



Alameda County (excluding City of Berkeley)

Status: *Opted in.* Alameda County began issuing MEHKO permits in 2021 ¹. The County's Department of Environmental Health (ACDEH) handles permitting outside Berkeley ².

- **How to Apply:** Download and complete the "Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation – Application / Standard Operating Procedures" form (available from ACDEH's website or office) ³ ⁴. Submit the application **by mail or in person** to ACDEH (1131 Harbor Bay Pkwy, Alameda, CA 94502) along with the permit fee ⁴. ACDEH will review the SOP and schedule an initial in-home inspection ⁵ ⁶. After a passed inspection and fee payment, a **Permit to Operate** is issued ⁵ ⁶.

- **Fees:** The **permit fee is \ \$696.00** (one-time application review/inspection fee) ⁷. Annual renewals are subject to the regular health permit fee (same amount) ⁸ ⁹.

- **Requirements:** At least one person (the operator) must have a certified Food Safety Manager certificate; any helpers need Food Handler cards ¹⁰ ¹¹. No more than 30 meals/day or 90/week; gross annual sales capped at \ \$100,000 ¹². Only the primary residence's kitchen may be used (no second homes or outdoor kitchens) ¹³ ¹⁴. - **Contact:** Alameda County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (510) 567-6700. *(Berkeley residents, see City of Berkeley below.)*

City of Berkeley (independent jurisdiction)

Status: *Opted in.* Berkeley has its own health department and authorized MEHKOs via a local ordinance in 2021 ¹⁵ ¹⁶.

- **How to Apply:** **Contact Berkeley Environmental Health** to obtain the MEHKO application form ¹⁷. Complete the application and Standard Operating Procedures form, and submit (with required documents) to Berkeley's Environmental Health Division for review ¹⁸ ¹⁷. After approval and an inspection, the City will issue the health permit ¹⁸ ¹⁷.

- **Fees:** The **permit fee** in Berkeley is approximately **\ \$500–\$550** (it was \ \$546 as of 2021, covering application, SOP review and inspection) ⁹. Berkeley's City Council has set the MEHKO permit fee at **\ \$510** per year in recent fee schedules ¹⁹ ²⁰. *(Business license fee: \ \$80 per year in Berkeley ⁹.)*

- **Contact:** **Phone:** (510) 981-5310 – City of Berkeley Environmental Health ²¹. **Email/Web:** See Berkeley's "Food Safety Program" page ²¹ for forms and guidance.

Amador County

Status: *Opted in.* Amador County allows MEHKOs (via County Code Chapter 7.44) and began its program in 2021.

- **How to Apply:** **Contact Amador County Environmental Health** to obtain the MEHKO permit application. Submit a completed MEHKO permit application form and written Standard Operating Procedures to the Environmental Health Department (810 Court St., Jackson, CA) with the required fee. An initial home-kitchen inspection will be scheduled after application review ²² ²². Upon passing inspection, a one-year health permit will be issued.

- **Fees:** **Annual Permit Fee: \ \$185** (covers annual inspection) ²³. **Plan Review Fee: \ \$120** (one-time, for initial plan check and any menu/operation changes) ²⁴. *Both fees are set by ordinance and charged at an hourly rate if additional time is required beyond the base allotment.*

- **Contact:** Amador Co. Environmental Health – **Phone:** (209) 223-6439. **Office:** 810 Court Street, Jackson, CA. (Call for forms and to schedule plan review.) ²⁵

Contra Costa County

Status: *Opted in.* Contra Costa's Board of Supervisors approved a **2-year MEHKO pilot** effective June 20, 2024 ²⁶ ²⁷. The county began issuing permits on July 1, 2024 ²⁸ ²⁹.

