

A stylized illustration of a city street at sunset. The sun is a large white circle in the center of the sky, surrounded by orange and yellow clouds. The street is a wide, orange path that leads towards the horizon. On either side of the street are silhouettes of buildings, trees, and a person walking. In the foreground, a black food truck with a striped awning is driving away from the viewer. The truck has two figures inside. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones of orange, yellow, and green.

# City of Manteca Culinary Launchpad Program





# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Program Overview

The City of Manteca is proud to introduce the Manteca Culinary Launchpad Program, a pilot initiative designed to support aspiring food entrepreneurs, encourage small business development, and showcase local culinary talent.

Through this program, the City will provide a mobile food cart that participants can use to launch and test their food business without the high upfront costs typically associated with starting a food truck. The goal is to lower barriers to entry and give entrepreneurs a practical way to gain experience operating a food business.

Participants will receive coordinated technical assistance, permitting support, and City-led promotion. The program will also include mentorship and business guidance through the City's partner organization, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). City staff will work closely with participants to help navigate the permitting process and support the successful launch and operation of a mobile food cart business in Manteca.

The program is designed to serve as a stepping stone, helping entrepreneurs build sustainable businesses that may eventually grow into permanent food trucks, storefronts, or brick-and-mortar restaurants in the community.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Applicants Must:

- Demonstrate a viable food business concept.
- Provide a financial plan showing sufficient capital and a clear strategy to sustain operations for the full term of the program. The plan should include anticipated monthly expenses, realistic sales projections, and funding sources.
- Participate in a business concept pitch event with the program committee. Participants will present their concept and provide a tasting of their signature dishes or beverages.
- Obtain all required permits and approvals from the San Joaquin County Environmental Health Department.
- Obtain a City of Manteca Business License.
- Present a valid California Driver's License.
- Obtain liability insurance coverage as outlined on page 15.
- Comply with Chapter 10.70 of the Manteca Municipal Code.
- Own a truck with a hitch capable of transporting the City's food cart.
- Provide monthly reports to the City, including financial updates, operational challenges, and any proposed menu changes.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Program Benefits

The selected entrepreneur will receive the following benefits:

- Business support through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Assistance with application preparation, financial planning, and business pitch development will be available upon request before submitting an application.
- Use of a fully equipped City-owned food cart, including a generator, point-of-sale system, security cameras, and essential equipment.
- The food cart includes refrigeration, a food preparation station, and heating and cooling stations, suitable for items such as sandwiches, soups, salads, beverages, and similar menu offerings.
- Please note: The food cart does not include a hood or stove.
- Mentorship and coaching throughout the duration of the program.
- Marketing and promotional support from the City.
- Opportunities to operate at City and City co-sponsored events with dedicated vendor space.
- Mobile Food Vendor Permit fees will be waived for the selected entrepreneur.



# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Application and Pitch Event Schedule:

**Program Launch Date:** March 16, 2026

**Application Period:** March 16, 2026 – May 4, 2026

**Business Pitch Event:** May 11, 2026 – May 14, 2026

**Determination Letters Issued:** Late May 2026

**Onboarding Period:** Early June 2026

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Locations of Operation:

Although the entrepreneur is not required to operate solely in Manteca City limits, it must serve the Manteca community on a regular basis. The selected entrepreneur will work with the City staff on identifying strategic locations to operate the business which may include dedicated space on City-owned properties, such as Woodward Park, Library Park, Downtown Mini-Park, Manteca Golf Course, and City Hall facilities.

The selected candidate will have dedicated spaces at City and City Co-Sponsored community events including, but not limited to the list below.

#### **City and City Co-Sponsored Events:**

Music on Maple: May-October 2026

Pumpkin Fair: October 3-4, 2026

Farm to Fork Event: October 10, 2026

Watermelon Street Fair: June 6-7, 2026

Christmas in the Park: December 5, 2026

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Application Process

Applicants must submit an application outlining their business concept, proposed menu, branding and design concepts for the wrapping of the food cart, and a financial plan demonstrating sufficient capital and a clear strategy to sustain operations for the full term of the program. The financial plan should account for anticipated monthly expenses, realistic sales projections, and funding sources.

Following the application deadline, applicants will be asked to participate in an in-person business pitch presentation to the City of Manteca Program Committee introducing their business concept, accompanied by taste testing of their proposed menu. The pitches will be evaluated based on creativity, feasibility, and potential impact on the local community. Marketing and supplemental material is not required for the purpose of the pitch event but recommended.

