



Dear Potential Arlington County Fair Food Vendor:

Thank you for your interest in participating in the 50th annual Arlington County Fair! Each year, dozens of interested food vendors reach out to the fair to learn about vending opportunities. Fair management strives to create a dynamic and diverse food vendor row that represents the best of Arlington and incorporates the many culinary offerings that are thought of as “traditional” fair food.

Participating food vendors will be located in the small parking lot on 2nd St S.

In addition to providing an excellent experience for our attendees, the fair also prides itself on being “green.” For years, the fair has worked with event partners to recycle bottles, cans, paper, cardboard, and food vendor grease; encouraged visitors to bike or walk to the event; set up a water bottle fill station; as well as other eco-friendly practices. Below is information about our efforts to extend our eco-friendly practices at the Fair and how it relates to your use of certain products. Please be sure to review this information thoroughly to ensure that you are in compliance.

- **Composting:** Compost bins will be placed throughout the fairgrounds and monitored by Arlington County staff. These bins will be located near the food vendor vehicles -- please be sure to dump any leftover food items, including excess food that isn't sold, peels, rinds, bones, etc. in these bins. Please see the attached document for more information on the specific items that are compostable.

- **Straws:** Single-use plastic straws will not be permitted. Vendors must use reusable straws (i.e. refillable lemonade cups with built in straws), paper straws, or utilize cups that do not need straws.

- **Condiment Packets:** Single-use condiment packets will also not be permitted at this year's event. Vendors must use bulk condiments and paper containers that can be composted.



- **Styrofoam:** Styrofoam items such as cups, plates and clamshells have not been permitted at the event for the past several years. Paper or plant-based materials should be used instead.
- **Cutlery:** While plant-based cutlery is preferred, vendors may continue to use plastic cutlery as needed.
- **Recycling:** Vendors must recycle paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum and plastic materials in the on-site recycle containers.

While Arlington County does not have a preferred vendor for food service materials, you may consider researching these companies:

- Aardvark Straws: <https://www.aardvarkstraws.com/>
- Eco Products: www.ecoproducts.com
- Greenstaurant: www.greenstaurant.com
- GreenGood USA: www.greengood.com

Thank you again for your interest in participating in the 2026 Arlington County Fair. Please be sure to review all the information in the vendor packet very carefully. Should you have any questions about the vendor application or about the fair in general, please contact countyfair@arlingtonva.us.

Best wishes for a successful 2026 fair season!

Sincerely,

Arlington County DPR



2026 ARLINGTON COUNTY FAIR

OUTDOOR FOOD VENDOR

INFORMATION & RULES

WHAT: Now in its 50th year, the Arlington County Fair is a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization that embraces a diverse community by educating, entertaining, and showcasing the best of Arlington. The event is one of the largest on the East Coast and entertained an estimated 150,000 people during the 2024 event. Fair highlights include dozens of Midway rides, over 100 indoor exhibitors, a variety of food offerings, and free family-friendly entertainment.

WHERE: Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 Second Street South, Arlington, VA 22204

WHEN: August 12-16, 2026

HOW TO APPLY: Complete the [online application](#). Applicants will be contacted within three weeks of application submission regarding the status of their acceptance.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA:

Vendors must be fully licensed and insured and operate within 125 miles of Arlington, VA.

As part of the selection process, management intentionally incorporates a wide range of food offerings—both traditional fair favorites and diverse regional cuisines—to ensure an engaging and well-rounded experience for all attendees.

Consideration for space assignments will be given to food vendors that offer unique food items with affordable menu selections and to sponsors of the Arlington County Fair. Arlington County Fair management reserves the right to reject any application for any reason.

FEES:



Food Vendor Space:

- Full-Service Concessionaire – \$2,000
- Single Item Concessionaire – \$1,300

Ice: All ice must be purchased through the Arlington County Fair for tented vendors. The fee for ice is \$300 per vendor and includes 40 16-lb bags. Additional bags may be purchased for \$7.50 each.

The County Fair Board will invoice 30 days after the fair and payment will be due upon receipt.

APPLICATION REVIEW & ACCEPTANCE PROCESS (2026):

To better manage space and provide timely communication to vendors, the Arlington County Fair will use a rolling review process with three acceptance rounds for 2026. This is the first year the Fair is implementing this structured timeline, and we appreciate vendors reviewing the dates and deadlines carefully. Applications are reviewed as they are received, but formal acceptance notifications and payment deadlines will follow the schedule below.

