



FOOD TRUCK ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Training Workbook

A Component of the Enterprise Rising: Food Truck Entrepreneurship & Minority Business Development Initiative

— Participant Edition —

“Our Mission: Empowering low-income individuals and minority entrepreneurs through business education, financial wellness, mentorship, and hands-on food truck entrepreneurship training in Enterprise, Alabama.”

Participant Name:

Cohort / Class Date:

Instructor:

Assistance Listing 10.351 — USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program

Welcome

Welcome to the WASHME TV Food Truck Training Program

This workbook is your personal guide through every lesson in the WASHME TV Food Truck Entrepreneurship Training Program. Access your online course at WWW.WWWWASHMETV.ORG.

Write on every page. Complete every activity. Bring this workbook to every class. Access course videos and resources at WWW.WWWWASHMETV.ORG.

How to Use This Workbook

- Complete video lessons on the WASHME TV Teachable platform at WWW.WWWWASHMETV.ORG first.
- Complete the corresponding module activities in this workbook.
- Write directly on every page — your answers are your personal business plan.
- Bring this workbook to every live session and mentor meeting.
- Save this workbook — it becomes your business planning binder.

Program Goals

- Explain how a food truck business model works.
- Identify your target customer and develop a brand concept.
- Estimate startup costs and understand basic pricing.
- Understand Alabama mobile food permit and commissary requirements.
- Build a simple menu, pricing plan, and operations checklist.
- Develop a personal launch readiness action plan.

My Reason for Joining

Why did I join this program?

What do I hope to build or achieve?

One word that describes my entrepreneur spirit:

Inside This Workbook

Module 1 — Entrepreneur Mindset (5 pages)

Vision, strengths, confidence, and goal setting

Module 2 — Food Truck Business Basics (5 pages)

Concept development, customer profile, business model

Module 3 — Menu Planning (5 pages)

Menu design, signature items, and production thinking

Module 4 — Pricing and Profit (5 pages)

Costing, pricing, and break-even analysis

Module 5 — Startup Requirements and Permits (5 pages)

Alabama compliance, EIN, commissary, business setup

Module 6 — Food Safety and Daily Operations (5 pages)

Opening, service, and closing checklists

Module 7 — Branding and Marketing (5 pages)

Name, story, social media, and marketing plan

Module 8 — Money Management and Records (5 pages)

Tracking sales, expenses, and financial habits

Module 9 — Launch Readiness Plan (5 pages)

Action plan, self-assessment, and mentor notes

Notes Pages

Extra writing space for class notes and questions

Certificate of Participation

Awarded upon program completion

MODULE 1

Entrepreneur Mindset

Entrepreneurs solve real problems, serve real people, and stay committed even when they start small.

Key Ideas

- A business starts with a problem you can solve.
- You do not have to start big — start smart.
- Growth comes from planning, consistent service, and learning every day.
- Setbacks are part of the process. Keep going.

My Business Vision

My business idea in one sentence:

Who do I want to serve?

MODULE 1

Entrepreneur Mindset (continued)

What problem will my business solve?

What makes my idea special or different?

Goal Setting

My 30-day goal:

My 90-day goal:

My 6-month goal:

One fear I need to overcome:

MODULE 1

Entrepreneur Mindset — Going Deeper

Thinking Like a Mobile Food Owner

- Food truck owners must think like operators AND marketers — the truck is both kitchen and billboard.
- Small, consistent wins (one great shift, one repeat customer) build the confidence to keep going.
- The best food truck ideas usually solve a real gap: no lunch options near a job site, no late-night food downtown, no culturally specific food nearby.
- Your personal story is part of your business asset — customers buy from people they trust and remember.
- Flexibility is a competitive advantage: a truck can move to where the customers are, unlike a fixed restaurant.

Mindset Self-Check

What personal story or experience led me to this business idea?

What is one gap in my community's food options that I could fill?

