

About the Hillsdale County Farmers Market Artisan Product Evaluation Process

Thank you for your interest in the Hillsdale County Farmers Market (HCFM)! This resource was produced to help applicants better understand the artisan selection process as well as the criteria used to determine if a product is a good fit for the Hillsdale County Farmers Market.

Definition of an Artisan Product

Broadly, artisan products include items that are not a food, produce, meat or plant product. Additionally, artisan products must be individually handcrafted and not produced from a commercial kit.

The HCFM rules define an artisan vendor in the following way:

“An Artisan vendor is one who uses creative skills in manufacturing, writing, or arranging materials resulting in a finished product. Items must be handcrafted on an individual basis by the Artisan and must not be a modified commercially purchased item.”

The HCFM evaluation committee is looking for products that are handmade, local, and unique.

Artisan Product Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria are used to evaluate artisan products:

- Item is handcrafted (not from a kit)
- Item is unique (similar items cannot be found on the mass market)
- Item is different from artisan products already available at the market
- Quality of craftsmanship
- Makes use of locally grown products
- Level of talent or skill needed to produce the item
- Level of artistic appeal and creativity shown in the product
- Attractiveness and tastefulness of the product

Artisan Committee and Evaluation Form

The HCFM Artisan Evaluation Committee consists of 3 vendors who volunteer to serve on the committee. An evaluation form consisting of 10 questions and 50 points (up to 5 points per question) is used to determine if a product is accepted into the market. Successful products receive 80% of the total combined points awarded by the evaluation committee.

Artisan Application Suggestions

- Share only quality photographs of your products. They should be in focus, well lit, and free of distractions.
- Include a narrative or written statement with your photographs that emphasizes the handmade, local, and unique qualities of your product. For example, if your wood products are made with local or reclaimed lumber, it would be good to share that in your application. Additionally, if the artisan has won regional or national recognition for their work, it would be good to share that.
- Show only your best product examples. Highlight quality over quantity. A first-time vendor may only have a couple of key product categories.
- Research the products that are currently sold at the market. Use this research to distinguish your product from those of other vendors.

