**Winter Haven Farmers Market Vendor Application Packet**

**Revised – March 2024**

**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.
* 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.

**HOW TO APPLY TO BE A VENDOR**

1. Preparation – It’s important that you carefully read this document before submitting your application.
	1. Your application should address all the topics defined here, regarding your type of product
	2. Applications are reviewed and evaluated throughout the year.
2. Application – Applying to the Market is done in the free online ‘Marketspread’ system.
	1. Each business will need to create a brief profile in Marketspread.
	2. Then the business will locate the WH 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 need to 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.
	+ We do not accept products that are commercially produced and/ or distributed.
	+ This includes products such as Scentsy, Lularoe, and other direct sales companies.
* Product Lines – The 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 has the opportunity to be successful.
* Booth Size - The standard booth space is up to 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep.
* Attendance Frequency – The Market will have both full-time and half-time vendors.
	+ Half-time vendors would typically be craft vendors to provide weekly variety in the customer’s shopping experience.
	+ Half-time vendors can select which dates they want to request in the scheduling window.
* For more information about how scheduling works, refer to the Vendor Operations Guidelines.

PRODUCT TYPES

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

* Product Types – There are 3 general categories of food products.
	+ - Ready-to-Eat Foods – e.g. sandwiches, omelets, BBQ, crepes, tamales, beverages, or smoothies.
		- Take-Home Foods – e.g. smoked fish, soup, bread, pies and cakes, salsa, granola, etc.
		- Specialty Foods & Condiment- e.g. gourmet oils, cheese, vinegar, herbs, olive salad, pasta, jams, etc.
* Vendors who sell ready-to-eat food will be favored if they also sell items that are packaged to take home.
* 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 ethnic recipes.
* Healthy Food - We have a strong preference for products that reflect healthy eating practices, e.g. 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. It is not necessary to have purchased a license before applying. Licenses are issued by the following two agencies.
	+ 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).
	+ 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 will have a single produce reseller who will 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 an appropriate license 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 color and 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, yard art, 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 are commercially produced are not acceptable.
	+ Food-Related - High quality and very unique items that are food related (e.g. cookbooks, kitchen utensils, table linens, aprons, etc.) may be considered, even if they are 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’.

Other Businesses

* Sponsorship – Businesses that do not meet our eligibility requirements can request to participate as a ‘sponsor’. Contact us to learn more about sponsorship options.
* Non-profits – We have a program to offer free space to selected non-profits. Email us with a description of your non profit and what you would like to do within your booth space to reserve a space.

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 will 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.
	+ You may wish to draft it in this document, and then copy and paste it into the online form.
	+ 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.
* Pictures - Good pictures of your product and set up are particularly important.
	+ Provide photos of your products. A link to product photos on a website are acceptable.
	+ We want a picture of your entire booth, and ones that show your product display and signage.
* Response Timing – Application 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 prospective vendor applies in a product line that we deem to be full, if the application is sufficiently strong, it may be ‘waitlisted’. When space becomes available because:
	+ a current vendor in a product category leaves, or
	+ new space becomes available (because of expansion), the vendor with the strongest application (within the category) on the waitlist may be invited to screen.
* Re-Application – A follow-up application can be made after an initial decline.
	+ It must be made at least one year following the earlier application and should outline key changes or enhancements since the earlier submission.
	+ 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.
* Sales Tax - Sales tax, where required by the State, is the responsibility of the seller.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

* Required Coverage - All vendors are required to carry liability insurance coverage with the Market listed as an ‘Additionally Insured’. Details of coverage will be provided on approval.
* Provider Options – On our website, we have a ‘Liability Insurance Overview’. It includes details of several insurance providers, with great prices, that specialize in liability coverage for concession operations.
* Timeframe - You do not need to buy insurance until after you have been approved as an on-going vendor. Proof of coverage will be required within 2 months of approval.

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 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
		- Strawberry Balsamic
		- Pineapple Brandy
	+ 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.
* Pictures
	+ Four pictures are attached of the booth setup and signs. You can see product photos in an album on my business Facebook page here.