



Worthington Farmers Market Vendor Handbook – 2026 Edition

Friendly, clear guidelines for a successful and fun market season!

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1. Mission & Purpose

The Worthington Farmers Market exists to uplift local growers, makers, bakers, and small businesses while creating a welcoming, community-centered space where residents and visitors can gather. We celebrate cultural diversity, healthy living, local agriculture, and entrepreneurship, and we aim to make every market day warm, friendly, and enjoyable.

2. Contact Information

Market Manager: Kris Hohensee

Email: khohensee@forwardworthington.com

Website: forwardworthington.com/farmersmarket

Phone: [Insert phone number]

3. Market Overview

FORWARD Worthington oversees the Worthington Farmers Market. Our focus is on creating a safe, consistent, and positive environment for vendors and shoppers. These guidelines help ensure fairness, clarity, and smooth weekly operations.

4. Market Dates, Times & Locations

Season Runs: June through October

Tuesdays: Downtown Pavilion, 915 10th Street

Saturdays: Ace Hardware Parking Lot, Oxford Street

Full season calendar will be shared each spring before opening day.

5. Vendor Application & Fees

All vendors must submit the following before attending the market:

- Completed Vendor Application
- Minnesota ST-19 Form
- Required food licenses (if applicable)
- Payment for stalls and electricity

2026 Pricing:

- \$25 per 8×10 space
- \$25 electricity flat fee

No stalls are reserved until payment and documents are received.

6. Eligible Products

Vendors may sell:

- Fresh produce
- Meat, poultry, eggs, dairy (properly licensed)
- Cottage Food baked and canned goods
- Breads, pastries, snacks
- Value-added foods such as salsa, pho kits, quiche, soups, dog treats, etc.
- Plants, flowers, herbs, starters
- Handmade artisan goods

All products must be vendor-grown or vendor-made—no resale without approval.

NO live animal may be sold, displayed, or given away at the market.

7. Vendor Conduct Expectations

To keep our friendly community spirit strong, vendors must:

- Treat customers, staff, and fellow vendors kindly and professionally
- Maintain a clean space
- Follow all market safety rules
- Avoid smoking or vaping in booth spaces
- Always use respectful language
- no dogs allowed in the vendor booth area unless they are a service animal and then they must have the proper gear stating this.
- Alcohol and drugs are prohibited at the market, unless used with prescription. Smoking is prohibited at the market.
- Vendors are expected to treat other vendors politely. If vendor behavior is offensive or threatening to other members of the market community, management reserves the right to reassign the vendor to a new space or remove the vendor from the market.

You represent the Worthington community, and we appreciate your energy and positivity!

8. Attendance & Cancellations

Please notify the Market Manager in the morning on market day if you cannot attend.

If the Market is going to be cancelled for weather or other unforeseen reasons all vendors will be contacted as soon as possible.

9. Labeling & Food Safety (Summary)

All food vendors must follow Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) rules.

Cottage Food vendors must include required labels.

Licensed vendors must maintain temperature control and safe sampling procedures.

10. Market Operations

Setup begins 1 hour before opening.

Vehicles must be moved by opening time.

Restrooms are available near both market locations.

Electricity is limited and must be requested in advance.

11. Stall Setup & Equipment

Vendors must provide their own tables, chairs, displays, and signage.

MANDATORY: At least 20 lbs. of weight per tent leg.

Tents without proper weights cannot be used for safety reasons.

12. Display, Signage & Booth Appearance

Your booth should look welcoming! Please display:

- A professional business name sign must be displayed. No hand-written signs on paper or cardboard will be allowed.
- Clear pricing
- Appropriate product labels
- Keep food stored 6 inches off the ground and maintain a clean space.
- Vendors offering samples must follow all Safe Food Sampling guidelines, including an approved portable handwashing station, no bare-hand contact with foods, and adequate garbage receptacle accessible to customers.

13. Sales & Payment Policies

Vendors handle their own sales and taxes.

We recommend accepting cash, card, and digital payment methods.

Resale of goods is not allowed unless approved.

