



HANDCRAFTEDMARKET

BASED IN NORTH
CAROLINA

SMALL BUSINESS HANDBOOK²⁰²⁶



WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY!



Welcome Message

Welcome to HandCraftedMarket!

This handbook outlines how our events operate, what vendors can expect from us, and what we expect from vendors in return. Our goal is to create beautifully curated, well-organized markets that support small businesses while maintaining fairness, clarity, and professionalism.

This handbook applies to all vendors, all events, and all participation with HandCrafted Market CLT (HCM).

Our Commitment to You

We are committed to:

- Clear, consistent communication
- Fair and transparent processes
- Community-forward decision-making
- Elevated, well-run events
- Supporting vendor growth long-term

To do this successfully, we operate under standardized policies that apply equally to everyone.

Our History

HandCrafted Market CLT was founded in 2021 with a simple belief:

small businesses deserve thoughtfully organized spaces to show up, grow, and be celebrated.

What began as a small community-focused market has grown into a multi-event organization serving hundreds of small businesses across the Charlotte region and beyond. As we enter our 6th market season, we continue to evolve—refining our processes, strengthening communication, and raising the standard for what a vendor market can be.

Our growth has been guided by one constant: a commitment to intention, fairness, and community. Each season builds on the last, and 2026 represents our most structured and thoughtful year yet.

Our Mission

Our mission is to create elevated, well-organized, and community-centered markets where small businesses can thrive. We are committed to fairness, transparency, and clear communication—while supporting vendors through thoughtfully curated events and long-term growth opportunities.

The Goals

Our goal is to raise the standard for vendor markets by delivering consistent, professional, and inclusive experiences for both vendors and shoppers. We aim to build a supportive community that encourages collaboration, eliminates uncertainty, and helps businesses grow confidently season after season.



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Our Policies

01 Required Vendor Participation Standards

Participation in HCM events requires:

- Monitoring email communications
- Completing required forms on time
- Signing event-specific contracts
- Following event policies and staff direction
- Maintaining professional conduct

These requirements are not optional and are enforced consistently across all events.

02 Event Confirmation, Load-In Selection & Contract Agreement

Required for Every Event

For each individual event, vendors must complete a required confirmation process.

Timeline:

- Sent: Monday of event week at 8:00 AM
- Due: Monday by 11:59 PM

This single form allows vendors to:

- Confirm participation or officially opt out
- Select their load-in time
- Purchase available add-ons
- Review and sign the event contract, which includes all current HCM policies

This process must be completed for every event.

Completion for one event does not carry over to future events.

Failure to Complete:

Vendors who do not complete the form and sign the contract by the deadline will:

- Be automatically removed from that event
- Be ineligible for any refund or credit
-

Because this process is:

- Standard for all events
- Communicated in advance
- Enforced consistently

Missed deadlines do not constitute grounds for exceptions.

03 Vendor Readiness Session (Required)

All vendors must complete a HandCrafted Market CLT Vendor Readiness Session prior to participating in any events.

Purpose:

These sessions:

- Review all policies and expectations
- Explain event flow and communication timelines
- Provide clarity and space for questions

Format:

- Held virtually via Zoom
- Cameras are not required
- Vendors may listen only

Attendance is required once per calendar year, unless otherwise stated.
Failure to attend will result in ineligibility to participate until completed.

04 Refunds, Credits & Payments

No Refunds. No Exceptions.

Refund Policy

Vendor fees are non-refundable under all circumstances.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Vendor cancellations
- Weather concerns
- Personal emergencies
- Scheduling conflicts
- Low sales or attendance
- Missed confirmations or deadlines

Once an invoice is paid, funds are allocated toward planning, staffing, permits, marketing, and operational commitments. Because these services begin immediately, **refunds are never issued.**

Credit Policy(When Applicable)

Credits may be issued at HCM's discretion only and are not guaranteed.

- Credits are issued as HCM e-gift cards
- Credits are non-transferable and non-refundable
- Credits are managed entirely by the vendor

Vendor Responsibility

Vendors are responsible for:

- Applying for credit, using the form under the "Vendors" tab on our website.
- Saving and tracking their e-gift card
- Applying the credit during checkout for future events

HCM can only view the last four digits of a gift card and cannot retrieve, replace, or manually apply credits.

