



One Community Around the Lake

Request for Proposal (RFP)

City of Lake Stevens Farmers Market Manager

Issue Date: January 6, 2026

Proposals Due: January 27, 2026

Contact: Dawn Goldson Smith, Event and Marketing Specialist
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Introduction and Purpose

Since 2020, the Lake Stevens Farmers Market has become a beloved seasonal event, offering fresh produce, artisan goods, and community connection. The City of Lake Stevens is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or organizations to serve as the Farmers Market Manager for the 2026 season and beyond.

Thank you for your interest in continuing to provide a farmers market experience to the Lake Stevens community. The City is committed to providing the highest level of opportunities to our residents and park users. The size and scope of the market will be determined by the bidder and should be outlined in the proposal.

Scope of Work

The selected individual or organization will be responsible for:

- Planning and coordinating weekly market operations during the market season.
- Recruiting and managing market vendors.
- Ensuring compliance with health, safety, and licensing regulations.
- Marketing and promoting the farmers market to the community.
- Managing the market's finances, including vendor fees and operational expenses.
- Maintaining accurate financial records and submitting regular reports to the City.

General Specifications

Previous farmers markets were held at North Cove Park on Wednesday nights, 3 – 7 PM, from June to August. The market utilized Mill Spur, the outdoor plaza and surrounding park areas, and limited use of The Mill on Lake Stevens.

Applicants may propose an alternative day, dates, and market location. All applicants are encouraged to visit any proposed alternate location prior to submitting a proposal. To schedule a tour of The Mill, call (425) 622-9406 or email dgsmith@lakestevenswa.gov.

City of Lake Stevens

Parks and Recreation

2306 131st Ave NE | PO Box 257 | Lake Stevens, WA 98258-0257

www.lakestevenswa.gov/parks

It is the responsibility of the bidder to verify that the space is adequate to support their proposed operations. Attendance at the market will remain free to the public.

Submittal Requirements

All proposals must follow these submittal requirements, and include all items listed in this section.

Proposals must be titled “The Farmers Market in Lake Stevens” and may be emailed to parks@lakestevenswa.gov or deliver to 2306 131st Ave NE, Lake Stevens, WA 98258. All proposals must be received by the City no later than **4:00 pm on Tuesday, January 27, 2026**. No submittals will be accepted after this date and time.

Submittals must be in 8.5" x 11" format and no smaller than a 11 pt font. As a minimum, the following information must be included.

- **Cover Letter:** A one-page letter outlining the overall capabilities of the individual or organization, summarizing their ability to plan, coordinate, and manage a farmers market in Lake Stevens.
- **Experience:** A summary of relevant experience, including community event management or prior market management. Describe previous collaborations, roles and responsibilities, services provided, and event size and location.
- **Site Plan:** A proposed layout showing vendor locations, market circulation, and estimated number of vendors.
- **Preferred Additional Elements:**
 - Planning and executing additional entertainment, which can include family-appropriate live music or family-focused or kid-focused activities.
 - Development of a refreshed brand identity that aligns with the market’s evolving mission and community values. Key deliverables include a new logo, visual identity system, and brand guidelines.
- **Proposed Budget:** A preliminary operating budget including all expenses and revenues, Washington State Farmers Market Association membership, proposed financial responsibilities, any requested City staff support, or fee waiver requests.
- **Market Schedule:** The days, dates, times and location of the market series should be outlined.

The City will keep a Questions and Answer (Q&A) sheet updated on the bid webpage located at www.lakestevenswa.gov/bids. Questions may be submitted by email to dgsmith@lakestevenswa.gov. The deadline for questions is January 14, 2026, at 4:00 pm and the final update for the Q&A sheet will be released by 4:00 pm on January 15, 2026.

Interviews will be held the week of February 9, 2026, and the accepted proposal will be notified by February 17.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Cover letter	10
Qualifications of project team	20
Project experience	25
Proposed budget	25
Overall quality of content and responsiveness to RFP	20
TOTAL	100

Business License

If your proposal is accepted, the Licensee shall obtain and maintain a City of Lake Stevens business license in accordance with the requirements of LSMC 4.04.030, prior to opening operations.

Insurance

Contractor is required to furnish proof of *Commercial General Liability* insurance with combined single limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 general aggregate with an insurer having no less than an AM Best rating of A: VII and authorized to do business in the State of Washington. A \$2,000,000 products/completed operations aggregate is required for contractors that prepare food. The insurance policies shall be written on an occurrence basis. City shall be named as an additional insured and a copy of the endorsement naming the City as an additional insured shall be attached to the Certificates of Insurance. Vendor shall provide a Certificate of Insurance with applicable Additional insured endorsements for both CGL coverage and products/completed operations with the City prior to Vendor using the Park and/or providing services. Claims-made Commercial General Liability insurance will not be accepted.

