



BLUE RIDGE EVENTS

— CREATING CONNECTIONS  INSPIRING COMMUNITY —

Vendor Handbook

— 2027 EDITION —



SUPPORTING
SMALL BUSINESS



BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS



STRENGTHENING
COMMUNITIES



CREATING MEMORABLE
EXPERIENCES

Welcome to the Blue Ridge Events Family *Creating Connections. Inspiring Community.*

I'm Cynthia, founder of Blue Ridge Events, and I'd like to personally thank you for becoming part of our vendor community.

Blue Ridge Events was created with one simple goal: to provide consistent, well-organized events where artisans and small businesses can grow, build lasting relationships, and succeed together. Like many of you, I began as a maker. From sewing and crochet to handcrafted soap and etched glass, I explored many creative paths while experiencing the same challenges so many vendors face—finding quality events, dealing with unpredictable conditions, and searching for organizers who truly value the success of their vendors.

Those experiences inspired something bigger.

I realized our creative community needed more than just another craft show. We needed events built on trust, consistency, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to helping small businesses thrive. That vision became Blue Ridge Events.

Today, Blue Ridge Events is a family-owned and operated business dedicated to creating welcoming, professionally managed events where creativity thrives, small businesses grow, and communities come together.

Everything we do is guided by a simple commitment:

- Provide organized, high-quality events vendors can count on.
- Create a welcoming experience for vendors and shoppers alike.
- Build lasting relationships through honesty, communication, and integrity.
- Support the growth and success of small businesses.
- Continually improve every event through planning, feedback, and innovation.

As our events continue to grow, so do our processes. Each improvement—from our application process to reservation confirmations and vendor communications—is designed to create a smoother, more professional experience while preserving the welcoming, family atmosphere that defines Blue Ridge Events.

Whether this is your first event or you've been with us for years, we're honored you've chosen to partner with us. Our hope is that you'll find a home you can count on—one where your business is valued, your creativity is celebrated, and meaningful connections are made.

The pages that follow will guide you through our registration process, event expectations, policies, and helpful tips to make your Blue Ridge experience as successful as possible.

Thank you for placing your trust in us. We look forward to creating connections, inspiring community, and building another successful season together.

Welcome to the Blue Ridge Events family!

Cynthia Bolin

Founder & Event Director

Blue Ridge Events

Creating Connections. Inspiring Community.

What's New for 2027

As Blue Ridge Events continues to grow, we're committed to creating an even better experience for our vendors. Based on feedback and the continued success of our events, we've made a few updates to our registration process for the 2027 season. These changes will take effect Jan. 1, 2027.

A Refined Registration Process

Our Vendor Application will continue to be the first step in joining Blue Ridge Events. After reviewing your application, you'll receive an **Invitation to Participate** for each event you've been selected to attend. To confirm your participation, simply complete the **Vendor Contract** for each event you'd like to join.

Reservation Deposit

Each Vendor Contract now includes a **\$25 Reservation Deposit** that is **credited toward your Total Booth Investment**—it is **not an additional fee**.

To help keep booth availability accurate and provide opportunities for vendors on our waitlist, invitations to reserve booth space will remain available for **10 calendar days**. Your reservation is confirmed once we receive your completed Vendor Contract and Reservation Deposit.

Why the Change?

These updates will help us:

- Keep booth availability accurate.
- Better serve vendors on our waitlist.
- Reduce unconfirmed reservations.
- Streamline communication and event planning.
- Continue providing the organized, professional experience you've come to expect from Blue Ridge Events.

While some of our processes are evolving, our mission remains the same: creating welcoming events where artisans and small businesses can grow, build lasting relationships, and connect with their communities.

Thank you for growing with us. We look forward to another incredible season together!

Creating Connections. Inspiring Community.

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This handbook is designed to answer most questions about participating in Blue Ridge Events. If you need additional assistance, we're always happy to help. Thank you for being part of the Blue Ridge Events family!

The Vendor Process

Our goal is to make the registration process simple, organized, and transparent. The following steps will guide you from your initial application through confirming your booth reservation.

Step 1 – Submit Your Vendor Application

Complete the Blue Ridge Events **Vendor Application** and select the events you'd like to be considered for. One application allows you to be considered for multiple Blue Ridge Events throughout the year.

