

Flavors of the Valley: Set up Logistics for Registered Vendors

For more information contact debbie@vitalcommunities.org (802) 291-9100 x112

Set-Up Time:

Set-up time for the event is **9:00-10:30AM**. Please be prompt! The doors open to the public at 11:00 AM. Vendors who arrive after the event has started greatly detract from the experience. Once your table is set up, feel free to chat and do business with other vendors until 11:00.

Unloading & Parking:

Attached are a map and directions. You may drive your vehicle up to the back doors of the gym, unload your products and display materials, and then park your vehicle. The unloading area and the gym are at ground level. Volunteers can direct you to your table. School is not in session the week of the event, so you may park anywhere in the school lot.

Table Set Up:

All tables are 8-ft in length. There is minimal or no space between tables. **You'll need to bring your own table covering.** (As part of our waste reduction efforts we no longer provide paper coverings.) We will provide two folding chairs and will hang a simple 11x17 sign with your business name above your table. Please bring your own signage and name tags if you have them. You will have electric outlets nearby **ONLY IF** you have registered for electrical access. Please bring your own 25-ft. extension cord and power strip for multiple plug-ins as back-up. All freezers must be on wheels to protect the gym floor.

Waste Reduction:

We ask attendees to bring their own small plate, utensils, and napkin. For those who forget, we hand out small disposable plates to reuse throughout the event. Please be creative in minimizing the amount of paper and plastic food service items that you use for your samples--while still letting attendees enjoy your wonderful offerings without making a mess! Edible platforms/finger foods are highly recommended. We realize not all of your products and food samples will neatly conform to these guidelines, so supply your own service ware as you see fit. Please pass along any ideas you may have, even ones that occur to you after the event.

Crowd Size:

We expect between 1,000-1,500 people.

Food Sampling:

Tasting of locally grown products is central to this event. Vendors providing food samples attract more people to their tables. All restaurant/grocer/caterer vendors are required to provide food samples, and all other vendors are encouraged to do so. Samples must include farm products grown within the [Valley Farm & Food service area](#). Samples for event attendees should be bite-sized—not meal portions. Beverage samples made with locally grown ingredients (fruit, herbs) are encouraged. Let us know if we can help you source additional local ingredients.

Sampling Advice: Surveys of last year's vendors showed they served anywhere from 500 – 2500 samples. Vendors who brought the fewest samples ran out quickly. **Even if you run out of**

samples, we expect you to stay for the duration of the event to talk to attendees about your business. Both vendors and event attendees have commented that departed vendors leave conspicuous holes under their business signs.

Past vendors provided this advice on food samples:

- "My advice would be to bring LOTS."
- "Go small with the size of the samples and make it something that can be done quickly. You can fall behind quickly and it fast becomes no fun."
- "Keep it simple, and if you are also selling at your table, have one person to sell/chat and one to serve samples"
- "Edible platforms are the way to go to minimize trash. I saw vendors offering chicken salad on crackers, mini ice cream cones, honey sampled on pretzel sticks, cheese cubes."
- "I learned ... that, as a nonprofit vendor, it was going to be a long, slow evening unless I brought samples"

State Food Regulations & Food Safety

- All vendors are responsible for ensuring that their business meets all applicable state food regulations. **Any meat that is sold or sampled at the event must be VT or USDA inspected.**
- Hand washing facilities are available in bathrooms on the same floor as the event. There are no kitchen facilities.
- **Please no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods. Please bring your own serving gloves and utensils.**

Cooking and Keeping Food Hot:

The following cooking appliances are acceptable to use on site: warming trays, sterno flames, crock pots, griddles, toaster ovens, convection ovens, and propane stoves. **If you will be cooking something that may splatter oil or grease on the gym floor, please bring a floor tarp to place under your table to protect the gym floor.** Please note that kitchen facilities are not available, so many vendors prefer to come with ready-to-serve dishes.

No Concession Sales:

Vendors may *not sell* prepared foods for consumption at the event. The event provides free tasting for attendees—not "dinner out." Vendors are, however, strongly encouraged to sell gift certificates, CSA shares, frozen meats, preserved foods, bagged produce, books, etc. **All food items sold by farm vendors must be grown on your farm.**

No Alcohol:

Due to Hartford High School's drug-free school policy, no alcohol is allowed on site, even in display bottles. However, alcoholic beverages prepared in cooked foods to be sampled are acceptable.

Your Table Display:

Feedback from vendors indicates that the following items are helpful to have at your table:

- A colorful, eye-catching display, including a sign with your business name.
- Your own cloth or plastic table covering.
- Photos of your farm/business.
- Take home pamphlets, brochures, and business cards explaining where consumers can purchase your products.
- Sample products for display, tasting, and/or for sale.
- Signs that clearly list products and prices, including wholesale prices if applicable.
- Gift certificates or coupons for your products, if appropriate.
- If you are a restaurant/caterer, a list of local farms from whom you buy products, including clear labeling of local products used in the samples at your table.

If your table is on the perimeter of the room, there will be folded blue bleachers behind you. You may tape posters or signs or hang your own covering from the bleachers. If your table is in the middle of the room, there will be an 8 ft. white fabric drape behind you, separating the back-to-back tables. You will need to provide your own free-standing easels or sign boards, or you may hang a banner, etc. from the top frame of the fabric drape. We will provide some short wire hooks for hanging signs. **Vendors may not attach anything directly to the fabric drape.**

Photo Permission:

Valley Food & Farm will be taking photos at the event. Your participation in the event signifies your permission for us to use any photos that we take of you and your display table.

Event Admission Cost:

This event is designed to break-even from income from vendor fees and door admission from attendees. Admission will be \$8, with a family max of \$25. Children ages 6 and under get in free.

Take Care of Yourself:

If you are not used to being a vendor at special events, please remember to provision yourself with food and beverages for the day. It's a long day, especially if you staff your table by yourself. We encourage you to bring your own drinking water.

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