



MARKET START-UP GUIDE

This guide was created to provide resources, examples and a step-by-step plan to help build community and connect local food producers with community members who want to buy their products.



STEP 1: Do Your Research!

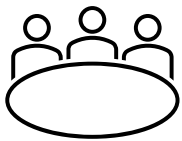
There are a variety of resources for Market managers and market start-up in the State of Iowa. You may not need all of these right away, but you will need them at some point in your market planning journey.

- Local [Food Safety & Inspection](#) Information
- [Iowa Market Manager Handbook](#) courtesy of Northeast Iowa and Iowa Valley RC&Ds
- Iowa [Farmers' Market Association](#)
- Iowa [Department of Ag. & Land Stewardship](#)
- National [Farmers' Market Coalition](#)



STEP 2: Understand Existing Markets

Observe other nearby markets and consider whether your community has capacity to support another – what can you offer that is new or different (times, location, vendors, etc.)?



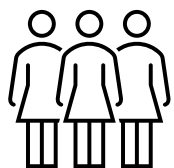
STEP 3: Organizational Structure

Determine how your market will be structured and who will be in charge of decision making. Examples of market organizational structures include: a nonprofit with a board of directors, a paid staff market manager, or a volunteer committee.



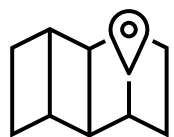
STEP 4: Get to Know the Vendors

Attend markets in and around your community and engage with local foods stakeholders to gauge their capacity and willingness to participate. Farmers, chefs, artists/crafters, and community organizations can all provide valuable input



STEP 5: Define Your Audience

Who are you hoping to attract with your market? How you will reach your potential vendors and shoppers – social media, local newspaper, posters & flyers, etc.



STEP 6: Review Potential Locations

Some zoning or city codes may present obstacles to large public gatherings or certain types of food or livestock. Have a couple of ideas about where you'd like to hold a market and find out if it allowed. Should your market be indoors or outdoors? Do you have an emergency weather plan? What will the flow of vehicle and foot traffic look like? How will you manage lines?



Step 7: Create a Budget

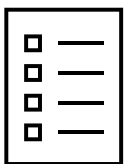
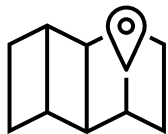
There can be a lot of hidden costs in running a farmers' market. Budgeting ahead of time will ensure your market is sustainable.

Potential Expenses

- Permit and application fees
- Liability insurance
- Venue rental/usage fees
- Porta-potties
- Waste receptacles/removal
- Printing (flyers, signage, vendor paperwork)
- Advertising
- General onsite supplies (cleaning, tables/chairs, first aid, etc.)
- Parking meter bags
- Street barricades
- Website hosting
- Branding/design
- Staff stipends
- Performer stipends
- Market merchandise (bags, t-shirts, etc.)

Potential Revenue

- Vendor booth fees
- Food or beverage sales
- Merchandise sales
- Sponsorships/Advertisers
- In-kind donations
- Volunteer labor



Step 8: Make Decisions About Market Operations

Building relationships with local foods stakeholders and clear expectations for everyone involved are key aspects of running a smooth market. Create a concise document that includes market rules and guidelines such as:

- Product quality & acceptance criteria
- Vendor & shopper code of conduct
- Your definition of "local" (a radius of 10 miles? 100 miles?)
- Attendance policy
- Inclement weather plan
- Conflict resolution procedures
- Product diversity standards or duplication limits
- Interactive programming or educational partnership opportunities
- Promotion & marketing plan

Sample Market Planning Timeline

9-12 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research other markets, target audiences, and community needsNetwork with & recruit potential vendorsResearch city & county ordinances, codes, and application requirements
6-9 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine ideal location and take steps to reserve, rent, or apply to occupy itDetermine organizational structure and brandingBegin fundraising and soliciting partnersFinalize market rules and product standards
3-6 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Finish any legal paperwork, insurance, etc. needed to operate marketOpen up vendor applicationsBegin market promotionContinue vendor recruitment
1-3 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create setup & teardown timelines and task listsRecruit volunteersEnsure vendors' inspections, permits, and state applications are filedIncrease market promotionHost a vendor meeting
WEEK BEFORE OPENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Print all onsite signageCollect vendor paymentsCreate market mapCommunicate final details to vendors, volunteers, media outlets, and partnersRecognize any sponsorsHost your first market!
ONGOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep records (attendance, vendors, finances, etc.)Continue to promoteEvaluate and measure successes/room for improvement