

International Festival of *Minnesota*



2026 POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Revised August 11, 2025

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MINNESOTA

HISTORY

The International Festival of Minnesota ('IFest-MN', 'the Festival') is a revival of the Festival of Nations, which was established in 1932 by the International Institute of Minnesota. The Festival of Nations was officially suspended in 2022, with the last event happening in 2019.

IFest-MN leadership consists of past directors and area leads dedicated to bringing this great event back to St. Paul.

MISSION

IFest-MN is an educational event designed to bring Americans of all backgrounds together - native and naturalized citizens alike - to share the ties with our past and take pride in the richness of diverse cultures in our community as we build for the future together.

AREAS OF PARTICIPATION

IFest-MN has five areas of participation:

- Food and Beverage (Café)
- Bazaar
- Entertainment
- Exhibit
- Demonstration

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE

Due to space limitations, only one participant from any ethnic group can participate in each of the program areas (for example, we cannot have two Irish cafes, two Brazilian Bazaars or two Somali dance groups).

The IFest-MN board sets the criteria for vendor and artist participation and has oversight of each area of the festival. The Board set forth three goals for choosing and approving participants:

- Diversity of Participants – IFest-MN's goal is to have the festival represent as many diverse ethnic groups as possible from throughout the world. A Board member will lead each committee area to ensure this goal is achieved and report back to the full Board.
- Traditional & Modern Ethnic Participation – IFest-MN invites both traditional and modern ethnic representations in selecting artists and vendors to participate in the festival. IFest-MN's goal is to connect audiences to historical traditions as well as engaging audiences in representations of their ethnic groups today. A Board member leads this effort.
- Overall Qualifications – The Board's goal is to have high quality participants in all parts of the event. Participants are screened to ensure they are educational, high quality and engaging. The Board oversees each area committee and the operations committee to ensure these goals are met.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

HARASSMENT FREE ENVIRONMENT

IFest-MN expressly prohibits any form of harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding or related medical conditions), marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, membership or activity in a local commission, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under federal, state or local law.

CULTURAL PROMOTION

IFest-MN is designed to promote cultures and ethnic groups in ways that are chosen by the participants. IFest-MN has designated areas of participation, with specific rules to abide by, but each participant may showcase their specific culture in a manner of their choosing. Participants may come from within the city, State or elsewhere in the country and may have many different backgrounds and organization sizes.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

Failure to follow these regulations is a breach of contract and may result in the removal of your booth without any further obligation by IFest-MN, including a refund.

PROMOTIONAL ALLOWANCES

IFest-MN is committed to showcasing the diversity of ethnic organizations, groups, and businesses that exist in our community. Participants will be allowed to share information about the ethnic organizations, groups, and businesses that they represent within the limitations outlined below.

- Participants can have printed materials (business cards, brochures, etc.) that include basic information such as contact information, general descriptions of activities, mission statements, locations, history, or an event calendar.
- Materials cannot contain political messages, language that could be considered derogatory toward another group, or messages or events that conflict with IFest-MN's mission.
- Promotional items may not be installed on café fronts.
- All promotional items must be reviewed by the area committee prior to posting or handing out.

CLOTHING EXPECTATIONS

IFest-MN encourages wearing traditional ethnic clothing where possible, while understanding there is a great diversity in the types of ethnic clothing participants and volunteers can wear. All participants should wear clothing that is significantly identifiable to the ethnic group they are representing. This could include contemporary items and modern designs inspired by traditional patterns and designs.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

All participants, attendees, staff and vendors are expected to treat each other with respect and consideration. All participants are expected to respect the diversity of viewpoints and opinions. All communication should be open and respectful of others, regardless of differences in opinion. Any participants using derogatory language or behaviors may be subject to immediate removal from the event.

NON-PROFIT STATUS

All profit-making participants (café, bazaar) must be or be affiliated with a non-profit entity. This affiliation shall be defined to IFest staff as a 'proof of non-profit affiliation'. This is a document provided each year by the non-profit entity to the participant, on official letterhead, stating their affiliation.



REGULATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

RESTRICTED ITEMS & ACTIVITIES

These items are prohibited from IFest-MN:

- Projectiles (an object which is fired, thrown or otherwise projected), or objects which are self-propelled (such as rockets, or weapons), or decorative knives, whips, guns, clubs, nunchakus, throwing stars or swords, or other weapon-like items.
- Helium tanks, balloons, lit candles, and burning of incense are prohibited by order of the Fire Marshall
- Gambling and other illegal activities
- CBD in any form
- Alcohol in any form
- Carbonated beverages of any kind
- Packaged foods which may be consumed at the event (unless expressly permitted by IFEST's Board or Area Chairperson)
- Any music, noise making devices, or video displays, without prior approval. These must not interfere with the entertainment stages or with the interactions of other vendors and their customers
- Political boundary maps, including reproductions on clothing or objects
- Symbolism/logos of an inflammatory nature
- Drug use, symbols of drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Any item endorsing any political cause or candidate
- Posters, handouts or business promoting items that are not within the promotional allowance guidelines

Any item that poses a safety concern or does not comply with festival regulations will be removed by either the St Paul Police and/or an IFest-MN staff Member, depending on the severity of the item(s).

SAFETY REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

The following are general safety guidelines that must be followed. When constructing your booth or setting up your merchandise, please think about the safety of your customers, the festival volunteers and yourselves!

- Only use LED bulbs in any lighting – other bulbs get too hot and pose a fire hazard. You will be asked to turn off and remove any lighting using other bulbs.
- Any freestanding shelving units must be secured or weighted at the bottom so they cannot tip and pose a safety hazard. Any shelving units deemed unsafe by the IFest-MN staff will be asked to be dismantled immediately.
- Any electrical cords running across the floor need to be entirely taped down or covered to avoid a tripping hazard. Any other cords should be secured out of the way with zip ties.
- Any shelving, tables or racks MUST stay within the confines of your booth. You may display merchandise

outside your booth by either hanging them on the side of your display booth, or by setting larger items just outside your booth, but you may be asked at any time to move items that may block traffic.

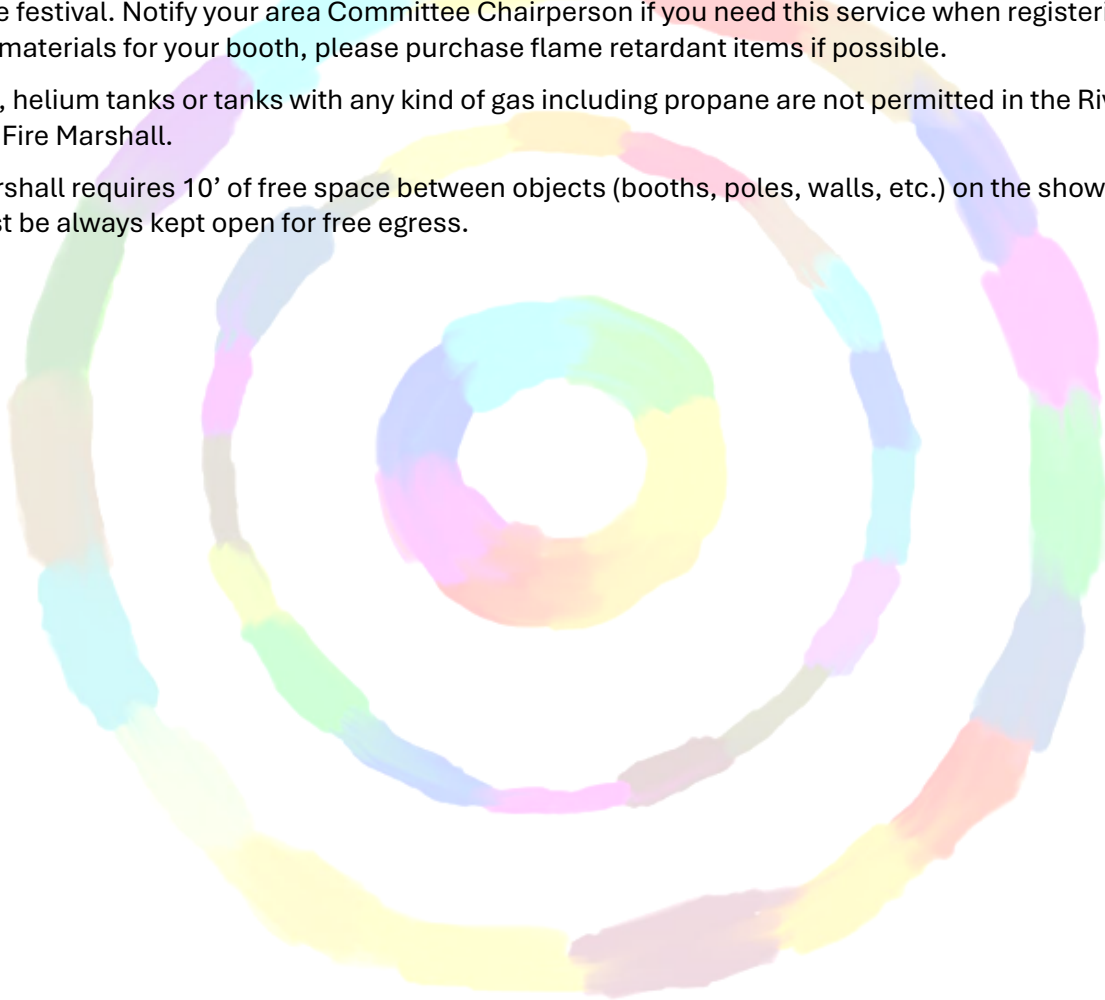
- Do not overload pipe and drape provided by IFest-MN. Pipe and drape are not load bearing and cannot support heavy loads.
- IFest-MN staff may remove hazardous items at their discretion and when necessary to remedy safety hazards.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS

Saint Paul Fire Department regulations require that all flammable material (such as fabric used anywhere throughout the festival) be flame proofed. IFest-MN will provide a spray applicator with a liquid solution that meets all fire code regulations for flammable natural fibers. This service is available at no cost to the groups prior to the set-up of the festival. Notify your area Committee Chairperson if you need this service when registering. If purchasing materials for your booth, please purchase flame retardant items if possible.

Open flame, helium tanks or tanks with any kind of gas including propane are not permitted in the RiverCentre by order of the Fire Marshall.

The Fire Marshall requires 10' of free space between objects (booths, poles, walls, etc.) on the show floor. These spaces must be always kept open for free egress.



SCHEDULE AND FEES

KEY DEADLINES

October 2025	Initial participant selections will be made, participants will be notified
November 7, 2025	All Booth Fees Due
November 2025	'Kick Off' Meeting – details forthcoming
February 2026	Entertainment Technical Reviews – Date TBD
March 1, 2026	All paperwork must be submitted for all areas in full or participation may be revoked (or earlier as directed by area chair)
TBD	Participant Tickets distributed
April 9	Participant Load-in
April 10-11	IFest 2026 is open
April 11-12	Participant Load-out

FEE SCHEDULE

Café	Fee
Café Booth Fee	\$500.00
Stove Rental – includes energy charges and hookups	TBD
Refrigerator Rental – includes energy charges and hookups	TBD
Freezer Rental – includes energy charges and hookups	TBD
220/208-volt appliance hookup fee, per vendor supplied appliance	\$50.00
220/208-volt appliance energy charge, per vendor supplied appliance	\$50.00
Freezer or refrigerator energy charge, per vendor supplied appliance	\$50.00
110/120-volt appliance energy charge, per vendor supplied appliance	\$30.00
Bazaar	Fee
Bazaar Booth Fee (per space)	\$500.00
Demonstration	Fee
Demonstration Booth Fee	\$0.00 if selling items made in booth

EXHIBIT

EXHIBIT PARTICIPATION

Cultural Exhibits are an integral part of the IFest-MN as they provide the opportunity to showcase the diverse cultures in our community. Each year the, IFest-MN chooses a theme for the Festival. The materials, craftsmanship and artifacts displayed in the Exhibit booth should be in keeping with this theme. Exhibitors are encouraged to include interactive demonstrations in addition to displays of items. The public can better understand and appreciate the various cultures represented at the Festival by viewing and participating directly with the exhibitors. **Selling is not permitted in the Exhibit area.**

THEME FOR 2026:

A MELTING POT - AMERICA'S 250th ANNIVERSARY

EXHIBIT FORMS

- The Exhibit general registration form must be completed with the ethnic group's general information and contact information.
- Provide a general idea of what your booth will look like and the items that will be contained within. Include descriptions of how your group's volunteers will work with the public to create a welcoming and interesting exhibit which will positively contribute to IFest-MN.
- Additional forms may be required to assist the Exhibit Committee with placement of booths or other needs.

