



Policy Handbook

The Ypsilanti Farmers Market is a vibrant community space dedicated to building a just and equitable local food system in the heart of Ypsilanti.

Our mission is to create an accessible and inclusive hub that celebrates the city's diversity while empowering everyone to grow, buy, sell, and enjoy nourishing food. We proudly support local farmers, food producers, and artisans as essential pillars of our community's well-being. By fostering connections, advocating for food access, and embracing our diversity, we aim to cultivate a thriving community where everyone has a seat at the table. Together, we're growing hope and harvesting a future rooted in equity, community, and a deep love for Ypsilanti.

Ypsilanti Farmers Markets Managers:

Farmers Market Team
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Growing Hope Office:

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Growing Hope & Ypsilanti Farmers Markets
922 W Michigan Ave Ypsilanti MI, 48197

Market Location and Hours of Operation:

Ypsilanti Farmers Market - Downtown
16 S Washington St, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Saturdays: May 16 - Oct 31 | 9am - 1pm

Tuesdays: June 2 - Aug 25 | 3pm - 7pm

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Definitions:

Vendor: A vendor is defined to mean an individual or business who participates in the market selling whole food agricultural products, food items prepared in facilities licensed by the State of Michigan, food items prepared utilizing the Michigan Cottage Food Law, handmade non-food items, or any other items or services approved by the Market Managers.



Community Partner: A Community Partner is defined to mean a business or organization distributing information, entertaining and/or providing services and not selling products or services.

Political Activity Policy:

As a nonprofit organization, the Ypsilanti Farmers Market must remain **nonpartisan and politically neutral**. While we support civic engagement and community dialogue, political activity at the market is limited to ensure compliance with nonprofit regulations and to maintain a welcoming environment for all community members.

Political Groups & Activities

Groups or individuals who are politically active may participate **only if all of the following guidelines are met:**

- Must remain **politically neutral** at all times
 - May not endorse or oppose any political candidate
 - May not endorse or oppose any political party
 - May not promote or advocate for specific political platforms, ballot initiatives, or political ideologies
 - Messaging must be informational only, not persuasive

- **Petitions & Signature Gathering**
 - Petition signature gathering is **not permitted within the farmers market**.
 - This includes: market hall, vendor areas, entrances, and immediate market boundaries
 - Petition activity must take place **outside the market limits** and may not interfere with market operations or access

- **Permitted Activities:**
 - Nonpartisan, informational outreach (e.g., general civic education, how voting works, census information)
 - Activities that are clearly educational and do not influence political views or outcomes

- **Prohibited Activities**
 - Petition activity must take place **outside the market limits** and may not interfere with market operations or access
 - The following are **not allowed** at the market:
 - Campaign materials (signs, flyers, buttons, apparel, banners)
 - Candidate appearances or campaign staffing
 - Fundraising for political campaigns or political organizations
 - Voter persuasion or advocacy messaging
 - Political debates or demonstrations

Vendor Application Process:

1. All interested vendors (including returning vendors) must complete the Vendor Application with accurate information for the season. Applications are due **by the last week of April** for priority consideration for the outdoor season. Applications will continue to be accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year and accepted based on availability and product mix. Applications are accepted year-round for the market and eligible vendors will be included in group onboarding sessions. Applications are available online, but paper or by-phone applications can be accepted upon request.

2. Application Timeline & Scheduling
 - a. Applications will open at least two months prior to the first market day.
 - b. *Example: If the first market is May 1st, applications will open no later than March 1st.*

 - c. Returning vendors will be notified 1–2 weeks before applications open to the general public.

 - d. During the priority scheduling period, vendors can expect a response within one week of submitting an application.

 - e. Once the market season has begun, applications will be accepted on a rolling, as-needed basis, depending on space and market needs.

3. All vendors must adhere the following guidelines for proper food safety guidelines for the farmers markets:
 - a. [Food Safety Guidelines](#)
 - b. [Proper Licensing](#)
 - c. [Cottage Food Guidelines](#)
 - d. [Safe Sampling Guidelines](#)

4. Supporting Documents must be turned in to the Market Managers when requested. Electronic or paper copies of these documents can be sent via email or mail.
 - a. All vendors must turn in copies of licenses and certifications yearly.
 - b. Any changes to a vendor's business will be communicated in their application and judged accordingly with requested follow up documentation.
 - c. Potential vendors are required to send photos of their finished product and/or process or include links to a website or social media account that includes pictures. We will contact you for additional information such as labels, ingredients or seed order purchase receipts, certifications, licenses, etc.

