

St Petersburg Saturday Morning Market

Vendor Application Guidelines

(Revised Sept 2015)

INTRODUCTION

The Saturday Morning Market is the result of the grassroots efforts of individuals committed to developing a creative community spirit in St. Petersburg. The Market has achieved remarkable success, having 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 from Oct through May in downtown St. Petersburg.

- It's located in the parking lot of Al Lang Stadium (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 intention 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. Many vendors indicate that the sense of community among our vendors is substantially greater than anywhere else they've vended, and that this is a significant source of satisfaction in their participation.
- 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 and coaching to help vendors develop. Many vendors report that this support has resulted in a substantial increase in their sales.

HOW TO APPLY TO BE A VENDOR

Applying involves sending an email with key information included.

- There is no application form. There is a template provided to guide you in including relevant information.
- It's imperative that you carefully read this entire Packet before submitting your email application to ensure you address all the relevant factors for your type of product.

PLANNING YOUR APPLICATION

The Market receives several hundred applications 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 get an understanding of vendors who may be selling products like yours. (Most craft vendors do not attend every week).

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 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.
 4. Vendor Style – The overall friendliness and general appearance of the vendor.
- b) Prior Vending Experience –
 - We strongly recommend that applicants gain experience vending at other markets/ shows prior to applying. It enables you to develop needed sophistication in vending.
- c) Visiting - We strongly recommend that you visit the market before submitting an application.
 - We encourage you to provide us with your perspective about how your product are similar to or different from our existing vendors.
- d) Commercial Products – Our focus is on artisan products that are designed and created by the vendor.
 - We do not tend to accept products that are commercially produced and/ or distributed.
- e) 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 with similar products so that each has the opportunity to be successful, while also stimulating them to improve due to competition.
- f) Booth Setup – You should read the [Vendor Self Evaluation Guidelines](#) to learn what our standards are for effective booth setup, signage and display. It will benefit you significantly to address, in detail, the categories in this framework in your application description.
- g) Product Mix - We aren't accepting applications for multiple categories of products in the same booth. (e.g. pottery & jewelry).
- h) Attendance Frequency - New craft vendors are generally invited to attend (on average) once a month. Food or plant vendors may be invited half or full time.
- i) Booth Size - The standard booth space is up to 12 feet wide and 12 feet deep.
 - We don't accept vehicles (trucks/ trailers) or booth designs that exceed these dimensions.
- j) 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.

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.
 - d) Product Type Combinations - Vendors who sell ready-to-eat food will be favored if they also sell items that are packaged to take home.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) Healthy Food - We have a strong preference for products that reflect healthy eating practices, e.g. healthy ingredients, freshly prepared, low sugar, baked vs. fried, etc. We don’t allow deep fried food.
- e) 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.
- f) Food Trucks – We will not be approving applications for food trucks.
 - Our existing food trucks are grandfathered in (from a time when we had more space)
- e) 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 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. www.hospitalityeducation.org
- f) Understanding Current Products - It is very valuable to visit the market to understand the types of food products that are currently represented. If you are applying for products similar to ones already available, you should address why your products are different.

B. Farm Produce

- a) Produce Resale - We are not accepting additional produce resellers.
- b) 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.

C. Plants & Flowers

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

D. Crafts

- d) 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.
- e) Product Categories - Crafts are evaluated within a respective product type (e.g. pottery, clothing, jewelry, personal care products, yard art, etc.).
- f) Homemade - Crafts made by the vendor themselves are given strong preference. It's our intention to support local craftspeople and artists at the market.
- g) Resale – Items offered for re-sale or commercially produced are not generally acceptable.
- h) 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.
- i) Food-Related - High quality and very 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.
- j) Attendance Frequency - Approved craft vendors are 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 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.

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).

F. Other Businesses

- a) Sponsorship – Businesses that do not meet our eligibility requirements can apply as a 'sponsor'.
- b) Cost – If approved as a sponsor, the cost is \$500 per week. It includes a tent and table. The revenue is used to support education and charitable programs at Market.

3. FEES

- a) Amount - The vending fee is \$50/ day.

4. THE EMAIL APPLICATION PROCESS

- a) Application Form – There is not a ‘form’ to complete.
- b) 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.)
- c) Pictures - Vendors should send digital pictures of a reasonable sample of your products. (This is optional for food/ plant vendors).
 - We strongly prefer getting a photo of your booth setup and product display.
 - Please do not send photos that are over 2MB per photo. Also, do not ‘zip’ your files.
- d) If the application is a separate document (versus the body of an email), please label the file with your business name (and not ‘*Sat Market Application*’. We already have 413 of those files 😊).
- e) Application Example - See the examples on page 6 for guidance about the degree of detail we need in your application. The detail in the application can substantially impact the likelihood of a positive response!
- f) Submission - Send the application to saturdaymkt@yahoo.com.
- g) Response Timing – Due to the volume of applications we receive, evaluating and responding to applications is a time consuming task. In addition, the working status of the Committee members means that there are limited opportunities to meet and review applications.
 - Applications received at any point in a month, will be replied to by the end of the following month
- h) Waitlisting – If a prospective vendor applies in a product line that we deem to be full, if the response is sufficiently strong, the application 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.
- i) 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. VENDOR SCREENING & APPROVAL PROCESS

- a) Screening Visit - The Steering Committee may decide that your application warrants an invitation to vend once (called a screening visit) 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.
- b) Date Selection - 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.
- c) Decision Making - The Steering Committee is responsible for making the final decision about the approval of a new vendor after the screening visit.

6. RESERVATION PROCESS

- a) Payment - 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.
- b) Payment Address - Checks should be made to Saturday Morning Market. Send the payment to:
Saturday Morning Market
Box 1213, St Petersburg, FL 33731
- c) Refunds - Payments made to reserve a spot are not refundable. If you cancel your scheduled date by Wednesday prior to the Saturday market, your payment will be credited to a future scheduled date.
- d) Late Arrival - 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.

7. TABLE & TENT RENTALS

- a) Fees - Tents (\$20) and tables (\$5) are available for rent. The price includes setup.

8. LICENSES & TAXES

- a) 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).
- b) Sales Tax - Sales tax, where required by the State, is the responsibility of the seller.

9. LIABILITY INSURANCE

- a) 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.
- b) Provider Options – On our website, we have a '[Liability Insurance Overview](#)'. It includes details of several insurance providers, with great prices, that specialize in concession liability coverage.
- c) Timeframe - Proof of coverage will be required within 2 months of approval as a vendors.

VENDOR APPLICATION EXAMPLE

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.
- For guidance on effective display, reference our [Vendor Self Evaluation Guidelines](#).

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 Stronger 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.