

Madison Public Market's MarketReady Program



January 25, 2019

Dear review committee members,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the FEED Kitchen's application to the Health Retail Access Program (HRAP) on behalf of MarketReady, a food-focused small business development program connected with the soon-to-be-built Madison Public Market. Our program has an equity focus: we work with women, new immigrants, non-English speakers, people of color, veterans, and people from other groups experiencing structural barriers to business ownership.

These business owners lean heavily on the FEED Kitchens. The ability to access commercial-scale equipment allows businesses to produce food economically. Renting space by the hour allows business owners to scale their business according to sales and life events. This is particularly essential for business owners experiencing barriers to accessing the capital. FEED is a place of connection. Chefs exchange advice, order in bulk to save on costs, and attend workshops organized by staff. If it were not for the FEED Kitchens, many of our current cohort of 30 business owners would not be able to serve healthy, culturally appropriate food across the City of Madison.

Here is one example to illustrate the point: MarketReady participant, Namgyal Ponsar immigrated to Madison from Tibet with her family. They dreamed of starting a restaurant but began with a food cart, farming their own vegetables that they cooked into healthy traditional Himalayan cuisine and renting space in the FEED Kitchen. Namgyal and her family have grown their business at FEED, adding a second food cart and mentoring newer business owners. This February they will "graduate" from FEED Kitchens, opening a bricks and mortar restaurant space.

FEED is a critical piece of the overall food system infrastructure. It is a place to start and grow a business. FEED serves all of Madison: those who cook in the space and those who eat the food cooked there hail from across the city. I have seen the many ways FEED supports the MarketReady business owners. Because of this I urge you to support FEED's application for funds through HRAP. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ian Aley
MarketReady Coordinator