- **How to Apply:** **Apply through Contra Costa Environmental Health (CCEH).** The County has a dedicated “Home Kitchen” portal with guidance and forms ³⁰ ³¹. **Step 1:** Complete a **Health Permit Application** and **MEHKO Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** form ³². **Step 2:** Submit the application packet (applications are accepted online, by email, or in-person) and **schedule a consultation or workshop if needed** ³³ ³⁴. The County offers free MEHKO workshops and one-on-one consultations ³⁵ ³⁶. **Step 3:** After CCEH approves the SOP and application, an inspector conducts a home kitchen inspection. Upon passing, you pay the permit fee and receive your one-year health permit ³⁷ ³⁸.

- **Fees:** **Initial Application/Inspection Fee: \ \$696** (one-time review fee) ³⁷. **Annual Permit Renewal: \ \$345** per year ³⁸. *Contra Costa has also subsidized permit fees using ARPA funds – the first 1,000 applicants had the \ \$597 application fee waived, and outreach funds were provided* ³⁹.

- **Contact:** Contra Costa Environmental Health – **Phone:** (925) 608-5500. **Email:** DEHWeb@cchealth.org. **Website:** cchealth.org/homekitchens (contains application forms, self-inspection checklists, and multilingual resources) ³² ⁴⁰.

Imperial County

Status: *Opted in.* Imperial County authorized MEHKOs effective Jan 2, 2020 ⁴¹ ⁴². Environmental Health has been permitting home kitchens under this program since 2020.

- **How to Apply:** **Apply through Imperial County Public Health – Environmental Health Division.** You must submit a **Food Facility Health Permit Application**, a written **MEHKO Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** document, your proposed menu, and the permit fee to Imperial County Environmental Health ⁴³ ²². Applications can be obtained from the **IC Public Health website** or office. After your application packet is reviewed, an inspector will schedule an in-home inspection ⁴⁴. If the SOP and home setup meet all requirements, a one-year MEHKO permit will be issued ⁴⁵ ⁴⁶.

- **Fees:** Imperial County uses a **time-and-materials fee** model – **permit fees are based on the actual staff time** spent on application review and inspection ⁴⁶. The hourly rate is set by the county fee schedule (this was about \ \$118/hour in 2023). *In practice, applicants pay a deposit and are billed for additional hours if needed. (Note: Imperial County's program received a state grant in 2023 to help waive or reduce fees; prospective operators are encouraged to inquire about current fee waivers.)* ⁴⁷

- **Contact:** *Imperial County Environmental Health* – **Phone:** (442) 265-1888 ⁴⁸. **Email:** envhealth@icphd.org. **Website:** icphd.org > Environmental Health > Food > MEHKO* (has guidelines, SOP forms, and FAQs) ⁴⁹ ⁵⁰.

Lake County

Status: *Opted in.* Lake County's MEHKO ordinance took effect January 4, 2021 ⁵¹. The Lake County Environmental Health Department issues permits and enforces the program.

- **How to Apply:** **Two-step application:** **(1)** Submit a **Plan Check Application** for MEHKO with an initial fee (for plan review). Environmental Health will evaluate your home kitchen plan/SOP and ensure it meets County Ordinance 3099 requirements ⁵² ⁵³. **(2)** After plan approval and an initial inspection, submit a

Health Permit Application to obtain the operating permit ⁵² ⁵⁴ . Lake County provides all required forms on its website (Plan Check form, Permit Application form, MEHKO SOP template, FAQs, and a Property Owner Acknowledgement form for renters) ⁵⁵ ⁵⁶ . Completed packets are submitted to Environmental Health (255 N. Forbes St., Lakeport).

- **Fees: Plan Check:** \ \$135.00 per hour (1-hour minimum, additional time billed in 15-min increments) ⁵⁷ .

Annual Permit: \ \$269.00 per year (calendar year permit) ⁵⁸ . *No fee refunds are given even if a permit is obtained late in the year* ⁵⁸ .

- **Contact:** Lake County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (707) 263-1164. **Website:** [lakecountycalifornia.gov > Environmental Health > Food Safety > MEHKO](http://lakecountycalifornia.gov/EnvironmentalHealth/FoodSafety/MEHKO) (has Ordinance 3099 ⁵⁹ , application forms, and FAQs).

