



Presented By



Spark DSM Business Incubator Presented by Principal
2026 Program Handbook

These events and programming are produced by Downtown Events Group, Inc. and the Greater Des Moines Partnership. Numerous community partners, local agencies and businesses contribute to the success of these events by supporting Downtown Event Group, Inc. and Greater Des Moines Partnership initiatives. Administrative policies and procedures, participant rules and regulations and overall event expectations are an important component to the success and development of all Downtown Events Group and Greater Des Moines Partnership events.

This document states the policies and expectations of participating in all Downtown Events Group and Greater Des Moines Partnership events. Participants are expected to display professionalism and conduct themselves and their business in a manner that is respectful toward all participants, staff, and the community.

Participants have a responsibility to maintain the integrity, safety, and compliance of Federal, State, City, and all event regulations, while creating an event Community that is a positive experience.

***By signing this handbook, the signee acknowledges that violations of the policies contained in the handbook could result in fines or removal from any Downtown Events Group or Greater Des Moines Partnership event.**

The Downtown Events Group and Greater Des Moines Partnership Staff reserve the right to change or adjust any policy in the handbook as necessary at any time throughout the year. Such changes are effective immediately upon notification to vendors.

Spark DSM Business Incubator Program Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Greater Des Moines Partnership
Attention: Spark DSM Business Incubator
700 Locust Street, Suite 100
Des Moines, IA 50309

Event Contact:

If you have questions related to our events, application, Marketspread, or other onsite or event related questions and issues, please contact our Events Team.

Contact:

If you have questions about the Spark DSM Business Incubator program, curriculum, requirements, or other questions not related to onsite events, please contact Emily McLain.

Downtown Farmers' Market Manager

Elizabeth Weyers
515-286-4911

eweyers@downtownDSMUSA.com

- You can also reach out to farmersmarket@downtownDSMUSA.com

Regional Affiliate & Member Support Manager

Emily McLain
515-286-4904

emclain@DSMpartnership.com

After Hours and Onsite Contact:

If vendors are experiencing issues on Friday after 4 p.m. or Saturday mornings, vendors can email our The Market team through Marketspread or email eweyers@downtownDSMUSA.com.

You can also visit our onsite Information Booth on Saturday mornings located on the NE corner of Third Street and Court Ave.

Spark DSM Business Incubator Overview

The Spark DSM Business Incubator, Presented by Principal empowers new and early-stage small businesses by providing both event access and educational resources to help them grow. This program supports vendors at signature Greater Des Moines Partnership events including the Downtown Farmers' Market presented by UnityPoint Health, World Food & Music Festival presented by Veridian Credit Union and Out to Lunch.

Participants gain real-world experience selling their products while also benefiting from year-round business education through the program. The curriculum covers essential topics such as business planning, financial management, marketing strategies, legal compliance, and networking, ensuring vendors have the tools and knowledge to succeed long-term. Learn more about the curriculum below.

The Spark DSM Business Incubator is designed to foster economic growth, inclusivity and innovation across the region, helping small businesses thrive in Greater Des Moines' vibrant marketplace.

The Spark DSM Business Incubator was started in 2022 to serve the Downtown Farmers' Market presented by UnityPoint Health – Des Moines. The program expanded in 2023 to include education and support services and other Downtown events, including the World Food & Music Festival, the DSM Book Festival, Out to Lunch and more.

Spark DSM Business Incubator Program Requirements

To participate in the Spark DSM Program, a business must be owned, operated and actively managed by one or more persons who sell locally grown/handmade items — no resale or wholesale options will be accepted.

Applicants of the Spark DSM Incubator program must be new to the event they are applying to join and meet one of the following requirements:

- Have been in business for one to four years.
- Have between \$40,000 – \$90,000 in demonstrated annual sales.
- Have participated in the Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families small business programming. For more information on this programming reach out to Curtis Baugh at gcbbaugh@dmacc.edu.
- A letter of recommendation from a community partner organization.

Businesses admitted to the program are approved on a case-by-case basis.

Spark DSM Incubator Program Completion Requirements:

To receive a program completion certificate, a participating business must:

- Attend 5 of 6 curriculum modules
- Vendors must be in good standing with all Downtown Events Group and Greater Des Moines Partnership event guidelines.

Spark DSM Business Incubator Curriculum and Resources

Spark DSM works closely with community partners to provide year-round education and work one-on-one with these vendors to support their experience and growth in the program.

