



Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center

55 Orilla Avenue • Ajo, Arizona 85321 | (520) 775-2565 | info@sonorancc.com | www.sonorancc.com

Job Description: Culinary Program Manager *Fall 2016*

The not-for-profit Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center in Ajo, Arizona is a unique new venue for workshops, conferences, retreats and gatherings in the heart of the Sonoran Desert. We have a dual mission: to draw tourism to Ajo, and to catalyze job creation and entrepreneurial activity among its residents.

Ajo is a fascinating, off-the-beaten path place, a former copper mining town that is reinventing itself as an arts destination. It's a friendly, warm community surrounded by 12 million acres of pristine desert landscapes, a hidden gem approximately two hours from Phoenix, Tucson, and the beaches of Puerto Penasco, Mexico. Located in the town's historic former elementary school, the Conference Center has attracted hundreds of guests, hosted dozens of events, and garnered rave reviews since opening in 2015.

A feature of the Conference Center is a spacious, modern commercial kitchen. The kitchen is designed to serve as both the catering facility for the Conference Center and as a community commissary, available to local residents to rent at a low cost to produce food and value-added products such as jams, honey, and baked goods. The Conference Center also has a hot dog cart that can be rented by community members. The goal of the kitchen and hot dog cart are to incubate food-related micro-businesses that will sell their products at festivals, the Authentically Ajo Farmers Market, and other local and regional events. The vision is that some of these will grow into mobile and/or brick-and-mortar businesses in the future.

The Culinary Program Manager will oversee this facility and have responsibilities in the following four areas:

I) Implementing Catering Services and Culinary Programs

- Recruit caterers, restaurants, and home cooks to cater events (the Culinary Program Manager may also serve as an event caterer on a separate contract basis)
- Design and help provide a variety of breakfast options for overnight guests and groups
- Generate food-related tourism by helping to coordinate overnight retreats focused on food, led by both Ajo chefs and those from across the region and country
- Oversee culinary programming geared at guests and Ajo residents such as pop-up restaurant nights, happy hours, and cooking workshops

II) Managing Kitchen and Hot Dog Cart Rentals

- Market and promote the Conference Center kitchen and hot dog cart to the Ajo community to increase activity and generate rental revenue



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- Conduct orientations to new users to ensure safety and quality
- Manage schedule of bookings and payment for rentals

III) Supporting Food Entrepreneurs and Micro Business Development

- Collaborate with the Ajo Regional Food Partnership to continue building a local food movement
- Coordinate workshops and technical assistance to support local food-related businesses
- Research/visit other commercial kitchens to understand successful strategies and implement them at the Conference Center

IV) General Duties

- Maintain Kitchen Use Guidelines (safety; cleaning; materials; access; storage)
- Oversee kitchen equipment inventory and purchasing
- Understand and enforce county codes/compliance around health and safety; serve as a liaison to the Pima County Health Department
- Oversee periodic county health inspections to ensure passing grade

Qualifications:

- Experience working in a professional kitchen
- A commitment to strengthening Ajo's local food movement and increasing entrepreneurial activity among its residents
- Ability to work effectively both independently and with a team
- Schedule flexibility with availability to work some early mornings, evenings, and weekends
- Community outreach, public speaking and facilitation experience
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills; Spanish language skills a plus
- Small business development and marketing experience a plus

Terms:

20 hours/week, with the possibility of expansion in the high season (January-April)

Pay is \$15/hour

The Culinary Programs Manager will report to the Conference Center Co-Directors

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to info@sonorancc.com. Ideal start date is January 2017. For candidates interested in re-locating to Ajo for this position, an affordable housing opportunity may be available at the neighboring [Curley School Artisan Apartments](#).