



Art Fair Rules & Information for DBQFest 2026

DBQFest, also known as DubuqueFest, is Iowa's longest-running art fair and festival, celebrating art, music, and culture since 1979. Held annually in downtown Dubuque's Washington Park, the 2-day festival features a juried art fair, free concerts and performance art, food vendors, and interactive art experiences for all ages to enjoy. For the Art Fair portion of the event, our focus is on featuring fine art and fine craft, handmade artisan goods, and high-quality original works of art.

Important Dates

- March 31, 2026 - Applications Close
- April 30, 2026 - Application Status Emails Sent
- May 15, 2026 – Vendor Fee Due
- August 7, 2026 – Check-in & Set-up Begins
- August 8-9, 2026 - It's DBQFest!

Exhibition Rules & Guidelines

- All work exhibited in the booth must be designed and/or created by the accepted artist/craftsperson.
- Work produced solely with commercial kits, molds, patterns, plans, and prefabricated forms are not permitted.
- Imported or buy/sell items are not permitted.
- Prints are permitted, provided they are copies of the original works by the exhibiting artist.
- As the artist, you are your own best salesperson and your presence is requested for the entire event.
- If your booth features art from more than one category, each category should be represented in your application entry.
- You are only allowed to sell or display work that has been juried into the show as represented by your application entry.
- Exhibitors may be asked to remove work which is inconsistent with approved images, not original works of the artist, or is in violation of the above rules.

Applications must include 4 high-quality images of work to be exhibited and an image of your booth. Hard copy applications will only be sent out by explicit request to director@dubuquefest.org. Hard copy mailed-in applications and photos will not be returned.

Fees

There is no application fee to apply.

Booth Fee: \$150, due upon acceptance into the fair, secures an 10'x10' booth space. Double booths may be available upon request; please inquire for price. Booth fees are partially refundable if cancellations are made 3 weeks or more prior to the event; Cancellations made within three (3) weeks of the event are not eligible for a refund. Also see the Event Cancellation or Modification policy.

If accepted, you will be emailed an invoice to be paid by May 15, 2026. Payments can be made online (additional fees may apply) or a check can be mailed to the address noted in the acceptance letter. Details will be provided in the acceptance letter.

Exhibitors are responsible for collecting and remitting Iowa 7% sales tax; call (563) 556-4631 for more information on Iowa sales tax permits. Exhibitors must supply their Iowa sales tax permit number prior to the event; if an applicant's request for an Iowa sales tax number is in process at the time of application it can be noted as pending in the application and supplied prior to the event.

Emerging Artist Scholarships

DBQFest believes in encouraging and supporting up-and-coming artists. DBQFest defines an Emerging Artist as an artist or maker with less than 12 months experience in vending at juried art fairs. We award a minimum of two Emerging Artist scholarships annually which waives the booth fee and provides a pop-up 10x10 tent with walls

and weights at no cost during the 2-day event. All display furniture, including tables, are the responsibility of the artist. If you would like to be considered for a 2026 Emerging Artist Scholarship, please answer the form questions accordingly. For more details, email director@dubuquefest.org.

Jury Process & Selection Criteria

***THIS IS A JURIED EVENT.** Submission of an application does not guarantee acceptance into the DBQFest Art Fair. Acceptance is determined through a blind review process conducted by a three (3) member jury composed of committee members, artists, and other arts professionals. All jury decisions are final.

The jury's primary focus is on fine art, fine craft, and handmade artisan goods that demonstrate a high level of quality, a distinct artistic voice, and a cohesive, professional presentation. Particular attention is given to the originality and craftsmanship of the work, as well as the clarity, consistency, and overall visual impact of the proposed booth display.

In addition to individual artistic merit, the jury seeks to curate a well-balanced and engaging event. This includes ensuring a thoughtful mix of media, artistic styles, and price points across the full range of exhibiting artists. Artist selection is based on the submitted application materials, including images of sample artwork and booth display images, as well as the accompanying artist statement.

Scholarship Artist applications are reviewed and considered separately from standard applications.

Awards

DBQFest cash awards will be continued in 2026 but the structure and levels of those awards are currently under consideration by the DBQFest planning committee. When finalized, information will be updated on the website and will be in hard copy information distributed at check in. An independent judge chosen by the DBQFest committee for awards. The judge visits all booths after the event opens to the public on Saturday, August 8, 2026. Award winners are announced at artist reception Saturday night.

Event Location, Dates & Times

LOCATION: Washington Park, between Locust & Bluff, 6th & 7th Streets in Dubuque, Iowa. Rain or shine.

DATES & TIMES:

- **Friday, August 7, 2026**
 - Artist Check-in and Set-up: 3 PM - 6 PM
- **Saturday, August 8, 2026**
 - Artist Check-in and Set-up, Breakfast Items Available: 8 AM - 10 AM
 - Art Fair Open to the Public: 10 AM - 5 PM
 - Artist Reception and Awards: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
- **Sunday, August 9, 2026**
 - Artist Check-in, Breakfast Items Available: 8 AM - 10 AM
 - Art Fair Open to the Public: 10 AM - 4 PM
 - Teardown: Begins at 4:00 PM

Booth Information

Accepted exhibitors are responsible for supplying all necessary equipment for their booths and setup. **We CAN NOT provide vendors with tents except in the case of Emerging Artist Scholarships; a limited number of tables and chairs maybe available for Emerging Artists if arrangements are made in advance.**

All tents must be weighted with at least 40 pounds on each tent leg or secured with screw stakes and straps for safety of the public and other exhibitors; all booths are located on grass. Most spaces have ample storage space to the rear of the booth space. Tents are marked out with at least 2' between each booth; if an artist display requires exterior side display of work please note it in the application. Vendors are responsible for supplying all their own display items. This event is outdoors, rain or shine.