- d. All required documents for food assistance and currency programs must be signed prior to accepting and reimbursing these payments.
5. All new accepted Vendors must attend one Vendor Orientation. Vendors who apply after the orientation dates will have the ability to view a recording of a virtual orientation.

Vendor Fees:

1. **Vendor Fees:** Vendor fees are non-refundable, except in the case of documented (in writing) circumstances that unexpectedly don't allow a vendor to continue to participate for the remainder of the season. These include major illness or sudden relocation, but do not include factors such as sales being lower than expected or other market opportunities arising.
2. **Returned check Fee:** Vendors will be charged a \$20 fee per each bank returned check. After one bank returns the check, you will not be permitted back into the market until you pre-pay. After we receive two returned checks, you will thereafter be required to pay by cashier's check, money order, or cash.
3. **Space Requests:** All seasonal vendors may apply for up to 4 spaces. Fees apply equally to each market space. Fees are per market stall.

Seasonal Rates:

Saturday Markets

- **Whole Season Rate:** \$312
(26 market days × \$12 per day, must be paid prior to the first market date)
- **Daily Rate:** \$15 per market day

Tuesday Markets

- **Whole Season Rate:** \$132
(11 market days × \$12 per day, must be paid prior to the first market date)
- **Daily Rate:** \$15 per market day

Discounts & Payment Policies

- No refunds are issued for seasonal or daily participation fees.
- If you pay in advance and are unable to attend all scheduled dates, your payment will be credited toward a future market day.
- Multi-date discounts:
 - Full season payment: Daily rate is reduced from \$15 to \$12 per market

- Monthly payment: Paying for four (4) or more markets at a time reduces the daily rate from \$15 to \$12 per market

Community Partner Rates

- **No participation fee** for approved community partners
- Applications are due by **May 1st** for priority scheduling
- Applications received after May 1st will be accepted on a **rolling basis**, as space allows
- **No-shows without prior communication** will result in a daily fee for that market day

Vendor Selection:

The Market Managers have sole discretion in approving participants for the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets.

1. The Market Managers will review applications and notify Vendors of whether or not they have been approved to participate. The Market Managers have the authority to approve or deny any Vendor from participating in the market prior to fees and payment.
2. The Market Managers take multiple factors into consideration in approving participants and assigning booth space, which includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. History of successful participation in the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets or other past markets.
 - b. Adherence to the rules, cooperation with market management, attendance, absence of consumer complaints, timely payment of fees, and courteous conduct.
 - c. Unique or unusual products that enhance the relevance to the community and diversity at the market, without creating excessive supply as assessed by the Market Managers.
 - d. Quality and origin of the products (i.e: operating within 100 miles, using Michigan products, etc.)
 - e. Intentionally prioritizing vendors from historically underserved communities.
 - f. Space availability and parking/table/electric needs of the vendor.

Products Allowed:

Products allowed for sale at the market include but are not limited to: fresh fruit and vegetables, herbs, plants, flowers, honey and maple syrup, fresh cider, Michigan made wines, cheese, eggs, poultry and meat products, prepared food or drinks, or handmade non-food items.

1. **Local Products:** The Ypsilanti Farmers Markets are open to vendors of local products. **Local means produced in Michigan or within 100 miles of the market (including northern Ohio).** Priority goes to *producers* of farm goods. All non-food items must be handmade locally by you/your business. All produce must be grown locally.



The market managers may make exceptions for other food products (i.e. fish or cheese) to improve product mix at the market if no local producer is available or to promote diversity at the markets.

2. **Acceptable Businesses:** We do not accept franchises or vendors selling products from multi-level marketing businesses.
3. **Processed & Prepared Foods:** Any vendor selling prepared, processed or edible foods must provide the Market Managers with a copy of all relevant licensing or a copy of the MI Cottage Food Label for all required products.
4. **Processed & Prepared Foods:** Eggs, meats, cheeses and other processed or prepared foods and drinks must meet all Federal, State, and County regulations while en route to and on site at any and all Ypsilanti Farmers Markets.
5. **Cottage Foods:** Vendors applying to sell products under Cottage Food Law must demonstrate that they understand allowable products and labeling requirements. All Cottage Food products require labels.
Please refer to MDARD's website for additional information and requirements:
michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-50772_45851-240577--,00.html
6. **THC & CBD Products:** YFM does not permit the sale of marijuana or ingestible/consumable products that contain THC. Topical products (soaps, lotions, .etc) containing CBD are allowable if the vendor can provide documentation that delta-9-THC concentrations are below 0.3%.
More information on State and Federal laws here:
<https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-11472-493396--,00.html>
7. **Home Grown:** All products not grown, produced, or crafted by a Vendor's business must be accurately labeled with the location of the product's originating business and available for customers to see at all times.
8. **Organic Certification:** Anyone producing organic products, handling organic products, or certifying organic operations in Michigan, needs to comply with Act 316 registration requirements. If vendors advertise organic produce and practices a State Certificate of Registration must be displayed and the Market Manager must be provided a copy of Certificate.
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-316-of-2000.pdf>
9. **Pre-Approval of Products:** All new products that are considered to be outside of a Vendor's specialty, and are not listed on the Vendor's original application, must be pre-approved with the Market Managers before being sold, in order to ensure product diversity and proper licensing and labeling.

