

St Petersburg Saturday Morning Market

Vendor Application Guidelines

(Revised Sept 2018)

OVERVIEW

The Saturday Morning Market is held weekly from October through May in downtown St. Petersburg.

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

The Market is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, and is guided by a Board of Directors and a Steering Committee which defines the mission, strategies, marketing practices, operational guidelines, and approves new vendors at the Market.

Gail Eggeman (Market Manager) and Sarah Fielding (Market Operations) are responsible for the weekly operations of the market.

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

PLANNING YOUR APPLICATION

The Market is the most desirable vending opportunity in central Florida.

- As a result, we receive hundreds of applications a year. We typically accept only 5-10 of them per year.
- To make as strong a submission as possible, we encourage you to carefully plan your submission.
- Competition is so strong, that vendors who do not have active vending experience (including pictures of the booth setup) have a very low probability of acceptance.

OUR VENDOR PHILOSOPHY

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

- 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 (on page 4) to guide providing the needed information.
- It's important 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.
- Applications are reviewed and evaluated 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 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 of the vendor.
- b) Visiting - Please visit the market before submitting an application.
 - When you apply provide us with your perspective about how your products are similar to or different from our existing vendors.
- 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 has the opportunity to be successful.
- e) Booth Setup – Please use the [Vendor Self Evaluation Guidelines](#) to learn what standards are for effective booth setup, signage and display.
 - Address, in detail, the categories in this framework in your application description.
 - Vendors need to have displays that are eye catching and display products unique to each booth.
- f) Product Mix - We do not accept applications for multiple categories of products in the same booth. (e.g. pottery & jewelry).
- g) Prior Experience – It is very rare that we accept applicants who do not have prior vending experience.
 - If you are just starting to vend, we strongly encourage you to get experience at one of the dozens of local venues before applying to us.
- 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.
 - Market has limited space and does not accept vehicles (trucks/ trailers) or booth designs that exceed these dimensions.
 - It is to your advantage to choose professional grade 10 x10' tents with full internal frames (vs recreational tents that have only perimeter frames).
- j) Plastic Policy – The Market is in the process of implementing a no plastics policy for single- use plastic shopping bags, food containers, etc., as well as other problematic products (styrofoam).
- k) Annual Participation - It is very rare that vendors are accepted for brief visits (e.g. 2 dates only) or seasonal attendance (Jan – March only). Exceptions may be made for unusual or seasonal food items (e.g. freshly picked apples, maple syrup)
- l) Email Communications - All communications must be done via email.
 - Vendors who do not have email accounts will not be considered.
 - Text messages, Facebook messaging and other methods do not work to communicate with us.

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 or no sugar, baked vs. fried, etc. We don’t allow deep-fried food.
- e) 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.
- f) Food Trucks – We do not accept applications for food trucks. They take up too much space.
 - Our existing food trucks are grandfathered in (from a time when we had more space)
- e) 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.
- 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 clearly 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 supplement these core products, and provide color and variety to the market.
- e) Product Categories - Crafts are evaluated within a respective product type (e.g. pottery, clothing, jewelry, personal care products, yard art, etc.).
- f) Homemade – We support craftspeople and artists at the market. As a result, crafts must be made by the vendor.
- g) Fair Trade Crafts – We no longer accept applications from ‘Fair Trade’ vendors, who are importing purchased item from abroad.
- h) Resale – Items offered for re-sale or commercially produced are not acceptable.
- 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, medical offices).

F. Other Businesses

- a) Sponsorship – Businesses that do not meet our eligibility requirements can apply as a ‘sponsor’.
 - 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.
 - More detail about this program is available on our website.
- 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 \$50/ day.

4. THE EMAIL APPLICATION PROCESS

- a) Application Details – There is not a ‘form’ to complete.
 - The following is the template for supplying the detail we want you to provide. You can copy and paste it into an email
 - You need to address all the items below in your response. Omitting information (e.g. prices, vending experience) will 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 Approach/ Experience *(How your booth is designed, and where you’ve vended before)*

- b) Application Example - See the example (on page 7) for guidance about the degree of detail we need in your application. The detail in the application can substantially impact the likely of a positive response!
- c) Email - We prefer that the application is in the body of the email.
 - If the application is a separate document (versus the body of an email), label the file with your business name (and not ‘Sat Market Application’. We already have 413 of those files 😊).
- d) Pictures - Good pictures of your product and set up are particularly important.
 - We need a picture of your entire booth, and ones that show your product display and signage.
 - Provide photos of your products. A link to product photos on a website are acceptable.
 - Please attach the photos (*as opposed to embedding them in the email body.*)
 - Please do not send photos that are over 2MB per photo. Also, do not ‘zip’ your files.
- e) Submission - Send the application to saturdaymkt@yahoo.com.
- f) Response Timing – Due to the high 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.
 - For applications received during a month, we will reply by the end of the following month
- g) 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.
- h) 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.

7. TABLE & TENT RENTALS

- a) Service - The Market operates a tent and table rental service
- b) 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 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.)*

I'm experimenting on-going with new flavors. The following are my primary jam flavors. Not all flavors are available all the time, as they are produced seasonally.

- 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.

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.

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

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](#).