
NATIONAL REPORT

Cottage Food Fees 2026

What it costs to start selling from a home kitchen — cottage-food and home-processor application fees for all 3,143 counties, without inventing a local business-license dollar.

COVERAGE**3,143 counties****JURISDICTIONS****50 states + DC****DATA DATE****August 2026****PUBLISHED BY****Crosodo.com****LEGAL DISCLAIMER**

Research only — not legal or tax advice. A researched \$0 means the state cottage / homemade-food path charges no permit. A city business license, sales-tax account, or food-safety course can still exist. Empty local cells stay empty. Confirm the live agency page before you pay anyone.

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Executive Summary

Most of the country does not charge a cottage-food or home-processor **application fee**. Of 3,143 county-equivalents, **2,508 (79.8%)** are a researched **\$0** — a statute exemption or a free registration — not a missing cell.

County share and people share are not the same. Those \$0 counties hold about **65.5%** of the population in this file (327,454,595). The five local varies states are only 172 counties (5.5%) but about **17.1%** of residents — California Class A/B environmental health is the main weight.

79.8%

COUNTIES AT \$0

2,508 places — exemption or free registration

65.5%

PEOPLE IN \$0 COUNTIES

Population-weighted. Local-fee states punch above their county count.

\$177.50

HIGHEST PUBLISHED ANNUALIZED

Washington \$355 / 2 years. Lowest published annualized among flats: \$25 (DC).

\$0 STATES

35

29 exemption · 6 free registry

STATEWIDE FLAT

8

264 counties · median annualized \$50

LOCAL VARIES

5

AL, CA, MA, ME, NV — \$ empty unless we read the schedule

SPECIAL PATHS

3

IL cap · MN tier · NH Class H upgrade

WHAT THIS NUMBER IS — AND IS NOT

The cottage-app fee is “do I pay the state (or county health) to start selling cookies from home?” It is not a city BPOL, not an LLC filing, not a food-handler course, and not liability insurance. Those can still exist on top. We do not invent ~3,100 local license amounts.

Why this is not the Permit Statistics report

Cottage Food Permit Statistics 2026 answers **how many operators states can count** — Minnesota’s 14,116 registrants, Arizona’s active stock, churn. This report answers **what the government charges to start** on the home cottage / home-processor path.

Volume and price are different research questions. A free-registration state can have tens of thousands of operators. A \$355/2-year permit can have hundreds. Mixing them in one PDF would make both harder to cite. Use Permit Statistics for operator counts. Use this report for the fee table.

How 3,143 counties split

Every county inherits its state’s cottage-app kind. The counts below are **places**, then **people** living in those places (Census population on the county file).

ANSWER	COUNTIES	SHARE OF COUNTIES	SHARE OF PEOPLE	EXAMPLES
Researched \$0 (exemption or free registration)	2,508	79.8%	65.5%	VA, TX, FL, GA, OH cottage path, NY home processor
Published statewide flat \$	264	8.4%	11.4%	CT \$50/yr, DE \$30/yr, DC \$50/2yr, KY \$50/yr, NJ \$100/2yr, PA \$35/yr, RI \$65/yr, WA \$355/2yr
Local varies — \$ left empty	172	5.5%	17.1%	CA Class A/B (county EH), AL county health, MA town kitchen, ME, NV
Illinois statute cap \$50	102	3.2%	3.9%	Law allows a local fee up to \$50; not treated as that county's actual charge
Minnesota sales tier	87	2.8%	1.7%	\$0 if sales ≤ \$7,665; \$50 above
New Hampshire optional upgrade	10	0.3%	0.4%	\$0 at home/market; Class H \$150 if they need internet/wholesale
Total	3,143	100%	100%	51 jurisdictions

Read the empty cell as a feature. California, Alabama, Massachusetts, Maine, and Nevada do not have one statewide cottage dollar we can copy onto every county. Leaving \$ blank is more honest than guessing San Diego's Class A onto Modoc.

