

MAC N CHEESE THROWDOWN

Competitor Kit

Event Date: Sat, March 7, 2026

Event Time: 12:00PM - 3:30PM

Estimated Attendance: 1,500

Event Location:

TENK West Bank
2111 Center St, Cleveland, OH 44113

WEBSITE:

www.macncheesethrowdown.com

Load In Time:

Early set-up for all vendors will be available on Fri, March 6th, Noon to 5pm. Day-of venue access will be available beginning at 8am. **Please be on site no later than 11am.** Hours of operation begin at 11:30am sharp. If you are late - you will not compete.



**"Growing Possibilities,
One Child at A Time"**

Benefits Include:

- Announcement on event advertising materials.
- Corporate recognition at the tasting table.
- Logo on the event map.
- Interview for broadcast before and during the event.
- Acknowledgement during all live broadcast interviews - TV & Radio
- Acknowledgement and link on W.A.G.S. 4 Kids website for one year.
- Acknowledgement and link on W.A.G.S. 4 Kids social media outlets: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Acknowledgement and thank you in W.A.G.S. 4 Kids newsletters. Logo in W.A.G.S. 4 Kids e-blast
- Winners featured in Cleveland Scene Magazine the week following the event.

Company Name (As you wish it to appear on all materials):

Contact Person/ Title:

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP:

Phone:

E-mail:

Website:

FB:

IG:

Twitter:

Category (Check One): (Does your meal have meat? If no - It's Classic!)

☐ Classic Mac (Vegetarian/Vegan)

☐ Modern Mac (Anything Goes!)

Name of the Mac 'N Cheese Dish You Are Entering:

(May Not Include the Name of the Restaurant/Competitor)

My Dish Meets the Following Dietary Restrictions (Circle All That Apply):

Dairy Free

Gluten Free

Vegan

Non-GMO

Vegetarian

Will you be serving an alternate version of your dish? (Example: Will a version of your Modern Mac dish entry also be available for vegetarians?)

*****Your Submission Must Include a Copy of Your Current or Renewed Food Service Operator's License Expiring No Earlier than March 1, 2026*****

***There is no cost to participate.** We apologize, however, there will be no merchandising at this year's event. Good news though - we do ask that dishes be served from disposable trays as any "leftovers" will be wrapped up and donated to the Ed Keating Center.

By my signature, I agree to abide by all terms and conditions, masking and safety guidelines and procedures, including but not limited to all COVID protocols, City of Cleveland Health Department guidelines and Public Hall guidelines, as they apply on the date of the event.

Authorized Signature: _____



**10TH ANNIVERSARY MAC THROWDOWN
CHEF & FOOD VENDOR INFORMATION PACKET**

Saturday, March 7, 2026

12:00 PM – 3:30 PM

TENK West Bank • Cleveland, OH

EVENT OVERVIEW

- **We're BACK for Year 10.** The Mac Throwdown will be an **indoor, walk-through tasting event** at TENK West Bank.
- **15–20 food vendors** will be contracted by W.A.G.S. 4 Kids. Vendor spaces and dish selections are approved **on a first-come, first-confirmed basis**.
- W.A.G.S. 4 Kids staff will distribute **menu maps** at the event entrance.
- Vendors will be provided with:
 - Two (2) six-foot tables
 - Linens
 - One (1) 20-watt electrical outlet
 - 2,500 sample cups (2 oz.)
 - Plastic forks
 - Dinner-sized napkins
 - Hand sanitizer
 - One (1) trash can
- Linens may be draped with branding, but **tables may not be covered completely, moved, or removed**.
- **NO additional electricity** will be available the day of the event—please plan accordingly.
- **No frying. No propane. No butane. No LP. No open flame.** Sterno is permitted.
- Serving lines will form according to vendor placement in **Classic** or **Modern** categories.
- Admission includes **all-you-can-eat samples**. Vendors should plan to serve **a minimum of 1,500 attendees**.
- All dishes must be served in **disposable vessels**. Leftovers will be donated to **The Ed Keating Center**.
- **No merchandising** is permitted within food vendor booths.
- All vendors must supply a current **Food Service or Mobile Food Service Permit**.
The City of Cleveland Department of Public Health will inspect all food units on event day.
- Sample serving size **must not exceed 2 oz.** per health and union guidelines.

