

VALLEY JUNCTION

Farmers Market

Handbook

2025



137 5TH STREET, WEST DES MOINES, IA 50265
(515) 222-3642 | VALLEYJUNCTION.COM

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INTRODUCTION

Historic Valley Junction is home to over 140 distinctive businesses — art galleries, craft shops, antique stores, restaurants, and unique destinations line our streets. A nationally accredited Main Street America community, state certified Cultural & Entertainment District, state certified Iowa Great Place, and 2012 Great American Main Street Award Winner, Historic Valley Junction is also home to over 60 events annually. Our farmers market got its start in the mid-1970s and has been operating in its current format since 1988.

At the Valley Junction Farmers Market, vendors offer fresh produce, arts and crafts, prepared foods, baked goods, specialty foods, flowers, plants and more. One of Iowa's largest farmers markets, this event has become the place to be in central Iowa on Thursday evenings from May—September. In addition, free live music is offered each week during the farmers market in a beverage garden at our Music in the Junction concert series.

Meet your friends and neighbors in Historic Valley Junction for this free event!

MISSION

The Valley Junction Farmers Market connects our community with fresh, local food and artisan products in a vibrant, inclusive atmosphere that celebrates the spirit of Historic Valley Junction being the meeting place of West Des Moines.

GOALS

- To secure the future of healthy, locally produced food.
- To reduce the friction of direct-to-consumer sales of local produce, meat, flowers, arts, and crafts.
- To provide an inclusive environment for Central Iowa community members.
- To attract visitors to our brick & mortar businesses.
- To be a primary source of education about healthy living.

KEY INFORMATION TO KNOW

- Registration for our market is online starting January 9.

- Visit <https://valleyjunction.com/farmers-market/> to start your application. The application this year is through Manage My Market. If you apply after the February 28 deadline, you will automatically be placed on a waitlist. If a stall opens where you will be a good fit, someone will reach out to you.
- Our annual vendors' meeting will be held in-person on Thursday, April 3, at 6:00 pm, at the stage in Railroad Park (425 Railroad Place). It is mandatory for new vendors and encouraged for all vendors. We will discuss the market opening/set up procedure, safety guidelines, highlighted changes from last year, and other important topics. In the case of inclement weather, this meeting will be moved to the first floor of the Valley Junction Activity Center at 217 5th Street.
- Vendor fees are due the day before the first day of the market at the latest, on April 30. This is for both seasonal and occasional vendors.

MARKET DATES & TIMES

The 2025 Valley Junction Farmers Market runs every Thursday, May through September, for a total of 22 weeks. This season will begin on May 1 and will end on September 25. The Valley Junction Farmers Market is from 4 - 8 pm.