MODULE 1

Entrepreneur Mindset — Case Study

Case Study: The Lunch Gap. A participant noticed that workers at a large industrial park had no quick lunch options within walking distance. Instead of designing an elaborate menu first, she spent one week simply asking workers what they wished they could buy nearby. Her truck concept — built entirely around their answers — had a built-in customer base before she ever fried her first order.

Reflection

Who could I talk to this week to test my business idea?

What is one small, low-cost way I could test demand before investing heavily?

MODULE 1

Entrepreneur Mindset — Module Wrap-Up

My Mindset Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I can describe my business idea in one sentence			
I have identified who I want to serve			
I have set 30-day, 90-day, and 6-month goals			
I have named a fear I am committed to overcoming			

“You do not have to start big — start smart.”

MODULE 2

Food Truck Business Basics

A food truck is a mobile food establishment that brings food directly to the customer.

My Business Concept Worksheet

Business name idea:

Type of food or service:

Best-selling item idea:

MODULE 2

Food Truck Business Basics (continued)

What makes my truck different?

Ideal customer:

Community Opportunity

3 places or events where my concept fits:

What customer traffic might each location bring?

MODULE 2

Food Truck Business Basics — Going Deeper

Choosing the Right Business Model

- Standalone daily route — park at the same reliable spot(s) every day (office parks, industrial sites).
- Event and festival circuit — higher sales per event but less predictable, requires booking fees and travel.
- Catering and private bookings — higher margins, requires building a client list and contracts.
- Hybrid model — combine a regular weekday route with weekend events and occasional catering.
- Match your model to your life: a route works well with a fixed schedule; events suit flexible availability.

My Business Model Worksheet

Which model (or mix) fits my life and goals best, and why?

What days and hours do I realistically want to operate?

MODULE 2

Food Truck Business Basics — Case Study

Case Study: The Reliable Route. *Instead of chasing every festival in the region, one new owner committed to the same three lunch spots every week for 90 days — even on slow days. Customers began planning their lunch around knowing exactly where to find her. By month three, her Tuesday stop alone was outselling most of the festivals she had turned down.*

Reflection

Would consistency or variety serve my business model better right now? Why?

MODULE 2

Food Truck Business Basics — Module Wrap-Up

My Concept Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I have a working business name and concept			
I have identified my ideal customer			
I have identified 3 potential locations or events			
I have chosen a business model that fits my life			

“A food truck is not just a kitchen on wheels — it is a business model built around going to your customer.”

MODULE 3

Menu Planning

A focused, well-designed menu is one of the most important decisions a food truck owner makes.

My Menu Draft

#	Item Name	Description	Main Ingredients	Est. Cost	Sell Price
1				\$	\$
2				\$	\$
3				\$	\$
4				\$	\$
5				\$	\$

MODULE 3

Menu Planning (continued)

My signature menu item is:

Why will customers remember it?

Instructor feedback on my menu:

MODULE 3

Menu Planning — Going Deeper

The Power of a Focused Menu

- A smaller menu means faster service, less waste, and easier training — speed is a competitive advantage on a truck.
- Aim for 80% of sales to come from 3-5 core items; treat everything else as a rotating special.
- Design items that share ingredients (a shared sauce, protein, or dough) to cut prep time and food cost.
- Build one 'wow' item that gives people a reason to talk about your truck online and in person.
- Test new items as limited-time specials before adding them permanently — let sales data decide.

Menu Efficiency Worksheet

Which 3-5 items will make up 80% of my sales?

What ingredients can I share across multiple menu items to reduce cost and prep time?

MODULE 3

Menu Planning — Case Study

Case Study: The 12-Item Mistake. A first-time owner launched with a 12-item menu to please everyone. Service was slow, food waste was high, and customers were confused about what the truck was 'known for.' After cutting down to four core items built around one shared marinade, ticket times dropped by half and sales increased because customers immediately knew what to order.

Reflection

Am I trying to offer too much right now? What could I cut or simplify?