LOAD-IN & LOAD-OUT PROCEDURES

Vendor Work Rights

Food vendors and their staff may:

- Set up and dismantle their own booth using standard hand tools
- Install their own signage, décor, and booth materials (not attached to venue structures)
- Set up table drapery and skirting
- Deliver, set up, and operate permitted electrical equipment

For more information, contact Sera Nelson, Executive Director
Tel: 216.586.5853, ext. 2 | E-Mail: sera@wags4kids.com
Mail: W.A.G.S. 4 Kids, 112 East Center Street, Berea, OH 44017
[Http://www.macncheesethrowdown.com](http://www.macncheesethrowdown.com)



- Self-unload **Privately Operated Vehicles (POVs)** using hand-carry or a **two-wheel dolly**

Bring your own dolly or cart. None will be provided.

POV unloading is limited to **20 minutes**, unless extended by the Event Manager.

Loading Area Instructions

Vendors will access TENK's designated loading area.

Staff will be onsite to direct traffic.

No parking is permitted at entry doors.

All packages are subject to inspection.

TENK prohibits freight or package deliveries to the loading dock; all items must arrive with your team.

ELECTRICAL

Each vendor receives **one (1) exclusive 20-watt outlet**.

All equipment must meet **National Electric Code** and **City of Cleveland** requirements.

Prohibited Items

- Deep fryers (*allowed outdoors only, 50 ft from building, with prior approval*)
- Grills
- More than **one (1) hot plate**
- More than **two (2) total cooking/heating appliances**, including:
 - Convection ovens
 - Microwaves
 - Refrigerators
 - Commercial coffee makers

For clarification, contact the venue coordinator.

SIGNAGE POLICIES – TENK WEST BANK

- No attaching materials to **walls, floors, ceilings, columns, handrails, or decorative surfaces**.
- No taping, tacking, stapling, wiring, or affixing signage to painted or permanent structures.
- No window clings or floor decals.
- No covering permanent venue signage.
- Freestanding signage is permitted.

COOKING TEAM TERMS & CONDITIONS

The Fire Marshal and Health Inspector will be on-site and have full authority to approve or reject any equipment or practices.

Violations may result in **disqualification without refund** and fines up to **\$250**.

Cooking Rules

- **No cooking** may take place in the main event space.
- All prep requiring heat must occur in the kitchen or approved areas.

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- Electric warmers and chafing dishes are permitted on the event floor.
- Sterno is permitted if continuously attended.
- All cords must be taped with gaffer or painter's tape.

Safety & Spacing

- No grease-laden vapor production indoors.
- Heating devices must be on a non-combustible surface, **2 ft** from combustibles, and **4 ft** from public access.
- Vendors must provide **one (1) 20-BC fire extinguisher** OR an approved automatic system.

PREPARATION & SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

- Open to **professional chefs and restaurants**.
- Vendors must supply all kitchen tools: pots, pans, knives, utensils, cutting boards, cleaning products, etc.
- A **\$250 cleaning fee** applies if your area is not fully cleaned prior to departure.
- Vendors receive a **10' x 10' space** with two tables and linens.
- Submit your License to Operate with the application or **no later than 30 days prior**.

Event Day Schedule

- Load-in: **9:00 AM**
- Setup complete: **11:30 AM**
- Mandatory Competitors Meeting: **11:30 AM**
- Event Time: **12:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

Sample Requirements

- Sample size: **2 oz.** (cups provided)
- Additional small wrapped promo items are permitted
- Mac must be held at proper temperatures
- Kitchen access is available for reheating and prep
- Trash cans and janitorial service provided
- All extra product will be donated post-event
- EMT on-site for minor injuries

Liability & Media

All competitors agree to indemnify W.A.G.S. 4 Kids and its volunteers, waive subrogation, and allow photography/video usage for promotional purposes.

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JUDGING & VOTING

A panel of independent judges will conduct **blind tastings from 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM**. Judges do not see vendor booths, branding, or service teams during the evaluation period.