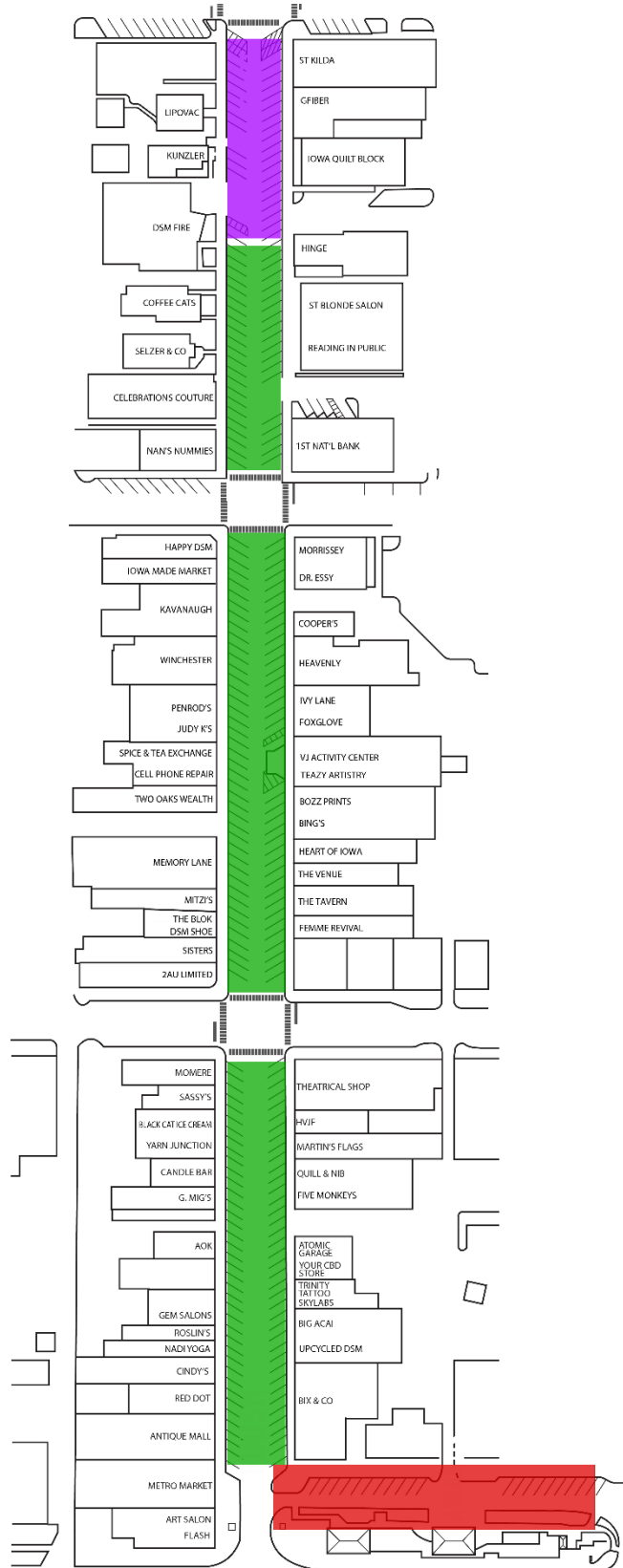
Other important dates:

- January 9: Applications open
- February 28: Applications due (waitlist applications accepted after this deadline)
- April 3: Vendor Meeting
- April 30: Vendor fees due in-full

MARKET LOCATION

The Valley Junction Farmers Market is in the 100-300 blocks of 5th Street in West Des Moines. Vendors are placed from the arch on the south end to the middle of the 300 block on the north end. A kid's zone is in the north part of the 300 block and live music on the stage in Railroad Park takes place near the south end.

KID'S ZONE
VENDORS
CONCERT



PRODUCT & MERCHANDISE GUIDLINES

The primary focus of the Valley Junction Farmers Market is Iowa grown produce and other farm items. All other merchandise will be limited at the discretion of HVJF Board/Management. Merchandise available for sale must be produced or grown in your individual home or business. Mass produced or franchised items including Avon, Mary Kay, Pampered Chef and Tupperware, etc. will not be allowed. HVJF reserves the right to refuse acceptance of any vendor or item that is not in keeping with the rules or quality of the Valley Junction Farmers Market.

The Valley Junction Farmers Market includes six categories:

Produce/Plants/Farm Animal Products

Certified organic produce, chemical free produce, and Iowa grown produce. Produce grown outside of Iowa will be allowed only when such items are not in-season locally. Out-of-state produce must be pre-approved when such items are in-season locally. Fresh and dried flowers, seeds and potted plants. Farm raised meat, dairy, and egg products, such as beef, chicken, turkey, cheese, milk, ice cream, eggs, etc.

Baked Goods/Specialty Foods

Breads, pies, cookies, etc. and other homemade baked goods. Specialty homemade food items that are not considered baked goods, including honeys, mustards, salsas, jams and other homemade food items.

Arts & Crafts

Homemade home décor items (candles, soaps, handmade jewelry, and other art items). Because the crafts category is very broad, it is important to maintain a high level of quality for our market.

Prepared Foods

Ready-to-eat items such as sandwiches, cooked items, and snack items. A complete menu must be submitted with the application and any additions must be approved by market management. Space for this category is limited to 20 vendors. Prepared food vendors must purchase at least a 20ft stall.

Merchant

Valley Junction businesses who rent stall to sell their store's products. Merchant stalls may not be sublet and are subject to all other market rules. This category is only available to current Valley Junction merchants.

Other

Vendor types that do not fit into the above categories. E.g., fitness companies and gyms, home improvement companies, etc. Mass produced and franchised items are not allowed at

the Valley Junction Farmers Market.

