



*IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson*

# *2026 Pinnacle Awards Competition*

*Celebrating Excellence In The IFEA / Haas & Wilkerson  
Pinnacle Awards Competition*



**HAAS & WILKERSON**  
INSURANCE

*Recognizing Innovation,  
Creativity & Achievement in the  
Global Festivals and Events Industry*



## **2026 GRAND PINNACLE**



# 2026 IFEA / HAAS & WILKERSON PINNACLE AWARDS COMPETITION

## CALL FOR ENTRIES

***CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN THE IFEA / HAAS & WILKERSON PINNACLE AWARDS COMPETITION***  
***RECOGNIZING INNOVATION, CREATIVITY & ACHIEVEMENT IN THE GLOBAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS INDUSTRY***

**F**or more than three decades, the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) has proudly recognized outstanding achievements in creativity, promotion, operations, and community impact through the prestigious Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition.

Each year, the Pinnacle Awards celebrate the best of the best across the global festivals and events industry – honoring those who raise the bar, inspire innovation, and set new standards for excellence. From major international celebrations to small-town traditions, from cities and chambers to universities, parks, recreation departments, vendors, and suppliers, the competition welcomes entries from organizations of all types and sizes. Budget-based divisions ensure a level playing field, giving every event the chance to shine.

With categories ranging from Best Event Poster, T-Shirt, and Promotional Brochure to Best Volunteer Program, Green Program, Media Relations Campaign, Sponsorship Activation, Social Media Site, and more, the Pinnacle Awards recognize excellence across nearly every facet of event production, marketing, and management.

Over the years, the Pinnacle Awards have showcased remarkable examples of how event professionals harness creativity, strategy, and collaboration to achieve exceptional results. By participating, your organization joins a legacy of innovation and leadership that uplifts not only individual events, but the entire festivals and events industry.

To help amplify your success, the IFEA provides all winners with a customizable press release template, making it easy to share your recognition with local media, partners, and stakeholders. Winning a Pinnacle Award not only highlights your creativity and professionalism – it affirms your commitment to excellence, community, and the power of shared celebration.

Join us for another inspiring year of recognition by entering the 2026 IFEA / Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition.

Let your event's creativity, hard work, and impact be recognized, celebrated, and shared with the world as part of the IFEA's ongoing mission to elevate the festivals and events industry.

### **ALL ENTRIES SUBMITTED ONLINE**

**All IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Award Entries are submitted online, saving you not only financial resources, but much needed time.** Simply upload your entries when you're ready to submit and you're done!

To get started, create digital versions of your entries, submit them through the online entry form, and pay for them all at once. For complete details on accepted file formats, file naming requirements, and submission steps, keep reading!

So, what are you waiting for? Start preparing your entries today and get ready to hear your organization's name announced at the next IFEA Annual Convention & Expo, when we once again get to say...

"And the winners are...!"

### **Haas & Wilkerson Insurance, Sponsor of the Pinnacle Awards**

Haas & Wilkerson Insurance has proudly supported the IFEA and festivals and events industry for over 30 years! As the title sponsor of the IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Program, they have helped to raise the quality and standards of excellence for festivals and events around the globe. With over 85 years of entertainment industry experience behind them, they provide insurance programs designed for each event's specific needs and have a long list of clients that includes festivals, fairs, parades, carnivals and more. Learn more about them at [www.hwins.com](http://www.hwins.com).

# THE CONTEST

## DEADLINES

- All entries must be submitted and paid for **online\*** by the following dates:
- **Early Bird Entry Deadline:**  
**11:55 p.m. (MST), Wednesday, April 15, 2026**  
**Rate: \$40 per entry or \$200 per Grand Pinnacle entry**
- **Final Entry Deadline:**  
**11:55 p.m. (MDT), Wednesday, June 24, 2026**  
**Rate: \$50 per entry or \$250 per Grand Pinnacle entry**

All entry fees include credit card processing fees.

## ELIGIBILITY

- You must be an active IFEA Member to enter.
- Entries must have been produced and/or used for the first time between June 26, 2025, and June 24, 2026.
  - If your event occurred just before this eligibility window and **was not** entered in the 2025 competition, contact Nia Hovde, CFEE at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com) to confirm possible eligibility.
- Each entry must be submitted, received, and paid in full by the deadlines listed above.
- A separate online entry form must be completed for each entry submitted.
- One entry = One online entry form.
- Judges will not refer to or transfer materials between categories.
- All entries and entry forms must be submitted in English.

## PAYMENT OF ENTRIES

- Entries must be paid in full online when submitted.
- \*If you require payment by check or invoice, contact Nia Hovde, CFEE at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com), BEFORE starting your entry. You will be provided with an alternate entry form.
- Refunds will not be issued for duplicate entries, though replacements may be arranged.
- If submitting multiple entries in the same category, you must check out and pay for each one separately to prevent overwriting.
- A receipt will be automatically emailed from [ifea@ifea.com](mailto:ifea@ifea.com) after submission (check spam/junk folders).
- Once your entry(ies) have officially been processed, a confirmation email will be sent from Nia Hovde, CFEE at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com).
- For confirmation or questions, contact Nia Hovde, CFEE at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com).

## IMPORTANT UPDATE: REVIEW REQUIREMENTS CAREFULLY BEFORE ENTERING

ALL entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been fully updated and revised for this year's IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition.

Please review each category's instructions carefully before preparing and submitting your entries to ensure compliance with the most current standards and expectations.

## DIGITAL ENTRIES ONLY

All entries must be submitted digitally. Physical entries will not be accepted.

Please review and follow the requirement guidelines in this brochure for file format, naming, and submission instructions.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Find common questions answered online at: [www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-faqs](http://www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-faqs)

## TIPS AND POINTERS

First-time entrant? Explore helpful insights from past participants at:

[www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-tips--pointers](http://www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-tips--pointers)

## QUESTIONS?

Contact: Nia Hovde, CFEE, Vice President / Director of Marketing & Communications at Email: [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com)

## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ENTRIES

When ready, submit your entries online at:

[www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/thisyear/EnterHere](http://www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/thisyear/EnterHere)

## IMPORTANT FILE NAMING REQUIREMENT

For all applicable categories where the entry will be uploaded to submit, please name each Pinnacle entry file exactly as outlined below (no spaces). This step is critical as it allows the IFEA team and judges to identify your entry quickly and accurately.

**Note:** If your entry being submitted is a direct link (for example, to a website, social media page, or YouTube video), this step is not required, as the original live link is needed to properly access and evaluate your entry.

### Format for Uploaded Entries:

2026IFEAP-C#B#-YourOrganizationName-YourEventName

**C#** = Category Number

**B#** = Budget Number

(Replace # with actual Category Number and Budget Number.)

**Example:** 2026IFEAP-C27B3-YourOrganization-Name-YourFestivalName.pdf (or .jpg | .png)

If entering more than one entry in the same category, add a number at the end (e.g., -1, -2) to clearly distinguish between each entry.

## ENTRY FILE FORMATS

Refer to each individual category within this brochure for exact file type/format for that category.

For format questions, contact **Nia Hovde, CFEE** at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com).

## SUBMITTING ENTRIES

All entries must be submitted in a digital format on the online entry form. Choose one of the following methods when completing your online entry form:

### Option 1: Upload Your Entry in the Entry Form

- Upload a PDF, JPG, or PNG of your entry.
  - Make sure files are named correctly – refer to File Naming Requirement above.
  - See requirements for each category for what file format each entry must be submitted.
  - Upload option only available on desk top computer. Not available on mobile devices.
- **Max file size for Upload:** 20 MB per entry. Upload may not be possible for all categories due to size limitations and entry requirements. The larger the file size, the longer your entry will take to upload.

### Option 2: Provide a Direct Link to Your Entry

- Submit a direct link to YouTube, Social Media, Website. **OR**
- Upload entries to your online storage (Dropbox, Google Drive, WeTransfer, etc.). Submit the direct link for each entry from online storage, where it can be downloaded.
  - Make sure files are named correctly – refer to File Naming Requirement above.
  - See requirements for each category for what file format each entry must be submitted.
  - Update share settings to allow “Anyone with the Link” to access the file – no password required.
  - Link must remain active until November 20, 2026.

## ORGANIZATION / EVENT LOGO

Upload one (1) high-resolution logo for your organization with your first entry.

This logo will represent all your submissions during the Awards Presentation.

## SOCIAL MEDIA TAGS

Include your official Facebook tag (e.g., @ifeaworld) on your first online entry form to help with post-award promotions.

## THE JUDGES

Entries are judged by recognized professionals in the fields of radio, television, website development, social/multi/print-media, graphic design, photography, promotions, public relations, marketing, advertising and festival & event planning and management.

## SCORING SYSTEM

- Categories 1 and 40–67 are scored using a 100-point scale.
- Entries must earn at least 60 points to qualify for an award.
- Scores are based on clarity, creativity, design, execution, and measurable success.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- Failure to meet all requirements or answer / provide all necessary information will result in a deduction of points.
- Scoring does not apply to Broadcast & Video, Social Media & Digital Content, Websites & Mobile Platforms, Print Publications, Advertising & Visual Design, Event Branding & Environmental Design and most Merchandising Categories (Categories 2-39).
- Scores are available on request.

## ENTRY BUDGET CATEGORIES

To ensure fair comparison, entries compete within one of four budget categories based on total event expense budget (USD):

Each Pinnacle category is separated into four budget categories to ensure that like size festivals & events compete against one another. Judges may combine budget levels if necessary based on entry volume.

Budget categories are based on your organization's event expense budget. (USD, include all cash outflows). (See Pinnacle FAQ at [ifea.com](http://ifea.com) for definition). Budget categories are as follows:

- Budget #1: Under \$50,000
- Budget #2: \$50,000–\$500,000
- Budget #3: \$500,000–\$1.5 million
- Budget #4: Over \$1.5 million

## WINNERS

- Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards are presented (where applicable) within each budget category.
- Winners are selected based on category-specific criteria and overall excellence.
- For all entries, each winning festival/event receiving a Gold, Silver or Bronze award is selected from those festivals and events who enter the IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition and are judged on the overall excellence of a festival / event based on the specific criteria and requirements of the specific category(ies) being entered, within each of the four separate budget categories.

Festivals / Events recognized as an “IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Award Winner” are entitled to use that specific language in sharing the news about a Pinnacle win, for the specific category(ies) won.

- Language declaring a Festival / Event as the “Best Festival / Event in the World by the IFEA” is not correct or in line with the nature of the competition and will not be supported or endorsed by the IFEA.
- Award Winners will be notified by August 19, 2026, via email. Notification will go ALL contacts listed on the Pinnacle Awards Entry Form. If you have not received a notification email, please contact [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com).
- Awards will be presented at the 2026 IFEA Annual Convention & Expo.
- Award Winners will receive access to a press release, logos, and complete winner lists online the evening of the Awards Presentation. Access will go to ALL contacts listed on the Pinnacle Awards Entry Form.
- A complete list of winners will be posted on the IFEA Website the evening of the Awards Presentation. Winning entries will be posted online on the IFEA Member Only section of [ifea.com](http://ifea.com) for other IFEA Members to view after they have been announced.
- **Organizations submitting entries for the Grand Pinnacle category must register at least one person for the Annual IFEA Convention & Expo or arrange for a representative to accept any award won on your behalf.**

## SHIPPING OF AWARDS

- If you are not able to be present at the IFEA Awards Presentation to accept your award(s), they will be mailed to you 3 weeks after the IFEA Annual Convention.
  - Awards being shipped within the United States will be shipped via the United States Postal Service (USPS) and may take up to 4 weeks to arrive at their destination, once shipped (depending on location).
  - Awards being shipped outside of the United States will also be shipped via the United States Postal Service, the recipient will be responsible for all shipping fees.

## IFEA AI USAGE POLICY

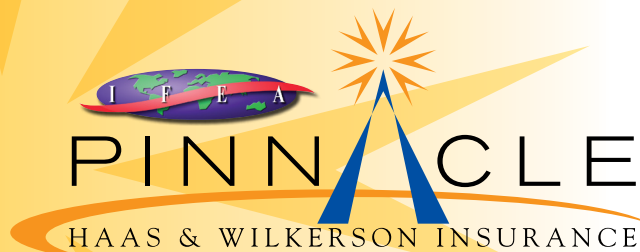
The IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition recognizes the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in helping event professionals save time, enhance creativity, and improve efficiency. If AI tools were used to plan or support elements of your event, that’s fantastic—AI can be an incredibly valuable resource in today’s event world. When it comes to assembling your Pinnacle Award entries, the use of AI for organization, writing assistance, or formatting is permitted as a tool to help streamline the entry process. However, all images, data, measurable results, and supporting materials must originate from your actual event and accurately reflect your real-world work, outcomes, and experiences. AI-generated visuals, fabricated data, or simulated event materials are not permitted. Entries must truthfully represent your event as it occurred. The IFEA trusts participants to uphold these standards of authenticity and professionalism in all submissions.

## IFEA CONTENT AND COPYRIGHT STANDARDS

By submitting an entry to the IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition, you agree to the following terms:

- **Usage Rights:** Grant the IFEA the right to use any submitted materials (text, images, videos, etc.) for editorial, educational, analytical, promotional, or other purposes without additional compensation or permission.
- **Ownership & Permissions:** Confirm that you hold, or have obtained, all necessary rights, licenses, and permissions to submit the materials and represent the festival, event, or organization entered.
- **Accuracy:** Confirm that all information included in your entries is true and accurate to the best of your knowledge.
- **AI Usage Policy:** Confirm that any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in preparing your submission was limited to assistance with organization, writing, or formatting only. All images, videos, data, and supporting materials are authentic and originate from your actual event.
- **Acknowledgment of Competition Terms:** Understand that participation in the competition does not guarantee an award, and that all entries are non-returnable and non-refundable.
- **Acceptance of Terms:** Submission of entries constitutes full acceptance of these conditions and all IFEA competition rules and guidelines.

