

# Winter Haven Farmers Market Vendor Application Guidelines

(Nov 2019)

## OVERVIEW

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

- It's located in the parking lot of the BB&T bank building, on the NE corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> St and Ave C SW. Its across the street from Grove Roots Brewing company.
- The Market is open to customers from 9a.m. to 1p.m.
- The initial season will open on January 11 and close on May 16. In subsequent years the Market will open in October.

Chris Sexson (Market Manager) is responsible for the weekly operations of the market.

Phone: (863)-845-3155

Email: WinterHavenMarket@gmail.com

Website: TBD

Facebook: TBD

## HOW TO APPLY TO BE A VENDOR

- a) Preparation – It's important that you carefully read this entire Packet before submitting your application. It will guide you in addressing all the relevant factors for your type of product.
- b) Applying – Applying to the Market is done in the online [Marketspread](#) system.
  - Each business will need to create a [brief profile](#) in the Marketspread.
  - Then locate the 'Winter Haven Farmers Market' in Marketspread and apply there, completing the application process. More detail is provided below.
  - Applications are reviewed and evaluated on-goingly through out the year.

## 1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- a) Selection Criteria - Potential vendors are screened based on a number of criteria, including:
  1. Product Type - Whether the product/service falls within the market guidelines (described below).
  2. Product Quality – The style, construction and uniqueness of the product.
  3. Presentation – The display of the products on tables and throughout the booth.
  4. Vendor Style – The overall friendliness of the vendor.
- b) Booth Setup – Please use the Vendor Self Evaluation Guidelines to learn about guidelines for effective booth setup, signage and display.
  - 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 10 x10' tents with full internal frames (*vs recreational tents that have only perimeter frames*).
- c) 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.
- d) 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.

- e) Product Mix - We do not accept applications for multiple categories of products in the same booth. (e.g. pottery & jewelry).
- f) Booth Size - The standard booth space is up to 12 feet wide and 12 feet deep.
- g) Attendance Frequency – The Market will have both full-time and half-time vendors.
  - The focus in the first season will be on having full-time vendor participation.
  - Half-time vendors would typically be craft vendors. This is intended some weekly variety in the customers shopping experience.
  - Half-time vendors can select which dates they want to request in a 10-12 week scheduling window.
  - For more information about the how scheduling works, refer to the Vendor Operations Guidelines.

## 2. PRODUCT TYPES

### A. Food Products

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

- a) Product Types – There are 3 general categories of food products.
  - a) Ready-to-Eat Foods – e.g. sandwiches, omelets, BBQ, crepes, tamales, beverages, or smoothies.
  - b) Take-Home Foods – e.g. smoked fish, soup, bread, pies and cakes, salsa, granola, etc.
  - c) 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.
- b) Unique products – We’re interested in products that are unusual and not readily available in stores. In particular, this might reflect gourmet preparation, unusual flavors or ingredients, or ethnic recipes.
- c) 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.
- d) Vendor Development – For food vendors with unique ideas and backgrounds, we may work with them over time to help refine their product, preparation, and presentation to enhance their success.
- d) 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.

### B. Farm Produce

- a) Farmers – We are very interested in cultivating relationships with farmers.
  - Interested farmers should contact us directly to learn about the current opportunities available.
  - Farmers receive a discount on the vendor fee.
- b) 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.

### C. Plants & Flowers

- a) 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.
- b) Grower Preference - Preference is given to growers versus resellers.
- c) Licensing - You must hold an appropriate license with the Division of Plant Industry in the Florida Dept. of Agriculture.

### D. Crafts

- a) 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.
- b) Product Categories - Crafts are evaluated within a respective product type (e.g. pottery, clothing, jewelry, personal care products, yard art, etc.).
- c) Homemade – We are only interested in crafts that are made by the vendor.
- d) Resale – Items offered for re-sale or are commercially produced are not acceptable.
- e) 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.

### E. Services

- a) Service Delivery - We will consider service vendors if the service is conducted at the market (e.g. face painting, massage, knife sharpening, etc.).
- b) 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'.

### F. Other Businesses

- a) Sponsorship – Businesses that do not meet our eligibility requirements can request to participate as a 'sponsor'. Contact us to learn more about sponsorship options.
- b) Non-profits – We have a program to offer free space to selected non-profits. More detail about this program is available on our website

### 3. FEES

- a) Amount - The vending fee is \$xx/ day.

### 4. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- a) You will need to create a brief profile in the Marketspread.
- b) Then locate the 'Winter Haven Farmers Market' in Marketspread and apply there, completing the application process.
  - You will have the following questions presented to you in your online application process.
  - Omitting information (e.g. prices, vending experience) 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. )

**Vending Experience** (Where you have vended previously, and how long)

**Booth Design** (How your booth is designed)

- c) Application Example - See the example (below) for guidance about the degree of detail we want in your application.
- d) Pictures - Good pictures of your product and set up are particularly important.
  - You can include product photos in your business profile on Marketspread.
  - We want a picture of your entire booth, and ones that show your product display and signage.
- e) 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.
- f) 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:
  - (1) a current vendor in a product category leaves, or
  - (2) new space becomes available (because of expansion), the vendor with the strongest application (within the category) on the waitlist may be invited to screen.
- g) 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.

## 5. THE APPROVAL PROCESS

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

## 6. LICENSES & TAXES

- a) Licenses – Vendors are responsible for obtaining any licenses applicable to their products.
- b) Sales Tax - Sales tax, where required by the State, is the responsibility of the seller.

## 7. LIABILITY INSURANCE

- a) Required Coverage - All vendors are required to carry basic liability insurance coverage with the Market listed as an ‘Additionally Insured’. Details of coverage will be provided on approval.
- b) Provider Options – On our website, we will have a [‘Liability Insurance Overview’](#). It includes details of several insurance providers, with great prices, that specialize in liability coverage for concession operations.
- c) 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.

- The example uses 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. So 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-going 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. Pictures of my products are viewable in an album on my Facebook page [here](#).

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.

### **Vending Experience** *(Where you have vended previously, and how long)*

I started selling at a few neighborhood events about 2 years ago, and then moved into selling at local 'Indie Markets'. Last year, I began selling weekly on Saturdays at the Bay Harbor Farmers Market.

My weekly sales average has more than doubled from when I started. A big driver for my improved sales is my method of providing taste samples. Most people who taste 2 flavors buy at least one jar.

In the last 3 months, 2 local gourmet markets have begun carrying a selection of my jams.

### **Booth Design** *(How your booth is designed)*

- My display was initially just my products line up on a table on the front of the booth.
- I've subsequently added product stands that include descriptions of each of the products.
- I have a large banner in the rear which includes description of how my jams are unique, and a small banner on the front lip of my tent.

### **Pictures**

Three pictures are attached of the booth setup and signs.