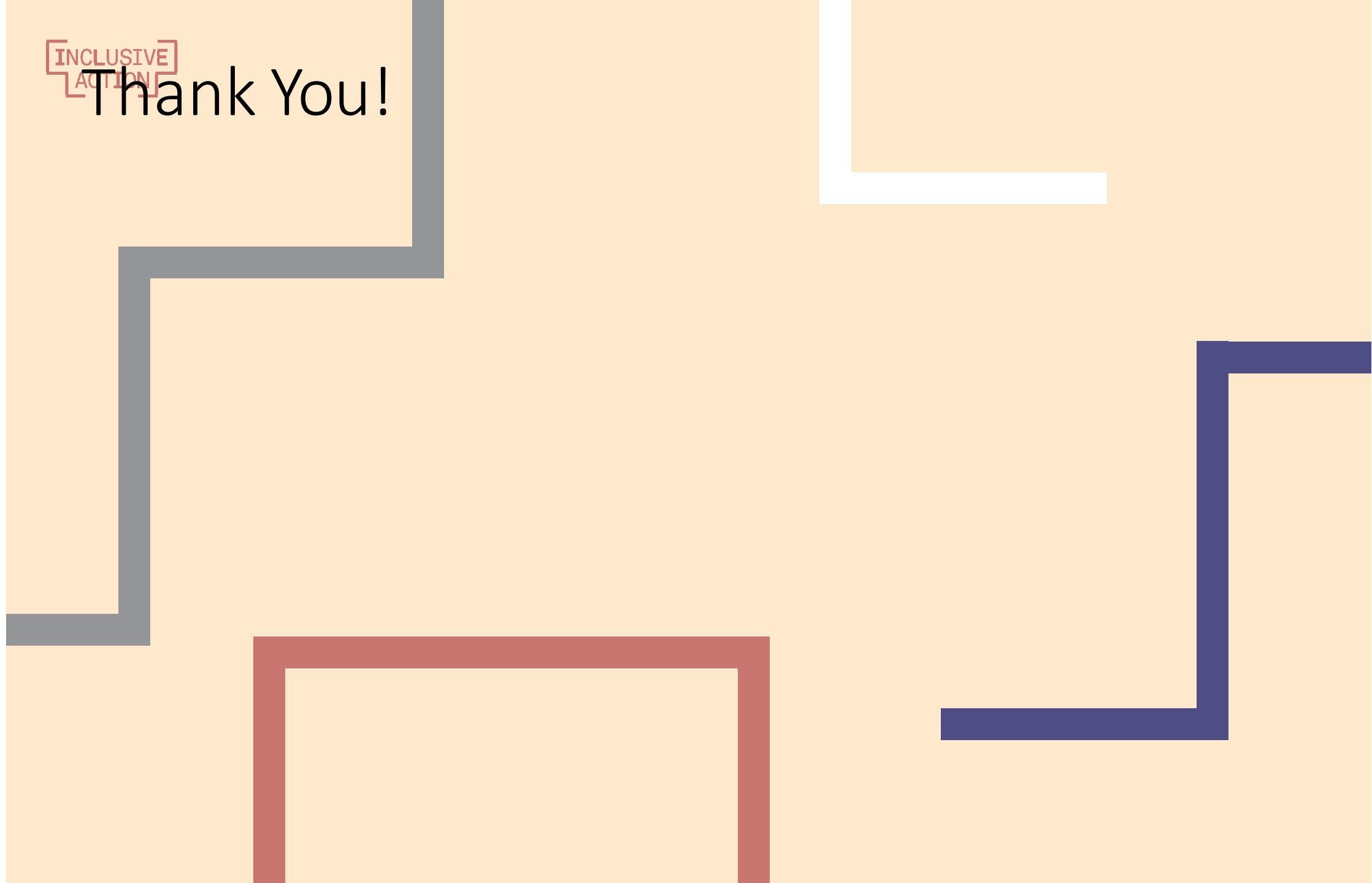


STATE LEVEL

- SB 946 (D: Lara) was introduced in February of 2018
- Signed by Governor Brown on September 17, 2018.
- Decriminalizes street vending across the state and expunges past violations.
- CA Street Vendor Campaign

INCLUSIVE
ACTION

Thank You!





Questions?
—

Additional Resources

- NALCAB's [Policy Resources](#) and [Newsletter](#)
- NALCAB's [Small Business TA application](#)
- NALCAB's [Policy Advocacy TA application](#)
- CAMEO's [Local Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Toolkit](#)
- COOK Alliance [website](#)
- COOK Alliance's [MEHKO County Packet](#)
- COOK Alliance's [Resources](#)
- Inclusive Action for the City [website](#)



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Website: nalcab.org

Hashtag: #LatinoEconomicEngine



Facebook: facebook.com/MicroBizCA

Twitter: [@CAMEOMICRO](https://twitter.com/CAMEOMICRO)

Website: cameonetwork.org



Facebook: facebook.com/COOKAlliance

Twitter: [@AllianceCOOK](https://twitter.com/AllianceCOOK)

Website: cookalliance.org



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