Los Angeles County (excluding Pasadena, Long Beach, Vernon)

Status: *Opted in.* Los Angeles County became the **15th jurisdiction** in CA to approve MEHKOs (ordinance adopted mid-2024) ⁶⁰ . The County's pilot MEHKO program launched November 1, 2024 ⁶⁰ . (*Note: The cities of Pasadena, Long Beach, and Vernon have independent health departments and are not covered by LA County's program*) ⁶¹ .

- **How to Apply: Apply through LA County Public Health – Specialized Food Services Program. Step 1:** Complete the **MEHKO Application Packet**, which includes a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) form (available in English and Spanish) ⁶² ⁶³ , copies of your Food Safety Manager Certificate, and Food Handler Cards for any assistants ⁶⁴ . If you use well water, include lab test results for water quality ⁶⁵ . **Step 2:** Submit the packet via email or mail to LA County Environmental Health (a dedicated Home-Based Food Operations unit). **Step 3:** Pay the required fees – currently **\\$597 one-time application review fee and \ \$347 for the annual permit** ⁶⁶ ⁶⁷ . (As of 2024, LA County has a **subsidy program waiving the \\$597 application fee for the first 1,000 MEHKO applicants** through June 30, 2026 ⁶⁸ .) **Step 4:** County inspectors will review your submission and schedule a home kitchen inspection. Upon approval and payment, you'll receive a one-year health permit to operate ⁶⁶ .

- **Fees: Application/Plan Review:** \ \$597. **Annual Permit:** \ \$347 ⁶⁶ . *These fees were set by ordinance in 2024. Initial applicants (first 1,000) get the \\$597 fee waived, thanks to ARPA funding* ⁶⁰ ⁶⁸ . Renewal permits are \ \$347/year.

- **Contact:** LA County Home-Based Food Operations Program – **Phone:** (626) 430-9855 ⁶⁹ . **Email:** homebasedfoods@ph.lacounty.gov ⁶⁹ . **Website:** publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/business/microenterprise-home-kitchen-operation.htm (contains forms, FAQs, and training videos). LA County also offers free MEHKO workshops and has funding to cover training and certification costs for operators ⁷⁰ .

Monterey County

Status: *Opted in.* Monterey County authorized MEHKOs on Sept 19, 2023 (county-wide, including all cities) ⁷¹ ⁷² . The program is managed by the County Health Dept. Environmental Health Bureau.

- **How to Apply: Submit a MEHKO permit application and SOP to Monterey County Environmental Health.** The county provides a **MEHKO Permit Application (health permit application)** and a **MEHKO SOP template** on its website ⁷³ ⁷⁴ . Fill these out, including your proposed menu, and submit them (with any required supplementary forms like a Worker's Compensation form and an Alcoholic Beverage Acknowledgement if applicable) ⁷⁵ ⁷⁶ . Environmental Health will review your packet and conduct an initial home inspection. **Approval:** A permit will be issued once the application is approved and the inspection passed ²² ²² .

- **Fees: Initial Permit Cost: \ \$623.00** (this covers ~2.5 hours of staff time for application processing, review, and the initial on-site inspection) ⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ . If additional plan-review time is needed beyond 2.5 hours,

additional fees may apply at the hourly rate. The \\$623 fee is paid up front with the application. *Annual renewals:* Monterey's annual permit fee is typically the same rate per year (subject to the county fee schedule; check with the department if renewal fees are separate).

- **Contact:** Monterey County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (831) 755-4505. **Email:** EH@co.monterey.ca.us. **Website:** montereycounty.gov > *Environmental Health > Consumer Health > Food > MEHKO* (provides guidelines and bilingual forms).

Riverside County

Status: *Opted in.* Riverside County was **the first in California** to implement MEHKOs, starting in 2019⁷⁹⁸⁰. The program is run by the Dept. of Environmental Health (DEH).