Exhibitors are responsible for the security of their booth and goods. DBQFest volunteers will be available to briefly watch booths as an exhibitor needs to take a restroom break or step away from their booth for a brief moment. Overnight security will be provided by DBQFest but exhibitors are expected to tents with secure side panels that can be put on overnight for enhanced security. DBQFest is not responsible for stolen or damaged artworks or exhibitor belongings.

Parking

On street parking around Washington Park is reserved for exhibitors ONLY to unload and load their work during setup and teardown. After unloading, exhibitors must relocate to free artist parking in nearby designated lots; a parking sign for your dash will be provided. This free parking may be limited and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Exhibitor vehicles that remain in on-street parking immediately surrounding the park impedes patron parking and may be asked to relocate by DBQFest volunteers.

Accommodations

Exhibitors are responsible for their own accommodations. Overnight camping in Washington Park is not permitted.

Insurance & Liability

All artwork and display materials are exhibited at the artist's own risk. DBQFest, the Dubuque County Fine Arts Society, and the City of Dubuque cannot be held responsible for loss, theft, or damage to artwork, displays, or personal property. Overnight security will be provided.

Artists are strongly encouraged to carry their own business or event insurance coverage. For those who do not currently have coverage, short-term policies are available through Artists, Crafters & Tradesmen Insurance (ACT Insurance): <http://www.actinsurance.com/artists-insurance>.

Event Changes, Weather, & Force Majeure

WEATHER & EVENT CONDITIONS: DBQFest is a rain-or-shine event. Exhibitors should plan accordingly and are responsible for protecting and securing their artwork, displays, and equipment against weather-related conditions. In cases of severe weather or unsafe conditions, DBQFest may delay opening, temporarily suspend activities, adjust event hours, or close the event early to ensure the safety of artists, staff, volunteers, and attendees.

EVENT CHANGES OR CANCELLATION: DBQFest reserves the right to cancel, postpone, relocate, or modify the event due to circumstances beyond its reasonable control, including severe weather, natural disasters, public health emergencies, government orders, or other unforeseen events. If the event is fully canceled prior to opening, DBQFest will make a good-faith effort to refund exhibitor booth fees, less any non-recoverable administrative and operational costs already incurred. If the event is canceled after it has begun, delayed, shortened, or otherwise modified due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, booth fees will not be refunded.

FORCE MAJEURE: DBQFest, the Dubuque County Fine Arts Society, and the City of Dubuque shall not be held responsible for delays or failures to perform resulting from causes beyond reasonable control, including acts of God, severe weather, fire, flood, war, terrorism, public health emergencies, labor disputes, government actions, or utility failures.

Terms, Conditions, & Legal Policies

- Accepted exhibitors may sell only the goods and services described in their approved application. The sale of additional or substitute products is not permitted without prior written consent from DBQFest.
- Exhibitor booths may not exceed 12 feet wide and may not exceed 15 feet in height unless special permission is granted by DBQFest. All booths must be clean, orderly, and professionally presented and must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- No loud music, excessive noise, or sound amplification devices may be used within or around exhibitor booths without prior approval from DBQFest. This policy is intended to ensure a positive experience for neighboring exhibitors and attendees.
- Exhibitors may access Washington Park to check in and begin setup on Friday, August 7, 2026, between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. only. Early arrivals will not be permitted. If an exhibitor arrives after 6:00 p.m. and the check-in booth is no longer staffed, the exhibitor may use the provided site map to locate their assigned space and complete setup that evening. Check-in will resume at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 8, 2026. It is advised that exhibitors are setup by 9:30 a.m. as the art fair opens to the public at 10:00 a.m.
- Exhibitors will have up to three (3) hours after the conclusion of the event to dismantle and remove all materials, displays, and personal property brought to the site. Exhibitors are responsible for leaving their booth space and surrounding area clean, free of trash, and in substantially the same condition as it was prior to occupancy. Early teardown prior to the official close of the event is not permitted without approval from DBQFest.
- Each exhibitor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless DBQFest, the Dubuque County Fine Arts Society,

and the City of Dubuque from and against any claims, damages, losses, or liabilities arising out of or related to the exhibitor's participation in the event, including the exhibitor's presence, activities, products, or operations at DBQFest.

- Once accepted into the fair, exhibitors may cancel up to three (3) weeks prior to the event and receive a 50% refund of the booth fee. Cancellations made within three (3) weeks of the event are not eligible for a refund. Exhibitors who cancel forfeit their booth space and may not sell, assign, or transfer their space to another artist or vendor. DBQFest reserves the right to fill canceled booth spaces at its discretion. Refunds will be processed within 14 days of cancellation notice.

For More Information

Contact DBQFest Festival Director Ali Levasseur via email director@dubuquefest.org – or visit our website at: DBQfest.com