

Saturday Morning Market Vendor Application Guidelines

(revised October 2009)

INTRODUCTION

The Saturday Morning Market is the result of the grassroots efforts of individuals committed to developing a creative community spirit in downtown St. Petersburg. The Market has achieved remarkable success in fulfilling its mission. In just several short years, it's become the largest fresh market in the southeast United States. More importantly, it's brought a vibrant energy to our city that is transformational.

The Saturday Morning Market is held weekly on Saturday mornings in downtown St. Petersburg.

- It's located in the parking lot of Al Lang Stadium/Progress Energy Park (corner of 1st Ave S & 1st Street).
- The market is open to customers from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

MARKET MANAGEMENT

The Market is guided by a 3 member Steering Committee, composed of Mark Johnson (Market Director), Gail Eggeman (Market Manager), and Carol Ringold. The Steering Committee defines the mission, strategies, marketing practices, operational guidelines, and approves new vendors at the Market.

Market Manager

Gail Eggeman, the Market Manager, is responsible for the weekly operations of the market, as well as managing the new vendor screening process.

- Phone: (727) 455-4921
- Email: saturdaymkt@yahoo.com

OUR VENDOR PHILOSOPHY

Vendor Community – It's our hope that all vendors feel that they are vital members of our community.

- We encourage you to meet, learn about and support the vendors around you. Our vendors indicate that they greatly appreciate this characteristic of our market.
- This spirit of community among vendors is a foundation for the sense of community that customers experience and love about the Saturday Morning Market.

Continuous Improvement - We are committed to our vendors' growth and success.

- We encourage vendors to continuously explore how they can improve their products and their booth display. We also know that each vendor's development of their products and display helps the market grow as a whole.
- We offer tools, coaching, and feedback (wherever desired) to help vendors develop. Many vendors report that this support has resulted in a substantial increase in their sales.

Planning your Application

The Market receives a several hundred applications and inquiries each season. As one of the premier vending locations in central Florida, the competition for the limited available space is very strong.

To make as strong a submission as possible, we encourage you to carefully plan your submission.

- Visit the market to assess the vendors there, and study the [Vendor Contact list](#) on our website to get a complete picture of vendors who may be selling products like yours. (most craft vendors do not attend every week).
- It's imperative that you carefully read the entire Packet before submitting your application to ensure you address all the relevant factors for your type of product.

PRODUCT TYPES

1. Food Products

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

- Healthy Food - We have a strong preference for products that reflect healthy eating practices, e.g. baked vs. fried, low sugar, healthy ingredients, freshly prepared, etc
- 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.
- Vendor Overlap - We recommend that you carefully compare your product to existing products before applying. Unique food items that are not currently present at market will be given greater consideration.
- Vendor Development – For food vendors with promising ideas and backgrounds, we will work with them over time to help refine their product, preparation, and presentation to ensure their success.
- Product Types – There are 3 general categories of food products.
 1. Ready to Eat Foods – e.g. sandwiches, omelets, BBQ, crepes, tamales, beverages, or smoothies.
 2. Take Home Foods – e.g. smoked fish, soup, bread, pies and cakes, salsa, granola, etc.
 3. Specialty Foods & Condiment - e.g. gourmet oils, cheese, vinegar, herbs, olive salad, pasta, jams, etc.
- Product Type Combinations - Vendors who sell ready-to-eat food will be favored if they also sell items that are packaged to take home.
- Licenses - Food vendors are expected to meet the requirements of applicable State regulatory agencies. Most food vendors need to have a license/permit from one of the following 2 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 Agriculture [Standards for Farmers Market Vendors](#).
 - Dept of Agriculture [Application Form](#).
 - Dept of Agriculture contact info: (850)245-5520. This is a central contact point. Typically a local agent will then return the call within a day.

Dept of Business & Professional Regulation – Hotel & Restaurant Division. – This agency regulates mobile vendors that prepare and cook food at the event.

 - DBPR – Hotel & Restaurant Division - www.hospitalityeducation.org
- Market Kitchen - The market may be able to provide a referral to a local kitchen that is certified by the local Health Dept, which enables new food vendors to meet the licensing requirements associated with cooking food for sale
 - These kitchens, which typically have commercial grade equipment, rent time to market vendors. .
 - To learn more about possible kitchen rental options, talk to Gail Eggeman, Market Manager,
- Management Guidance - We suggest you have a conversation with the Market Manager (Gail Eggeman) or Market Director (Mark Johnson) prior to applying for food products. It is also very important to visit the market to understand the types of food products that are currently represented.