10. **Sampling Guidelines:** All food vendors at farmers markets can provide bite-sized samples of products they sell without additional licensing. In general, best practice is to prepare samples in a licensed kitchen prior to attending the market, and store each individually portioned (toothpicks, single serve cups) in a covered tray. Please refer to [Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples guide](#) for more detailed guidelines if you intend to provide samples at market.

Booth Assignments:

1. Space at the market may be rented for the season (Seasonal Vendor), or they may be rented on a daily basis (Daily Vendor or Community Partner) . Space for both seasonal and daily Vendors based on market availability.
 - a. **Seasonal Vendor:** Applications are due by the end of priority deadline for the outdoor season. Applications and payment/payment plan are due by May 1 for the outdoor season.
 - b. **Daily Vendor:** Applications are due prior to market participation. Daily Vendors will be assigned a stall on a scheduled day that works for the best interest of the market. Payments are due the day of participation and will be collected by the market manager.
 - c. **Community Partners:** Applications are due by May 1st for priority scheduling, afterwards, applications are accepted on a rolling basis. While there is no fee for community partners, failure to show without prior communication will result in a fee for that day

2. **Stall Spaces:** The Market Managers reserve the right to adjust any vendor stall space on the day of the market to maximize the market space and make an inviting setting for customers. (e.g. if there have been vendor cancellations, to move the stalls closer together).

3. No Vendors shall be permitted at the Market except in the stalls assigned and paid for.
 - a. Each stall will be defined by the Market Managers.
 - b. Vendors wanting to share booth space must be approved to do so by the Market Managers. No more than two Vendors may share one stall.

4. Products or signage may only be displayed beyond the defined limits of the space with express permission of the Market Managers. Products and signage may not interfere with market traffic or obstruct another vendor's space.

5. No goods for sale shall be displayed or stored less than 6 inches from the ground.

6. Hawking (the calling out to market customers) for the purpose of selling or promoting a vendor's product or luring customers away from another Vendor will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

7. Active food sampling may occur within the immediate vicinity of the assigned stall space. All sampling must follow MDARD's [Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples](#).

8. No buildings, sheds, tables, tents, signs or offices shall be placed on the public market unless approved by the Market Managers.
9. **All approved canopies and pop-up tents must be weighted down with at least 25 pounds per tent post.** Weights must touch the ground (not hang from above), and connect securely to the upper frame corners. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of the stall. **Canopies for a single space must not exceed 10ftx10ft.**
10. Electricity is limited. Stall assignments are partially based on electric needs, which must be outlined in your application. The Market Managers reserves the right to limit electric uses by any Vendor if it is necessary. All generators must be silent, so that the noise level does not interfere with the ability of nearby Vendors to conduct sales, as determined solely by the Market Managers.

Vendor Identification and Signage:

1. **Business Identification:** The name of each Vendor/Business must be posted at their stall.
NOTE: Signs for this purpose will not be furnished by the Market Managers.
2. **Food Assistance Signage:** All participants in food assistance currencies must keep related signage visible to customers at all times.
WARNING: Do not accept currencies if you are not approved or do not know what they are. The Ypsilanti Farmers Markets may immediately suspend and/or terminate Vendors that we observe, or receive evidence of, failure to abide by applicable program rules, as outlined in their individual contracts.
3. **Pricing:** All products for sale must have their price displayed clearly and at all times.
4. **Product Information:** Vendors should be prepared to provide clear information about methods and practices involved in growing, producing, or crafting products to customers and Market Managers as requested.

Site Cleanliness Rules:

Each and every Vendor shall remove any and all debris in their stall and immediate surrounding site, regardless of whether or not the litter originated from their stall.

1. **Carry In & Carry Out:** Please pack out your own trash/recycling/compost. Landfill, recycling, and compost receptacles at the market are intended for customer use.
2. **Littering:** Every Vendor shall also ensure that proper control is exercised to eliminate paper and debris from blowing off their stall table onto market grounds.
3. **Wind:** All items must be weighted to withstand adverse weather conditions.

