



TENNESSEE
CRAFT
FAIR
Emerging Makers Tent

EMERGING MAKERS TENT OVERVIEW

Updated for Spring 2026



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EMERGING MAKERS TENT OVERVIEW

55th Annual Spring Tennessee Craft Fair | May 1, 2 & 3, 2026

Friday and Saturday 10 am – 6 pm | Sunday 10 am – 5 pm

Tennessee Craft and the Fair Committee are pleased to offer an exclusive opportunity for our member artists interested in taking their craft business to the next level. In the Emerging Makers Tent, groups of artists representing our statewide chapters work together in a supportive environment to gain practical experience selling their artwork at a professional craft fair, aided by a mentor. This experience is designed to help emerging makers build the skills they need and take the next step toward exhibiting as independent artists on the main tent circle at Tennessee Craft fairs.

Emerging makers may be artists of any age or background who are:

- beginning their professional craft career,
- working in a new medium,
- exhibiting at a Tennessee Craft Fair for the first time and have not previously exhibited at craft fairs of the caliber of the Tennessee Craft Fair.

Mentors are alumni of the Emerging Makers Tent or the Tennessee Craft Fair main tent circle who are:

- selling artwork in the Emerging Makers Tent,
- selling artwork on the main tent circle, or
- willing to be on-site during the Fair to assist emerging makers without selling.

Participation is open to members of a Tennessee Craft chapter. Offering this outlet to emerging makers works toward Tennessee Craft's mission of encouraging, developing and promoting crafts and craftspeople in Tennessee.

The Emerging Makers Tent application is available online at:

tennesseecraft.org/emergingmakerstent

The Mentor application is available online at:

tennesseecraft.org/emergingmakerstent

FAIR RULES AND POLICIES

EMT ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

1. Artists must be current members of Tennessee Craft.
2. Artists must comply with the Exhibitor Fees.
3. Submitted work must meet the Artwork Eligibility Criteria.
4. Artists may not have an individual booth in the Craft Fair AND participate in the Emerging Makers Tent.
5. Chapters can secure a section in the Emerging Makers Tent with up to five eligible artists only (one of which may include the mentor).
6. Artists may exhibit in the Emerging Makers Tent in a single medium in no more than three Craft Fairs, with the exception of mentors who have term limits set by their individual chapters.

EXHIBITOR FEES

- **\$75 booth fee per artist** (*Artists invited to exhibit in the Emerging Makers Tent will be invoiced via PayPal.*)
- **20% commission on all sales taken before taxes; maximum \$500 for mentors** (*Each chapter treasurer will submit one check payable to Tennessee Craft.*)*
- **Credit card fees shall be deducted from payments to artists.***
- **Davidson County sales tax, currently 9.75%, collected and remitted on all sales** (*Each chapter treasurer will remit one check for all section artists to the Tennessee Department of Revenue.*)

**Some chapters may opt to include the 20% commission and credit card and administrative fees into one artist fee, for instance 25% for all fees; or charge up to 5% in a chapter commission beyond the sum of the 20% commission to Tennessee Craft and the credit card fees. Notification will be made to invited artists if/when assigned to a chapter section with an alternate fee structure.*

ARTWORK ELIGIBILITY

Complete eligibility requirements of Tennessee Craft fairs may be found online at tennesseecraft.org/events/craft-fairs.

1. Acceptable media: basketry, books/paper, clay, drawing, fiber/textile, furniture, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, mixed media/other, painting, photography, printmaking and wood.
2. Original artwork only.
3. Absolutely no buy-sell.
4. Artwork produced mostly by assistants, with commercial kits, molds, patterns, plans, prefabricated forms or other commercial methods are not permitted.
5. Any commercially-made embellishments must be subordinate to the handcrafted work.
6. For upcycled/recycled artwork, the finished pieces must show a manipulation of the materials and originality in design to be eligible.
7. Tennessee Craft expects full and accurate disclosure by the craft artist of materials and methods used in his/her work.

8. Copyrighted designs not owned by the craft artist may not be used, nor may commercially manufactured artwork be shown (e.g., coffee cups, postcards, calendars, stickers).
9. All work exhibited must be available for sale. Displays of work not intended for sale, but for purposes of receiving orders for work to be delivered at a later date will not be permitted.

Ineligible work includes:

1. Items for sale that are not of the medium in which they were accepted, including all non-craft items such as books, food products, etc.
2. Seconds: advertising of close-out sales or specially marked down items is considered inappropriate.
3. Commercially produced or digitally produced works.
4. Commercially molded ceramics, sculpture or jewelry.

Reproduction Rules: Reproductions of an artist's one-of-a-kind work may be exhibited under the following conditions:

1. Original work must be clearly visible and of primary importance.
2. All reproductions must be signed and numbered.
3. All reproductions whether framed or unframed must be clearly and individually labeled "Reproduction."
4. Reproductions may comprise no more than 30% of display space.
5. All reproductions whether framed or unframed, must be displayed in browse bins – limited to two (2) bins per booth.
6. Notecard reproductions of your art pieces are allowed.

Limited Edition Rules (for photography and printmaking): Limited Editions must be labeled as "Limited Edition Reproductions" and signed, numbered and dated. There is no restriction as to how many limited editions may be displayed. If displayed in bins, up to two (2) bins per booth are allowed.

Work exhibited must be consistent with the quality shown in digital images submitted and only media accepted by the jurors will be permitted in booths.

ARTWORK DISPLAYS

1. Displays and/or work that block the view of all work in the tent and/or the pathway for patrons to enter and exit the tent will be removed.
2. All individual displays must be subordinate to the overall chapter section display (i.e. no giant individual banners).
3. It is recommended that all artists use black linens to cover tables and decorate their space.
4. Displays must fit entirely within their designated section (to be determined by Tennessee Craft staff).
5. Staking of any kind is not permitted, regardless of size of stakes.

CANCELLATIONS

All cancellations must be made in writing via email to Trish Tallon-Blanchard, Director of Programs and Community Engagement, at ttallonblanchard@tennesseecraft.org.

LIABILITY

All exhibitors waive, release and discharge from any and all claims or liabilities attributable to the negligence of Tennessee Craft and/or any agents, successors, assigns, or employees of Tennessee Craft, which may arise from their participation in the Tennessee Craft Fair. Exhibitors agree to indemnify and hold harmless Tennessee Craft, Metro Parks and Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County for any claims for damage, loss or injury which relate to or in any way arise from acts or omissions connected to my participation in the Tennessee Craft Fair. Tennessee Craft Fairs are a rain or shine event and may remain scheduled as planned, regardless of inclement weather. No refunds will be given due to interruption of the event or cancellation for reasons beyond the control of Tennessee Craft. These reasons include, but are not limited to weather, acts of God, acts of terrorism, public health or safety concerns, or governmental intervention. Tent, art, and other staking is not permitted, regardless of size of stakes. All fair participants are expected to exercise full and reasonable respect for other artists, Tennessee Craft staff and volunteers, and the public, including all who are participating in and at the fair. Any breach of reasonable behavior may result in a jury zero score and disqualification from participation in Tennessee Craft Fairs. Exhibitors confirm that they are not under active felony proceedings in any state or country, and confirm that they do not have an active felony conviction in any state or country and/or are not active on a justice registry of any state or country at the time of submitting their application. They confirm that they will not have an active felony conviction in any state or country and will not be on a justice registry of any state or country during the period of this event, and will immediately notify Tennessee Craft if they have an active felony conviction in any state or country or are on a justice registry of any state or country and acknowledge that Tennessee Craft may disqualify them from participating based on such status. The Tennessee Craft Fair Committee and/or Governing Board bodies reserve the right to make final interpretation of all rules. Exhibitors grant Tennessee Craft permission to reproduce submitted images for publicity or educational purposes.

Tennessee Craft staff, along with the Fair Committee, reserve the right to request removal of any exhibited work not meeting the guidelines for eligibility or displays not meeting the guidelines for set up. Failure to comply with these policies will be taken into consideration when offering invitations to future shows.

The rules and policies outlined in this document are subject to change.

ARTIST SELECTION and FAIR PREPARATION

All Emerging Makers Tent and Mentor applications must be submitted online. A jury comprised of chapter presidents from each chapter with current fair EMT applicants will select the emerging artists. Chapter presidents who apply to exhibit in the Emerging Makers Tent must designate an alternate chapter officer to serve on the jury. Mentors will be selected by each chapter without jurying.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

1. After the application deadline, Tennessee Craft staff will review submissions for eligibility.
2. Tennessee Craft staff will provide the jury with the link to review and score eligible applications online.
3. A virtual meeting with Tennessee Craft staff will be scheduled to select the artists to be invited to exhibit in the Emerging Makers Tent.
4. After the meeting, Tennessee Craft staff will notify all applicants of the jury decisions and invoice selected artists via PayPal for the booth fee.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Communicate in a professional and timely manner with your fellow emerging makers and mentor.
- Ask for advice from previous fairs' emerging makers.
- Ask for advice from craft fair veterans in your chapter.
- Consider including a small sign with your artist statement or photos that highlight the basics or interesting parts in your creative process.
- Familiarize yourself with the credit card processing system prior to the fair.
- Visit tennesseecraft.org/events/craft-fairs and click on the button labeled **Fair Prep for Invited Artists** to download your own **Fair Checklist**, learn more about **Artist Self-Promotion**, and learn what artists exhibiting on the main tent circle do when exhibiting at Tennessee Craft fairs.
- Support your fellow emerging makers during load-in and load-out and during the fair to provide each other breaks and other assistance.

"I believe that our group was successful because each person had an equal say in the arrangement of our booth. We did not try to showcase only one maker, but thought long and hard about how all of the work looked together. We also assigned jobs (checkout, wrapping, etc.) and rotated those jobs throughout the day so that no one felt overwhelmed or felt like they couldn't give their full attention to their customers."

- Rachel Stovall, 2017 Spring Tennessee Craft Fair emerging maker

MENTORS

A mentor will be designated by the chapter president for each chapter's section. The mentor will be chosen from all prospective mentors who complete an online mentor application.

Although the mentor is expected to take the lead, section artists should work together as a team to ensure smooth customer transactions and give each artist experience in performing the tasks every exhibiting craft fair artist must master (e.g., making display decisions, closing a sale, handling digital transactions).

Responsibilities include:

1. Generating interest in the Emerging Makers Tent within your local chapter and encouraging artists to apply.
2. Designing the layout of your chapter's designated section in the Emerging Makers Tent and orienting your chapter's artists.
3. Mentoring your chapter's emerging makers regarding:
 - Transporting artwork
 - Displaying artwork
 - Preparing for difficult weather
 - Sales and financial processes
4. Coordinating with the chapter treasurer on all financial matters.
5. Bringing a cash box with change and credit card processing equipment.
6. Ensuring that Davidson County sales tax is being collected for each sale.
7. Ensuring that credit card sales are made directly into the chapter's Square or PayPal account (not individual artist accounts), with credit to each artist in the sale.
 - If a chapter elects to give each artist in their designated section their own card reader, then the chapter is responsible for setting up user accounts for each person. This will allow the chapter to set limits on account capabilities and ensure that each artist has only the capabilities needed (i.e. artists will not be able to transfer/withdraw funds).
8. Ensuring that customer checks are made out to the chapter.
9. Ensuring that cash is placed directly into the cashbox.
10. Reconciling all cash, checks, and credit card sales at the end of each day using Square or PayPal software.
11. Working with the chapter treasurer to manage post-fair financial reporting of exhibitor sales and sales tax, including making sure artists, Tennessee Craft, and sales taxes are paid in a timely manner.

"As an artist, I learned the importance of good displays, communication and price range. I loved meeting with other artists and talking with customers."

- 2018 Spring Tennessee Craft Fair emerging maker

AT THE FAIR

As the fair approaches, all emerging makers will receive a welcome packet with detailed information regarding parking, set-up/breakdown times, etc.

A guest juror will be present on Friday to score each emerging maker on eligibility to exhibit in Tennessee Craft fairs, originality of work, and craftsmanship and manipulation of medium. The announcement of the winners occurs in the Emerging Makers Tent on Friday afternoon. Awards will be given for:

1. **Best Emerging Maker** – Individual award to the best emerging maker based on eligibility to exhibit in Tennessee Craft fairs, originality of work and craftsmanship. Winner receives a certificate, \$55 individual Tennessee Craft membership for 2027, feature in our member newsletter, \$35 application fee waived to apply in ZAPP for the following year's Tennessee Craft fair of the same season as an individual exhibiting artist and a Tennessee Craft t-shirt.
2. **Merit Award** – Individual award to an emerging maker based on eligibility to exhibit in Tennessee Craft fairs, originality of work and craftsmanship. Winner receives a certificate, \$35 application fee waived to apply in ZAPP for the following year's Tennessee Craft fair of the same season as an individual exhibiting artist and a Tennessee Craft t-shirt.
3. **Best Display** – Individual award to artist with best display that is attention getting, promotes products well, conveys an effective message using design/graphics and correctly balances the booth size versus amount of product displayed. Winner receives a certificate, \$35 application fee waived to apply in ZAPP for the following year's Tennessee Craft fair of the same season as an individual exhibiting artist and a Tennessee Craft t-shirt.
4. **Best Fresh Idea** – Individual award to artist with the best new, original idea for craft, materials or innovative way to display or sell. Winner receives a certificate, \$35 application fee waived to apply in ZAPP for the following year's Tennessee Craft fair of the same season as an individual exhibiting artist and a Tennessee Craft t-shirt.
5. **Best Collaboration** – Group award to chapter for best use of space as a group based on layout of space for product display and checkout experience. Winning group receives a certificate, a feature in our member newsletter, and one Tennessee Craft t-shirt per member.

POST-FAIR ACCOUNTING

All Tennessee Craft chapters are required to follow the accounting procedures below for Emerging Makers Tent revenue. It is important for Tennessee Craft to abide by these consistent accounting procedures across the state to:

- Ensure that we maintain our 501(c)(3) status
- Prepare us for future audits
- Help exhibiting artists understand how booth sales work
- Facilitate an easy transition between chapter officers
- Ensure that we adhere to the Tennessee Department of Revenue special event tax laws

Because of this, we require that all Tennessee Craft chapters follow guidelines for Emerging Makers Tent sales and accounting at the Fairs. **These guidelines should be managed by the mentor and chapter treasurer.**

All transactions (cash, credit card, and check) for each chapter section will go through the chapter bank account. An overall sales summary for each artist and detailed transaction list including the subtotal, tax, and grand total for each transaction must be submitted in a spreadsheet to Trish Tallon-Blanchard, Director of Programs and Community Engagement, at ttallonblanchard@tennesseecraft.org.

The week after the fair, each chapter treasurer should double-check the sales summary, reconcile the sales income received, deposit that income (and any starting cash) into the chapter checking account, and write:

- a check to each artist for their net profit (80% pre-tax minus any credit card / chapter fees),
- one check to Tennessee Craft for commission on all sales (20% calculated before tax added and credit card fees deducted, with a maximum commission of \$500 for mentors), and
- one check to the Tennessee Department of Revenue for sales tax.

SALES TAX RESPONSIBILITIES

It is your responsibility to collect sales tax. The current tax rate is: 9.75%.(if there is a change in tax rate this document will be updated accordingly.)

Chapter mentors and treasurers will file the sales tax return for your group online via the state's new TNTAP (Tennessee Taxpayer Access Point) system at tntap.tn.gov/eservices.

Emerging Makers Tent

DEADLINES

February 15, 2025	Application deadline for mentors
March 1, 2025	Mentors selected for each chapter
March 12, 2025	Application deadline for emerging artists
March 15, 2025	Tennessee Craft will forward eligibility determinations to chapter president for emerging artists
March 21-23, 2025	Emerging Makers Tent jury will deliberate via conference call to select emerging artists
March 24, 2025	Notifications will be sent to all emerging artist applicants. Selected participants will be invoiced for booth fee via PayPal by Tennessee Craft
March 31, 2025	Booth fee payments due from invited artists to secure spot in tent
April 1, 2025	Tennessee Craft will provide tent layout map
April 8, 2025	Table(s) and chair(s) count due to Tennessee Craft <i>*If table & chair count are not included by this date, your requested number is not guaranteed</i>
May 1, 2025	Set-up / load-in
May 2, 3 & 4, 2025	Fair dates!
May 25, 2025	Sales report and commission check due to Tennessee Craft office (PO Box 120066; Nashville, TN 37212)
June 20, 2025	Taxes due to Department of Revenue