As a not-for-profit 501 (c) 6 organization the IFEA reserves the right to refuse entries from any individual or organization who, at its sole discretion, may represent / display unprofessional, unlawful, unethical, unsafe or other actions/positions deemed contrary to the best interests of the IFEA and our global industry.



# IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Category Quick List

Please review the specific instructions, requirements, criteria, file type, and file size for each of the below categories listed within the 2026 IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Brochure before you start working on your entries.

## OVERALL AWARD

Recognizing the pinnacle of achievement within the festivals and events industry—those that demonstrate balanced excellence across all operational, creative, and community impact areas.

1. Grand Pinnacle

## BROADCAST & VIDEO

Honoring excellence in television, radio, and video storytelling used to promote, document, or celebrate an event or festival.

2. Best TV Promotion
3. Best Full-Length TV Program
4. Best Video Promotion
5. Best Radio Promotion

## SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL CONTENT

Celebrating creative and effective use of digital platforms and social media to engage audiences, build community, and promote events.

6. Best Single Social Video
7. Best Social Video Series (NEW)
8. Best Multimedia Component
9. Best Facebook Site
10. Best Instagram Site
11. Best Single Digital/Social Ad
12. Best Digital/Social Ad Series
13. Best Event / Organization E-Newsletter

## WEBSITES & MOBILE PLATFORMS

Recognizing innovation and excellence in online engagement through event and organizational websites, apps, and adaptive platforms.

14. Best Event Website
15. Best Organization Website
16. Best Event Mobile Application / Adaptive Website

## PRINT PUBLICATIONS

Honoring creativity and clarity in print materials that inform, inspire, and promote—ranging from programs and brochures to guides and inserts.

17. Best Event Program / Guide
18. Best Newspaper Insert / Supplement
19. Best Promotional Brochure
20. Best Printed Materials (Multiple Page)

## ADVERTISING & VISUAL DESIGN

Recognizing outstanding design and messaging across advertising, posters, photography, and outdoor promotional materials.

21. Best Printed Materials (Single Page)
22. Best Cover Design
23. Best Single Newspaper Display Ad
24. Best Single Magazine Display Ad
25. Best Ad Series
26. Best Promotional Poster
27. Best Commemorative Poster
28. Best Promotional Photograph
29. Best Invitation / Ticket

## EVENT BRANDING & ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Celebrating visual creativity in how an event presents itself through décor, signage, and branded environments that enhance the attendee experience.

30. Best Outdoor Billboard / Signage
31. Best Installation / Wrap
32. Best Street Banner
33. Best On-Site Décor

## MERCHANDISING & RETAIL

Recognizing excellence in event-branded merchandise, from concept and design to execution and sales strategy.

34. Best T-Shirt Design
35. Best Pin or Button

36. Best Hat
37. Best Festival / Event Merchandise
38. Best Sponsor Gift
39. Best Give-Away Item
40. Best Overall Merchandising Program

### **SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE**

Highlighting innovation and effectiveness in sponsorship solicitation, activation, relationship management, and partner engagement.

41. Best Targeted Sponsor Solicitation Proposal
42. Best Individual Sponsor Follow-Up Report
43. Best Sponsor Partner
44. Best Sponsor Activation
45. Best Sponsorship Program for Individual Sponsor
46. Best Overall Sponsorship Program

### **COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT**

Recognizing programs that strengthen community connection, broaden participation, support learning, and enrich the overall event experience.

47. Best Volunteer Program
48. Best Green Program
49. Best Educational Program
50. Best Accessibility Program
51. Best Culture, Community & Connection Plan
52. Best Children's Programming
53. Best Community Outreach Program

### **ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING**

Celebrating innovation, creativity, and success in entertainment, special programs, and new event concepts.

54. Best Parade
55. Best Overall Entertainment Program
56. Best Event / Program Within an Event to Benefit A Cause
57. Best Event (Within an Existing Festival)
58. Best New Festival or Event
59. Best Cultural / Heritage Event (NEW)
60. Best Nighttime Economy Event (NEW)

### **EVENT OPERATIONS & SAFETY**

Recognizing excellence in the planning, preparedness, and implementation of operational systems that ensure smooth, safe, and successful event execution.

61. Best Emergency Preparedness & Risk Management Plan

### **INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE**

Honoring innovation, service quality, and outstanding contributions from partners, vendors, and suppliers within the festivals and events industry.

62. Best Product or Service
63. Best Vendor / Supplier

### **MEDIA RELATIONS**

Recognizing excellence in the strategy, execution, and measurable success of a comprehensive media relations campaign.

64. Best Overall Media Relations Campaign

### **ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Celebrating educational institutions and programs that prepare the next generation of event professionals.

65. Best Event Management Bachelor's Degree
66. Best Event Management Master's Degree
67. Best Event Management PhD Program

# THE GRAND PINNACLE

## 1) GRAND PINNACLE

The Grand Pinnacle is the highest honor presented by the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) in recognition of those festivals and events that best demonstrate a balance of all elements necessary for overall excellence – including creativity, community impact, innovation, operational effectiveness, inclusivity, and sustainability.

*\*Award winners are selected from those festivals and events that have entered the IFEA / Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition and are judged on the overall quality, achievement, and professionalism of their event within each budget category.*

*Note: Winners of the Grand Pinnacle Award may use the designation "IFEA / Haas & Wilkerson Grand Pinnacle Award Winner." Phrasing that declares a festival or event as "Best Festival/Event in the World by the IFEA" is not accurate and will not be endorsed or supported by the IFEA.*

## ENTRY INFORMATION

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Complete Sections 1–3 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

## HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted on the online entry form.

### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

As applicable, please include supporting materials throughout your entry (no more than 5 examples per area), placed within their respective sections. Supporting materials should be viewable within the entry, not linked externally. Examples include: Event programs, maps, or schedules; Marketing and promotional materials; Press coverage or media clippings; Social media and digital samples; Photos, videos, or creative assets; Economic impact reports, community testimonials, or measurable outcomes.

### 1. Introductory Information: (10 Points)

Provide an overview of your event in the following order (a-m). Maximum of four (4) total pages. Clearly label each section.

- a. A one (1) paragraph promotional overview of your festival/event.
- b. Website and social media links.
- c. Brief history and description of your festival/event.
- d. Purpose / Mission and core values.
- e. Event dates (current year).
- f. Types of activities and components included under the event umbrella.
- g. Overall revenue and expense budget.
- h. Estimated economic impact on your community.
- i. Attendance numbers and audience demographics.
- j. Volunteer count and demographics.
- k. Staffing numbers and key positions.
- l. Audience satisfaction and post-event evaluation summaries
- m. Founding/incorporation date and management structure (e.g., 501(c)(3), city-managed, private partnership, etc.).

### 2. Overview Information: (40 Points)

Provide a detailed overview for each of the following (a–d), using no more than four (4) pages per section (except for section c). If an area does not apply to your event, please explain why or describe a comparable alternative to avoid point deductions. \*Be sure to clearly identify each section in order to assist the judging process.

### a. Marketing, Communications & Media Relations

Provide an overview of your marketing strategy and media outreach, including:

- Integrated marketing, branding, and media campaigns
- Use of traditional, digital, and social platforms
- Advertising, promotions, and influencer partnerships
- Community and media engagement outcomes

### b. Sponsorship, Funding & Partnerships

- Provide an overview of your sponsorship and funding programs, including:
- Number and type of sponsors or funding partners
- Total sponsorship value or financial contributions
- Examples of sponsor activations or creative collaborations
- Community or corporate partnerships that added value to the event

### c. Core Program Areas

Provide no more than one (1) page per sub-program listed below. Clearly identify each section. If not applicable, state as such or note what is offered in its place.

- Merchandise Program
- Volunteer Program
- Culture, Community & Connection Plan
- Accessibility Program
- Entertainment Program (music, arts, theatre, performers, etc.)
- Environmental / Sustainability Program ("Green" initiatives)
- Educational Program
- Children's / Family Programming
- Community Outreach Program
- Emergency Preparedness & Risk Management Plan
- Additional Programming not listed above

### d. Innovation & Special Initiatives

Highlight special programs or new initiatives that demonstrate creativity, leadership, and forward-thinking practices – such as technology integration, audience engagement innovations, sustainability achievements, or global collaborations.

### 3. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer the following questions (maximum one (1) page per question):

- a. What updates, changes, or innovations were made from the previous year, and were they successful? Provide measurable results or examples.
  - If the event is new, describe the challenges or obstacles encountered in its creation and how they were addressed.
- b. What makes your event stand out as a globally recognized, exemplary event?
- c. Why should your festival/event be selected as the IFEA / Haas & Wilkerson Grand Pinnacle Award winner?

### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Entries will be judged on the quality of the event and the professionalism of the submission based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, clear, and easy to understand?
- Is the message concise, organized, and informative?
- Is the event creative, original, and inspiring?
- Does the entry demonstrate strong design, storytelling, and impact?
- Is the event compelling enough to engage and move an audience?
- Does the event effectively represent its brand, mission, and community?
- Are measurable results and supporting data provided?
- Does the event show balance across all major operational areas?
- What is the overall impression of excellence?
- Have all requirements and requested materials been met?

### Additional Notes:

- Provide complete responses for all requested items in Sections 1–3.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- This entry is judged independently from all other categories.
- Organizations submitting for the Grand Pinnacle must ensure that at least one representative is registered for the next IFEA Annual Convention & Expo, or has made arrangements for an official representative to accept the award on their behalf.

# CATEGORIES

## BROADCAST & VIDEO

Honoring excellence in television, radio, and video storytelling used to promote, document, or celebrate an event or festival.

### ENTRY INFORMATION FOR CATEGORIES 2-5

- [Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.](#)
- Entries will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- All entries must be submitted in a digital format by providing a direct viewing link for each entry (one link per entry).
- Links must remain active and downloadable through November 20, 2026.
- Video and audio files must be accessible for both streaming and download.
- Please verify that all links are functional and publicly accessible (no passwords, logins, or restricted access) before submitting.
- Entries that cannot be accessed by judges will be disqualified.
- These are standalone entries – no written documentation or supporting materials are required.
- All entries must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted on the online entry form.

### Judging Criteria

Each entry will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Does the entry effectively relay the image and message of the event?
- Is the entry creative and original in concept and execution?
- Does it successfully engage and hold the audience's attention?
- Is the message clear, concise, and visually or audibly compelling?
- Does it demonstrate strong production quality, storytelling clarity, and promotional usability?
- Does it have visual or auditory impact appropriate for its medium?
- What is the overall impression of the entry?

### 2) BEST TV PROMOTION

Recognizes excellence in a television commercial, advertisement, or PSA created to promote a festival or event.

Submissions may include locally, regionally, or nationally aired spots.

**Submit:** Direct link to view and download the video online.

**Maximum Length:** 60 seconds.

### 3) BEST FULL-LENGTH TV PROGRAM

Recognizes a local, national, or syndicated television program or feature produced to promote or highlight a festival or event.

Entries may include broadcast specials, documentaries, or televised recaps.

**Submit:** Direct link to view and download the full program online.

**Recommended Length:** Up to 60 minutes.

### 4) BEST VIDEO PROMOTION

Recognizes excellence in a video promotion longer than 30 seconds created by a festival or event for TV, online, or digital platforms to promote festival or event.

Entries may include highlight reels, promotional trailers, storytelling videos, or branded event recaps. (For videos under 30 seconds, see Category 6: Best Single Social Video.)

**Submit:** Direct link to view and download the video online.

**Length:** Over 30 seconds

### 5) BEST RADIO PROMOTION

Recognizes outstanding radio advertisements, interviews, or PSAs used to promote a festival or event.

Entries may include live reads, recorded spots, or creative campaign segments.

**Submit:** Direct link to stream and download the radio file online.

**Maximum Length:** 60 seconds.

# CATEGORIES

## SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL CONTENT

Celebrating creative and effective use of digital platforms and social media to engage audiences, build community, and promote events.

### ENTRY INFORMATION FOR CATEGORIES 6–13

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entries will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- All entries must be submitted in a digital format by providing a direct viewing link for each entry (one link per entry).
- Links must remain active and downloadable through November 20, 2026.
- Video, audio, or website links must open directly to the specific entry (not a homepage or general folder).
- Please verify that all links are functional and publicly accessible (no passwords or restricted permissions) before submitting.
- Entries that cannot be accessed by judges will be disqualified.
- These are standalone items – no written documentation or supporting materials are required unless otherwise noted.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted on the online entry form.

### Judging Criteria

Each entry will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Does the entry effectively relay the image and message of the event or organization?
- Does it have strong visual impact and appeal?
- Is the design organized, professional, and easy to navigate?
- Does the entry demonstrate creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does it effectively communicate key information or emotion at a glance?
- What is the usability and adaptability of the entry across various digital or social formats?
- What is the overall impression?

### 6) BEST SINGLE SOCIAL VIDEO

Recognizes excellence in short-form video content (under 30 seconds) created and shared on any social media platform to promote a festival or event. Submissions must represent content created and posted by the festival, event, or its official marketing partners. Videos may be organic posts or paid promotions.

**Eligible formats include, but are not limited to:** TikTok videos, Instagram Reels, Stories, YouTube Shorts, Snapchat Spotlights, Facebook Reels, or short looping videos (including GIFs).

**Submit:** Direct link to view and download the video online.

**Maximum Length:** 30 seconds.

(For videos longer than 30 seconds, see Category 4: Best Video Promotion.)

### 7) BEST SOCIAL VIDEO SERIES (NEW)

Recognizes excellence in a series of short-form videos (each under 30 seconds) created and shared on social media platforms to promote a festival or event.

Entries should represent a coordinated campaign, demonstrating creativity, engagement, and brand consistency across multiple posts. Submissions must represent content created and posted by the festival, event, or its official marketing partners. Videos may include organic posts or paid promotions.

Each series should include a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of five (5) short videos connected by a common theme, story, or campaign goal.

