



NEWS RELEASE

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Consider Ordering from a Home-Based Restaurant this Holiday Season



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Riverside County, CA- Have you ever thought that the best holiday meals are home-cooked? It's possible your neighbor could be selling those delicious, seasonal dishes this holiday season and beyond.

Thanks to Riverside County Environmental Health's Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation program, residents can prepare and serve permitted food to customers from the comfort of their homes.

In 2019, Riverside County became the first county in the state to offer this new type of food facility to those eager to start in the restaurant business. Known as Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations, or MHKOs for short, these home-based restaurants have become a popular alternative to opening the typical brick and mortar establishment. This option allows home chefs a way to minimize start-up costs, establish a client base, and build their businesses before transitioning to a commercial facility.

"For many families, being able to cater their traditional food is a way to make a living, particularly in Latino communities," said Riverside County Fourth District and Board Vice-Chair Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. "By providing them a permit to operate legally, the county not only supports their small business but also supports the safety of the products we purchase from local food vendors."

The permit is valid for one year and costs \$658. Currently there are 100 active MHKOs providing a variety of food, like Marcela Guerrero Carrillo, a Perris resident and owner of home-based seafood restaurant, Mariscos El Panzass.

"I got my permit two years ago because I want to provide safety and quality to my clients when I serve them home cooked meals," said Marcela Guerrero Carrillo, Mariscos El Panzass operator.

Starting a MHKO in Riverside County is an easy process.

Home chefs will first submit their written food handling procedures and menu to their nearest Environmental Health office. Next, they will obtain a food safety manager certification, and a food handler certification for all other cooks and food preparers involved in the home business.

Once the procedures are approved by an environmental health inspector, they will submit an application to operate a food facility and pay the annual permit fee.

The last step of the process is the home kitchen inspection. An inspector will schedule a time to come to the operator's home and review the food safety requirements outlined in their written procedures. The inspector will ask questions about how each menu item is prepared and look at the equipment and storage areas that will be used for the new business. Plumbing, dishwashing setup, and trash disposal areas are also checked during the inspection.

To learn more about starting a MHKO, please visit: <https://rivcoeh.org/microenterprise-home-kitchen-operation>

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