

Maine Building Application Information Packet

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Application Checklist and Reminders

- Read through all selection priorities and questions
- Review important materials in the [Exhibitor Resources](#) section of the webpage
- Use the [online application](#) to submit your info
- Ensure the application is complete and [submitted by deadline](#)
- Be prepared to provide proof of insurance upon request if awarded space
- Be prepared to [remit payment by deadline](#)

Selection Priorities:

The following products and selection areas are prioritized for the Maine Building:

- Exhibitors who are able to secure and comply with staffing requirements (fully staff booth with daily time commitment of at least 11 hours).
- Businesses headquartered in Maine and meet applicable in-state licensing requirements
- Preference will be given to products that use Maine-sourced ingredients and/or materials, as well as:
 - Products that highlight Maine specialty crops and value-added products.
 - Products that highlight Maine’s natural resources and commerce.
 - Consumer goods such as accessories, art, jewelry, apparel, home and body products.
 - Products or services that encourage Maine experiences—visiting Maine!
 - Products that feature Maine craft beverage industry.
 - Products that feature
 - Brands and businesses that currently have a membership listing in: Real Maine, Maine Made, Visit Maine, DMR Seafood Directory
- Food trucks/mobile retail that are self-contained and may be placed at an exterior space.
- For food producers: Note - Fried or grilled foods are not permitted in the building at this time. Such foods may be prepared outside as approved by local health department. Food may be par-cooked and heated on site and/or cooked using appliances such as convection ovens, crockpots, toasters, microwaves, etc.

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm not familiar with the venue. What is the exhibitor and attendee experience?

The State of Maine Building is one of seven special buildings on the Avenue of States—including one for each New England state, and one for the Grange—located on the ESE grounds.

The Avenue of States is on the grounds of the Eastern States Exposition (ESE), an agricultural non-profit, home to The Big E! fair—a 100-plus year annual event that attracts more than 1 million attendees for 17 days each September. This is a busy, time-intensive, and often hot experience that draws heavy foot traffic. With proper preparation and planning, this can be a financially successful event for Exhibitors.

Exhibitors may find success if they have the planning, support, and logistics to complete the following:

- ✓ Submit a thorough application – do not leave reviewers guessing about your credibility and goals.
- ✓ Fully stock (or resupply) inventory for the duration of exhibiting at the event.
- ✓ Fully staff booth for a daily time commitment of at least 11 hours for full duration of your contract.
- ✓ Budget for expenses: booth rental, staffing, lodging, certifications (examples include, but are not limited to: temporary municipal permits for food and beverages), and amenities (examples, include but are not limited to: additional storage for inventory, Internet, etc.).

Feedback from recent Exhibitors:

- ✓ Exhibiting at this event helped Exhibitors dramatically reduce the number of shows they do each season—the Maine Building revenue was more than 10 other combined events for the season!
- ✓ This event provided some businesses growth from a part-time startup to full-time business.
- ✓ Exhibitors report the Building Management, custodial supports their success; they would recommend the venue to peers.

Q: What types of products do well in the Building?

A variety of products have been displayed and sold in the Maine Building. Here are general examples of products that tend to be most successful:

- Those that can be purchased with a credit card (or card tap at point of sale)
- Products where the customer perceives a good value for the price
- Unique gifts that offer a memorable keepsake, represent quality craftsmanship
- Easy to carry (or receive text reminder for pickup before departure, or no later than 7 PM)
- Non-alcoholic, simple refreshing beverages
- Food that is quickly and safely prepared, easily ordered, and convenient to eat while walking
- A product line that could interest a variety of shoppers
- Products and experiences or services that can be sought year-round

Q: I would like to start small—do you offer short-term rental options?

Yes. There is an introductory lower cost option for those who aspire to fulfill a longer-term rental. The short-term option is a fit for those curious about ways to participate in the Exhibit space and conduct outreach, promotions and sales prospecting without committing to the full 17-day schedule.

Q: What is the benefit of exhibiting at the Maine Building versus at a Maine agricultural fair, craft fair or festival?

- The venue is a regional destination.
- In a 17-day time frame, it attracts more visitors than the population of the state of Maine.
- This scale provides more different marketing, and promotional and sales opportunities.

