



2026 City of Alexandria Special Event Food Vendor Selection Guidelines

The City of Alexandria produces numerous special events throughout the year. The purpose of this document is to set criteria for the selection of food vendors at the event. Selection outcome is designed to serve the culinary enjoyment of Alexandria residents and other attendees at live in-person events produced by the City.

Selection Process: To ensure a diverse range, the food vendors will be selected based on the following criteria:

1. High standard of food excellence is a top priority.
2. Consideration will be given to Alexandria-centered or DC/Virginia/Maryland food vendors.
3. A focus on the culinary history of Alexandria or cultural demographics will be considered but not required.
4. Food vendors will need to have experience serving at large outdoor events.
5. Vendors must have a clean record with no permit or license violations.

Applicants are reviewed by a volunteer task force and City staff. The city reserves the right to make the final decision on selections.

Selection Requirements: Food vendors **MUST** apply for consideration and be available for at least one special event from the Signature Events category, and two special events from the Community Events Category. You may apply for consideration at several or all of the special events.

If other events become available during the year, first consideration will be given to those who have already applied.

Fees & Requirements: Selected food vendors must pay a **\$500 vendor fee** to the City of Alexandria if selected. Fees are due no later than **Friday, May 29, 2026**.

Selected food vendors must be fully-licensed to vend in the City of Alexandria. They will also be required to pass any and all inspections and have all up-to-date permits in keeping with what is required for food vendors at any public Alexandria event. Food vendors will also be expected to disclose sales at the request of City of Alexandria.



The vendor must provide their own equipment to provide their service at the event successfully. If the vendor requires a 10x10 tent, the City will accommodate one at **\$185 per tent request**.

If selected, the vendor will be guaranteed a slot at a Signature Event and at least one Community Event.

Scheduling: All vendors will have the option to apply again for the following year, regardless if they are selected. However, if a vendor is selected for this year and fails to attend a selected Special Event (Signature or Community Event), the vendor will incur a **\$200 penalty** and will be unable to apply for selection in the following year.

Weather: The event is rain or shine, unless prior updates confirmed by the Special Events staff liaison.

Timeline of Vendor Process 2026:

- **Monday, April 27, 2026:** Call for applicants opens
- **Friday, May 15, 2026:** Vendor submits application through online city portal no later than 11:59PM.
- **Friday, May 22, 2026:** Vendors are notified of selection and placement at one Signature Event and at least one Community Event.
- **Friday, May 29, 2026:** Vendors submit registration payment (**\$500**), proof of Alexandria Food Vendor License, and flame permit (if applicable). If requesting a 10x10 tent, the **\$185 tent fee** must be paid at this time, as well.
- **Wednesday, June 6, 2026:** Vendor confirms final menu and setup logistics with City Staff.
- **Ongoing:** Vendor fills out and submits event survey to provide feedback regarding their experience, and/or lessons learned upon completion of either a Signature Event or Community Event.



Signature Events

Sails on the Potomac

Friday, June 12 – Sunday, June 14, 2026

12 PM – 6 PM

Alexandria Waterfront

Alexandria will be hosting Sails on the Potomac from June 12 – 14, 2026 as a Sail 250 Virginia 2026 Affiliate Harbor. This three-day event will highlight Alexandria's unique role in the birth of our new nation and its impact on today. Join us as we commemorate America's Story with music, family activities, exhibits, tours, public art, educational programs, and more!

48th Annual ALX Jazz Fest

Saturday, June 13, 2026

12 – 9 PM

Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street

Celebrate jazz music, America's original beloved art form, at the Alexandria Waterfront! Enjoy live performances by some of the region's top jazz performers, along with inspiring words by renowned poets. Plus: experience hands-on art projects, lawn games, food vendors, and drinks all afternoon. Admission is free.

Alexandria & USA's Birthday Celebration

Saturday, July 11, 2026

6 – 9:45 PM

Oronoco Bay Park, 100 Madison St.

The City will celebrate its 277th and the USA's 250th birthday on Saturday, July 11, at Oronoco Bay Park (100 Madison St.). Experience this one-of-a-kind Alexandria event with your family. The evening includes live music, food and drink vendors, and ends with the grand finale -- a fireworks display on the Potomac River at 9:30 p.m. Admission is free.



2026 Holiday Tree Lighting
Saturday, November 21, 2026
6 – 8 PM
TBD

The City invites the community to join the mayor and a host of holiday friends at the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, November 21, at 6 p.m. Admission is free, and the event will occur rain or shine. Tree Lighting is expected to occur sometime between 6:40 - 6:55 PM following the arrival of Santa. Then, after 7pm enjoy the start of the holiday season with music and merriment while Santa visits with families until 8pm.

New Year's Eve Fireworks 2026
Thursday, December 31, 2026
7 PM – 12 AM
Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street

The City of Alexandria is proud to host the New Year's Eve Fireworks Celebration at the Waterfront. On Thursday, December 31, join the celebration from 7 p.m. - midnight at Waterfront Park (1 Prince St.). The City is celebrating the end of 2026 with live music, a festive waterfront atmosphere, and two fireworks shows (7:30 p.m. and midnight) to welcome the New Year!



Community Events

Juneteenth Celebration

Friday, June 19, 2026

4PM – 8 PM

Charles Houston Rec Center, 901 Wythe St.

The City of Alexandria celebrates the historical Juneteenth holiday at Charles Houston Recreation Center, featuring food, beverage, and retail vendors accompanied by live music and other engaging family activities. The event is FREE to the public!

Tons of Trucks 2026

Saturday September 26, 2026

10 AM – 2 PM

Chinquapin Park, 3210 King Street

The City of Alexandria will host its tenth annual Tons of Trucks event on Saturday, September 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Chinquapin Park (3210 King St.). The event is FREE to the public!

A Very Merry ALX Jazz Fest

Saturday December 19 2026

5 – 8 PM

Nannie J. Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St.

Get ready to celebrate the holidays at A Very Merry ALX Jazz Fest - a festive gathering of music, art, and poetry!

Please note: Other Signature and Community Events may become available throughout the year. Candidates selected through this process will receive priority for other Special Events.