EXHIBIT GUIDELINES

- Select a central idea related to the Festival Theme.
- All staff are always in view of the public and therefore **MUST BE IN APPROPRIATE CLOTHING** for the event (see CLOTHING EXPECTATIONS for more information).
- Exhibitors must be in their Exhibit booths 15 minutes before the IFest-MN opens each day and all booths must be always staffed during open hours. If your Exhibit booth is not attended, the Exhibit Committee has the right to close the Exhibit booth. IFest-MN is not responsible for articles left in the Exhibit booth.
- Flags may be displayed tastefully if not larger than 3'x 5'.
- Noisemaking devices (musical, verbal, radios, video monitors) and all handouts of any kind must be pre-approved by the Exhibit Committee.
- The Festival provides uniform signage to each bazaar booth that remains the property of the Festival and must be left in place at the conclusion of the event.
- No maps or maps in books or magazines are to be displayed in the individual Exhibit booths.
- Sales - no selling is allowed in the Exhibit booths.
- Exhibitors must provide skirting on all tables in the Exhibit booth. The skirting must be no more than three inches from the floor on three sides, and flame retardant.
- Exhibitors must furnish supplies and tools for setting up and taking down the artifacts in their booth. Suggested supplies/tools include a hammer, fish line or wire, drapery hooks, scissors and lighting.

- There is no advertising allowed in the booth, unless expressly approved by the Exhibit Chairperson. The exhibit booths may not be used for the promotion of any business, travel bureau, or any business, non-profit, or cause tied to anyone in the booth or associated with the ethnic group represented. Handouts must be approved by the IFest-MN prior to use.
- All persons staffing Exhibit booths MUST BE knowledgeable about their culture and the contents in their Exhibit booth.

REMINDER: All proposed handouts must be submitted for approval to the Exhibit Committee during registration. Before investing in multiple copies of potential handouts, ensure you receive approval, in writing, from the Exhibit Committee. No distribution of handouts will be allowed unless the above procedure is adhered to and the necessary approval is granted. **Absolutely No Exceptions.**

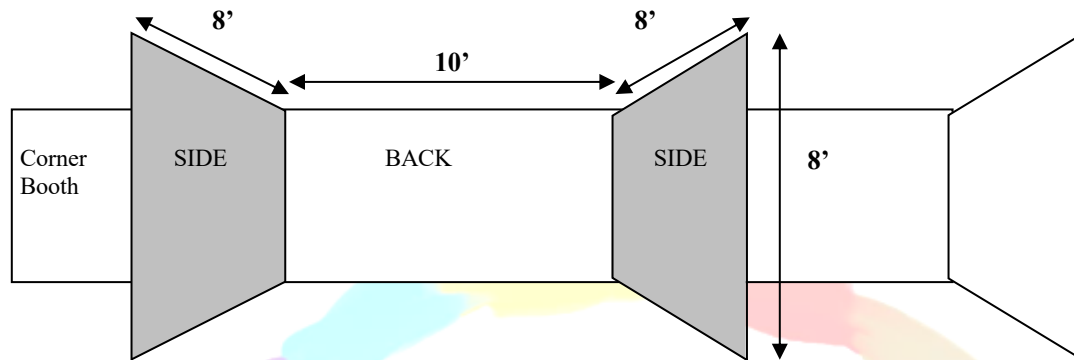
PASSPORT PROGRAM (ARE WE DOING THIS?)

- IFest-MN will provide a passport stamp to each exhibitor.
- Each ethnic group should use the stamp to begin discussions with patrons about their culture, the theme of the Festival or other relevant topics.