Published statewide flat fees

Eight jurisdictions publish one amount that applies in every county. Biennial fees are shown annualized ($\div 2$) so you can compare them.

PLACE	PUBLISHED \$	CADENCE	ANNUALIZED	NAME
District of Columbia	\$50	biennial	\$25	Cottage Food Business Registry
Delaware	\$30	annual	\$30	Cottage Food Establishment registration
Pennsylvania	\$35	annual	\$35	Limited Food Establishment registration
Connecticut	\$50	annual	\$50	Cottage Food Operator license
Kentucky	\$50	annual	\$50	Home-based processor registration
New Jersey	\$100	biennial	\$50	Cottage Food Operator Permit
Rhode Island	\$65	annual	\$65	Cottage Food Manufacture registration
Washington	\$355	biennial	\$177.50	WSDA cottage food permit

Among these eight, annualized fees run \$25–\$177.50 (median \$50). Washington is the outlier: a two-year WSDA permit that includes inspection. The others sit between \$25 and \$65 a year.

Local varies, caps, and tiers

Local varies (172 counties)

California — CDPH does not set the CFO fee. County environmental health publishes Class A / Class B amounts. We fill a local \$ only when we have read that county's schedule (San Diego, Orange, Sacramento, Mono, El Dorado, San Luis Obispo, Placer). Los Angeles still prints a 2013 \$118 Class A figure; that is too stale to copy.

Alabama — county health approval; no statewide \$. **Massachusetts** — 351 boards of health set the residential-kitchen fee. **Maine** — processor license vs food-sovereignty towns. **Nevada** — historically local health; 2025 NDA transition not copied until a published number exists.

Illinois statute cap (102 counties)

410 ILCS 625/4(c): local health may charge up to **\$50 / year**. The high column is the legal ceiling, not Champaign County's actual invoice.

Minnesota sales tier (87 counties)

MDA: **\$0** at or under \$7,665 gross; **\$50 / year** from \$7,666–\$78,000. MDA's announced future single **\$30** tier is not treated as live.

New Hampshire optional upgrade (10 counties)

Home / farm-stand / farmers market: **\$0**. Class H (internet, mail-order, wholesale/retail): **\$150 / year**.

Hand-verified local overlays (10 places)

Only FIPS where we read a published schedule. Everyone else stays empty.

PLACE	HOME OCCUPATION \$	HEALTH INITIAL \$	HEALTH ANNUAL \$
El Dorado County, CA	—	\$86	\$86
Mono County, CA	—	\$22	\$22
Orange County, CA	—	\$225	\$128
Placer County, CA	—	\$201	\$201
Sacramento County, CA	—	\$306	\$306
San Bernardino County, CA	—	\$229	\$229
San Diego County, CA	—	\$231	\$92
San Luis Obispo County, CA	—	\$172	\$172
Fairfax County, VA	\$140	—	—
Fairfax city, VA	\$50	—	—

51-jurisdiction table

STATE	KIND	\$	HIGH / OTHER	CADENCE	COUNTIES
Alabama	Local varies (cell empty)	—	—	none	67
Alaska	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	29
Arizona	Free registration	\$0	—	none	15
Arkansas	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	75
California	Local varies (cell empty)	—	—	none	58
Colorado	Free registration	\$0	—	none	64
Connecticut	Statewide flat \$	\$50	—	annual	8
Delaware	Statewide flat \$	\$30	—	annual	3
District of Columbia	Statewide flat \$	\$50	—	biennial	1
Florida	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	67
Georgia	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	159
Hawaii	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	5
Idaho	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	44
Illinois	Statute cap (not the county \$)	—	\$50	annual	102
Indiana	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	92
Iowa	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	99

