

2024 Minnesota State Fair 51st Annual Amateur Talent Contest



Entry Rules and Information

ONLINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT mnstatefair.org

Entry: Acts must submit an entry form along with the entry fee. Participants may either register online or complete a paper entry form. **The fee is \$15 for acts with 1-3 participants, \$25 for acts with 4-9 participants and \$30 for acts with 10 or more participants.** *Entry fees are non-refundable. Checks should be made payable to the Minnesota State Fair.*

Divisions: All acts compete in one of three different divisions. The Preteen Division is open to acts age 12 and under only. The Teen Division is open to acts ages 13 through 18 only. The Open Division is open to any act, regardless of age. In cases where the act consists of a group of people, choose the division that is appropriate for the majority of the group members. Contestants' age at audition date determines which division an act competes in. When not a part of the act, accompanists may be any age.

Eligibility: The contest is open to all amateur entertainers. Professionals are NOT permitted to compete. This includes Union musicians and anyone whose principal source of income is from their talent. Compensation for performing at weddings, etc. does not constitute principal source of income.

With the exception of first-place division winners, acts that have participated in the past are welcome to compete again. 2023 Preteen and Teen first-place division winners are ineligible to compete in 2024. After a one-year hiatus, former Teen Division first-place winners are required to compete in the Open Division. Former Preteen first-place winners must also compete in the Open Division if they are not of age to compete in the Teen Division.

Auditions: The contest consists of three parts: auditions, semifinals, and finals. Auditions are **Monday, July 22 through Sunday, July 28** at the Leinie Lodge Bandshell stage on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Weekday auditions begin at 5:30 p.m., and weekend auditions begin at 11 a.m. Upon receipt of the signed entry form and fee, an audition date and time will be scheduled, and the act will be notified by mail. All acts must audition in person.

House Band: Acts who advance to the semifinals and finals will have the option to use our house band, which consists of a piano, bass guitar, drums, and rhythm guitar.

Semifinals: 48 Open Division, 42 Teen Division and 30 Preteen Division acts selected from all auditions advance to the semifinals during the fair. Each act will be scheduled to compete on one of 10 semifinal evenings (Aug. 22 through Aug. 31). Each evening's acts must attend a mandatory check-in meeting at 5 p.m. on their performance night at the Libby Conference Center. The contest begins at 6 p.m. on the Leinie Lodge Bandshell stage. One finalist and one runner-up from each division are selected each night.

Semifinals Appearances: An individual may only compete in one act throughout the competition. A contestant may not perform "solo" and also participate as part of a group during semifinals or finals. Contestants are allowed to also participate in the MSF County Fair Talent Contest, but they may only qualify for the Finals competition with one performance.

Finals: Finals for all divisions will be held at **7:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 1** in the Grandstand. Five semifinalists from the Preteen Division, seven semifinalists from the Teen Division and eight semifinalists from the Open Division will advance, as will the MSF County Fair Talent Contest's first- and second-place division winners.

See backside for more information and awards!

GENERAL RULES

Admission & Parking: The Minnesota State Fair operates an "All Pay Gate" policy. Acts are responsible for gate admission and parking fees. Discount admission tickets can be purchased through Aug. 21. Free parking and bus service is also available through the State Fair Park & Ride system.

Dressing Rooms: Dressing rooms are available **for auditions only!** Please plan to use public restrooms for semifinals and finals.

Judging: Judges' decisions are final, and scores are not released to acts or the public.

Acts will be judged on:

- quality of performance (including selection)
- stage presence
- entertainment value

Selection: All semifinalists and finalists must perform the same routine or musical selection as used for their audition. This includes the number of people in the act, as well as the musical choice.

Stage: The Leinie Lodge Bandshell stage is an outdoor covered facility with a concrete floor that has been covered with a thin Marley dance floor approximately 35' wide and 20' deep. (*Dimensions subject to change during semifinals.*) Auditions, semifinals and finals will be held rain or shine.

Time Limit: Time limit is four minutes (this includes any spoken intros by the act). Points will be deducted for acts going over the allotted time. Acts are allowed to perform a medley of songs, but the performance must remain within the four-minute time limit.

SOUND AND ACCOMPANIMENT

Sound System: *All acts are required to use the sound system and sound technician provided by the Minnesota State Fair.* The State Fair provides microphones, monitors and a piano. All other instruments and amplifiers must be provided by act, if needed. The State Fair does not allow microphones supplied by the act.

Piano accompaniment: For auditions, a professional piano accompanist will be available for acts' use **July 22 through July 28**. If you intend to use our accompanist, be sure to note it on your entry form, and please bring piano sheet music IN YOUR KEY to your audition. You will have an opportunity to discuss your music with the accompanist before going on stage, but there will be no rehearsal.

House Band: Acts who advance to the semifinals and finals will have the option to use our house band that consists of a piano, bass guitar, drums and rhythm guitar.

Recorded accompaniment: You are required to use the provided MSF USB Drive. Further information regarding the flash drive will be included with your audition confirmation. Vocalists may use recorded accompaniment, provided it contains instrumental accompaniment ONLY; absolutely no vocals are allowed on the recording. ***NO iPods, iPads or cell phones are allowed for accompaniment recordings.***

For vocal acts, acts will be disqualified if accompaniment recording has vocals of any kind.

AWARDS

Semifinals

- Open Division: Each nightly winner will receive \$100 and advance to the finals on Sunday, Sept. 1 in the Grandstand; each nightly runner-up will receive \$50.
- Teen Division: Each nightly winner will receive \$50 and advance to the finals on Sunday, Sept. 1 in the Grandstand; each nightly runner-up will receive \$25.
- Preteen Division: Each nightly winner will receive \$50 and advance to the finals on Sunday, Sept. 1 in the Grandstand; each nightly runner-up will receive \$25.

Finals –

Winners receive:

- Open Division: Grand Prize: \$10,000; Second Place: \$2,500; Third Place: \$1,000.
- Teen Division: First Place: \$2,500; Second Place: \$750; Third Place: \$500.
- Preteen Division: First Place: \$2,500; Second Place: \$750; Third Place: \$500.

QUESTIONS? If you have any questions regarding the contest, call **651-288-4418** or email msfent@mnstatefair.org