



South Osborne Farmers' Market – Vendor Selection Process 2021

Run by the Fireweed Food Co-op

INTRODUCTION

The Fireweed Food Co-op was designed to enable market access for small food producers, and to make it easier for buyers to make local food choices. Supporting farmers, as well as small businesses that purchase from farmers, will remain a top priority in our vendor selection process. This document outlines other factors that are considered when choosing our vendors, and how the selection process was created.

Creation of the Selection Process:

In 2019, the Fireweed Food Co-op (formerly Farm Fresh Food Hub), organizers of the South Osborne Farmers' Market, initiated the inaugural "Farmers' Market Advisory Committee" (FMAC). The FMAC contributed to the "Vendor Selection Process" through meetings, guidance and feedback. Fireweed hopes to continue using a FMAC to assist in evaluating market successes, failures and changes that need to be made to various market activities and processes.

The purpose of the FMAC is to help Fireweed create good, strong, relevant processes for accepting vendors at the South Osborne Farmers' Market (& indoor markets). As the market grows, Fireweed has recognized a need for some feedback on creating and maintaining a process that is fair and accessible, but also results in an appealing vendor mix for the general public. The FMAC will meet twice a year (pre-market and post-market), and change year over year to allow for new vendors to join and provide feedback. The FMAC will be made up of a combination of vendors (Fireweed Co-op member vendors and non-members) and board members chosen by the Fireweed board's Farmers' Market Sub-Committee. It will be representative of both food and craft vendors. The FMAC should target 7-8 diverse and enthusiastic representatives to join, and there must always be a vegetable vendor or a meat vendor on the FMAC.

SELECTION PROCESS

Below is a list of Fireweed's considerations when choosing vendors for the South Osborne Farmers' Market and Indoor Markets. The Primary Priority Groups (groups 1-3) are the most important and should be considered in descending order from 1 to 3. The Secondary Priority Groups (groups 4-9) are considered as a whole and given equal weight between them. A prospective vendor need not fulfill all criteria in groups 4 through 9, though the more priority groups they fulfill the greater the likelihood their application will be successful. Fireweed's goal is to ensure equitable treatment between new and returning vendors and so all vendors are chosen according to this official Vendor Selection Process.

Note: Priority is still provided to existing/returning vendors, but only as outlined below.



PRIMARY PRIORITY GROUPS

The Primary Priority Groups (groups 1-3) are the most important and should be considered in descending order from 1 to 3.

(1) **Current (2021) Market Capacity by Vendor Category (South Osborne Farmers' Market only):**

We carefully consider which vendors we can accept into our market mix, in hopes that all will be successful. This section provides an estimate as to how many vendors we believe the market can economically support in various product categories each week. This is anticipated to change year over year (and may even change within a season), and is meant as a guideline more than a rule. Offering bi-weekly spots for certain categories will become a more common practice as a means of allowing more new vendors an opportunity to vend at the market, as well as a means of increasing the variety for customers.

- **Meat:** 1-2 vendors, depending on products
- **Vegetables:** 3 larger (vegetable only) vendors, 1-2 smaller vendors (may sell some variety). It is expected that there would be some variation in terms of what each vegetable vendor is bringing to market
- **Flowers:** 2 vendors, it is expected there will be some variation between each vendor
- **Prepared Food/Food Trucks:** 3-4 vendors, food offerings must differ substantially
- **Baking:** 3-4 bakers if there is variety (ie. sourdough, standard, vegan, pies, etc.) Bakers may be accepted but asked not to bring certain products if there is too much overlap.
- **Honey:** 1 vendor
- **Jewelry:** 2-3 vendors, must have different types of product
- **Body Products:** 1-2 vendors
- **Sauces:** 3-5 vendors, sauces must differ substantially
- **Preserves:** 2-3 vendors, preserves must differ substantially
- **Drinks:** 3-4 vendors, drinks must differ substantially (beer/cider, lemonade, coffee, etc.)
- **Non-Profits:** 2 tables for informational or fund raising (events, raffle tickets, etc.) purposes. They may collect signatures for political causes provided the cause aligns with FFC's [values statement](#). See Priority Group (9) listed below for more details.
- **Young Vendors:** 2 vendors. Children and youth under the age of 18 who wish to sell products they've made are welcome to do so. Like other vendors they will be subject to all existing FFFH market rules and expectations, including all applicable food safety laws and requirements.
- **Other:** Would likely only allow for 1-2 vendors of a similar product at this time



Notes:

- Vendors with similar products may be given the option of alternating weeks (ie. each vendor attending the market bi-weekly)
- No individual politician may have a table at the market for campaigning purposes, however, politicians with platforms that align with Fireweed's safer spaces policy are welcome to volunteer at the market and use that time to speak to market patrons.

NEW! In order to be considered for a weekly vendor spot, vendors must become a Producer Member of the Co-Op. However, membership does not guarantee a spot, therefore we suggest waiting to hear whether you have been accepted as a weekly vendor prior to purchasing your membership! Memberships can be purchased [here](#).

(2) Existing/Returning Vendors:

- **South Osborne Farmers' Market:** Returning weekly vendors to the summer market will be given priority over other vendors with similar products provided they continue to meet all criteria noted in the vendor application form. After five years as a participating vendor, the vendor will be given notice that their "priority" has lapsed, and they will be evaluated for the following year as a new vendor.