MODULE 3

Menu Planning — Module Wrap-Up

My Menu Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I have drafted at least 5 menu items with costs			
I have identified my signature item			
I have checked my menu for shared ingredients			
I have received instructor or mentor feedback on my menu			

“A focused menu is a business decision, not a limitation.”

MODULE 4

Pricing and Profit

Pricing determines whether your business can survive.

Simple Cost Worksheet

Menu item:

Cost Item	Amount	Cost Item	Amount
Ingredient cost	\$	Packaging cost	\$
Labor cost	\$	Other costs	\$
TOTAL COST	\$		
Desired profit	\$		
SUGGESTED PRICE	\$		

MODULE 4

Pricing and Profit (continued)

Break-even is the point where your sales cover all costs.

My fixed daily or weekly costs include:

I need to sell _____ items to cover my costs.

MODULE 4

Pricing and Profit — Going Deeper

Pricing Psychology and Strategy

- Charm pricing (\$7.99 vs \$8.00) can increase perceived value, but round pricing (\$8) speeds up cash handling on a truck.
- Bundle pricing (combo meals) increases average ticket size without requiring new inventory.
- Never price by copying a competitor blindly — their cost structure, rent, and labor may be very different from yours.
- Review and adjust prices at least twice a year as ingredient costs change; a stale price is a shrinking margin.
- A 25-35% food cost percentage (cost divided by price) is a healthy target for most food trucks.

Pricing Strategy Worksheet

What is my food cost percentage for my signature item?

Could a combo or bundle increase my average ticket size? How?

MODULE 4

Pricing and Profit — Case Study

Case Study: The Combo Bump. A truck selling tacos at \$4 each noticed customers usually bought two tacos and a drink separately. The owner created a \$10 combo (two tacos, chips, and a drink) that was priced slightly higher than buying items separately but felt like a deal to customers. Average ticket size rose by \$1.50 with zero new menu items or ingredients.

Reflection

Could a similar combo work on my menu? What would I include?

MODULE 4

Pricing and Profit — Module Wrap-Up

My Pricing Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I have calculated true cost for my signature item			
I have set a suggested price with a target profit			
I know my break-even sales number			
I have considered a bundle or combo option			

“Pricing is not a guess — it is a calculation that protects your business.”

MODULE 5

Startup Requirements and Permits

In Alabama, every mobile food operation must be reviewed and approved before it can legally operate.

Key Alabama Requirements

- Mobile food units must be readily movable and on wheels during operation.
- The unit must return to the commissary daily; commissary must be named and approved.
- Category 3 and 4 operations require a certified food protection manager on-site.
- Commissary name and address must appear on two sides of the truck.
- Wastewater tank must be at least 15% larger than the fresh water tank.

Contact your county health department early with your menu, layout, and commissary letter.

Startup Checklist

- Choose a business name and decide on a business structure.
- Apply for an EIN through the IRS (free at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov)).
- Open a dedicated business bank account.
- Develop a proposed menu.

MODULE 5

Startup Requirements and Permits (continued)

- Secure a signed commissary agreement letter.
- Contact the county health department for plan review.
- Apply for a local business license.
- Build a full startup budget.

Which county or city do I plan to operate in?

My compliance action steps:

MODULE 5

Startup Requirements — Going Deeper

Understanding the Commissary Relationship

- A commissary is a licensed commercial kitchen where your truck restocks, cleans, and stores food overnight.
- Commissary agreements should specify hours of access, storage space, and monthly fees in writing.
- Some commissaries offer shared use by multiple food trucks — confirm scheduling before signing.
- Health inspectors will verify your commissary relationship as part of your plan review, so secure it early.
- A good commissary relationship can also open doors to catering leads and shared supply purchasing.

Commissary and Startup Budget Worksheet

My target commissary and monthly fee:

My estimated total startup budget (truck, permits, equipment, first inventory):

MODULE 5

Startup Requirements — Case Study

Case Study: The Early Call. A new owner assumed permitting would take two weeks and booked a launch event accordingly. After calling the county health department on day one of planning — instead of after buying the truck — she learned plan review alone could take up to six weeks. She adjusted her timeline immediately and launched on schedule with zero last-minute panic.