STATE	KIND	\$	HIGH / OTHER	CADENCE	COUNTIES
Kansas	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	105
Kentucky	Statewide flat \$	\$50	—	annual	120
Louisiana	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	64
Maine	Local varies (cell empty)	—	—	none	16
Maryland	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	24
Massachusetts	Local varies (cell empty)	—	—	none	14
Michigan	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	83
Minnesota	Sales-tier registration	\$0	\$50	annual	87
Mississippi	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	82
Missouri	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	115
Montana	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	56
Nebraska	Free registration	\$0	—	none	93
Nevada	Local varies (cell empty)	—	—	none	17
New Hampshire	Optional upgrade	\$0	\$150	annual	10
New Jersey	Statewide flat \$	\$100	—	biennial	21
New Mexico	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	33
New York	Free registration	\$0	—	none	62
North Carolina	Free registration	\$0	—	none	100
North Dakota	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	53
Ohio	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	88
Oklahoma	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	77
Oregon	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	36
Pennsylvania	Statewide flat \$	\$35	—	annual	67
Rhode Island	Statewide flat \$	\$65	—	annual	5
South Carolina	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	46
South Dakota	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	66
Tennessee	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	95
Texas	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	254
Utah	Free registration	\$0	—	none	29
Vermont	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	14
Virginia	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	134
Washington	Statewide flat \$	\$355	—	biennial	39
West Virginia	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	55
Wisconsin	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	72
Wyoming	Exemption — no cottage permit	\$0	—	none	23

Official URLs and notes live on `state_cottage_food_app_fees.csv` and on each county row of `county_startup_fees.csv`.

LLC and local license context

An LLC is **optional** for most cottage-food paths. Many bakers stay sole proprietors. Across 51 jurisdictions, published LLC formation fees run \$35–\$500 (median \$100, mean \$120.82). That is a Secretary of State bill, not a cottage permit.

Local business-license dollars: **2,963** counties unpublished (we will not invent BPOL), **134** Virginia gross-receipts (rate not invented), **46** with a state business license already on the LLC other-annual columns (Alaska \$50/yr, Nevada \$200/yr).

Typical cottage-baker product-liability quotes in the sheet are **\$200–\$400 / year** for \$1M — a market range, not a county fee, and not required by most cottage-food statutes.

Home processing across the states: a working law review

This Part is written so a baker can read a statute the way a law-review note is read: every acronym is defined on first use, the core legal instrument is named, and the legislative story is told in order. It is still research, not counsel. Confirm the live agency page.

I. LITERATURE AND BACKGROUND

There is no federal “home bakery license.” The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code — the model code the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) maintains and most states adopt or adapt — defines a **food establishment** as a place that stores, prepares, packages, or serves food for human consumption. States that adopt the Code then require that establishment to hold a permit and meet the Code’s construction and sanitation rules, including the animal rule that keeps pets out of food-prep areas during operations.¹ A home kitchen used for family dinner is not, by itself, a food establishment. The moment the same kitchen sells to the public, the default rule in most states used to be: you have just become one, and you need a commercial permit or a commissary (a licensed kitchen you rent by the hour).

Two federal texts sit in the background even when a state never cites them. First, **time/temperature control for safety (TCS)** food — the modern name for what older codes called **potentially hazardous food (PHF)** — is food that needs refrigeration to limit pathogen growth (cheesecake, cream pie, cut melon). Cottage-food statutes almost always draw the line at non-TCS products.² Second, **21 C.F.R. Part 117**, the Current Good Manufacturing Practice (CGMP or “GMP”) rule issued under the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), is written for food manufacturing facilities. North Carolina’s Home Processor program applies that Part to a house and treats indoor pets as pests.³ Everyone else who says “GMP applies” during production is usually gesturing at the same idea without incorporating the dwelling-wide reading.

The academic literature on homemade-food law is thin. Food-safety writing treats cottage food as a risk-class exemption from the retail Food Code, not as a license type of its own. The Institute for Justice (IJ) National Food Freedom Initiative (launched 2013) and its Flour Power survey are the main multi-state compilations; they are litigation and legislative materials, not agency guidance.⁴ Popular 50-state blogs (Forrager and its cousins) are useful checklists and unreliable as to fees, sales caps, and which statute is still in force. Cooperative-extension bulletins — Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Ohio State Farm Office, Purdue for Indiana’s home-based vendor (HBV) path, Oregon State University — are more reliable for how to comply in this state. This report uses statutes and .gov pages as primary sources; IJ is cited only for the political timeline.