Non-profits

Non-profits booth space for informational or outreach purposes only. This category has a limit of three dates per market season. There is no fee for this category.

Non-mainstage Performers

Musicians, dance groups, and other performing artist buskers. Performers will be placed near the normal vendor stall spaces. There is no fee for this category.

MARKET STALL FEES

Vendor locations are reviewed based on several criteria, including product quality and origin (how and where the product is made/produced), category and space availability, market history, previous attendance, and other pertinent criteria. A parking spot directly behind your stall is included.

Small Seasonal Stall (10ft wide x 10ft deep) | \$350 per season

If you will be attending ten dates or more, then choose this option for a 10 ft wide stall. Each vendor will be assigned the same stall for the whole season if they are here for all 22 weeks.

Standard Seasonal Stall (20ft wide x 10ft deep) | \$450 per season

If you will be attending nine dates or more, then choose this option for a 20ft wide stall. Each vendor will be assigned the same stall for the whole season if they are here for all 22 weeks.

Two Adjacent Standard Seasonal Stalls (40ft wide x 10ft deep) | \$925 per season

If you will be attending nine dates or more, then choose this option for a 40ft wide stall. Each vendor will be assigned the stall for the whole season if they are here for all 22 weeks.

Occasional Small Vendor Stall (10ft wide x 10ft deep) | \$35 per week

If you will be attending nine dates or less, then choose this option for a 10ft wide stall. Occasional vendors are not guaranteed to have the same stall each date they are at the market, however, we do try to keep occasional vendors in the same stall when possible.

Occasional Standard Vendor Stall (20ft wide x 10ft deep) | \$55 per week

If you will be attending eight dates or less, then choose this option for a 20ft wide stall. Occasional vendors are not guaranteed to have the same stall each date they are at the market, however, we do try to keep occasional vendors in the same stall when possible.

ADDITIONAL FEES

Application Fee | \$20 (non-refundable)

This fee is non-refundable and is due at the time of applying. This fee applies to applications received prior to the February 28 deadline. All applications received after this deadline are automatically waitlisted and do not require an application fee.

Deposit | \$100 per seasonal stall

A deposit of \$100 per stall, for all sizes, is required with your application prior to the February 28 deadline. Vendors that have not paid this deposit will not be considered. Vendors not accepted to the market will have this deposit refunded in full. Vendors approved, but who choose not to participate (for any reason) after April 3, 2025 will not have their deposits refunded.

Corner Seasonal Stall Fee | \$50

All stalls, regardless of size, will be required to pay an additional \$50 if on a corner. Corner stalls are limited and not guaranteed. Please note if you would like to be considered for a corner stall when applying.

Seasonal Trash Fee | \$100.00 per season

This fee is for seasonal prepared food vendors only. We employ trash cleanup for every market. This fee is to help keep up with the trash created by attendees eating at the prepared food vendors.

Occasional Trash Fee | \$10 per week

This fee is for occasional prepared food vendors only. We employ trash cleanup for every market. This fee is to help keep up with the trash created by attendees eating at the prepared food vendors.

Reckless Driving Fee | \$50

No vendor is allowed to drive through the market area during the market hours of 4:00pm to 8:00pm. Any vendor caught driving during this time will need to pay this fee prior to returning to the market. No exceptions.

Trash Removal Fee | \$50

The trash cans on the sidewalks are for attendees only. Vendors are not allowed to use trash cans on the sidewalk for trash created at their booth and are required to dispose of all trash off-property. Any vendor caught putting trash in cans on the sidewalks or dumpsters behind the 5th Street businesses will need to pay this fee in full prior to returning to the market. No exceptions.

APPLYING TO THE MARKET

To be considered for a full-time seasonal stall, applications must be received through our website by 11:59pm on Friday, February 28. All applications received after this date will automatically be placed on a waitlist and be accepted on an available space basis.

If you are applying as an Occasional Vendor, you may not get all your requested dates approved. We give priority to seasonal vendors that are scheduled the whole season. If there are not enough vacancies for all an Occasional Vendor's requested dates, only the dates that we have vacancies for will be approved.

It is the sole responsibility of HVJF to fill vacant stalls. Vendors may not sublet space. HVJF retains the right to approve and facilitate all arrangements for sharing a stall.

Preference of location requests should be noted on the application. Stall preference will be considered but is not guaranteed for any vendor.

