



## KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

### Signature Report

#### Motion 16887

**Proposed No.** 2025-0209.1

**Sponsors** Mosqueda

1 A MOTION acknowledging receipt of a report on  
2 streamlining food business permitting process, in  
3 accordance with the 2025 Annual Budget Ordinance,  
4 Ordinance 19861, Section 104, Proviso P1.

5 WHEREAS, the Washington State Retail Food Code as adopted in King County  
6 BOH Title 5, requires that all foods sold to the public be evaluated and permitted by  
7 public health - Seattle & King County, and

8 WHEREAS, the number of street vendors selling food to the public without  
9 permits has been increasing in King County since 2023, and

10 WHEREAS, the food and safety program, within public health - Seattle & King  
11 County is responsible for the safety of all retail foods sold in King County, and has been  
12 investing resources aimed at helping street foods vendors overcome permitting barriers,  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, the food and safety program recognizes that the key barriers in the  
15 food permitting process include knowledge gaps, limited access to commissary kitchens,  
16 uniform permitting requirements, limited permitting options, and financial challenges,  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, starting 2025, the food and safety program has launched four  
19 initiatives in an effort to lower permitting barriers;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

---

Motion 16887

---

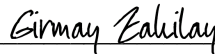
- 21           The receipt of the report on streamlining and improving the food business  
22   permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits,  
23   Attachment A to this motion, in accordance with the 2025 Annual Budget Ordinance,  
24   Ordinance 19861, Section 104, Proviso P1, is hereby acknowledged.

Motion 16887 was introduced on 7/8/2025 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 9/23/2025, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Perry, Quinn, von Reichbauer and Zahilay

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:



1AEA3C5077F8485...

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:



8DE1BB375AD3422...

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** A. Streamlining Food Business Permitting, June 30, 2025

---

**Streamlining Food Business Permitting**

June 30, 2025



**King County**

Contents

I. Proviso Text..... 3

II. Executive Summary ..... 4

III. Background..... 6

IV. Report Requirements ..... 11

    A. Description of the current food business permitting processes ..... 11

    B. Data on current food business permitting timelines..... 13

    C. Options for streamlining and otherwise improving the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits, including resources necessary for or barriers to implementing each option ..... 14

    D. A recommendation on whether to implement each option required in subsection C of this proviso..... 17

    E. A workplan, including, but not limited to, a timeline of key milestones for implementing each option recommended in accordance with subsection D. of this proviso ..... 17

V. Conclusion/Next Actions ..... 22

VI. Appendix..... 24

## I. Proviso Text

P1 PROVIDED THAT:

Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits a report on streamlining and otherwise improving the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits, and a motion that should acknowledge receipt of the report, and a motion acknowledging receipt of the report is passed by the council. The motion should reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance, ordinance section, and proviso number in both the title and body of the motion.

The report shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Description of current food business permitting processes;
- B. Data on current food business permitting timelines;
- C. Options for streamlining and otherwise improving the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits, including resources necessary for or barriers to implementing each option;
- D. A recommendation on whether to implement each option required in subsection C. of this proviso;
- E. A workplan, including, but not limited to, a timeline of key milestones for implementing each option recommended in accordance with subsection D. of this proviso.

The executive should electronically file the report and a motion required by this proviso by July 1, 2025, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the health and human services committee or its successor.

Cite in the following format:

Ordinance 19861, Section 104, Public Health, P71<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ordinance 19861 [\[LINK\]](#), Section 104, Public Health, P71

## II. Executive Summary

This report is provided in response to Ordinance 19861 which included a Proviso calling for a report on streamlining and otherwise improving the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits, and a proposed Motion that would acknowledge receipt of the report.

Washington State Retail Food Code as adopted in the King County Board of Health (BOH) Title 5<sup>2</sup> requires that all foods sold to the public be stored and prepared in approved commercial kitchens and permitted by the Public Health – Seattle & King County’s Food Safety Program. The Food Safety Program is responsible for the safety of all retail foods sold in King County.

The core mission of the Food Safety Program is to prevent and reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses to King County residents and those that visit the county. The Food Safety Program prioritizes education and outreach over enforcement because the program understands enforcement alone won’t address the challenges and needs of food vendors who operate without a permit.

In recent years, the number of vendors selling foods to the public without permits, commonly called unpermitted food vendors, has significantly increased locally;<sup>3</sup> similar trends have been reported in other jurisdictions, including Oregon and California.<sup>4</sup> Based on input the Food Safety Program has gathered through its outreach and engagement efforts (including through stakeholder engagement, surveys, information sessions, and inspections), the majority of street food vendors would like to operate their business in compliance with the Retail Food Code but lack either the knowledge or the resources, or both, to do so. However, certain unpermitted street food vendors continue to operate despite repeated engagement with Food Safety Program staff.

This report describes current food business permitting processes. The Food Safety Program issues three types of permits:<sup>5</sup> (1) Permanent food permits for businesses that retail out of brick-and-mortar places. Examples include, restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, school cafeterias, and caterers. (2) Permanent food permits for mobile food units that retail out of a food truck or a cart. Examples include food trucks, hot dog carts, and espresso carts. (3) Temporary food permits including Farmers Markets that retail out of a temporary setup for a short duration. Examples include Bite of Seattle and festivals around the county.

The food permitting process begins with the food establishment plan review, which is required for all food services operations before opening day. Plan review ensures that establishments are built or

---

<sup>2</sup> King County Board of Health, editor. “Title 5: Food Establishments.” *King County Food Code*, 14 Mar. 2025, <https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/dph/documents/about-public-health/board-of-health/boh-code-title-5.pdf?rev=2522a74f7a0146c89772fc260119c285&hash=737DBC3D411DDA1128DDD12FD9E66430>.

<sup>3</sup> Vinh, T. “King County food permit violations surged in 2024. We checked the data.” *Seattle Times*. 25 Mar. 2025, <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/food-drink/king-county-food-permit-violations-surged-in-2024-we-checked-the-data/>.

<sup>4</sup> Multnomah County. “Health Department urges public to avoid purchasing food from unlicensed food carts or street vendors.” 15 Aug. 2024. <https://multco.us/news/health-department-urges-public-avoid-purchasing-food-unlicensed-food-carts-or-street-vendors>

renovated in ways that promote food safety and prevent code violations by addressing potential layout and design issues prior to construction or renovation. For mobile food unit operators, vendors at farmers markets or temporary events, and caterers, plan review requires that these businesses identify a commercial kitchen where they can store and process food. In King County, there are about 30 large commercial kitchens that offer kitchen access to multiple food vendors. The demand for access to commercial kitchens far exceeds the availability of these facilities.

This report also provides data on current food business permitting timelines. The Food Safety Program received more food establishment plan applications in 2024 than in the years leading up to the pandemic (943 plans received in 2024; 920 plans received in 2019). The Food Safety Program Plan Review Team has been steadily improving responsive times for plans submitted by new and remodeled restaurants and mobile food units. As of the end of February 2025, the plan review response time was 20 days. The Food Safety Program's goal is to maintain a response time under 21 days.

Lastly, the Food Safety Program recognizes that additional work is needed to lower permitting barriers for vendors. The key barriers in the food permitting process include knowledge gaps, limited access to commissary kitchens, limited permitting options, uniform permitting requirements, and financial challenges.