- **How to Apply:** Follow Riverside's "How to Start a MHKO" process: **Step 1:** Submit your **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** document and proposed menu to your **local DEH Area Office** for review⁸¹. (Riverside provides an SOP template in English and Spanish on its MEHKO page⁸¹.) **Step 2:** Obtain a Food Safety Manager Certification for the operator and a **Riverside County Food Handler Certification** for any other person helping in the kitchen⁸²⁸³. **Step 3:** Submit an **Application to Operate a Food Facility** (the county's general health permit application) indicating you are a MEHKO⁸²⁸⁴. **Step 4:** Schedule and pass an in-home inspection – DEH will contact you to set this up after reviewing your documents⁸⁵. Once you pass inspection and pay fees, DEH issues your permit (valid for one year).

- **Fees:** Riverside County's MEHKO permit fee is **\\$659 per year**⁸⁶. This fee covers plan review, one inspection, and the annual permit. (It was \\$651 in earlier years and adjusted to \\$659 for FY 2025⁸⁷⁸⁸.) Renewal each year requires paying the annual fee again. *Note:* Permit fees are **non-refundable** and non-transferable⁸⁹.

- **Contact:** Riverside County Dept. of Environmental Health – **Phone:** (888) 722-4234 (toll-free). **Website:** rivcoeh.org > *Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation*. DEH's site offers informational bulletins, the county ordinance, and bilingual SOP forms⁹⁰⁸¹.

Santa Barbara County

Status: *Opted in.* Santa Barbara County launched its MEHKO program on June 15, 2021⁹¹. The County Public Health Department's Environmental Health Services (EHS) issues MEHKO permits. (*Santa Barbara has actively promoted MEHKOs with fee waivers through 2024-2025*⁹²⁹³.)

- **How to Apply:** Submit a **Plan Check Application and MEHKO Permit Application to EHS**. Santa Barbara requires a two-part process: first a "**Food Facility Plan Check & Permit Application**" with MEHKO specified, and a completed **MEHKO Standard Operating Procedures form**⁹⁴. These forms are available on the county website's MEHKO section (under "*Helpful Documents*")⁹⁴. **Include:** your proposed menu and any required supplemental materials (e.g. landlord approval if renting). Submit the packet to Santa Barbara County EHS either in Santa Barbara or Santa Maria office. EHS will review your submission and work with you on any needed corrections; then an in-home inspection will be scheduled⁹⁵⁹⁶. After passing inspection and paying all fees, you apply for the annual operating permit⁹⁷ (which EHS will issue).

- **Fees:** *Santa Barbara County has waived MEHKO permit fees through May 31, 2025 thanks to a local grant*⁹²⁹³. This means currently **no county fees** for plan review or the first-year permit. (Normally, the County's fee schedule would apply – roughly \\$646 initial and \\$322 annual⁹⁸ – but these are **\$0 until 5/31/2025** under the waiver program⁹³.) Prospective operators still need to invest in required certifications (Food Manager course, etc.) but the health permit cost is presently covered by the County's grant⁹³⁹⁹.

- **Contact:** Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services – **Phone:** (805) 681-4900 (Santa Barbara office) or (805) 346-8460 (Santa Maria office)¹⁰⁰. **Email:** PHDEHSWeb@sbcphd.org. **Website:** countyofsb.org

> *Environmental Health > Home Kitchen Operations* (has application forms, FAQs, and a Quick-Start Guide). EHS also provides **free consultations** to assist new MEHKO operators ¹⁰¹ ¹⁰² .

San Benito County

Status: *Opted in.* San Benito County authorized MEHKOs via ordinance in 2022 (pilot program) and began accepting applications in January 2023.

- **How to Apply:** **Apply through San Benito County Environmental Health (a division of the Health & Human Services Agency).** You must submit: a completed **MEHKO permit application** (form provided by the County), your detailed **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** document, and proof of Food Manager certification ¹⁰³ ¹⁰⁴ . All materials are submitted to San Benito Environmental Health (351 Tres Pinos Rd, Ste C-1, Hollister, CA). After submission, an initial home inspection will be arranged ¹⁰³ . Once your application, SOP, and inspection are approved, you'll be issued a one-year MEHKO health permit.