By applying online, potential vendors acknowledge they have received, understood, and agreed to follow all the policies and procedures set forth by the Historic Valley Junction Foundation (referred to as HVJF) as stated in this handbook. HVJF reserves the right to remove any vendor at any time for failure to comply with the Farmers Market Policies and Procedures. Disregard for any guidelines established in this document will be just cause for action to be taken. HVJF retains the right to prohibit a vendor from participation in the Valley Junction Farmers Market, without refund.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

January 9

Application open. Go to <https://valleyjunction.com/farmers-market/> and apply. Every vendor must apply online. Your application is not considered received until you have also submitted your application fee and deposit payment if applying prior to the February 28 deadline.

March 1

We will begin assigning stalls to accepted vendors. You may not see any change to your application right away, so please be patient. You will receive a notification when your vendor status changes in Manage My Market:

- **Received:** We have received your application and is under review.
- **Pending:** We have received all required paperwork, application fee, and deposit. The application is now waiting for the approval/denial decision.

- **Approved:** The application was selected to be a part of the market and awaiting final payment of your stall fee.
- **Declined:** The application was not selected and does not meet our vendor guidelines to be a part of the market. A refund of your deposit will be issued.
- **Withdrawn:** The vendor requested the application to be withdrawn from the market.
- **Wait Listed:** The application was not selected and does not meet our vendor guidelines to be part of the market, or you applied after the March 1 deadline. A refund of your deposit will be issued, if one was paid.

Note: Any space assignments are subject to change at any time. This includes after the market has opened for the season.

April 3

Last day to withdraw from the market (for any reason) and receive a deposit refund.

April 30

All final stall payments due.

FARMERS MARKET SET UP

Set Up Hours

Set up will begin at 3:00 p.m. each Thursday. Vendors may not set up prior to 3:00 p.m. Unless given the OK to enter early by a staff person. Any vendor entering the event area prior to 3:00 p.m. will be asked to leave and re-enter at the appropriate time. We have limited staff to clear the streets safely of all signage and vehicles. We need our space to clear the street, so you have your space to set up.

Vendors not set up by 4:00 p.m. will have games or furniture set in their stalls. If you will be arriving late or not attending the event, please notify the HVJF office at (515) 222-3642.

Official market hours are 4:00–8:00 p.m. Vehicles are not allowed to drive on 5th Street from 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Set Up Regulations

Vendor booths should be set up facing the sidewalk (not towards the middle of the street). Vendors must provide all set up materials (tent, tables, signage, etc.) Tents must have weights on each leg or anchored down. HVJF will not loan any materials to vendors.

By law, fire lanes in the center of the streets must always be kept open, including during set up. Each vendor is allowed one vehicle per stall and should be parked parallel with the sidewalk behind the booth while still allowing enough space for fire a lane.

Sidewalks are not included in your space and are required to be kept clear during event hours. Vendors are not allowed to set up (or give out free samples) on the sidewalks or against storefronts to provide proper customer walkway access.

Electricity is not available for vendors at the Valley Junction Farmers Market. If you require electricity, you are required to provide your own generator. All generators must be muffled to respect Valley Junction residents, merchants, customers, and other vendors. (Suggested generator - Honda EU3000is or equivalent with a volume of less than 60dB). Without refunding vendor fees, HVJF may request a vendor to leave if the vendor's generator is deemed too loud. Vendors attempting to use electricity outlets located on or near Valley Junction trees or buildings will be immediately removed from the market without refund. Outlets anywhere on the street are for HVJF use and may not be used by market vendors without prior HVJF approval.

VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

Because of the importance of keeping a full and active farmers market, all vendors are expected to attend each scheduled date and should not request dates they cannot attend. An absence is considered unexcused if a vendor notifies our office after 12:00pm on the Wednesday before the market or does not show up to the market without notification. Vendors who have three or more unexcused absences may be removed from the market without a refund and/or not accepted for following years. Vendors not able to attend a scheduled market date are required to notify HVJF with as much notice as possible by emailing events@valleyjunction.com or calling Larry Kaster at 515-222-3642. Full-time seasonal vendors are required to notify management of planned absences on the market application. Unforeseen emergencies will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. Cancellation or no-show date fees are not refunded or waived. Attendance is enforced and will be taken into consideration when accepting applications each following season.