Competition Awards

1. Judge's Choice – Classic Mac

Awarded for excellence in traditional mac 'n' cheese execution and flavor.

2. Judge's Choice – Modern Mac

Awarded for innovation, creativity, and forward-thinking culinary interpretation.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE VOTING

Public voting runs the entire event—**12:00 PM to 3:30 PM**.

Attendees will be instructed to:

Text MAC to 66866

to vote for the mac that *tickles their tastebuds*.

Competitors are encouraged to promote People's Choice voting throughout event day and in the week leading up to the event.

Votes close at **3:30 PM**.

All awards will be presented immediately thereafter.

YEAR 10 AWARD SUITE

Competition Awards

Judge's Choice – Classic Mac

For mastery of traditional mac 'n' cheese technique and flavor.

Judge's Choice – Modern Mac

For innovation, creativity, and exceptional execution of a contemporary mac concept.

People's Choice Award

Voted by the public via text-to-vote.

Heritage Awards

Golden Noodle – Rising Chef Award

Recognizes an outstanding *first-time competitor* demonstrating exceptional creativity and promise.

Heavyweight Mac Champion – Veteran Award

Awarded to a returning competitor whose multi-year excellence and consistency elevate the standard of the Throwdown.

Craft & Culture Awards

Best Booth Experience

For the team delivering the strongest guest-facing experience—presentation, efficiency, hospitality, and spirit.

Chef's Choice Legacy Award

A peer-voted honor. Chefs vote for the competitor (other than themselves) whose skill, character, or dish deserves special recognition.

10th Anniversary Milestone Award

The Mac Legacy Award (10th Anniversary Edition)

The premier milestone honor.

Awarded to the chef or restaurant whose **long-term commitment, excellence, and impact** have shaped the identity and evolution of the Mac 'n' Cheese Throwdown over the past decade.

Presented **only** in this anniversary year.

The Mac N Cheese Throwdown has grown through your creativity, dedication, and willingness to push the craft forward. These awards celebrate not just the dishes you create, but the community you build. Thank you for helping us shape ten years of Cleveland's most iconic comfort food competition.

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Food Safety Guidelines for Vendors



The following guidelines have been prepared by the Department of Public Health to insure that all special events and festivals in the City of Cleveland, which include the handling and sale food products, are conducted in a safe and sanitary manner. The Health Department's goal in developing these minimum guidelines is to protect the health and welfare of all the citizens and visitors of our city.

The Top 6 Causes of Food Poisoning

- ☐ Poor personal hygiene and sick food employees
- ☐ Not keeping cold foods at or below 41°F
- ☐ Not keeping hot foods at or above 135°F
- ☐ Not reheating foods to 165°F or higher
- ☐ Not cooling hot foods the right way
- ☐ Contaminated raw foods and ingredients

Clean Hands For Safe Food

- ☐ Use soap and water
- ☐ Wash all surfaces including: back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails
- ☐ Rinse your hands well
- ☐ Dry hands with a paper towel
- ☐ Turn off the water using paper towel instead of your bare hands

Equipment Checklist

- ☐ Hand Washing Supplies
 - Continuous flow of warm running water of 100 ° F or greater (e.g. coffee urn)
 - Bucket to catch waste water
 - Soap
 - Paper towels
- ☐ Gloves. NOTE: NO latex gloves are permitted for food handling in Ohio.
- ☐ Extra utensils
- ☐ A 3-compartment set-up for cleaning utensils, with compartments big enough to hold your largest piece of equipment. Must wash in soapy water, rinse in clear water, and sanitize.
- ☐ Sanitizer and sanitizer test kit
- ☐ Probe type stem thermometer to check food temperatures
- ☐ Food grade water hose with back flow prevention device
- ☐ Hot and cold holding equipment for ALL potentially hazardous foods
- ☐ Mechanical refrigeration for overnight storage
- ☐ Separate containers for washing vegetables
- ☐ Ice scoop with handle, if you are using ice
- ☐ Bucket for sanitizing wiping cloths
- ☐ All fryers and grills must have a metal covering such as a lid or metal awning



City of Cleveland Department of Health
75 Erieview Plaza, 3rd Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
www.clevelandhealth.org

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