Read four words carefully. They are not synonyms, and statutes mix them on purpose. A **license** or **permit** is permission the government can deny, inspect against, and revoke (Washington’s WSDA cottage permit; Pennsylvania’s Limited Food Establishment). A **registration** is a name on a list; it may be free (Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS); New York’s 20-C exemption registration) or paid (Minnesota’s \$50 tier). An **exemption** is the absence of the food-establishment permit — Virginia’s home food processor under Va. Code § 3.2-5130, Ohio’s Cottage Food Production Operation, Wyoming Food Freedom. A **certificate** is usually the food-handler course (often ANSI / ANAB accredited), not the cottage instrument. Crosodo’s fee column records the first three when the state charges for them. It does not invent the course price.

II. WHAT IS THE “CORE LICENSE”?

For a microbakery selling shelf-stable bread from a private kitchen, the core legal move is almost never a new license. It is an **exemption** from the food-establishment permit. The baker stays out of the Food Code by fitting a cottage-food, homemade-food, homestead, or food-freedom statute. The things that still attach to that

exemption — a label, a sales cap, a registration, a course — are conditions of the carve-out, not a retail-food license.

Crosodo's fee file therefore asks one question: does the state (or the county health department standing in for the state) charge a cottage / home-processor application or registration fee? In 2,508 of 3,143 counties the researched answer is \$0 because the core instrument is an exemption or a free registry. The baker may still need a zoning home-occupation approval, a sales-tax account, or a city business tax. Those are different licenses. Mixing them into one "startup fee" is how folklore about "you have to pay \$300 for a cottage permit" gets started.

Leave the exemption — sell TCS bakery, wholesale into restaurants as an ingredient supplier, or operate a meal service — and the core license changes. It becomes a food-processing plant license, a retail food establishment permit, a home-bakery license, or (in California counties that opted in) a Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation (MEHKO) permit. That is a different stack. This report's dollar column is the exemption path.

III. A GLOSSARY OF LICENSE-TYPE ACRONYMS

States do not use one vocabulary. The same legal idea — "you may sell non-TCS food from the house without a food-establishment permit" — is branded a dozen ways. Read the acronym, then the path, not the other way around.

ACRONYM	EXPANDS TO	WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS
CFO	Cottage Food Operation	California's name (Cal. Health & Safety Code § 113758) for the homemade non-TCS path. County environmental health (EH) registers or permits it. Not a MEHKO.
Class A / Class B	California CFO tiers	Class A: direct-to-consumer, registration + self-certification, no routine inspection. Class B: also indirect (stores), permit + inspection. Fees are county EH, not California Department of Public Health (CDPH).
MEHKO	Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation	California AB 626 (2018) path for same-day meals, including TCS. County opt-in. One residence cannot be both a CFO and a MEHKO. Not in this fee column.
HBP / HBMP	Home-Based Processor / Home-Based Microprocessor	Kentucky KRS § 217.136 / 217.137. Processor is the ordinary baked-goods path (\$50). Microprocessor is the farmers-market acidified-foods path.
HBV	Home-Based Vendor	Indiana's cottage analog (HEA 1309, 2009; later HEA 1149). No state license fee. ANSI food-handler certificate required. Acidified foods need a food-establishment license — a different path.
CFPO	Cottage Food Production Operation	Ohio's statutory name (R.C. 3715.01 / 3715.023). Exemption, not a license. Do not confuse with Ohio's Home Bakery license.
Home Processor	NCDA&CS / NY AGM programs	North Carolina: inspected home manufacturing under 21 C.F.R. 117 — no standalone cottage statute, free registration, pets in the dwelling disqualify. New York: 20-C exemption registration for non-TCS; a licensed Article 20-C facility is a different commercial path.
20-C	N.Y. Agric. & Mkts. Law art. 20-C	New York's food-processing license chapter. The home-processor exemption in § 251-z-4 is the \$0 cottage analog. Do not call the exemption a 20-C license.
Home Bakery	Ohio R.C. 911.02; Hawaii HAR ch. 11-50	Inspected path for bakery that is often TCS (Ohio \$10/year, no pets in the home). Ohio cottage food (R.C. 3715.023) is the \$0 non-TCS path. Do not collapse them.
LFE	Limited Food Establishment	Pennsylvania's home-processor registration (3 Pa.C.S. ch. 57). PDA inspects. \$35 at first compliant inspection, \$35/year to renew.
Homestead / Class H	N.H. RSA 143-A homestead food	Unlicensed homestead: \$0 for home, farm stand, or farmers market. Class H: \$150/year if they need internet, mail-order, or wholesale/retail.
HFPE	Home Food Processing Establishment	Iowa's licensed (wider product) path. The cottage exemption in Iowa Code ch. 137F is \$0 and is what this file records.
DKB	Domestic Kitchen Bakery	Oregon's inspected retail bakery license. The ORS 616.723 cottage / farm-direct exemption is \$0 and is the standard path.
Residential kitchen	105 C.M.R. 590.009	Massachusetts town/city board of health permit to produce food in a house. Fee is local. There is no statewide cottage dollar.