The following table is a summary of actions identified by the Food Safety Program that could further streamline and improve the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits and timeline of key milestones to achieve each action:

| Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Duration | Cost (Source of funding)                             | Implementation planning and timeline                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Action #1:</b> Address knowledge gaps by contracting with community-based organizations (CBO) to conduct outreach to unpermitted street food vendors, to encourage them to apply for a permit and provide them with support in submitting an application.   | One Year | \$150K (Revenue from Food Handler Card)              | RFP issued on 2/5/2, contracts established, and work commenced 5/1/2025; will offer for a year |
| <b>Action #2:</b> Reduce financial barriers by offering a one-time 50 percent reduced fee for new street food vendors with carts for their first year. The reduced fee includes 50 percent off plan review and annual permit fees for new street food vendors. | One Year | \$49,000-\$55,000 (Revenue from Food Handler Card)   | Q3-Q4 2025                                                                                     |
| <b>Action #3:</b> Expand access to commissary kitchens by offering a six-month pilot for commercial                                                                                                                                                            | One Year | \$210,000-\$270,000 (Revenue from Food Handler Card) | Q2-Q4 2025                                                                                     |

| Action                                                                                                                                                                                   | Duration   | Cost (Source of funding)                    | Implementation planning and timeline |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| kitchen vouchers to support new and unpermitted street food vendors.                                                                                                                     |            |                                             |                                      |
| <b>Action #4: Expand permitting options</b> by piloting seasonal permitting for “pop-up” vendors (currently booths/stands are only allowed as part of temporary events/farmers markets). | One Year   | Not applicable – covered by permit fees     | Q3-Q4 2025                           |
| <b>Action #5: Reduce financial barriers</b> by offering a modified plan review for vendors using a pre-approved cart design for specific low-risk menu items.                            | Continuous | Not applicable – covered by Plan review fee | Q1 2026-Q2, 2026                     |

### III. Background

**Department Overview:** Public Health — Seattle & King County (PHSKC) works to protect and improve the health and well-being of all people in King County. Public Health is one of the largest metropolitan health departments in the United States, with approximately 1,600 employees. The department serves the 2.3 million people of King County, who reside in urban, rural, shoreline, foothill, and mountain communities.<sup>6</sup>

The PHSKC Environmental Health Services Division’s Food Safety Program (program) is responsible for the safety of all retail foods sold in King County. The program permits, inspects, and provides technical support to retail food establishments. The program permits about 12,500 permanent food establishments including restaurants, coffee shops, mobile food units, bakeries shops, school cafeterias, and catering operations. In addition, the program permits and inspects more than 3,000 temporary events including 50 farmers markets across King County. The program conducts more than 20,000 routine inspections, issues more than 50,000 food worker cards,<sup>7</sup> and responds to more than 1,000 complaints annually. The Food Safety Program investigates foodborne illness complaints and outbreaks. The Food Safety Program has 65 diverse, multidisciplinary, and multilingual (16+ languages) staff who provide oversight of the dynamic and multicultural food cuisines in King County.

**Key Historical Conditions:** Washington State Retail Food Code as adopted in the KC Board of Health (BOH) Title 5,<sup>8</sup> requires that all foods sold to the public be stored and prepared in approved commercial

<sup>6</sup> Public Health - Seattle & King County, 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, [kingcounty.gov/health/strategicplan](https://kingcounty.gov/health/strategicplan) Accessed: April 2025

<sup>7</sup> <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dph/certificates-permits-licenses/food-worker-cards>

<sup>8</sup> King County Board of Health, editor. “Title 5: Food Establishments.” *King County Food Code*, 14 Mar. 2025, <https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/dph/documents/about-public-health/board-of->



kitchens and evaluated and permitted by Public Health – Seattle & King County. The Retail Food Code also requires that food establishments receive regular inspections.

In recent years, the number of vendors selling foods to the public without permits, commonly called unpermitted food vendors, has significantly increased locally;<sup>9</sup> similar trends have been reported in other jurisdictions, including Oregon and California.<sup>10</sup> Locally, based on health inspectors' encounters and complaints submitted to the Food Safety Program, unpermitted vendors routinely operate at large public events. Based on an internal analysis of complaints submitted to the Food Safety Program, areas of King County where complaints have been most common include Seattle (Alki Beach, Capitol Hill, the stadium area, Pike Place Market, at the waterfront) and at various street corners and parking lots in other cities, including Federal Way, Burien, SeaTac, Kent, and Auburn. In addition, anecdotally, there has been an increase in the sale of foods prepared in residential kitchens directly to customers without the benefit of Public Health permitting and inspection, with the growth of online marketplaces and the ease of setting up an online store.

In 2024, the Food Safety Program received over 77 complaints related to unpermitted street food vending from the public and businesses and closed the operation of 109 street food vendors. These figures represented a substantial increase relative to 2023 (27 closures and 41 complaints). The majority of these vendors were "pop-ups" in the form of tables, tents, and booths that were either selling food cooked or reheated on site (e.g., hot dogs) or cut fruit prepared elsewhere. In addition to complaints from the public about food safety, permitted food vendors routinely express concerns that unpermitted food vendors are unfairly competing with them or are putting the reputation of street foods at risk due to their lack of permitting and oversight. Multiple media outlets have reported on issues related to unpermitted vendors, including about the growing number of unpermitted street food operations,<sup>11</sup> tensions between permitted and unpermitted food vendors,<sup>12</sup> and concerns about food and public safety.<sup>13</sup>

**Key Current Conditions:** Based on input the Food Safety Program has gathered through its outreach and engagement efforts (including through stakeholder engagement, surveys, information sessions, and

---

[health/boh-code-title-5.pdf?rev=2522a74f7a0146c89772fc260119c285&hash=737DBC3D411DDA1128DDD12FD9E66430](#).

<sup>9</sup> Vinh, T. "King County food permit violations surged in 2024. We checked the data." *Seattle Times*. 25 Mar. 2025, <https://www.seattletimes.com/life/food-drink/king-county-food-permit-violations-surged-in-2024-we-checked-the-data/>.

<sup>10</sup> Multnomah County. "Health Department urges public to avoid purchasing food from unlicensed food carts or street vendors." 15 Aug. 2024. <https://multco.us/news/health-department-urges-public-avoid-purchasing-food-unlicensed-food-carts-or-street-vendors>

<sup>11</sup> Varriano, J. & Vinh, T. "Unpermitted food vendor violations have exploded in Seattle in 2024." *Seattle Times*. 9 Nov. 2024, [https://www.seattletimes.com/life/food-drink/unpermitted-food-vendor-violations-have-exploded-in-seattle-in-2024/?utm\\_source=referral&utm\\_medium=mobile-app&utm\\_campaign=ios](https://www.seattletimes.com/life/food-drink/unpermitted-food-vendor-violations-have-exploded-in-seattle-in-2024/?utm_source=referral&utm_medium=mobile-app&utm_campaign=ios).

<sup>12</sup> Varriano, J. & Vinh, T. "Unpermitted food vendor violations have exploded in Seattle in 2024." *Seattle Times*. 9 Nov. 2024, [https://www.seattletimes.com/life/food-drink/unpermitted-food-vendor-violations-have-exploded-in-seattle-in-2024/?utm\\_source=referral&utm\\_medium=mobile-app&utm\\_campaign=ios](https://www.seattletimes.com/life/food-drink/unpermitted-food-vendor-violations-have-exploded-in-seattle-in-2024/?utm_source=referral&utm_medium=mobile-app&utm_campaign=ios).

<sup>13</sup> "Monster Dogs is legit, but county has begun crackdown on Pike/Pine 'unpermitted mobile food vendors.'" *Capitol Hill Seattle Blog*. 11 December 2024. [https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2024/12/monster-dogs-is-legit-but-county-has-begun-crackdown-on-pike-pine-unpermitted-mobile-food-vendors/?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=bluesky](https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2024/12/monster-dogs-is-legit-but-county-has-begun-crackdown-on-pike-pine-unpermitted-mobile-food-vendors/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=bluesky)

inspections), the majority of street food vendors would like to operate their business in compliance with the Retail Food Code but lack either the knowledge or the resources, or both, to do so. Key barriers to obtaining permits identified for businesses include:

- **Financial challenges:** The cost of operating a mobile food sales unit includes much more than obtaining a food permit (See Appendix A). From conversations with vendors and commercial kitchen owners, the Food Safety Program learned that vendors anticipate these costs related to a mobile food sales unit: cost of purchasing a cart: \$5,000-\$10,000; commercial kitchen rental: \$800-\$1,200/per month; Public Health one-time plan review: \$972; Public Health operational annual permit: \$1,000; state/city business permits: \$400; city street use permit: \$400-\$800. While the cost of obtaining Food Safety Program plan review and permits is only a small fraction of the total cost of starting a food business, these costs can be a barrier, particularly for vendors who do not anticipate profit margins to justify a mobile food truck.
- **Knowledge gaps:** The permitting process requires vendors to navigate information across multiple agencies' permitting and licensing requirements. Some vendors would like to comply with these requirements but have difficulty understanding what to do to meet each requirement.
- **Limited access to commercial kitchens:** Commercial kitchen access is an expense that smaller business owners may struggle to afford, particularly for vendors whose profit margins might not be sufficiently high to offset commercial rental fees. Furthermore, there aren't enough commercial kitchens to meet the demand.
- **Restricted permitting under the Retail Food Code:** The Retail Food Code does not provide permitting options for certain types of food businesses. For example, the code does not allow "pop-up" food vending, unless the vendor is associated with a temporary event or farmer's market. In addition, all mobile units must satisfy the same mobile plan review requirements regardless of the type of food served.

