



Chili Cook-Off Participants' Guide

18th Annual Harvey County United Way Chili Cook-Off

Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024, 11:00 am – 1:30 pm

6th Street between Main Street and Poplar, Newton

What you'll need to prepare:

1. Six to eight gallons of chili and a means to keep it warm. There will be a limited number of spots with electricity available this year and those spots will be assigned in the order requested. Please be prepared to find another way to keep your chili warm. For those that do have a spot with electricity, a 50' 12-gauge professional-quality extension cord is required.
2. Booth supplies (canopy, table, **hand sanitizer**, etc.) and a CREATIVE DESIGN if you want to compete in the booth decor category. Booths will need to provide their own receptacle to collect money for People's Choice Chili.
3. **The "Sweet Treat" Cook-Off will return this year!** If you choose to participate in the "Sweet Treat" Cook-Off, you will need to prepare bit sized portions of your treat to serve alongside your chili. Booths will need to bring an additional receptacle to collect money for People's Choice Sweet Treat. There is a \$25 fee to participate in this portion of the event.
4. Two people to staff the booth, serving your chili and representing your agency. Staff will be required to wear **gloves** when handling chili.

Weeks before the event: Use your best promotion tools: e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Mail and good old-fashioned gossip to encourage your constituency to attend the 18th Annual Chili Cook-off.

- **Divide and Conquer!** Eight gallons of chili will be necessary. Consider having several people each make one or more gallons of the same recipe. A one-ounce ladle is provided to manage portions; with up to 1,000 people in attendance, we'll need every ounce of the eight gallons.
- **Develop a booth theme.** With 20-25 entries the visual appeal of a booth is as important as the chili itself and can help generate contributions to your donation jar. A booth façade, costumes, signage and non-audio entertainment such as jugglers/clowns/cheerleaders are some possibilities.
- **Booth essentials:** a table from which to serve, a method of keeping the chili hot, a jar or receptacle for donations, a sign identifying your organization, enthusiastic chili servers. NOTE: The ladle and sample cups will be provided by Prairy Market as soon as your chili is tested at the proper temperature. Additional sample cups will be available at the North entry gate.
- **ELECTRICITY:** Some booth spots have electrical hook-up available for a charge of \$25. See event staff that morning to access. Extension cords of 12 gauge, 50' are required to keep breakers from tripping. If you require an extension cord and do not have one, you will need to purchase one on your own before the morning of the Cook-Off.

Day of Event:

Hundreds of people will be waiting for the gates to open, so we must be prepared for action at 11:00 am. We will have little chance to problem solve after 10:30 am.

- **8:30 am Booth set-up begins:** Enter the area from Poplar Street, west end of 6th Street and exit on to Main Street from the east end of 6th Street. Only one vehicle per booth is allowed in at a time. Booths will be spaced out so that vehicles can park in between the booths while unloading. Please do not block the street so that others can exit. Volunteers will assist with unloading; vehicles must be moved out of the street by 10:30 am.

- **10:45 am Temp check—chili must be 160°** Ladles will be distributed when chili is at the proper temperature. Chili may not be sampled until it is at 160°. When additional chili is brought to your booth, it must already be at 160°. Resting temp is 140 °.
- **11:00 am Gates open** for the community to sample chili! This is an exciting rush, be ready to serve one-ounce samples. There is no need to give larger portions because people who sample chili at each booth will consume about 20 ounces. Engage folks verbally and visually to “sell” your chili and educate about your organization. Invite people to put cash in your jar, remind them that all of funds collected in the jar is donated to United Way.
- **12:00pm Pride of the Prairie and Booth Décor winners announced.**
- **1:00 pm Donation jars are counted.** One person from each booth brings the donation jar money in the envelope provided to Union State Bank’s west entrance (alley side) to be counted.
- **1:25 pm People’s Choice Winners Announced**
- **1:30 pm Disassemble booths.**

This is a great community event, but we do have a few simple rules:

- Chili must be the main feature at each booth...white, red, vegan, meaty, but chili!!
- Chili must arrive at the event hot and ready to serve.
- Participants may not disturb the neighboring booth with excessive noise. Although some smack talking is encouraged.
- Additions that consumers can add to the chili during the cook-off may include cheese, onions, crackers, jalapenos, etc., but items such as hot dogs are NOT allowed.
- Literature about the business/organization is welcome (brochures, business cards, etc). “Selling” promotional items of any perceived value (imprinted items, bottles of water, etc) for the jar vote is NOT allowed as not all entries have the budget to purchase these types of items.