ACRONYM	EXPANDS TO	WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS
CFO (N.J.)	Cottage Food Operator	New Jersey's statewide permit (N.J.A.C. 8:24-11). \$100 / 2 years. Not California's CFO, despite the same letters.
WSDA permit	Washington State Dept. of Agriculture cottage-food permit	RCW 69.22. Inspected. \$355 / 2 years (WAC 16-149-060). Highest published statewide cottage-app fee in this file.
Food Freedom	Homemade-food exemption statutes	Wyoming (2015) coined the brand. Later: North Dakota, Oklahoma, Montana Local Food Choice, Arkansas Act 1040, Tennessee, Alaska HB 251. Usually no license and no fee.
BPOL	Business, Professional, and Occupational License tax	Virginia local tax on gross receipts (Va. Code tit. 58.1). Not a food permit. Rate is set by the commissioner of the revenue. Amount left blank on all 134 Virginia places.
HBB / HO / MHO	Home-Based Business / Home Occupation / Minor Home Occupation	Zoning, not food. Fairfax County HBB \$140 and Fairfax City accessory \$35 are the only Virginia local \$ we copied, because those pages publish a flat number.
EH	Environmental Health	The county (or city) health division that runs California Class A/B and many local kitchen permits.
ANAB	ANSI National Accreditation Board	The usual accreditor named in statutes for the food-handler course. A course fee is not a cottage license.
VDACS	Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	Runs the home-food-processor exemption (no permit \$). Not the locality that bills BPOL.
GDA / MDA / ODA / PDA / DATCP	Georgia / Minnesota / Ohio / Pennsylvania / Wisconsin agriculture departments	State food agencies. Georgia's GDA cottage license was repealed by HB 398 (2025). Wisconsin's DATCP still licenses unbaked homemade food; baked non-TCS rides on the Kivirist injunction, not a DATCP cottage permit.
CDPH / ADHS / NCDA&CS / NDA	Cal. Dept. of Public Health / Ariz. Dept. of Health Services / N.C. Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services / Nev. Dept. of Agriculture	CDPH writes California's CFO foods list; county EH sets the fee. ADHS runs a free registry. NCDA&CS runs Home Processor. NDA takes cottage licensing in July 2027 under AB 352 — no \$ copied until they publish one.

IV. HOW THE CORE LICENSE CHANGED OVER TIME

Before about 2010. A handful of states already had a homemade carve-out: Ohio's cottage-food labeling statute (2001), Kentucky's home-based processor (2003), Maryland farmers-market / bake-sale rules (2007), Indiana's home-based vendor (2009), and older Iowa and Massachusetts residential-kitchen practice. Everywhere else, selling a loaf from the home kitchen was, as a practical matter, operating an unlicensed food establishment.

