

Winter Haven Farmers Market Vendor Application Packet

Revised – April 2025

OVERVIEW

The Winter Haven Farmers Market is held weekly on Saturdays in downtown Winter Haven.

- It's located in the parking lot of the old BB&T bank building, on the NE corner of 3rd St and Ave C SW. (It's across the street from Grove Roots Brewing company.)
- The Market is open to customers from 9 am to 1 pm during the spring season (Jan-May), 9 am to 12 pm during the summer season (June-Aug) and 9 am to 1 pm during the fall season (Sep-Dec). Set up starts at 7:30 am.
- Additional info and links to our social channels can be found on our website
www.winterhavenfarmersmarket.com
- Chris Sexson (Market Manager) is responsible for the weekly operations of the market.
Phone: 863-845-3155 Email: winterhavenmarket@gmail.com

Vendor Agreements

- Vendors must provide their own tent, tent weights (**required**), tables, chairs, etc.
- **Vendors must cancel any assigned dates by Tuesday the week of the market. If you cancel after invoices are sent on Wednesday morning, you are still responsible for that week's invoice.**
- If a vendor no call no shows or has repeated short-notice cancellations, they may be removed from the schedule.
- Trailer vendors will not detach their vehicles until the market manager has shown them to their space. We often have to make layout changes on the fly. We appreciate your flexibility.

Green Initiative

The Winter Haven Farmers Market encourages vendors to use eco-friendly packaging when possible. Our goal is to reduce the amount of single-use plastics our market contributes to the landfills. We understand that many vendors cannot completely eliminate plastic from their offerings. Our main goal is to reduce plastic items that are used and disposed of in the same day.

For example, a burger is served in a plastic or styrofoam container. It is immediately consumed at the market and then thrown away. This burger could be served on a paper plate, in a paper napkin or in a compostable or paper box, creating a much smaller impact on our earth.

Vendors who serve food at the market or sell single-use food items (like a croissant or produce) should use non-plastic and non-styrofoam packaging. Be thoughtful in the way you serve food- maybe the packaging is unnecessary and a napkin will suffice? We hope to work together with you on this to reduce our market's impact on the planet. Here are a few places you can find eco-friendly packaging products: <https://greenpaperproducts.com/> and <https://www.clearbags.com/eco-packaging>

HOW TO APPLY TO BE A VENDOR

1. Preparation – It's important that you carefully read this document before submitting your application.
 - a. Your application should address all the topics defined here, regarding your type of product
 - b. Applications are reviewed and evaluated throughout the year.
2. Application – Applying to the Market is done in the free online 'Marketspread' system.
 - a. Each business will need to create a brief profile in Marketspread.
 - b. Then the business will locate the Winter Haven Farmers Market in Marketspread and 'apply' there, completing the application process.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Selection Criteria - Potential vendors are screened based on a number of criteria, including:
 - Product Type - Whether the product/service falls within the market guidelines (described below).
 - Product Quality – The style, construction and uniqueness of the product.
 - Presentation – The display of the products on tables and throughout the booth.
 - Vendor Style – The overall friendliness of the vendor.
 - Booth Setup
 - Vendors should have displays that are eye catching and thoughtfully designed.
 - For both appearance and safety reasons, we strongly recommend use of a professional grade 10x10' tents with full internal frames (vs recreational tents that have only perimeter frames).
 - Commercial Products – Our focus is on artisan products that are designed and created by the vendor. The majority of your products should not be commercially produced for resale.
 - This includes products such as Scentsy, Lularoe, and other direct sales companies.
 - Product Lines – Market management makes judgements about the appropriate number of vendors within a product category.
 - This assessment is based on the number of total available spaces, etc., and how many vendors are currently vending any one category of product.
 - We limit the number of similar products so that each vendor can be successful.
 - Booth Size - The standard booth space is 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep.
 - Attendance Frequency – The Market will have both full-time and part-time vendors.
 - Part-time vendors would typically be craft vendors to provide weekly variety in the customer's shopping experience.

- Part-time vendors can select which dates they want to request in the scheduling window. Requested dates will be reviewed and assigned by market management, giving equal opportunity to all qualified applicants.
- As a privately run market, we reserve the right to approve and decline vendors as we deem appropriate.

PRODUCT TYPES

Food Products - Food-related items are intended to be the core of the market experience.

- Unique products – We’re interested in products that are unusual and not readily available in stores. This might reflect gourmet preparation, unusual flavors or ingredients, or multicultural recipes.
- Healthy Food - We have a strong preference for products that reflect healthy eating practices, This could include healthy ingredients, freshly prepared, low or no sugar, baked vs. fried, etc.
- Licenses - Food vendors need to meet the requirements of applicable State regulatory agencies.
 - We cannot advise you on what is required by the state for your business type. We cannot determine if your business type qualifies for cottage law.
 - If your business type requires a license, licenses are issued by the following two agencies:
 1. Florida Dept. of Agriculture – This agency regulates mobile vendors that sell pre-packaged foods or food that is prepared prior to the event (bread, soup, etc).
 2. Dept of Business & Professional Regulation – Hotel & Restaurant Division – This agency regulates mobile vendors that prepare and cook food at the event.