14. SNAP/EBT & Token Programs

The Worthington Farmers Market proudly participates in:

- EBT / SNAP coupons
- Market Bucks
- Power of Produce \$2 tokens (PoPs)
- Power of Produce \$4 tokens (PoPs+)

Vendors are reimbursed weekly.

15. Special Programming

2026 hopes to include:

- Weekly live music
- Rotating food trucks
- Recipes and sampling
- Children's activities and engagement tables

We welcome vendors to participate or partner in these activities!

16. Weather Policy

The market operates rain or shine, but severe weather may cause delays or closure.

Examples include lightning, high winds, tornado warnings, and extreme heat.

Vendors will be notified by phone, text or email.

17. Pets, Volunteers & Public Safety

No Pets are allowed in the vendors booths.

Service animals are always welcome.

Volunteers help with setup, kids' activities, and events.

All vendors must keep walkways safe and clutter-free.

18. Market Staff Roles

We aim for a supportive and collaborative market environment.

Market Manager supervises operations and manages development and promotion of the market. The Market Manager oversees setup, vendor placement, communication, and programming.

The Market Manager enforces the rules and guidelines of the market and has the authority to interpret and implement the policy and have final authority over the market.

Repeated rule violations may result in warnings or removal.

Assistants help with logistics and customer engagement.

We are here to help you succeed!

19. Feedback & Communication

We love hearing your ideas!

Please reach out anytime to help us improve and grow the market.

20. Sampling

Vendors are strongly encouraged to provide samples of their products. Samples are very appealing to shoppers and offering samples gives vendors a reason to engage shoppers in conversation about the product. *Sampling will increase your sales.*

According to state law, vendors may sample their wares at the farmers market if the following rules are followed. For more information about the state's Safe Food Sampling at Farmers Market law and requirements, visit <https://www.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/courses/safe-food-sampling-farmers-markets/>

Sampling must occur under a tent or canopy.

Store all foods, beverages, ice, utensils, and paper products at least 6 inches above the ground.

All samples must be prepared on site at the farmers market. Samples may not be prepared off site.

Always keep potentially hazardous foods such as meats, fish, poultry, or salads at 41 degrees F or colder or 140 degrees F or hotter. Use a metal-stem thermometer to monitor product temperatures and use mechanical refrigeration for cold items.

Hot items must be discarded after four hours. Cold items must be discarded if they have been displayed outside of mechanical refrigeration for four hours.

Samples must be covered in order to prevent contamination.

No bare hand contact with foods. Vendors must provide their own gloves, serving papers, toothpicks, or other means to avoid touching food with bare hands.

Vendors must provide their own portable handwashing station which contains a minimum of five gallons of warm water. (**Note that water is not available on site and must be brought to the market.**) The handwashing station must have a toggle-type spigot that allows water to run over both hands as they are washed. Vendors must provide their own soap, disposable paper towels, and wastewater catch basin.

For sampling utensils, vendors must provide a three-compartment sink or bring extra sanitized utensils in the event that one becomes soiled.

Samples must be three ounces or less.

Samples must be provided at no cost.

Worthington Farmers Market **Token/Coupon Programs**: Important Information for Vendors

Vendors will be reimbursed for Worthington Farmers Market-issued tokens/coupons by check every week. Other markets issue their own tokens, but we will reimburse only tokens from Worthington Farmers Market as in the examples on the following pages. The exception to this rule is Market Bucks, which you may redeem at any participating market.

Vendors cannot use tokens as change for a customer's purchase (you should provide change ONLY in cash) nor should a vendor use tokens to make their own purchases or transfer tokens to another vendor for any reason.

Vendor Reimbursement Procedure (HOW TO TURN TOKENS INTO REAL MONEY!)

Accept the various tokens from customers, according to the specific instructions on the back of this page.

You may accept tokens and Market (Produce) Bucks if you sell qualifying products— edible items for home consumption—and have a signed agreement on file with Worthington Farmers Market.

Each vendor will receive a token baggie kit and daily submission form. Tokens must be pre-counted, and the form completed before turning into the market attendee.