2010–2014 — the first national wave. Recessions and farmers-market culture produced a cluster of “cottage food” acts limited to a list of non-TCS foods and a sales cap: Michigan (2010), Arizona and Washington (2011), California's Homemade Food Act (AB 1616, 2012) creating the CFO, plus Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, South Carolina (2012), Texas (2013), Alabama and Missouri (2014). California's two-class CFO (later refined by AB 1144 in 2021) became the template other states cite when they want direct vs. indirect sales.⁵

2015–2017 — food freedom, then the last holdout. Wyoming's Food Freedom Act (2015) dropped the approved-foods list and the license for sales to an informed end consumer. Minnesota's § 28A.152 (2015) built the registration-and-tier model that now produces the best public operator census in the country. In 2017, Kivirist v. Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (Lafayette County Circuit Court) held that Wisconsin's ban on selling non-TCS home-baked goods lacked a rational relation to public health; the October 2, 2017 order applied to all home bakers, not only the three plaintiffs. After that order, every state had some lawful homemade-food path.⁶

2018–2023 — filling the map and splitting the path. Connecticut (2018) and New Jersey (2021) opened late, licensed, inspected-or-permitted programs. Rhode Island followed in 2022. Arkansas Act 1040 (2021) and Tennessee (2022) joined the food-freedom family. California added MEHKO (AB 626, 2018) as a meal path that counties must opt into — still not cottage food. Several “cottage” states quietly grew a second, inspected home path for TCS bakery (Ohio Home Bakery, Oregon DKB, Iowa HFPE, New Hampshire Class H).

2024–2026 — deregulation of the fee itself. The live fight is less “may I sell a cookie?” and more “must I buy a license to do it?” Alaska HB 251 (2024) replaced the old cottage regulation with a homemade-food exemption. Georgia HB 398 (effective July 1, 2025) repealed the Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) cottage license

and the old ~\$100/year fee. Vermont Act 42 (2025) created a licensing exemption at or under \$30,000 gross. Virginia HB 402 (2026) expanded in-state internet and phone sales for home food processors without creating a VDACS permit fee. West Virginia SB 44 (2026) added Article 40 — a potentially hazardous cottage-food vendor permit — on top of the existing \$0 shelf-stable path in § 19-35-6; this file still records the non-TCS path. Nevada AB 352 (2025) transfers cottage licensing to the State Department of Agriculture effective July 2027; local health still registers until then, and this file does not copy a new \$ until NDA publishes one.⁷

V. WHO IS LEADING ON LEGISLATION?

“Leading” depends on the metric. Four clusters matter for a microbakery:

1. **Food-freedom first movers (no license, broad foods).** Wyoming (2015) wrote the statute other states copy. Oklahoma, North Dakota, Montana’s Local Food Choice Act, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Alaska followed. The core license here is none. The fee column is \$0. The limiter is usually the product list (meat, dairy) and the “informed end consumer” rule, not a permit window.
2. **Administration and volume.** Minnesota (free-then-\$50 tier, public registrant counts) and Arizona (free ADHS registry, ~8,800 active in late 2024) are the states a journalist can actually count. See Cottage Food Permit Statistics 2026. Illinois leads on preemption: 410 ILCS 625/4 stops cities from banning cottage food, and the statute caps the local health fee at \$50.
3. **Recent fee-and-license repeal.** Georgia HB 398 is the clearest 2025 example of a state deciding the cottage license was the problem. Older “\$100 Georgia cottage license” tables are stale. Vermont Act 42 is the New England version of the same idea: stay under the cap, file the exemption, do not buy a manufacturing license.
4. **Inspected / paid cottage as a product.** Washington (WSDA \$355/2yr), Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania LFE, Delaware, Kentucky, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia still sell a statewide cottage permit. North Carolina’s Home Processor is free but is the strictest kitchen GMP in the country. Those are the states where “the core license” is a real piece of paper, and where pets or a latching door can be the practical limiter.

California leads on architecture (CFO Class A/B statewide, MEHKO opt-in for meals) and lags on a single statewide fee — which is why 58 counties sit in `local_varies` and why this file will not invent Modoc County’s Class A from San Diego’s schedule.