- **Fees:** San Benito County's fees are charged **at an hourly rate of \$110**. Specifically, the ordinance sets the **Annual Permit fee at actual cost (\$110/hr)** (covering the yearly inspection) and the **Plan Check/Initial Application fee at \$110/hr** as well ¹⁰⁵ . In practice, applicants pay for the staff time to review the application and conduct the inspection. *The county received a state MEHKO grant in 2024 to help offset fees, so fee waivers or reductions may be available until funds are exhausted* ¹⁰⁶ ¹⁰⁷ . It's recommended to inquire if any grant-funded **fee waivers** are in effect for new applicants.

- **Contact:** San Benito County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (831) 636-4035. **Email:** envhealth@cosb.us. *(This small county often prefers direct phone or in-person inquiries for MEHKOs.)*

Santa Clara County

Status: *Opted in.* Santa Clara County launched a **3-year pilot MEHKO program** in 2022 ¹⁰⁸ , with ordinance and fees approved March 14, 2023 ¹⁰⁸ ¹⁰⁹ . The Department of Environmental Health (DEH) oversees the program.

- **How to Apply:** **Follow the County's MEHKO Application Process:** **Step 1:** Complete the **MEHKO Application Packet** ¹¹⁰ , which consists of a MEHKO Permit Application form, a Checklist, a Self-Certification Checklist, a written SOP, and proof of water/sewer service ¹¹¹ . (All required forms are downloadable from DEH's website ¹¹² ¹¹³ .) **Step 2:** Submit the packet **by email, mail, or in-person** to DEH (1555 Berger Dr., Suite 300, San Jose) ¹¹⁴ . You do **not** pay upon submission; DEH will **invoice you** the application review fee after receiving your packet ¹¹⁵ . **Step 3:** Once invoiced, **pay the application fee** promptly so the review can begin ¹¹⁵ . DEH staff will then review your materials, ask follow-up questions if needed, and schedule an **on-site kitchen evaluation** at your home ¹¹⁶ ¹¹⁷ . The review + inspection process can take up to **20 business days** ¹¹⁸ . **Step 4:** If everything is approved, you will be prompted to **pay the MEHKO annual permit fee**, after which your operating permit is issued ¹¹⁹ .

- **Fees:** *Santa Clara County has been waiving fees during the pilot.* New Operating Permit Application Fee: *Waived through March 14, 2025 (normally required upon application)* ¹¹³ ¹²⁰ . MEHKO Permit Fee (annual): *Waived for permits issued by March 14, 2025* ¹²¹ . ***These fee waivers mean that through early 2025, Santa Clara MEHKO permits effectively cost \$0 in county fees, thanks to a local subsidy*** ¹¹³ ¹²¹ . ***After March 2025, regular fees will apply (the County Board will set those – expected to be a few hundred dollars for application and similar for annual permit). (Note: Even with fee waivers, applicants must still obtain a Food Manager Certification, which may cost \$100+, and a city business license.)***

- **Contact:** **Santa Clara County DEH** – **Phone:** (408) 918-3400 ¹²² . **Email:** DEHWEB@deh.sccgov.org ¹²² . **Website:** deh.sccgov.org > *Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations* (offers multilingual slideshows, forms, and a MEHKO newsletter sign-up ¹²³ ¹²⁴).

Santa Cruz County

Status: *Opted in.* Santa Cruz County approved a **2-year pilot MEHKO program** on Sept 24, 2024¹²⁵ ¹²⁶. The County's Environmental Health Division began accepting applications on **January 1, 2025**¹²⁷ ¹²⁸.