**Eligible formats include, but are not limited to:**

TikTok videos, Instagram Reels or Stories, YouTube Shorts, Snapchat Spotlights, Facebook Reels, or other short looping videos (including GIFs).

**Submit:** Combine direct links to all videos in one PDF document, or provide a single link to a playlist (e.g., YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram series).

**Maximum Length:** Each individual video must be 30 seconds or less.

(For individual short videos, see Category 6: Best Single Social Video.)

### 8) BEST MULTIMEDIA COMPONENT

Recognizes excellence in innovative multimedia content such as podcasts, interviews, educational/instructional videos, montage features, or screen-based digital content used to promote or enhance a festival or event.

Does not include: Items entered in Categories 2–7 or 9–13.

**Submit:** Direct link to view or access the multimedia component online.

**Note:** Only one multimedia item per entry.

### 9) BEST FACEBOOK SITE

Recognizes outstanding use of Facebook for community engagement, storytelling, and brand representation of a festival, event, or organization.

**Submit:** Direct Facebook page URL.

### 10) BEST INSTAGRAM SITE

Recognizes creative and effective use of Instagram to visually promote a festival, event, or organization through imagery, reels, and stories.

**Submit:** Direct Instagram profile URL.

### 11) BEST SINGLE DIGITAL / SOCIAL AD

Recognizes excellence in the design and execution of a single static digital or social media advertisement used to promote a festival or event.

**Submit:** One (1) digital ad as a single JPG or PNG file.

(For short-form video, see Category 6: Best Single Social Video.)

### 12) BEST DIGITAL / SOCIAL AD SERIES

Recognizes the creative and strategic use of a series of coordinated digital or social static ads that tell a connected story or support a campaign theme.

Series should show consistency in design, messaging, and branding across multiple posts or platforms.

**Submit:** Up to five (5) ads combined into one single JPG, or PNG file (preferred) or PDF file, presented in the intended chronological or campaign order.

(For short-form video, see Category 7: Best Social Video Series.)

### 13) BEST EVENT / ORGANIZATION E-NEWSLETTER

Recognizes excellence in the design, content, and delivery of an emailed newsletter used to inform, engage, and promote a festival, event, or organization.

Entries should demonstrate strong storytelling, brand consistency, readability, and overall digital communication effectiveness.

#### Entry Requirements

- **Submit:** Three (3) consecutive e-newsletters that represent your typical communication cadence (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.).
- Combine all three e-newsletters into one single PDF file in the order they were distributed.
- Entries must reflect actual distributed versions (not drafts or print-only versions).
- Ensure that any links or embedded media shown in screenshots are active and functional where possible.

# CATEGORIES

## WEBSITES & MOBILE PLATFORMS

Recognizing innovation and excellence in online engagement through event and organizational websites, apps, and adaptive platforms.

### ENTRY INFORMATION FOR CATEGORIES 14–16

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entries will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Submit a direct web address (URL) for each website entry or a link to download/access the mobile app.
- Ensure that links remain active and accessible through November 20, 2026.
- All websites and mobile apps must be fully functional and publicly accessible (no passwords, logins, or restricted access).
- Entries that cannot be accessed by judges will be disqualified.
- Each entry must stand on its own—no supporting documents are required unless specified.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### Technical Recommendations

- Websites and apps should be accessible across both desktop and mobile browsers.
- Judges will view the live site or app experience directly; ensure all key pages, features, and navigation are active.

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted on the online entry form.

### Judging Criteria

Each entry will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Does the website or app effectively convey the image and mission of the event or organization?
- Is the design visually appealing, organized, and easy to navigate?
- Does it demonstrate creativity, originality, and innovation in design or functionality?
- Is the content accurate, engaging, and up to date?
- Does the platform perform well across multiple devices (desktop, mobile, tablet)?
- Are accessibility and user experience prioritized throughout the design?
- What is the overall impression of the site or app?

### 14) BEST EVENT WEBSITE

Recognizes outstanding design, functionality, and user experience for a festival or event-specific website (distinct from a main organization site).

**Submit:** Direct web address (URL) for judges to review the site.

### 15) BEST ORGANIZATION WEBSITE

Recognizes exceptional design, usability, and content strategy for an organization website representing multiple festivals or events.

**Submit:** Direct web address (URL) for judges to review the site.

### 16) BEST EVENT MOBILE APPLICATION / ADAPTIVE WEBSITE

Recognizes excellence in mobile user experience through a festival or event-specific mobile app or mobile-responsive/adaptive website.

**Submit:** Direct link to the app download page or website URL.

# CATEGORIES

## PRINT PUBLICATIONS

Honoring creativity and clarity in print materials that inform, inspire, and promote—ranging from programs and brochures to guides and inserts.

### ENTRY INFORMATION FOR CATEGORIES 17–20

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entries will be reviewed digitally by the judging panel.
- Each entry must be submitted as a single PDF file. JPG or PNG formats will not be accepted for these categories.
- Do not add any additional covers, graphics, title pages, or artwork not part of the original printed piece. Entries must represent the actual printed material exactly as it appeared in use.
- Each PDF must include the full publication, in its entirety, with pages presented in the correct order.
- Entries should be standalone visual items—no written narrative, supporting documentation, or external links are required unless otherwise specified.
- Ensure all files are clearly labeled and formatted for easy viewing.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted on the online entry form.

### Judging Criteria

Each entry will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Does the piece effectively communicate the image and message of the event or organization?
- Is the message clear, concise, and well-organized?
- Does the design demonstrate creativity, originality, and visual appeal?
- Does it reflect professional quality and attention to detail?
- Is the layout balanced, functional, and easy to navigate?
- Does the piece maintain consistent branding and event identity?
- What is the overall usability, readability, and viewer impression?

### 17) BEST EVENT PROGRAM / GUIDE

Recognizes outstanding design and content in programs or guides distributed for use during a festival or event.

Entries should demonstrate effective layout, logical flow, and thoughtful sponsor recognition.

**Submit:** One (1) full program or guide as a single PDF including all pages.

### 18) BEST NEWSPAPER INSERT / SUPPLEMENT

Recognizes excellence in newspaper inserts or supplements distributed to promote or guide attendees during an event.

**Submit:** One (1) complete insert or supplement as a single PDF including all pages.

### 19) BEST PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE

Recognizes brochures created to promote a festival or event prior to its occurrence.

Entries should emphasize storytelling, design quality, and engagement.

**Submit:** One (1) brochure as a single PDF including all pages.

### 20) BEST PRINTED MATERIALS (MULTIPLE PAGE)

Recognizes excellence in multi-page printed materials that promote or represent a festival or event.

**Includes, but is not limited to:** multi-page pieces such as direct mail brochures, cookbooks, annual reports, or other publications designed to engage audiences and showcase the event's identity and impact.

(Does not include event programs, newspaper inserts, promotional brochures, or invitations.)

**Submit:** One (1) complete piece as a single PDF, including all pages. Only one item per entry.

# CATEGORIES

## ADVERTISING & VISUAL DESIGN

Recognizing outstanding design and messaging across advertising, posters, photography, and outdoor promotional materials.

### ENTRY INFORMATION FOR CATEGORIES 21–29

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entries will be reviewed digitally by the judging panel.
- Each entry must be submitted as a single JPG or PNG file unless otherwise noted.
- Preferred Maximum File Size: 5 MB
- Do not add additional covers, title pages, watermarks, graphics, or artwork not part of the original printed or displayed piece.
- Entries must accurately represent the final, actual printed or installed item as used in the campaign or event – not a digital mock-up or concept rendering.
- Only one item may be entered per submission.
- Ensure all files are clearly labeled, properly oriented, and formatted for easy viewing.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted via the online entry form.

### Judging Criteria

Each entry will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Does the design effectively communicate the image and message of the event or organization?
- Is the message clear, concise, and visually compelling?
- Does the entry demonstrate creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does it reflect professional quality and attention to visual detail?
- Is the layout organized, balanced, and easy to interpret?
- Does the design maintain consistent branding and identity?
- What is the overall visual impact and audience impression?

### 21) BEST PRINTED MATERIALS (SINGLE PAGE)

Recognizes excellence in single-page printed materials such as rack cards, flyers, or maps used to promote a festival or event.

(Does not include covers, posters, billboards, or invitations.)

**Submit:** Up to two (2) images (front and back) combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max). Only one item per entry.

### 22) BEST COVER DESIGN

Recognizes outstanding creativity and layout in the cover design of magazines, newspapers, brochures, or programs used to promote a festival or event.

**Submit:** One (1) image of the cover only as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 23) BEST SINGLE NEWSPAPER DISPLAY AD

Recognizes outstanding design and message execution in a single newspaper advertisement promoting a festival or event.

**Submit:** One (1) image of the ad only as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 24) BEST SINGLE MAGAZINE DISPLAY AD

Recognizes outstanding design and message execution in a single magazine advertisement promoting a festival or event.

**Submit:** One (1) image of the ad only as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 25) BEST AD SERIES

Recognizes cohesive and creative storytelling through a series of related print ads (magazine or newspaper) promoting a festival or event.

Entries should demonstrate consistent branding and visual evolution across the series.

**Submit:** Up to five (5) ads displayed together on one page as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 26) BEST PROMOTIONAL POSTER

Recognizes outstanding design, visual impact, and creativity in posters used for promotional purposes prior to an event.

(Poster is not intended for sale.)

**Submit:** One (1) image of the poster as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 27) BEST COMMEMORATIVE POSTER

Recognizes exceptional artistry, design and creativity in posters created for sale or as collectibles at a festival or event.

**Submit:** One (1) image of the poster as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 28) BEST PROMOTIONAL PHOTOGRAPH

Recognizes a single photograph that captures the energy, emotion and spirit of a festival or event and is used for promotional purposes.

**Submit:** One (1) photograph as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 29) BEST INVITATION / TICKET

Recognizes design excellence in printed event invitations or tickets (single or multiple page) used to invite guests or grant access to a festival or event.

Entry must feature a photograph of the actual printed item, not a digital mock-up.

**Submit:** Up to four (4) images of the invitation or ticket combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

# CATEGORIES

## EVENT BRANDING & ON-SITE DESIGN

Recognizing excellence in the creative design, production, and installation of large-scale signage, décor, and environmental elements that visually define the event experience and extend brand visibility.

### ENTRY INFORMATION FOR CATEGORIES 29–33

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entries will be reviewed digitally by the judging panel.
- Each entry must be submitted as a single JPG or PNG file unless otherwise noted.
- Preferred Maximum File Size: 5 MB
- Do not add additional covers, title pages, watermarks, graphics, or artwork not part of the original printed or displayed piece.
- Entries must include clear photographs of the actual installed signage, décor, or installations as they appeared in use. Digital mock-ups, renderings, or design proofs may be included only as supplemental visuals and will not be accepted in place of photographs.
- Entries must be standalone visual submissions—no written explanations or external links are required unless otherwise specified.
- Ensure all files are clearly labeled, properly formatted, and easy to view.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted via the online entry form.

### Judging Criteria

Entries will be evaluated based on the following:

- Does the entry accurately represent and enhance the image of the festival or event?
- Is the design clear, visually appealing, and professionally executed?
- Does it demonstrate creativity, originality, and visual impact?
- Does it effectively engage attendees and strengthen brand visibility?
- Is the item functional, durable, and appropriate for its environment?
- Does the presentation create a strong visual impression within its community or venue?
- What is the overall quality, execution, and impact of the design?

### 30) BEST OUTDOOR BILLBOARD / SIGNAGE

Recognizes excellence in outdoor advertising, including both traditional print and digital billboards or large-format signage promoting a festival or event.

Entry must show photograph of the actual installed piece – digital mock-ups may be included only as supplemental materials.

**Submit:** Up to four (4) images of the billboard/signage combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 31) BEST INSTALLATION / WRAP

Recognizes creativity and technical execution in brand installations or wraps (e.g., vehicles, elevators, walls, parking garages, trash bins, etc.) that extend the event's visual presence.

Entry must show the actual installed piece – digital mock-ups will not be accepted.

**Submit:** Up to four (4) images of the installation/wrap combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 32) BEST STREET BANNER

Recognizes outstanding design, production, and installation of street or pole banners used to promote a festival or event within its community.

**Includes:** Street banners, pole banners, and outdoor promotional signage that enhance awareness and visual presence. (Does not include outdoor billboards or large-scale installations/wraps.)

Entry must show photograph of the actual installed piece – digital mock-ups may be included only as supplemental materials.

**Submit:** One (1) photograph of the actual installed banner as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 33) BEST ON-SITE DÉCOR

Recognizes creative, visually impactful décor and design that enhance the environment and attendee experience at a festival or event.

**Includes, but is not limited to:** Directional signage, stage backdrops, entryways, flags, inflatables, photo/selfie stations, and thematic installations that enhance the event atmosphere.

Entry must show the actual installed décor – digital mock-ups may be included only as supplemental materials.

**Submit:**

- One (1) specific décor area or activation per entry (additional décor areas require separate submissions).
- Up to four (4) photographs combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

# CATEGORIES

## MERCHANDISING & RETAIL

Recognizing excellence in event-branded merchandise—from concept and design to execution, presentation, and audience appeal.

### ENTRY INFORMATION FOR CATEGORIES 34–39

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entries will be reviewed digitally by the judging panel.
- Each entry must be submitted as a single JPG or PNG file (unless otherwise noted).
- Preferred Maximum File Size: 5 MB (unless otherwise specified).
- Entries must feature photographs of the actual merchandise item used, sold, or given away at your event. Digital mock-ups, stock photos, or renderings will not be accepted as primary images but may be included only as supplemental visuals.
- Remove merchandise from any packaging before photographing.
- Black or neutral background recommended for best visibility of merchandise item.
- Do not add additional covers, title pages, watermarks, graphics, or artwork not part of the original product design.
- Entries must accurately represent how the merchandise appeared in use or display during the festival or event.
- Entries are standalone visual submissions—no written explanations or external links are required unless otherwise specified.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

### Judging Criteria

Each entry will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Does the merchandise effectively relay and reinforce the image of the event or organization?
- Is the design clear, creative, and aligned with the event's brand identity?
- Does the entry demonstrate originality, innovation, and audience appeal?
- Is the item functional, durable, and produced with professional quality?
- Does it display strong visual impact?
- What is the usability or collectability factor?
- What is the overall impression of the item within the context of the event experience?