Each application is carefully reviewed to help create a balanced event with a variety of artisans, makers, boutiques, specialty food vendors, and small businesses.

Step 2 – Invitation to Participate

If selected for an event, you'll receive an **Invitation to Participate** by email.

Your invitation will include a **Vendor Contract** for each event you've been invited to attend. If an event or product category is full, you may be placed on the waitlist and will be contacted if space becomes available.

Step 3 – Confirm Your Reservation

To confirm your participation, simply complete the **Vendor Contract** for each event you'd like to attend.

Each Vendor Contract includes a **\$25 Reservation Deposit (credited toward your Total Booth Investment)**. This is **not an additional fee** and serves as the first portion of your booth payment. Invitations to reserve booth space remain available for **10 calendar days**. After that time, unconfirmed invitations may be released to another vendor.

Once we've received your completed Vendor Contract and Reservation Deposit, your booth reservation is officially confirmed.

Step 4 – Event Communication

After your reservation has been confirmed, you'll begin receiving event-specific communications to help you prepare for a successful event.

These communications may include:

- Payment reminders for your remaining booth investment.
- Event updates and important deadlines.
- Marketing materials to help promote the event.
- Load-in and setup information.
- Booth assignments and final event details.

Our goal is to keep you informed every step of the way.

Making Booth Requests

Each Vendor Contract includes a section where you can share information that may help us when creating the event floor plan. While every request cannot be guaranteed, we carefully review each one and do our best to accommodate them whenever possible.

Helpful information includes:

- **Accessibility or mobility needs**
- **Allergies or sensitivities** (such as food or fragrance)
- **Family members or friends** you'd like to be located near
- **Preferred booth locations** (corner, wall space, etc.)
- **Tent frames or special display requirements**
- **Any additional information** that will help us create the best possible experience for you.

The more we know, the better we can plan!

Staying Connected

There are several ways to stay informed about upcoming Blue Ridge Events:

- **Email Announcements** – Vendors who have completed a Vendor Application will receive announcements when new events become available.
- **Blue Ridge Vendor Application** – Check the application periodically for newly added events. Please avoid submitting multiple applications for the same event, as this can create duplicate records.
- **Post-Event Surveys** – Upcoming events and current availability are often included in our post-event surveys.
- **Facebook** – Follow Blue Ridge Events for announcements, event updates, and important reminders.
- **Email Us Anytime** – If you're unsure whether you've missed an announcement or have a question about an upcoming event, we're always happy to help.

Promotional Images

As outlined in your **Vendor Contract**, promotional images are requested to help market both your business and the event.

When selecting images:

- Choose your best-selling, most unique, or seasonal products.
- Use clear, well-lit photos with minimal background clutter.
- You do not need to photograph every item.
- Approximately **7–8 quality images** are ideal.

To be included in our promotional campaign, **promotional images must be received at least 30 days prior to the event.**

If we already have promotional images on file, we'll continue using them unless updated images are received before the 30-day deadline.



BLUE RIDGE INSIDER TIP: COMPLETE YOUR VENDOR CONTRACT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER RECEIVING YOUR INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE. THIS CONFIRMS YOUR RESERVATION AND ALLOWS US TO BEGIN PLANNING THE EVENT WITH CONFIDENCE.

Communication

Clear communication is one of the keys to a successful event. We are committed to keeping vendors informed throughout the registration process and leading up to each event. In return, we ask that you carefully review our communications and notify us promptly of any changes that may affect your participation.

Contacting Blue Ridge Events

Method	Best Used For
 Phone / Text 423-373-2232	Questions before an event, event-day communication, or time-sensitive matters. Text messaging is the fastest way to reach us during event weekends. Please allow up to 24 business hours for a response during normal business operations.
 Email blueridgeevents@protonmail.com	Registration questions, payment inquiries, schedule changes, cancellations, sending photos or documents, and general account questions. Please add this address to your Safe Senders list to ensure you receive all event communications.
 Facebook Messenger	General questions or non-urgent communication. Because notifications are not always immediate, please use email or text for time-sensitive matters.

