2026 Food Vendor Guidelines

Introduction

Festival food is an essential element of the Ottawa Bluesfest experience. We are committed to providing our city's best and most diverse festival dining experience for our patrons to enjoy! There will be an estimated 18 food vendors in the categories of entrées, dessert/snacks, and beverages. Thank you for your interest, and we look forward to receiving your application!

Important Dates

February 3rd	Application opens
March 2nd	Deadline - Food Vendor Application Submission
March 23rd	Successful applicants will be notified of acceptance
May 4th	Deadline - Contract, Deposit, Void Cheque, General Liability Insurance

If these items are not received by May 4th 2026, Ottawa Bluesfest will withdraw said vendor's 2026 application and reallocate the space to waitlisted vendors, no exceptions will be made.

July 6th,7th & 8	Food vendor load-in begins. The festival will confirm dates and times.
July 9th	Booths must be completely set up and secured by 12:00 PM for inspection.
July 9th to 19th	Festival dates. Vendor operating hours are 4:00 PM to 11:30 PM.
July 12th	Cheo Day - All vendors are required to participate in raising money for Cheo by encouraging patrons to donate and accepting donations.
July 13th & 14th	*No programming is scheduled on July 13 & 14; the festival will be closed.*
July 20th	Vendor load-out as per pre-arranged schedule. ALL vendor items must be removed from the site by 5:00 pm.

Note: All dates and times are subject to change, vendors will be notified on all festival changes

Vendors are responsible for supplying their own point of sale system (POS). The 2026 event will be cashless with the organizers not supporting cash transactions (no atms, no support).

Vendor Fee Payment

Vendors will be charged a deposit fee of $3,500 that will be due May 4th. The balance of the on-site rent will be paid in full with a post dated cheque or credit card for the last day of the festival July 19th.

The total revenue dollar (including HST) is solely used as a basis for monetary calculation to determine rent; the percentage figure calculated as RENT does not represent any portion due to CRA. It is understood by the Vendor that all on-site sales include HST, and it **is the responsibility of the Vendor to remit these taxes to Canada Revenue Agency in full**. Rent charged by the festival does not include HST. The vendor must provide the Ottawa Bluesfest with a VOID cheque in order to set up and test the electronic funds transfer system.

2026 Vending Options – Wellington Street and Side Stage

PLEASE NOTE: The tent in which the main stage vendors would typically operate in years past will no longer exist in 2026. All vendors that will be selected for the main stage will reside on Wellington street and must have a food truck in order to be considered. Please refrain from applying for those areas if you do not have a food truck.

Wellington Street (Main Stage): $10,000 (Food Trucks Only) (Maximum of 6 items plus volunteer option)

Description: Main Stage vendors are prominently located on Wellington street in our new "Vendor Village". As part of the application process, vendors will present a minimum of **six (6)** individually priced items (plus their volunteer option) that will be sold from the vending booth. There is no limit to the number of items you may serve at the festival. Final menu is subject to approval and may not be modified without advance permission from festival management.

Services Included: (value $3,500)

Specifications	Description
Vendor Space	Determined based on size of unit. Each stand will have approximately 5 ft. prep space behind it. Flooring is not provided by the festival.
Items Served	Unlimited amount. Only non-alcoholic beverages may be served. Beverages must be arranged via festival supplier and may not conflict with sponsorship agreements. Vendors must sell products out of pre-approved fully compostable serving ware.
Power	Electrical needs must be requested in advance through the festival's Electrical Requirements Form.
Signage & Branding	Provided by the vendor. Must be bilingual and within the confines of the stand. Ottawa Bluesfest reserves the right to veto inappropriate signage at any time.
Additional Services	Grey water bin and pumping, security throughout event duration, used vegetable oil bins, and working access to site.

Side Stages $9,000 (Unlimited items)

A limited number of spaces are provided for Side Stage concessionaires. As part of the application process, vendors will present a minimum of **six (6)** individually priced items (plus their volunteer option) as a sample of the product offering. There is no limit to the number of items you may serve at the festival. Side Stage vendors must produce their own signage. This category includes cart vendors. Vendor locations will be determined by the festival and communicated in advance.

Services Included: (value $3,500)

Specifications	Description
Vendor Space	Determined based on size of unit. Each will have about 5-8 feet of prep space behind the truck
Items Served	Unlimited amounts, but ideally would be more simple options (Ex, ice cream, popcorn, pizza, etc.). Only non-alcoholic beverages may be served.
Power	The street vendors would be required to have a generator in the case that power could not reach your location.
Signage & Branding	Provided by the vendor. Must be bilingual and within the confines of the stand. Ottawa Bluesfest reserves the right to veto inappropriate signage at any time.
Additional Services	Grey water bin and pumping, security throughout event duration, used vegetable oil bins, and working access to site.

Water

In 2026 all food vendors will be required to sell Eska water at their booth with the market price of $3.00. Food vendors can be supplied with water through our inventory control team at the price of $8.00 per case of 24 units. Vendors are allowed to outsource their own cases, but it is required to be Eska brand. This item can be sold individually or as part of a combo option.

Greening

Vendors are required to serve all products in 100% compostable festival approved serving ware. If the vendor fails to use compostable serving ware products, they will be required to cease operations until such time as the proper serving ware has been acquired.