At the end of each market day, bring all tokens to the Farmers Market attendee.

Market staff will contact you within five business days if there is any discrepancy between your form totals and the number of tokens in the bag.

Worthington Farmers Market will either mail a reimbursement check every week to the address provided by the vendor or will have the check available at the following weeks market. You may update your "payable" information or address at any time by contacting market management. Please deposit or cash your checks promptly.

Vendors with eligible products may choose to accept EBT coupons and PoPs/PoPs+ tokens. You must sign an agreement form if you wish to participate in the EBT program. *Do not make change in cash.*



\$2 or \$4 Tokens are issued when a customer signs the distribution sheet.

Tokens may be used to purchase any grocery item that will be prepared at home (fresh or preserved produce, meats, eggs, cheese, breads, sauces, pickles, jams, juices, prepared foods that are packaged to take home, etc.)

Tokens may **NOT** be used for items that will be consumed on-site at Market (prepared drinks, hot foods, single cookies or snacks, for example.) They may NOT be used for decorative items such as non-edible pumpkins or gourds, decorative corn or non-edible flowering plants. DO NOT use these tokens to make change for transactions or to make your own purchases.



Market Bucks are a special incentive for SNAP/EBT customers. These shoppers will receive a FREE match of up to \$10 when they use their EBT card at market. As in the past, Market Bucks Coupons are worth \$1 in EBT-eligible products.

They follow all the same rules as the tokens, and you will be reimbursed for them. Unlike tokens, they have an expiration date. Vendors are responsible for watching the expirations dates. Expires coupons will not be reimbursed to the vendors if accepted.



Produce Bucks are a special incentive for SNAP/EBT customers. These shoppers will receive a FREE match of up to \$10 when they use their EBT card at market. These are in addition to the matching Market Bucks. As in the past, Produce Bucks Coupons are worth \$1 in EBT-eligible products.

They are good only for fresh produce products, and you will be reimbursed for them. Unlike tokens, they have an expiration date. Vendors are responsible for watching the expirations dates. Expires coupons will not be reimbursed to the vendors if accepted.

Permits, Licenses, Taxes and Insurance

The market may be inspected by local, Nobles County, or State inspectors on any day without advance notice. Inspectors may have the authority to temporarily close vendor businesses. To avoid disruption and lost income, it is important to seek all appropriate licensing and permits prior to the beginning of the market season. Copies of these licenses must be submitted to market organizers.

All permits and licenses required by the City of Worthington, Nobles County, the State of Minnesota or the Federal Government are the sole responsibility of the vendors. Vendors must work directly with the issuing agency to seek proper licensing.

The table below is intended as a guide for vendors when determining which forms, licenses and permits to submit with vendor application. This guide may not be accurate for every vendor or product. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Food Licensing Wizard may also be helpful:

<http://www2.mda.state.mn.us/webapp/foodlicensingwizard/>

	MN Revenue Form ST-19	Proof of Insurance	MN Cottage Foods Producer Registration	MN Dept. Ag Retail Mobile Food Handler License	City of Worthington Itinerant License	MN Dept Health License AND City of Wgtn. Mobile Food Unit Reciprocity	MN Dept. Labor & Industry Portable & Temp. Power Inspection
Fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh-cut flowers	X	X					
Meat or dairy products	X	X		X			
Pure honey or maple syrup	X	X					
Farmstead products with added ingredients (for example, flavored honey or maple syrup)	X	X	Consult Henn Co. Environmental Health	Consult Henn. Co. Environmental Health			
Non-potentially hazardous home-baked and home-processed foods	X	X	X				
Concession items	X	X		X	X		

				--OR--			
Non-edible items	X	X					
Food trucks or mobile food units	X	X		X	X	X	X
				--OR--			

Vendors must provide a copy of all applicable licenses to the Worthington Farmers Market prior to attending the market. Vendors must also have licenses available for review in person on every market day.

