

Slow Food Atlanta

Snail of Approval

Nomination and Application Guidelines v1.0

<https://www.slowfoodatlanta.org/snail-of-approval>

Slow Food Atlanta



Slow Food's Snail of Approval Program

[Slow Food](#) is a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us. Since its beginnings, Slow Food has grown into a global movement involving millions of people [in over 160 countries](#), working to ensure everyone has access to [good, clean and fair food](#). Slow Food believes food is tied to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture and the environment. Through our food choices we can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced and distributed, and change the world as a result.

Under Slow Food USA, the [Snail of Approval](#) program is a locally-awarded recognition given by local chapters to any food business/ organization — restaurants, farms, cafes, bars, wineries, farmers markets, social enterprises — that are pursuing and practicing Slow Food values of good, clean, fair food for all. The Slow Food community aims to create nationwide awareness that recognizes the impact of vital food organizations. As a locally adjudicated but nationally recognized program, Snail of Approval is a powerful recognition. This is more than about making good food — it's about making commitments to the environment, local communities, employees and purveyors, and our core values of antiracism and anti-oppression.

Unlike other food awards, Snail of Approval always awards locally and through the lens of a sustainable food system. Applicants are evaluated on Sourcing, Environmental Impact, Cultural Connection, Community Involvement, Staff Support, and Business Values. We hope to celebrate the great achievements of local establishments as well as provide resources for them to continue their sustainability journey. The goal is to stimulate greater support for these important businesses—by eating, participating, volunteering, patronizing, donating, and spreading the word. We envision an ever-growing network of consumer, business and environment-friendly food operations.

Slow Food Atlanta

Slow Food Atlanta is a local chapter that celebrates **Good, Clean and Fair food for all** in our community. Our member-supported nonprofit works in the community to foster the preservation of diverse southern food cultures and traditions, while educating and advocating

for local alternatives to the broken industrialized food system. We support and celebrate farmers, community members and professionals working in our local food system.

Slow Food Atlanta's Snail of Approval will be awarded to those restaurants, bars, food and beverage artisans, shops, farms/farmers, and markets that contribute to the good, clean and fair food supply in Atlanta and have been deemed outstanding among peers. Members of Slow Food Atlanta will organize in our local communities to nominate and to give awards to local businesses.

Snail of Approval Standards

This award is always awarded locally by a Slow Food Chapter or community. In order to create a national standard, we have created a standardized national eligibility application. The minimum requirement to win the Snail of Approval award is to pass this eligibility application. The application is based on certain standards around our values of good, clean and fair – the standards are listed below.

Slow Food Atlanta envisions these standards as guiding principles to embodying core Slow Food values. We understand that practicing Slow Food values is a process based on commitment, passion, and practicality, not on a rubric of metrics. However, these are the standards against which applicants will be evaluated.

GOOD

- Seasonality: Menu emphasizes use of seasonal, fresh, local produce.
- Taste: Menu offers fresh and wholesome ingredients; food is prepared with care and craft.
- Artisan: Presents fine food created by their own or the hands of other artisans; traditional foods are true to their cultural heritage.
- Authenticity: Heirloom varieties and heritage breeds are true to their evolutionary history and incorporated in menus and products.

CLEAN

- Sustainability: Establishment uses natural products free of additives and strives to incorporate local, seasonal foods on the menu as much as possible with regard to provenance and production methods.
- Uses meats, dairy, fish, and shellfish that have been produced responsibly, sustainably, and humanely from reputable providers. Produce is grown and harvested with methods that have a positive impact on our local ecosystems and promote biodiversity.
- Low Impact: Produces food using products and processes that minimize waste and impact of food production/distribution (e.g., avoids single-use, non-recyclable packaging/products; participates in recycling/composting and low-carbon delivery programs).
- Connection: Aims to communicate regularly with distributors and producers about the quality of, and production and processing of, produce and product. Regular dialogue ensures traceability and a commitment to food safety.

FAIR

- Local/Regional Sourcing: Where applicable, makes an effort to procure food sources from Georgia and the southeastern region.
- Awareness: Establishment includes outreach and education for customers on the source of the products used.
- Fair Business and Labor Practices: Contributes to the quality of life in Atlanta/Georgia through fair employment practices; purchases ingredients produced by people who are treated with dignity and justly compensated for their labor.
- Humane: Humans and animals are treated with dignity and respect, from farm to table. Use of growth hormones and antibiotics is limited. Animals are free to move and not confined.
- Managers and caretakers are thoroughly trained, skilled and competent in animal husbandry and welfare.
- Community: Contributes to the uniqueness and richness of the local food community. Involved in advancing the awareness of Slow Food principles in the community through sharing time, talent, knowledge, and/or resources. Membership of other local food networks such as Georgia Organic's Farmer Champions.

Eligibility/Who Should Apply?

