



FAQs

Sidewalk Vending Cart Distribution Program Frequently Asked Questions

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Who is eligible to apply for a sidewalk vending cart?

Applicants must:

- Reside in Los Angeles County
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have a gross household income under \$75,000
- Have operated as a food vendor for at least one year in the unincorporated areas of LA County or within the City of Los Angeles

Priority consideration will be given to vendors actively working to formalize their businesses, such as those who have obtained a seller's permit, food handler certificate, or are participating in the Compact Mobile Food Operation (CMFO) subsidy program.

2

What types of carts are available through this program?

The program offers four types of California Health Code-compliant carts:

- Integrated Grill Carts – Suitable for grilling pre-cooked meat items like tacos or hot dogs
- Cold-Hold Ice Cream Carts – Designed for selling pre-packaged frozen goods
- Hot-Holding Carts – Maintain hot items like tamales or wraps at safe temperatures
- Cut Fruit Carts – Intended for fresh produce and fruit-based items such as fruit bowls

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Is there a cost to receive a cart?

No. Carts are provided at no cost to selected vendors. However, recipients are responsible for cost associated with securing all required permits and for transporting the cart after approval. Please note, a 75% subsidy for a Compact Mobile Food Operations (CMFO) permit is available for those that qualify.

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What documentation is required to apply?

While applicants do not need to provide any documents when first applying. They will eventually need to acquire/submit the following to receive a cart:

- California Seller's Permit
- Fictitious Business Name (DBA) registration
- Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) or Social Security Number
- LA County Department of Public Health (DPH) permit
- Valid food handler certificate
- Government-issued photo ID
- Business information and vending details
- Proof of sole proprietorship (only one cart per household)



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Are permits required before receiving the cart?

Yes. Prior to cart distribution, recipients must obtain:

- A Compact Mobile Food Operation (CMFO) Permit from the LA County Department of Public Health
- A Sidewalk Vending Registration Certificate (SVRC) or a City of LA sidewalk vending permit, depending on the vending location
- All recipients must also agree to a five-year covenant agreement, which includes terms for legal use and compliance.

Please note that technical assistance will be available to all those that qualify.

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How does the application process work?

Applicants must:

- Complete the online application at opportunity.lacounty.gov/sidewalkvendingcarts
- Wait for a confirmation email within 72 hours
- Submit all required documents
- If selected for Phase 2, complete permit requirements within 45 days
- Receive pickup instructions once compliance is confirmed

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How are carts awarded?

Eligible applicants are scored based on:

- Compliance readiness (e.g., having permits or certifications)
- Residency in equity-prioritized areas (based on the County's Equity Explorer Map)

If applications exceed the number of available carts, top-scoring applicants are entered into a monthly digital lottery. Those not selected remain eligible for the next lottery round.

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Is support available to help applicants complete the process?

Yes. Free technical assistance is available through:

- County Applicants: Inclusive Action for the City (IAC) at (323) 604-9765 or info@inclusiveaction.org
- City of LA Applicants: Initiating Change in Our Neighborhoods (ICON CDC) at (818) 647-9704 or infosidewalkvending@iconcdc.org

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Can other adults in the same household receive a cart?

No. Only one cart may be awarded per residential address, regardless of how many eligible individuals reside there. The program is limited to one cart per household to ensure equitable distribution across the County.

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What is the Compact Mobile Food Operations (CMFO) Subsidy?

The CMFO Subsidy helps eligible sidewalk vendors cover the cost of obtaining a Compact Mobile Food Operation permit from the LA County Department of Public Health. The subsidy covers up to 75% of permit fees for qualifying individuals. Eligibility requirements apply and are determined through a separate application process.



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Can I receive a cart if I live outside of Los Angeles County but vend in the unincorporated areas of LA County or the City of LA?

No. Only individuals who live in Los Angeles County may be eligible for a cart, provided they meet all other program requirements.

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Do I need a Social Security Number to qualify?

A Social Security Number is not required. However, you must have either an Employer Identification Number (EIN) or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to qualify.

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Can I apply for the DEO Formalization and Resiliency Grants and still qualify for a cart?

Applicants who apply for or receive funding through the DEO Formalization and Resiliency Grant Program are still eligible to apply for and receive a cart, provided all other eligibility requirements are met.

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Where can I get assistance with my application and permits?

Call the Department of Economic Opportunity 844-432-4900

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Are vendors required to insure the cart? Is any coverage provided by the County or City?

Although insurance is not required, we strongly recommend that vendors consider obtaining coverage to protect their newly awarded cart. For more information about possible insurance options in California, please contact the CA Department of Insurance at (800) 927-4357.

Please note that the County will not provide coverage or repairs for the carts.

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Who is responsible if the cart breaks or is vandalized?

If the cart has any manufacturer-related issues, vendors may contact the manufacturer directly, as each cart includes a 12-month warranty. Any damage or repairs not covered under the manufacturer warranty will be the responsibility of the awardee.



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