Returning Vendor Priority Term: Priority for all returning vendors will be in effect for a term of five consecutive years of market attendance. At the time that a returning vendor's application is accepted for a fifth consecutive year, the vendor will be notified their Returning Vendor Priority has expired and their next application for the summer market will be re-evaluated at this time. Vendors loyalty and continuing commitment to FFC's values will be taken into consideration during the re-evaluation process. If a returning vendor does not participate in the summer market for a season their priority will lapse and their next application will be evaluated on the same terms as a new vendor. If accepted again their Returning Vendor Priority will be in effect again for another 5 years.

Reasons for the five year term:

- Fireweed recognizes that a vendor's stall is their storefront. Fireweed wishes to help a new vendor benefit from the security of having presence in the market over a given period of time in order to build up a customer base and establish their business.
- Fireweed wishes to provide opportunities for new vendors to access the market by encouraging a stable and sustainable level of vendor turnover each year.
- Fireweed believes a managed level of vendor turnover each year encourages long term market health and vibrancy. New vendors help sustain continued interest and variety for



market patrons as well as encouraging existing vendors to remain competitive and viable. As a result this encourages overall long term market health and sustainability.

- While we wish to maintain a healthy level of turnover each year, long term vendors commitment and contributions to the market will be factors that are taken into consideration when they have reached the end of their five year term, and will help inform our evaluation of their application

Note for Indoor Markets: Fireweed's indoor markets will make an effort to have at least 10% new vendors.

(3) Vendor Frequency (South Osborne Farmers' Market only): Below is the order in which vendors are prioritized.

- Vendors who sign-up as a weekly vendor are given first priority
- Vendors who sign-up casually, but with bi-weekly or pre-chosen dates are given second priority
- Vendors who sign-up casually, but with dates TBD (week to week) are given last priority

SECONDARY PRIORITY GROUPS

The Secondary Priority Groups (groups 4-9) are considered as a whole and given equal weight between them. A prospective vendor need not fulfill all criteria in groups 4 through 9, though the more priority groups they fulfill the greater the likelihood their application will be successful.

(4) Members of the Fireweed Food Co-op: Producer Members are given priority over Supporter Members. All members are given priority over non-members. Weekly vendors will be required to purchase a producer membership once confirmed as a weekly vendor in order to secure their spot.

(5) Environmental Considerations & Sustainability: Fireweed looks for vendors who prioritize sustainability in their production practices. This includes but is not limited to environmentally friendly packaging, spray-free/organic products, locally purchased inputs for products, etc. Please note that the Fireweed has commercial compost on site, and has officially banned the use of plastic shopping bags & Styrofoam products at our markets. Reusable fabric bags will be available for sale.

(6) Local Vendors: Fireweed prioritizes vendors that are located within the Lord Roberts and Riverview Catchment areas.

(7) Reducing Barriers: Fireweed tries to reduce barriers for businesses and vendors who are underrepresented in the local food/farmers' market industry and works to ensure that queer, BIPOC, and folks with disability are especially welcome into our spaces.



Note: We are also committed to reducing barriers through the offering of discounts to individuals living below the federally outlined "Low Income Cut-off". Vendors are asked to contact Fireweed for further details and provide documentation of their most recent income, if possible. Falling into this category should never change a vendor's likelihood of being accepted as a vendor or not. All vendors are evaluated using the same process.

(8) **Uniqueness of Product:** Fireweed values new or unique products that contribute positively to the diversity of our market's product mix.

(9) **Cooperation & Values:** As a cooperative, Fireweed values vendors or businesses that follow cooperative principles or other similar guiding principles in their operation. Fireweed also sees the importance of appreciating and encouraging organizations with similar values, as outlined in our [values statement](#).

Fireweed welcomes community groups, co-ops and non-profits to apply as vendors to the Summer Market. They will be charged the full weekly vendor rate plus power fee, if needed. Fireweed prioritizes organizations in this order:

1. Organizations based within the Lord Roberts Community Centre's catchment area
2. Organizations based in the City of Winnipeg area
3. Organizations operating within the Province of Manitoba, Canada, or internationally

Fireweed will not provide a space to for-profit businesses to use primarily for advertising or promotional purposes. All for-profit vendors must have their product or service present on the market site. This is not to prevent accepted market vendors from bringing their own promotional materials such as banners, signs, brochures, catalogues, etc. to use at their tables.

(10) **Indoor Markets only:** Fireweed runs two indoor markets, a Holiday Market and Mother's Day Market.

- Please note that these markets are very popular, and often have waitlists of 20+ vendors.
- Fireweed tries to ensure that at least 60% of the vendors are food vendors.
- When possible, Fireweed tries to provide our regular summer vendors who applied to our Holiday Market (but weren't accepted) a chance to vend at the Mother's Day Market instead.

A NOTE ON VENDOR DISCOUNTS

FFFH offers the following market fee discounts:

- **Non-Profit Discount:** Non-profits relying on at least 50% volunteer labour* are eligible to a free vendor space. Non-profits utilising over 50% paid labour are subject to the full vendor fee.
- **Young Vendor Discount:** Children/youth under 18 are eligible to a vendor space at \$10 per market.



- **Low Income Vendor Discount:** Individuals living below the federally outlined [Low Income Cut-Off \(LICO\)](#) are eligible to a vendor space at \$15 per market. Tents and power are provided if needed at the standard rate of \$5 for each, however the total fee is capped at \$20.

*Volunteer labour can be defined at our discretion, but is typically assumed to be regular, working volunteers as opposed to occasional, one-time volunteers.

Final Note – *If you are not accepted as a vendor into the South Osborne Farmers' Market, don't be discouraged! We have a substitute list that we use in case our vendors have to cancel due to a last minute emergency or sickness. This list is a good opportunity for us to get to know you and your product. Taking part on our "substitution list" will be considered when you apply as a vendor the following year.*