Cuyahoga Community College

CORPORATE COLLEGE
Center for Entrepreneurs

Cuyahoga Community College
School of Business, Legal Professions and Hospitality

THE ROAD MAP / OUR JOURNEY

From Vision to Reality

Tri-C's Mobile Teaching Kitchen Story



Cuyahoga Community College

NOURISH

A TRI-C MOBILE TEACHING KITCHEN



From Vision to Reality

Tri-C's Mobile Teaching Kitchen Story

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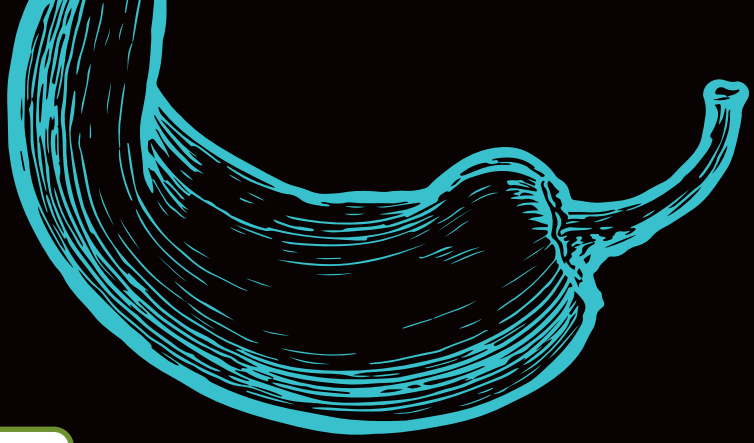
SPRING 2027
New Courses Launch

SPRING 2027
Community Feedings

2027
Food Truck Rodeo & Full Operation



Cuyahoga Community College®



September 2024

Idea Presented to Tri-C

When the executive director of the Center for Entrepreneurs learned about the Pitch for the Trades competition at the NACCE conference in September 2024, the Center had been operating for a year. Our team decided this was a great time to pitch a new concept.

Knowing a partnership with the noncredit and credit areas of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) was important to our success, we reached out to the associate dean for the School of Business, Legal Professions and Hospitality (SoBLPH) to see if they were interested in partnering with us on this new adventure. It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

November 2024

Next Steps

Next, the idea had to be approved by leadership, so the executive director discussed it with the President of Corporate College, while the associate dean discussed it with the SoBLPH's dean. Both approved the idea immediately.

November 2024

The Idea Flourishes

The Center's executive director and the SoBLPH's associate dean worked together to develop the concept for the pitch. They quickly landed on a food truck — an idea the Hospitality Management associate dean and faculty had wanted to pursue for some time. The College already has a kitchen for students — why not add one on wheels?



January 2025

The Dream Team Is Chosen

We formed a committee that consisted of the executive director of the Center, the associate dean of the SoBLPH, the associate dean of Hospitality Management (who originally had the idea for a food truck), the director of the Center for Entrepreneurs, and an adjunct faculty member in Hospitality Management (who is also an entrepreneur), a chef and an instructor for the Center.

January – March 2025

What to Pitch?

NOTE:
During this time, we held conversations with an outside organization that was interested in a food truck opportunity with us.

First, our committee had to determine who would handle the pitch at the NACCE conference. The adjunct faculty member had already won 19 pitches, so they were an obvious choice. The director of the Center would be on stage to represent the noncredit side — even though they had no pitch experience.

We had to decide how to pitch the idea. We landed on a skit in which the adjunct faculty member would play a faculty member (AKA the Chef) and the director would be a student. We also decided that instead of a food truck, it would be a mobile teaching kitchen, as we wanted to ensure we included noncredit students who were entrepreneurs. Even though many of them do not want to own a food truck, they need to know how to run their own restaurant.



March 2025

Creating the Pitch

We started putting ideas on paper. The adjunct faculty member and the director each wrote skits, which they combined into one. They used ChatGPT to help refine it because we knew we would only have three minutes to present.

July 2025

Application Submitted

August 2025

Pitch for Semifinalists

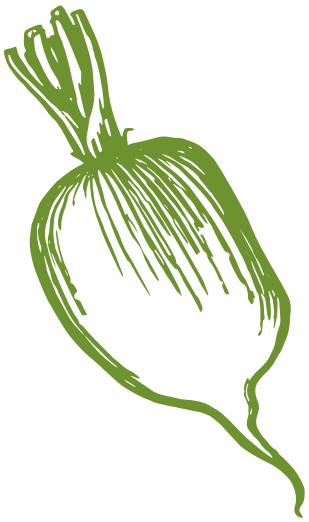
The adjunct faculty member and the director delivered the pitch virtually to a panel of judges.



August 2025

Pitch Semifinalists Announced

We were selected! The adjunct faculty member and the director delivered the pitch virtually to a panel of judges.



