

ARTS in the HEART of AUGUSTA FESTIVAL

Frequently Asked Questions:

General Festival Questions:

1. When is Arts in the Heart?

- a. Arts in the Heart is the third weekend of September every year.

2. Where is Arts in the Heart?

- a. In Downtown, Augusta, GA.

3. What times/days is the festival open?

- a. The festival starts on the third Friday of September, running from 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Saturday from 11:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

4. Where can I buy weekend badges/tickets?

- a. Pre-sale badges are sold at local partners, such as the Richmond County Tag Offices, Augusta & CO. and Sacred Heart Cultural Center Gift Shop. Our team also strives to add additional locations in Columbia and Aiken Counties to allow for patrons to easily obtain them. All locations can be found on our website. Tickets are also sold online. Weekend badges can also be purchased at the gate the days of the festival. You can find more information on our website at <https://artsintheheartofaugusta.com>.

5. What does VIP get me?

- a. VIP entry into the festival gets you into a special area on the Augusta Common where there is catered food, drinks, ample seating, service with a smile, and nice, cool shade! Plus, you have front row views of the Global Stage performances. No lines, no standing while you eat, no sweating in the sun, only good times.

6. How many days is my badge good for?

- a. All days of the festival!

7. Where do I park?

- a. There is not one designated area for parking for the festival. Parking can be found in the privately owned lots that surround the festival, on Broad Street, Ellis, and Greene Streets. There are parking decks at 9th and Reynolds Street

and 8th and Ellis Streets. Depending on where you park, there may be fees involved. These fees are not regulated by the festival, but rather, the owner of said lots or decks. You can find parking information at <https://artsintheheartofaugusta.com>.

8. Are there places for handicap parking?

- a. There are handicap parking spaces along the major streets Downtown, including Broad Street. There are also handicap spaces in all parking decks, as well as the private parking lots made available to festival patrons. You can find parking information at <https://artsintheheartofaugusta.com>.

9. Is carpooling recommended?

- a. YES! We recommend ride sharing or carpooling. Not only is it good for the environment, it's also easier to find a place to park, or drop off arts lovers to enjoy the festival. We recommend any drop offs be made near the Augusta Common Gates.

10. Where can I find a map?

- a. Maps will be available at each festival gate, at the Festival Info booth as well as online at <https://artsintheheartofaugusta.com>.

11. Where can I find the stage schedule?

- a. Stage schedules will be available at each festival gate, the Arts in the Heart info booth, at each stage or online at <https://artsintheheartofaugusta.com>.

12. Where can I find my favorite arts vendor?

- a. Vendor lists and their booth numbers can be found online at <https://artsintheheartofaugusta.com> . Artists are sorted by zone, which coincides with the first number in their booth number. I.e. booth 605 is in zone 6. Booth vendors should have their booth number in plain view at the front of their tent.

13. What should I bring/wear?

- a. Please plan to wear weather appropriate clothing. Georgia weather can be unpredictable this time of year, so something that will keep you cool is a plus. Hats and sunscreen are encouraged. Comfortable walking shoes are a must. An insider tip: bring a tote bag big enough to carry your new art trinkets.

14. Are there ATMs at the festival?

- a. Yes. Please refer to your map to find the one closest to you or visit the Arts in the Heart info tent on the Augusta Common.

15. Does everyone accept card payments?

- a. No. While most vendors will accept card, and all gates are card friendly, there are some global food vendors who are cash only. Each vendor has a different capacity for what they are capable of doing.

16. Should I bring cash?

- a. While most vendors do accept card, there are some who are cash only. It's up to you on what you would like to carry. There are ATMs on site.

17. Where can I buy festival merch?

- a. Festival merch is sold in the merch tent on the Augusta Common near the Festival Information booth.

18. Where can I find out more about the festival and the Greater Augusta Arts Council?

- a. Visit the Festival Info tent on the Augusta Common or visit www.artsintheheartofaugusta.com or www.augustaarts.com

19. Are Pets allowed?

- a. No. We do not allow pets of any kind on festival site. Trained service animals are allowed, per the ADA. You can learn more about what constitutes as a service animal at <https://www.ada.gov/resources/service-animals-2010-requirements/#how-service-animal-is-defined>.