If the scope of services includes activities involving the use of automobile, *Automobile Liability* insurance for ANY AUTO with a minimum limit of \$1,000,000 combined single limit is required.

Disclaimer

The City reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, to waive any formality in the RFP process, and to accept the proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the company. The issuance of this RFP does not obligate the City to award a contract or pay any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation and submission of their quotations.

All submittals become public record and are subject to Chapter 42.56 RCW, the Public Records Act.

Title VI Statement

The City of Lake Stevens, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat.252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4, Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, and RCW 49.60.180(1) hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises as defined at 49 CFR Part 26 will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex or sexual orientation in consideration for an award. During the performance of this

Agreement, the consultant shall comply with all federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws, regulations and policies, this shall include but not be limited to the following: consultant shall not discriminate on the bases enumerated at RCW 49.60.530(3). In addition, the consultant shall give written notice of this nondiscrimination requirement to any labor organizations or service provider with which the consultant has a collective bargaining or other agreement.

ADA Information

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Information. The City of Lake Stevens, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), commits to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all of its programs and activities. The City of Lake Stevens encourages disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned consultant firms to respond. Persons with disabilities may request this information be prepared and supplied in alternate forms by contacting Maximilian Roth, ADA Coordinator at 425-622-9443 or email mroth@lakestevenswa.gov. The consultant is expected to likewise be compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) OF 1990, Public Law 101-336, also referred to as the "ADA" 28 CFR Part 35.

Farmers Market 2026 RFP – Supplemental Information

Is there a required minimum or maximum number of vendors?

No specific number is required. However, proposals should include a site plan with a suggested number of vendors and circulation strategy.

Will the City provide staff support during market operations?

The proposal should outline any requested City staff support needs. These will be evaluated as part of the budget and feasibility. Self-sufficient market models will be viewed favorably.

Can we charge admission to the public?

No. Attendance at the market must remain free to the public; vendors will be charged for booth space.

Is branding and logo development mandatory or optional?

It is preferred but not mandatory. Proposals that include a refreshed brand identity and logo will be viewed favorably.

Are we required to include entertainment or music in our proposal?

It is preferred but not mandatory. Because it enhances community engagement and aligns with the City's goals for the market, proposals that include this component will be viewed favorably.

What are the insurance requirements for vendors?

All market vendors must have a commercial general liability policy that does not exclude products-completed operations coverage. The policy limit should be a minimum of 1 million per occurrence with a 2 million aggregate limit. The Market Manager is responsible for ensuring market participants are in compliance.

Can multiple organizations collaborate on a joint proposal?

Yes. Collaborative proposals are welcome, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and one lead entity is designated for contracting purposes.

Will the City provide access to utilities (e.g., power, water) at the market site?

Access to utilities may be available depending on the proposed location. Applicants should verify site capabilities during their visit and include any utility needs in their proposal. Self-sufficient market models will be viewed favorably.

Can we include sponsorships or partnerships in our proposal?

Yes. Proposals that include community partnerships or sponsorships to enhance programming, branding, or financial sustainability are encouraged.

Can we include digital marketing strategies in our proposal?

Absolutely. Marketing and promotion are key components of the scope of work. Including digital strategies—such as social media campaigns, email newsletters, and website updates—will strengthen your proposal.

Will the City assist with permitting or regulatory approvals?

The selected market manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable health, safety, and licensing regulations. The City may provide guidance but will not manage permitting on behalf of any vendor.

Are there restrictions on the types of vendors allowed at the market?

Possibly. If your plan is to become a member of the Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA), the farmers market must adhere to the Roots Guidelines, which prioritize an agriculturally based market system. Vendor categories are defined as follows:

- **Farmers:** Vendors who grow or raise the products they sell. Markets must maintain an average of five farmers per market day.
- **Processors:** Vendors who process raw ingredients they grow or raise.
- **Resellers:** Vendors who sell products they did not grow or produce themselves—these are limited and must not outnumber farmers.
- **Artisans/Crafters and Prepared Food Vendors:** Allowed, but their combined sales must not exceed those of farmers, processors, and resellers.

Can we include volunteer coordination in our proposal?

Yes. Including a strategy for recruiting and managing volunteers can strengthen your proposal and demonstrate community engagement.

Will the City provide any marketing support for the farmers market?

The selected manager is responsible for marketing and promotion. However, the City may assist with cross-promotion through its official channels depending on availability and alignment with City messaging.

