

Built From Scratch: Starting Up A New Market & Setting It Up For Success

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We Dig Tidewater LLC

Norfolk, VA

Hampton Blvd Farmers Market

Harvest Market at O'Connor Brewing Co.

East Beach Farmers Market (NEW in 2020)



Our markets are privately run, for-profit markets. You will need your own seed money or to secure a sponsoring partner for start up expenses.

Location Selection

- ◆ Where is there need for a market and an audience to support it? (this will vary depending on the goals of your market)
- ◆ Proximity to existing markets
- ◆ Other considerations

◆ Other Considerations

- ◆ accessible and convenient to audience you've identified
- ◆ restrooms
- ◆ parking
- ◆ visibility
- ◆ space for number of vendors desired for an appealing market
- ◆ electricity and water sources
- ◆ space and plan for vendors to access, unload, park, load
- ◆ storage for market items
- ◆ if including food trucks or catering vendors with portions larger than "street foods", guests may want to sit in order for that to be successful

Pros & Cons of Private Property vs. Public Property



◆ Pros of Private Property

- ◆ generally, getting permits is easier
- ◆ LOTS of location options
- ◆ partnering with another business or a neighborhood, double the promotion
- ◆ can restrict activities of protesters or petitioners more easily on private property
- ◆ usually more freedom in layout

◆ Cons of private property

- ◆ need to find a cooperative property owner and obtain written permission to attach to permit application
- ◆ property owner may want a say in how market is run

◆ Pros of Public Property

- ◆ larger spaces may be available—parks, fairgrounds, city office buildings where parking lot is empty on weekends
- ◆ city or town may be willing to help you financially or with advertising

◆ Cons of Public Property

- ◆ based on expected number of attendees, city or town may require police for crowd / parking control and EMS on standby; lots of red tape
- ◆ less control over petitioners or protesters, as police will only remove them if they are directly impeding a vendor's doing business
- ◆ you may have less control over how you utilize the property

Obtaining Your Permits

- ◆ **Start with the Planning and Zoning Office**

- ◆ Provide the address of desired location for the office to tell you if farmers markets are expressly addressed in the zoning laws for your location. If not, you'll likely need to apply for a Conditional Use Permit.
- ◆ Special Event Permits are generally limited to holding an event X number of times per year (often four), so not a viable route for a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly market
- ◆ Review process for Conditional Use Permits may be either Administrative (much easier) or Legislative (far more difficult, time consuming and expensive)
- ◆ Going to city council / town council / zoning board for approval will likely require public notices in newspapers (\$\$) and detailed property drawings. You may need to allow 6-8 months to have your application heard if going this route. You can invest a lot of time and money before you even know if you will get approval.

◆ Create a Market Map

- ◆ vendor layout and locations - exactly how many vendors can you accommodate
- ◆ specify where vendors will park
- ◆ show customer parking including direction of traffic flow
- ◆ indicate foot traffic points of entry / exit
- ◆ show location of market manager as part of a safety and security plan
- ◆ include this map with your conditional use permit application, and also use it in the future for use with vendors and / or customers

Once you obtain your conditional use permit, you must abide by any conditions specified in your permit with regard to hours of operation, products sold, etc.