### 34) BEST T-SHIRT DESIGN

Recognizes creativity and design excellence in T-shirts created to promote or commemorate a festival or event, whether sold before, during, or after the event. (Long or short sleeved T-shirts accepted.) (Does not include tank tops.)

#### Submit:

- One (1) specific T-Shirt per entry (additional items require separate submissions).
- Up to two (2) photos (front and back) of the actual T-shirt (not a Digital mock-up, stock photo, or rendering) combined on one page as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 35) BEST PIN OR BUTTON

Recognizes outstanding design and presentation of a single pin or button used to promote or commemorate a festival or event.

(For Single Pins only. Does not include sets or collections.)

#### Submit:

- One (1) specific Pin or Button per entry (additional items require separate submissions).
- One (1) photo of the actual pin or button (not a Digital mock-up, stock photo, or rendering) as a single JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 36) BEST HAT

Recognizes outstanding design and craftsmanship in hats or headwear sold or distributed to promote or commemorate a festival or event.

#### Submit:

- One (1) specific hat per entry (additional items require separate submissions).
- Up to two (2) photographs of the actual hat (not a Digital mock-up, stock photo, or rendering) combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 37) BEST FESTIVAL / EVENT MERCHANDISE

Recognizes the best individual merchandise item sold or distributed to promote a festival or event. Includes but is not limited to: Tote bags, hoodies, ornaments, glassware, blankets, or collectible items. Does not include: T-shirts, pins, hats, sponsor gifts, and giveaway items.

#### Submit:

- One (1) specific Festival / Event Merchandise item per entry (additional items require separate submissions).
- Up to four (4) photographs of the actual Merchandise (not a Digital mock-up, stock photo, or rendering) combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 38) BEST SPONSOR GIFT

Recognizes excellence in sponsor appreciation gifts given to festival or event sponsors as a thank-you or relationship-building gesture.

#### Submit:

- One (1) specific sponsor gift item per entry (additional items require separate submissions).
- Up to four (4) photographs of the actual Sponsor Gift (not a Digital mock-up, stock photo, or rendering) combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

### 39) BEST GIVE-AWAY ITEM

Recognizes creativity and impact in items distributed free of charge to all attendees at a festival or event.

Includes, but is not limited to: race medals, tote bags, mugs, water bottles, or branded keepsakes.

Does not include: Items raffled or auctioned at an event.

#### Submit:

- One (1) specific give away item per entry (additional items require separate submissions).
- Up to four (4) photographs of the actual Give-Away Item (not a Digital mock-up, stock photo, or rendering) combined into one JPG or PNG file (5 MB max).

## MERCHANDISING & RETAIL

### 40) BEST OVERALL MERCHANDISING PROGRAM

Recognizing outstanding achievement in a comprehensive merchandising program that embodies creativity, strategy, and brand alignment.

Entries should highlight the full scope of the program – including concept development, design, production, retail presentation, and integration across both physical and digital platforms. Submissions should demonstrate how the merchandising strategy strengthens audience engagement, supports sustainability, and enhances the overall success and identity of the festival, event, or organization.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (30 Points)

Please include photographs/images of merchandise items available in your program and merchandising displays, pop-up shops, packaging, or digital storefronts. You may also include:

- Printed and digital marketing materials promoting merchandise
- Photographs of retail setups, vendor booths, or online shopping interfaces
- Examples of branded or collaborative products (with sponsors, artists, etc.)
- Samples or screenshots of online/e-commerce listings
- Measurable results and analytics

#### 1. Overview Information: (30 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–i) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section. Please title each section as noted below.

- a. Introduction & description of event
- b. Name (if applicable) and description of merchandising program – including goals, strategy, and connection to your overall brand identity
- c. Overall revenue and expense budget for merchandise lines – including ROI or profit margins where applicable
- d. Target market for merchandise program (demographics, location, etc.)
- e. Marketing efforts tied to merchandise program (pre-event promotions, on-site sales, digital campaigns, influencer partnerships, etc.)
- f. Community and partner involvement in selling or distributing merchandise (sponsors, local artists, non-profits, vendors, etc.)
- g. Outlets for selling merchandise (festival storefront, online/e-commerce store, pop-ups, third-party retail, etc.)
- h. Measurable results (sales data, number/variety of items sold, online traffic, social engagement, etc.)
- i. Overall effectiveness of the merchandise program (brand visibility, attendee engagement, sustainability initiatives, innovation, etc.)

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

• If the program is an existing program, what did you do to update, refresh, or innovate your merchandise line from the previous year? Were your updates successful? Please provide measurable results / examples.

#### OR

• If the program is a new program, what challenges / obstacles did you foresee or encounter in creating and managing the program, and how did you address them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry / program professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the messaging clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the overall merchandising concept creative and original?
- Does the program effectively represent and strengthen the event's brand identity?
- Does the program engage and excite the audience?
- Are sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity considered in product design or production?
- Does the merchandising program align with the event's mission and marketing strategy?
- Are measurable results and data clearly presented?
- Have all supporting materials been provided and requirements met?
- What is the overall impression of quality and success?

# CATEGORIES

## SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE

Highlighting innovation and effectiveness in sponsorship solicitation, activation, relationship management, and partner engagement.

### 41) BEST TARGETED SPONSOR SOLICITATION PROPOSAL

Recognizing excellence in the research, design, presentation, and customization of a sponsor solicitation proposal created to target a specific sponsor for your festival, event, or organization.

Entry should focus on an actual sponsorship proposal that was used to target a specific sponsor for your Festival / Event / Organization. The entry should highlight creativity, clarity, and strategic alignment between the sponsor's objectives and the event's mission, audience, and opportunities for brand activation – demonstrating mutual value and partnership potential.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (50 Points)

Please include the actual sponsor solicitation proposal that was used to target a specific sponsor, along with any additional materials, visuals, or samples that were sent with the proposal.

(You may substitute the sponsor's name for a generic name for confidentiality, but please clearly note this within your entry.)

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital versions of the proposal or presentation deck
- Cover letters, introductory emails, or video messages used in outreach
- Images of branded mockups, activation examples, or customized pitch materials
- Sponsorship prospectus excerpts or customized proposal pages tailored to the target sponsor

- Analytics, demographic data, or visual elements used to demonstrate value alignment
- Examples of post-sponsorship reporting (if applicable)

#### 1. Overview Information: (10 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–c) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction and description of main event** – including purpose, audience demographics, scale, and community impact.
- Target Sponsor** – include the sponsor's name (or indicate "Sponsor Name Withheld for Confidentiality"), description of the sponsor's brand or industry, and the reasoning behind selecting this sponsor as a target partner.
- Introduction, effectiveness, and success of the Sponsor Solicitation Proposal** – include details about how the proposal was developed, tailored, presented, and the outcome (sponsorship secured, pending, feedback received, etc.).

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- If the proposal was successful, what factors or elements contributed most to securing the sponsorship? Provide examples or measurable results.

#### OR

- If the proposal was not selected, what did you learn from the process that improved your approach to future sponsor solicitations?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry / proposal professional and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and strategically aligned?
- Is the entry / proposal visually appealing and well designed (digital or print)?
- Does the proposal demonstrate creativity, originality, and customization to the specific sponsor?
- Does it clearly articulate audience demographics, engagement opportunities, and ROI for the sponsor?
- Is the value proposition compelling enough to engage a potential partner?
- Does the proposal reflect the image, mission, and professionalism of the event / organization?
- Are measurable results, feedback, or post-sponsorship data included (if applicable)?
- Have all supporting materials been provided and requirements met?
- Would you recommend or support this opportunity if you were in a position to do so?

# CATEGORIES

## SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE

### 42) BEST INDIVIDUAL SPONSOR FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Recognizing excellence in sponsorship stewardship through a post-event follow-up report created and delivered to a specific sponsor.

Entries should clearly demonstrate how the report documented, communicated, and celebrated the sponsor's participation, results, and return on investment (ROI). Reports should reflect the event's professionalism, measurable outcomes, and commitment to relationship-building for future partnerships.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (50 Points)

Please include a sponsor follow-up report that was sent to a specific sponsor, along with any additional supporting materials, visuals, or communications that accompanied the report.

(You may substitute the sponsor's name for a generic name for confidentiality; please note this clearly in your entry.)

Supporting materials may include:

- The full sponsor follow-up report (digital or printed version)
- Thank-you correspondence, email summaries, or cover letters
- Photos and visuals of sponsor activations, signage, or product placements
- Data summaries or analytics dashboards used to measure exposure or engagement
- Media coverage or social media highlights referencing the sponsor
- Testimonials, survey feedback, or quotes from sponsors or attendees
- Screenshots or videos of post-event recap presentations or virtual reports

#### 1. Overview Information: (10 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–c) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction and description of main event** – including type, scale, and audience demographics.
- Target Sponsor** – include the sponsor's name (or indicate "Sponsor Name Withheld for Confidentiality"), their level of sponsorship, and why the partnership was strategically important.
- Introduction and effectiveness of the Sponsor Follow-Up Report** – include purpose, key elements, data highlights, and results. Discuss how the report demonstrated ROI, engagement, and relationship value for the sponsor.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this was an existing sponsor, how did this follow-up report evolve from previous years to deliver fresh value and reinforce a long-term relationship? Describe what changes, insights, or creative approaches you used to maintain relevance, highlight growth, and demonstrate measurable success to a returning sponsor.
- OR**
- If this was a new sponsor, how did this follow-up report help convert a new sponsor into a continuing or future partner? Describe what strategies, messaging, or data you used to demonstrate value and build trust with a first-time sponsor. Include examples of how the report inspired ongoing engagement or renewed interest.

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry / report professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and results-driven?
- Is the report visually appealing and well designed (digital or print)?
- Does the report demonstrate creativity, originality, and brand alignment?
- Does it clearly communicate the value and ROI to the sponsor?
- Does it reflect the professionalism and image of the event / organization?
- Does it align with the event's mission and sponsorship objectives?
- Are measurable results and engagement data clearly presented?
- Have all supporting materials been provided and requirements met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, completeness, and stewardship?
- Would you recommend or support continued partnership if in a position to do so?

# CATEGORIES

## SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE

### 43) BEST SPONSOR PARTNER

Recognizing a sponsor whose partnership stands out as a model of exceptional collaboration, creativity, and mutual benefit.

Entries should highlight how the sponsor went above and beyond in engagement, integration, and shared commitment to event goals, values, and community impact.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 points)

Include visuals and materials that support your entry, such as:

- Sponsor activation photos/videos (Provide link to videos)
- Co-branded marketing materials
- Media coverage featuring the sponsor
- Metrics reports, testimonials, or sponsor feedback
- Copies or screenshots of sponsor-related campaigns or promotions

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–h), in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section:

- Introduction & Description of Main Event** - Provide an overview of your event, including its size, scope, audience, and purpose.
- Name of Sponsor**
- Description of Sponsor Partnership** - Outline the sponsor's industry, level of sponsorship (cash, in-kind, or combination), the duration of the relationship, and an overview of the negotiated benefits and deliverables.

#### d. Quantity and Quality of Support Provided -

Describe the tangible and intangible value the sponsor contributed to your event (e.g., financial investment, marketing reach, resources, expertise, staff support, or community engagement).

#### e. Activation of Sponsorship -

Detail how the sponsor activated their partnership—onsite, digitally, or through unique audience experiences, content, or co-branded initiatives. Include examples of creative activations, contests, or campaigns.

#### f. Impact and Measurable Results -

Provide specific data or outcomes that demonstrate how the partnership benefited both the sponsor and the event (e.g., brand visibility, audience engagement, social reach, attendance growth, or revenue results).

#### g. Mutual Goals and Relationship Success -

Explain how the event and sponsor aligned in goals, values, and mission—and how the partnership evolved over time to produce meaningful results or community impact.

#### h. What Sets This Sponsor Apart -

Summarize why this sponsor stands out as your “Best Sponsor Partner.” What makes their contribution, collaboration, or creativity exceptional compared to others?

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this was an existing sponsor, how has your approach to this sponsor relationship evolved over time? Explain what new strategies, activations, or collaborative initiatives have been introduced to deepen the partnership and deliver fresh value for both the sponsor and your event.

#### OR

- If this was a new sponsor, what lessons did you learn in developing this new sponsorship? Describe how you identified alignment between the sponsor's brand and your event, overcame challenges during onboarding or activation, and how this partnership lays the foundation for future collaboration.

#### Judging Criteria: (30 points)

Entries will also be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, organized, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out well?
- Does the entry creatively and effectively showcase the partnership?
- Does the report demonstrate measurable impact and authenticity?
- What is the overall impression?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE

### 44) BEST SPONSOR ACTIVATION

Recognizing creative, effective, and mutually beneficial sponsor activations that enhance the overall attendee experience, strengthen brand integration, and demonstrate measurable results for both the sponsor and the event.

Entries may include on-site experiences, digital or hybrid activations, social media campaigns, or community engagement initiatives that successfully connect audiences to both brands.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry. Limit supporting materials to those actually used in connection with the sponsor activation. Supporting materials may include:

- Images or renderings of activation spaces / installations
- Printed or digital promotional materials (brochures, signage, QR codes, programs, etc.)
- Photos, videos, or screenshots of activation moments and attendee interaction
- Social media examples, influencer integrations, or engagement metrics
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (e.g., impressions, leads, foot traffic, feedback, reach)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–h) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

a. **Introduction & Description of Main Event** - Briefly describe your event, its audience demographics, and overall mission or purpose.