2. Farm Produce

- Produce resale - We are not accepting additional produce resellers.
- Farmers – We are very interested in cultivating relationships with farmers.
 - Interested farmers should contact us directly to learn about the current opportunities available.
 - Farmers also receive discounts on the vendor fee.

3. Plants & Flowers

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

4. Crafts

- Product Priorities - The primary focus of the market is related to food and plants. Crafts are intended to supplement these core products and provide color and variety to the marketplace. Our current interest is primarily in very unusual or high end type of crafts.
- Product Categories - Crafts are evaluated within a respective product type (e.g. pottery, clothing, jewelry, personal care products, yard art, etc).
- Homemade - Crafts made by the vendor themselves are given strong preference. It's our intention to support local craftspeople and artists at the market.
- Resale – Items offered for re-sale or commercially produced are not generally acceptable.
- Fair Trade Crafts – Unique crafts from 3rd world artisans will be considered when there is a direct relationship between the vendor and craftspeople, and fair trade practices are observed.
- Food-Related - High quality and unique items that are food related (e.g. cookbooks, kitchen utensils, table linens, aprons, etc) will be considered even if they are not made by the vendor
- Attendance Frequency - Approved new craft vendors are typically invited to attend (on average) once every 4 weeks.
 - The limitation on craft vendor frequency is intentionally designed to create a rotation of craft vendors so the customers experience significant variety in the craft selection.
 - Vendors are given the opportunity to 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.

5. Services

- Service Delivery - We generally accept service vendors if the service is conducted at the market (e.g. face painting, massage, or knife sharpening).
- Promotion - We do not accept applications for businesses wishing to promote services provided elsewhere (e.g. health club or real estate sales)

6. Environmentally Friendly Products

- Green products – The market has a partnership with [Pinellas Living Green](#). Space has been allocated at the market for products that reflect progressive or unusual environmental products and practices. These booths are for products that do not fit other categories of eligibility outlined above.
 - Examples might include energy saving devices, sustainably building products, non-toxic pesticides, etc
 - Visit Pinellas Living Green's [webpage](#) to learn more about this option.

GENERAL VENDING GUIDELINES

- 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 above).
 2. Product Quality – The style, construction and uniqueness of the product.
 3. Presentation – The display of the products on tables and throughout the booth. (see the separate *Vendor Success Guidelines* document)
 4. Vendor Style – The overall friendliness and general appearance of the vendor.
- Product Lines – The market management attempts to make judgments about the appropriate number of vendors within a product category.
 - This assessment is based on factors such as the current size of our weekly attendance, the number of total available spaces, etc.
 - Our intention is to limit the number of vendors so that each has the opportunity to be successful, while also stimulating them to improve due to competition.
- Visiting - We strongly recommend that you visit the market before submitting an application.
 - We strongly encourage you to provide us with your perspective about how your product is similar to or different from our existing vendors.
- Product Additions - Vendors are not permitted to add additional product lines (outside the products described in the acceptance email) without written approval. Requests must be made by email.
 - Any subsequent additions to a product line must to be approved by the Market Manager.
 - Examples of a product line addition requiring approval would include:
 - a baked goods vendor adding prepared sandwiches to their offering.
 - a craft vendor, who sells decorative accessories, adding a line of jewelry.
- Booth Size - The standard booth space is up to 12 feet wide and 12 feet deep (somewhat larger than the size of the typical EZ-UP tent).

FEES

- The fee for vending at the market is \$45/ day or \$165 for 4 weeks (they do not need to be consecutive).
- Fees must be paid one week in advance of the scheduled date to ensure a space reservation.

THE EMAIL APPLICATION PROCESS

- Description - A prospective vendor begins by emailing a detailed description of the proposed products and booth setup. The description should include:
 - a detailed description of the types of item(s) you want to sell.
 - any unique characteristics of the items (e.g. who makes them, how they're made, etc)
 - how you plan to display your item (e.g. displayed on table, hung on racks, use of a tent, etc.)
- Pictures - Vendors should also send digital pictures of a reasonable sample of your products. (This is optional for food/ plant vendors). We also prefer to get a photo of your overall booth setup.
- Application Example - See the examples at the end of this document (page 6) for guidance about the degree of detail we need in your application. The quality and detail in the application can substantially impact the likely of a positive response!
- Email Accounts - Vendors who do not have email accounts will probably not be considered. We are too large to attempt to do business without email communication.
- Submission - Send the application to saturdaymkt@yahoo.com.
- Application Review – Due to the working status of the Committee, it may take up to 3-4 weeks for an application to be reviewed by the Steering Committee.