Vendors operating food trucks (self-contained mobile food units where foods are cooked or served ready-to eat to market customers) will be required to display a current inspection sticker from the MN Department of Labor and Industry. Find an inspector and learn more by going to this resource page: http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/PDF/eli_area_reps.pdf

Any required sales tax collections and remittances are the sole responsibility of the vendors.

The City of Worthington or the Worthington Farmers Market are not liable for any injury, illness, theft, loss, or damage of any kind to either the buyer or seller, or their property, arising out of or pertaining to preparation for, participation in, or use or consumption of products bought, sold, or provided at the Worthington Farmers Market; whether such injury, illness, theft, loss or damage occurred prior, during, or after the Worthington Farmers Market. By participating in the Market, seller further agrees to indemnify and hold the City of Worthington and Worthington Farmers Market harmless for and against any claims for such injury, illness, theft, loss or damag

Insurance: Each vendor must carry General Liability/Product Insurance as follows. A certificate of insurance must accompany the vendor application.

- \$1,000,000 (1 million dollars) each occurrence **AND**
- \$1,000,000 (1 million dollars) aggregate of general liability insurance.
- The Worthington Farmers Market and FORWARD Worthington **MUST BE LISTED** as an additional insured on your policy for the dates of the Worthington Farmers Market and shown on the Certificate of Insurance as such.

Minnesota Food & Beverage Licensing Guide

Overview

This guide is designed to help food entrepreneurs determine what kind of food license or registration they need to legally prepare and sell food and beverages in Minnesota. It combines information from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), covering food types, preparation methods, location and sales frequency. It includes license and registration types, who needs them, covered foods, application steps, fees, real-world examples, and official resources.

Step-by-Step Licensing Checklist

- ✓ Identify your product(s)
- ✓ Estimate the number of days you'll sell each year
- ✓ Determine where the food is prepared (home, commercial kitchen, mobile unit)
- ✓ Choose the correct license type (see license descriptions)
- ✓ Complete any required training
- ✓ Apply for the license or registration and complete any required plan review
- ✓ Prepare product labels and signage (if required)
- ✓ Set up at your event, stand, market, or cart

Decision Tree

1. Are you only selling the product you grew and harvested yourself?

- ✓ Yes → No license needed (Product of the Farm or Garden Exclusion)
- ✗ No → Continue below

2. Are you making low-risk foods at home? (e.g., cookies, bread, pickles)

- ✓ Yes → Apply for a Cottage Food Producer Registration (MDA)
- ✗ No → Continue below

3. Are you selling fewer than 10 days per year?

- ✓ Yes → Apply for a Special Event Food Stand license
 - Selling mostly baked goods, popcorn, cotton candy, candy, sno cones/shaved ice, nuts, or prepackaged foods? → MDA
 - Selling mostly foods/beverages prepared or served per customer order? → MDH
- ✗ No → Apply for a Mobile, Seasonal, or Retail license (MDA or MDH)

4. Do you prepare food on-site at the market?

- ✓ Yes → Requires plan review (MDA/MDH)
- ✗ No → Retail license may suffice

License Types, Requirements, and Examples

1. Cottage Food Producer Registration (MDA)

For individuals making non-potentially hazardous food at home for direct-to-consumer sales in person. Foods must either have a pH of 4.6 or lower or a water activity of 0.85 or less. Preparation must be done in the home kitchen, not onsite at the event

Examples: Cookies, breads, muffins, fruit preserves, pickles, granola, dry mixes

Not Allowed: Cut fruit, dairy-based foods (e.g., cheesecakes, butter, yogurt), tamales, egg rolls, animal products, foods that require refrigeration to keep them safe

Sales Limits: Tier 1 – Up to \$7,665/year (Free); Tier 2 – Up to \$78,000/year (\$50 fee + \$50 training)

Training: Mandatory - Either reading through MDA's online training (Tier 1 registration) or the online advanced cottage foods course through University of Minnesota Extension (Tier 2).

Apply: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/cottagefood>

2. Special Event Food Stand License (MDA or MDH)

For vendors operating 10 or fewer days per year at community festivals, markets, or events.