Final Use of Credits

Once a credit is applied to an event invoice, it is fully redeemed.

If a vendor later chooses not to participate:

- The credit is not returned
- The credit is not reissued
- The credit cannot be moved to another event

There is no rolling, forwarding, or reuse of credits once applied.

05 Vendor Conduct & Professionalism

Respect Is Required at All Times

HCM events are professional, community-centered environments. Vendors are expected to act respectfully and professionally in all interactions, including:

- In person at events
- Via email or written communication
- On social media
- In public forums or private groups
- In any context related to HCM

Violations Include(but are not limited to):

- Harassment, yelling, or aggressive behavior
- Refusal to follow staff direction
- Disruptive conduct during load-in, events, or load-out
- Inflammatory, misleading, or defamatory statements about HCM
- Violations of any policy outlined in this handbook

Right to Remove Vendors

HandCrafted Market CLT and its coordinators reserve the right to remove any vendor from any event, at any time, for violations of policies or conduct standards.

This includes behavior occurring:

- At events
- Over email
- On social media
- Before or after an event
- In any context that impacts the safety, integrity, or reputation of HCM

Removal may occur without refund or credit.

06 Load-In & Load-Out Expectations

Respect Is Required at All Times

- Vendors must arrive within assigned load-in windows
- Vehicles may not enter event areas without approval
- Staff instructions must be followed at all times

Failure to comply may result in delayed setup, loss of placement, or removal.

Early breakdown is not permitted unless approved.

07 Booth Appearance Standards

Elevated Presentation Required

Vendors must maintain clean, organized, and professional booths.

Required:

- Proper tent weights (when applicable, 25lbs per leg of your tent and 45lbs at base of patio umbrella).
- Clear pricing signage
- Safe, secure displays
- Straight leg tents only(no slant leg). Canopy MUST be white or professionally branded.

Not Permitted

- Exposed storage bins or clutter
 - Unsafe or unstable setups
-

08 Pet Policy

Pets are permitted at outdoor events only. Pets are not permitted at indoor events, with the exception of legally recognized service animals.

All pets must be:

- Leashed and attended at all times, including during load-in and load-out
- Under the vendor's control at all times
- Never left unattended or tied to tents, tables, vehicles, or structures

Excessive barking or disruptive behavior is not permitted and may require immediate removal of the pet from the event area.

Vendors are responsible for considering weather conditions and ground surface temperatures, especially at locations with asphalt or concrete. If conditions are deemed unsafe for a pet, vendors may be required to remove the pet from the event area.

HandCrafted Market CLT and its coordinators reserve the right to require the removal of any pet—or vendor—for noncompliance with this policy. Removal will be without refund or credit.

Vendors who choose to bring pets do so at their own responsibility.

Clear Commitments • Fair Accountability • No Surprises

HandCrafted Market CLT does not charge a general application fee. Instead, we rely on vendors applying only when they are genuinely interested, available, and prepared to commit to the event selected.

The policies below exist to protect the time, fairness, and efficiency of the application and invoicing process for all vendors.

Application Commitment Policy:

By submitting an application, vendors acknowledge that:

- They are applying for a specific event date
- They are available for that date
- They are prepared to commit and pay promptly if accepted

Because applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, vendors may be accepted and invoiced shortly after applying. **Vendors should only apply when they are ready to move forward.**

If a vendor selects “I do not accept” to these terms, their application will not be processed.

Administrative Fee Policy (\$25)

If a vendor:

- Applies
- Is accepted
- Receives an invoice
- And then fails to pay the invoice or communicate with us before the invoice due date

a \$25 administrative fee will be added to their account.

What the Administrative Fee Covers

This fee exists solely to cover the time and administrative work required to:

- Review and process the application
- Reserve a vendor space
- Create, send, and track the invoice
- Follow up on unpaid or abandoned spots

This policy applies only to vendors who are accepted and then ghost (no payment and no communication).

Continued on next page.