What stayed empty on purpose

Empty is a researched answer. The following cells are blank because a published flat cottage-or-local dollar was not on the page we read — not because the work was skipped.

- **Virginia BPOL (134 places):** marked `business_license_fee_kind=gross_receipts`, amount blank. BPOL is a local tax on receipts. Copying one county’s rate onto Fairfax City — or onto a town that is not the county — would be a wrong counter.
- **City/county business licenses everywhere else:** unpublished, amount blank. A required-or-unknown local license is not a number we will stand behind.
- **Only 9 local overlays have a published \$ we read:** Fairfax County HBB \$140; Fairfax City accessory \$35; California Class A for San Diego, Orange, Sacramento, Mono (\$22), El Dorado (\$86), San Luis Obispo (\$172), Placer (\$201).
- **Did not copy Los Angeles County’s \$118.** The EH page still prints a 2013 figure. A stale fee sends someone to the wrong window.

`county_permit_steps.csv` has only eight official `fee_schedule_url` values. Scraping that column cannot invent three thousand local licenses. Rebuild the sheet with `python3 scripts/build_county_startup_fees.py` after any source edit.

NOTES

1. FDA Food Code (latest state-adopted edition varies), maintained with the Conference for Food Protection. “Food establishment” is the defined term that triggers a permit; cottage-food statutes are exemptions from that term.
2. FDA Food Code Annex / 2017+ definition of TCS food. Older state codes still say PHF. The product line in cottage statutes is the same idea: no refrigeration required to stay safe.
3. 21 C.F.R. Part 117, subpart B (CGMP). NCDA&CS Home Processor FAQ applies the pest rule to privately owned pets in the dwelling. [ncagr.gov Home Processor](https://ncagr.gov/Home-Processor).
4. Institute for Justice, National Food Freedom Initiative (2013–); Flour Power cottage-foods survey; Kivist case page. Advocacy sources, used here for chronology only.
5. Cal. Health & Safety Code § 113758 (CFO); AB 1616 (2012); AB 1144 (2021) (Class A/B caps). MEHKO: AB 626 (2018), HSC § 113825. CDPH CFO FAQ.
6. Wyo. Stat. §§ 11-49-101 to -104 (2015). Minn. Stat. § 28A.152. Kivist v. DATCP, Lafayette Cty. Cir. Ct. (May 31, 2017; clarified Oct. 2, 2017). Wisconsin Legislative Council issue brief on cottage food (2025) summarizes the later unbaked-goods follow-on.
7. Alaska HB 251 / AS 17.20.332 (2024). Ga. HB 398, O.C.G.A. §§ 26-2-470 et seq. (eff. July 1, 2025). Vt. Act 42 (2025). Va. Code § 3.2-5130 as amended by HB 402 (2026). W. Va. Code § 19-35-6 (non-TCS, no paid permit); art. 19-40 (SB 44, 2026) is the TCS vendor path. Nev. AB 352 (2025, cottage licensing to NDA July 2027) — fee not copied pending NDA publication.

Methodology

Source of truth: `data/research/permit-packets/state_cottage_food_app_fees.csv` (51 rows, official .gov / statute / application PDFs, compiled 2026-08-19) joined onto every FIPS by `scripts/build_county_startup_fees.py`. How to read the sheet: `data/research/permit-packets/FEES.md`.

Population weights use the Census population field on `county_permit_steps.csv`. Annualized flat fees divide biennial amounts by two. We do not treat blogs as sources. We do not copy a neighbor county’s CFO fee onto the rest of a state.

Companion reports: Cottage Food Permit Statistics 2026 (operator volume), Cottage Food Online Sales (carts and shipping), county lookup at crosodo.com/what-permits. The law-review Part above is part of this fee report, not a third PDF. Suggested citation: Crosodo Research, Cottage Food Fees 2026 (August 2026), crosodo.com/reports/cottage-food-fees-2026.pdf.