Event Communications

Beginning approximately 30 days before each event, you'll receive regular event emails containing important information, including:

- Event reminders and deadlines
- Setup and load-in instructions
- Booth assignments
- Event maps and parking information
- Marketing resources
- Final event details

Please read these emails carefully. If you're confirmed for an event and are not receiving them, contact us as soon as possible so we can resolve the issue before event day.

Our Commitment

Our goal is to provide timely communication, helpful information, and the support you need to make every Blue Ridge Events experience organized, enjoyable, and successful.



BLUE RIDGE INSIDER TIP: IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED AN EVENT EMAIL IN A WHILE, CHECK YOUR SPAM FOLDER BEFORE CONTACTING US. MISSING ONE EMAIL CAN MEAN MISSING IMPORTANT SETUP INFORMATION.

Advertising & Promotion

Successful events are built through intentional planning, consistent promotion, and strong partnerships.

At Blue Ridge Events, we invest in marketing each event throughout the Tri-Cities and surrounding communities with one goal: **bringing more shoppers through the doors so our vendors have every opportunity to succeed.**

How Blue Ridge Events Promotes Our Events

Our marketing efforts may include:

- Paid social media and Google advertising
- Television and local media
- Newspapers, **The Stroll**, and community publications
- Community and radio station event calendars
- Chamber of Commerce listings
- Email marketing
- Printed postcards, flyers, and signage
- Sponsor and community partnerships

Advertising methods may vary by event.

How You Can Help

Marketing works best when everyone participates. Help us by:

- Liking, commenting on, and sharing Blue Ridge Events posts.
- Inviting friends, family, and customers.
- Displaying event postcards in your business or community.
- Letting customers know where they can find you.

Working Together

Every post, conversation, and recommendation helps introduce someone new to Blue Ridge Events. Thank you for partnering with us to create successful events, support small businesses, and strengthen our community.



BLUE RIDGE INSIDER TIP: DON'T JUST SHARE OUR POSTS—COMMENT ON THEM!
SOCIAL MEDIA ALGORITHMS REWARD ENGAGEMENT. A QUICK COMMENT LIKE "**WE'LL BE THERE!**", "**CAN'T WAIT!**", OR "**STOP BY AND SEE US!**" CAN HELP OUR POSTS REACH
MANY MORE POTENTIAL SHOPPERS.

Preparing for Event Day

As event day approaches, a little preparation goes a long way. Taking time to plan ahead helps create a smoother setup, a more attractive booth, and a more enjoyable experience for both you and your customers.

Booth Equipment

Bring everything you'll need for a successful event, including:

- Tables (unless rented)
 - Chairs (unless rented)
 - Table coverings
 - Display fixtures
 - Extension cords (if electricity was requested)
 - Lighting (if desired)
 - Price tags and signage
 - Business cards
 - Shopping bags
 - Payment supplies
 - Change for cash sales
-

Raffle Donations (Optional)

Vendors are welcome to donate an item to our event raffle.

Benefits include:

- Additional recognition on social media
- Increased visibility for your business
- Helping create excitement for shoppers

Please bring your raffle donation and business card to the Welcome Table during setup.

Tables & Chairs

Tables and chairs are available at many venues for an additional fee.

Availability and pricing vary by venue and will be listed in your Vendor Contract.

While we try to have a few extras available for emergencies, availability cannot be guaranteed.

Working Together

Preparing ahead of time helps create a smooth setup, a professional presentation, and a great experience for shoppers. Thank you for helping us make every Blue Ridge Events event enjoyable for everyone.



BLUE RIDGE INSIDER TIP: CREATE A PACKING CHECKLIST AND UPDATE IT AFTER EVERY EVENT. A SIMPLE CHECKLIST CAN PREVENT FORGOTTEN EXTENSION CORDS, DISPLAY PIECES, BUSINESS CARDS, OR PAYMENT SUPPLIES AND MAKE SETUP MUCH LESS STRESSFUL.

Event Day Expectations

Event day has arrived! Our goal is to create a welcoming, enjoyable experience for both our vendors and our shoppers. A little preparation, patience, and teamwork help make every Blue Ridge Events event a success.

Load-In

Load-in procedures vary by event.

