

Application Questions — Preview & Prep Worksheet

Use this to prepare before you start. The real application is an online form (about 30–40 minutes). You can't save partway and come back, so this lets you draft your answers first, then copy them in. No polished essays needed — we want to understand your business, not see perfect writing. Print it, fill it in, or just read through to get ready.

Questions? accelerator@venturecentralva.com

Eligibility (confirm each is true)

- ☐ Revenue \$100K+ or a clear path to \$100K within 12 months
- ☐ Business or home in one of the six localities — or willing to relocate
- ☐ Required licenses & permits are current (or noted in 1.8)
- ☐ At least one founder is full-time or moving to full-time

Section 1 — Business Basics

1.1 Legal company name

as it appears in government filings; add your DBA in parentheses if different.

1.2 One-line business description

twenty words or fewer.

1.3 Legal entity type

- ☐ Sole proprietorship
- ☐ LLC
- ☐ S-Corp
- ☐ C-Corp
- ☐ B-Corp
- ☐ Other

1.4 Year founded

1.5 Locality of business

- ☐ City of Charlottesville
- ☐ Albemarle
- ☐ Fauquier
- ☐ Madison
- ☐ Nelson
- ☐ Orange
- ☐ Other — willing to relocate (explain in 1.5a)

1.5a If relocating — tell us your plan

1.6 Locality of your home

- ☐ City of Charlottesville
- ☐ Albemarle
- ☐ Fauquier
- ☐ Madison
- ☐ Nelson
- ☐ Orange
- ☐ Other

1.7 Product category

this program serves packaged, non-alcoholic F&B manufacturers.

- ☐ Packaged food manufacturer
- ☐ Non-alcoholic beverage manufacturer
- ☐ Both
- ☐ Neither — alcohol / wine / beer (not eligible)

1.8 Licenses & permits

are the licenses and permits required to operate your business currently valid?

- ☐ Yes — all current
- ☐ Some pending / in process (explain in 1.8a)
- ☐ No

1.8a If pending — explain

1.9 Website

1.10 Primary social / LinkedIn

Section 2 — Founder & Team

2.1 Founder name

the primary founder completing this application; our main point of contact.

2.2 Email

2.2a Phone

2.3 Founder status

- ☐ Full-time in the business
- ☐ Moving to full-time (tell us when in 2.3a)
- ☐ Part-time with no current plan to go full-time

2.3a If moving to full-time — when?

2.4 Team size — full-time / part-time

full-time count includes founders.

2.5 More than one founder/owner?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes — list in 2.5a

2.5a Co-founders — name / role / full-time or part-time

2.6 Primary program participant

one founder serves as our main contact and attends coaching sessions. Co-founders are welcome at workshops and program events.

2.7 Business support programs you have used

(not scored — helps us coordinate with partners)

- ☐ SBDC counseling
- ☐ Community Investment Collaborative (CIC)
- ☐ Commercial kitchen programs
- ☐ Virginia Specialty Food Association
- ☐ Another accelerator or incubator (name it in 2.8)
- ☐ None yet — this would be my first

2.8 What helped most and what was missing? (optional)

only if you checked a program above. In a sentence or two.

Section 3 — Product & Market

3.1 What do you make?

products, category, top 3 SKUs.

3.2 Current sales channels (check all)

- ☐ Farmers markets / direct events
- ☐ Own e-commerce
- ☐ Faire and other online marketplaces
- ☐ Independent / specialty retail (wholesale)
- ☐ Distributor
- ☐ Grocery chain(s)
- ☐ Food service / restaurants
- ☐ Co-packing for others
- ☐ Export

3.3 Do you currently sell outside Virginia?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section 4 — Financials

4.1 Trailing 12-month revenue

your total sales over the most recent 12 months (calendar 2025 is fine if that's what your books show).

- ☐ Under \$50K (explain path to \$100K in 8.1)
- ☐ \$50K-\$100K (explain path to \$100K in 8.1)
- ☐ \$100K-\$250K
- ☐ \$250K-\$500K
- ☐ \$500K-\$1M
- ☐ \$1M-\$3M
- ☐ Over \$3M

4.2 Revenue trajectory

rough revenue for your last two completed years, plus this year's projection.

4.3 Estimated gross margin

(sales minus what it cost to make the products you sold) divided by sales. Ingredients, packaging, and production labor count; rent and marketing do not. Your best estimate is fine.

4.4 Funding routes you are open to exploring (not scored)

- ☐ Reinvesting profits
- ☐ Bank or SBA loan / line of credit
- ☐ Equipment financing
- ☐ Grants
- ☐ Angel or equity investment
- ☐ Not sure yet — I want to learn what fits my business

Section 5 — Production

5.1 Current production setup (check all)

- ☐ Home kitchen (permitted)
- ☐ Home kitchen (cottage — no permit)
- ☐ Shared commercial kitchen (name it in 5.1a)
- ☐ Dedicated facility
- ☐ Co-packer
- ☐ Combination

5.1a If shared kitchen — which one?

Section 6 — Barriers to Growth

6.1 Top 3 barriers to growth (choose up to 3)

- ☐ Marketing & customer acquisition
- ☐ Access to capital
- ☐ Workforce & hiring
- ☐ Distribution & logistics
- ☐ Scaling production
- ☐ Regulatory compliance
- ☐ Other (explain in 6.1a)

6.1a If other barrier — explain

Section 7 — Commitment

7.1 I can commit to workshops and monthly coaching for the full 8 months. (required)

- ☐ Yes

7.2 I agree to confidential baseline and progress data collection. (required)

- ☐ Yes

Section 8 — Short Answer

These six are the heart of the application.

8.1 Where are you headed and why now?

where do you want the business to be in 2-3 years, and what makes now the right time to scale? If you're currently under \$100K, tell us your specific path to reaching it within 12 months.

8.2 How do you know it's working?

share the proof your product has traction: repeat orders, retail placements, wholesale accounts, growth rate, margins, or whatever tells the story best.

8.3 Capital & financial readiness

what funding has your business used so far? What will you need to scale, and how ready are you to go get it?

8.4 Your edge

what makes your product hard to copy? Who are your main competitors or alternatives, and how do you win beyond your local market?

8.5 Can you make more?

can your current production setup keep up with growth? If not, what's the plan — new equipment, a co-packer, a bigger facility? What's the main bottleneck?

8.6 You as a founder

why do you want to be in this cohort? As you grow, how do you plan to share the load? And how do you tend to react when someone challenges the way you're doing things?

Section 9 — Final Details

9.1 Founder background (optional — not scored; grant reporting only)

- ☐ Woman-owned
- ☐ Veteran / military-connected
- ☐ Minority-owned
- ☐ Immigrant founder
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

9.2 How did you hear about the accelerator?

- ☐ Conversation with the Program Director
- ☐ SBDC
- ☐ CIC
- ☐ Commercial kitchen
- ☐ Industry association
- ☐ Locality / chamber
- ☐ Word of mouth / peer
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Other

9.3 Attachments (optional)

*P&L or sales summary, pitch deck, business plan, line sheet / wholesale card / marketing materials.
Completely fine to skip — your application answers are what we score.*

- ☐ I will attach one or more of these
- ☐ Skipping — my answers stand on their own

Attestation

- ☐ The information is accurate and I understand the 8-month commitment. **(required)**
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