MDA: Covers primarily prepackaged foods, snacks, popcorn, nuts, baked goods, candy, sno cones/shaved ice

MDH: Covers food/beverage prepared or served to order, e.g., tamales, tacos, burgers, stir fry, sandwiches, chicken wings, raspados

Fees: Varies (\$60–\$120); must apply at least 14 days before event

Apply (MDA): <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/special-event-food-stand-license>

Apply (MDH): <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/specevent.html>

3. Retail Mobile Food Handler License (MDA)

For mobile food carts, trailers, trucks, or seasonal temporary food stands that primarily sell baked goods, candy, cotton candy, popcorn, nuts, sno cones/shaved ice, prepackaged food items, and raw agricultural products more than 10 dates per year.

Examples: Prepackaged fruit cups, packaged snack or beverage items, baked goods, candies

Valid for up to 365 days per year; plan review required unless only selling prepackaged items

4. Mobile Food Unit / Seasonal Temporary License (MDA)

Used for stands or trailers that operate up to 21 days per location and involve food preparation or service. These units require a plan review prior to licensure.

Examples: Food trucks, taco trailers, lemonade stands that prepare food on-site

5. Food Cart / Truck License (MDH)

For carts, stands, or vehicles that prepare and serve food/beverages directly to customers on a recurring basis. MDH handles licensing unless delegated to a local authority.

Examples: Tamale stand, raspado cart, on-demand smoothies or sandwiches

Check delegation map:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/delegation.html>

Shared Commercial Kitchens

When a commercial kitchen is required (non-home production of potentially hazardous/Time Temperature Control for Safety/TCS foods), vendors may use approved shared spaces. Commercial kitchens must be inspected and approved by MDA or MDH.

Directory: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/shared-commercial-kitchen-directory>

Other options include Community Education, Church Kitchens, Schools, community centers, other existing food businesses

Vendor Case Study Examples

- Fruit/yogurt parfaits → MDA (packaged, if made in commercial kitchen)
- Tamales & street corn → MDH (food prepared on-site)
- Fruit & veggie cups → MDA (if prepackaged), MDH (if cut/served on-site)
- Kettle/caramel corn → MDA Special Event or Retail Mobile
- Mini-cakes, brownies, strawberry cups → MDA or Cottage Food (no dairy/cut fruit under Cottage Food)
- Scooped or dispensed ice cream, fresh squeezed lemonade, strawberries & cream → MDH (prepared beverages and dairy)

Quick License Comparison Table

License Type	Operate Days	Food Type	Agency	Plan Review	Cost Estimate	Examples
Cottage Food Producer	N/A	Baked goods, jams, pet treats	MDA	No	Free - \$50	Cookies, jams
Special Event Food Stand	≤ 10 days/year	Baked goods, candy, cotton candy, nuts, sno cones/shaved ice, popcorn, or prepackaged foods (MDA), Prepared or served per customer order, or food item not covered by MDA (MDH)	MDA/MDH	No	\$60-\$120	Caramel corn, tamales
Retail Mobile Food Handler	Up to 365 days	Baked goods, candy, cotton candy, nuts, sno cones/shaved ice, popcorn, or prepackaged foods sold more than 10 dates per year.	MDA	No (if prepackaged)	\$100-\$400	Packaged fruit cups
Mobile Food Unit / Seasonal Temp Stand	≤ 21 days/location	Food prepared on-site	MDA	Yes	\$120-\$500+	Taco truck, lemonade stand
Food Cart / Truck	Varies	Prepared foods/beverages	MDH	Yes	\$200-\$600+	Raspados cart, tamale vendor

Contacts & Resources

- MDA: mda.licensing@state.mn.us | 651-201-6062
- MDH: health.foodlodging@state.mn.us | 651-201-4500
- Plan Review (MDH): <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/planreview.html>
- Plan Review (MDA): <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/retail-food-plan-review>
- Cottage Food: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/cottagefood>
- MDA Special Events: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/special-event-food-stand-license>

Commercial Kitchens: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/shared-commercial-kitchen-directory>