- b. **Sponsor Overview** - Identify the sponsor, their industry, level of sponsorship (cash/in-kind/combination), benefit package, and length of partnership.
- c. **Description & Purpose of the Activation** - Explain what activation took place, why it was designed, and how it supported both the sponsor's and event's goals.
- d. **Roles & Responsibilities** - Describe how the activation was developed and executed. Indicate which elements were led by the sponsor, the event team, or through co-creation.
- e. **Creativity & Originality of the Activation** - Discuss what made this activation unique, engaging, or innovative. Was it exclusive to your event, or adapted from a sponsor's broader campaign?
- f. **Execution & Attendee Engagement** - Describe how the activation came to life on-site or online, how attendees interacted, and what tactics were used to draw participation and enhance experience.
- g. **Measurable Results & Impact** - Provide quantifiable and qualitative outcomes – attendance at activation, media/social impressions, engagement data, brand visibility, or post-event ROI.
- h. **Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize why the activation succeeded for both parties. How did it elevate the event, strengthen the partnership, or build future opportunities?

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the activation is an existing activation, what updates or improvements were made from the prior year, and how did those changes affect success? Provide measurable results or examples.
- OR**
- If the activation is a new activation, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter in developing and executing it, and how were they overcome?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry / activation professional and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and well organized?
- Is the activation visually and experientially appealing?
- Does the activation display creativity and originality?
- Does it effectively engage attendees and represent both brands well?
- Does the activation align with the purpose / mission of the event?
- Are measurable results and success indicators clearly presented?
- Have all requirements and materials been provided?
- What is the overall impression of quality, innovation, and partnership?
- Would you recommend or support this activation if in a position to do so?

# CATEGORIES

## SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE

### 45) BEST SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUAL SPONSOR

Recognizing excellence in the creation and execution of a customized sponsorship program designed specifically for one sponsor.

Entries should demonstrate creativity, collaboration, and innovation – showcasing how the program delivered measurable value to both the sponsor and the event through engagement, visibility, and impact.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limited to those actually created for or used in conjunction with the sponsor.

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (brochures, signage, programs, invitations, etc.)
- Marketing, promotional, or media materials featuring the sponsor's integration
- Photographs or video stills of activations, installations, or event experiences
- Examples of sponsor-related contests, giveaways, or campaigns
- Measurable results (tangible & intangible): audience reach, engagement, impressions, or ROI metrics

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–h) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Main Event** - Provide a brief description of your event, including size, scope, purpose, and audience demographics.
- Name of Activity / Program & Sponsor** - Identify the program or activity created for the sponsor and the

sponsor's name (use a generic name if confidentiality is required and note that within your entry).

- Description & Purpose of the Sponsored Activity / Program** - Explain how and why this specific sponsorship opportunity was developed, and what goals it aimed to achieve for both the sponsor and the event.
- Sponsor Overview & Partnership Details** - Include a description of the sponsor's brand or industry, level of sponsorship (cash, in-kind, or combination), length of the partnership, and key elements of the benefit package.
- Roles & Collaboration** - Describe how the sponsor and event worked together to bring the program to life. Who contributed what? How did both teams collaborate on planning, creative direction, and execution?
- Creativity & Innovation** - Highlight what made this sponsorship program distinctive – such as unique activations, cross-promotions, community tie-ins, digital engagement, or sustainability initiatives.
- Measurable Results & Impact** - Provide quantifiable data and qualitative insights on the sponsorship's success. Include metrics such as audience engagement, media exposure, attendance impact, brand impressions, or social media analytics.
- Overall Effectiveness / Success of the Program** - Summarize the results and overall success of the sponsorship program in achieving goals for both the sponsor and the event, including lessons learned or long-term relationship outcomes.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the program is an existing sponsorship, what changes, improvements, or innovations were made this year? Were they successful? Please include measurable examples or outcomes.

#### OR

- If the program is a new sponsorship, what challenges or obstacles did you foresee or encounter in creating and executing the program, and how did you address them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry / program professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the design and layout visually appealing and cohesive?
- Does the program demonstrate creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Is the sponsorship integration authentic, strategic, and mutually beneficial?
- Does the program effectively represent both the event's and sponsor's brands?
- Are measurable results clearly presented and supported?
- Does the entry reflect collaboration and partnership excellence?
- Have all supporting materials and requirements been provided?
- What is the overall impression of success and quality?
- Would you recommend or support this opportunity if in a position to do so?

# CATEGORIES

## SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE

### 46) BEST OVERALL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Recognizing outstanding achievement in the development, management, and execution of a comprehensive sponsorship strategy that encompasses all sponsors involved in a festival, event, or organization.

Entries should highlight creativity, strategic alignment, measurable success, and long-term relationship value – demonstrating how the sponsorship program enhances both event excellence and sponsor satisfaction.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include relevant supporting materials throughout your entry. Limit supporting materials to those actually used as part of your sponsorship program.

Supporting materials may include:

- Sponsor prospectus, benefits guide, or customized proposals
- Marketing / promotional / media materials with sponsor integration
- Sponsor activation photos or video stills
- Sample sponsorship contracts or partnership agreements (confidential details may be redacted)
- Sponsorship recap / follow-up reports
- Measurable results (financial impact, audience engagement, brand visibility, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–j) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Main Event** - Briefly describe your event's size, purpose, and audience demographics.
- Overview of Sponsorship Program** - Summarize your overall sponsorship structure and strategy, including goals, philosophy, and how it aligns with your event's mission and values.
- Sponsor Portfolio & Levels of Support** - Provide a list of all current sponsors, including cash and in-kind contributors, levels of support, and longevity of each partnership.

- Sponsorship Packages & Valuation Methods** - Describe your available sponsorship levels, benefit structures, pricing, and valuation formulas, and how you ensure fair market value and measurable ROI.
- Sponsor Research, Targeting, and Acquisition Process** - Explain how you identify and approach potential sponsors, including data use, audience analytics, and alignment strategies.
- Sponsorship Activation & Integration** - Outline how sponsors are activated across your event (on-site, digital, broadcast, community engagement, etc.) and how activations enhance attendee experience and sponsor value.
- Sponsor Service & Relationship Management** - Describe your sponsorship servicing process – how you onboard, communicate with, and support sponsors before, during, and after the event.
- Renewal Process & Retention Rate** - Explain your renewal strategy, retention rate, and examples of long-term sponsor relationships.
- Innovation, Sustainability, & Community Impact** - Describe any creative, sustainable, or community-focused sponsorship initiatives that strengthened your program's relevance and value.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success of the Program** - Summarize the measurable success of your overall sponsorship program – including revenue growth, partnership longevity, satisfaction feedback, and community or brand impact.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the program is an existing sponsorship program, what updates or innovations were made this year? Were they successful? Please provide measurable examples or results.
- OR**
- If the program is a new sponsorship program, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter in developing and implementing it, and how did you overcome them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry / program professional and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, organized, and informative?
- Is the entry / program visually well designed and cohesive?
- Does the program demonstrate creativity, innovation, and originality?
- Is there evidence of strong sponsor servicing and relationship management?
- Does the program effectively align with and represent the event's mission?
- Are measurable results and success metrics clearly presented?
- Are digital, experiential, or sustainable practices incorporated where applicable?
- Have all requirements and supporting materials been provided?
- What is the overall impression of quality, professionalism, and success?

# CATEGORIES

## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

Recognizing programs that strengthen community connection, broaden participation, support learning, and enrich the overall event experience.

### 47) BEST VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Recognizing excellence in the design, management, and success of an overall Volunteer Program for a Festival, Event, or Organization.

Entries should highlight how the program effectively recruits, trains, supports, and celebrates volunteers while enhancing the event experience, strengthening community engagement, and ensuring sustainability and long-term volunteer retention.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital volunteer materials (brochures, handbooks, recruiting materials, evaluation forms, signage, etc.)
- Marketing / promotional / media materials
- Training guides, schedules, or onboarding materials
- Volunteer merchandise or recognition items
- Information provided to participants / sponsors / partner organizations
- Supporting photographs and testimonials
- Measurable results (tangible & intangible)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–p) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Event / Organization** - Provide an overview of the event or organization, including its purpose, audience, and scale, as context for your volunteer program.
- Volunteer Program Overview & Objectives** - Describe the name (if applicable), purpose, and key objectives of your volunteer program, and explain how it supports your event's mission and success.
- Volunteer Demographics & Participation** - Summarize the makeup of your volunteer base (e.g., age, background, affiliations, groups, etc.) and the number of volunteers and total volunteer hours contributed.
- Recruitment Strategy** - Explain how volunteers are recruited (community outreach, online platforms, partnerships, word-of-mouth, etc.), and describe the materials and messages used to attract participants.
- Training & Onboarding** - Outline how volunteers are oriented, trained, and prepared for their roles, including examples of handbooks, sessions, or digital tools used for training and communication.

- Roles & Responsibilities** - Provide examples of volunteer job descriptions and explain how volunteers are matched with roles that align with their skills, interests, and availability.
- Organization & Scheduling** - Describe the structure of the volunteer management team, scheduling process, and communication systems (e.g., volunteer management software, apps, or check-in systems).
- Communication & Support** - Detail how your team maintains communication with volunteers before, during, and after the event, including newsletters, briefings, social media, or feedback channels.
- Volunteer Benefits & Perks** - Explain what incentives, benefits, or exclusive experiences volunteers receive, such as meals, merchandise, certificates, training credits, or access to special areas.
- Recognition & Appreciation** - Describe how you celebrate and acknowledge volunteers, both during and after the event (e.g., events, awards, thank-you gifts, social spotlights, or media recognition).
- Retention & Relationship Building** - Explain how you foster long-term engagement, encourage returning volunteers, and maintain communication and connection throughout the year.
- Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility** - Highlight efforts to create an inclusive and welcoming volunteer environment, ensuring accessibility and representation across all demographics.
- Partnerships & Community Collaboration** - Describe how your program partners with schools, nonprofits, civic groups, or sponsors to recruit or support volunteers, and explain mutual benefits achieved.
- Budget & Resource Management** - Summarize the program's budget and financial considerations, including expenses for recruitment, training, materials, or recognition, and any in-kind support received.
- Measurable Results** - Provide quantitative and qualitative results, such as total volunteer hours, volunteer-to-guest ratios, retention rate, or estimated financial value of volunteer contributions.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the outcomes and impact of your volunteer program, including how it improved event operations, enhanced guest experience, and strengthened community engagement.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this is an existing volunteer program, what updates or improvements were made this year? Were they successful? Please include measurable examples or results.

**OR**

- If this is a new volunteer program, what challenges or obstacles did you foresee or encounter in creating and managing the program, and how did you address them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, well-written, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the entry display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the program effectively recruit, train, and manage volunteers?
- Does the program demonstrate measurable success and community impact?
- Are communication, recognition, and retention strategies clearly defined?
- Does the entry reflect inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, professionalism, and success?

# CATEGORIES

## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

### 48) BEST GREEN PROGRAM

Recognizing excellence in the design, implementation, and impact of a sustainability or environmental ("green") program at a Festival, Event, or within an Organization.

Entries should highlight how the program effectively reduces environmental impact, promotes sustainable practices, educates and engages attendees, and enhances the long-term environmental legacy of the event and its community.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital educational materials, handbooks, or signage promoting sustainability
- Marketing and media materials showcasing green initiatives
- Photographs or video stills of environmental programs in action
- Vendor, sponsor, or partner communications related to sustainability efforts
- Data or reports illustrating measurable environmental impact (waste diversion, recycling rates, energy use, etc.)
- Community outreach or educational campaign examples

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–p) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Event / Organization** - Provide an overview of your event or organization, including purpose, audience, and scale, as context for your sustainability efforts.
- Green Program Overview & Objectives** - Describe the name (if applicable), purpose, and primary goals of your green or sustainability program. Explain what environmental issues it addresses and why they are important to your event and community.
- Program Design & Implementation** - Outline how the program was developed and executed, including planning, logistics, and how sustainability goals were integrated into operations.
- Key Green Initiatives** - Describe the specific sustainability practices used (e.g., recycling and composting, reusable materials, renewable energy, carbon offsetting, waste diversion, water conservation, sustainable transportation, etc.).
- Promotion & Public Education** - Explain how your program was communicated to attendees, vendors, sponsors, and the public. Include examples of messaging, outreach campaigns, or educational materials designed to raise awareness and participation.

- Engagement & Participation** - Describe how the program encouraged involvement from attendees, staff, vendors, or community members, and what partnerships or incentives supported engagement.
- Measurement & Tracking** - Explain how results were tracked and evaluated (e.g., waste audits, carbon calculations, volunteer reporting, vendor data), and identify tools or metrics used to measure environmental performance.
- Measurable Results & Outcomes** - Provide quantitative and qualitative results such as recycling or composting totals, waste diversion percentages, carbon reductions, or resource savings.
- Non-Tangible Results & Legacy Impact** - Describe broader benefits such as increased environmental awareness, long-term behavior change, improved stakeholder relationships, or policy adoption influenced by your program.
- Partnerships & Collaboration** - Highlight involvement from sponsors, vendors, government agencies, community groups, or schools. Describe how collaboration strengthened program outcomes and mutual benefits achieved.
- Volunteer & Staff Involvement** - Explain how volunteers, staff, and operational teams contributed to the success of your sustainability initiatives and were educated or empowered in the process.
- Duration & Longevity** - State the timeline of the program and how long it has been part of your event or organization. If ongoing, note how it has evolved or expanded over time.
- Budget & Resource Management** - Summarize the financial aspects of your green program, including overall expenses, funding sources, sponsor contributions, or cost savings generated through sustainable practices.
- Integration with Event Operations** - Describe how your green program was woven into the larger event – such as aligning with the event's mission, programming, or brand – and how it complemented attendee experience.
- Creativity, Innovation & Scalability** - Showcase innovative elements or new approaches within your green efforts, and discuss how these can serve as a model for other events or organizations.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the overall success and impact of your green program, including measurable results, community engagement, and the long-term environmental legacy of your event.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this is an existing program, what new or improved sustainability strategies were implemented this year? Were they successful? Please provide measurable examples or results.  
**OR**
- If this is a new program, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter in developing and implementing your sustainability program, and how were they addressed?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, well-written, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the entry display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the program demonstrate measurable environmental results and impact?
- Are sustainability practices clearly integrated throughout event operations?
- Does the program effectively engage attendees, vendors, sponsors, and the community?
- Does the entry reflect environmental leadership, inclusivity, and community responsibility?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, professionalism, and sustainability excellence?