- Waitlisting – If a prospective vendor applies in a product line that we deem to be full, the application will 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.
- Attendance Frequency - New craft vendors are generally invited to attend on average once a month (or 3 dates in a 12 week scheduling period). Food or plant vendors may be invited half or full time.

VENDOR SCREENING & APPROVAL PROCESS

- The Steering Committee may decide that your application warrants an invitation to vend once at the market. The purpose of this opportunity is for the Committee to complete the overall assessment of your product, booth setup, and your personal presentation.
- You'll receive an email invitation to vend at the Market, including a choice of dates to select from. You should email back with your preferred date.
- Once you receive the confirmation of your scheduled date, you'll need to send your payment in at least one week in advance of your scheduled date.
- The Steering Committee is responsible for making the final decision about the approval of a new vendor after the screening visit.

RESERVATION PROCESS

- Payment must be received one week prior to your scheduled date to hold your space. Payment received after that may result in loss of that space for that week.
- Checks should be made to Saturday Morning Market. Send the payment to:
 - Saturday Morning Market
 - Box 1213
 - St Petersburg, FL 33731
- Payments made to reserve a spot are not refundable. However, if you cancel your scheduled date by Wednesday prior to the Saturday market, your payment will be credited to a future scheduled date.
- Reserved vendors who do not arrive by 8:15 a.m. on Saturday, or fail to indicate in advance that they will be late, may forfeit their space.

TABLE & TENT RENTALS

- Tents (\$20) and tables (\$5) are available for rent. The price includes setup.
- The rental service is provided by one of our large produce vendors. To make a reservation, contact:
 - Connie Lehmer (727) 433-0849
 - Bob & Daughter Produce
 - 1266 Lakeview Rd. Email: clehmer@tampabay.rr.com
 - Clearwater, FL 33756
- Payment is collected at the end of the day.

LICENSES & TAXES

- Occupational License - The market has a blanket occupational license from the City of St Petersburg for all participating vendors (which applies only while the participant is vending at our market).
- Sales Tax - Sales tax, where required by the State, is the responsibility of the seller.

SAMPLE VENDOR APPLICATIONS

The following are 2 hypothetical examples of an application to participate in the market.

- These examples are designed to clarify the type of description that will speed up the review process for your submission, and increase the possibility of acceptance.
- The application examples are for the same product and vendor.
- The key characteristic that distinguishes a poor from a strong application is the amount of detail provided. This is true for all types of products – food, plants or crafts.
- Send the application to saturdaymkt@yahoo.com.

A Poor Application

I'd like to sell Guatemalan hammocks, made by the native Indians. I've had a dream to create a business selling these since I lived there 7 years ago.

They're colorful, sturdy, and very unique. I've been selling them to friends, who just love them. I'm really looking forward to bringing them to the market!

Pictures – 2 pictures are included. The hammocks are lined up on a table. Lighting is poor. The photos are from 6-8 feet away.

A Strong Application

Product Description

I'd like to sell Guatemalan Hammocks. They are made by native Indians I worked with while in the Peace Corps. Making these hammocks provides an important source of income for them, as their only other source of support is the crops they raise. I travel back to Guatemala several times a year to meet with the Indians that make the products. Our purchases follow all the principles of Fair Trade practices

The hammocks come in several styles – singles, doubles and chair. They're made with all natural fibers and typically include 3-5 colors woven throughout. They are very sturdy - the double can safely hold over 400 lbs. They typically last 4-5 years or more when left outside in Guatemala. The prices will range from \$30-70. Each hammock comes with instructions about options for safely hanging it, and information about the Indians who make them.

To my knowledge, hammocks like these are not available in stores anywhere in the Tampa Bay area. They are being sold in stores in California.

Display Description

We are still thinking through how to display them. My husband is designing a tall rack made from PVC pipe that can be easily assembled at the market. It would enable customers to see the variety of colors easily as they walk by.

Pictures – 5 pictures are included. One shows numerous multicolored hammocks hung over a clothesline in sunlight. Another shows close-ups of the workmanship. There are pictures of 2 people in a double hammock and one of a chair style hammock.