



PHILLYCOOKS
FOR PHILLY

Executive Summary Summer 2026

**Fueling Our City's Future:
A Vision of Community, Careers,
and Nourishment**

The Opportunity

Every year, **over 16M pre-plated meals** are served to School District of Philadelphia (District) students, Archdiocese of Philadelphia students, and Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department program participants. The meals are prepared **outside of Pennsylvania, frozen, and distributed to Philadelphia's schools and out-of-school-time programs**. The process directs millions of local taxpayer dollars 100 miles away, increases the programs' cost and carbon footprint, and relies on a single national vendor.

Philly Cooks for Philly believes we can do better by building a centralized meal production facility, **recapturing this tax base**, creating **family-sustaining jobs and career advancement opportunities**, and **utilizing local and regional vendors**, all while **supplying nutritious, nourishing meals** to young Philadelphians. The kitchen will operate as a **public-nonprofit partnership** driving economic activity in Philadelphia and the surrounding region with support from the District and USDA, alongside local and state governments.

The Vision

Philly Cooks for Philly envisions a dynamic public-nonprofit partnership that fosters economic development and empowers individuals in the workforce. We believe in the power of combining nourishing meals with opportunities for personal and professional growth to create a vibrant and thriving community.

The Mission

Promote sustainable and equitable access to nourishing meals in Philadelphia, driving economic growth and job opportunities. Using strategic partnerships and responsible sourcing practices; we foster a thriving food ecosystem, emphasizing local production and waste management for a resilient and inclusive community.

Central Kitchens as Revenue Drivers: Comparing School Districts

City/County	# Schools	Annual Meals	Gross Revenue	Net Income	Operations Model
Philadelphia, PA	120	10.7M	\$39.5M	\$4.1M	Partnership
Duval County, FL	160	23.4M	\$69.2M	\$935K	Self-operated
San Francisco, CA	125	6.5M	\$43.1M	\$5.4M	Self-operated
Fresno, CA	108	15.6M	\$77.7M	\$2.5M	Self-operated

Sources: Public records for the School District of Philadelphia ('24-'25 data) and personal interviews with school food authorities in 2025

A BOLD SOLUTION for Philadelphia's
families, workers, and economy



Economic Impact: Operations

The estimated maximum capacity for a **75,000 SF** facility is **20M** meals; a phase one operations model demonstrates a **10.7M pre-plated meal** production and distribution for the District.

A direct output for a **10.7M pre-plated** meal volume is an estimated **\$39.5M** in annual revenue (2025 reimbursement rates), which would result in an overall annual impact of **\$124.4M for the region**. The facility, at full capacity, would support **340** direct, indirect, and induced FTEs in the City of Philadelphia, and another **85** regionally, with approximately **137** directly employed FTEs in Phase 1. Direct positions would be new to Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Impacts on Revenue, FTEs, Net Income from Increased Scratch Cooking, Local Purchasing

	Gross Revenue	Direct FTEs	Indirect FTEs	Net Income
Phase 1: Replace Pre-Plated Meals	\$39.5M	80	57	\$4.1 M
Phase 2: 70% Scratch Cooked + Local Purchasing	\$39.5M	114	57	(\$423K)*

*The number includes depreciation and 5% reserve.

Sources: IMPLAN (2021), MFR (2023), Hygieia (2025)

District Meal Volume Demand

For the District, federally reimbursed pre-plated lunch volume is approximately 10.7M meals annually. However, several other programs rely on similarly styled meals.

Additional opportunities are estimated at 9M meals:

- Nutritional Development Services, Archdiocese of Philadelphia
- District childcare and twilight meals
- District schools with full-service kitchens
- Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
- Area acute-care health systems

Changes in Meal Demand Output, FY23 & FY25

	FY 2023	FY 2025
School District of Philadelphia Pre-Plate Output	9.5M	10.7M
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Total Output	2.1M	2M
Additional Market Demand Total Output	8.4M	9M
Total Meal Demand Output	20M	21.7M



Economic Impact from Facility Construction

Total Output for the region is estimated at \$48.4M, which considers only the cost of construction, not equipment. This assumes equipment would likely not be produced in-region and, therefore, the economic benefit would be attributable to the region of origin.

This analysis also assumes that the facility would be **75,000 SF**, accommodating up to **20M** meals per year.

Employment Supported and Employee Compensation estimates include direct, indirect, and induced employment.

3x Effect on Tax Revenues from Increased Meal Production

For phase one production at 10.7M meals produced, the central kitchen is estimated to generate Philadelphia Wage Tax and Pennsylvania Income Tax combined revenue of over \$457K.

At full scale, growing production to 19.5M meals produced would increase combined tax revenue to \$1.55M total revenue, meaning **tax revenues expand at nearly triple the rate of meal production volume.**

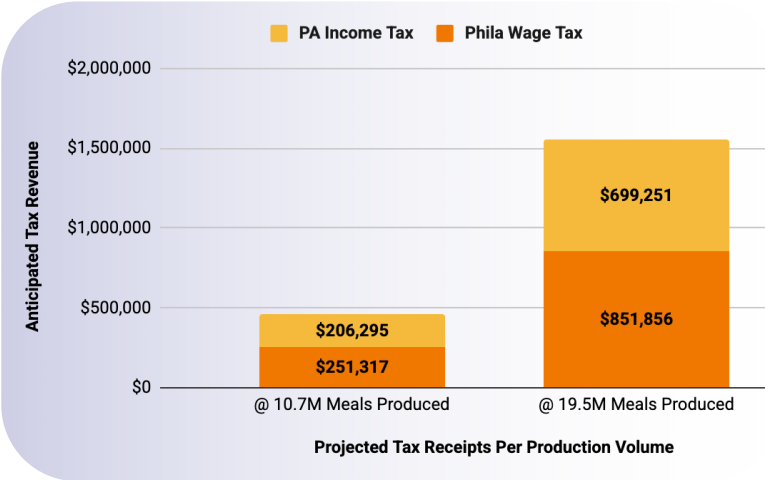
About 65% use of this tax revenue is expected to be incremental, as the portion of the current pre-plated meal vendor’s employees who locally deliver pre-plated meals prepared outside of the region are currently employed within Philadelphia.

Economic Impact Across Philadelphia MSA (est.)

	City of Philadelphia	Rest of Philadelphia MSA	Total
Total Output	\$37M	\$11.4M	\$48.4M
Annual Employment Supported (FTE)	171	85	256
Employee Compensation	\$8.5M	\$8.1M	\$16.6M

Source: IMPLAN (2021), MFR (2023), Hygieia (2025)

Projected Wage & Income Tax Revenue Impacts



Source: MFR (2023), publicly available Philadelphia and Pennsylvania tax rates



Estimated Start-up Costs

Overall costs of acquisition and construction for a newly built facility are projected to be **\$600/SF**. This is consistent with other central kitchen build-outs for which data is available, considering the escalations in building costs in the past few years, as well as the assumption that the **Philly Cooks for Philly** facility would be new construction.

Start-up costs are estimated to be \$43-59M, including liquidity funding for the first three years.

Facility: \$24M-39.4M

- \$320/SF - Buy and renovate with prevailing wage
- \$525/SF - Build new with prevailing wage
- Cost may be lowered if building is leased

Equipment: \$11.3M

- \$150/SF - Includes refrigeration, freezers, and production equipment

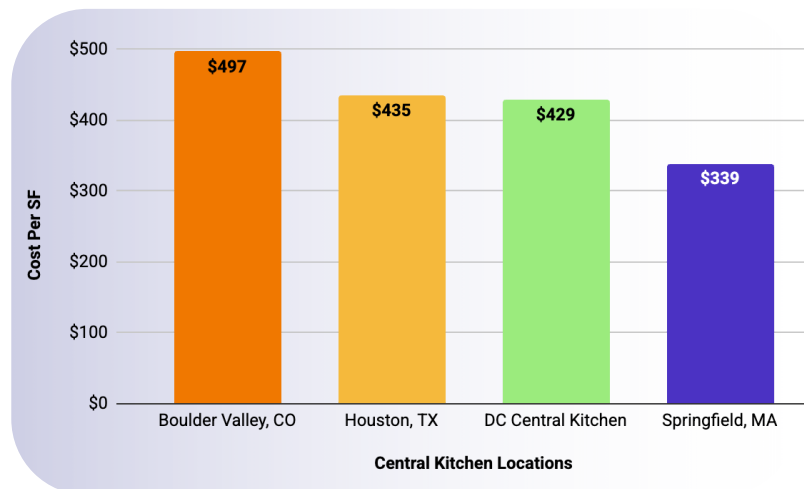
Liquidity Fund: \$5M

- To support the organization's liquidity during three-year start-up period

Vehicles: \$3M

- 20 refrigerated vehicles

Cost Per Square Foot Comparisons for Facility Acquisition Construction



Up Next...

Define client-operator model and create initial LOI with the District

Site identification and acquisition

Secure start-up funding and establish operational team

Establish entity ownership governance model