# CATEGORIES

## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

### 49) BEST EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Recognizing the design, execution, and impact of an educational program, component, or feature that is part of a larger Festival, Event, or Organization.

Entries should demonstrate how the program provides meaningful learning experiences, engages diverse audiences, supports community or professional development, and enhances the mission and long-term impact of the event.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (program guides, lesson plans, handouts, signage, etc.)
- Promotional or marketing materials
- Curriculum outlines or educational toolkits
- Information provided to participants, volunteers, sponsors, or schools
- Photographs or video stills of the educational activity in action
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (attendance, feedback, certifications, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Event / Organization** - Provide an overview of your event or organization, including its mission, audience, and context for the educational component.
- Program Overview & Objectives** - Provide the name, purpose, and key goals of the educational program, explaining how it supports your event's mission and enhances learning, awareness, or professional development.
- Target Audience & Participation** - Identify your intended audience (e.g., students, professionals, families, artists, volunteers, community members), participation numbers, and any demographic insights.
- Program Content & Delivery** - Describe the educational content and format – such as workshops, lectures, hands-on activities, virtual programs, or exhibits – and how learning objectives were achieved.
- Curriculum Design & Learning Outcomes** - Explain how the program's curriculum or content was developed, including educational themes, structure, and intended takeaways or skills gained by participants.

- Instructors, Presenters & Facilitators** - Identify who delivered the education (industry experts, educators, artists, community leaders, etc.) and the setting or platform used (in-person, virtual, hybrid).
- Partnerships & Collaborations** - Highlight involvement from schools, universities, nonprofits, sponsors, or professional organizations that contributed to program success and describe the mutual benefits.
- Community & Audience Engagement** - Explain how the program engaged its audience beyond attendance – including interactivity, discussion, feedback opportunities, or continued learning post-event.
- Diversity, Accessibility & Inclusion** - Describe efforts to make the educational experience accessible and inclusive to all participants, including multilingual content, ADA accessibility, or outreach to underrepresented groups.
- Marketing & Communications** - Summarize the promotional and communication strategy used to attract participants and communicate the value of the educational offering, including social, digital, and media outreach.
- Budget & Resource Management** - Provide an overview of the program's financial structure, including revenue sources, sponsorship support, expenses, and cost-effective practices.
- Evaluation & Measurable Results** - Share measurable outcomes such as attendance, participant satisfaction, learning assessments, media reach, or community impact. Include both quantitative and qualitative results.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the program's overall success, impact on the community or audience, and any ongoing benefits, legacy, or future plans for continuation or growth.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this is an existing program, what updates or improvements were made this year to enhance learning or engagement? Were they successful? Please include measurable examples or results.  
**OR**
- If this is a new program, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter in creating and implementing the program, and how did you overcome them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, well-written, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the entry display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the program demonstrate measurable educational impact and participant engagement?
- Does the program align with the mission and values of the event or organization?
- Does the program promote accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in participation?
- Are partnerships, collaborations, and community benefits clearly demonstrated?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, professionalism, and success?

# CATEGORIES

## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

### 50) BEST ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM

Recognizing excellence in the design, implementation, and success of accessibility programs and initiatives that make a Festival or Event inclusive and welcoming for people of all abilities.

Entries should demonstrate how the event proactively removes barriers, enhances the attendee experience, and integrates accessibility and inclusion into every phase of event planning, execution, and communication.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Accessibility maps, signage, and public communication materials
- Website and digital accessibility documentation (e.g., WCAG compliance summary)
- Photographs or videos of accessible features and services in use
- Information or training materials for staff, volunteers, or vendors
- Marketing, media, or social posts promoting inclusion and accessibility
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (feedback, participation rates, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Event / Organization** - Provide a brief overview of your event or organization, including mission, audience, and context for accessibility and inclusion initiatives.
- Accessibility Program Overview & Objectives** - Describe the name (if applicable), purpose, and key goals of your accessibility program, including the specific needs it addresses and how it supports your event's broader mission.
- Planning & Development** - Explain how accessibility was integrated into event design, planning, and operations – including consultation with disability advocates, local agencies, or accessibility experts.
- Accessible Features & Services** - Provide a detailed description of accessibility accommodations offered, including (as applicable):
  - Mobility accommodations (ramps, ADA-compliant pathways, shuttle services, etc.)
  - Visual and auditory services (captioning, ASL interpretation, assistive listening, audio description)

- Sensory-friendly spaces and materials for neurodiverse attendees
  - Quiet zones, rest areas, and inclusive seating options
  - Service animal accommodations and medical access support
  - Adaptive or inclusive programming for all ages and abilities
- Digital & Communication Accessibility** - Describe how your website, ticketing system, mobile app, and other online materials meet accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1 or higher). Include how accessibility information is communicated clearly to attendees before and during the event.
  - Training & Staff Education** - Explain how staff, volunteers, and vendors are trained to provide inclusive, respectful, and informed service to guests with disabilities or accessibility needs.
  - Community Partnerships & Collaboration** - Highlight partnerships with disability organizations, local advocacy groups, or accessibility consultants who contributed to the design or delivery of your program.
  - Marketing & Awareness** - Summarize how accessibility was promoted publicly and how inclusive messaging was integrated into marketing and communication efforts to ensure all guests felt welcome.
  - Budget & Resource Management** - Provide an overview of the accessibility program's budget, including expenses, grants, in-kind support, or sponsorship contributions dedicated to accessibility efforts.
  - Measurable Outcomes** - Include measurable results such as number of accommodations used, accessibility service utilization rates, audience satisfaction, and post-event feedback from guests with disabilities.
  - Innovation & Creativity** - Describe new or creative solutions that enhanced accessibility – such as technology integrations, sensory mapping, adaptive equipment, or inclusive programming design.
  - Program Duration & Evolution** - Specify how long your accessibility program has been in place and describe improvements, expansions, or year-over-year growth in inclusion efforts.
  - Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the overall impact of your accessibility program on attendee experience, community reputation, and the event's long-term commitment to inclusivity and equal access.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer **one** of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this is an existing accessibility program, what new accommodations or improvements were made this year, and how did they improve accessibility or inclusion? Please include measurable examples or results.
- OR**
- If this is a new accessibility program, what challenges or obstacles did you face in implementing accessibility initiatives, and how were they overcome?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, well-written, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the entry display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the accessibility program demonstrate measurable improvement in inclusion and guest experience?
- Are accessibility efforts comprehensive across mobility, sensory, cognitive, and digital needs?
- Does the event demonstrate genuine commitment to accessibility, diversity, and equity?
- Are measurable results, community partnerships, and training programs clearly documented?
- Are sustainability and long-term accessibility goals evident?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, professionalism, and inclusivity?

# CATEGORIES

## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

### 51) BEST CULTURE, COMMUNITY & CONNECTION PLAN

Recognizing excellence in strengthening belonging, representation, cultural understanding, and meaningful community connection within a festival, event, or organization.

Entries should demonstrate how your plan builds welcoming environments, elevates a wide range of voices and perspectives, broadens community participation, and creates a sense of shared ownership and pride. Focus may be on accessibility, cultural expression, community relationships, and strategies that deepen connection before, during, or after the event.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- [Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.](#)
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Written statements, handbooks, or guiding documents reflecting your organization's cultural or community values
- Marketing or media examples demonstrating broad community representation
- Internal communications that highlight commitment to welcoming environments
- Photographs, video stills, or case studies of your plan in action
- Metrics or testimonials reflecting outcomes such as increased engagement, improved access, or strengthened community ties

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Event / Organization Overview** - Describe your event or organization, its mission, its audience, and the role it plays in its community.
- Plan Overview & Objectives** - Outline the purpose, goals, and guiding principles of your Culture, Community & Connection plan and how it aligns with your values.
- Scope & Implementation** - Explain how the plan was planned and executed, and how it was integrated into operations or programming.
- Representation & Participation** - Describe how your event ensures that a wide range of cultural backgrounds, viewpoints, talents, or community groups feel welcomed and reflected through programming, staffing, outreach, or partnerships.

- Education & Engagement** - Detail how your event fosters learning, mutual understanding, or cultural awareness among attendees, staff, or partners.
- Community Partnerships** - Highlight collaborations with cultural organizations, neighborhood groups, community leaders, or local businesses that strengthened your efforts.
- Marketing & Communications** - Explain how imagery, messaging, tone, and content reflect your commitment to belonging, openness, accessibility, and community connection.
- Accessibility & Guest Experience** - Describe how barriers—physical, linguistic, sensory, financial, or otherwise—were reduced to create equitable access and comfort for all participants.
- Programming & Content** - Share examples of activities, performances, or experiences designed to spark connection, celebrate culture, or spotlight community voices.
- Measurement & Evaluation** - Provide data or feedback that reflect engagement, effectiveness, or community response.
- Resource & Budget Management** - Outline financial and staff resources dedicated to this plan.
- Innovation & Growth** - Highlight unique strategies, creative approaches, or evolving practices that improved connection or cultural engagement.
- Overall Impact & Success** - Summarize key outcomes—such as stronger community relationships, increased participation, enhanced accessibility, or meaningful cultural moments.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this is an established plan: What new strategies or partnerships were introduced this year to deepen cultural connection or strengthen community participation?  
**OR**
- If this is a new plan: What challenges or obstacles arose during planning or implementation, and how were they addressed to ensure the plan's success?

#### JUDGING CRITERIA (30 Points)

Entries will be evaluated on the following:

- Is the entry professional, clear, and well-organized?
- Is the message concise, meaningful, and easy to follow?
- Does the plan reflect authenticity, creativity, and thoughtfulness?
- Does the program demonstrate real community impact or enhanced cultural connection?
- Are accessibility and guest experience thoughtfully addressed?
- Are partnerships purposeful, well-developed, and mutually beneficial?
- Are outcomes—both measurable and narrative—well documented?
- Does the plan reflect sustainable, ongoing commitment rather than one-time gestures?
- Were all requirements met?
- What is the overall impression of purpose, quality, and impact?

# CATEGORIES

## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

### 52) BEST CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

Recognizing excellence in the creation and execution of programming specifically designed for children and families within a Festival, Event, or Organization.

Entries should highlight innovative, educational, and engaging experiences that are developmentally appropriate, safe, inclusive, and aligned with the event's overall mission. Programs may include activities, entertainment, workshops, or learning experiences created for children of all ages.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- [Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.](#)
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (brochures, handbooks, activity guides, signage, etc.)
- Promotional / marketing / media materials highlighting the children's programming
- Photos or video stills showcasing activities and engagement
- Participant materials, curriculum outlines, or educational components
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (attendance data, feedback, social engagement, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Main Event / Organization** - Provide an overview of the festival or event, including mission, audience, and context for the children's programming.
- Program Overview & Objectives** - Describe the purpose, goals, and desired outcomes of the children's programming, including educational, cultural, or entertainment objectives.
- Target Age Group & Audience Engagement** - Define the age range(s) served and describe how programming was designed to be age-appropriate, interactive, and engaging.
- Program Design & Activities** - Outline the structure and highlights of the program, including key activities, performances, workshops, or educational features.
- Safety, Accessibility & Inclusivity** - Explain how the program ensured child safety and inclusivity—covering supervision, accessibility for all abilities, sensory-friendly options, and family engagement spaces.

- Educational or Developmental Value** - Describe how the program supported creativity, learning, teamwork, or cultural understanding among participating children.
- Community & School Involvement** - Highlight partnerships or collaborations with local schools, educators, museums, or youth organizations, and describe the benefits for both the community and the event.
- Sponsorship & Partnerships** - Describe sponsor, volunteer, or partner involvement and how they contributed to the success of the program (financially, through materials, or by providing activities).
- Marketing & Promotion** - Summarize how the children's program was promoted to families and schools—via social media, family publications, or targeted community outreach.
- Budget & Resource Management** - Provide an overview of the program's financial resources, including revenue, expenses, or in-kind support.
- Duration & History** - Specify the length of the program (single-day, multi-day, recurring throughout the event) and the number of years it has been part of the festival or organization.
- Creativity & Innovation** - Explain what makes the program unique, engaging, or trendsetting—such as creative themes, interactive technology, hands-on learning, or partnerships that enhance child engagement.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize measurable results and community impact, including attendance growth, participant satisfaction, educational outcomes, and family engagement.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the program is an existing program, what improvements, updates, or innovations were implemented this year? Were your updates successful? Please include measurable results or examples.  
**OR**
- If the program is a new program, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter in creating and delivering the program, and how did you overcome them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the program display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the program provide meaningful, age-appropriate engagement for children?
- Does the program support learning, imagination, or community participation?
- Were safety, accessibility, and inclusivity effectively addressed?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Does the program reflect the mission and image of the event or organization?
- Have all entry requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, impact, and effectiveness?

# CATEGORIES

## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

### 53) BEST COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Recognizing excellence in community engagement and outreach initiatives conducted by a Festival, Event, or Organization.