Product Exclusivity

If an accepted vendor wishes to request product exclusivity for the festival, they must do so by notifying festival staff of the request. If the request is accepted, product exclusivity comes at a cost of an additional $10,000.

Volunteer Options

Vendors will be required to offer a volunteer option on their menus. The value of this food option should be $10.00 including taxes. The vendor will collect vouchers from the volunteers and the festival will transfer the value of the voucher to the contractors at the end of the festival. This offering will not be posted to the public and is only for on shift volunteers. ***The food option must also include one bottle of water as part of the meal.***

Branding

For an additional cost, vendors can purchase a branding benefits package. This would include additional custom branding on the menu provided by the festival, a unique sign design to stand out, your branding on our public app and one social media post on our platforms with your branding. Since there is a difference in supplies included in the rental fees of the main bowl and the side stage vendors, there is a price difference.

Wellington (Main Stage): $8,500
Side Stage: $5,000

please note: all vendors do not receive signage from the festival, the custom branded menu will not be provided

Accreditation

Before the festival, food vendors will be required to provide the number and names of employees that they will have per day in order to receive their working passes. Included in the vendor rental fee, each vendor will receive 2 lanyard workers passes which are meant for the managers/lead of the vendors operation. Additionally, there will be 5 food vendor staff RFID wristbands included for the festival, which are intended for staff only. Staff will be required to check in at the box office each day to get their wristband activated for that specific day. The wristband's RFID access will reset every day of the festival, so it is required to re-activate each day despite the potential repeat of staff.

If a vendor requires additional passes beyond the two lanyards and 5 wristbands, they will have to be purchased by Ottawa Bluesfest staff at $25 per pass per day.

Working Access to Site

Note that any form of access, pass, or accreditation is to be used only for working purposes, and not for festival access during off-shift hours or to view events. A drop off and pick up pass in addition to an off-site parking pass will be allocated to each vendor. There is no on-site parking available to any vendor; **vendors must leave the premises with their vehicle one hour before gates open.** Vendors are not permitted to purchase and/or consume alcohol while using festival accreditation. **During pre festival set up, it is mandatory that anyone coming onto site before July 9th is wearing some form of high visibility outerwear as during that time the festival grounds are considered a construction site.**

Vendor Rules and Regulations

Vendors are responsible for knowing and following all festival guidelines. Knowledge of these guidelines is expected prior to application submission.

- Vendors will only be allowed to sell items approved by the festival. Vendors may not sell any item with the Ottawa Bluesfest logo, Bluesfest word mark, or any sponsor or contractor logo. Additionally, you may not sell any item with the name or image of any band or performer playing the festival.

- Vendors may add additional signage or lighting to the interior of the tent (Ottawa Bluesfest reserves the right to veto inappropriate or offensive signage). All vendors are responsible for their own signage structures, which will be inspected and approved by Ottawa Bluesfest prior to operation.
- Power and basic area lighting are provided by Ottawa Bluesfest. Vendor is responsible for supplying all interior lighting, extension cords, water hoses, and accessories for booth space. No generators or propane lanterns allowed.
- Booth space is allocated to a single vendor. No subletting or space sharing.
- All cooking on-site must be done with the use of propane. Vendors must have a cut-off valve and proper TSSA certification (at vendors' expense).
- All sales must be made from a vendor's assigned booth only. No sales outside of the confines of the booth are allowed.
- No bullhorns or megaphones, flashing lights, speakers or amplified sound is allowed.
- No hawkers. A vendor cannot solicit or harass the crowd for sales.
- No motor vehicles. After load-in, no vehicles (including golf carts, scooters, etc.) of any kind are allowed on site by any vendor during the festival.
- No pets of any kind.
- No alcohol consumption is permitted in vendor stands/booths/carts. Vendors are not permitted to consume alcohol or be intoxicated while working on the festival grounds.
- No overnight camping on the festival grounds or staff parking lot. Festival provides reasonable security on the park grounds during the festival and overnight.
- Final booth setup and display are subject to approval by the festival logistics coordinator[s].
- The Proof of Liability Insurance Certificate (*minimum of $2,000,000.00 per occurrence*) must name Ottawa Bluesfest as an additional insured and must be in English.
- It is the responsibility of the vendor to ensure that all necessary permits and insurance forms have been properly obtained with proof provided to the festival. All vendors must follow all federal, provincial and municipal regulations that apply.
- Vendors must abide by these guidelines and follow instructions from festival staff.
- Acceptance and participation does not guarantee a space in future or affiliated festivals.
- Ottawa Bluesfest reserves the right to charge vendors for removal and cleanup costs if sites are damaged or left in an unclean state**.**

Disclaimer: Terms and conditions of this information package and agreements are subject to change before and or during the festival activities.

In 2026 food vendors that apply and accept Ottawa Bluesfest's offer to participate as a food vendor from July 9th to the 19th may also be contacted by the Minister of Canadian Heritage team with an opportunity to provide services during Canada Day on July 1st. This secondary contract will be at the sole discretion of the representatives of The Ministry and a separate agreement will be signed and negotiated outside of the Bluesfest scope of work and agreement.