Lake Stevens Farmers Market 2025 Survey Summary

Survey Snapshot

- Total Submissions: 230
- Total Responses: 2,645
- Survey Period: October 5 – November 5, 2025

2025 Market Overview

- Summer season - 102 unique vendors, Harvest Market – 73 vendors
 - Held at North Cove Park on Wednesday nights, 3 – 7 PM, from June to August.
- The market collected fees from each vendor:
 - Summer market and Harvest Market application fees, \$50/new application
 - Summer market weekly vendor booth fees; single stall fee \$40, double stall fee or food truck, \$70
 - Harvest Market vendor booth fee; single stall fee, \$125
 - Harvest Market vendor booth fee; double stall fee or food truck \$200
- A portion of the application fees was paid to the City (\$20/new application) for a total of \$2,440. A portion of the weekly vendor booth fees was paid to the City – (\$5/vendor) for a total of \$3,550. Combined total received by the City: \$5,990.
- Estimated City staff costs: \$7,278.25.
 - Overtime field staff cost: summer season - 13 days x 4 hours = 52 hours/2 = 26 staff hours, Harvest Market 1 day x 1.75 hours – 1.75 staff hours; OT field staff cost \$3,246.75
 - Field staff cost: 14 days x 1.5 hours; field staff cost \$2,352.
 - Admin staff cost: 14 days x 1 hour; admin staff cost \$1,680.

Attendance & Demographics

- The survey captured responses from a broad age range and both residents and non-residents of Lake Stevens.
- Frequency of attendance and participation in special events (e.g., Harvest Market in October) were assessed.

Market Location & Timing Preferences

- **Location Ranking:** Respondents ranked preferred locations for the market, with additional feedback on alternative sites. 59.75% support remaining at North Cove.
- **Sentiment on Location:** Mostly neutral (65.31%), with 18.37% positive suggestions and 16.33% negative sentiment on locations.
- **Market Day Change:** 70.25% of respondents would not change the market day, but among those with a preference, Sunday, Saturday, and Friday were most mentioned.
- **Market Time Change:** 71.7% of respondents would not change the market time, but among those with a preference, extending to later hours was the most popular response.
- **Seasonal Adjustment:** Suggestions included starting earlier (May) or ending later (September), with 62.42% respondents would change the time frame.

Membership & Operations

- **Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA) Membership:** The majority favored remaining a member, (93.24%) but among dissenters, concerns included vendor variety, cost, and local focus.
- **Parking & Shuttle:** With limited parking at North Cove Park, 44.38% of respondents would take a free shuttle and 48.13% would not use a provided shuttle.

Product & Service Expansion

- **Desired Products:** Respondents requested more local artisan goods, children's activities, and expanded food services.
- **Desired Services:** Top requests included food trucks, knife sharpening, and more drop-in activities.

Market Experience & Improvement Suggestions

- **What People Like:** High positive sentiment (68.7%) for the market experience and product availability.
- **What People Would Change:** Suggestions focused on market improvements (33.98% positive, 24.27% negative), with feedback on variety and logistics.

Key Insights & Recommendations

- **Explore Expanded Days/Times:** There is interest in a longer market season and later hours. Extending the market times will overlap further with Music in the Park. With interest for more produce vendors, growing seasons are impacted with a market May start and/or a September end.
- **Enhance Product & Service Variety:** Add more artisan products, food trucks, and children's activities to meet community demand. However, there are vendor requirements and restrictions if the Market is a member of WSFMA.
- **Address Parking & Accessibility:** The City will continue improving communication efforts as we move towards the Main Street roundabout project and its impact on the community and North Cove Park access.
- **Review Membership Benefits:** If WSFMA membership is continued, be aware that this may not allow vendor diversity and costs are directly tied to WSFMA requirements. The [2026 application](#) deadline is March 15; as a 'new' market for 2026, dues are \$150. Membership includes a minimum average of 5 farmers per market day and adhering to the [Roots Guidelines](#).

Lake Stevens Farmers Market Overall Vendor Revenues 2023 – 2025
(Totals do not include EBT or SNAP benefits)

Category	2023	2024	2025
Farmers	\$101,682.19	\$137,127.00	\$101,988.51
Artisans/Crafts	\$103,824.80	\$104,015.00	\$70,873.30
Prepared Food	\$105,114.00	\$218,143.00	\$164,205.93
Processors	\$71,291.12	\$31,904.00	\$96,599.39
Other	\$17,366.00	Not reported	Not reported
EBT	Not available	\$ 1,371.00	\$1,274.00
SNAP total	\$1,500.00	Not reported	Not reported
SNAP Match	\$1,125.00	\$1,425.00	\$1,244.00
Total	\$399,278.11	\$491,189.00	\$433,667.13