

# Downtown Farmer's Market Interview with Des Moines 10.6.16

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## Their Structure & History

- The Des Moines Downtown Farmers Market is a program of the Downtown community alliance (Downtown Des Moines inc.) Their Downtown Des Moines Inc. is mostly known for hosting and creating events. They are a nonprofit 501c6. This started as a group of volunteers for the first 5-6 years and they found it exhausting. So the volunteers handed

it off to the city and the city ran it for a couple of years and handed it to Downtown Des Moines Inc. and said if you don't take this we won't do it anymore.

- Their budget comes from 50% vendor fees, 40% sponsorship fees and roughly 10% from things they sell like market bags and coffee mugs. They get a lot of in-kind marketing from partners like the local newspaper. Their CBV (like Visit Topeka) distributes their guide and flyers to hotels but doesn't provide any other services.
- Started in 1976 in a parking lot in an area downtown with a handful of vendors. Mid 80's moved the market again to another area of downtown. Early 90's they moved the market to the street and it has gradually grown based on need.

### **Economic Development Impact Numbers**

- Des Moines does not have Economic Development Impact numbers, but they do have them for the [state](#). They do have survey information from customers and vendors and I have requested this data from Kelly & Lydia.

### **How they decide who gets what spot?**

- 300 vendors ½ full season and ½ half season
- Each vendor has to apply every year. There is no seniority for who gets what spot. The Downtown Farmer's Market organization gets the flexibility and authority to move people wherever they want. They do give special consideration to those who need it. A vendor may be in spot 1 for one month and the next be in spot 20. In March, the vendors get a schedule of which spot they are in for the rest of the year.
- Their policy doesn't sell more than 2 spaces to a vendor. This went into place because some vendors liked to purchase 5-6 stalls so they didn't have neighbors or whatever. The market grew big enough where this wasn't okay anymore.
- EVERYTHING WAS A PROGRESSION...when they moved to the street they initially parked their trucks and vehicles on the street against the curbs and put their tables on the sidewalks. In 2002 the market asked vendors to move off sidewalks and all hell broke loose. People were super resistant to this change. After a time or two it ended up being fine because customers liked it much better. As you can see on the map, they have now moved to no vehicles at all in the market space. (They have provided one or two leniencies with corn season and trailers full of corn.)
- The corner spaces of the market that open to both sides are reserved for produce.
- The staff really work to know the needs of each vendor and make their life easy.

### **Street Closure & Relationship with Retailers downtown**

- Initially Des Moines Farmer's Market had to apply every year to close the streets. They would canvas neighborhood and downtown stores to get signatures to close the street. They didn't know from year to year if they would get the streets closed. Spent a lot of time talking to restaurants and neighborhood. Apparently at first the relationship

between the farmer's market team and the retailers was not friendly, it took roughly 10 years to get to a good place. Eventually they told the City Council that every year they weren't sure if they would be able to close the streets. They now have something in place where it becomes more certain (not sure exactly what....)

- The downtown retailers do get a discounted price if they want to have a space in the market.

### **Food Trucks**

- They don't have food trucks. They allow people to park their food trucks or food trailers off-site and bring food in. They have tents and vendor spaces that sell food, it is just cooked right there or brought in. When they made this rule to have vehicles off-site most learned how to cook out of their 10 by 10 tent.

### **Size and cost of space/policy and procedures**

- (Below you see the most pertinent questions for our committee, although this link will show more FAQ's.) [http://www.desmoinesfarmersmarket.com.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/2016\\_Des-Moines-Farmers-Market-Vendor-Information-Guide.pdf](http://www.desmoinesfarmersmarket.com.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/2016_Des-Moines-Farmers-Market-Vendor-Information-Guide.pdf)

**How much space do vendors lease?** The DFM is very limited in regards to useable space available for vending stalls. Vendors are leased one stall. Stall is approximately 10 x 10, however vendors assigned to the south side of Court Ave will have approx. 10 x 15. (Vendors assigned to vend on Court Ave are required to show product and sell toward sidewalk and toward street, (toward "front" and "back" of stall).

**How much is the fee to participate?** There is an annual non-refundable application fee of \$50. An Occasional vendor pays \$50 day/per market stall. Full season vendor fee is based on the product sold & assigned stall. Additional details are noted in application.

**Is there access to electricity at the Market?** Electricity is not available at the DFM. Generators may be approved under certain circumstances. If a vendor requires electricity at the DFM they are required to request approval. All generators must meet DFM guidelines AND be approved by DFM management in advance. If approved, vendor provides generator, extension cord, and cover for the part of the cord that lies in walkways and all areas utilized by public. Generators must be quiet to respect DFM vendors, customers and residents. Generators causing disruption or complaints will not be permitted.

**What are the requirements for General Commercial Liability Insurance?** Each accepted vendor, in all product categories, is required to furnish proof of insurance before Market acceptance. Applicants do not need to show proof of a policy upon submitting application but will be required to provide a certificate of insurance prior to final acceptance. Vendor agrees to purchase and provide Certificate of General Commercial Liability insurance with \$1,000,000

limits & name Downtown Community Alliance as Additional Insured and Certificate Holder. Certificate must be on file at Downtown Community Alliance prior to vending at the DF M. Applicants can submit Certificate of General Commercial Liability Insurance to: farmersmarket@downtowndesmoines.com OR fax to 515-286-4902.

**What kind of licenses/permits do I need?** Each applicant / accepted vendor is required to furnish several documents upon DFM acceptance; the completed online vendor application, certificate of insurance, and the necessary licenses and permits. Listed are general permits and requirements. Other requirements may apply, it is the responsibility of the vendor to know and comply with all requirements. Sales Tax: Vendors are required to comply with Iowa Sales Tax law. It is the responsibility of every vendor to know if they are required to collect and remit Iowa Sales Tax based on the product they sell. Questions/concerns regarding Iowa Sales Tax obligations should be directed to: Annette Collins; Iowa Department of Revenue, (515) 725-0202. Food Safety: Vendors are required to comply with State Public Health regulations governing the preparation, handling and presentation of food. It is the responsibility of every food handling vendor to know if they are required to obtain specific food handling licensing. Contact Food and Consumer Safety; (515) 281-6538; Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals with questions. Generally, vendors that plan to cut, pierce, cold hold, hot hold, can, or preserve any edible product will be required to purchase the seasonal permit. Fire Extinguishers: Food vendors using gas or other fuel sources for cooking are required to have on site, in their stall, a portable fire extinguisher, with a DMFD Extinguisher Service Tag affixed. These service tags may be obtained from most fire extinguisher companies in the Des Moines Metro area. Contact Des Moines Fire Department Prevention Bureau at 515-283-4240 for additional information. Additional Permits and Opportunities:

- Wireless EBT project (USDA food stamp program) Contact Iowa Department of Human Services, EBT Wireless Project (Electronic Benefits Transfer), (515) 281-4935; [Tpenick@DHS.state.ia.us](mailto:Tpenick@DHS.state.ia.us)
- FMNP, Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC and Senior Checks program). Contact Paul Ovrom, Horticulture Bureau, IDALS, 515-242- 6239; paul.ovrom@iowaagriculture.gov, [www.agriculture.state.ia.us/horticultrue.htm](http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/horticultrue.htm).