20. Are emotional support animals allowed?

- a. No. Emotional Support Animal is a term used to describe animals that provide comfort just by being with a person. Because they have not been trained to perform a specific job or task, they do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Georgia law does not require public places to allow emotional support animals (ESAs). Under state and federal law, ESAs do not have the same access rights as trained service animals and can be denied entry to restaurants, stores, and other public accommodations.

21. Why aren't pets allowed?

- a. For several reasons, the first being for hygiene. Like you, when your pet has to go, they have to go. Unlike you, they don't use the restroom or step into a portlet. Not everyone is responsible enough to pick up after their pet, either. Animal feces and urine within a festival that has open air cooking just doesn't sound clean or safe (because it isn't). There is also the consideration for safety of fellow patrons. Large crowds tend to agitate animals. What, at home, may be a sweet dog can, under the stress of strangers, loud noises, new smells, etc., lash out and/or bite a fellow guest. Animals also pose a risk of breaking free from their owner, running into crowds, food or vendor booths, or outside the festival gates and into traffic. Though we love fur babies, they are best kept safe at home. There are local pet boarders downtown, like Urban K9 on Broad Street: <https://myurbank9.com> . Please don't leave your pet in your car while you are at the festival. If you are hot, they are hotter. Animals left unattended in cars will be reported to the Sheriff's office. This

goes for all types of pets, including dogs, cats, goats, horses, snakes, birds, Guinea pigs, rats, etc.

22. Do you allow coolers and chairs?

- a. We do not allow coolers, but we do allow chairs.

23. Is the festival rain or shine?

- a. Yes, barring cases of extreme weather events, we are a rain or shine festival.

24. Are tickets refundable?

- a. Tickets are non-refundable.

25. What age do kids get in free?

- a. 10 and under get in free.

26. Can I bring my own alcohol?

- a. No. Outside alcohol is not permitted within the festival grounds. You can find adult beverages at our beer tents or in VIP. Restaurants within the festival also have libations.

27. Can I carry my festival beer/wine/cocktail around the festival while I shop or see a show?

- a. Yes, open containers purchased within the festival are allowed within the event grounds. Please plan to bring your ID and drink responsibly.

28. Is there first aid available at the festival?

- a. Yes, there are first aid kits at dispatch on the Augusta Common, the Family Area Main tent, and Volunteer Check-in. A first aid station sponsored by Doctors Hospital (2025) is also available (see map). If you are in need of emergent assistance, dial 911 and alert a member of our staff, a deputy, or volunteer. We will alert dispatch and first responders on the best way to access you within the festival.

29. Is there wifi?

- a. There is open/free wifi available through the City centralized in the Augusta Common, but the bandwidth is limited. We recommend bringing portable wifi devices or using personal cell data.

30. Is it safe?

- a. The festival pays Richmond County sheriff's department to secure the festival from set up to break down. Officers are on site 24/7 both in plain clothes and in uniform. The festival is also completely fenced off with barricades that protect festival goers. It is incredibly important to our team that our guests, staff, volunteers, friends and families are kept safe during their time at the festival.

31. Are there hotels associated with the festival?

- a. While this festival is an outdoor festival, we do partner with several downtown hotels and inns to offer discounted rates for artists or out of town patrons. Visit www.artsintheheartofaugusta.com for more info on which hotels are offering rates this year.

32. Is smoking/vaping allowed?

- a. Yes, but we do appreciate no smoking in the Family Area and Young Artist Market.

Community Questions:

33. How many entries are sold every year?

- a. One weekend badge will get an individual into the festival all weekend long. We typically order about 30,000 badges to sell during the festival season. Therefore, each individual that comes into the festival each day is counted 3 separate times. We consider each day a new day as they are seeing or experiencing something they didn't the day prior, whether it is a stage performance, an arts vendor, a new cuisine, etc. When you walk through the gate, you are counted. If we sell all 30,000 that is roughly 90,000 total visits over the 2.5 day weekend. This doesn't include all the volunteers who get in for free, the stage performers and their crew, the staff, cooks, city employees, sponsors, media, non-profits and their volunteers, kids 10 and under, arts vendors, charity entries, etc. They are having fun at the festival too by shopping, catching a band on stage, or eating yummy food. This brings our grand total of visitors to 100,000+, but we only ever order 30,000 badges to sell.

