

# Community Kitchens

The Come to the Table Project - [www.cometothetablenc.org](http://www.cometothetablenc.org)

## What is a community kitchen?

Community kitchens are kitchens that are open during certain hours to the community. Commercially certified kitchens allow cooks to sell their products. Churches with day care programs, meal programs, or large facilities often have already certified kitchens. Other kitchens may require upgrades or added equipment.

## Why have a community kitchen?

Teach cooking classes

Allow families to preserve abundant summer food

Stock winter food pantries with preserved produce

Increase the value of farm products by letting farmers make jams, jellies, dried herbs, cakes, breads, and other products

Support entrepreneurs and small farmers

Ask users to contribute some preserved food to the church food pantry

## What can a community kitchen include?

A community kitchen can be as small as a pressure canner on the stove that everyone can use. Larger, certified kitchens may include commercial dehydrators, pressure canners, commercial mixers, large ovens, commercial freezers, stainless steel work tables, large sinks and lots of preparation space.

## Who can help?

**The North Carolina Department of Agriculture** certifies commercial kitchens. <http://www.ncagr.gov/fooddrug/food/commercial.htm>

**Your local Agricultural Extension Office**, [www.ces.ncsu.edu/](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/), can help link farmers to the kitchen and may offer training in safe food preparation and preservation.

**The Interfaith Food Shuttle's Operation Frontline** organizes healthy cooking classes. [www.foodshuttle.org/nutrition.html](http://www.foodshuttle.org/nutrition.html)

**Local economic development centers** may be interested in helping develop community kitchens because of the resources they offer to entrepreneurs.

**The Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund** provides cost-share support for innovative agricultural enterprises such as community kitchens. [www.rafiusa.org](http://www.rafiusa.org)

