

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Middlesex County

Massachusetts · — · FIPS 25017 · Population 1,623,109 ·
Crosodo Index #2589*

STATE BASELINE

105 CMR 590.009(D)

STATE TIER

Okay

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED

2026-05-05

IMPORTANT — NOT LEGAL ADVICE

This report compiles publicly-available statutes, regulations, and county zoning rules into a research reference. It is **not legal advice** and is provided **without warranty** as to accuracy, completeness, or current applicability.

Cottage food law changes frequently. Counties may amend zoning, health departments may issue new permits, and state legislatures may update statutes after the publication date shown above.

Always verify rules directly with your state department of health/agriculture and your county health and planning offices before relying on them for any business or regulatory decision. Consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.

How to start — 60-second path

Middlesex County, Massachusetts — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies by city

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

Yes

PETS

State baseline applies

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under Massachusetts cottage food rules (county cannot expand a state ban).
- ☐ **2. Pickup & zoning** — Home occupation and porch pickup cells above; HOA/lease may still block customer traffic.
- ☐ **3. Local tax / license** — Business license or sales tax certificate if your city/parish requires it (common even with no state food permit).
- ☐ **4. Training** — Food handler or state registration before market day.
- ☐ **5. Labels** — Disclaimer, allergens, ingredients, net quantity, producer info.
- ☐ **6. Call if unclear** — County health and planning for your exact address.

LABEL FIELDS TO INCLUDE

- ☐ Product name · producer name · address (or allowed alternative)
- ☐ Ingredients by weight · major allergens · net weight/quantity
- ☐ Massachusetts home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[Massachusetts label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

Planning path only — not legal advice. Rules change. Always verify with state and local offices before selling.

MASSACHUSETTS: MIDDLESEX COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2589* · FIPS 25017 · —

Middlesex County

Population 1,623,109 · State baseline: 105 CMR 590.009(D) · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Massachusetts has no county-level government with food safety authority — Middlesex County does not have an operational county government (county government was abolished in 1997). Retail Residential Kitchen (cottage food) permits are issued by local Boards of Health in each city/town. Operators selling directly to consumers must obtain a permit from their local Board of Health; wholesale sellers must obtain a state license from MA DPH Food Protection Program.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

State baseline applies

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies by city (Each city/town in Middlesex County (Cambridge, Lowell, Newton, Somerville, etc.) has its own Board of Health with its own permit fee and inspection requirements. No county-level home occupation permit — Middlesex County government was abolished in 1997.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Local Board of Health inspects before issuing the Retail Residential Kitchen permit (cottage food operation) and may conduct routine and complaint-based inspections. Wholesale operations inspected by MA DPH.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — Massachusetts has no county-level government with food safety authority — Middlesex County does not have an operational county government (county government was abolished in 1997). Retail Residential Kitchen (cottage food) permits are issued by local Boards of Health in each city/town. Operators selling directly to consumers must obtain a permit from their local Board of Health; wholesale sellers must obtain a state license from MA DPH Food Protection Program.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

State baseline applies

WATER SUPPLY

State baseline applies; Board of Health may require lab documentation for pH ≤ 4.6 or water activity ≤ 0.85 for certain products

HANDWASHING

State baseline applies

FOOD STORAGE

State baseline applies

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED

Yes — Local Board of Health inspects before issuing the Retail Residential Kitchen permit (cottage food operation) and may conduct routine and complaint-based inspections. Wholesale operations inspected by MA DPH.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT

Varies by city — Each city/town in Middlesex County (Cambridge, Lowell, Newton, Somerville, etc.) has its own Board of Health with its own permit fee and inspection requirements. No county-level home occupation permit — Middlesex County government was abolished in 1997.

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE

Varies by city

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Retail residential kitchen: direct to consumer sales only; mail order prohibited. Wholesale residential kitchen: may sell to retailers/restaurants but needs state DPH license. Only household members may be employed in the operation.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Only household members may be employed (state regulation)

Relevant county code

none — Middlesex County government abolished 1997; 105 CMR 590.009(D) and 105 CMR 500.015 apply through local Boards of Health

RESEARCH NOTES

Middlesex County Massachusetts has no operating county government (abolished 1997). The county name is used for geographic/census purposes. All cottage food regulation is at the city/town Board of Health level. Key cities in Middlesex County include Cambridge, Lowell, Newton, Somerville, Waltham, and Framingham — each with independent Boards of Health and varying permit fees and requirements. Some cities (notably Boston in adjacent Suffolk County) previously restricted residential kitchens but Middlesex cities generally have programs. Only household members may be employed; no commercial brokers/wholesalers may distribute. No mail order allowed for retail residential kitchens.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/middlesex-county-massachusetts>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/residential-kitchen-questions-and-answers>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/residential-kitchen-permit-information>

Questions about this county? Local notes and a place to leave a question: crosodo.com/nb/massachusetts/middlesex-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Middlesex County	Worcester County	Essex County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	State baseline applies	Standard sanitation; pets excluded from food preparation areas during production is typically required	Pets typically excluded from food preparation areas per Board of Health requirements
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Retail residential kitchen: direct to consumer sales only; mail order prohibited. Wholesale residential kitchen: may sell to retailers/rest...	No statewide cap. Sales allowed from home, at events, farmers markets, and to retail stores. Mail order prohibited. Catering prohibited und...	Sales allowed from home, events, farmers markets, and retail stores. Mail order prohibited. Catering prohibited. Wholesale may not be condu...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies by city	Varies by city	Varies by city
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies by city	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Massachusetts has no county-level government with food safety authority — Middlesex County does not have an operational county government (...)	Massachusetts uses a residential kitchen model — home kitchen treated as food establishment requiring a local Board of Health permit and ki...	Each of Essex County's 34 municipalities administers its own Board of Health residential kitchen permit. Kitchen inspection required. No st...
FOOD STORAGE	State baseline applies	Standard food storage per residential kitchen permit requirements	Standard food storage per residential kitchen permit
POPULATION	1,623,109	858,898	806,103

State context — Massachusetts cottage food law

Middlesex County's rules sit on top of Massachusetts's state cottage food framework. The state law sets the floor — counties can add but cannot remove protections.

STATUTE	ANNUAL SALES CAP
105 CMR 590.009(D)	—
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
Yes	Recommended
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
Yes	No
INDIRECT SALES	
Yes — Massachusetts residential kitchens are treated as food establishments, so permitted operators may sell at any venue within the state including restaurants and retail stores, without the wholesale restriction that most cottage food laws impose. Mail order and catering are prohibited. Local boards of health administer permits and may impose additional restrictions.	

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Massachusetts cottage food law report](#) on Crosodo, or open the live guide: crosodo.com/states/massachusetts.

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/105-CMR-59000-state-sanitary-code-chapter-x>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/residential-kitchen-permit-information>

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/massachusetts/>

Questions about Middlesex County? Local notes and a place to leave a question are on Crosodo. We monitor new threads — start with zoning, permits, or porch pickup.

crosodo.com/nb/massachusetts/middlesex-county-discuss

Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · crosodo.com/advertise

NATIONAL

SUPPLIES

Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

COURSES

Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

INSURANCE

Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

LOCAL

Advertise here

Reach home bakers in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours on Crosodo.

crosodo.com/nb/massachusetts/middlesex-county-discuss

Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

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