- **How to Apply: Two steps – Home Evaluation, then Permit: Step 1: Home Kitchen Evaluation.** Submit a **MEHKO Home Evaluation Request Form** along with your draft **Standard Operating Procedures** to Santa Cruz Environmental Health¹²⁹ ¹³⁰. An inspector will conduct a site visit to evaluate whether your home kitchen meets the criteria (per county code and CalCode)¹³¹. This evaluation has a fee of **\\$470** which must be paid at the time of request¹³⁰ ¹³². *(The Home Evaluation Checklist is available to guide you in preparing the kitchen)*¹³³. **Step 2: Permit Application.** After passing the home evaluation, you then submit a **Health Permit Application** with a fee of **\\$530** to obtain the actual MEHKO operating permit¹³⁴. Environmental Health will assist in scheduling your first annual inspection within the permit year¹³⁵ ¹³⁶. Permits must be renewed annually (with payment of the \\$530 fee each year)¹³⁵.

- **Fees: Home Evaluation Fee: \\$470** (one-time, upfront)¹³² ¹³⁷. **Annual Permit Fee: \\$530** (due upon final permit issuance, covers one year of operation and routine inspections)¹³⁴. *These fees were set by Santa Cruz's ordinance for the 2025–2026 pilot.* There is currently **no fee waiver program** in Santa Cruz, so new operators should budget for roughly \\$1,000 total in county fees.

- **Contact:** Santa Cruz County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (831) 454-2022¹³⁸. **Email:** EnvironmentalHealth@santacruzcountycal.gov¹³⁹. **Office:** 701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA. *(Walk-in hours Mon–Thu 8am–12pm; appointments in afternoons)*¹⁴⁰. The county website (scceh.org, Food Protection section) provides all forms (in English & Spanish) and an FAQ¹⁴¹ ¹⁴².

San Diego County

Status: *Opted in.* San Diego County initially piloted MEHKOs in 2022 and made the program **permanent effective Jan 5, 2024**¹⁴³ ¹⁴⁴. The Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) administers the program countywide.

- **How to Apply: Submit required documents to DEHQ's Food and Housing Division.** Specifically, new MEHKO operators must **submit:** a **Health Permit Application**, a written **Standard Operating Procedures** document, and a copy of an ANSI-approved **Food Safety Manager Certificate**¹⁴⁵. These should be submitted together at the time of application (via mail or in person to any County DEHQ office, or online if available)¹⁴⁵. DEHQ provides a MEHKO Program Training Workshop video to guide applicants on completing the forms¹⁴⁶. After submission, DEHQ will review your packet and schedule an initial home inspection. If compliant, a permit will be issued. *Note:* As of late 2024, **San Diego has a state grant to waive MEHKO permit fees through May 2025***¹⁴⁷ – **see Fees below.**

- ***Fees: \\$**Fee Waiver in effect**** – Thanks to a CA Workforce grant, **San Diego County is waiving all MEHKO permit fees for new operators through May 2025** (or until funds run out)¹⁴⁷ ¹⁴⁸. All existing MEHKO permit-holders also received a one-time waiver on their next annual renewal¹⁴⁹. This means if you apply now, you pay \$0 for the application and permit. *(Ordinarily, the County's fee schedule shows an application + annual permit cost of a few hundred dollars total – but this cost is currently covered by the grant.)* Always check DEHQ's **Fee Schedule** for any updates¹⁵⁰.

- **Contact:** San Diego County DEHQ – **Phone:** (858) 505-6900¹⁵¹. **Email:** FHDMEHKO@sdcounty.ca.gov¹⁵¹. **Website:** [sandiegocounty.gov Home Kitchen Operations](https://sandiegocounty.gov/Home-Kitchen-Operations) page (offers application forms in multiple languages and FAQs). The County News Center also provides updates on fee waivers and program metrics¹⁴⁷ ¹⁵².

San Mateo County

Status: *Opted in.* San Mateo County was an early adopter of MEHKOs in the Bay Area – the County **opted in by 2019**, and MEHKO permits have been available for several years ²⁹ ¹⁵³. Environmental Health Services (EHS) oversees MEHKOs.