Any food business or organization that produces and/or offers food for public consumption and is pursuing and practicing Slow Food values of good, clean, fair food for all—restaurants, farms, ranches, fisheries, cafes, bars, food trucks, breweries, wineries, caterers, value-added food producers, food- and beverage-related businesses in the Atlanta area that have been open for at least one year. Businesses and organizations can apply directly, or can be nominated through the process outlined in the next section.

Nomination Processes

Anyone can nominate a business or organization for a Snail of Approval. We would encourage Slow Food Atlanta members to identify and educate businesses and organizations in the Atlanta area that follow the principles of good, clean and fair food. Online nomination forms can be found at <http://www.slowfoodatlanta.org/snail-of-approval> or you can email the following to snailofapproval-sfatl@googlegroups.com:

- Your name
- Your email
- Your phone number
- Are you a Slow Food Atlanta member? Y/N
- Nominee contact name
- Nominee email
- Nominee phone number
- Why are you nominating this business/organization for Snail of Approval?

Nominees will then be contacted via email with a link to the application, at which point they may decide to proceed.

Application and Review Process

Applications are accepted and approved twice per year (this frequency is subject to change as the program develops). As we get started, we will have a limit on the number of applications that are accepted in each round so we can ensure we can respond to each. Limits for each round will be posted at <http://www.slowfoodatlanta.org/snail-of-approval>. Our inaugural application round will be due on January 31, 2023 and we will be accepting 25 eligible applicants only (determined by the Eligibility Application below).

The application process consists of three major steps below. Our process is thorough but also designed to respect the applicant's busy schedule.

1. Standardized online Eligibility Application through Slow Food USA (Apply Now! [Snail of Approval Eligibility Application](#))
2. Evaluation conducted by Slow Food Atlanta members/volunteers
3. Submission to the Slow Food Atlanta Board for a yes/no vote

All Snail of Approval awards are given out locally by chapters; Slow Food USA is not an awarding body. However, in order to nationally recognize businesses, Slow Food USA created a minimum standard that all participating chapters can abide by, known as the **Eligibility Application**. With this requirement, no matter where in the country a business operates, it must meet the baseline standard.

Many of the questions in the Eligibility Application are required (i.e. require an answer before advancing to the next question); therefore, applicants will not be able to view all the questions once the application process begins. To preview the entire questionnaire, please click [here](#). You will not be able to save your progress as you go. The application is all multiple choice and we estimate it will take 30-45 minutes to complete.

After the online application is complete, it will be scored automatically. We have borrowed the evaluating principles from [B-Corp](#). The evaluation calls for a minimum score of 56 out of 231 points. While the minimum is a high standard for any food establishment, we realize that the road to sustainability is a journey and we want to partner with our awardees on increasing their scores every evaluation period. That means, some of the questions are brownie points – scoring the applicants extra but not punishing those who aren't quite there... yet! So each question is another opportunity to gain points, not a test meant to deduct points.

If the applicant meets the minimum score, a Snail of Approval committee member of Slow Food Atlanta will reach out to schedule a meeting (in-person or remote), which will last a maximum of one hour. This meeting will be conducted by at least 3 individuals affiliated with Slow Food Atlanta (volunteers or committee members). The purpose of this is to learn more about the applicant's practices and goals through additional (scripted) questions.

The Snail of Approval team will then present the findings from the evaluation and make a recommendation on the application. Snail of Approval awards will then be granted based on a simple majority vote by the Slow Food Atlanta board.

If the application is unsuccessful, we will also provide feedback if the applicant would like.

We acknowledge the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing financial and supply chain challenges across many industries, but in particular, related to food and food services. Therefore, if any assistance is needed during the online application, you can call Kameko Nichols at 404-496-8535 or email snailofapproval-sfatl@googlegroups.com to set up a time to go through the application over the phone.

Award Process and Benefits

If successful, awardees will be contacted by a member of the Slow Food Atlanta Snail of Approval committee. All awardees will be recognized on the national level, including use of the official Slow Food Snail of Approval award mark, listing on the [national awardee map and directory](#), and chance to be included in national and local marketing campaigns. Specific benefits of this award include:

- A Snail of Approval Award
- Official Snail of Approval window cling and/or plaque to display in your business as well as digital access to the Snail of Approval logo for business websites and promotional materials as desired
- Listed, along with a description of products and services, on Slow Food Atlanta's Snail of Approval webpage
- Marketing/promotion through Slow Food Atlanta's social media channels
- Opportunities to partner with Slow Food Atlanta, including the option of recognition at our annual meeting or to be a host site of our board meetings/events
- Highlights in local media and newspapers
- Exposure to Atlanta residents who care about food in the same way you do
- Listed in the [Slow Food USA national searchable map/directory](#) of award winners
- Offer to take part in national marketing campaigns via Slow Food USA

The Snail of Approval certification is valid for two years; after expiry, the renewal follows the initial application process. The renewal process will be added to these guidelines in the future.