September 2025

NACCE Coach Assigned

NACCE assigned a coach to each pitch team, and we were assigned Lydia, who helped us further refine our pitch by considering items we could bring on stage. During these meetings, the idea for a cardboard cutout of the mobile teaching kitchen was born.

September – October 2025

Practice

We started putting ideas on paper. The adjunct faculty member and the director each wrote skits, which they combined into one. They used ChatGPT to help refine it because we knew we would only have three minutes to present.

$60,000 awarded

$45,000 requested

October 2025

Pitch at NACCE

The day finally arrived when we would pitch at the NACCE conference. There were lights, there was a clock, there was an audience, and there we were on stage with a ton of people watching. Our hard work was finally going to pay off. And what happened? **We nailed it!** The adjunct faculty member was keeping an eye on the time and when they noticed we were running short, they shortened their part so we could end with our power closing of "Yes, Chef!" The judges asked us questions, which we answered without issue.

The next day, they announced the winners. They went from the bottom up, and when we were not called, we knew we had gotten the top prize — but we had no idea the award would exceed what we requested. We asked for $45,000 and won $60,000.

October 2025

The Return Home

Now the work had to begin. We had $60,000 at our disposal, and we had to decide how to proceed.

November 2025

The Stars Aligned

The committee got back to work. The associate dean of Hospitality Management provided a checklist of what needed to be done and updated the list of needs for the mobile teaching kitchen.

We also learned that an outside organization had decided to work with us on the mobile teaching kitchen.



December 2025 – January 2026

The Contract

The outside organization, the Sisters of Charity, had been in conversations with the associate dean of Hospitality Management for some time. After the competition, the organization informed us that it would like to help feed the Central community using a food truck since it is in a food desert. To do this, the organization would provide us with a food truck. A donor with the Sisters of Charity purchased a food truck and leased it to the College at a nominal expense. We were overjoyed to discover that it was a 25-foot food truck equipped with commercial equipment including a flat top, tilt skillet, convention oven, and more. Our dream was getting bigger than we could ever have imagined!

To accept the truck, the contract had to be reviewed by our Legal department and rewritten several times. In the end, the contract was approved, and we were contracted to participate in five Central neighborhood feedings this first year (Fall 2026) and 10 next year (Spring, Summer and Fall 2027). The Sisters will arrange additional community events and ancillary services — food bank, counseling and health services — to be present for some of the events. Outside these scheduled neighborhood meals, Tri-C can use the truck for internal events, food truck events and display purposes, giving culinary students and entrepreneurs the opportunity to gain experience with food truck operations — possibly for a community event.

While the contract was being finalized, we continued working internally to determine what we might need for the truck. Do we need to have a driver? What licensure and permits do we need? Do we need to make any changes to the truck? What culinary supplies are needed? Who will be on the truck? Do they all need to be certified?



January – March 2026

The Marketing Plan

While we sorted out the contract and other details, a committee was created to discuss marketing the truck. The committee included the vice president of Marketing and Communications, the executive director of the Center, the dean and associate dean of Hospitality Management, and faculty and staff members.

The committee focused on the truck's name, overall concept, design renderings and other details. We originally decided the Tri-C Mobile Teaching Kitchen was a good name, but we determined we needed something more powerful. After many meetings, the truck was named **Nourish: A Tri-C Mobile Teaching Kitchen**.

The design for the truck won a gold medallion award, first place, from the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations (district 3) in the "wild card" category. These awards recognize outstanding achievement in design and communication at community colleges in each of seven districts. The wild card category includes designs that did not fit into a standard category like brochures, digital ads, etc.

NOURISH
A TRI-C MOBILE TEACHING KITCHEN

April 2026

The Licensure Requirements

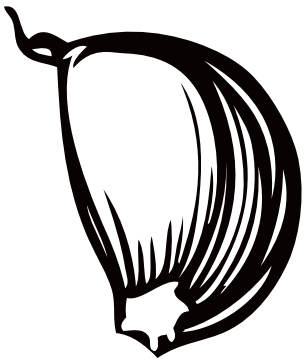
Since our focus is on the Sisters' community events for Fall 2026, no food license is necessary to give food away. That will change in 2027. Getting the food license can be a challenge. The Ohio Department of Health would prefer a static menu with traceable items. Whenever the menu changes, we will need to submit the revised version to the Ohio Department of Health. We don't know exactly how that will work yet. However, we have a good relationship with the Ohio Department of Health and will request its guidance. We also have to think about the special USDA licensure we have at the Hospitality Management Center in downtown Cleveland, which allows us to transport prepared food to the truck with proper documentation. *See the end of the document for the list of fees.*



February – June 2026

The Curriculum

As you can imagine, developing the curriculum for the mobile teaching kitchen is a challenge because we want to educate both students pursuing a degree or certificate and entrepreneurs who already have a degree or certificate and are looking to start their own business. A committee was formed that once again included the Center's director, the associate dean of Hospitality Management, the adjunct faculty member in Hospitality Management and, this time, two full-time faculty members in Hospitality Management.