Entries should highlight creative and meaningful efforts to connect with, support, and include all segments of the community—before, during, and after the event. Programs may include educational initiatives, charitable partnerships, volunteer drives, civic collaborations, or year-round engagement that strengthen community pride and the festival's reputation as a positive local force.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- [Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.](#)
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (brochures, community guides, informational flyers, signage, etc.)
- Marketing / promotional / media materials highlighting outreach initiatives
- Photographs or video stills showcasing community involvement
- Letters of support, testimonials, or partner feedback
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (participation data, engagement metrics, impact reports, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Main Event / Organization** - Provide an overview of your event or organization, including size, mission, and role within the community.
- Program Overview & Objectives** - Describe the purpose and goals of your community outreach program, and how it supports your festival's mission and values.
- Target Audience & Community Focus** - Identify the communities or populations your outreach program serves and how they were engaged or supported.
- Program Design & Implementation** - Outline how the outreach program was created, structured, and delivered – including partnerships, logistics, and timing (seasonal, year-round, etc.).
- Community Partnerships & Collaboration** - Describe collaborations with local organizations, nonprofits, schools, businesses, or civic groups. Include mutual benefits and shared goals.

- Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility** - Explain how your outreach program ensures accessibility, cultural inclusivity, and equitable participation for all community members.
- Volunteer & Participant Engagement** - Highlight how community members were encouraged to get involved, including volunteer participation or ambassador programs.
- Marketing & Communications** - Summarize how your outreach efforts were promoted and communicated to the public, including social media, local media, or community events.
- Sponsorship & Support** - Describe any sponsorships, donations, or in-kind support that helped fund or amplify your outreach program.
- Impact on the Community** - Outline the tangible and intangible benefits of the program—economic, social, environmental, or cultural—and how these outcomes were measured.
- Budget & Resource Management** - Provide an overview of the financial and staffing resources dedicated to the program.
- Innovation & Creativity** - Describe what made the program unique—new approaches, creative partnerships, or ideas that expanded your reach or effectiveness.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize key outcomes, lessons learned, and long-term community impact, including how the program strengthens your festival's year-round brand and legacy.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the program is an existing program, what changes, improvements, or innovations were introduced this year? Were your updates successful? Please provide measurable results or examples.

**OR**

- If the program is a new initiative, what challenges or obstacles did you face in creating and delivering the program, and how did you overcome them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and well-written?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the program display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the outreach reflect genuine community collaboration and engagement?
- Does the program demonstrate inclusivity and accessibility for diverse audiences?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Does the program reinforce the festival's image and mission throughout the year?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, authenticity, and impact?

# CATEGORIES

## ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING

Celebrating innovation, creativity, and success in entertainment, special programs, and new event concepts.

### 54) BEST PARADE

Recognizing excellence in the creation, production, and presentation of a Parade – whether a stand-alone event or part of a larger Festival or Celebration.

Entries should highlight creativity, community engagement, operational excellence, and measurable success in delivering a safe, inclusive, and memorable parade experience that reflects the event's mission and enhances community pride.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital promotional materials (brochures, route maps, signage, etc.)
- Media, marketing, or broadcast coverage of the parade
- Photographs or video stills of floats, bands, performers, and audiences
- Information provided to participants, volunteers, sponsors, or city agencies
- Examples of community outreach, accessibility measures, or sustainability practices
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (attendance, media reach, participant growth, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of the Parade** - Provide the parade's name, purpose, history, and objectives. Explain the overall theme and how it aligns with the event's mission or community celebration.
- Festival / Event Context** (if applicable) - If the parade is part of a larger festival or event, describe how it integrates with and supports the broader event experience.
- Audience & Attendance** - Include target audience demographics, total attendance, and how participation (in-person or virtual) was encouraged and measured.

- Participants & Entries** - Provide the number and types of parade entries (e.g., floats, marching bands, cultural groups, vehicles, mascots, etc.), as well as any themed or specialty divisions.
- Programming & Activities** - Describe activities or entertainment before, during, and after the parade (e.g., pre-parade shows, announcer zones, community performances, after-parties, etc.).
- Production & Logistics** - Summarize key operational components – such as parade route design, staging areas, safety coordination, accessibility measures, transportation, and emergency planning.
- Sponsorship, Partnerships & Support** - Identify key sponsors, volunteers, vendors, civic agencies, or community organizations involved, and describe their contributions and benefits achieved.
- Marketing, Promotion & Media Coverage** - Outline your marketing and communication strategy, including branding, theme design, social media engagement, earned media, and live-streaming or broadcast elements.
- Community Engagement & Diversity** - Explain how the parade represented or celebrated the diversity of your community and how it engaged participants and attendees across demographics and cultures.
- Sustainability & Environmental Impact** - Describe any efforts made to reduce environmental impact – such as eco-friendly materials, waste management, transportation alternatives, or green initiatives.
- Financial Overview** - Provide a summary of the parade's revenue and expenses, including sponsorship, in-kind support, and overall budget allocation.
- Creativity & Innovation** - Highlight what makes your parade stand out – unique themes, float design, technology integration, audience interactivity, or new approaches to production.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize results and outcomes, including community impact, attendee feedback, economic influence, media exposure, and overall achievement of goals.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this is an existing parade, what new or innovative elements were added this year to improve the experience or expand community impact? Were these updates successful? Please include measurable examples or results.
- OR**
- If this is a new parade, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter in developing and delivering it, and how did you address them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, well-written, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the entry display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the parade demonstrate strong community engagement and inclusivity?
- Is the event operationally sound, safe, and accessible?
- Does the parade effectively represent the mission and image of the event or community?
- Does the program demonstrate measurable results and community impact?
- Are sustainability and environmental practices clearly demonstrated?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, professionalism, and success?

# CATEGORIES

## ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING

### 55) BEST OVERALL ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

Recognizing excellence in the planning, diversity, and execution of entertainment programming at a Festival or Event.

Entries should highlight the breadth and quality of performances – including main stage acts, roving entertainers, family or children’s shows, and specialty or cultural performances – as well as creativity, community engagement, and overall audience experience. Programs may include both scheduled and spontaneous entertainment that contributes to the event’s identity and enhances its cultural and economic value.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (brochures, performer schedules, handbooks, signage, etc.)
- Promotional / marketing / media materials highlighting entertainment features
- Photographs or video stills showcasing performances or crowd engagement
- Performer lineups, stage layouts, or talent contracts (if applicable)
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (attendance figures, audience feedback, ticket sales, media reach, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Main Event** - Provide an overview of the festival or event, including its size, mission, and audience context for the entertainment programming.
- Entertainment Program Overview & Objectives** - Describe the purpose, scope, and goals of your overall entertainment strategy, including how it supports your event’s theme, mission, or community impact.
- Programming Diversity & Structure** - Outline the range of entertainment offered, including main stage, roving, children’s, cultural, specialty, and spontaneous or interactive performances.
- Talent Selection & Partnerships** - Explain how entertainment was curated or booked – including partnerships with local artists, agencies, or cultural organizations – and how talent diversity was

prioritized.

- Production & Logistics** - Describe how your event managed the technical, scheduling, and operational aspects of entertainment, including stage management, sound, lighting, and safety considerations.
- Audience Engagement & Experience** - Explain how programming encouraged active participation, surprise moments, or emotional connection among attendees. Include examples of innovative audience interaction or experiential design.
- Accessibility & Inclusion** - Describe how your entertainment program ensured accessibility for all attendees, performers, and community members – including diverse representation, ADA considerations, and sensory or family-friendly offerings.
- Marketing & Promotion** - Summarize your entertainment marketing strategy, including media campaigns, digital content, influencer or artist cross-promotion, and community outreach.
- Sponsorship & Partnerships** - Describe sponsor involvement, brand activations, or collaborations tied to entertainment, and how these enhanced the event experience.
- Budget & Resource Management** - Provide an overview of your entertainment budget, including revenue sources (ticketing, sponsorship, grants, etc.), expenses, and any cost-saving measures.
- Community Impact & Cultural Value** - Explain how your entertainment programming reflected the community’s culture, supported local talent, or contributed to regional tourism and economic vitality.
- Measurable Results** - Provide attendance numbers, audience demographics, media coverage, social media engagement, or post-event survey results demonstrating the success of the program.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the entertainment program’s overall impact – on audience satisfaction, community reputation, and the event’s long-term growth or evolution.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the entertainment program is an existing program, what new or innovative elements were introduced this year? Were your updates successful? Please include measurable results or examples.
- OR**
- If the entertainment program is a new initiative, what challenges or obstacles did you face in creating and producing the program, and how did you overcome them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and well-written?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the program demonstrate creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the entertainment align with and enhance the event’s purpose and theme?
- Does the program offer a diverse and inclusive range of talent and experiences?
- Is the production quality professional, safe, and engaging?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Does the entertainment reflect community culture and event identity?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, engagement, and impact?

# CATEGORIES

## ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING

### 56) BEST EVENT / PROGRAM WITHIN AN EVENT TO BENEFIT A CAUSE

Recognizing excellence in the creation, execution, and impact of an event or program within a larger Festival or Event designed to raise awareness or funds for a charitable, social, or community cause – other than the organization's own.

Entries should highlight programs that meaningfully engage attendees, sponsors, and the broader community in support of a cause, demonstrating creativity, collaboration, transparency, and measurable results.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (brochures, promotional pieces, signage, informational flyers, etc.)
- Marketing, social media, or media coverage related to the program
- Photos or video stills showcasing the event or cause-driven activity
- Partnership or sponsor materials highlighting collaboration
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (funds raised, participation data, volunteer hours, awareness metrics, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Main Event** - Provide an overview of the main festival or event, including its mission, audience, and community role.
- Program Overview & Objectives** - Describe the purpose and goals of the specific cause-related event or program, and how it aligns with both your organization's mission and the selected cause.
- Cause Selection & Partnerships** - Explain the process for selecting the cause or charitable partner, including any criteria or community input, and describe the relationship established with the benefiting organization(s).
- Program Design & Execution** - Detail how the cause-related event or program was planned, structured, and implemented – including activation methods, on-site engagement, and integration into the larger event.

- Target Audience & Participation** - Describe the demographics and engagement of participants, attendees, or donors, and how outreach was tailored to maximize involvement and awareness.
- Marketing & Communication Strategy** - Summarize how the cause and related activities were promoted – through social media, earned media, influencer or sponsor collaboration, or event storytelling.
- Sponsorship & Partnerships** - Explain how sponsors, vendors, or community partners supported the cause, and what mutual benefits were achieved.
- Volunteer & Staff Involvement** - Highlight volunteer roles and staff efforts that contributed to the program's success, including recruitment, training, and coordination.
- Budget & Fundraising Performance** - Provide an overview of the financial structure – including revenue, expenses, sponsorship, in-kind donations, and total funds raised (if applicable).
- Community Impact & Measurable Outcomes** - Describe the tangible and intangible results of the initiative, including funds raised, awareness generated, partnerships formed, and testimonials from beneficiaries.
- Transparency & Accountability** - Explain how funds or resources were distributed to the cause, including communication back to donors and attendees.
- Creativity & Innovation** - Describe what made the program unique or particularly effective – creative activations, audience engagement strategies, or use of technology.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the overall impact of the initiative on your community, the benefiting organization, and the festival's reputation as a community partner.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the program is an existing initiative, what new or innovative elements were added this year to increase impact or engagement? Were your updates successful? Please provide measurable results or examples. **OR**
- If the program is a new initiative, what challenges or obstacles did you face in developing and executing the program, and how did you overcome them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and well-written?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the program demonstrate creativity, originality, and authenticity?
- Does the initiative effectively connect the event and the cause in a meaningful way?
- Were funds or awareness outcomes measurable and clearly communicated?
- Does the program demonstrate community partnership, integrity, and transparency?
- Does the program align with and enhance the event's purpose and mission?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, effectiveness, and social impact?

# CATEGORIES

## ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING

### 57) BEST EVENT (WITHIN AN EXISTING FESTIVAL)

Recognizing excellence in the creation, execution, and impact of a standalone event or activation that takes place within a larger festival or event.

Entries should focus on how the featured event complements and enhances the overall festival experience while delivering unique value through creativity, engagement, innovation, and measurable success.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (brochures, programs, maps, signage, etc.)
- Marketing and promotional materials related to the event
- Photographs or video stills of the event in action
- Participant, sponsor, or partner materials
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (attendance, engagement, media reach, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Description of Main Festival / Event** - Provide an overview of the parent festival, including its history, mission, and audience.
- Event Overview & Objectives** - Describe the featured event held within the larger festival, including its name, theme, and purpose. Explain how it complements the festival's overall vision or programming.
- Target Audience & Attendance** - Define the target audience and provide attendance data, engagement figures, and demographic insights.
- Program Design & Experience** - Outline the event structure and format – including key elements such as entertainment, activities, layout, or scheduling – that contributed to its success.

- Innovation & Creativity** - Explain what makes the event unique – creative concepts, design approaches, interactive experiences, or use of technology that enhanced attendee engagement.
- Partnerships & Collaboration** - Highlight collaborations with sponsors, local businesses, artists, volunteers, or organizations that helped bring the event to life.
- Marketing & Promotion** - Describe how the event was promoted independently and as part of the overall festival, including social media, press, influencer engagement, and community outreach.
- Accessibility, Safety & Sustainability** - Explain how the event ensured accessibility for all attendees, implemented safety measures, and adopted sustainable practices (e.g., waste reduction, eco-friendly operations).
- Budget & Resource Management** - Provide an overview of the event's financial structure, including revenue sources, expenses, and resource allocation (staff, volunteers, sponsors).
- Community & Cultural Impact** - Describe how the event contributed to community engagement, cultural enrichment, or local economic benefits.
- Integration with the Main Festival** - Explain how the featured event complemented, enhanced, or diversified the larger festival's programming and audience experience.
- Measurable Results & Evaluation** - Provide tangible and intangible outcomes – including attendance, economic impact, media exposure, social media engagement, or attendee satisfaction.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the overall impact, sustainability, and long-term value of the event within the larger festival ecosystem.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If the event is an existing program, what updates or innovations were introduced this year? Were they successful? Please provide measurable results or examples.
- OR**
- If the event is a new program, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter in creating and executing it, and how did you address them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and well-written?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the event demonstrate creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the program effectively enhance and align with the main festival's mission and goals?
- Were accessibility, safety, and sustainability effectively incorporated?
- Does the event engage and resonate with its intended audience?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Does the event contribute to community or cultural enrichment?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, execution, and impact?