Important: Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee acceptance. Approval is based on available space, category balance, adherence to vendor guidelines at past County Fairs, and overall fit within the Fair.

Application Timeline

- **Applications Open:** March 3, 2026
- **Final Application Deadline:** June 20, 2026
- Applications received after June 20 may not be considered unless space remains available.

Acceptance Round 1

- Application window: **March 3 – March 31, 2026**
- Acceptance notifications sent: **April 8, 2026**
- Booth payment deadline: **April 30, 2026**



Acceptance Round 2

- Application window: **April 1 – April 30, 2026**
- Acceptance notifications sent: **May 8, 2026**
- Booth payment deadline: **May 31, 2026**

Acceptance Round 3 (Final Round)

- Application window: **May 1 – June 20, 2026**
- Acceptance notifications sent: **June 25, 2026**
- Booth payment deadline: **July 5, 2026**

Waitlist & Unpaid Booths

- Vendors who do not submit payment by their assigned deadline may forfeit their booth space.
- Forfeited spaces may be offered to qualified applicants on the waitlist.
- Waitlisted vendors who are offered a space will have a short payment window (typically 3 business days).

Additional Notes

- All accepted vendors will receive payment instructions and any additional information via email.
- Booth assignments and final logistics will be shared after payments are completed and vendor placement is finalized.
- Vendors should ensure the email address provided on their application is monitored regularly for time-sensitive communications.
- If you are not accepted, you will be informed accordingly. You will also be unable to reapply during the subsequent rounds.

By submitting an application, vendors acknowledge and agree to follow the acceptance timeline, payment deadlines, and procedures outlined above.

PAYMENT:

There is no fee to apply online. Fees will only be charged once a vendor is accepted.



Payments should not be submitted prior to the event management's confirmation of a vendor's acceptance into the event. Once accepted, full payment is due according to the deadline of each round. Following vendor's acceptance into the Arlington County Fair, payment may be made by any of the following methods:

- Online: Log into your account at <https://registration.arlingtonva.us> (Credit card or eCheck accepted)
- Phone: Call our Administrative Services office at 703-228-4747 Monday - Friday, 8am - 5pm (Credit Card accepted)
- By mail or In Person: Make checks payable to Arlington County Treasurer and mail to or drop off at Arlington Parks and Recreation, 300 N Park Dr, Arlington, VA 22203

CANCELLATIONS: Cancellations after **August 8, 2026** will result in the forfeiture of all fees and assigned vehicle space.

SPACE PRIORITY: Due to limited available space, Arlington County cannot guarantee vehicle space for all food vendor applicants. Space location is driven by desired menu, individual food vendor space requirements, logistical restrictions, and is at the discretion of the Arlington County Fair management.

VEHICLE LOCATION: Food vendors are not permitted to relocate their vendor or mobile unit at any time during the Fair without the advanced authorization by the Arlington County Fair management. If any food vendor is seen moving their vehicle or mobile unit to another location without said authorization, the food vendor and all equipment, supplies, materials, food, beverages, employees, owners, etc. will be removed from the Arlington County Fair by the Arlington County Fair management via the Arlington County Police Department.

FAIR CANCELLATION/POSTPONEMENT: In the event that the Fair is canceled or postponed, in whole or in part, for any reason beyond the Fair's control, including but not limited to weather, acts of God, and decisions by public officials, food vendor agrees that Arlington County will not be liable for any loss of income, promotional/marketing opportunities, costs, or other damages incurred on the part of the food vendor.



FAIR SET UP: Food vendor vehicle set up is coordinated based on a food vendor's space number. Participating food vendors will be notified prior to the event regarding their allotted set up times.

OPERATING HOURS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE):

	<u>Indoor Hours</u>	<u>Outdoor Hours</u>
Wednesday, August 12*	N/A	5 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.
Thursday, August 13*	N/A	5 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.
Friday, August 14	4 p.m. – 10 p.m.	2 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.
Saturday, August 15	11 a.m. – 9 p.m.	10 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.
Sunday, August 16	11 a.m. – 7 p.m.	11 a.m. – 10 p.m.

*Midway rides and food vendors open on Wednesday and Thursday nights.