When the Administrative Fee Does NOT Apply:

- If a vendor emails us before the invoice due date to let us know they can no longer attend, no fee will be charged.
- The space will simply be released.

Outstanding Administrative Fees:

- Vendors with an outstanding administrative fee must pay the \$25 fee before being eligible to participate in any future HandCrafted Market CLT events.
- Administrative fees are non-refundable.

This policy allows us to avoid charging a universal application fee that would otherwise impact all vendors due to the actions of a few.

Invoice Payment Policy:**48-Hour Payment Window**

- All vendor invoices are due within 48 hours of being sent.
- This payment window is clearly stated on each invoice.
- Unpaid invoices after the due date may result in:
 - Removal from the event
 - Assessment of the administrative fee (if applicable)

We cannot hold spaces for unpaid vendors.

Invoice Cancellation Policy:

Required Process — No Exceptions

If a vendor needs to cancel an invoice after it has been sent, they must email:

✉ info@handcraftedmarketclt.net

📌 Subject line:

"Please Cancel My Invoice: Invoice #____"

This exact subject line is required to ensure timely processing.

Important Notes

- Requests sent via:
 - Instagram or Facebook DMs
 - Text messages
 - Replies to Square invoices
 - Emails without the required subject line

will not be accounted for, and the \$25 administrative fee will apply if the invoice remains unpaid past the due date.

Continued on next page.

Payment Extensions Policy:

No Extensions Offered

HandCrafted Market CLT no longer offers payment extensions.

Because applications are reviewed on a rolling basis:

- Vendors may be accepted and invoiced shortly after applying
- Vendors should only apply if they are ready to commit and pay within the invoice window

Requests such as:

- "I didn't expect to hear back this quickly"
- "I need more time to pay"
- "Can you hold my spot?"

cannot be accommodated.

If a vendor is not ready to pay:

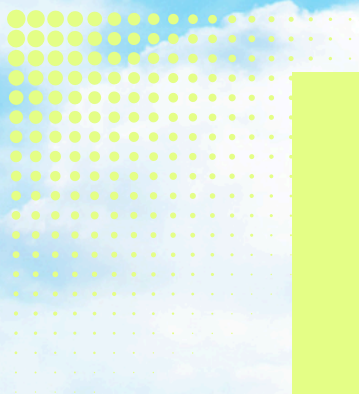
- They must request invoice cancellation using the required email process
- **They may re-apply when they are ready to commit.**

Why These Policies Exist:

These policies ensure that:

- Vendor spaces are not held unnecessarily
- Waitlisted vendors have fair access
- Administrative time is respected
- Event planning remains accurate and efficient

They allow us to continue offering a no application fee model while maintaining fairness and accountability across all vendors.



10 Weather & Safety

Clear Thresholds • Safety-First • Consistently Applied

HandCrafted Market CLT hosts a significant number of outdoor events, and weather is an inherent part of participating in outdoor markets. While we cannot control weather conditions, we are committed to making decisions that prioritize vendor, staff, and shopper safety while remaining fair and consistent. All weather-related decisions are made at the sole discretion of HandCraftedMarket CLT based on safety, forecast data, and event logistics.

Conditions That May Result in Event Cancellation or Postponement (Prior to Event Start):

An event may be canceled or postponed prior to start time if forecasts indicate unsafe or unreasonable conditions, including but not limited to:

- Hail
- Snow accumulation
- Ice or freezing precipitation
- Temperatures below freezing (below 32°F)
- Temperatures above 100°F
- Torrential rain or rain forecasted for a significant portion of the event (50% or more)
- Tornado watches or warnings
- Lightning storms predicted in the event area

If an event is canceled or postponed before it begins, credits will be issued to all vendors in accordance with HCM's Credit Policy.

Conditions That Will NOT Result in Cancellation or Postponement:

The following conditions are considered normal risks of outdoor events and will not result in cancellation or postponement:

- Light or intermittent rain
- Wind
- Temperatures between 33°F and 99°F
- High UV index
- Snow flurries with no accumulation
-

Vendors are expected to prepare accordingly for typical outdoor conditions.

Cont. on next page.

