

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the FEED Kitchens Project Needed?

While Dane County has a robust local food system, many different individual and organizations have identified that there is a major gap in this system: the lack of commercial kitchen space in which farmers, food entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, and community members can work to process food for sale to the public, known as a food business incubator, or community kitchen incubator. The FEED kitchens will provide a facility to meet these needs and close this gap.

Describe the FEED Facility.

The facility will be 5400 square feet, with 5 separate kitchen spaces. It will operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and each kitchen will be able to be rented by the hour. The facility will be located near the Dane County Airport, with easy access by bus, bicycle and car.

Here is a rendering of how the building will look:



CONCEPT IMAGE

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How many people will use it each year?

Approximately 125 individuals and businesses (both for-profit and non-profit) will use the facility in a year's time.

How many jobs will it create?

Similarly-sized facilities create 25 – 35 new food-related jobs each year they are open.

How will those jobs be created? What are those jobs?

The types of businesses that will be started in the FEED Kitchens include: catering; food cart vendors; food product developers and manufacturers (pickles, sauces, preserved foods, processed meats, and more); wholesale bakery businesses; specialty food product businesses providing food to grocery stores, restaurants, and direct to consumers; and a local produce processing business that will provide custom processing services to local farmers to increase the availability of local food products to their customers.

FEED will provide a space where individuals and non-profit organizations can start new food-related businesses, thus adding new jobs to our community and enabling ne business start-ups. People working in the facility will have access to micro-loans through the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) to help them launch their new food business.

How does the FEED facility fit into the current local food system?

The FEED project will allow the following organizations and individual to do work they cannot currently do:

- The Dane County Fresh Market Packing House
- The North side Farmers' Market Co-Packing and Custom Processing Service
- Farm-To-Table health school snack program operated by REAP (Research, Education, Action and Policy)
- Food product development entrepreneurs needing production space
- The Dane County Food Coalition
- Madison College Non-degree Culinary Classes
- Madison College Culinary Arts Students
- The River Food Pantry Wholesale Bakery and Training Program
- The Madison Urban Ministry Wholesale Bakery and Training Program

- The Dane County Public Health Departments' and Community Groundwork's healthy Cooking classes.
- Food cart vendors
- Caterers
- Specialty Food Business start-ups
- Farmers seeking space to process excess produce
- Customers of the Resilience Research Center's Test Kitchens when they are ready for Production

How is FEED Kitchens different from the Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen in Mineral Point and the Mazomanie Heritage Kitchen?

FEED has a lot in common with both facilities, while offering some opportunities that are not available in each of these locations. FEED will have a custom processing team on site, similar to the Innovation Kitchen. The FEED Kitchens will offer kitchen space for rent by the hour, similar to both the Innovation Kitchen and the Heritage Kitchen, however there will be 5 different processing areas in the facility, offering specialized equipment for bakery and meat production that are not available in the other kitchens. Unlike the other kitchens, FEED will also offer an advisory team that will be available to mentor businesses, as well as food business classes offered by Madison College, and other business classes, planning assistance and micro-loans offered by the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation.

FEED is unique in that it will be the home of at least two food businesses operated by non-profit organizations. These businesses will have two goals: first: to train youth and adults food preparation and bakery skills so that they may obtain long-term, stable jobs; second: to provide income to the non-profit to fund their other charitable activities in the community.

Where will it be located?

1502 Pankratz Road, on Dane County Airport property, near the corner of Packers and International Lane.

Why can't you repurpose a vacant building? Wouldn't that be less costly?

Unfortunately, it is more expensive to refurbish an existing vacant building because of the specialized nature of the kitchens.

Why not rent space?

FEED cannot rent space because some of our funding requires that we own the facility.

How will FEED be sustained financially?

FEED will be self-sustaining through user fees once it is open and operating at least at 25% capacity. (For more details, see business plan included or at www.feedkitchens.org)

Who will oversee the FEED Kitchens?

The North side Planning Council, a non-profit with a 20 year history of developing successful community organizations, will own the facility and provide supervision and fiscal oversight to the staff managing FEED. An advisory board made up of experienced business people and members of the local food community will oversee the day-to-day operations and will offer mentoring and assistance to food entrepreneurs who express interest.

Where is FEED in the funding process to date?

We have commitments of \$525,000 to date

How much do you need to start construction of the building?

We need \$362,500 more to be able to start building the facility; our goal is to have this no later than August 2012.

What is the total fundraising goal?

Our goal is \$775,000. This will allow us to open the FEED Kitchens without any debt.

What if a potential user can't pay the full price?

If we are able to raise the full amount listed above, then we will be able to set up a fund that will offset user fees for those who cannot afford the full rental fees. This would include community groups using the kitchens for fundraising events, and low-income users who are not eligible for micro-loans and need time to get their new business started before being able to pay the full price for rent.

Will you be able to have a retail outlet on site?

The current site, located near the Dane County Airport, is not zoned for retail sales, so we would not be able to have a retail outlet on site. However, we will be providing assistance to our users so that they are able to find wholesale and retail outlets in which to sell their products.