The Food Safety Program trains its inspectors to educate unpermitted vendors on how to obtain a food permit. When closing unpermitted street food vending operations, inspectors provide written materials in English and Spanish, offer language support through interpretation services, and offer to meet by phone or in person to help vendors with the permitting process. While these strategies have been successful at getting some vendors to obtain a food permit, certain unpermitted street food vendors continue to operate despite repeated. For example, the Food Safety Program often finds unpermitted street food vendors selling foods out of makeshift carts near stadiums, Climate Pledge Arena, Capitol Hill, and outside concert halls. Similar vendors have been seen operating in defiance of food safety requirements in other counties and states (e.g., Oregon, California).<sup>14</sup> These street food vendors lack equipment designed for safe food handling; they do not have handwashing equipment and cannot hold foods at a safe temperature. The Food Safety Program has not been able to obtain the contact information of the cart owners from the vendors that operate them. The vendors typically evade efforts to engage them in a conversation about permitting (e.g., by walking away), and some vendors have gotten into physical altercations with health inspectors as well as other regulatory agencies. While the Food Safety Program continues to provide as much support and education as possible to these food vendors, the Program takes regulatory enforcement actions to protect the public from food safety risks.

---

<sup>14</sup> Multnomah County. "Health Department urges public to avoid purchasing food from unlicensed food carts or street vendors." 15 Aug. 2024. <https://multco.us/news/health-department-urges-public-avoid-purchasing-food-unlicensed-food-carts-or-street-vendors>

However, given that many unpermitted operations reopen for business as soon as an inspector walks away, it is not possible for staff to ensure compliance at all times.

The Food Safety Program is fully funded through a fee-for-service model. As unpermitted vendors do not pay permit fees, all the time and resources spent on providing guidance and conducting regulatory enforcement of unpermitted vending is funded by fees paid by permitted businesses. These activities put a strain on the program's budget and staff time for conducting routine inspections and educational visits for permitted establishments.

### Report Methodology:

To assemble this report, Food Safety Program staff used information gathered from the following outreach and engagement opportunities:

- **Quarterly business community meetings** hosted by the Food Safety Program, to which all 12,500 permitted food establishments are invited. An additional meeting is held with owners of mobile food units. This meeting is held in both English and Spanish.
- **Quarterly newsletters**<sup>15</sup> distributed to more than 14,000 subscribers, whereby the Food Safety Program not only provides food safety news and updates but also solicits readers to engage with the program by submitting comments or questions. Staff review and respond to all submitted messages.
- **Surveys** deployed to all permitted food establishments in King County (more than 13,000 recipients). In 2024/25, the Food Safety Program deployed surveys to gather information about: (1) The food safety rating expansion (2) establishing a stakeholder meeting for mobile food units aimed at fostering knowledge sharing within the community of mobile businesses (3) challenges/successes business owners experienced when obtaining a food permit.
- **Community information sessions** hosted by the Food Safety Program, aimed at supporting new food vendors in navigating the permitting process. The first session was held on 11/19/2024 at the Rainier Beach Library in Seattle and the second and third sessions were held on 2/3/2025 and 3/27/25 at El Centro de la Raza also in Seattle. Food Safety Program staff provided one-on-one guidance in English or Spanish about the permitting process. The Program's partners, including Growing Contigo, Lake City Collective, and El Centro de la Raza, also had staff available to answer broader business development questions from new food vendors.
- **Feedback from operators to food inspectors** during inspections; inspectors take advantage of opportunities to share and discuss suggestions for improvement with their team leads, supervisors, and the program director on a regular basis.
- **Regular meetings with business advocacy groups:**
  - The Washington Hospitality Association,<sup>16</sup> the state's hospitality trade group, representing more than 6,000 members of the hotel, restaurant, and hospitality industry.
  - The Washington Food Truck Association,<sup>17</sup> a member services organization whose mission is to help protect, promote, and grow the mobile food industry in Washington.

---

<sup>15</sup> King County, *Manage Your*

*Subscriptions*. [public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAKING/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=WAPHSKC\\_81](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAKING/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAPHSKC_81). Accessed: April 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Washington Hospitality Association. <https://wahospitality.org/>. Accessed April 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Washington Food Truck Association. <https://wafoodtrucks.org/>. Accessed April 2025.

- **One-on-one technical support** provided to callers to the Food Safety Program seeking assistance; calls are staffed every weekday during regular business hours.
- **Engagement with small business advocacy organizations** whose aims include creating opportunities for entrepreneurship, by participating in meetings, presenting about the Food Safety Program and its actions, and engaging with their members about economic development opportunities (e.g., Seattle Restored,<sup>18</sup> Seattle Good Business Network,<sup>19</sup> Good Food Kitchens,<sup>20</sup> Rainier Beach Action Coalition<sup>21</sup>).
- **Nightlife food safety inspections** conducted in collaboration with the Seattle Police Department, the Seattle Fire Department, and the Seattle Department of Transportation as part of the Joint Enforcement Team. This team focuses on addressing regulatory issues through collaborative education and enforcement.
- **Feedback from agency partners**, including the Washington State Department of Health, other local health jurisdictions, the City of Seattle, Washington State Labor and Industries, the Seattle Fire Department, and the Seattle Department of Transportation. The program routinely engages with these partners to ensure alignment of strategies across programs, with a focus on streamlining the permitting process and reducing unpermitted vending.
- **Outreach to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)**, including conversations about how the program can support vendors in navigating the permitting process, and how the program can potentially partner with CBOs to support business owners.
- **Community feedback in response to media engagement**, including stories about unpermitted vending trends, permitting barriers, and strategies the program is taking to improve food safety.

In response to the increased number of unpermitted street food vendors, and to address community feedback about challenges they have experienced with regard to the permitting process, the Food Safety Program created an internal departmental workgroup that includes a broad cross-section of its staff. Collectively, staff on the workgroup are subject matter experts representing supervisors, plan reviewers, a temporary event lead, a donated food distribution organization lead, a technical and policy lead, a meat safety lead, and program directors. The workgroup was asked to:

1. Identify the major barriers street food vendors encounter with regard to permitting, based on feedback the program has received from various stakeholders.
2. Learn from other comparable local health jurisdictions about ways to streamline permitting.
3. Identify potential impacts of actions on staffing, budgets, and collaborations with partners.
4. Propose a comprehensive set of recommendations aimed at addressing the identified barriers.

---

<sup>18</sup> Seattle Restored. "Pop-ups and Art Installations in Empty Storefronts | Seattle Restored." [seattlerestored.org/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=EAlaIqObChMIy\\_f3w-HniwMVKdfCBB0NpjTjEAAYASAAEgJ47\\_D\\_BwE](https://seattlerestored.org/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIqObChMIy_f3w-HniwMVKdfCBB0NpjTjEAAYASAAEgJ47_D_BwE). Accessed April 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Seattle Good Business Network. [https://seattlegood.org/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=EAlaIqObChMI\\_5P1td3IjAMVCi-tBh3uYS3ZEAAYASAAEgJ4PD\\_BwE](https://seattlegood.org/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIqObChMI_5P1td3IjAMVCi-tBh3uYS3ZEAAYASAAEgJ4PD_BwE). Accessed April 2025.