10 Weather & Safety(continued)

Conditions That May Result in Early Event Closure or Pack-Up:

If severe weather develops after an event has already started, HCM may determine that early closure or pack-up is necessary for safety reasons.

This may include:

- An expected thunderstorm moving into the area during event hours
- Torrential downpour occurring during the event
- Extreme or dangerous winds, defined as sustained or gusting winds above 35 mph

Credits & Early Closure Policy:

- If an event is canceled prior to start time, vendors will receive a credit.
- If an event is shortened, packed up early, or canceled after it has already begun, no credit will be issued.

Once an event has started, vendor fees are considered earned due to:

- Staffing
- Permits
- Marketing
- Operational execution

Weather-related interruptions after start time do not qualify for credits or refunds.

Vendor Acknowledgment of Weather Risk:

By participating in outdoor events, vendors acknowledge that:

- Weather is unpredictable
- Conditions may change quickly
- Outdoor events carry inherent risk

HandCrafted Market CLT cannot guarantee:

- Ideal weather conditions
- Continuous event operation once started

Vendors are responsible for:

- Weather-appropriate setups
- Required tent weights
- Securing displays and inventory

Continued on next page.

10 Weather & Safety(continued)

Communication of Weather Decisions

- Weather updates and decisions will be communicated via email as early as possible. We typically try to send out weather related cancellations no later than the afternoon prior to the event. Occasionally there will be instances where we will need to cancel the morning of the event. This is not ideal and only for rapidly changing weather.
 - Vendors are expected to monitor email leading up to and during event days.
 - Failure to review communications does not constitute grounds for refunds or credits.
-

11 Photography & Media Use

- **By participating, vendors grant permission for photos and videos of booths and products to be used for marketing and promotional purposes.**

12 Post-Event Survey

Required for Continued Participation

A post-event survey is sent the Monday following each event. It will be located within the email you listed on your event application.

Completion is required. Repeated failure to submit surveys may impact future approvals or priority access.

13 Theft & Property Policy

Theft of any kind is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Products or inventory
- Cash or payment devices
- Booth setup materials or displays
- Personal belongings of vendors, staff, or shoppers

Any vendor found stealing from another vendor, event staff, or the event itself will be immediately removed from the event without refund or credit and may be permanently banned from future HandCrafted Market CLT events. Law enforcement may be contacted when appropriate.

14 Alcohol Policy

Alcohol is permitted only at event locations where it is legally allowed.

Vendors choosing to consume alcohol must:

- Comply with all venue and local regulations
- Behave professionally at all times

Intoxication, unsafe behavior, or alcohol-related disturbances will result in immediate removal from the event without refund or credit. Removal is at discretion of staff.

15 Vendor Responsibility for Guests, Staff & Helpers

Vendors are fully responsible for the conduct of anyone present at their booth, including:

- Employees
 - Contractors
 - Family members
 - Friends
 - Children
 - The actions of helpers or guests are treated as the actions of the vendor.
 - Violations of any policy by a helper, family member, or child may result in removal of the vendor from the event.
-

16 Hired Staff & Vendor Education Requirement

Vendors who hire staff or designate others to work events on their behalf must ensure that those individuals:

- Are provided with all HCM policies and event information
- Attend a Vendor Readiness Session prior to working an event
-

Failure to properly prepare hired staff may result in removal from the event or future participation restrictions.

17 Lighting Policy for Evening & Night Events

Vendors participating in evening or nighttime events are responsible for providing adequate booth lighting.

- Lighting must be safe, secure, and appropriate for outdoor use
- Poorly lit booths may be asked to adjust lighting for safety and visibility

Proper lighting helps ensure:

- Shopper safety
 - Product visibility
 - Overall event quality
-

18 Electricity & Generator Policy

HandCrafted Market CLT does not provide electricity at any events unless explicitly stated.

Generators

- Generators must be disclosed via email prior to the event
- Only quiet/silent generators are permitted
- Not all events or locations can accommodate generators

Vendors must receive approval before bringing a generator.

If you are unsure whether a generator is permitted at a specific event, email prior to applying.

Unauthorized generators may be required to be removed immediately.