4. **Service Ware:** All single-use service ware **must not be made of Styrofoam**. Compostable materials are highly encouraged for all prepared food vendors.

Sales and Data Reporting:

To be a vendor at the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets you are required to report ALL weekly sales data. We keep detailed records on weekly sales, and these numbers are kept confidential and only used for market evaluation.

1. All vendors are **required** to turn in coupons, tokens, and total sales tally at the end of each market day to the Market Managers. Failure to do so may result in loss of reimbursement. You may not wait to turn in coupons and tokens until the end of the season.
2. Vendors who choose to count cash sales after they leave the market can turn those sales figures in the next week or via email.
3. **Vendor Survey:** All Vendors must complete a vendor survey for each market season. Vendor survey information is vital to improving the markets and securing funding. Failure to complete a vendor survey may impact a vendor's ability to participate in future market seasons.

Alternate Currencies:

1. Ypsilanti Farmers Markets use multiple different currencies in order to provide increased food access for all. All participating Vendors will receive signage from the market, **which is required to be visible to customers at all times**. All documentation for accepting these currencies must be signed before accepting or redeeming them.
2. Vendors who sell Michigan-grown produce are expected to accept SNAP (which is used via an EBT card), Double Up Food Bucks, WIC Project FRESH, Senior Market FRESH, Prescription for Health tokens, and Veggie Bucks.
3. All other vendors are expected to accept all forms of market currency (tokens, etc.) that are eligible to purchase the types of products they sell. **Market Managers reserve the right to choose vendors based on this expectation.**
4. Vendors are responsible for understanding alternate currency and food assistance program rules before they sell at the market. We encourage you to ask us questions on any of this. See here for a copy of the [Currency Guide](#), which will always be available in your vendor packet.

Conduct Guidelines:

Vendor conduct at the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets should reflect the [Mission, Vision, and Values](#) of Growing Hope.



1. **Discrimination:** No Vendor shall refuse to permit the purchase of any produce, goods or participation based on race, religion, color, creed, gender, political affiliation, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, age, marital status, gender-identity, height, weight or mental or physical ability.
2. **Harassment:** All Vendors, employees/helpers, volunteers, etc. are expected to treat each other, customers, and market staff in a courteous and professional manner. Harassment in any form, such as sexual, gender, or race based, is unacceptable no matter who it is directed towards. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, physical contact such as petting or pinching, and sexually oriented “kidding” or “teasing” jokes. These behaviors are unacceptable and it is our policy to investigate all complaints of harassment promptly and thoroughly. Investigations will include interviews with the directly involved parties and, if necessary, other employees or Vendors who may have knowledge of the alleged harassment. To the fullest practical extent, The Ypsilanti Farmers Markets will keep confidential all complaints and the terms of their resolution. If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, YFM will take disciplinary action, up to and including, immediate removal from the market.

Attendance and No-Show Policy:

Attendance is extremely important for the success of the markets and your business. Customers and Managers count on you to be at the market(s) you signed up to attend, and missing a market without proper notice has a negative effect on all.

1. **Set Up & Tear Down:** All vendors are expected to arrive at the market at least **ONE** hour and have set up complete **THIRTY** mins prior to the market and **be prepared to sell the whole four hours** of each market day.
 - a. Vendors should not tear down or leave until the final 30 mins of the market day.
 - b. Leaving early without prior arrangements or being entirely sold out will automatically result in a violation.
2. **Late Arrivals:** You **MUST** notify the Market Managers via phone call or email if you expect to be late to the market. Any arrival after one hour before the market start-time is considered late. For example, if the market begins at 9:00 a.m. and you cannot arrive by 8:00 a.m., that is considered a late arrival.
 - a. If you have not yet arrived by the market start-time, we can no longer guarantee you a table. Sometimes waitlisted vendors will be on standby. If your table has been forfeited to another vendor, you will not be charged for a table that day.
3. **Cancellations:** All cancellations must be made **ONE** week before the market day vendors are scheduled for, with exceptions for emergencies only. If you fail to attend a market without proper notice, you will be considered a “no show”.

- a. **1st no show:** Verbal Warning. Daily vendors will be required to pay in advance for all future market days.
- b. **2nd no show:** Written Warning, and a notice in file.
- c. **3rd no show:** Market Managers will issue a written letter excluding the Vendor from further participation at the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets.