Liability Insurance

All Valley Junction Farmers Market vendors are required to have a current Certificate of Liability Insurance for the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 on file with HVJF. This certificate must be submitted by all vendors prior to setting up at your first market. Historic Valley Junction Foundation must be listed as additional insured and certificate holder. Please note that a copy of your insurance policy does not satisfy this requirement. An updated certificate will need to be provided to HVJF for any policies renewed during the market season. Provide your certificate of liability insurance to HVJF by submitting by uploading the document to your application. Insurance requirements will not be waived for any Valley Junction Farmers Market vendors. If there is a question about what you need from your insurance agent, please show them this page and they will know what policy to prepare.

Sales Tax

It is each vendor's responsibility to know if they are required to collect and remit Iowa Sales Tax. HVJF does not accept responsibility for vendors who fail to meet this obligation. Vendors who are required to remit sales tax must have a permanent valid Sales Tax Permit. Temporary sales tax permits are no longer issued. Failure to respond and reply to sales tax inquiries by the Internal Revenue Service will eliminate vendors from future participation in the Valley Junction Farmers Market, as well as other Valley Junction special events. For questions, please call the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance at (515) 281-3114.

Health Inspection

All Valley Junction Farmers Market vendors are required to comply with the State of Iowa Public Health regulations governing the preparation, handling, and presentation of food. Prepared food vendors are responsible for obtaining all necessary licenses and permits required by the State of Iowa. Vendors are encouraged to contact the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals at (515) 281-6538 with any questions or concerns regarding product regulations, licensing, and fees. HVJF is not responsible for health permits/inspections, however, HVJF is required by law to submit to the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals the business information of all vendors at each market.

Clean-up and Trash Removal

Vendors must provide their own garbage removal. Any vendor serving food must place a tarp or mat under the space to protect the street from grease spills. Grease spills may not be left on the street as it is dangerous and gets tracked into stores. All vendors are responsible for cleaning their stalls at the end of each market. All garbage must be removed. Garbage may not be placed in any city trash can, private dumpsters, event trash box, or left on the curb. These are for attendees only. Failure to follow these standards is a violation of these policies and procedures and repeat offenders may be removed from the market without refund of dues. Seasonal prepared food vendors will be charged an additional \$100 per space (\$10 per space for occasional prepared food vendors) for trash maintenance due to the extra waste created by Farmers Market customers who purchase prepared food.

Severe Weather Protocol

The Valley Junction Farmers Market is held rain or shine, and vendors are expected to attend regardless of weather. Announcements of cancellation due to severe weather will be made to vendors via email and public announcement by a staff. Regarding the personal safety of vendors, patrons, and the public, HVJF will determine if or when a closure or cancellation of the market is imminent. With the assistance of local police, the message and pertinent information will be broadcast to onsite vendors.

WIC, FMNP and Food Stamps

Produce vendors may register to accept WIC checks as a way of increasing sales at the Valley Junction Farmers Market. To accept WIC checks, vendors must be certified through the State

of Iowa. HVJF is not responsible for losses incurred from accepting WIC checks without certification. All WIC certified vendors must adhere to the State of Iowa rules and regulations. A WIC certified vendor found not adhering to the rules will be immediately reported. Vendors seeking certification in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for the first time must be certified through classroom instruction scheduled by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship at (515) 242-6239. Reservations for classes must be made in advance. Food, seeds and food producing plants may be purchased with USDA Food Stamps. Contact the Federal Dept. of Agriculture at (877) 823-4369 for more information.

Valley Junction Gift Certificates and Tickets

Vendors are not expected to accept Valley Junction district gift certificates. All Valley Junction district gift certificates have the Valley Junction logo on them. These gift certificates are good for brick & mortar merchants only. Occasionally, visitor groups will receive Valley Junction tickets or gift certificates to spend at Farmers Market. When this occurs, all vendors will be informed of all pertinent information prior to the market date. Vendors are expected and agree to accept these special occasion gift certificates and/or tickets. Vendors may turn in gift certificates or tickets for reimbursement during market hours and non-market hours (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday). Reimbursement checks will be issued.