EXHIBIT SETUP AND LAYOUT

- When planning your Exhibit booth, the allocated space will be approximately 8' x 10'.
- Indicate on the Exhibits Questionnaire if you have specific requirements. If you do not build your own Exhibit booth, the one provided will consist of a 10' wide black curtain wall and at least one 8'-wide black curtain sidewall. The walls are cloth draperies. Articles may be suspended from the top drapery poles with wire or monofilament line (fish line) or drapery hooks. No pins may be used in the draperies.
- Only use LED bulbs in any lighting – other bulbs get too hot and pose a fire hazard. You will be asked to turn off and remove any lighting using other bulbs.
- Any freestanding shelving units must be secured or weighted at the bottom so they cannot tip and pose a safety hazard. Any shelving units deemed unsafe by the IFest-MN staff will be asked to be dismantled immediately.
- Any electrical cords running across the floor need to be entirely taped down or covered to avoid a tripping hazard. Any other cords should be secured out of the way with zip ties.
- Any shelving, tables or racks MUST stay within the confines of your booth. You may display items outside your booth by either hanging them on the side of your display booth, or by setting larger items just outside your booth, but you may be asked at any time to move items that blocks traffic in or around the area.
- Do not overload pipe and drape provided by IFest-MN. Pipe and drape is not load bearing and cannot support heavy loads.
- IFest-MN staff may remove hazardous items at their discretion and when necessary to remedy safety hazards.

- A diagram of a booth with two (2) side drapes. Corner booths have only one side drape. Please specify on the questionnaire which booth you would prefer. Requests will be considered but are subject to availability.



- A self-built Exhibit booth is a display where all the walls stand independently from the drapery. These displays must not exceed the dimensions of the ordinary booth (8 feet deep by 10 feet wide).

EXHIBIT SET UP AND TAKE DOWN

- Set-up is on the day prior to the start of IFest-MN. No group will be allowed to set up their booth once the event begins. The Exhibit Committee will provide “drive-in” times for the set-up day to each group. These times must be followed for safe operation. If you need to change your time(s) you must get approval from the Exhibit Committee. Any group who does not follow drive-in or drive-out instructions by staff at the loading dock may be held solely responsible for any damage or injury caused and may be asked not to participate in future events.
- Once you have unloaded, you must drive your car out of the loading entrance and park. We suggest you have a second person with you to stay with your artifacts. It is important that you follow the schedule closely so as not to cause delays for all participants. You may designate a preferred time for drive-in on your registration materials. The Exhibit Committee will attempt to honor drive-in requests as space allows.
- All fabrics and linens used in exhibit, including vendor brought items, must be flame proofed each year. The Exhibit Committee will provide a spray applicator with a liquid solution that meets all fire code regulations for flammable natural fibers. This service is available at no cost during set-up. Vendors are responsible for the application of the flameproof solution and logging the application on the form provided. For any fabrics or linens not treated during set-up, a certificate meeting flameproof regulations must be provided to the Exhibit Committee. Please contact the Exhibit Committee if flame-proofing is not possible for certain items due to age or fragility.
- Festival staff or volunteers are not authorized to sign for any deliveries to Exhibit booths under any circumstances. Companies should be given the name of the booth, its location in the RiverCentre and the contact person responsible for accepting deliveries. Deliveries must not occur during the open hours of the event.
- Once the event has closed, all vendors will receive time to return to take down their booth and remove items from the premises **only once their items and booth have been packed and are ready to exit. There may be a line to enter the building, please be patient.** Vendors shall not line up prior to receiving authorization for the Exhibit Committee to retrieve their goods.

QUESTIONS

Exhibit questions should be directed to the members of Exhibit Committee. They encourage you to call or email

them if you have any questions or problems relating to the planning of your exhibit.

IFEST-MN REGULATIONS

Failure to follow any stated regulations is a breach of contract and may result in the removal of your booth without any further obligation by IFest-MN, including a refund.

Groups who fail to adhere to the Policies & Procedures Book, the IFest-MN Theme, or those who do not return their questionnaires by the due date, will not be invited to participate the following year and may thereby jeopardize their ethnic group's participation in IFest-MN.