<sup>20</sup> Good Food Kitchens. <https://goodfoodkitchens.org/>. Accessed April 2025.

<sup>21</sup> Rainier Beach Action Coalition. <https://www.rbcoalition.org/>. Accessed April 2025.

## IV. Report Requirements

Ordinance 19861 directs the Executive to transmit a report on streamlining and otherwise improving the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits. The Ordinance requirements are summarized in the box below and provided in detail in this section.

- A. Description of current food business permitting processes;*
- B. Data on current food business permitting timelines;*
- C. Options for streamlining and otherwise improving the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits, including resources necessary for or barriers to implementing each option;*
- D. A recommendation on whether to implement each option required in subsection C. of this proviso;*
- E. A workplan, including, but not limited to, a timeline of key milestones for implementing each option recommended in accordance with subsection D. of this proviso.*

The section is organized to follow the structure of Ordinance 19861. Each element of the Proviso is addressed.

### A. Description of the current food business permitting processes

The Food Safety Program issues three types of food permits:<sup>22</sup>

1. **Permanent food permits for businesses that retail out of brick-and-mortar places.** Examples include, restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, school cafeterias, and caterers. <sup>[OBJ]</sup>
2. **Permanent food permits for mobile food units that retail out of a food truck or a cart.** Examples include food trucks, hot dog carts, and espresso carts. <sup>[OBJ]</sup>
3. **Temporary food permits including Farmers Market that retail out of a temporary setup for a short duration.** Examples include Bite of Seattle and festivals around the county. <sup>[OBJ]</sup>

After submitting an application for a plan review (either online or in person), all permanent food businesses must undergo a plan review and a pre-opening inspection before being issued a permit to operate, as shown in the table below.<sup>23</sup> For temporary food businesses, a plan review is required after submitting an application.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> King County. *Food Business Permits - King County, Washington*. <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dph/certificates-permits-licenses/food-business-permits>. Accessed April 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Public Health – Seattle & King County. Permanent food service business permit. <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dph/certificates-permits-licenses/food-business-permits/permanent-food-business-permit>. Accessed May 2025.

<sup>24</sup> Washington State Legislature. *Washington Administrative Code 246-215-09110 Plan Approval – Plan Review*: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-215-09110>. Accessed April 2025.

Plan review ensures that establishments are built or renovated in ways that promote food safety and prevent code violations by addressing potential layout and equipment issues prior to construction or renovation. Pre-opening inspection ensures food establishments are built as approved during the plan review process. For existing food businesses, plans and specifications may also be required if there has been a significant menu change or change in the establishment's method of operations.

For mobile food unit operators, vendors at farmers markets or temporary events, and caterers, plan review requires that these businesses identify a commercial kitchen where they can store and process food. In King County, there are about 30 large commercial kitchens that offer kitchen access to multiple food vendors.

| Permit type                                                                                   | Permitting process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Permanent food permits for businesses that retail out of brick-and-mortar places</b>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Applicant submits final business plans and plan review application before construction/remodeling begins, along with supporting documents (e.g., site plan, menu, floor plan, equipment list) along with the plan review fee.</li> <li>(2) Plan reviewer reviews the submitted application and communicates with the applicant if changes are needed and if plans are approved. If not approved, applicant is given instructions for making corrections so that they can turn the application in to be reconsidered for approval.</li> <li>(3) Once plans are approved, the Plans Examiner provides an approval letter and supporting documents to the applicant. If additional review/approval is needed by other regulatory agencies, the applicant is instructed to contact other agencies for their approval.</li> <li>(4) Applicant builds/remodels the facility.</li> <li>(5) Applicant obtains the final plumbing inspection/permit approval.</li> <li>(6) Applicant pays for the operating permit.</li> <li>(7) Applicant contacts the plan reviewer to schedule a pre-operational inspection before opening for business or once the remodel has been completed. One week advance notice is needed.</li> <li>(8) A preoperational inspection is conducted, and if approved, an operating permit is issued by mail or email to the applicant.</li> <li>(9) If food establishment fails a pre-operational inspection because of deviation from approved plans, a return pre-operational inspection is scheduled, and the applicant is charged for return inspection.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Permanent food permits for mobile food units that retail out of a food truck or a cart</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Applicant completes final business plans and plan review application, including copy of mobile food unit plans, commissary and restroom agreements, food preparation flow chart, menu, mobile food unit contact information or route or</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

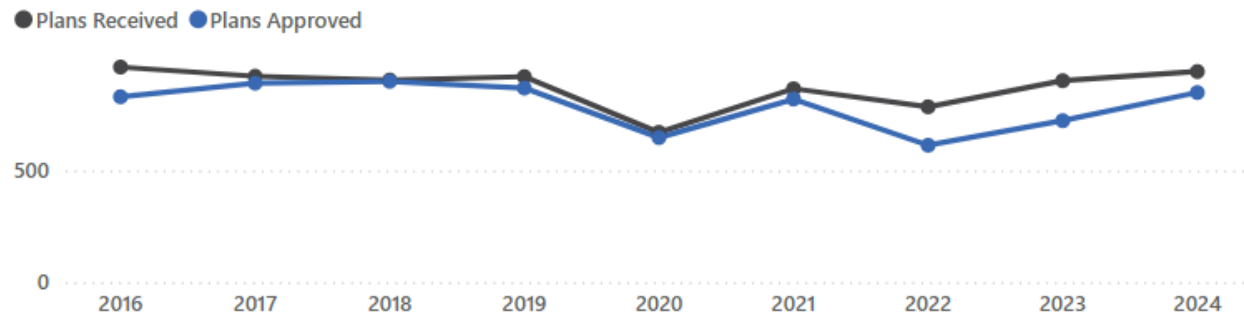


| Permit type                                                                                                      | Permitting process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                  | <p>site location, and mobile questionnaire about operational procedures along with the plan review fee.</p> <p>(2) Plan reviewer reviews the submitted application and communicates with the applicant if changes are needed and if plan was approved. If not approved, applicant is given instructions for making corrections.</p> <p>(3) When the plan is approved, applicant applies for an operating permit to operate the mobile food unit.</p> <p>(4) Applicant schedules a pre-operational inspection.</p> <p>(5) A preoperational inspection is conducted, and if passed, an operating permit is issued.</p> <p>(6) A mobile food unit applicant may be required to obtain an additional approval from Labor and Industry, before it receives an approval from Public Health to open for business.</p> |
| <b>Temporary food permits including Farmers Market that retail out of a temporary setup for a short duration</b> | <p>(1) Depending on the menu, an applicant submits one of the three temporary applications (minimal food service application, moderate or complex food service application, or blanket permit application).</p> <p>(2) Applicant pays a temporary event permit fee.</p> <p>(3) After office plan review is completed by an inspector, operating permit is approved and issued to the applicant.</p> <p>(4) Applicants obtaining multiple or unlimited permits for moderate and complex menus, they are required to obtain a Certified Booth Operator training before or soon after operating permits are issued.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                           |

B. Data on current food business permitting timelines

The number of plan review applications received by the Food Safety Program in 2024 surpassed the level received in the years leading up to the pandemic (943 plans received in 2024; 920 plans received in 2019). Figure 1 below shows the number of plans received and approved since 2016.