Applications may be hand-delivered, mailed, or submitted electronically. Mailed applications must be received in office by the May 4<sup>th</sup> deadline. Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered for the program. Certain exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the City Manager.

Electronic submittals should be emailed to: [\*\*EconDev@manteca.gov\*\*](mailto:EconDev@manteca.gov).

Mailed or hand-delivered applications should be submitted to:

**City Manager's Office**  
**Attn: Economic Development Division**  
**1001 W. Center Street**  
**Manteca, CA 95337**

For questions about the application process, please contact Economic Development staff at (209) 456-8014 or send an email to [\*\*EconDev@manteca.gov\*\*](mailto:EconDev@manteca.gov).

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Application Submittal Checklist

Complete application submittals shall include the following:

- Completed Application form
- Financial Plan
- Proposed Menu
- Branding and design concepts for the exterior of the food cart

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Business Pitch Event

In the week following the close of the application period, selected applicants will be contacted by the City of Manteca and invited to participate in an in-person pitch presentation.

#### **Event Format**

Each applicant will be allotted a 30-minute window to pitch their business concept and provide food samples of their signature dish(es).

#### **Presentation**

Applicants should be prepared to address the following during their pitch:

- Overview of the business concept and culinary vision
- Target market and unique value proposition
- Operational approach (menus and service style)
- Long-term goals and readiness to participate in the program

#### **Menu Tasting & Dish Presentation**

Applicants will present samples of their signature menu items for tasting by the Program Committee.

- Dishes should reflect the applicant's concept, creativity, and culinary skill.
- Presentation, originality, and overall execution will be considered.
- Applicants are encouraged to be creative within the limitations provided by the program.

#### **Committee Q&A**

Following the pitch and tasting, the Program Committee may ask clarifying questions related to the business concept, operations, and program readiness.

#### **Marketing & Supplemental Materials**

Marketing materials, visual aids, and supplemental documentation are **not required** for the pitch event; however, applicants are welcome to bring them.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Evaluation Criteria

- Feasibility and innovation of the business concept.
- Strength and viability of the business plan.
- Culinary skill and quality of food samples (taste, presentation, originality).
- Operational readiness and understanding of requirements.
- Branding and customer appeal.
- Market demand and community impact.
- Entrepreneur's commitment and ability to fulfill program requirements.
- Long-term business vision and growth potential.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Post-Selection

Following the selection of an entrepreneur, the participant agrees to:

- Obtain a City of Manteca Business License and all required Food Safety permits and certifications from the San Joaquin County Environmental Health Department.
- Maintain a current Food Safety Certificate throughout the duration of the program.
- Obtain Liability Insurance.
- Obtain a Seller's Permit through the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.
- Establish a base commissary kitchen to release fats, oils, and grease (FOG).
- Submit an application for a Mobile Food Truck Vendor Permit to the City of Manteca Recreation Department (fee waiver will be applied).
- Enter into a lease agreement with the City of Manteca for a 12-month period following the conclusion of Phase II as further detailed below.
- Lease payments will be in the amount of \$750.00 and shall be processed on a monthly basis, payable to:

**City of Manteca**  
**Attn: Economic Development Division**  
**1001 W. Center Street**  
**Manteca, CA 95337**



# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Schedule of Program Phases

#### **Phase I - Month 1**

##### **Marketing, Branding, and Onboarding**

The selected entrepreneur will work directly with the City and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to initiate the onboarding which will include an introduction to designated mentor(s), who will assist with reviewing the proposed business plan, branding concepts, and marketing plan and work through improvement opportunities.

Entrepreneur will work with their designated mentor to establish social media platforms and a schedule of operation that includes the days of the week, operating hours, and locations.

At the conclusion of this Phase I, the entrepreneur will work with the City to complete the exterior wrapping and branding design of the food cart.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Schedule of Program Phases

#### **Phase II - Month 2-3**

##### **State, County, and City Requirements**

The entrepreneur will work directly with their designated mentor(s) as selected by SBDC and City to obtain all required State, County, and City certifications and permits.