Farm Produce

- Farmers – We are very interested in cultivating relationships with farmers.
 - Interested farmers should contact us directly to learn about the current opportunities available. Farmers can receive a discount on the vendor fee.
- Produce Resale -The market allows produce resellers who focus on providing produce that is not locally grown (e.g. apples, bananas, asparagus, mushrooms etc.). This provides customers the opportunity to do all their produce shopping in one trip.
- Plants & Flowers
 - Product Types - Prospective plant vendors are evaluated based on the unique character of their plants, and how they are different than other plant vendors already at the market.
 - Grower Preference - Preference is given to growers versus resellers.

- Licensing - You must hold appropriate licenses with the Division of Plant Industry in the Florida Dept. of Agriculture.

Crafts

- Product Priorities- The primary focus of the market is related to produce, food and plants. Crafts supplement these core products and provide variety to the market.
- We do not allow any political or religious products/vendors.
- Product Categories - Crafts are evaluated within a respective product type (e.g. pottery, clothing, jewelry, personal care products, etc.).
 - Homemade – We support craftspeople and artisans at the market. As a result, crafts must be made by the vendor.
 - Resale – Items offered for re-sale or commercially produced are not acceptable in most cases.
 - Food-Related - High quality and unique food-related items (e.g. cookbooks, kitchen utensils, table linens, aprons, etc.) may be considered, even if not made by the vendor.

Services

- Service Delivery - We will consider service vendors if the service is conducted at the market (e.g. face painting, massage, knife sharpening, etc.).
- Promotion - We do not accept applications for businesses wishing to promote services provided elsewhere (e.g. health club, real estate sales, medical offices). This type of activity is eligible to participate as a 'sponsor'. If you are interested in a sponsorship, contact Chris@destroyermedia.com.
- We do not allow any political or religious products/vendors.

Other Businesses

- Sponsorship – Businesses that do not meet our eligibility requirements can request to participate as a 'sponsor'. Contact Chris@destroyermedia.com to learn more about sponsorship options.
- Non-profits – We have a program to offer free space to select non-profits. Email winterhavenmarket@gmail.com with a description of your non-profit and what you would like to do within your booth space to reserve a date.

FEES

- Amount - The vending fee is \$30/day per space during the spring and fall seasons. It is \$20/day per space for the summer season.
 - If your booth is larger than 10x10, you may be charged based on the number of 10x10 spaces you occupy.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Application Details –You need to address all the categories of information below in your application. Omitting information will delay the process or diminish the likelihood of a positive response.
 - Product Description- Include product details, prices, production methods, etc.
 - Business Description- Include the background/training of the owner, origins of the business, etc. Ensure your Marketspread profile is fully built out with links to your social media sites. We use this to look at your products and tag you in promotions.
 - Picture- Provide a photo of your booth setup. This photo should show your display, signage, products, etc.
- Response Timing – Applications are reviewed by an Application Committee. We attempt to review and act on applications in a timely manner. This would typically be in 2 weeks or less.
- Waitlisting – If a qualified vendor applies in a product line that we deem to be full, they may be ‘waitlisted’. We often pull from the waitlist to backfill cancellations.
- Re-Application – A follow-up application can be made after an initial decline.
 - Applicants who have been notified that they are on a Waitlist need not apply again. They are simply waiting for an appropriate opening. They will be notified should one occur.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

- Approved Vendors - Some vendors will be approved immediately based on the strength of their application.
- Screened Vendors - The Application Committee may decide that your application warrants an invitation to vend once (called a ‘screening’ visit) at the market.
 - The purpose of this visit is to complete an overall assessment of your product and booth setup. The decision about approval will be provided following the screening visit.

LICENSES & TAXES

- Licenses – Vendors are responsible for obtaining any licenses applicable to their products. We cannot advise you on which licenses are required for your products.
- Sales Tax - Sales tax, where required by the State, is the responsibility of the seller. You must obtain resale certificates when appropriate and collect and report sales tax.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

- Required Coverage - All food vendors are required to carry liability insurance coverage with the Market listed as an ‘Additionally Insured’.
- Timeframe - You do not need to buy insurance until after you have been approved as a vendor. Your insurance must take effect by your first assigned market date.

VENDOR APPLICATION EXAMPLE

The following is a hypothetical example of an application to participate in the market using our application template. It's designed to illustrate the type of description that will increase the possibility of acceptance.

- Business Description (Include the background of the owner, the origins of the business, etc.)
 - My business, 'Jamazing' started when my neighbor offered to give me free mangoes from several of his abundant trees. I learned how to make mango chutney, which became hugely popular among my friends. It set me off on learning how to make a variety of interesting jams and chutneys. I experimented extensively with how to make particularly unusual flavors, using a variety of herbs and spices. I started out producing the jams at home, observing the 'cottage food' law requirements. I needed to expand my capacity, so I've been renting time in a commercial kitchen for the last year. I have now also been permitted by the Florida Dept of Agriculture.
- Product Description (Include product details, prices, production methods, etc.)
 - The following are my primary jam flavors. Not all flavors are available all the time, as they are produced seasonally. I'm also experimenting on-goingly with new flavors.
 - Mango Chutney
 - Blood Orange Marmalade
 - Blueberry Limoncello
 - Peach Chipotle Jam
 - Whenever possible, I use fruit grown within Florida. The product is sold in a 12 oz glass jar. Most sell for \$9. A key characteristic of my jams is that they have only 2/3rds of the sugar content than is typical for jams. My customers indicate that the intensity of the fruit flavor and the unusual spices diminish the need for sugar.