34. Why does the festival need sponsors?

- a. Our festival would not happen without the support of our generous sponsors and donors. This festival costs several hundred thousand to one million dollars to orchestrate and execute. From cleaning up the properties, to hiring deputies to guard the festival 24/7, to paying for generator and tent rentals, to stage rentals with sound and lighting, it gets costly, and inflation has a direct impact on what we are able to accomplish with the funding we do obtain. The festival accepts sponsorships from individuals, businesses, agencies and the city of Augusta. Without them, it just wouldn't happen. Every cent counts.

35. Why isn't the festival free to enter?

- a. We charge admission (a weekend badge) because we have to. One major misconception is we sell 100,000 tickets each year at \$15-20 bucks a pop. That would be a lot of money. We wish we had that money, but we don't. Your

weekend badge purchase helps support our non-profit's mission to enrich the quality of life for citizens and visitors in Augusta River Region by advancing vibrant cultural arts and hosting this festival. If you want to get in for free, consider supporting the festival through volunteering. Volunteers get in for free all weekend long after working just one shift.

36. I'm a local business within the festival. Do my patrons and staff have to pay to get to work?

- a. **NO!** Patrons of your establishment and your employees do not need to pay to get in to see you or work. Businesses within the festival will receive walk-through passes to present to staff. These are also available at all gates. Guests and staff need simply to say, "I am here to visit (insert business name here)" and they will get a walk-through wristband. This wristband only allows them to get to you, however. If they are seen by staff or a deputy walking around the festival, shopping, eating or watching a performance, they will be asked to leave or buy a badge.

37. In what ways is the festival supporting my business?

- a. Downtown brick-and-mortar businesses have the option to be included in the festival in many ways. Whether it is a free ad in the catalog, activating their space during the festival, or becoming a sponsor of the festival, we strive to give our local businesses the support they need during this big event.

Festival Participation Questions:

1. How do I volunteer?

- a. You can sign-up at www.artsintheheartofaugusta.com.

2. If I volunteer, what do I get?

- a. Volunteers get a free locally designed t-shirt and entrance into the festival all weekend long. Even after just one 3 hour shift.

3. What areas are there available to volunteer?

- a. We have many areas of the festival where you can volunteer. General options include Badge Check at the Gates, Fine Arts and Crafts Market Hospitality, VIP, Dispatch, Festival Cleanliness, Family Area, Stagehands for any of the 5 Stages, Beer-tenders, Info Booth, Merchandise, Festival Set-Up, Festival Break-Down, and many more.

4. How old do I have to be to volunteer?

- a. 13 years of age with a parent or guardian in the Family Area. 16 years of age or older on your own in other areas. 21 and up for the Beer Tents and VIP.

5. How do I become a food vendor?

- a. Our Global Food Village is mainly comprised of local cultural organizations selling dishes to raise money for their mission or charities they support. We do not allow restaurants or food trucks to set up in the Global Food Village. The select few food vendors we do allow on site are technically sponsors of the festival. We have a limited number of spaces for these types of vendors. There is no application process, per se. Those interested are encouraged to reach out to our team at info@augustaarts.com . While we may not have space at Arts in the Heart, we do have other events we may have need for, as well as additional resources for food vendors to find other local and regional events. Check out the scroll-a-dex at www.augustaarts.com/resources to find out more.

6. How do I become a Family Area booth?

- a. Family Area booth applications open in March every year and close in early July. We announce when the applications open on social media, in our newsletter and on our website. For more information, please visit www.artsintheheartofaugusta.com or email info@augustaarts.com.

7. How do I become a sponsor?

- a. Easy! Email info@augustaarts.com or call our office at 706-826-4702. One of our team will share the sponsor agreement and info packet with you.

8. How do I become a performer?

- a. Performer applications typically open in May and close in early July of each year. Some stages continue to accept applications until all slots are full and all budgets are depleted. We announce when the applications open on social media, in our newsletter and on our website. For more information, please visit www.artsintheheartofaugusta.com. We encourage performers to put their best food forward in their application. Use high resolution images, have good descriptions, links to websites and/or social media. For more resources on performing, please visit www.augustaarts.com/resources.