# CATEGORIES

## ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING

### 58) BEST NEW FESTIVAL OR EVENT

Recognizing excellence in innovation, creativity, and excellence in launching a brand-new event that demonstrates strong planning, execution, and community or economic impact.

Entry should focus on a Festival or Event created from scratch for the first time between June 26, 2025, and June 24, 2026, that is not part of a larger Festival or Event.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any relevant materials throughout your entry, limiting to no more than five (5) examples per area (if applicable):

- Printed materials (brochures, handbooks, signage, maps, etc.)
- Marketing and media materials (social media, press coverage, ads, etc.)
- Merchandise or branding elements
- Information provided to participants, volunteers, sponsors, or community partners
- Supporting photographs or video stills
- Measurable results (attendance data, media impressions, revenue, community, or business impact)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–j) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section:

a. **Introduction and Description of Main Event** - Provide a brief overview of the new festival or event, including its name, location, date(s), and mission or purpose.

- b. **Objectives and Concept Development** - Describe the inspiration and rationale for creating the event – what need or opportunity it addressed – and the key goals behind its launch.
- c. **Target Audience and Attendance** - Define your primary and secondary audiences and provide attendance or participation figures.
- d. **Programming and Experience Design** - Outline the core components and experiences of the event, such as entertainment, cultural elements, activities, food/beverage, or unique attractions.
- e. **Marketing and Communications** - Summarize the promotional strategy used to introduce and establish the new event brand, including audience engagement, media outreach, and digital tactics.
- f. **Partnerships, Sponsors, and Community Involvement** - Describe how sponsors, volunteers, local businesses, or community organizations contributed to the event's success and mutual benefits achieved.
- g. **Budget and Financial Overview** - Provide a general overview of event revenue and expenses, along with major funding sources (e.g., sponsorships, ticket sales, grants, donations).
- h. **Challenges and Solutions** - Discuss the primary challenges encountered in developing and executing the event and how they were addressed.
- i. **Innovation and Creativity** - Highlight what made this new festival or event distinctive – new ideas, technologies, collaborations, or design approaches that set it apart.
- j. **Overall Effectiveness and Success** - Summarize measurable outcomes such as attendance, economic or tourism impact, community engagement, media reach, and plans for future sustainability or growth.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer the following question using no more than one (1) page:

- What challenges or obstacles did you foresee or encounter in creating this new event, and how did you handle them? Please include measurable results or examples where possible.

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out well?
- Does the entry demonstrate creativity and originality?
- Is the entry compelling and engaging to review?
- Does the event effectively reflect the brand, mission, and purpose?
- Does the event show measurable success and sustainability potential?
- Have all supporting materials and measurable results been provided?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING

### 59) BEST CULTURAL / HERITAGE EVENT (NEW)

Recognizing excellence in outstanding events that showcase and sustain cultural heritage through programming, partnerships, and creative expression.

Entry should focus on a Festival or Event that celebrates and preserves cultural, historical, or heritage traditions – whether local, regional, national, or global – while fostering community engagement, education, and authenticity.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area (if applicable):

- Printed materials (brochures, guides, signage, maps, programs, etc.)
- Marketing and promotional materials
- Cultural or educational content (interpretive displays, digital storytelling, videos, etc.)
- Partnerships with cultural institutions, artists, or heritage organizations
- Supporting photographs and/or short video clips
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–l), in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page to explain each section:

- Introduction and Description of Main Event** - Provide a general overview, including the name, location, and purpose of the event.
- Cultural or Heritage Focus** - Describe the specific cultural, ethnic, or historical traditions represented and their significance.
- Event Objectives** - Outline the main goals of the event (e.g., cultural preservation, education, tourism, economic impact, or community unity).
- Programming and Activities** - Describe the cultural and educational components – such as performances, exhibits, workshops, demonstrations, culinary elements, or storytelling.
- Authenticity and Representation** - Explain how the event ensures accurate, respectful, and authentic representation of cultural or heritage traditions, including involvement of community representatives or cultural advisors.
- Partnerships and Collaborations** - List partnerships with local cultural organizations, heritage sites, tourism bureaus, or community groups, and describe their roles.
- Audience Engagement and Demographics** - Describe your audience, attendance numbers, and efforts to engage diverse communities and age groups.

- Marketing and Outreach** - Summarize how the event was promoted locally, regionally, and/or nationally, including key media or community engagement strategies.
- Economic, Educational, and Cultural Impact** - Provide measurable results, such as attendance growth, tourism revenue, community feedback, or educational outcomes.
- Sustainability and Inclusivity Practices** - Describe any environmental, social, or accessibility practices that enhance the event's inclusivity and long-term cultural preservation.
- Challenges and Solutions** - Identify any challenges faced (e.g., cultural sensitivity, funding, logistics) and how they were addressed.
- Overall Effectiveness / Success of Event** - Summarize the event's impact, success, and contribution to cultural heritage and community vitality.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- If the event is an existing event, what changes or enhancements were made in the past year to improve authenticity, engagement, or inclusivity? Provide measurable examples.
- If the event is a new event, what inspired the creation of the event, and what strategies ensured its cultural or historical integrity?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, clear, and easy to understand?
- Is the message concise, organized, and informative?
- Is the entry well-designed and presented?
- Does the event creatively and authentically celebrate culture or heritage?
- Does the event demonstrate inclusivity and respect for cultural traditions?
- Is there measurable community, cultural, or economic impact?
- Does the event align with the mission and values of cultural preservation?
- Does the event engage audiences and foster learning or appreciation?
- Have all supporting materials and measurable results been provided?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## ENTERTAINMENT & PROGRAMMING

### 60) BEST NIGHTTIME ECONOMY EVENT (NEW)

Recognizing excellence in a festival or event that has made the most significant contribution to the nighttime economy in its community – defined as economic, cultural, and social activities taking place between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Entry should highlight how the event activates local spaces after dark, supports local businesses, enhances community safety, fosters inclusivity, and contributes to a vibrant, sustainable, and well-managed nighttime experience.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable).

Supporting materials may include:

- Printed or digital materials (brochures, signage, business outreach flyers, etc.)
- Promotional / marketing / media materials highlighting night-time activations
- Branded merchandise or collateral related to after-dark programming
- Community or business outreach materials
- Photographs or video stills highlighting the event at night
- Measurable results (attendance, economic impact, social media analytics, press coverage, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–j) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section.

- Introduction & Event Overview** - Provide a concise description of your event, including name, location, dates, and purpose. Include a brief history (if applicable) and explain how the event supports, contributes to, or enhances the local nighttime economy.
- Objectives & Strategy** - Describe the primary goals and strategic objectives of your nighttime programming or activation—such as increasing visitor spending, supporting local businesses, extending operating hours, promoting safe and inclusive engagement, or enriching the community's cultural and economic vitality after dark.
- Target Audience & Attendance** - Identify your target audience, provide attendance figures and demographic information, and summarize how you engaged or attracted your audience to participate in the nighttime experience.
- Duration & Frequency** - Specify the event's operating hours,

number of nights, and how long this program has been part of your festival, event, or community calendar. Include context for growth or evolution over time if applicable.

- Financial Overview & Economic Impact** - Summarize the event's budget, including overall revenue and expenses, and describe measurable economic outcomes such as increased sales, hotel occupancy, visitor spending, employment, or other benefits to the local economy.
- Program Design & Execution** - Explain how your event was developed and delivered, including programming highlights (e.g., entertainment, lighting, dining, cultural elements), operational logistics (e.g., safety, transportation, infrastructure), and any unique features that enhanced the attendee experience after dark.
- Partnerships, Collaboration & Community Support** - Describe partnerships with local venues, restaurants, businesses, artists, sponsors, or civic organizations that contributed to the event's success. Highlight collaborative efforts and mutual benefits resulting from these relationships.
- Safety, Accessibility & Sustainability** - Explain how your event prioritized attendee safety, accessibility, and environmental responsibility, including crowd management, lighting, transportation, inclusivity for diverse audiences, and sustainable practices that reduced environmental impact.
- Marketing & Communications** - Summarize the marketing and communication strategy for promoting your nighttime programming, including messaging, creative design, media channels (social, digital, traditional), partnerships, and audience engagement tactics before, during, and after the event.
- Creativity, Innovation & Overall Effectiveness** - Describe what made the event unique and successful—highlighting innovation in design, cultural authenticity, use of technology, or creative activation—and summarize overall results such as community engagement, attendee satisfaction, and long-term impact on the local night-time economy.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this is an existing program, what new or innovative approaches were introduced to enhance your nighttime economy impact? Were your updates successful? Please include measurable examples or results.  
**OR**
- If this is a new program, what challenges or obstacles did you foresee or encounter in creating and delivering a nighttime event, and how did you address them?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, well-written, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the entry display creativity, originality, and innovation?
- Does the program demonstrate measurable impact on the local nighttime economy?
- Does the event effectively engage and benefit the community, local businesses, and stakeholders?
- Were safety, accessibility, and sustainability clearly considered and implemented?
- Does the entry reflect the professionalism and image of the event and its organizers?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly presented?
- Have all entry requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of quality, effectiveness, and community value?

# CATEGORIES

## EVENT OPERATIONS & SAFETY

Recognizing excellence in the planning, preparedness, and implementation of operational systems that ensure smooth, safe, and successful event execution.

### 61) BEST EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Recognizing excellence in the planning, implementation, and management of comprehensive emergency preparedness and risk management programs that ensure smooth, safe and successful Festival or Event execution.

Entries should highlight how organizers proactively assess, prepare for, mitigate, and respond to risks related to attendee safety, weather, security, health, and crowd management—while maintaining event continuity, clear communication, and stakeholder coordination.

#### Confidentiality Notice

Due to the sensitive nature of this category, all information submitted in this entry will be viewed only by the assigned judge for this category. If the entry receives an award, selected documentation may be shared in the Members-Only section of IFEA.com for educational purposes. For security reasons, winning organizations have the option to provide an alternative version of their entry with sensitive or proprietary information removed prior to publication.

To coordinate the submission of an alternative version or discuss confidentiality considerations, please contact Nia Hovde, CFEE, Vice President/Director of Marketing & Communications at the IFEA, at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com).

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- [Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.](#)
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any necessary supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area listed below (if applicable). Supporting materials may include:

- Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Risk Matrix, or Command Structure Chart
- Communication templates, signage examples, and incident protocols
- Maps and diagrams of emergency routes, first aid stations, or security posts
- Photos or documentation of emergency drills or preparedness training
- Evidence of interagency collaboration or safety certifications
- Measurable results: tangible & intangible (response times, training participation, reduced incidents, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–m) in the order listed below. *At the request of the judge for this category, there are no page limitations for this section.* Entrants are encouraged to provide sufficient detail, supporting documentation, and examples to clearly demonstrate the scope, structure, and effectiveness of their plan.

- Introduction & Description of Event** - Provide an overview of your festival or event, including size, location, audience demographics, and primary risk factors associated with your event environment.
- Plan Overview & Objectives** - Describe the purpose and scope of your Emergency Preparedness & Risk Management Plan, including its objectives and guiding principles.
- Risk Assessment & Hazard Identification** - Provide a comprehensive overview of the potential hazards and risks associated with your event, describing how they were identified, evaluated, and addressed. Outline your overall risk assessment process, including key hazard categories such as weather, medical, security, crowd management, infrastructure, terrorism, and cyber threats. Clearly demonstrate how risks were analyzed and mitigated by including the following information:
  - **Categories of hazards and risks**, how each was identified, and the assessed level of risk before any controls were applied.
  - **Control or mitigation measures** implemented to reduce or manage each identified risk.
  - **New (residual) level of risk** after mitigation, demonstrating the effectiveness of your controls. Include a risk matrix or table summarizing hazard types, pre-control risk levels, mitigation strategies, and residual risk levels.

- d. **Agency Coordination & Stakeholder Roles** - List all public and private agencies involved (law enforcement, fire, EMS, public health, security, etc.) and their roles in plan implementation. Include the number of personnel or units deployed and a brief rationale for deployment levels based on your event's risk profile and expected attendance.
- e. **Command, Control & Communication Structure** - Explain your incident command system (ICS) or equivalent, including chain of command, decision-making authority, and internal/external communication processes.
- f. **Crowd Management & Public Safety Measures** - Describe how attendee flow, density, and behavior are monitored and managed throughout the event. Include your capacity limits and how those limits were determined. Summarize the methods used to track crowd numbers, the controls in place to prevent overcrowding, and the protocols for relieving congestion in high-density areas. Reference key tools or strategies such as signage, barriers, trained staff, and communication systems used to maintain a safe environment.
- g. **Emergency Response & Evacuation Planning** - Detail procedures for shelter-in-place, evacuation, medical emergencies, lost persons, and reunification. Include communication methods used for attendees and staff.
- h. **Medical & Health Preparedness** - Summarize medical and public health resources on-site – including staffing levels, first aid coverage, cooling/warming areas, and pandemic-related precautions if applicable.
- i. **Training, Exercises & Staff Readiness** - Describe how staff, volunteers, and vendors are trained in safety procedures and emergency communication, and note any drills, tabletop exercises, or credentialing programs.
- j. **Technology & Innovation** - Explain any digital systems, apps, or tools used for communication, real-time alerts, incident tracking, or risk data management.
- k. **Accessibility, Equity & Inclusion in Emergency Planning** - Describe how your plan accounts for people with disabilities, language diversity, or other accessibility needs during emergencies.
- l. **Budget & Resource Allocation** - Provide an overview of financial resources and partnerships supporting safety operations, including staffing, equipment, and training investments.
- m. **Evaluation, Review & Continuous Improvement** - Describe how your plan's effectiveness is measured post-event, including debriefing processes, key performance indicators, and lessons learned.

## 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- If the plan is an existing plan, what updates or improvements were implemented this year to enhance safety and preparedness? Were they successful? