



Common Ground Country Fair

September 25, 26, & 27, 2026

Guidelines and Policies for Social and Political Action Exhibitors

Table of Contents

Social and Political Action Guidelines	
Social and Political Action Purpose	Page 2
Statement of Philosophy	Page 2
Goals of the Area	Page 2
General Guidelines	Page 2
Guidelines for all Exhibitors, Vendors and Demonstrators	
MOFGA's Mission and Vision	Page 4
General Guidelines	Page 4
General Application Process	Page 5
Participation in the Fair	Page 6
Passes	Page 6
Booth Operation	Page 6
Move-in/Move-out	Page 7
Utilities	Page 7
Compost & Recycling	Page 8
Cancellation Policy	Page 8

The Common Ground Country Fair has the right to close any exhibit or booth, or require the removal of any item from an exhibit or booth, that fails to comply with the guidelines set forth.

Please familiarize yourself with these. Thank you.



Social and Political Action Area Guidelines

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Purpose: The purpose of the Social and Political Action (SPA) area is: to serve as a common ground for a wide variety of organizations and ethnic groups to explore shared values and possible areas of cooperation; to encourage environmental protection and a respect for all living things; to make it possible for people to earn a living through their work and to develop their potential as human beings; to support public policy that promotes these objectives; to educate the public to injustices; and to provide opportunities to help right these injustices.

Statement of Philosophy: Sustainable agriculture requires sustainable communities. The very basis and justification of organic agriculture is that it should not harm the earth, its plants, animals and its people. As we contemplate and support changes in our food system and our systems of land ownership and use, and as we return to a system that both supports and benefits from organic and locally grown food, we need to be aware of trade, agricultural land use policies, human rights and suffering throughout the world.

Goals:

1. To promote a bioregion that is environmentally sound and sustainable, meeting the basic needs of all living things, in accordance with humane principles.
2. To provide an opportunity for groups advocating for sustainable agriculture and communities, peace, social equity, civil/human rights and concern for the rights of all living species (including groups addressing international environmental and agricultural problems) to present ideas and information.
3. To promote educational activities at each booth, and provide a forum for scheduled presentations and debate.
4. To accommodate activities that are compatible with the area.

Guidelines:

1. Applicants must read and abide by the general guidelines for the Common Ground Country Fair (CGCF).
2. Local, grassroots organizations will provide information on issues pertaining to sustainable agriculture and communities, peace and justice, social equity, and civil/human rights and environmental politics at individual booths and through scheduled presentations at designated sites (common forum).
3. The mission of each group participating in this area must be in accord with the stated purpose, philosophy, goals and objectives of MOFGA and the SPA area.
4. Applicants to the Social and Political Action Area (SPA) will be judged on the basis of their strict adherence to MOFGA's Mission and the SPA guidelines. SPA Area Coordinators and MOFGA Staff make decisions regarding who is in compliance with these guidelines and who will be invited to participate. Decisions are final.
5. Participating organizations/businesses must promote views that are compatible with environmental sustainability and embody respect for the planet and all living things.



6. Organizations selected to participate in the SPA area will have demonstrated a commitment to non-violent methods of social and political advocacy. Their programs and activities will reflect respect for the dignity, safety and equality of all human beings. Groups that interfere with the ability of individuals to exercise their legal rights freely and without intimidation will not be accepted.
7. The Social and Political Action area encourages presentation of a wide range of issues and perspectives. It is conceivable that groups with opposing views on an issue(s) may participate in the area at the same time. Participants in such groups must be respectful of those with views and perspectives different from their own and, while making their disagreements clear, will refrain from maligning the program or mission of another organization.
8. The primary purpose of booth displays must be educational, conveying the group's message to fairgoers in an appropriate manner, and demonstrating how it relates to the CGCF. These educational displays must be clear and prominently featured in the booth.
9. Ancillary to the educational focus of a booth, exhibitors may sell items (including buttons and bumper stickers) that reflect the clear message of the organization. The CGCF gives preference to organizations that make their own educational merchandise. These items must fit the goals, objectives and guidelines of the area, the CGCF and MOFGA. The connection between sales items and how they tie into the group's mission must be clearly communicated in the educational display. Items not manufactured in Maine may be excluded at the discretion of the area coordinators or the Fair Staff. Items manufactured outside the country must show that they were produced with high ethical standards such as equality, transparency, accountability, a fair price to producers, and creating economic opportunities.
10. Food may not be sold or served in the SPA area.
11. Activities of all exhibitors and vendors must be located within the assigned booth space or speaking engagement.
12. Exhibitors intending to use audio/visual equipment for presentations must provide headphones for fairgoers. Such presentations must not be audible to neighbouring exhibitors or passers-by.



THE MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Mission: Transforming our food system by supporting farmers, empowering people to feed their communities, and advocating for an organic future.

Vision: MOFGA's vision is a future where local organic farming nourishes all people, and sustains thriving ecosystems, healthy communities, and fair economies. We'll accomplish this through our mission to transform our food system by supporting farmers, empowering people to feed their communities, and advocating for an organic future.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMON GROUND COUNTRY FAIR

Each year, the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) hosts the Common Ground Country Fair (CGCF), which takes place on the third weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) after Labor Day. The following guidelines apply to all people attending the Fair in any capacity.

1. Pets are not permitted on the fairgrounds or in the Fair parking areas. Animals tied to trees or cars, or left within vehicles (whether locked or not), may be removed by the local animal control officer.
2. No smoking on the fairgrounds, except for the designated smoking area across from the Fair Office.
3. Fair participants may not build fires without written permission from the CGCF office.
4. The CGCF follows Maine laws regarding public drinking of alcohol and use of controlled substances on the fairgrounds and in the Fair parking lots.
5. Audio and video devices audible to the general public are prohibited on the fairgrounds unless they are part of a CGCF-approved demonstration.
6. All demonstrations must be approved by the CGCF office. Busking is not allowed.
7. Do not feed livestock or other display animals unless tending to your own animals.
8. Skateboards, bicycles or other unauthorized wheeled vehicles are prohibited on the fairgrounds.
9. Kites are not allowed. Drones are not allowed unless specially authorized by the CGCF Office in writing.
10. Unauthorized possession of firearms, weapons, or explosives is not allowed on the fairgrounds.
11. The CGCF office assumes no liability for damage to or loss of personal property.
12. Harassment (verbal, physical, or sexual) and physical altercations are not allowed.

Statement of inclusion - MOFGA strives to promote organic food and a sustainable farming community that is inclusive of all people that validates diverse identities including race, class, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or beliefs. We urge all exhibitors and presenters to consider their participation through the lens of race, equity, social justice, and supportive local food systems. We expect all attendees to be courteous, respectful and to refrain from inappropriate language, humor, gestures, or statements that discriminate against any individual or group.

If attendees are not abiding by the Guidelines, MOFGA Directors shall take actions to address and change the attendee's behavior. MOFGA reserves the right to ask attendees to leave the premises at any time and, to the extent their conduct constitutes a violation of law, may be subject to arrest. If an attendee is asked to leave or chooses to leave, refunds will not be given. In the event of a dispute, the decision of the MOFGA Directors will be accepted as final.



GUIDELINES FOR ALL DEMONSTRATORS, EXHIBITORS AND VENDORS

Henceforth, the words “vendor” and “vendors” refer to “demonstrator(s)” and “exhibitor(s)” as well.

The Common Ground Country Fair has the right to close any exhibit or booth, or require the removal of any item from an exhibit or booth that fails to comply with the guidelines set forth.

Application Process

1. A non-refundable application fee must accompany each application (with the exception of Youth Enterprise Zone applications) for booth space in commercial areas.
2. Interested vendors must apply each year.
3. Area Coordinators determine application deadlines for respective areas. The Fine Art and Craft Market Coordinators do not accept applications postmarked after their established deadline. Other Area Coordinators process timely applications before late applications, allocating space first to timely applicants. Late applicants receive space if available.
4. A late fee may be applied to late applications.
5. Area Coordinators review vendor applications each year and give preference to vendors in good standing who meet respective area guidelines. The “vendor in good standing” guideline does not apply to areas where juries review applications for quality.
6. Failure to meet application and/or contract fee deadlines will result in forfeiture of booth location and/or booth space.
7. Area Coordinators, in consultation with MOFGA staff, may refuse to accept any vendor who does not meet the Guidelines of MOFGA, the CGCF, or the Area itself.
8. The CGCF office does not grant vendors exclusive rights to sell any particular item.
9. Vendors must reside in Maine and represent Maine-based businesses or organizations. The CGCF accepts goods and services not made in Maine if they are important to the quality of rural living and are not yet available from a Maine-based business or organization.
10. Area Coordinators give preference to applicants who make their products with sustainably harvested, natural resources from Maine. When a product made in Maine depends upon materials or components from elsewhere, its approval will depend upon the need it fills, the value added by the Maine worker who makes it and the source of the materials or components. Examples of products not made in Maine but acceptable if they contribute to the quality of rural living are: books; farming and gardening tools; cotton fabric; soil supplements; hardware; animal feeds; home heating units for renewable energy sources; and tractors, rototillers, and accessories. Examples of unacceptable products not made in Maine are: those making no essential contribution to the quality of rural living; those detracting from Maine’s becoming more self-sufficient; or those which exploit producers or consumers.
11. Vendors must list on their application all items and services that they wish to sell. Items and services listed on the application must relate directly to the area to which the vendor applies. Vendors serving or selling any food item or sample that is not certified organic must submit an Ingredient Form with their application. The CGCF will not permit the sale of items not listed or approved on the applications. The CGCF requires vendors to remove such items from booths immediately. Vendors may not take orders for display items that are not approved for sale.
12. Vendors may sell their own business T-shirts, but may not sell T-shirts of other businesses or organizations. The CGCF restricts sales of other promotional products.
13. Vendors may not share booth space. Each business or organization must apply for booth space separately.
14. Vendors needing any amount of electricity must fill out electricity request forms and return them to the CGCF office by the contract deadline. Vendors needing electricity in excess of an amount designated by the CGCF Electrical Coordinator must pay for it. Payment is due by the respective area contract deadline.
15. Vendors wishing to be listed in the directory of Fair participants must fulfill contract or registration obligations by respective area deadlines.
16. Applicants must answer all questions on their area application forms. Area coordinators may ask applicants for clarification on questions answered unclearly. Area coordinators reserve the right to reject applicants who fail to provide requested clarification.



17. The CGCF does not accept applications from network or multi-level marketing businesses.

Participation in the Fair

1. Vendors agree to make no misrepresentations, implicit or explicit, about the nature of their businesses, the nature of their products and services offered or their ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds.
2. While we appreciate the skill of all craftspeople, applications for Wabanaki-Style baskets, such as strawberry, corn, sweetgrass, pack baskets, or baskets with curl work, produced by non-Wabanaki makers do not align with our mission-driven sourcing criteria and will not be accepted.
3. All MOFGA-certified growers and processors are eligible to receive a \$10/day reduction in vendor booth fees for all areas of the CGCF.
4. All food or ingestibles served or sold at the CGCF, even free samples, must adhere to the MOFGA Food Policy.
5. All non-certified organic garlic sold at the CGCF should be labeled not certified organic garlic.
6. Only MOFGA/CGCF may have a raffle on the fairgrounds. All other raffles, free or otherwise, are prohibited.
7. Food and meals served by the Common Kitchen are for use by current CGCF volunteers only.
8. Vendors who camp in their booths must contact the Fair office to get a permission form and must attach the form to the outside of their booths for the evening. Vendors may not camp elsewhere on the fairgrounds. Only vendors or associated staff may camp in vendor booths.
9. The State of Maine requires the CGCF to send a list of commercial vendors and their tax ID numbers to the state tax office. Vendors are responsible for reporting earnings and workers' pay to the IRS and the State of Maine.
10. Vendors assume all risk for their property. Neither the CGCF nor MOFGA will be responsible for any loss or damage from any cause.
11. MOFGA, doing business as the CGCF, disclaims any authority of control over the operation of vendors. Vendors assume all rights and responsibilities for the conduct of their operations including, but not limited to: obtaining liability and general coverage insurance for vendor-related activities and adhering to all local and state ordinances and regulations. MOFGA does not have separate vendor coverage under any insurance it may maintain.
12. Vendors must have general liability and completed operations insurance coverage with \$2,000,000 general aggregate and \$1,000,000 for each occurrence for the duration of the Fair, including during the vendor's move-in and move-out; name MOFGA as Additionally Insured; and provide a Certificate of Insurance to MOFGA by June 1. MOFGA reserves the right to change this coverage requirement.
13. In the event of a dispute, the decision of the CGCF officials will be accepted as final.

Passes

All vendors and personnel are required to have a gate pass for admission to the Fair. The CGCF provides a limited number of gate passes for vendors. Vendors may purchase additional tickets in advance from the Fair office. Vendors and staff without passes will not be granted admission to the Fair.

Booth Operation

1. Vendors must set up booths and be ready for business by 8:45 a.m. each day of the Fair.
2. Vendors must staff their booths for the duration of the Fair—from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.
3. Vendors should bring an adequate amount of food or merchandise to last through the entire Fair.
4. The CGCF assigns booth spaces to vendors. Vendors may not change booth location or designated boundaries of any booth space. Vendors must place all supports within the boundaries of their assigned booth spaces.
5. Vendors must restrict their activities to their booth spaces. The CGCF prohibits hawking of wares.



6. Vendor contracts are for space only. The CGCF does not supply tables, chairs, or other booth supplies *unless otherwise specifically stated in that Area's Guidelines*. Vendors should prepare for dirt/grass floors in tents and outside vendor locations.
7. Vendors must make their booths as attractive as possible. Vendors may not use plastics (clear, colored, or poly-tarps) in the construction of booths. The only exception to this is rip-stop nylon. Preferred materials include canvas, denim and cotton. Vendors may cover booths with plastic tarps at night, but must remove them by 8:00 a.m. daily.
8. Be prepared for inclement weather.
9. Only Vendors or associated staff are permitted in the area behind the booth, "backstage area", throughout the duration of the Fair.

Move-in/Move-out

1. Vendors may set up booths all day Thursday before the Fair weekend, or before 8:00 a.m. on Friday of the Fair. Vendors needing to set up before Thursday should make arrangements with their Area Coordinators.
2. The CGCF restricts vehicle movement on the fairgrounds. The CGCF prohibits vehicles from entering the fairgrounds after 8:00 a.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All vehicles already on the fairgrounds must exit by 8:30 a.m. Vehicles may return to the fairgrounds once the All Clear has been given and the Gates have been opened by Safety. Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, all Vendors must wait till the Fair Safety Coordinator gives permission to move onto the grounds when all Fairgoers have left. Please note this re-entry time will vary due to conditions on the fairgrounds.
3. Vendors must obtain permission from the MOFGA's Facilities Coordinator before digging any holes. Vendors must fill in holes before leaving the fairgrounds.
4. Consult with your Area's Guidelines for the time your booth needs to be cleaned up and removed from your exhibition area.

Utilities

Water and/or electricity are not available in all areas or booth locations on the fairgrounds.

Electricity

1. The CGCF provides electricity, where available, for a fee to vendors.
2. Vendors needing electricity must indicate such on their application and, if accepted, submit an electricity request form and payment with their contract.
3. Vendors must bring suitable panels, cords and outlet strips to meet their electrical needs.
4. The CGCF encourages electricity conservation. Using light-emitting diode (LED) lights will cut consumption dramatically.

Water

Vendors needing water must contact their area coordinator to determine whether the CGCF can meet their needs.

Cooking/Heating Equipment and Propane

1. Any participant using cooking equipment must have an appropriate fire extinguisher. Any vendor who serves food must have a 20 BC-minimum fire extinguisher. The CGCF encourages all vendors to obtain 40 BC-minimum extinguishers.
2. Cooking is only allowed in designated areas with 1lb propane or butane cylinders. No solid fuel may be used without permission. Food vendors wishing to use propane or butane tanks greater than 1lb must receive Fair Office approval, must pass the state onsite inspection before operating cooking equipment, and must operate in an approved area.
3. Per State of Maine regulations, propane tanks must be secured firmly on a hard, non-combustible surface, i.e. cement blocks, tin, etc... Vendors must supply their own surface on which to secure tanks—the ground alone does not suffice. The Fire Marshall will check for compliance.



Compost and Recycling

CGCF strives to produce Zero Waste. To that end, all waste at the Fair is sorted for compostable and recyclable materials by our Compost and Recycling volunteers. To assist in these efforts:

1. Vendors must separate all of the trash they generate into compostable/non-compostable waste and take the waste to the CGCF recycling area daily (not public Resource Recovery Stations).
2. Vendors shall break down and clean cardboard boxes of tape, staples, etc., tie them in bundles, and take them to the CGCF recycling area, or take them home.
3. Vendors must take their entire booths -- including carpets, display racks, storage containers, zip ties and decorations -- home with them. All booths must be taken down by Monday night unless special arrangements have been made with the vendor's Area Coordinator.
4. Vendors that leave trash in their area risk non-acceptance at future Fairs.

Cancellation Policy

1. The CGCF makes no refunds for cancellations made after August 1.
2. The CGCF makes no refunds in the event of inclement weather.

Updated: 3/18/26