The State of Maine underwrites most of the expenses for the permanent exhibit space. Specifically, Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation & Forestry manages the venue, and State of Maine funds are budgeted for operations, property and event management, electrical, sewage, and municipal regulations. It also supports coordinated publicity, emergency management, and some Exhibitor credentials.

Q: How does the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry promote the Maine Building Exhibits?

- The Department provides print, radio, web and social media promotions to feature Exhibitors, Works with The Big E! and regional news outlets to provide media alerts for targeted stories about Exhibitors and Maine.
- Each Exhibitor is encouraged to create use social media to help tell their story and extend a Maine welcome to attendees and promote their exhibit.

Q: I've heard there can be a lot of automobile traffic around the ESE. How does that impact Exhibitors?

There is a lot of traffic due to the size and scope of the fair. Exhibitors and fairgoers are encouraged to use the shuttle and carpool services to reduce congestion. It can take up to 30-90 minutes more than the typical GPS predictions to get across town. Exhibitors need to plan vehicle travel routes accordingly.

Q: Given the size of the crowds at the fair, is it safe for Exhibitors?

Like any large-scale event, public safety is an important part of event management. The fairgrounds provide public safety, in coordination with local and state emergency management personnel. There is a fire dept., and EMT/nursing station on site for fairgoers and Exhibitors, and a designated public health official. Certain items are prohibited from use on the grounds.

Exhibitors should be proactive by taking care of valuables and managing cash—don't leave them unattended at any time. Other tips: coordinate backup staffing to ensure adequate rest, care and nutrition. Use best practices for food and beverage sampling and sales. There is an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) device in the building. The Exhibitor lounge has A/C.

Q. When will I know if I've been awarded a space?

Confirmation will be sent to all applicants via email about the award decision. The anticipated notice date is April 1. If you do not receive an update by this time, please [email Building Management](#).

Q: Will there be rules about what I can and can't sell in my booth?

Yes. There is a preference for Maine products and services. All exhibitors are required to comply with local regulations about product preparation and sales.

Q. What services and amenities are available to Exhibitors?

- Building Management publishes a library of resource you should read before applying: www.maine.gov/dacf/bigmainebuilding
- The booth rental fee includes electricity and custodial. All other display and service amenities are Exhibitors' responsibility.
- ESE offers grounds-wide services, which may have added fees. They include on-site banking, phone and Internet, limited dry storage, heavy equipment support, and package receipt and delivery services during the fair – <https://www.thebige.com/p/generalinfo/vendor-exhibitor-info>
- The Exhibitor lounge in the building includes a shared kitchen and bathrooms are available exclusively for building personnel and Exhibitors.
- A dedicated room block at a local hotel is available, first come first serve, for Maine Building Exhibitors. Info is sent separately to awarded applicants.

Q. Can I make a site visit to the Building?

Pre-Event site visits are available to Exhibitors awarded space for 17-days, who are in good standing, and paid rental fees. Pre-fair site visits happen in June and July. You must [Email Building Management](#) to coordinate and reserve a time. **Otherwise, please attend or watch one of the orientation webinars (available on the website in the spring).**

Q. How are exhibits selected?

A committee reviews applications. Agreements are awarded based on priorities and space availability.

Q. How many exhibit spaces are available?

Available space is dependent upon size requirements of booths from year-to-year. There are approximately 15-25 Exhibitors, day to day. Most Exhibitors setup for all 17days of the fair.

What is the price to sublet exhibit space in the State of Maine Building? When is payment due?

Number of days	Location	Approx. Size	Exhibit Group	Rates	July 1	Aug. 1	Oct. 10
17	Interior building space	11w X 13d	A	\$20.00/ square foot	50% Non-refundable	50% Non-refundable	N/A
17	Exterior space building	100 sq. ft.	A	\$1,500, plus 10-percent event gross sales commission	\$1,500.00 Non-refundable	N/A	10% event gross sales commission
6 days	Introductory— multi day— building interior	11w X 13d	B-D	\$150/day	100% of exhibit fee	N/A	N/A
1	Outside building-front lawn	10 x 10	E	\$150/day	100% of exhibit fee	N/A	N/A

Exhibitors who are not exhibiting outside for all 17 days last payment must submit final payment by August 1. Invoices are sent to Exhibitors by the Department's service center staff who receive and process payments. You may pay in full or by installments scheduled with Building Management.

Q: Is there a waiting list if I am not awarded space or apply late?

There is a waiting list, and late applications may be accepted.