Figure 1. Number of plans received and approved over time



The Food Safety Program Plan Review Team has been steadily improving responsive times for plans submitted by new and remodeled restaurants and mobile food units). At the beginning of 2024, the average time in the plan review queue was 45 days with an average wait time of 74 days. The Food Safety Program’s goal was to reduce and maintain a response time under 21 days. In March 2024, the Food Safety Program has hired an additional plan reviewer on a short-term basis to address the backlog of plans awaiting reviews. As of the end of the first quarter of 2025, the plan review response time was 26 days, with an average time in the queue of 17 days.

| Quarter   | Date Range           | Average Time in Queue | Wait Time | Plans in Queue |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Quarter 1 | 1/1/2024-3/26/2024   | 45 days               | 74 days   | 160            |
| Quarter 2 | 4/1/2024-7/02/2024   | 46 days               | 55 days   | 112            |
| Quarter 3 | 7/1/2024-9/30/2024   | 32 days               | 24 days   | 39             |
| Quarter 4 | 10/1/2024-12/31/2024 | 17 days               | 26 days   | 48             |
| Quarter 1 | 1/1/2025-3/31/2025   | 17 days               | 26 days   | 65             |

**C. Options for streamlining and otherwise improving the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits, including resources necessary for or barriers to implementing each option**

The Food Safety Program has invested resources aimed at helping street food vendors overcome permitting barriers (see Appendix B), but additional work is needed upstream to address the barriers encountered by operators because regulatory approach alone cannot ensure food safety for the public or address the needs of food vendors. .

The following table is a summary of actions identified by the Food Safety Program that could further streamline and improve the food business permitting process to reduce barriers for small food businesses seeking permits. The Food Safety Program is implementing Actions 1-4 in 2025, and will begin implementing Action 5 in 2026.

**Table 1: Options for streamlining and improving the food business permitting process**

|   | Action                                                                                                                                           | Barrier addressed                 | Resources needed                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Contract with CBOs to conduct outreach to unpermitted street food vendors, to encourage them to apply for a permit and provide them with support | Navigating the permitting process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A program manager to provide oversight to the CBOs</li><li>• Staff capacity to develop training materials</li><li>• Staff capacity to train CBOs</li></ul> |



|   | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Barrier addressed                                                                                                       | Resources needed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | in submitting an application.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding to pay CBOs for performing the work</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | Reduce new vendor fees:<br>Offer a one-time 50 percent reduced fee for new street food vendors with carts for their first year. The reduced fee includes 50 percent off plan review and annual permit fees for new street food vendors. | Financial                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff capacity to develop and manage administrative processes to issue one-time reduced permit fees for new vendors.</li> <li>Staff capacity to assess cost recovery and determine whether cost of program is offset by reduced time/effort spent on enforcement related to unpermitted vending.</li> </ul> |
| 3 | Offer six-month pilot commercial kitchen vouchers to support new and unpermitted street food vendors.                                                                                                                                   | Financial                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff capacity to set up a Request for Applications and establish a contract with commercial kitchens.</li> <li>Staff capacity to manage accounting and reimbursement for the contracts.</li> <li>Funding for commercial kitchen contracts.</li> </ul>                                                      |
| 4 | Pilot seasonal permitting options for “pop-up” vendors (currently booths/stands are only allowed as part of temporary events/farmers markets).                                                                                          | Lack of permit category                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff capacity to work additional evenings/weekends to coordinate and cover inspections.</li> <li>Staff capacity to develop a comprehensive operational plan, and conduct a pilot and evaluation before implementing the changes at a larger scale.</li> </ul>                                              |
| 5 | Lower start-up costs by offering a modified plan review for vendors using a pre-approved cart design for specific low-risk menu items.                                                                                                  | Currently all mobile units must satisfy the same mobile plan review requirements regardless of the type of food served. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff capacity to explore feasibility with cart builders and assess the costs</li> <li>Staff capacity to set up a Request for Applications and establish and manage contracts.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   |

The following is a summary of the actions listed in the table above:

**Action #1: Improve permit navigation by contracting with CBOs to offer additional support to street food vendors with the permitting process**

Under this action, the Food Safety Program is providing up to \$50K in grant funding to up to three CBOs to conduct outreach to unpermitted street food vendors, including food trucks, carts, trailers, pop-ups,

tents, booths, and support them in navigating the process of obtaining a permit to operate. CBOs will host workshops, accept referrals, support unpermitted street food vendors with their permitting applications, and connect vendors to Public Health for additional support as needed. CBOs will have strong ties to the community of unpermitted mobile food vendors, and will provide information, assistance, and support for both starting and sustaining a permitted mobile food unit. CBOs will utilize peer education methods to provide trainings and knowledge sharing and will also build and develop educational materials and curriculum that can be used for the community at large.

**Action #2: Lower business start-up costs by offering a 50 percent reduced fee for new street food vendors with carts. The reduced fee includes 50 percent off plan review and annual permit fees for new street food vendors.**

As an incentive to bring unpermitted street food vendors into compliance, street food vendors will be eligible for a one-time reduction in both plan review and permit fees for their first cart. A first-time cart owner would save \$486 for the plan review and between \$304 - \$607 for the permit fee (depending on the risk level of the cart). A vendor will receive a reduction in fees between \$790 and \$1093. This offer will be bundled with a voucher for six months of access to a commercial kitchen (refer to Action #3). These incentives will be offered in one of two ways: (1) To street food vendors that the Food Safety Program has identified as operating without a permit and are taking steps toward compliance, and (2) via CBOs providing outreach to various communities on behalf of the county (refer to Action #1). The Food Safety Program expects about 50 street food vendors to qualify for the fee reduction program. The Program is expected to run for one year, with an option to offer the same fee reduction for another group of street food vendors in 2026, pending funding and success of the action.

**Action #3: Lower financial barriers by offering six-month commercial kitchen vouchers to support new and unpermitted street food vendors.**

Under this action, the Food Safety Program will establish contracts with CBOs, faith-based organizations, schools, and Donated Food Distribution Organizations that are able to offer affordable rates to food business owners who are seeking space for commercial food preparation. The program will prioritize facilities that can offer affordable rates long-term (i.e., beyond the term of the contract). Unpermitted vendors that have been identified by the Food Safety Program will be offered vouchers to use these approved commercial kitchens for a period of six months, up to \$2200-\$4500 per vendor. This approach could expand the number of available commercial kitchens in King County and create a sustainable strategy for identifying affordable commercial kitchen rentals for street food vendors.

**Action #4: Offer additional temporary permitting options for “pop-up” vendors.**

This action would assess the feasibility of offering seasonal (up to three months within a permit year) permitting pathways for “pop-up” vendors: (1) Allow vendors to set up a booth/table within an existing permitted food establishment that is able to provide access to a kitchen for food preparation, wastewater disposal, and fresh water supply, as well as plumbing for handwashing and a restroom; (2) Allow vendors to sell foods that are prepared and packaged at a commercial kitchen and sold from an unoccupied cart, trailer, booth, or stand from a fixed outside location (e.g., Waterfront, City Hall), where the vendor is able to access a handwashing station and a restroom. Vendors will be required to keep foods either cold or hot during vending. The Food Safety Program would like to collaborate on the City of Seattle to identify a designated location where street use permits would be issued to pop-up food vendors. This proposal will open opportunities for seasonal food businesses such as those offering cut fruit, shaved ice, prepackaged and precooked tamales, and steamed hot dogs to operate as “pop-ups.”

**Action #5: Lower startup costs by offering a modified plan review for vendors using a pre-approved cart design(s) for specific menu items.**

This action aims to lower barriers by developing pre-approved cart designs for specific types of menus. These designs, which would be available to the public when applying for a permit, will include options for hot, cold holding and reheating of foods. By providing a list of pre-approved cart designs to the public, plan review times are reduced, thereby allowing for lower plan review costs and turnaround time.

**D. A recommendation on whether to implement each option required in subsection C of this proviso**

The Food Safety Program is planning to implement each of the actions described above.

However, the Food Safety Program will delay initiating Action #5 until 2026. This action will require the Food Safety Program to identify a cart design to support several use cases (reheating, hot holding, and cold holding). The Program will develop a call for designers (e.g., manufacturers or individual business owners) to submit designs. This Program will then develop new plan review application materials for a pre-approved cart design, including determining new reduced rates for the application and plan review, which will require approval by Board of Health.