9. Do you pay performers?

- a. Part of the application process for our performers requires artists to list what their fees are. Not every performer requires a fee. Think of your little sister's elementary school dance troupe or your teenaged son who plays guitar with his pals but has never been on a stage before. Some folks just do it for the good times, entry into the festival, and the love for their community, which is totally fine by us. Some do it for in kind trades, like VIP badges or Arts Council memberships. Those that do require a fee are reviewed along with the rest of the candidates. Each stage has a limited budget to pull from to pay artists.

Which makes the process very competitive. To keep folks interested in coming to each stage, managers are mindful of who will draw a crowd vs. what pay they can offer them. This process is similar to that of any other concert, show, or festival. Budgets like these are essential. The more entries we can sell, the more we can expand stage budgets. So yes, we do pay performers, many of whom are local. Just not all 3,000 (est) of them.

10. My kid is performing, do I have to buy a badge to get in?

- a. Yes! The purchase of your badge helps us to fund the festival your kid is performing in. *Insider tip:* A great way to support the festival, without the purchase of a weekend badge but still get in for free, is to volunteer for a few hours! We always need good volunteers to help manage the show. Whether as a stagehand, badge checker at the gate, info booth, beer garden bartender or volunteering in the Family Area, there are so many sections of the festival that need helpers!

11. Are there hotels associated with the festival?

- a. While this festival is an outdoor festival, we do partner with several downtown hotels and inns to offer discounted rates for artists or out of town patrons. Visit www.artsintheheartofaugusta.com for more info on which hotels are offering rates this year.

12. How do I become an Arts Vendor?

- a. Our application for the Fine Arts and Crafts Market opens March 1st of every year and closes May 10th. We utilize zapplication, which is an application program that is built specifically for festivals like ours. We typically announce applications have opened via our newsletter, social media and on our website. You can learn more at www.artsintheheartofaugusta.com

13. Why don't you allow candles, cosmetics and/or consumables to be sold in the market?

- a. There are many reasons why we don't allow these types of items to be sold in our market. Consumables like foods, lotions, soaps, cosmetics and candles are incredibly difficult to regulate and require additional steps to ensure the safety of our patrons that many crafters aren't prepared for. In addition to this, the festival could be held liable should any patron become ill or injured from using such items. The FDA heavily regulates cosmetic items, requiring such items to be made in clean environments and sufficiently labeled. Which would be a difficult task for our very small staff and volunteers to monitor. The local public health department also has specific codes when it comes to the sale of personal care products, including how they are stored, handled and tested. An outdoor festival isn't always the best place to have such

items. For candles specifically, there is the hazard that comes with an open flame at a high traffic festival. Even if the seller does not light the candle, a patron might. There are fire codes and regulations in place within the city, enforced by the fire marshal that we must consider. The safety and wellbeing of our patrons, performers, artists, staff and volunteers is incredibly important to us.

14. Do you support local artists?

- a. Yes! Much of what our festival does is supporting local artists, performers and creatives. Our Young Artist Market, where a lot of local artists get their start, is 100% CSRA kids. Our 5 stages are roughly 85% local and the street performers are about 96% local (the rest being regional). Our Literary Lounge is run by the Authors Club of Augusta, a local organization. The Story Time tent is comprised of CSRA based Children's Authors, all local. While big market vending isn't for everyone, we do have several local arts vendors who participate in the Fine Arts and Crafts Market, as well as a new Local Artists Alley (2025). All of our culinary artists in the Global Food Village are run by local cultural organizations. Our arts non-profits are able to host a booth for free in the festival. The festival also exposes local artists and arts lovers to art and culture they may not readily have access to in their everyday life, bringing the inspiration directly to them.

Outside of Arts in the Heart, the Greater Augusta Arts Council runs two "locals only" gallery spaces, hosts arts events that highlight local talent like the WetPaint Party and Art Sale, the Annual Augusta Arts Awards, arts professional workshops, provides resources like the lending library where artists have access to necessary tools, lists free resources on our website for artist opportunities, publishes arts community news, shares two monthly newsletters for artists and the general public, runs an extensive arts calendar where artists can promote their work at no cost, manages the Love Augusta Arts Facebook group and Discord Channel where artists and patrons can connect, hosts an artist directory where patrons can find artists and book them, public arts opportunities, and much more. In Spring 2026 we will be hosting a new music festival. Our whole year is filled with local artists support and advocacy.