Reflection

Have I contacted my county health department yet? If not, when will I call this week?

MODULE 5

Startup Requirements — Module Wrap-Up

My Permitting Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I have identified my county's health department contact			
I have a signed or pending commissary agreement			
I have applied for or received my EIN			
I have built a full startup budget			

“Permits are not paperwork for its own sake — they protect your business and your customers.”

MODULE 6

Food Safety and Daily Operations

Food safety protects your customers, your reputation, and your license.

Opening Checklist

- Wash hands and stock the hand sink (soap, towels, warm water).
- Check refrigeration temps (41F or below) and hot holding temps (135F or above).
- Sanitize all food-contact surfaces.
- Stock clean utensils, gloves, and packaging.
- Confirm permit and inspection score are posted and visible.

MODULE 6

Food Safety and Daily Operations (continued)

Closing Checklist

- Discard TCS foods that cannot be safely stored.
- Clean and sanitize all food-contact surfaces.
- Dispose of wastewater at an approved area.
- Return to the commissary as required.
- Record daily sales and follow-up notes.

My food safety incident response plan:

MODULE 6

Food Safety — Going Deeper

The Temperature Danger Zone

- The 'danger zone' is 41F to 135F — bacteria multiply fastest in this range.
- TCS (Time/Temperature Control for Safety) foods include meat, dairy, cooked rice, and cut produce.
- Use a calibrated thermometer at every shift, not guesswork — log temps in writing.
- Cross-contamination (raw meat touching ready-to-eat food) is one of the most common inspection violations.
- Color-coded cutting boards and separate storage for raw vs. cooked items prevent most cross-contamination issues.

Food Safety Habits Worksheet

What temperature log system will I use every shift?

How will I prevent cross-contamination on my truck's limited counter space?

MODULE 6

Food Safety — Case Study

Case Study: The Failed Inspection. A truck failed its first surprise inspection for storing raw chicken above ready-to-eat vegetables in a small cooler. The owner reorganized the cooler with raw meats on the bottom shelf and posted a simple laminated storage-order chart inside the door. The follow-up inspection passed with zero violations — a five-dollar fix for a problem that could have closed the truck.

Reflection

What is one food safety habit I need to double-check on my own truck or plan?

MODULE 6

Food Safety — Module Wrap-Up

My Food Safety Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I understand the temperature danger zone			
I have a plan to prevent cross-contamination			
I have written opening and closing checklists			
I have a food safety incident response plan			

“Food safety is not optional — it is the foundation of customer trust.”

MODULE 7

Branding and Marketing

Branding is how customers recognize you. Marketing is how they find you.

Brand Identity Worksheet

Business name:

Tagline:

Brand colors:

Bold • Friendly • Fresh • Family • Fast • Affordable • Creative • Local

MODULE 7

Branding and Marketing (continued)

Why did I choose this business?

My top 3 marketing channels:

My launch promotion idea:

MODULE 7

Branding and Marketing — Going Deeper

Location Marketing for a Mobile Business

- Post your daily or weekly location schedule in the same place every time (bio link, pinned post) so regulars know where to find you.
- Geotag every social media post — many customers search by location, not by business name.
- Partner with breweries, offices, and event organizers who need food vendors but don't want to cook.
- A simple text or email list of regulars can drive repeat visits without depending on social media algorithms.
- Word of mouth is still the strongest marketing tool for a food truck — consistent quality creates it for free.

My social media message:

MODULE 7

Branding and Marketing — Case Study

Case Study: The Location Post. A truck owner struggled with inconsistent turnout until she began posting her exact location and hours every morning at 8 a.m. sharp, in the same format, on the same platform. Customers began checking that post daily before deciding where to eat lunch. Turnout became predictable once her marketing became predictable.

Reflection

What is one marketing habit I could do the same way, every time, starting this week?