**E. A workplan, including, but not limited to, a timeline of key milestones for implementing each option recommended in accordance with subsection D. of this proviso**

**Action #1: Improve permit navigation by contracting with CBOs to offer additional support to street food vendors with the permitting process.**

To implement this action, the Food Safety Program published a Request for Applications in Q1 2025. CBOs have submitted applications, which were reviewed and rated by the Program based on each organization’s experience with the unpermitted street food vendors, capacity to take on this work, proposed scope of work, and budget.

The Food Safety Program established one-year contracts with selected CBOs in May 2025, with a possible second year extension, pending funding and success of the action.

| Milestone                              | Task Details                                                                                                                                   | Target Deadline |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Request for Applications <sup>25</sup> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine funding source/amount and scopes of work</li><li>• Draft RFA</li><li>• Publish RFA</li></ul> | Completed       |
| Application deadline                   |                                                                                                                                                | Q1, 2025        |
| Select CBOs that will be funded        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and score applications</li><li>• Notify CBOs of decisions</li></ul>                             | Completed       |

<sup>25</sup> Public Health - Seattle & King County. [Supporting Street Food Vendors in Becoming Permitted.](https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dph/about-king-county/about-public-health/working-with-public-health/funding-opportunities/supporting-street-vendors-permits) <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dph/about-king-county/about-public-health/working-with-public-health/funding-opportunities/supporting-street-vendors-permits>. Accessed May 2025.

| Milestone                     | Task Details                                                                                                                                           | Target Deadline              |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Establish contracts with CBOs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin contracts</li> </ul>                                                                                    | Q2, 2025<br>Completed        |
| Train CBOs                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine staffing needed to train CBOs</li> <li>• Develop trainings</li> <li>• Schedule trainings</li> </ul> | Q2 – Q3, 2025<br>In progress |
| Monitor CBO work              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess completed work</li> <li>• Provide feedback</li> <li>• Issue reimbursements</li> </ul>                  | Ongoing 2025-2026            |
| Close out                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final reports from CBOs</li> </ul>                                                                            | Q2, 2026                     |

**Action #2: Lower business start-up costs by offering a 50 percent reduced fee for new street food vendors with carts. The reduced fee includes 50 percent off plan review and annual permit fees for new street food vendors.**

To implement this action, the Food Safety program will establish qualification criteria for the reduced fees. The program will then develop a system for tracking businesses that have received the reduced fees and will communicate the fee changes to the public.

| Milestone                     | Task Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Target Deadline         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Define qualification criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish eligibility criteria for receiving the fee reduction (e.g., street food vendors, first application, working out of a commissary kitchen).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Q3, 2025<br>Completed   |
| Fee reduction tracking        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish how the reduced fee will be entered into the system and tracked.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Q3, 2025<br>In progress |
| Communication/<br>Outreach    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a communication plan to provide outreach to street food vendors, in collaboration with CBOs and other partners</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Q3, 2025                |
| Training and launch           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide trainings to field staff, plan reviewers, permit techs and CBOs.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Q3 – Q4, 2025           |
| Evaluation                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a system to track plan review time.</li> <li>Establish a system to track time/effort to support the qualified vendors.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track success and failure rates (e.g., how many vendors who qualify for the reduced fee fail to complete the plan review process)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Develop evaluation plan to assess the success of the pilot project (e.g., number of food vendors remaining in business after the first year of the program).</li> <li>Conduct a survey soliciting feedback from vendors (e.g., how many obtained an operating permit the following year)</li> </ul> | Q3 – Q4, 2025           |

### **Action #3: Lower financial barriers by offering six-month commercial kitchen vouchers to support new and unpermitted street food vendors.**

To implement this action, the Food Safety Program will invite CBOs, community centers, faith-based organizations, schools, and Donated Food Distribution Organizations to participate in a webinar to hear about this action and the Food Safety Program and ask questions about the RFA process. Through the RFA, the program will identify community commercial kitchens in locations spread out across King County to partner with King County in this action. Applicants will be selected based on criteria such as affordability, ability to sustain operations beyond the funding period, geographic location, and operational capacity (e.g., number of vendors supported, adequate workspace and equipment, availability of parking, and operating hours).

The Food Safety Program will contract with selected commercial kitchen operators to offer a monthly discounted commercial kitchen access to new and unpermitted food vendors. The one-year contract will include a provision for the commercial kitchen operators to receive between \$2200-\$4500 over a six-month period for every vendor they are assigned to host.

To identify new and unpermitted vendor participants in this action, the Food Safety Program will conduct outreach to unpermitted vendors who have been identified and closed in 2024 and 2025 and are taking steps toward compliance. The Food Safety Program’s goal is to support up to 50 vendors.

The Food Safety Program will conduct an evaluation upon completion of the project to summarize the number of vendors who were supported, including an end-of-program survey to participating vendors and operators of commercial kitchens.

| Milestone                                | Task Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Target Deadline                                          |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Establish scope of work                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine program structure (eligibility requirements, reimbursement structure, etc.)</li> <li>Determine tracking needed</li> <li>Determine staffing needed</li> <li>Determine funding source/amount</li> </ul> | Q2, 2025<br>Completed                                    |
| Call for Applications                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft RFA</li> <li>Publish RFA</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       | Q2-Q3, 2025<br>RFA draft completed; will publish in June |
| Applications open                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect applications</li> <li>Review applications</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                    | Q3, 2025<br>Application deadline July 2025               |
| Select organizations that will be funded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish contracts</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                  | Q3, 2025<br>Anticipate finalizing contracts by Aug 31    |
| Launch project                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor deliverables</li> <li>Reimburse organizations for expenses</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                   | Q3-Q4, 2025<br>Anticipate starting contracts October 1st |
| Close out                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate outcomes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                    | Q3-Q4, 2025                                              |

#### **Action #4: Offer additional temporary permitting options for “pop-up” vendors.**

To implement this action, the Food Safety Program will revisit the definition of a temporary event and create a working definition for a “pop-up” food vendor; establish policies for operations; determine procedures for the program to track permits and conduct inspections; define roles/responsibilities for program staff; update application materials, and develop trainings for staff. The Food Safety Program will launch this action as a pilot and at the end of the pilot, will assess the feasibility of this action. Since “pop-up” permitting is not defined within the current BOH-Title 5 Food Code, the Food Safety Program will request a Board of Health Rule and Regulation revision to codify the “pop-up” definition after the successful completion and evaluation of the pilot program.

| Milestone                                                       | Task Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Target Deadline    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Establish permitting category definitions and operational plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a workgroup comprised of internal staff and permitted vendors</li> <li>Evaluate and revisit definitions (e.g., temporary event, pop-up) and permitting details</li> <li>Identify who will be approving applications</li> </ul>                                                                                    | Q3, 2025           |
| Identify needs/impacts                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine staffing</li> <li>Identify required resources that will need to be allocated</li> <li>Identify trainings that need to be developed</li> <li>Identify materials that need to be developed</li> </ul>                                                                                                               | Q3, 2025           |
| Prepare for limited pilot before operationalizing changes       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop application materials</li> <li>Determine how the Food Safety Program will track permits</li> <li>Outreach to potential vendors to participate</li> <li>Establish metrics for evaluating success of pilot</li> <li>Allocate required resources</li> <li>Develop trainings and other educational materials</li> </ul> | Q3 – Q4, 2025      |
| Training                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train staff</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Q3-Q4, 2025        |
| Launch and evaluate pilot                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch pilot</li> <li>Conduct evaluation</li> <li>Translate recommendations into policies</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Q4 2025 – Q1, 2026 |
| Launch permitting changes                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update website</li> <li>Media outreach</li> <li>Outreach to vendors</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Q2-Q3, 2026        |

**Action #5: Lower startup costs by offering a modified plan review for vendors using a pre-approved cart design(s) for specific menu items.**

This action will be delayed until 2026, pending further exploration, development, and resources.