Vendor Compliance Checklist

The following is a list of policies that vendors must follow to be in compliance with the Historic Valley Junction Farmers Market. Please understand that this is not an all-inclusive list, and policies and procedures listed on other pages of the application must also be followed. If a vendor is non-compliant, possible repercussions include vendor status being up for review with the Board of Directors, fines, or suspension or expulsion from the market.

- Signage with the name of the business is neat, clear, and visible within the vendor's booth space.
- Glass containers for products consumed on site are not allowed.
- Vendors are not allowed to smoke or drink alcoholic beverages within their booth space or outside of permitted areas. Outdoor alcoholic beverages require a wristband and are limited to Railroad Park during a concert.
- Burning of any kind of substance including incense, smoking chips, candles, etc., is prohibited.
- Only one vehicle is allowed per vendor within the market area. That vehicle must be parallel parked at the back of the stall. Be sure to always keep a fire lane in the center of the street clear by making sure some of the white parking lines are visible from the middle of the street. For vendors with extra vehicles, parking is available in the public lots on 4th and 6th Streets.
- Pets (excluding service animals) are not allowed within the vendor's booth space.
- Driving is not permitted on 5th Street between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on market days.

Violations of this rule will result in a \$50 reckless driving fee to be paid in full before returning to the market.

- Vendors are expected to have consistent attendance. Failure to notify HVJF of an absence and repeat absences may result in removal from the market. Attendance is strictly enforced.
- Vendors will not sublet their booth space. It is the sole responsibility of HVJF to fill any vacant spaces.
- Vendors may not place garbage in city trash bins, private dumpsters, event trash boxes, or on the curb. Any vendor found violating this rule will need to pay a \$50 fine in full before returning to the market.
- All vendors must provide HVJF with proof of insurance as stated on page 10.
- All vendors must comply with health code regulations.
- It is each vendor's responsibility to know if they are required to collect and remit Iowa Sales Tax. HVJF does not accept responsibility for vendors who fail to meet this obligation.
- Electricity is not available for organizations. If you require electricity, you must supply a generator with a 60db max volume under load (suggested generator – Honda EU3000is or equivalent). If deemed too loud you will need to shut it off.
- Vendors are expected to have positive, friendly conduct towards customers, fellow vendors, market staff, and volunteers. Through cooperation we can all benefit from working together!

NON-PROFITS

The Valley Junction Farmers Market offers up to three market dates to registered non-profits at no charge. These 10x10 stalls are offered for informational purposes only, and selling of any goods or services is not permitted. If you are a non-profit that wants to sell at our market, you must fill out the application as a vendor. Non-profit space preference is not guaranteed. Non-profits fill out the same application and follow the same rules as vendors. See the [Vendor Compliance Checklist](#) above.

NON-MAINSTAGE PERFORMERS

The Valley Junction Farmers Market offers non-mainstage performer busking space at various locations throughout the market. Non-mainstage performers fill out the same application as vendors. There is no limit to the number of date requests that can be made, but in the interests of keeping a constant rotation of performers, not all dates may be approved. Applying does not guarantee placement. Our current event budget does not allow us to pay non-mainstage event performers; however, you are welcome to place a tip jar while

performing. Performance locations are not guaranteed and may be relocated as needed by HVJF. Amplification is permitted if kept at a reasonable volume. Please be considerate of the Farmers Market vendors & customers while you are performing. If vendors, attendees, or staff voice concerns over the volume or content of your performance, you will be asked to turn down the level, remove the amplification, or stop the performance. If requiring electricity, you are required to provide a muffled generator (Honda 3000is or similar). Non-mainstage performers must follow the same rules as vendors. See the [Vendor Compliance Checklist](#) above.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Market Staff

Historic Valley Junction Foundation 515-281-5321
<https://valleyjunction.com/>

Crops, livestock, food production, food safety standards

Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship 515-281-5321
<https://iowaagriculture.gov/agricultural-diversification-market-development-bureau/farmers-market-nutrition-program>

Food and beverage licensing

Iowa Departments of Inspections & Appeals 515-281-6538
<https://ia.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/resources1/farmers-market/#tab3>

SNAP

Federal Department of Agriculture 515-877-4369
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer>

Sales Tax Permit

Iowa Department of Revenue & Finance 515-281-3114
<https://tax.iowa.gov/businesses>