The YFM is a rain-or-shine market. Vendors must be prepared for all weather conditions and attend the market as scheduled unless otherwise canceled. It is the Market Managers decision to cancel the market if the weather conditions appear too dangerous for market set-up or tear-down. If we need to cancel a market, we'll confirm the decision by 5:00 p.m. the day before.

Enforcement and Disputes:

The Market Managers shall be charged with the responsibility of interpreting and enforcing these rules and maintaining order at the market.

1. **Written Violation Reports:** Should the Market Managers find it necessary to take action to enforce the rules contained within this handbook, the Market Managers will issue a written violation report, describing the incident and the action taken.
 - a. **2nd Report:** Should a second violation *of the same nature* occur, the Market Managers will issue a second written violation report. A suspension from the market may result from a second violation.
 - b. **3rd Report:** Should a third violation *of the same nature* occur, the Market Managers will issue a written letter excluding the Vendor from further participation at the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets.

Immediate Threats: If any Vendor or person violates poses a health or safety hazard to themselves, others, or market operations, Market Managers reserve the right to order such a person or persons from the premises.

- a. Any person who remains after being ordered to leave will be considered to be trespassing.
- b. Any Vendor who is ordered to leave and does not do so will be immediately excluded from further participation at the market.
- c. There will be no refunds for paid fees.

Grievances:

Any problems, concerns, or complaints should be communicated to the Market Managers immediately. However, if you have communicated your grievance to the Market Managers and feel the issue has not been properly addressed OR feel that you have a grievance that is private and do not want to speak openly about it, grievance forms are available physically and virtually. Grievance forms and the online QR code are in your packet, and we regularly replenish them each month. If you choose to fill out a physical grievance form, please leave it on a market manager's desk. All grievances will be reviewed within two weeks of the date received.

Additional YFM Policies:

1. **Liability:** Vendors shall bear sole responsibility and liability for any of their items sold at the market. YFM and Growing Hope assumes no responsibility and shall not be liable for any damage or injury. NOTE: YFM encourages all participating Vendors to carry liability insurance for their products, business or enterprise.
2. **Sales Tax:** All vendors are responsible for collecting and reporting sales tax.
3. **Weights and Measures:** All sales by weight or measure shall be weighed on scales or measured in containers approved by the Inspector of Weights, Scales, and Measures, Michigan Department of Agriculture.
4. **Government Inspection:** All items offered for sale on the market shall be subject to inspection by State, Country, and/or Federal officials as provided by law.
5. **Smoking** is prohibited for both Vendors and Customers at Ypsilanti Farmers Markets.
6. **Pets:** Vendors are prohibited from bringing pets to the markets. Vendors' booths are considered food establishments by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. No animals are allowed in vendor booths. An exception is registered service dogs.
7. **Market Management Inspection:** The Market Managers have the right to inspect any products offered for sale at any time. Routine inspection should be expected. Misrepresentation of items sold will result in a violation. The Market Managers have the right to visit any farm at any time, including for consecutive days to witness harvest procedures.
8. **Business Address:** No Vendor shall use the market telephone number, address, or website URL as their business, mailing, or Internet point of contact.
9. **Allowed Activity:** Any activity by any person not under contract with the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets, such as busking, petitioning, campaigning or other public speaking must take place on the public sidewalk surrounding the market. No such activity will be allowed within the market.

Marketing:

1. **Social Media:** We maintain an active Facebook (@YpsilantiFarmersMarkets) and Instagram (@ypsimarkets). We encourage all Vendors to follow both and tag us in your posts. Please use the hashtags: #YpsiMarkets #GrowingTheHope and #MIFarmersMarkets.
2. **Website:** Our website can be found at www.ypsimarkets.info.



3. **Youtube:** Visit Growing Hope's YouTube page for vendor spotlights, shopper stories, and more.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/growinghopemichigan>

If you have questions about these rules and policies or need further clarification please contact the Market Managers at market@growinghope.net.



Policy Acknowledgement Form

We encourage Vendors to read this handbook prior to applying to the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets. All Vendors are **required** to affirm they have read and understood this document upon approval into the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets **each** season.

The Market Managers reserve the right to update this handbook at any time, and should there be a change made, a new acknowledgement form will be distributed to all Vendors.

Please sign the statement below and return this sheet to Market Managers.

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the [YEAR] Ypsilanti Farmers Markets Policy Handbook. I agree to comply with all policies as a condition of my approved vendor status for the [YEAR] season. I further acknowledge that I am signing on behalf of all individuals working or present at my booth and am responsible for ensuring they have read and understand these policies.

Name Printed: _____

Business Name Printed: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____