



The Osage Café

Mission To employ underserved young adults and train them in skills to help them succeed in the culinary industry.

Location 1099 Osage Street Denver, CO 80204 (Mariposa District)

Launch Year 2013

Summary

The Osage Café is a social enterprise café and training program for underserved youth interested in careers in the culinary industry. The Osage Café is a program of **Youth Employment Academy (YEA)**, a nonprofit dedicated to serving young adults in breaking the cycle of generational poverty in Denver by gaining stability through education, arts and technology, and employment training.

Youth in the program first participate in a 48-hour classroom-based curriculum that covers knife skills, recipe reading, measuring techniques, food safety, sanitation, and nutrition and receive the **National Restaurant Association's ServSafe certification**. Next, youth complete a 120-hour internship, building practical front- and back-of-house skills in an on-the-job training setting. Skills covered include serving, point of sales, food prep, line cooking, dishwashing, and superior customer service. Youth learn from an Executive Chef who manages the kitchen, ensures food quality, and offers mentorship to aspiring chefs. At the completion of their internship, Osage Café helps youth find placements in permanent jobs or additional post-secondary training. The Café is certified as a green business by the City of Denver strives to operate sustainably for the environment. **It is open to the public Monday-Friday from 7:30-2:00 and serves breakfast and lunch.**

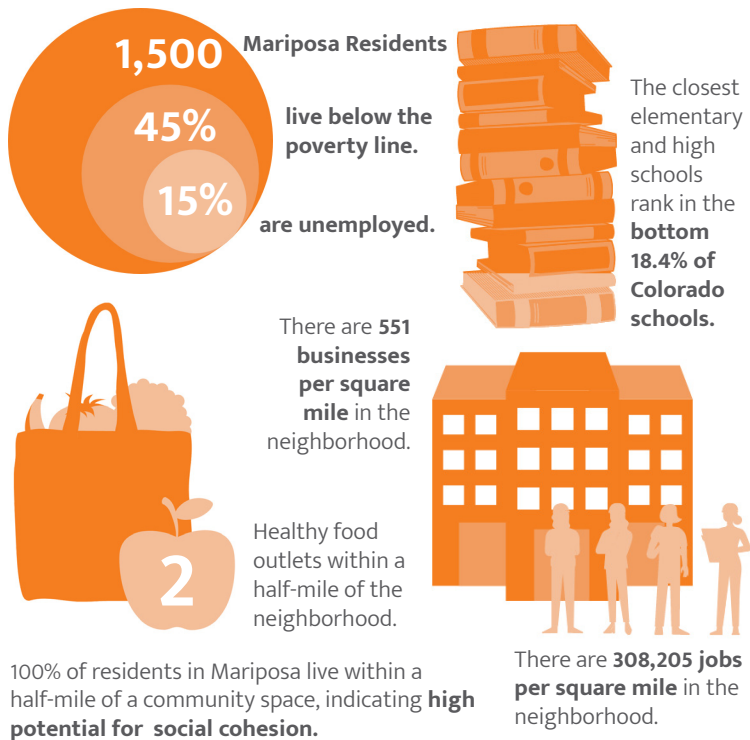
Outside of regular operating hours, youth have access to further learning and can access Osage Café's kitchen as a commissary kitchen. The Osage Café will soon extend the scope of its internship training to include preparing grab-and-go items for grocery stores and nonperishable items such as pickles, salsas, and sauces. **The Café will also expand programming available to youth who have completed the training program.**

Objectives

- 1 Offer youth the **foundational knowledge and certification** required to succeed in the culinary industry.
- 2 Offer a safe and supportive environment for youth to **explore their professional interests** and plan their next career steps.
- 3 Provide **supplemental income** to youth in the internship program.
- 4 Operate a **financially and environmentally sustainable café** with high-quality and nutritious food offerings.
- 5 Offer **cooking and nutrition classes** to the Mariposa community.

Neighborhood

The Mariposa District is a mixed-income neighborhood in Central Denver with 1,500 residents.



The Osage Café will have close partnerships with many of the planned social enterprises that the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) will develop in the coming years. Osage will serve as a starting point for participants to forge their path through the network, incrementally developing skill sets to ultimately reach their career aspirations. Osage Café will expand its internship offerings in 2021 to include customer service and cash register training at **Decatur Fresh**. After participating in Osage's training program, graduates will have access to the **Food Incubator Space**. Osage will also support **Decatur Fresh** and **Choice Market** by wholesaling grab-and-go items and nonperishables in cans and jars to the markets. The Osage Café will purchase produce from **Joli Farm** and **GROW Garden** in bulk, using fresh, local ingredients.

Key Partnerships

- Denver Botanic Gardens
- Colorado Charter School
- Mile High 360

Impact

Short-term Outcomes

- Participants **increase employability** and labor market competitiveness.
- **Participants are stabilized** and able to focus on completing training.
- Osage Café makes a **profit**.
- Community members **increase knowledge of healthy cooking** and nutrition.

Mid-term Outcomes

- Participants **increase employment skills**, including hard skills, soft skills, credentials, and workplace readiness and gain on-the-job experience.
- Participants **earn needed income**.
- Osage Café is a **thriving social enterprise**.
- The community is **no longer a food desert**.

Long-term Outcomes

- Participants are matched with unsubsidized jobs that provide a **career with a livable wage**.
- Participants **launch their food businesses** through Micro-Restaurant Incubator or Business Incubator.
- Osage Café is a **sustainable business**.
- Community members **increase healthy cooking and eating behaviors**.

Legal Structure The Osage Café is an LLC under parent nonprofit Youth Employment Academy (YEA), an affiliate of DHA.

[Osage Café Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