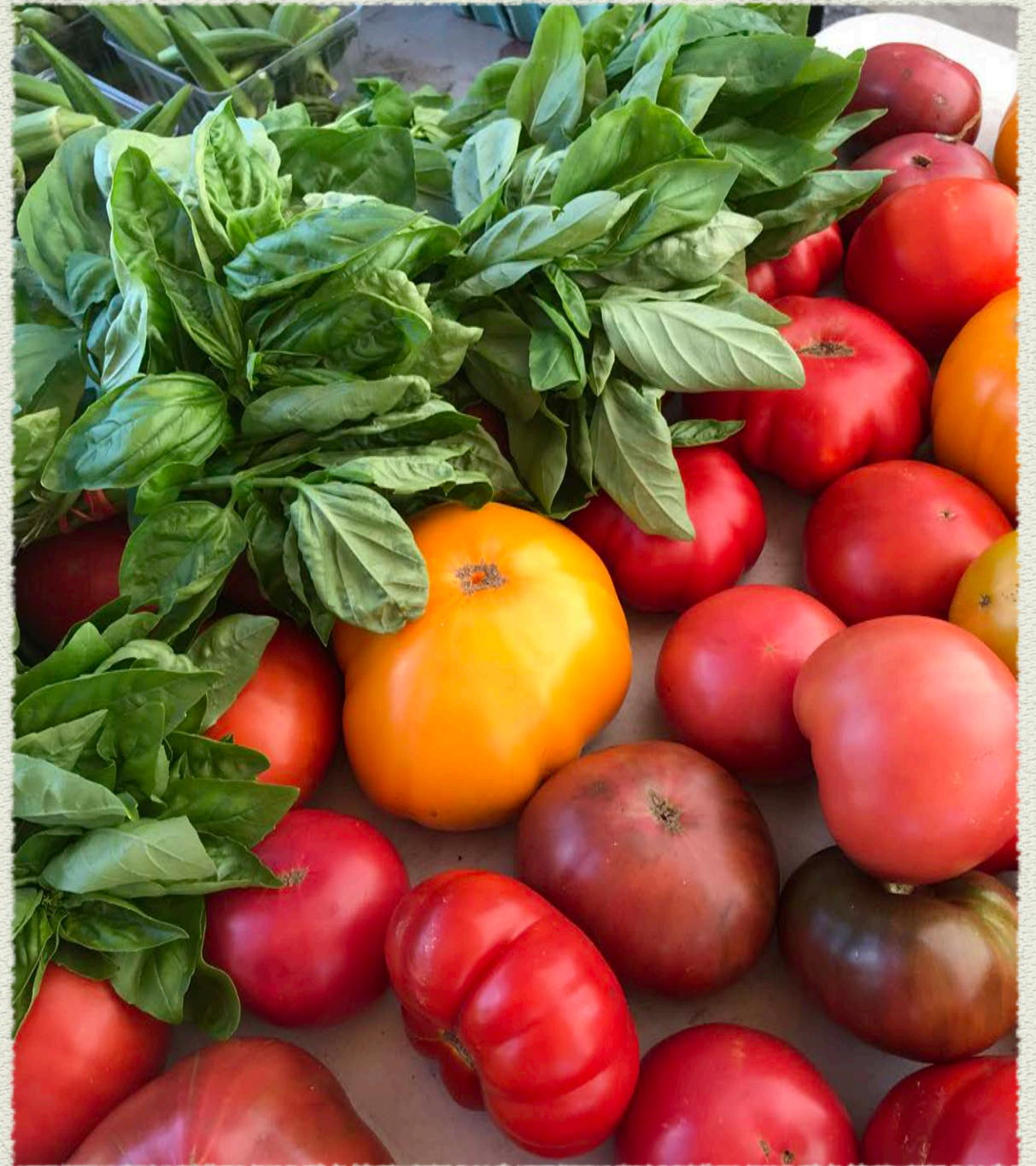


Contact the Commissioner of Revenue

- ◆ Requirements and fees for vendors will vary by locality. In Norfolk, vendors must apply for a Special Event Business License (\$50 fee). This ensures they are registered with the Commissioner of the Revenue to collect and pay sales & use tax for all sales made within the city.
- ◆ Market is required to provide a list of all vendors and contact info to Commissioner of Revenue as a second measure. Must be updated as new vendors are added during the season.

Contact Local VDACS Agent

- ◆ The Virginia Department of Agriculture needs to be aware of your market, as they are the ones appointed to perform inspections of your vendors at the market to assure compliance with regulations
- ◆ Department of Weights and Measures may also show up to check that scales used to sell product priced by the pound are inspected and labeled as such



Recruit Your Vendors

- ◆ Secure your Anchor Vendors First
 - ◆ Produce
 - ◆ Meat
 - ◆ Seafood (if applicable)
 - ◆ Eggs



◆ Then Fill In With Other Vendor Categories

- ◆ Honey
- ◆ Baked Goods
- ◆ Jams
- ◆ Pickles & Pickled Products
- ◆ Beverages
- ◆ Cut Flowers
- ◆ Prepared Foods & Snacks
- ◆ Specialty Foods
- ◆ Crafts / Artisans?

- ◆ Do your best to ensure vendor balance
- ◆ Do not go to neighboring markets and poach their vendors. That's inconsiderate to the manager of that market. You also don't want to take the vendor's time and attention away from their paying customers. Contact them at another time.

