

Join us in Historic Lowell for the Chamber Chili Cook-Off for Charity!



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2026

Tasting & Judging from 1 - 3 PM | Downtown Lowell Riverwalk

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS TO PROVIDE:

- \$20 Entry fee AND the required Health Department forms completely filled out
- 5 Gallon minimum of one type of chili
- Covered tent (weighted down), tables and chairs
- Name of Chili
- Minimum of 2 servers/volunteers
- Thermometers, paper towel, hairnets, plastic gloves, etc., as described in the enclosed "cooking instructions"

CHAMBER TO PROVIDE:

- Tasting cups, spoons, napkins, serving ladles

Wristbands will be sold to the public for \$10: Times and locations to be determined based on entries.

Deadline to Enter: Friday, September 25, 2026

By submitting this form, I acknowledge that I have read the Chili Cook-off requirements and Health Department "Cooking Instructions" as attached to this application. I agree to participate in the 2026 Chamber Chili Cook-Off for Charity and abide by the Health Inspector's instructions.

Business / Group / Individual Name to be listed on the ballot: _____

Lowell Nonprofit you are competing for: _____

Name of Chili: _____

Electricity Needed? ☐ yes ☐ no

Contact Name: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Entry Fee to be Paid: \$20

Name as it appears on the card

Credit card number

Credit card billing address

Credit card security # (3 or 4 digit number on back)

Expiration Date

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Email your completed application and credit card info to: info@lowellchamber.org

Or, mail your entry form and check to: LACC, PO Box 224, Lowell, MI 49331 | Questions? Call (616) 897-9161

Chili Cook Off for Charity 2026—Hosted by the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce

As part of Lowell's Harvest Celebration, area restaurants, residents, organizations, and clubs are invited to join the Chamber Chili Cook-off for Charity. All participants will set-up along the Riverwalk in spots assigned by the Chamber. The Cook-off winner will receive bragging rights and a trophy to keep. The winners will be determined by popular vote and judges choice. **In addition, \$500 minimum will be awarded to a local, Lowell nonprofit Chamber Member of the winner's choosing!** The Chamber reserves the right to add additional award categories and prizes at any time.

The Chamber will provide:

- Contest tasting cups, spoons, napkins, and a serving ladle
- Health Department coordination and licensing fees
- Sanitizing station for utensils
- Electricity as needed. *We urge participants to use gas burners and grills when possible, as these methods have proven to be the best method to maintain your temperatures.*
- Music, live or recorded

Public participants must provide:

- Entry Fee of \$20
- 5 Gallons of chili – Cooked, held, and served according to health department standards. Additional toppings may NOT be added to Chili.
- 1-2 volunteers to cook and serve, and at least 1 volunteer to check wristbands and ballot cards
- Chamber application and required documentation from the Health Department to be returned to the Chamber by Friday, September 26, 2026.
- Tables, chairs, and a covered tent with weights (10x10, must be WEIGHTED down, no stakes)
- Small handwashing station in your tent area
- Thermometers, paper towel, hairnets, plastic gloves, etc., as described below in the “cooking instructions”

Public participants (excludes restaurants) must set-up in their designated space by 8:30 AM for the Health Department inspection. Cooking will begin at 10 AM and tasting/judging to start at 1 PM. No food prep or cooking before 10 AM. If the Health Department determines that your set-up, preparation, or final product is not fit to serve, you will be excused from the Cook-off.

We may have an optional, 30-minute meeting for Cook-off participants to review guidelines and ask your questions, on Monday, September 28, 2026, at 6 PM.

Public Cooking Instructions per Kent County Health Department

- Each participant must maintain a clean and orderly area
- Hair must be restrained – cap, scarf, hairnet, etc., and outer clothing shall be clean and maintained
- No smoking, eating, or drinking is to be done during food preparation. Tasting may be done during this time but only with a single use disposable spoon.
- Hand washing supplies must be available – soap and warm water with paper towels, or wet ones. Wash thoroughly before food preparation. Protective gloves **MUST** be worn for food handling.
- Clean and sanitized cooking utensils in good condition must be used. No porcelain or enamel coated containers. Cutting boards must be hard maple or approved plastic free from deep cuts or cracks. All work surfaces must be cleaned and sprayed with sanitizer solution. (Food safe sanitizing wipes are acceptable for surfaces but not utensils/equipment/containers.)
- Paper towels to wipe up spills.
- Unnecessary people are not permitted in food prep area.
- Food must be stored off the ground in clean covered containers.
- All food products must be purchased from a commercial source. Meats must be purchased from licensed, inspected outlets (grocery stores, licensed meat markets, etc.). No privately slaughtered wild game. No home canned or home processed foods of any kind.

All food must be prepped and cooked on-site.

- Fresh vegetables must be washed before use and prepped on-site.
- Meat and Dairy products must be transported and stored at a temperature of 41° F or below.
- Meat shall be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 155°F for ground meat, 165°F for poultry, 145°F for other proteins. Hold Chili at 135°F or above until served. Use a metal stem food thermometer to check food temperatures.