

2026 Chili Cook-Off Participants' Guide

Welcome, Chili Champions!

Thank you for being part of the **20th Annual United Way Chili Cook-Off**! This guide has everything you need to prepare for a fun, flavorful, and impactful event. Your creativity, enthusiasm, and secret recipes help make this one of Newton's favorite community gatherings and help United Way make a difference all year long.

Event Details

Saturday, November 7, 2025

11:00 am – 1:30 pm

6th Street between Main Street & Poplar, Newton

What You'll Need to Bring

- 6-8 gallons of chili (ready to serve and kept warm)
- Method to keep chili hot (limited electricity available – 50' 12-gauge extension cords required)
- Booth setup: canopy, table, hand sanitizer, themed décor, signage, and donation jar
- Two volunteers to serve chili
- Optional: Bite-sized treats for Sweet Treat Cook-Off + extra donation jar (\$25 entry fee)

Promote Your Booth

Get the word out through email, social media, and personal invites. The more people at the event, the more support for United Way—and your booth!

Booth Decor & Theme Ideas

Creativity counts! Eye-catching themes and costumes attract attention and donations. Juggling clowns, cheerleaders, or fun props—bring the energy!

Electricity Guidelines

- Limited spots available for \$25
- Must bring your own 50' 12-gauge extension cord
- No cord=no power hookup
- See event staff by 9:30 AM for access

Day-of Schedule

9:00 AM – Booth setup begins (Enter from Poplar, exit on Main; only one vehicle per booth at a time)

10:45 AM – Chili temp check (must be at 160°F to serve)

11:00 AM – Gates open! Serve 1-ounce samples

12:00 PM – Booth Décor & Pride of the Prairie winners announced

1:00 PM – Donation jars collected at Union State Bank (alley side)

1:25 PM – People's Choice Winners announced

1:30 PM – Booth teardown

Sweet Treat Cook-Off (Optional)

- Bring bite-sized portions to serve with chili

- Provide separate donation jar
- \$25 entry fee
- Treats judged by People's Choice

Event Rules

- Chili must be the STAR! (red, white, vegan, meaty – all welcome!)
- Arrive hot and ready to serve
- No excessive noise or disruption to neighbors
- Approved toppings: cheese, onions, crackers, jalapenos (no hot dogs!)
- No selling or handing out items of monetary value (to ensure fairness)

Contact Info

Got questions? Need help?

Email: director@uwhmc.org

Call: 316-283-7101

Chili Cook-Off Checklist

- ☐ 6-8 gallons of chili, fully cooked and hot
- ☐ Method to keep chili warm (cord or other)
- ☐ Booth décor, signage, and donation jar
- ☐ Hand sanitizer, gloves and other booth materials
- ☐ Sweet Treat supplies + extra donation jar (if entering)
- ☐ 2 volunteers to serve
- ☐ 50' extension cord if using electricity