

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE IMPACT REPORT

By the Numbers

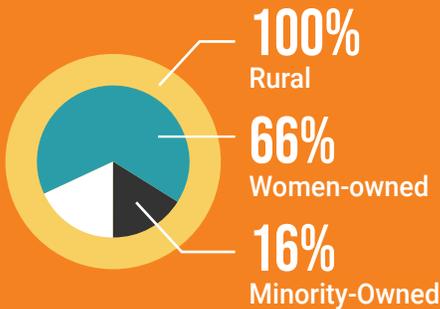


\$215,000

Additional funding leveraged

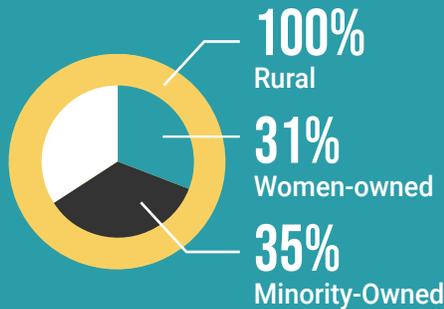
30

Entrepreneurs received technical assistance



34

City-facilitated COVID support grants



7

Local businesses with 20 products are featured in the "Made in Polk County" market

5

Entrepreneurs are currently working through the license application process



“The ROI program has helped Indy Idea Hub make the leap to becoming a more formalized organization with regular funding and programs that have been fully implemented. This ‘track record’ will be extremely valuable as the organization seeks funding for additional permanent staff from other sources who might not fund an early-stage organization.”

—Kate Schwarzler, Owner



Developing an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Reduction of Barriers

Access to a shared use kitchen and market, funding for licensing fees, and connection with COVID response grants allowed local food business entrepreneurs to pivot during the pandemic. Technical assistance was given to launch websites, social media, CRM software, and more.

Engagement

Indy Commons and Indy Kitchen became a gathering place to exchange ideas and possibilities. This included significant one-on-one outreach and a survey of business owners' needs, which will now be sent out annually.

Access

To make local services more accessible, outreach materials were published in multiple languages. Overall, business owners have shared that they now see Indy Commons/Indy Idea Hub as the go-to resource to connect with a variety of services.

Capital Access

Indy Commons and Indy Idea Hub were instrumental in ensuring COVID support programs reached all segments of the local business community. They connected 40 local businesses to COVID support opportunities.

Supportive Culture

Collaborative promotions and engaging social media campaigns helped community members recognize the value their patronage brings. Further, the Kitchen Manager provided mentorship and encouraged collaboration among entrepreneurs.

Project Highlight

GRAZING FIELDS CHARCUTERIE

One of the very first Indy Kitchen users makes fresh charcuterie boards for parties and events. After several conversations with the Kitchen Manager on how to expand their offerings, they developed a smaller, packaged board that is portable and disposable. Using connections from the Kitchen Manager, they reached out to area wineries, and the packaged boards are now sold at an area tasting room that does not have an on-site kitchen. They are continuing to approach other wineries for similar opportunities and plan to sell the boards at pop up events for the City's summer concerts, which happen just across the street from Indy Kitchen.

They experienced this success with just one month of support from the Indy Kitchen team!



Success!

ROI funding expedited the creation of a shared use commercial kitchen, which was also supported through USDA funding. Indy Kitchen offers a recipe for success: combine a commercial kitchen with food-based business support to help entrepreneurs realize their visions. This one-stop-shop provides access to customers and markets through support from experts and peers via educational programming, a micro-retail space, and a community event space to bring current and future customers, partners, and visibility to the many food-based and value-added producers who call Independence home.

Located on Main Street in downtown Independence, Indy Kitchen is propelling growth in the local food industry as a space for startups and small businesses to innovate, launch, test, and scale while tapping into a variety of curated, industry-specific support.



Goal Progress To Date

GOAL ONE

Start, Support, and Grow Food-Based Businesses

ROI GOALS ACHIEVED

- Opened and now operating a licensed, shared-use commercial kitchen.
- Hired a part time Kitchen Manager to help with startup, operations, and provide mentorship for food entrepreneurs.
- Formed a Technical Assistance program for COVID-impacted local businesses with Indy Idea Hub.
- Launched two rounds of Independence/ Monmouth emergency business support grants.
- Paid for licensing of initial kitchen users.

OUTCOMES

- Increased ability for local food entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.
- Increased resilience among local food business economy.
- Increased opportunities for mentoring, technical support, and access to funding for local businesses.

GOAL TWO

Open New Markets for Locally Sourced Products

ROI GOALS ACHIEVED

- Opened "Made in Polk County" market selling locally-made food and other high quality and unique goods.
- Introduced a Point-of-Sale system and separate scheduling system to manage market, kitchen, and office spaces.

OUTCOMES

- Increased visibility of local food products.
- Increased the available creative options for local entrepreneurs to position and sell their products.

GOAL THREE

Celebrate Local Food Systems

ROI GOALS ACHIEVED

- Organized Kitchen Open House to showcase kitchen and local food entrepreneurs.
- Purchased podcast equipment and featured kitchen users in podcast interviews.
- Featured Q&As with local entrepreneurs on kitchen website.
- Created and launched the Business Tune Up Survey, a survey of business owners that tracks longer term goals like business owner confidence, collaborative spirit, and community pride.

OUTCOMES

- Increased awareness of the kitchen and market.
- Increased the number of avenues through which local food-based businesses could share their story with the community.
- Improved methods for tracking the impact of continued entrepreneurial support.