| Milestone                | Task Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Target Deadline |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Draft call for proposals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define use cases (reheating, hot holding, cold holding) and components that need to be included in application</li> <li>Draft call for manufacturers to develop cart specifications and submit applications for plan review, for specific types of menus</li> <li>Identify list of manufacturers to reach out to</li> <li>Create application materials for plan review for a pre-approved cart design</li> </ul> | Q1-Q2, 2026     |

| Milestone                  | Task Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Target Deadline |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine rates for application and plan review (e.g., review special service fees)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |
| Publish call for proposals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct outreach to invite applicants to submit designs (letters, webinar)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Q2-Q3, 2026     |
| Review proposals           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve designs that meet criteria according to existing plan review procedures</li> <li>Issue approval letters that include disclaimers outlining limitations on responsibility for approval of design at time of submission</li> </ul>                                                                                 | Q2-Q4, 2026     |
| Review rates               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue memo to BOH to approve reduction in plan review fees for carts that are manufactured according to pre-approved designs</li> <li>Modify policies/procedures (how to maintain list of approved plans, how to review new designs, how to review and charge for plans that deviate from approved designs)</li> </ul>   | 2027            |
| Database updates           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modify public-facing application to allow applicants to choose pre-approved designs at a reduced plan review fee</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              | Q1-Q2, 2027     |
| Communications             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create list of approved designs</li> <li>Update application materials to include information about approved designs and any rate changes and disclaimers</li> <li>Outreach to community-based organizations to encourage them to support vendors by purchasing approved carts</li> <li>Train staff on changes</li> </ul> | Q1-Q2, 2027     |

## V. Conclusion/Next Actions

In recent years, the number of unpermitted food vendors selling foods to the public has significantly increased, locally and nationally. In the experience of the Food Safety Program, most street food vendors would like to operate in compliance with the Retail Food Code but lack either the knowledge or the resources to do so. The Food Safety Program recognizes that a regulatory approach alone will not protect food safety for the public or address the financial and support needs of food vendors; the barriers encountered by operators need to be addressed upstream. Therefore, the program has been approaching the issue of unpermitted vending through a variety of ways, including by offering financial incentives; improving access to commercial kitchens; providing outreach and educational support to vendors; improving the food permitting process; helping the public more easily identify permitted street food vendors; and developing partnerships to discourage unpermitted vending.

The Food Safety Program recognizes that additional work is needed to lower permitting barriers for vendors. The key barriers in the food permitting process include:



- Knowledge gaps
- Limited access to commissary kitchens
- Limited permitting options
- Uniform permitting requirements
- Financial challenges

To address these barriers, the Food Safety Program established a workgroup and advanced the following four actions in an effort to lower permitting barriers.

- Improve permit navigation by contracting with CBOs to offer additional support to street food vendors with the permitting process.
- Lower financial barriers by offering six-month commissary kitchen vouchers to support new and unpermitted street food vendors.
- Offer additional temporary permitting options for “pop-up” vendors.
- Lower business start-up costs by offering a 50 percent reduced fee for new street food vendors with carts. The reduced fee includes 50 percent off plan review and annual permit fees for new street food vendors.

The Food Safety Plan Review Team has been steadily improving responsiveness to plans submitted by new and remodeled restaurants and mobile food units. As of the end of February 2025, the plan review turnaround time was 20 days. The Food Safety Program’s goal is to maintain the current wait time under 21 days.

The Food Safety Program has started to implement some of these actions and is in the process of operationalizing plans for the remaining ones. The program does not intend to hire staff to manage each project; therefore, the time required to initiate each action is variable, as it depends on the availability of staff to work towards reaching each milestone. Although there are some factors that may limit the availability of staff to implement the actions in the expected timelines (e.g., budget and implementation of a new database for permitting and licensing in Q4 of 2025), the Food Safety Program is committed to avoiding delays to the extent possible.

## VI. Appendix

### Appendix A: Fees for Starting a Mobile Food Business.

| Fee Description                                                | Average Cost                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mobile unit                                                    | Truck: \$30K-100K for a used truck, \$50K or more for a new truck<br>Trailer: \$6K or more<br>Cart: \$5K or more |
| Register business structure (state)                            | \$180-\$230                                                                                                      |
| State business license                                         | \$50                                                                                                             |
| City business license                                          | \$110 (for Seattle, varies by city)                                                                              |
| L&I inspection                                                 | \$115                                                                                                            |
| L&I permit to use propane, solid fuel, open flame, or charcoal | \$400                                                                                                            |
| Street use vending permit                                      | \$400-800 (for Seattle, varies by city)                                                                          |
| PHSKC plan review fee                                          | \$972 (4-hour base) for a new operation                                                                          |
| PHSKC mobile annual permit fee                                 | \$608 for Risk 1/\$972 for Risk 2/\$1,215 for Risk 3                                                             |
| Commissary kitchen fee                                         | \$300-1000 a month                                                                                               |
| Food handler's permit                                          | \$10                                                                                                             |

### Appendix B: Investments the Food Safety Program has made to help street food vendors overcome permitting barriers.

- **Offering financial incentives:** Prorating permit fees on a quarterly basis, as approved by the Board of Health in February 2024.
- **Improving access to commercial kitchens:**
  - Building an online searchable database<sup>26</sup> of commercial kitchens
  - Identifying low-cost commercial kitchens that can be added to the database (e.g., non-profits, schools, community centers, faith-based organizations that offer their kitchens to the public at reduced rates).
  - The Food Safety Program has broadened the definition of commercial kitchens to include approvable commercial kitchens located in community centers, faith-based organizations, schools, and restaurants that meet the equipment and facility needs of the food operator.
- **Improving the food permitting process and providing educational support to vendors:**
  - Ensuring staff can provide multilingual support to the public.

<sup>26</sup> King County, *Commissary Kitchens in King County - King County, Washington*. <https://kingcounty.gov/es-es/dept/dph/health-safety/food-safety/educational-resources/commissary-kitchens>. Accessed: April 2025.

- Reducing plan review wait time from 10 weeks to three weeks.
- Simplifying and translating public-facing materials about permitting steps and sharing these materials with community-based organizations (CBOs) that support street food vendors who want to become permitted.
- Beginning in late 2024 and continuing into 2025, organizing information sessions aimed at providing training and one-on-one support in multiple languages on how to navigate the permitting process.

The Food Safety Program has simultaneously invested in developing strategies to support the public in making informed decisions about where they eat by:

- Conducting media interviews in English and Spanish languages to bring attention to the benefits of permitting as it relates to food safety.
- Expanding food safety rating placards<sup>27</sup> to mobile vendors, meat and seafood shops, bakeries, and caterers to help the public identify permitted vendors.
- Publishing blog posts<sup>28</sup> aimed at educating the public about how to reduce their risk of foodborne illness and support permitted vendors.

The Food Safety Program has encouraged partnerships intended to discourage unpermitted food vending, including:

- Strengthening collaboration with several city agencies with a code-compliance focus aimed at responding to complaints related to unpermitted food vendors during late nights.
- Strengthening partnerships with major sports venues to coordinate enforcement of unpermitted vendors.

---

<sup>27</sup> Lovell, Sam. "Public Health's Food Safety Rating System Is Expanding! Here is What to Expect." *Public Health Insider*, 16 Dec. 2024, [publichealthinsider.com/2024/12/16/public-healths-food-safety-rating-system-is-expanding-heres-what-to-expect](https://publichealthinsider.com/2024/12/16/public-healths-food-safety-rating-system-is-expanding-heres-what-to-expect).

<sup>28</sup> "How to Reduce Your Risk of Foodborne Illness and Support Permitted Food Vendors." *Public Health Insider*, 19 Mar. 2025, [publichealthinsider.com/2024/09/06/how-to-reduce-your-risk-of-foodborne-illness-and-support-permitted-food-vendors](https://publichealthinsider.com/2024/09/06/how-to-reduce-your-risk-of-foodborne-illness-and-support-permitted-food-vendors).