FAIR BREAKDOWN: Vehicles must be closed promptly at closing time. Please note that load-in vehicles may not obstruct the sidewalk located in the middle of food vendor row. If a vendor's vehicle is blocking the sidewalk, they will be asked to move the vehicle.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT: The Fair has an extensive marketing and promotion campaign and patron attendance is at its all-time highest. However, return on investment is the sole responsibility of food vendor and does not fall under the burden of the Fair.

Arlington County will not, under any circumstances, reimburse or replace any costs associated with food, beverage, serving supplies, equipment and materials that the food vendor made in preparation for the event.

REPORTING: All food vendors must complete the enclosed Arlington County Fair Earnings Report. The report must be emailed or mailed to Arlington County DPR no later than **September 10, 2026**.

EXCLUDED FOOD: Food vendors are not permitted to sell **popcorn, caramel corn, candy, cotton candy or caramel apples**.



CATEGORY EXCLUSIVITY: Please note that there will be no category exclusivity awarded to any food vendors. Event management will work to ensure a variety of food options.

Please note that Arlington County reserves the right to invite food/drink sponsors on-site to sample their products and/or to require a preferred food or beverage use by all food vendors.

GENERATORS: The use of generators is not permitted at the Arlington County Fair.

GREASE DISPOSAL: Grease disposal containers for cooking oils, cooking fats, and cooking grease will be provided by Arlington County DPR. Food vendors are required to use these containers for the disposal of used fats, oils and grease. Any food vendors found dumping this waste on the ground or into a drain will be asked to leave immediately and is subject to a fine by the Arlington County Public Health Department.

WASTE WATER DISPOSAL: All waste water must be disposed of in the grey water tank provided on site adjacent to the trash dumpsters. **Do not dump food, trash, etc. in the grey water tank. If a vendor is seen doing so, they will be removed immediately from the fairgrounds and will be subject to a fine.**

PROPANE: Vendors using propane must place propane tanks in heavy-duty plastic milk crates or similar. Tanks may not be placed on the ground.

COOKING DEVICES: Per Fire Marshal regulations, grills, fryers and other cooking devices may not be placed under tents/coverings.

RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING: Vendors are required to recycle all cardboard, plastic, and aluminum in compliance with Arlington County recycling policies. Vendors will be provided with a recycling bin for use throughout the event. Vendors are **required** to use renewable serving materials such as sugarcane clamshells and plant starch cutlery, or paper-based products (see page one of this packet for details).



Vendors are also required to compost any leftover food items. Compost receptacles will be provided to vendors and emptied regularly.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS: All food vendors must apply and obtain:

- **Temporary Food Establishment License** from the Arlington County Public Health Division, Environmental Health Program. All food vendors (mobile food units, one day vendors, and licensed food establishments) must submit a [temporary food establishment application](#) to sell food at the Arlington County Fair. Depending on the type of vendor a \$40 fee may be required.

- Mobile food units must be Arlington County licensed or apply for a mobile food unit license and [Fire Prevention](#) permit before the Arlington County Fair. Additional information about obtaining a mobile food unit license can be found on the [Mobile Food Unit and Vendor Health License webpage](#).
- Virginia Licensed Food Establishments must submit the temporary food license application and provide a copy of their health license.
- One-day food service vendors must submit the temporary food license application.
- Temporary food license applications must be submitted at least ten (10) days prior to the event (by **August 2, 2026**).

THEFT/PERSONAL INJURY: Each food vendor is responsible for securing his/her own property. Arlington County DPR is not responsible for theft or personal injury.

CODE OF CONDUCT: All food vendors are required to conduct themselves in a fair, professional, and courteous manner. Vendors must acknowledge requests from the Arlington County Fair management, Police and/or Fire Marshal.

NON-COMPLIANCE: Any food vendor that does not comply with the rules, county ordinances, and health or fire code regulations is subject to immediate



dismissal and removal from the Arlington County Fair by the Arlington County Fair management, Police, and/or Fire Marshal and are subject to forfeiture of all fees.

**2026 ARLINGTON COUNTY FAIR
FOOD VENDOR EARNINGS REPORT**

To be filled out and mailed after the event, no later than September 10, 2026

Food Vendor Business Name: _____
Contact Person: _____ **Phone:** _____

Please account for all food and drink items sold during the 2026 Arlington County Fair.

FOOD ITEM/DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY SOLD	SELL PRICE	SUBTOTAL



GRAND TOTAL	\$
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Fill out and mail this form to:

Arlington County DPR

Attn: Emilee Riches

2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 414

No later than September 10, 2026

You may print additional pages if needed.