19 Policy Acknowledgment

Vendors acknowledge and agree to these policies:

- At application
- At invoice payment
- Through event-specific confirmation and contract signature
- Through participation in the Vendor Readiness Session

Claims of not seeing or misunderstanding policies cannot be accommodated.

Formal Process • Centralized Review:

To ensure fairness, consistency, and accurate documentation, all payment-related concerns must follow the formal dispute process outlined below.

What Must Be Submitted to legal@handcraftedmarketclt.net :

All of the following must be submitted in writing to

✉ legal@handcraftedmarketclt.net

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Credit or debit card disputes
- Chargeback-related communications
- Refund or credit requests
- Post-event concerns seeking a monetary response
- Payment disagreements or invoice issues

Required Format:

To be reviewed, submissions must include:

- Business name
- Event name and date
- Invoice number (if applicable)
- A clear, written explanation of the concern

What Will NOT Be Reviewed:

The following channels are not considered valid forms of dispute submission and may not receive a response:

- Social media direct messages
- Text messages
- Verbal complaints at events
- Replies to Square invoices
- Emails sent to other HCM addresses regarding payment disputes

Important Clarification:

Submitting a dispute does not override or negate existing policies, including:

- No-refund policy
- Credit policy
- Chargeback consequences

All disputes are reviewed against signed agreements and documented policies.



Key Contacts



Please use the appropriate contact below to ensure timely responses:

General & Event Questions:

info@handcraftedmarketclt.net

Invoices, Payments & Administrative Fees:

info@handcraftedmarketclt.net

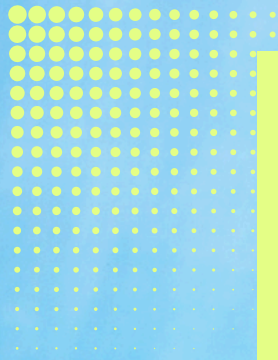
Disputes, Chargebacks & Legal Matters:

legal@handcraftedmarketclt.net

Messages sent via social media DMs, text messages, or invoice replies may not be monitored or accounted for.

We can be reached via text or call at 704-728-4299

Our office hours are Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm. Any communication sent after these times will be responded to the next business day.



Vendor Resources and Graphics

HandCrafted Market CLT provides optional marketing resources to help vendors promote upcoming events.

These may include:

- **Event flyers**
- **Instagram story graphics**
- **Shareable posts**

Vendor graphics will be shared via email the Wednesday prior to the event AND made available through our website, as well as available in the Vendor Facebook Group ‘HandcraftedMarketCLT Vendors’.

Use of provided graphics is encouraged but not required. You may create your own to fit your unique business branding.



Using Our Website



Using the HandCrafted Market CLT Website

Our website is the most up-to-date source for event and vendor information.

Vendors can find:

- **FAQ Page: Answers to common questions**
- **Vendor Applications: All open and upcoming events**
- **Credit Request Form**
- **Full 2026 Event Schedule: Dates and locations**
- **Event Photos & Recaps: From past events**
- **Other activations throughout the year**

We recommend checking the website regularly for updates.



What to Expect

What You Can Expect From Us:

- **Clear communication and timelines**
- **Organized event execution**
- **Fair and consistent policy enforcement**
- **Marketing and promotion of events**
- **Respect for vendors' time and businesses**

What We Expect From Vendors:

- **Timely communication and form completion**
- **Adherence to all policies**
- **Professional conduct**
- **Preparation for outdoor conditions**
- **Respect for fellow vendors, staff, and event spaces**



Thank You for Being Part of HandCraftedMarket

Thank you for taking the time to review the 2026 Vendor Handbook.

These policies, processes, and expectations exist to create organized, fair, and elevated events—and to support a vendor community built on respect, transparency, and shared accountability.

We are grateful for every small business that chooses to grow alongside HandCraftedMarket CLT. Your commitment, professionalism, and participation allow us to continue raising the standard for vendor markets and creating experiences we can all be proud of.

We look forward to another successful season and appreciate your partnership as we continue to build something meaningful—together.

— Hanna Ross, owner
& The Entire HandCraftedMarket Team!