Your Vendor Contract and pre-event emails will provide complete load-in instructions, including dates, times, parking information, and any venue-specific details.

Please extend grace and kindness to those around you during load-in. A little patience goes a long way as everyone works together to prepare for a successful event.

Finding Your Booth

A floor plan and final event instructions will be emailed before the event, sometimes as late as a few hours before load-in as we finalize last-minute changes.

Your email will include:

- Booth location
- Parking information
- Load-in instructions
- Final event details

If you need assistance upon arrival, look for a member of the **Blue Ridge Events Team** wearing a royal blue “Blue Ridge Events” shirt. We'll be happy to help you.

Be a Good Neighbor

Load-in is one of the busiest parts of the day. Please be patient and courteous with those around you. If an adjacent booth appears empty shortly before the event begins, please check with us before expanding into that space. Vendors who have contacted us about arriving late will have their booth held for them.

Need a quick restroom or lunch break? Our vendor community is known for helping one another, and neighboring vendors are often happy to watch your booth for a few minutes. If you'd prefer, a member of the Blue Ridge Events Team will gladly assist whenever possible.

Please Stay Until Closing

One of the ways we provide an exceptional shopping experience is by remaining open for the advertised event hours.

Think of it this way: **If a store advertises that it's open until 5:00 p.m., customers expect it to be open until 5:00 p.m. Blue Ridge Events is no different.** We promote our event hours through advertising, community calendars, social media, and word of mouth. Guests who arrive later in the day deserve the same welcoming experience as those who arrived when the doors first opened. Packing up early not only disappoints shoppers, but it also affects neighboring vendors and the overall appearance of the event.

Unless approved in advance because of an emergency or special circumstance, **vendors are expected to remain set up until the published closing time.**

💡 **Blue Ridge Insider Tip**

Every guest deserves a great experience.

Whether they arrive at opening or ten minutes before closing, greet them warmly and make them feel welcome. Some of the best conversations—and sales—happen during the final hour of the event.

Working Together

Every smile, every helping hand during load-in, and every vendor who remains open through closing contributes to the welcoming atmosphere shoppers have come to expect from Blue Ridge Events.

Thank you for helping us create an exceptional experience while creating connections and inspiring community.



BLUE RIDGE INSIDER TIP: STAND WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND GREET SHOPPERS WITH A SMILE. A SIMPLE "GOOD MORNING!" OR "WELCOME!" MAKES YOUR BOOTH FEEL INVITING AND OFTEN STARTS CONVERSATIONS THAT LEAD TO SALES.

After the Event

Our commitment to you doesn't end when the event is over.

Every Blue Ridge Events event is an opportunity to learn, improve, and create an even better experience for our vendors and shoppers. Your feedback is an important part of that process.

Post-Event Survey

After each event, you'll receive a brief anonymous survey.

Questions generally include:

- What worked well?
- What could be improved?
- Recommendations for future events
- **Your Total Event Sales** (*optional, but greatly appreciated*)
- Additional comments

The survey is typically available for **4–5 days** before results are reviewed.

Why It Matters

Your feedback helps us:

- Improve the vendor and guest experience.
- Evaluate marketing efforts.
- Identify trends and opportunities for growth.
- Make informed decisions for future events.

While sharing your **Total Event Sales** is optional, it provides valuable insight into event performance and helps us evaluate the effectiveness of our marketing and planning efforts.

Event Follow-Up

After reviewing the survey results, we'll send a final event recap that may include:

- Survey highlights
- Raffle and advertising statistics
- Upcoming Blue Ridge Events

We believe transparency and continuous improvement are essential to creating exceptional events.

Working Together

Blue Ridge Events continues to grow because of the ideas and feedback we receive from our vendor community.

Thank you for helping us create better events while creating connections and inspiring community.



BLUE RIDGE INSIDER TIP: YOUR FEEDBACK TRULY MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

MANY OF THE IMPROVEMENTS WE'VE MADE OVER THE YEARS HAVE COME DIRECTLY FROM VENDOR SUGGESTIONS. EVEN ONE THOUGHTFUL IDEA CAN MAKE A LASTING IMPACT.