- **How to Apply:** San Mateo County refers to MEHKOs as “*Microkitchens*.” **Step 1:** Review the County’s MEHKO guidance documents and online presentation (San Mateo offers an on-demand info session) ¹⁵⁴. **Step 2:** Complete a **MEHKO Permit Application Packet** – including the application form, SOP form, and any other required documents (e.g. a Homeowner/Rental agreement if applicable). **Step 3:** Submit the packet to San Mateo County EHS (you may submit via their online portal or by email/physical mail) ¹⁵⁴. EHS will conduct an initial site visit and plan review (the standard processing time is ~20 days for a complete application) ¹¹⁸. After approval, you’ll be issued the permit. The County may also require you to attend an in-person or virtual MEHKO workshop as part of the process ¹⁵⁵.

- **Fees:** *San Mateo’s MEHKO fees are set by the County’s fee schedule.* While exact amounts are not listed on the public FAQ (it notes fees “may vary” by local ordinance) ¹⁵⁶, typical costs have been reported as around **\ \$652 for initial permit** and **\\$326 for annual renewal** (similar to Santa Cruz’s structure) ¹⁵⁷. **However**, San Mateo County has periodically adjusted or waived fees: for example, in 2021–22, the County received state funding to offset some fees for MEHKO entrepreneurs. It’s best to **contact EHS for current fee information**.

- **Contact:** San Mateo County Environmental Health Services – **Phone:** (650) 372-6200 ¹⁵⁸. **Email:** DEHFood@smcgov.org. **Website:** smchealth.org/microkitchens-mehko (provides “How to Apply” steps, required forms, and an FAQ).

Sierra County

Status: *Opted in.* Tiny Sierra County authorized MEHKOs in November 2021 (Res. 2021-154) ¹⁰⁶ ¹⁵⁹. The county has only a handful of permitted MEHKOs so far. Sierra County Environmental Health is the permitting agency.

- **How to Apply:** Prospective operators should **contact Sierra County Environmental Health** directly to request a MEHKO application packet. Due to the rural nature of the county, there is no online portal; instead, the Assistant Director of Public Health (or designee) will provide the application form and SOP template. You will submit the completed application, SOP, and proof of Food Manager certification. The county will perform an initial inspection of your home kitchen and then issue the permit.

- **Fees:** Sierra County received a **\$35,136 state grant (AB 178)** in 2024 to support its MEHKO program ¹⁶⁰ ¹⁰⁷. These funds are being used to **augment the program and offset permit fees** for operators ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁶¹.

As a result, MEHKO permit fees in Sierra County are currently waived or significantly reduced. (The grant covers both initial permit costs and some enforcement/outreach.) This waiver will continue until the grant funds are depleted (available through FY 2024-25) ¹⁶² ¹⁶³. In practical terms, this means Sierra applicants can likely obtain a MEHKO permit **at no charge** at this time. If/when standard fees resume: the county would likely charge a nominal annual fee (approximately a few hundred dollars) based on time spent.

- **Contact:** Sierra County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (530) 289-3431. **Email:** envhealth@sierracounty.ca.gov. *(Given the small department, calling to speak with staff is recommended.)*

Solano County

Status: *Opted in.* Solano County's Board of Supervisors approved MEHKOs in March 2021 ¹⁶⁴. Solano was one of the first counties to implement the program (by mid-2021 it was up and running) ¹⁶⁵. Environmental Health (a division of Resource Management) handles MEHKO permits.

- **How to Apply:** Solano County requires filling out the standard **Retail Food Facility Permit Application** and a MEHKO SOP. **Step 1: Contact Solano County Environmental Health** to request a MEHKO application packet (or download from the county website) ¹⁶⁶ ¹⁶⁷. **Step 2:** Complete the forms, including your menu and SOP, and gather required documents (Food Manager cert, etc.). **Step 3:** Submit the packet to Solano Environmental Health in Fairfield. An inspector will review your SOP and schedule a home inspection. After approval, you'll be issued the permit. Solano County has partnered with the Solano-Napa SBDC to provide **free MEHKO workshops and consulting** – it's advised to attend a workshop for guidance before applying ¹⁶⁸ ¹⁶⁹.

