

April 8, 2026

Re: Special \$3 food tickets for foster and adoptive families at the Illinois State Fair

Dear Food Vendor:

Again, this year, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is offering foster and adoptive family members tickets worth \$3 toward the purchase of any food or drink item from any food vendor on the fairgrounds during the 2026 Illinois State Fair.

Thanks to your participation, this program is running smoothly, and we are grateful for your partnership. As in previous years, all food vendors are strongly encouraged to accept these \$3 coupons from customers at any time your food stand is open. After the fair, please redeem all collected tickets for \$3 each at the Central Cashier's Office, Emmerson Building, on the last day of the fair (Sunday, August 23) and on Monday, August 24.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you how the food ticket program works and to explain the exact steps you need to take to redeem the tickets that you accept.

1. All vendors selling food and/or drinks on the fairgrounds are **encouraged to accept the \$3 tickets** in lieu of, or in addition to, cash for any food or drink item except alcoholic beverages.
2. Ticket **users cannot receive more than \$1.50 change back per ticket when redeeming tickets**. Please make sure your staff understands this! You must give customers \$1.50 back if the purchase is \$1.50 or less, \$1 back if the purchase is \$2, and so on.
3. **Tickets are valid any day of the fair**, any time of the day or night, any time your food stand is open. To avoid confusion, please accept the tickets until your sales close on the last day of the fair.
4. **Ticket holders may use more than one ticket at a time**. Many will be purchasing food for themselves and family members at the same time, so this is acceptable.
5. **After accepting a ticket, your staff must void it** by tearing off the "Illinois State Fair" logo on the left side of the ticket. Save the remaining portion ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the ticket so it can be redeemed for cash at the State Fair Cashier's Office.

6. **Do not accept any ticket that is not whole and intact**, and please make sure that the tickets you accept have **“August 13-23, 2026”** printed on them.

Food tickets will be printed in colored ink so you can easily distinguish them from carnival ride tickets. We know your business is fast-paced, and hope this makes it easy for you and your staff to identify the tickets as official DCFS food tickets given to our foster and adoptive families.

How and when vendors may redeem tickets:

1. **Tickets will be fully redeemed** (\$3 for each valid ticket) at the Central Cashier’s Office, Emmerson Building, on the last day of the fair, and on Monday, August 24, 2026.
2. The total value of **redeemed tickets must be reflected in gross sales** reported daily for Department of Revenue sales tax and Illinois State Fair percentage calculations.

Ms. Sandra Aguirre-Lievano, Special Events Manager, will participate in the vendor meetings on August 11, 12, and 13 to provide you and your team with an overview leading up to the Fair. If you have any questions prior to this meeting, please contact Ms. Sandra Aguirre-Lievano at Sandra.Aguirre-Lievano@illinois.gov. Once again, thank you very much for your flexibility and support.

Thank you again for your participation and for supporting our families!