Vendor Expectations & Accountability

Immediate Removal

The following behaviors will result in immediate removal from the event and may result in the loss of eligibility to participate in future Blue Ridge Events:

- Theft
- Fighting or threatening behavior
- Destruction of property

These expectations apply to vendors and anyone representing their business during the event.

Three-Strike Policy

For other policy violations, Blue Ridge Events follows a **Three-Strike Policy**.

Examples include:

- **No Call / No Show** – If you're unable to attend, please notify us as soon as possible so we can adjust the floor plan and assist other vendors.
- **Leaving Before Closing** – Vendors are expected to remain set up until the published closing time unless prior approval has been given.
- **Disrespectful or Unprofessional Behavior** – Treat vendors, guests, volunteers, and staff with courtesy and respect.

Receiving **three strikes** may result in the loss of eligibility to participate in future Blue Ridge Events.

Blue Ridge Events reserves the right to address situations on a case-by-case basis when circumstances warrant.

Working Together

These policies aren't intended to be punitive—they exist to protect the welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere our vendors and shoppers have come to expect.

Thank you for helping us create events where everyone feels respected, supported, and welcome.



BLUE RIDGE INSIDER TIP: COMMUNICATION GOES A LONG WAY.

IF AN EMERGENCY ARISES OR YOUR PLANS CHANGE, LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. MOST SITUATIONS CAN BE RESOLVED MUCH MORE EASILY WHEN WE'RE KEPT INFORMED.

Keys to a Successful Event

Whether this is your first event or your hundredth, there's always something new to learn. The following ideas have come from years of experience, conversations with successful vendors, customer feedback, and lessons learned along the way.

Hopefully you'll discover one or two ideas that help make your next event your best one yet.

Keys to Success

Create an inviting booth. Rugs, lighting, and thoughtful displays encourage shoppers to step inside.

Smile and greet every guest. A simple hello can start a conversation—and a sale.

Engage with shoppers. Ask questions and invite them to learn more about your products.

Have a conversation starter ready. Share your newest item, your best seller, or what makes your products unique.

Tell your story. Customers love learning how and why something was created.

Be present. Avoid sitting at the back of your booth or spending time on your phone.

Celebrate your customers. With permission, take a photo of customers with their purchases and share it on social media.

Less is often more. A clean, uncluttered display makes shopping easier and helps your products stand out.

Build your customer list. Collect names and email addresses so shoppers can stay connected long after the event.

A Lesson I Learned

Over the years, I've occasionally invited secret shoppers to attend our events. Their role isn't to evaluate the products—they simply experience the event as any customer would and then share honest feedback with me afterward.

One conversation has stayed with me ever since.

As we were discussing her experience, I recommended a product from one of the vendors that I thought she would really like.

She looked at me and said,

"Yes, I saw it. It's beautiful. I walked into the booth and was ignored, so I left. I'll spend my money with someone who cares that I was there."

I had no idea she had already visited that booth.

That conversation changed the way I think about customer service.

The vendor had a beautiful product. In fact, it was good enough that I recommended it without realizing she had already discovered it on her own.

It just goes to show that "Great products bring people into your booth. Great customer service keeps them there."

As artisans and small business owners, we spend countless hours perfecting our craft. We work hard on our displays, pricing, and inventory. But sometimes the most important thing we have to offer isn't sitting on the table—it's ourselves.

A smile.

A warm greeting.

A genuine conversation.

Sharing the story behind what we create.

Those simple moments help customers feel welcome, appreciated, and valued.

Don't let someone leave your booth wondering if anyone noticed they were there

Additional Resources

Looking for more ideas to grow your business?

We've created a **Vendor Resources** page on the Blue Ridge Events website featuring helpful articles, business tools, booth display ideas, marketing resources, and downloadable checklists to help you prepare for future events.

We encourage you to visit often as new resources are added throughout the year.

Thank You

Thank you for choosing to be part of the Blue Ridge Events family.

We appreciate the creativity, passion, and professionalism you bring to every event. Your talent, hard work, and dedication are what make Blue Ridge Events a place shoppers look forward to visiting time and time again.

Whether you're joining us for your very first event or you've been with us for years, we're honored to partner with you.

Together, we're Creating Connections. Inspiring Community.

"People may forget what you sold, but they'll never forget how you made them feel."