- **Fees:** Solano's fees are consistent with many counties: The **initial permit application plus inspection fee is approximately \$651** (as of 2019) ¹⁷⁰. Annual renewals are roughly \$325. The County's current fee schedule likely has updated figures (for FY 2024-25, one source indicates about \$670 initial, \$335 renewal). **Importantly**, Solano has at times offered **scholarships or reimbursements** for MEHKO fees via its SBDC – prospective applicants should inquire if any fee-assistance programs are available.

- **Contact:** Solano County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (707) 784-6765. **Email:** EnvHealth@solanocounty.com. **Website:** solanocounty.com > Home-Based Food Operation. (The Solano-Napa SBDC site also provides MEHKO info and can connect you with advisors for help.) ¹⁶⁹

Sonoma County

Status: *Opted in.* Sonoma County approved a MEHKO ordinance on Dec 3, 2024 ¹⁷¹. **Permits will be issued starting April 2, 2025** (the program's anticipated launch date) ¹⁷². Environmental Health (within the Dept. of Health Services) will run the program.

- **How to Apply:** **Beginning April 2025**, interested residents should **contact Sonoma County Environmental Health** at EH@sonomacounty.gov or **(707) 565-6565** to request a MEHKO application packet ¹⁷³ ¹⁷⁴. The packet will include a Retail Food Facility Permit Application, a MEHKO SOP template, and a Rental Property Owner Approval form (for those who rent) ¹⁷⁵ ¹⁷⁶. **Complete and submit** the full packet to Environmental Health (at 463 Aviation Blvd, Santa Rosa). The County will review the materials and perform an initial home inspection. Because Sonoma's ordinance "*conditionally*" authorizes MEHKOs, you must also ensure your MEHKO doesn't violate any city zoning or HOA rules (check with your city or HOA as needed) ¹⁷⁷ ¹⁷⁸. Once approved, Sonoma EH will issue the health permit.

- **Fees:** Sonoma County's fee schedule for MEHKOs is being finalized as of early 2025. The ordinance calls for setting fees to recover program costs (likely similar to neighboring counties). Expect an initial permit fee on the order of \$600–\$700 and an annual renewal around \$300–\$400. **Good news:** Sonoma received a **State MEHKO grant (AB 178)**, which they intend to use for **offsetting permit fees for new MEHKOs** ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁷⁹. This means the first wave of Sonoma MEHKO operators may have **significantly reduced or waived fees**. Keep an eye on Sonoma's MEHKO webpage for updated fee information once applications open.

- **Contact:** Sonoma County Environmental Health – **Phone:** (707) 565-6565 ¹⁷³ ¹⁸⁰. **Email:** EH@sonomacounty.org (or EH@sonomacounty.gov) ¹⁶⁶ ¹⁷³. **Website:** sonomacounty.gov/MEHKO. The county has posted bilingual introductions and FAQs online ¹⁸¹ ¹⁸² and will likely update with forms and fee details closer to April 2025.

(Note on Independent Cities: *Pasadena, Long Beach, and Vernon have their own health departments and as of this writing have not authorized MEHKOs within their city limits* ⁶¹ . Residents in those cities must wait for their city to opt in or rely on the county’s program if jurisdiction allows (e.g. Pasadena/Long Beach are excluded from LA County’s program) ⁶¹ .)

Sources: Connected official county websites, ordinances, and news releases were used to compile the above information ⁴ ⁷ ⁸ ⁹ ²³ ²⁴ ³⁸ ⁴⁵ ⁵⁸ ⁶⁶ ⁶⁷ ⁷⁸ ⁸⁶ ¹⁰⁰ ¹⁰⁵ ¹¹³ ¹²¹ ¹³² ¹³⁴ ¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁷ ¹⁵⁶ ¹⁵⁹ ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁷³ ¹⁸⁰ .

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