

Technical Assistance Program Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Food Business & Supply Chain

- **Overview of the Food Systems Supply Chain:** Components of the food supply chain, including processing, distribution, marketing, and sales.
- **Understanding the Market Landscape:** Trends in consumer demand, sustainable practices, and key players in Nevada's food ecosystem.
- **Legal Structures & Compliance:** Navigating food business legal structures (LLC, S-Corp, etc.) and essential compliance standards, including health regulations, food safety, and local licensing.

Week 2: Business Planning & Goal Setting

- **Developing a Business Model:** Introduction to business model canvas and value proposition.
- **Goal Setting & Road Mapping:** Crafting clear, achievable short- and long-term goals to guide business growth.
- **Risk Management & Contingency Planning:** Identifying potential risks in the food business landscape and creating a plan to mitigate them.

Week 3: Financial Foundations for Food Businesses

- **Basic Accounting Principles:** Understanding financial statements, including income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements.
- **Budgeting for Food Businesses:** Creating and maintaining an effective budget tailored to food-related expenses.
- **Funding Options:** Exploring grants, loans, and private funding specifically for food businesses, with practical application exercises.

Week 4: Food Product Development & Labeling Compliance

- **Product Development:** Testing, scaling, and adjusting product recipes for commercial use.
- **Labeling Requirements:** Understanding FDA guidelines for food labeling, including allergens, nutritional information, and organic certifications.

- **Product Testing & Quality Control:** Ensuring product consistency, shelf-life testing, and quality assurance practices.

Week 5: Marketing & Branding in the Food Industry

- **Building Your Brand:** Crafting a brand identity that reflects business values and attracts the target audience.
- **Marketing Channels & Strategies:** Social media marketing, influencer collaborations, and email marketing tailored to food businesses.
- **Storytelling & Building Customer Loyalty:** Techniques for creating a brand story and engaging consumers to build a loyal customer base.

Week 6: Sales & Distribution Channels

- **Exploring Sales Channels:** From farmers markets to online platforms, identifying appropriate channels for product distribution.
- **Pricing Strategies:** Establishing profitable and competitive pricing models that account for production costs and market positioning.
- **Distribution Logistics:** Setting up distribution systems, including direct-to-consumer, retail partnerships, and logistics for perishables.

Week 7: Food Safety & Quality Assurance

- **Compliance with Food Safety Standards:** Key regulatory standards, including HACCP, GMP, and FSMA.
- **Sanitation & Facility Management:** Setting up and maintaining safe food handling, storage, and transportation practices.
- **Traceability & Record Keeping:** Establishing systems to trace product ingredients from sourcing to sale, including digital solutions.

Week 8: Leveraging Technology in Food Businesses

- **Inventory & Supply Chain Management Tools:** Utilizing software and tools to manage inventory, orders, and suppliers.
- **E-commerce & Online Sales Platforms:** Evaluating online sales platforms and best practices for e-commerce success.
- **Data Analytics for Growth:** Basics of data analytics to understand customer behavior, optimize inventory, and forecast demand.

Week 9: Legal, Tax, and Insurance Essentials

- **Understanding Business Taxes:** Tax responsibilities specific to food businesses, including sales tax, excise tax, and tax incentives.
- **Navigating Food Business Insurance:** Necessary insurance policies (e.g., product liability, property insurance, business interruption).
- **Legal Protections & IP:** Introduction to protecting business trademarks, copyrights, and recipes.

Week 10: Scaling & Preparing for Growth

- **Strategies for Scaling:** Assessing when and how to scale operations, products, or market reach.
- **Networking & Building Strategic Partnerships:** Engaging with local businesses, food hubs, and institutions to expand market opportunities.
- **Final Presentations & Feedback:** Participants present their business model and strategies, receive feedback from mentors, and gain insights for future improvements.