Many meetings and conversations were held because we needed to ensure the curriculum could be taught to both groups, while the credit side also needed to go through accreditation.

In June 2026, before the faculty went on summer break, we confirmed that the following courses would be created for both the credit and noncredit sides by Spring 2027. Students in both groups would take these courses, depending on their background and expertise.

Discovery Track COMPLETED
Center for Entrepreneurs

ServSafe Certification COMPLETED
Certification required to work on the truck

Hospitality Law and Legal Status NEW
Created by the faculty/credit side

Money Moves COMPLETED
Center for Entrepreneurs

Customer Service NEW
Created by the faculty/credit side

MashUp Hybrid NEW
Created by the faculty/credit side
Business Certificate and Food Truck Operations

Business Certificate
The business certificate would consist of:

- Menu Engineering
- Cost
- Purchasing
- Production
- Equipment
- Menu planning



Food Truck Operations
Culinary skills as they relate to the following industries:

- Home cooking
- Restaurant cooking
- Mobile teaching business
- Cottage

Food Truck Prep

- Develop recipes
- Tweak recipes
- Prep food properly
- Sell food on a truck
- Transport food
- Load food
- Serve food
- Clean the truck

June 2026

Modifications

With any project, each group involved has its own vision of what the project should look like, and our food truck was no exception. It needed to be a mobile teaching kitchen, so we needed to modify it to meet our needs as well as the needs of our inspectors.

- **Truck Modifications:** We needed to make certain modifications to the truck. However, it was purchased from a company in Columbus which made it difficult to get the truck back and forth from since it is two hours from Tri-C. After a lengthy search, we were able to find a local manufacturer in Wellington OH, which was much closer for us to transport the truck to and from for the modifications.
    - **Extending the Generator Platform:** One of the modifications involved the platform supporting the generator. During the inspection of the truck, we discovered the platform was too small to hold the generators, so the platform was extended to a proper length.
    - **Gas Vent:** We also learned that the gas oven was venting directly into the truck. The Wellington manufacturer modified the system to vent through the roof to the outside of the truck.
    - **Propane Tank Tubing:** The black pipe for the propane tanks and the manifold were rusted and needed attention.
    - **Rearview Camera:** The rearview camera was not functioning and needed to be fixed.

It was definitely a learning experience — who would have thought a brand-new, state-of-the-art food truck would have so many issues?

June – July 2026

We Are Popular

As you can imagine, everyone wants to see Nourish: The Tri-C Mobile Teaching Kitchen. Our College president was so excited and proud of what we accomplished with the pitch and the truck. With that came the opportunity to showcase Nourish at the NACCE Pathways to Prosperity, which we hosted at Corporate College®, a division of Tri-C, and our Tri-C Board of Trustees meeting.

September 2026

The Community Experience

The first community event was held at Arbor Park in the Central neighborhood close to our Tri-C Metro Campus. It was a great experience and the residents were grateful as well. We served a Hispanic themed meal to 135 community members. Another partner was with us, the Cleveland Food Bank, and they handed out perishable items to the residents as well. It was a very beneficial event!

Our next event will be a "Trunk or Treat" for 250 elementary school children. We are serving chicken quesadillas and handing out candy.

October 2026

Where Are We Now?

We are very excited to report that we were able to get a full-time position who will be managing the day-to-day operations of the food truck and we also hired a driver whose main responsibility is making sure the truck gets to all of the events and maintenance check-ups/ appointments. These are two very big steps toward the success of our Mobile Teaching Kitchen. Without these two individuals we would not be able to have the efficiency we will need as we go forward.

BEST PRACTICES: WHAT WE LEARNED

Fee-Based Expenses

Expense	Cost/Frequency
Propane test – failed	$20
Propane test – passed	$90
Fire inspection	$150
Food license	Unknown at this time
Department of Commerce license	Unknown at this time
Fire suppression servicing	$500 — semiannual

INSPECTION NOTE

Failed the first test due to a gas leak inside the truck. A plumber was able to find and fix the leak. Cost $850.

Each city will have its own required permits and costs.

2027

What's Next?

Next year, we will be participating in the Food Truck Rodeo, where all of the necessary licensing agencies and city departments will come together for one day to provide food trucks with everything they need to operate. This one-stop shop saves us time and money. Other tests will need to be completed before the rodeo, but attending the rodeo will allow us to have a fully operational mobile teaching kitchen and food truck for our students, entrepreneurs and community.

We also need to finalize the curriculum and determine the approval process before we can start to offer the classes to our eager students in Spring 2027.

Our list will continue to grow as the months go on.

We are grateful for this experience, lessons learned and the opportunity NACCE gave us to make this possible. As with any entrepreneur, we will continue to grow and experience new things with our new adventure!

From Vision to Reality!



NOURISH

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tri-c.edu/nourish

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