Together We Bake

A concept for a sustainable local worker cooperative bakery in Arizona’s Phoenix area.

To develop a sustainable local food economy and create decent, stable jobs, the SLFEE lab developed a cooperative bakery concept for the Phoenix area. In response to stakeholder interest, they based it on the Arizmendi cooperative bakery model from the San Francisco Bay Area and pulled in elements from other inspiring bakeries. The resulting concept is fully fleshed out with a vision, financial goals, legal status, an implementation strategy, and guidelines for all aspects of the business, from products to governance. The team also identified resources like potential suppliers, customers, and interior design concepts. The goal now is to see this project through to an operational business. To support the implementation, the SLFEE Lab will refine the business plan with local experts, help secure funding, and recruit and train members in collaboration with community organizations and other partners.

Ownership & Decision-Making
Guidelines: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence

The cooperative is owned by the workers. Worker-owners are its primary members. Requirements to become a member include being an Arizona resident, completing all required trainings, approval by existing members, and a member equity buy-in (payment plan available). All major decisions are discussed at board meetings attended by all members, with the goal of consensus. Supporting members pay a small membership fee and receive exclusive discounts on products. They also elect a supporting member to the board annually. They are not eligible for patronage.

Management
Guidelines: Supportive and democratic, committee-based

All decisions are made collectively. There is no management hierarchy. Worker-owners participate in various management roles. Management-level tasks are delegated to committees. Each worker-owner is expected to serve on at least one committee. There are elected and non-elected committees.

Workforce
Guidelines: Diversity and inclusion, fair wages, broad skillset, wide range of benefits

The workforce consists of approximately 15 worker-owners from diverse backgrounds. About half are women, with marginalized groups strongly represented. Workers are highly trained in baking and a range of business skills and are capable of performing all roles in the bakery.

Operations
Guidelines: Strategic shifts, revolving complementary roles, mindful resource consumption, zero waste

The bakery is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays and serves breakfast and lunch. Once items are sold out, the bakery closes. Work shifts occur every day of the week except...
holidays and are staggered (four shifts on weekdays, three shifts on Saturdays, two production shifts on Sundays). Work days start at 4 a.m. weekdays, 5 a.m. Saturdays, and 7 a.m. Sundays. Deliveries are made to wholesale clients within biking distance before 9 a.m. Emphasis is on minimal waste, sustainable packaging, and efficient energy and water use.

Products
Guidelines: Delicious, healthy, simple but diverse, handcrafted

Menu offerings including salads, soups, pizza, and sandwiches are served in a counter-service style during morning and lunch. Also sold are artisan breads, pastries, rolls, and beverages. This includes gluten-free, nut-free, and dairy-free options. Product prices are competitive but take into account accessibility for the community, quality of product, and quality of ingredients.

Supplies
Guidelines: Organic or naturally grown, local and regional, socially responsible

Goals are for 75% of supplies to be sourced as locally as possible, up to 200 miles away, and for 75% of supplies to be sustainably produced (meaning organic or naturally grown). Some products will need to be sourced from further away. Also prioritized are socially responsible suppliers, meaning they are living-wage employers, worker-owned cooperatives, minority- or female-owned, and/or fair trade.

Location
Guidelines: Accessible, visible, sustainably operated

The bakery is welcoming and accessible to diverse groups of people and encourages interaction among customers. It will have some dining space. It should be easily visible from the street and have a clearly visible and distinct identity that continues to the inside design. It should also be accessible via public transportation. Ideally the facility would meet green building standards.

What’s Next?

Within the next six to twelve months, a SLFEE Lab leadership and partners will form a cooperative development organization. Following that the business plan will be further developed and financing obtained. Prospective members will be recruited, trained, and transitioned to worker-ownership.

TOGETHER WE BAKE CONCEPT
Greater Phoenix Area, Arizona

Bakery Workforce
• 15 worker-owners

Worker-Owner Pay
• Worker-owners earn $20/hour plus tips
• All receive benefits, paid vacation
• Personal development opportunities
• Transportation stipend
• Education stipend

Worker-Owner Hours
• 40-hour work week of 5 8-hour shifts
• 1-hour breaks
• Earliest shift starts at 4 a.m. weekdays
• Latest shift ends at midnight weekdays

Training
• Trainees receive $15/hr & option for health insurance at 3 months

Expected Patronage (Surplus Income)
• $76,000
• Half reinvested in company
• Half distributed evenly to worker-owners

Bakery Location
• Streetside
• Accessible by public transportation

Bakery Design
• Standing space and simple dining, reclaimed wood furniture, marketing & design that portrays bakery mission

Target Customer Volume
• 600 weekdays (50/hour, 12-hour day)
• 420 Saturdays (70/hour, 6-hour day)

Decision-Making Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elected</th>
<th>Non-Elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Trainer</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Evaluation</td>
<td>Site &amp; Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>Finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Council</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential Supply Partnerships
Grain: Pinnacle Farms, Hayden Flour Mills, BKW Farms
Produce: Stern Produce, Sun Produce Co-op, direct from producers

For more information, contact Dr. Nigel Forrest, nforrest@asu.edu

The Sustainable Local Food Economies and Enterprises (SLFEE) Lab at Arizona State University (ASU) is dedicated to supporting and advancing sustainable local food economies and enterprises. Learn more at slfee.lab.asu.edu.

Published December 5, 2018