Develop A List Of Requirements That Vendors Must Meet

- ◆ Vendors must work out of an inspected kitchen (by VDACS or VDH) unless it's a product exempt by VDACS regulations and properly labeled as such
- ◆ Must have licensing and labeling appropriate for the product they sell
- ◆ Vendors must carry liability insurance of a minimum specified amount; consider making them add the market entity and possibly your host property owner as additional insured parties and provide certificates of insurance



- ◆ Vendors must supply their own cash for making change and credit card processing equipment, tents / tables / supplies / equipment / signage and inspected scales
- ◆ Will you require that all applicable vendors accept SNAP or utilize a token system market-wide?
- ◆ Vendors must be willing to agree to your policies in writing to be accepted as a vendor.

Develop Your Vendor Application

- ◆ On paper or online, using market management software
- ◆ Don't need to reinvent the wheel - phone a friend!
- ◆ First item on application should be explanation of your market's mission or goals, so people understand what your market is about
- ◆ Dates of market season
- ◆ Hours of operation
- ◆ Include any specific product requirements you may have, such as:
 - ◆ Producer-only?
 - ◆ Virginia-grown/made only?
 - ◆ Grown or made within 150 miles of the market?

- ◆ State market rules and guidelines, including specifically stating prohibited activities or conditions for vendor expulsion.
- ◆ Spell out all items you already identified as requirements vendors must meet in order to participate in the market.
- ◆ Ask vendors' needs to help you determine if you can accommodate them in your location and help you determine where to assign their stall(s)
 - ◆ Need electricity?
 - ◆ Use a generator?
 - ◆ Preparing food on-site?
 - ◆ Does setup utilize a trailer or vehicle or refrigerated truck
- ◆ If you have an application fee, explain
- ◆ Outline market fee structure, based on number of stalls requested by vendor. Explain billing and payment.

- ◆ If choosing to take part in Farmers Market Coalition's Farmers Market Metrics Program, build the 11 required vendor questions into your application (See Mary Delicate)
- ◆ State weather policy. Both vendors and customers need to be clear on this, so you also want to advertise this to customers.
- ◆ State your application deadline
- ◆ Provide resources and contact info
- ◆ Circulate your application when other local markets do, not later
- ◆ Require vendor signature or electronic signature stating they have read, understand and agree to all market policies and guidelines

Vendor Selection & Acceptance

- ◆ Aside from your anchor vendors, keep product balance in mind when selecting
- ◆ Create an official acceptance letter that includes info on:
 - ◆ Arrival instructions / vendor parking
 - ◆ Setup procedures
 - ◆ Breakdown instructions
- ◆ Continue to use this letter throughout the season as new vendors are accepted



Obtain Equipment To Set Up For And Run The Market

- ◆ Tent
- ◆ Tent weights
- ◆ Information Table
- ◆ Banners / Signage
- ◆ Sponsor banners / signage, if applicable
- ◆ Traffic cones
- ◆ Office Supplies, literature, mailing list
signup
- ◆ First aid kit



Decide On Special Programming & Partners Needed

- ◆ Accepting SNAP
- ◆ Cooking demos
- ◆ Kids' program
- ◆ Live Music
- ◆ Special Events and Promotions
(National Farmers Market Week, holiday markets after regular season has ended, Farm to Table Dinner, Raffles, etc)



Sponsors & Advertising Partners

- ◆ Develop a recruitment plan
 - ◆ Tiers? What do sponsors get in exchange—what specific recognition or perks?
 - ◆ Sponsors for specific programs and needs? (music sponsor, cooking demo sponsor, etc)
 - ◆ VAFMA Market Manager Certification Course covers this in detail or learn more at conferences like this



- ◆ Identify potential sponsors and advertising partners (signage and graphics companies make great sponsors if they will provide your signs and banners free or at a reduced cost)
- ◆ Contact potential partners
- ◆ Follow up and secure partners
- ◆ Deliver on what you promised your sponsors or advertising partners

Create A Marketing Plan

- ◆ Create a budget based on expected revenue from application fees, vendor fees and sponsorship money
- ◆ Don't forget press releases, radio interviews, TV interviews are free promotion for your Grand Opening — you're working on a shoestring budget here
- ◆ Take full advantage of free social media. Develop your tone. Plan your content. Create a social media calendar that takes into account holidays, food holidays, current events. Keep learning—social media keeps changing.
- ◆ Use MailChimp's free plan and build up an e-newsletter list with signups at the market info table and on social media.
- ◆ Once the market is open, take tons of good photos for future promotional use.

Purchase Insurance

- ◆ Besides your vendors needing liability insurance, your market management company needs to carry it, as well
- ◆ Get quotes from VAFMA resources or other insurers
- ◆ Make the effective date the day before your season begins



Questions???

Contact Us

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