These include:

- Food Safety Certification.
- San Joaquin County Environmental Health Department Certification.
- Seller's Permit through the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.
- City of Manteca Business License.
- Obtain Liability Insurance Requirements, as detailed on page 15.
- Mobile Food Truck Vendor Permit (fee waiver will be applied).
- Establish a base commissary kitchen to release fats, oils, and grease (FOG).
- Lease Agreement with the City of Manteca for a 12-month period which will commence following the conclusion of Phase II.
- Review calendar of upcoming Community events with City and secure vendor spaces.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Schedule of Program Phases

#### **Phase III - 12 Month Term**

- Begin regular business operations in accordance with the Lease Agreement and program requirements.
- Work collaboratively with the City of Manteca, in partnership with the Manteca Chamber of Commerce, to coordinate and host a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.
- Continued marketing and promotional support from the City of Manteca.
- Maintain compliance with all applicable State, County, and City regulations throughout the duration of the program.
- Participate in ongoing mentorship provided by a designated program mentor(s).
- Submit required financial documentation, including monthly profit and loss statements, to the City.
- Participate in periodic check-ins or progress meetings with City staff, as scheduled.
- At the conclusion of the program, entrepreneur shall participate in a final program evaluation or exit meeting with City staff to review business performance, lessons learned, and future plans.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Program Guidelines

### Insurance Requirements

#### General Liability

**Minimum Limits of Insurance:** *The organization using City facilities shall maintain limits no less than:*

- General Liability Insurance with \$1,000,000 minimum limit per occurrence.
- General Liability Additional Insured Endorsement naming the following as insured **on 2001 or earlier issued endorsement forms:** *"The City of Manteca, its officers, officials, employees, agents, and volunteers."*
- Automobile Liability Insurance with \$1,000,000 minimum limit per accident for bodily injury and property damage.
- Automobile Liability Additional Insured Endorsement naming the following as additional insured: *"The City of Manteca, its officers, officials, employees, agents, and volunteers."*

#### Other Insurance Liability

***The General Liability and Automobile Liability policies are to contain, or be endorsed to contain, the following provisions:***

1. The City of Manteca, its officers, officials, employees, agents, and volunteers are to be covered as insureds as respect to: liability arising out of the activities performed by or on behalf of the Insured (applicant); products and completed operations of the applicant; premises owned, occupied or used by the applicant; or automobiles owned, leased, hired or borrowed by the applicant. The coverage shall contain no special limitations on the scope of protection afforded the City, its officers, officials, employees, agents, or volunteers.
2. For any claims related to this event, the applicant's insurance coverage shall be primary insurance as respects the City, its officers, officials, employees, agents, and volunteers. Any insurance or self-insurance maintained by the City, its officers, officials, employees, agents, or volunteers, shall be excess of the applicant's insurance and shall not contribute with it.
3. The applicant's insurance shall apply separately to each insured against whom claim is made or suit is brought, except with respect to the limits of the insurer's liability.
4. Each insurance policy required by this clause shall be endorsed to state that coverage shall not be suspended, voided, cancelled by either party, reduced in coverage or in limits except after thirty (30) days prior written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, has been given to the City of Manteca.

#### Verification of Coverage

Applicant shall furnish the City with original endorsements effecting coverage required by this clause. The endorsements are to be signed by a person authorized by that insurer to bind coverage on its behalf. The endorsements are to be on forms provided by the City. All endorsements are to be received and approved by the City before any use permits will be granted. As an alternative to the City's forms, the applicant's insurer may provide complete, certified copies of all required insurance policies including endorsements effecting coverage required by these specifications.

# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Application Form

### Manteca Culinary Launch Pad Application

**Applicant Name(s):**

**Business Name:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Contact Phone:**

**Email Address:**

**Proposed Food Cart Name:**

**Cuisine Type or Concept:**

**Describe your business concept.**

**How is your business concept unique to the existing food establishments in the area?**

**Describe your food product(s).**

**What are your long-term business goals?**



# MANTECA CULINARY LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

## Application Form

### Manteca Culinary Launch Pad Application

Please return the completed application with supporting attachments to the City of Manteca Economic Development Division, 1001 W. Center Street, Manteca, CA 95336 or submit your application electronically at [EconDev@manteca.gov](mailto:EconDev@manteca.gov).

For questions about the application process, please contact the Economic Development team at (209) 456-8520 or send an email [EconDev@manteca.gov](mailto:EconDev@manteca.gov).

#### **Supplemental Documentation\***

Please provide the following documents with application form:

- Copy of Menu
- Financial Plan
- Branding and Design Concepts for the Exterior of the Food Cart