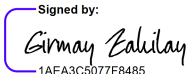
## Certificate Of Completion

|                                                                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Envelope Id: 13E9AAF3-4319-4898-B83C-BE9A2AB9BEAC                                 | Status: Completed          |
| Subject: Complete with Docusign: Motion 16887.docx, Motion 16887 Attachment A.pdf |                            |
| Source Envelope:                                                                  |                            |
| Document Pages: 2                                                                 | Signatures: 2              |
| Supplemental Document Pages: 25                                                   | Initials: 0                |
| Certificate Pages: 5                                                              | Envelope Originator:       |
| AutoNav: Enabled                                                                  | Cherie Camp                |
| Envelopeld Stamping: Enabled                                                      | 401 5TH AVE                |
| Time Zone: (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)                                 | SEATTLE, WA 98104          |
|                                                                                   | Cherie.Camp@kingcounty.gov |
|                                                                                   | IP Address: 198.49.222.20  |

## Record Tracking

|                                      |                            |                    |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Status: Original                     | Holder: Cherie Camp        | Location: DocuSign |
| 9/24/2025 2:07:21 PM                 | Cherie.Camp@kingcounty.gov |                    |
| Security Appliance Status: Connected | Pool: FedRamp              |                    |
| Storage Appliance Status: Connected  | Pool: King County-Council  | Location: Docusign |

## Signer Events

| Signer Events                                        | Signature                                                                         | Timestamp                    |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Girmay Zahilay                                       |  | Sent: 9/24/2025 2:08:49 PM   |
| girmay.zahilay@kingcounty.gov                        | <small>Signed by:<br/>1AEA3C5077F8485...</small>                                  | Viewed: 9/24/2025 2:23:56 PM |
| Council Chair                                        |                                                                                   | Signed: 9/24/2025 2:24:04 PM |
| Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None) | Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style                                            |                              |
|                                                      | Using IP Address: 71.227.166.164                                                  |                              |

## Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:

Accepted: 9/24/2025 2:23:56 PM  
ID: 538e31d8-67de-48b2-9d05-d2c9b832a71f

|                                                      |                                                                                     |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Melani Hay                                           |  | Sent: 9/24/2025 2:24:05 PM   |
| melani.hay@kingcounty.gov                            | <small>DocuSigned by:<br/>8DE1BB375AD3422...</small>                                | Viewed: 9/24/2025 2:54:14 PM |
| Clerk of the Council                                 |                                                                                     | Signed: 9/24/2025 2:54:20 PM |
| King County Council                                  | Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style                                              |                              |
| Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None) | Using IP Address: 198.49.222.20                                                     |                              |

## Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:

Accepted: 9/30/2022 11:27:12 AM  
ID: 639a6b47-a4ff-458a-8ae8-c9251b7d1a1f

| In Person Signer Events      | Signature | Timestamp |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Editor Delivery Events       | Status    | Timestamp |
| Agent Delivery Events        | Status    | Timestamp |
| Intermediary Delivery Events | Status    | Timestamp |
| Certified Delivery Events    | Status    | Timestamp |
| Carbon Copy Events           | Status    | Timestamp |
| Witness Events               | Signature | Timestamp |
| Notary Events                | Signature | Timestamp |

| Envelope Summary Events                    | Status           | Timestamps           |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Envelope Sent                              | Hashed/Encrypted | 9/24/2025 2:08:49 PM |
| Certified Delivered                        | Security Checked | 9/24/2025 2:54:14 PM |
| Signing Complete                           | Security Checked | 9/24/2025 2:54:20 PM |
| Completed                                  | Security Checked | 9/24/2025 2:54:20 PM |
| Payment Events                             | Status           | Timestamps           |
| Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure |                  |                      |

## **ELECTRONIC RECORD AND SIGNATURE DISCLOSURE**

From time to time, King County-Department of 02 (we, us or Company) may be required by law to provide to you certain written notices or disclosures. Described below are the terms and conditions for providing to you such notices and disclosures electronically through the DocuSign system. Please read the information below carefully and thoroughly, and if you can access this information electronically to your satisfaction and agree to this Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure (ERSD), please confirm your agreement by selecting the check-box next to 'I agree to use electronic records and signatures' before clicking 'CONTINUE' within the DocuSign system.

### **Getting paper copies**

At any time, you may request from us a paper copy of any record provided or made available electronically to you by us. You will have the ability to download and print documents we send to you through the DocuSign system during and immediately after the signing session and, if you elect to create a DocuSign account, you may access the documents for a limited period of time (usually 30 days) after such documents are first sent to you. After such time, if you wish for us to send you paper copies of any such documents from our office to you, you will be charged a \$0.00 per-page fee. You may request delivery of such paper copies from us by following the procedure described below.

### **Withdrawing your consent**

If you decide to receive notices and disclosures from us electronically, you may at any time change your mind and tell us that thereafter you want to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format. How you must inform us of your decision to receive future notices and disclosure in paper format and withdraw your consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically is described below.

### **Consequences of changing your mind**

If you elect to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format, it will slow the speed at which we can complete certain steps in transactions with you and delivering services to you because we will need first to send the required notices or disclosures to you in paper format, and then wait until we receive back from you your acknowledgment of your receipt of such paper notices or disclosures. Further, you will no longer be able to use the DocuSign system to receive required notices and consents electronically from us or to sign electronically documents from us.

### **All notices and disclosures will be sent to you electronically**

Unless you tell us otherwise in accordance with the procedures described herein, we will provide electronically to you through the DocuSign system all required notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you during the course of our relationship with you. To reduce the chance of you inadvertently not receiving any notice or disclosure, we prefer to provide all of the required notices and disclosures to you by the same method and to the same address that you have given us. Thus, you can receive all the disclosures and notices electronically or in paper format through the paper mail delivery system. If you do not agree with this process, please let us know as described below. Please also see the paragraph immediately above that describes the consequences of your electing not to receive delivery of the notices and disclosures electronically from us.

### **How to contact King County-Department of 02:**

You may contact us to let us know of your changes as to how we may contact you electronically, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically as follows:

To contact us by email send messages to: [cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov)

### **To advise King County-Department of 02 of your new email address**

To let us know of a change in your email address where we should send notices and disclosures electronically to you, you must send an email message to us at [cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov) and in the body of such request you must state: your previous email address, your new email address. We do not require any other information from you to change your email address.

If you created a DocuSign account, you may update it with your new email address through your account preferences.

### **To request paper copies from King County-Department of 02**

To request delivery from us of paper copies of the notices and disclosures previously provided by us to you electronically, you must send us an email to [cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov) and in the body of such request you must state your email address, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We will bill you for any fees at that time, if any.

### **To withdraw your consent with King County-Department of 02**

To inform us that you no longer wish to receive future notices and disclosures in electronic format you may:

- i. decline to sign a document from within your signing session, and on the subsequent page, select the check-box indicating you wish to withdraw your consent, or you may;
- ii. send us an email to [cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov) and in the body of such request you must state your email, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We do not need any other information from you to withdraw consent.. The consequences of your withdrawing consent for online documents will be that transactions may take a longer time to process..

### **Required hardware and software**

The minimum system requirements for using the DocuSign system may change over time. The current system requirements are found here: <https://support.docusign.com/guides/signer-guide-signing-system-requirements>.

### **Acknowledging your access and consent to receive and sign documents electronically**

To confirm to us that you can access this information electronically, which will be similar to other electronic notices and disclosures that we will provide to you, please confirm that you have read this ERSD, and (i) that you are able to print on paper or electronically save this ERSD for your future reference and access; or (ii) that you are able to email this ERSD to an email address where you will be able to print on paper or save it for your future reference and access. Further, if you consent to receiving notices and disclosures exclusively in electronic format as described herein, then select the check-box next to 'I agree to use electronic records and signatures' before clicking 'CONTINUE' within the DocuSign system.

By selecting the check-box next to 'I agree to use electronic records and signatures', you confirm that:

- You can access and read this Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure; and
- You can print on paper this Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure, or save or send this Electronic Record and Disclosure to a location where you can print it, for future reference and access; and
- Until or unless you notify King County-Department of 02 as described above, you consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you by King County-Department of 02 during the course of your relationship with King County-Department of 02.