Spark DSM curriculum will consist of 6 educational modules designed to provide participating businesses with foundational knowledge and skills applicable to their business. Questions about program curriculum can be directed to Emily McLain, Regional Affiliates and Member Support Manager at emclain@DSMpartnership.com.

Downtown Events

Following approval into the Spark DSM Business Incubator, all participants of the Spark DSM Business Incubator will be offered the chance to apply to vend at The Downtown Farmers' Market and other Downtown Events.

Should a participant be interested in vending at Downtown Events Group or Greater Des Moines Partnership events, they will be required to create a Marketspread account and fill out the event questionnaire.

Questions about event applications can be directed to Elizabeth Weyers, Downtown Farmers' Market Manager at eweyers@downtownDSMUSA.com.

Downtown Farmers' Market

Farmers' Market Dates:

- Once Spark DSM participants are approved for the program and have filled out the event questionnaire (if interested in events). The Spark DSM team will work on scheduling each business.
- Each Spark DSM participant will get between 3-5 Market dates based on availability.

Booth Spaces:

- There are 3 10x10 booth spaces available for Spark DSM participants each week at the Downtown Farmers' Market. These booths are included with the program

and participants will not need to pay the normal Market vendor fees while in the program.

- Booth spaces are located on Court Ave. between 2nd and 3rd by The Market Information booth.

Materials Provided:

The Market will provide each Spark DSM participant with the following items.

- One 10x10 booth space.
- One 10x10 Spark DSM branded tent to vend out of during the event.
- Spark DSM banners and signage.
- Business specific signage that businesses will be able to complete after completion of the program.
- One 6-foot folding table
- Up to two folding stools.
- One whiteboard sign with expo markers

If other materials such as tablecloths, display racks, generators, power cords, cashboxes, POS systems, etc. are needed, businesses must provide it themselves.

Electricity:

- Electricity is not available at The Market. If participants require electricity they must request approval to bring a generator.
- Generators are approved on an annual basis and under certain circumstances. All generators must meet Market guidelines and be approved by Market Management annually in advance of vendor's first Market date.

Market generator guidelines include

- Generators must be quiet to respect Market vendors, customers and residents. This is defined as giving off less than 65 dB of sound.
- Suggested generator is a Honda EU 22001 or equivalent.
- Generators causing disruption or complaints will not be permitted.
- Vendors must provide a generator, extension cord, and cover for the part of the cord that lies in walkways and all areas utilized by the public.
- Market Management has the right to remove any generator at any time for any reason.

Additional Market Dates

- To schedule all Spark DSM participants who would like to be at The Market, we have limited availability and space to accommodate additional dates outside of the schedule given.
- There may be instances where a vendor calls out, or cannot make it to a Market, in the event that happens, an email will be sent out and the spot will be given on a first-come-first-served basis.

Future Market Seasons

- Spark DSM Participants who would like to be a part of future Market Seasons will be required to apply to the Downtown Farmers' Market as a new vendor for the following Market season. New vendor applications will be available at the beginning of the year and go in front of the vendor jury for the 2027 Downtown Farmers' Market season.
- Participation in the Spark DSM Business Incubator does not guarantee acceptance into future Market seasons.

World Food & Music Festival

Event Logistics:

- Friday, Aug. 28: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- Saturday, Aug. 29: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- Sunday, Aug. 30: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Each food vendor is required to sell a \$2 taste item on menu.

Booth Spaces:

- There are 3 10x10 booth spaces; which will include a tent, two tables, vendor signage with menu/vendor name and electricity.

Vendors will be selected to vend one day or three days based on vendor availability.

Out to Lunch

Events Dates/Logistics:

- Wednesdays, May 13 – June 24
- Various locations throughout Downtown Des Moines
- 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Booth Spaces:

- Number of booth spaces vary based on event location.

Materials Provided:

The Event Team will provide each Spark DSM participant with the following items.

- One 10x10 Spark DSM branded tent to vend out of during the event.
- Spark DSM banners and signage.
- Business specific signage that businesses will be able to complete after completion of the program.
- One 6-foot folding table

Electricity:

- Electricity is not available at Out to Lunch. Vendor is responsible for providing electricity with generator approved by Events Team.
- Same generator rules apply as the Downtown Farmers' Market (see rules above).

All Spark DSM Participants must follow the 2026 Handbook specific to each event, and abide by vendor rules and regulations.

Downtown Events Group and Greater Des Moines Partnership staff has the right to give up your booth space for any reason that we see appropriate at any time during the event season. Recurring absences or no shows could result in being pulled from all event schedules.