MODULE 7

Branding and Marketing — Module Wrap-Up

My Marketing Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I have a business name, tagline, and brand colors			
I have chosen my top marketing channels			
I have a launch promotion idea			
I have a plan to post my location consistently			

“Branding is how customers recognize you. Marketing is how they find you.”

MODULE 8

Money Management and Records

Track every dollar in and every dollar out — starting on day one.

Daily Sales Log

Date	Location	Total Sales	Expenses	Best Item	Notes

MODULE 8

Money Management and Records (continued)

Total money that came in this week:

Total money that went out this week:

What was my highest expense this week?

What will I do differently next week?

MODULE 8

Money Management — Going Deeper

Building Simple, Consistent Bookkeeping Habits

- Reconcile your cash and card sales at the end of every shift, not once a week — small errors compound.
- Separate business and personal accounts from day one so tax time and loan applications are simple.
- Use a free or low-cost app (Wave, QuickBooks Self-Employed) to track expenses by category automatically.
- Save receipts digitally (photo apps count) — paper receipts fade and get lost in a moving truck.
- Review your numbers weekly, not just at tax time, so you can react to problems while they're small.

My Bookkeeping System Worksheet

What tool or app will I use to track sales and expenses?

When will I do my weekly money review (day and time)?

MODULE 8

Money Management — Case Study

Case Study: The Sunday Reset. A truck owner set a recurring 30-minute appointment every Sunday night to enter the week's receipts and update her sales log. What used to be a stressful, shoebox-of-receipts scramble at tax time became a five-minute export. The habit cost her thirty minutes a week and saved her an accountant's bill in cleanup fees.

Reflection

What day and time will I commit to my own weekly money review?

MODULE 8

Money Management — Module Wrap-Up

My Money Management Action Plan

Action Step	Target Date	Resources Needed	Status

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
I have a daily sales log system			
I have separated business and personal accounts			
I have chosen a bookkeeping tool or app			
I have scheduled a recurring weekly money review			

“Track every dollar in and every dollar out — starting on day one.”

MODULE 9

Launch Readiness Plan

Organize your next steps, rate your readiness, and commit to building your business.

My Next-Step Timeline

Next 7 Days — Steps I will take:

MODULE 9

Launch Readiness Plan (continued)

Next 30 Days — Steps I will take:

Next 60 Days — Steps I will take:

MODULE 9

Launch Readiness — Going Deeper

Planning a Strong Opening Week

- Soft-open with friends, family, or a small private event before a full public launch.
- Prep less inventory than you think you'll need for day one — you can always restock; you can't easily un-waste spoiled food.
- Ask every customer in your first week one question: what almost stopped you from ordering?
- Have a backup plan for equipment failure (extra propane, a spare fryer part, a backup generator plan).
- Celebrate the opening — momentum and morale matter as much as logistics in the first 30 days.

Launch Readiness Self-Assessment

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
Business concept			
Menu finalized			
Pricing worksheet complete			
Brand and name decided			

MODULE 9

Launch Readiness — Case Study

Case Study: The Soft Opening. Before her public launch, one owner invited 15 friends and family members to a free trial run at a church parking lot. She discovered her service line was too slow during a rush and fixed her station layout before a single paying customer ever placed an order — turning a possible public failure into free, private practice.

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
Startup budget built			
Permits researched			
Food safety knowledge			

MODULE 9

Launch Readiness — Module Wrap-Up

Area	Not Started	In Progress	Ready
Marketing plan drafted			
Commissary identified			

Mentor / instructor feedback:

I commit to:

Participant Signature:

Date:

Class Notes and Research Questions

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Notes (continued)

Questions to Research

Additional Notes

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This certifies that

_____ has successfully completed the

Food Truck Entrepreneurship Training Program

Work and Save Human Minority Entrepreneurs TV | WWWWASHMETV.ORG

Participant Signature

Instructor

Date

WASHME TV | Food Truck Training | WWWWASHMETV.ORG | Enterprise, Alabama | 2026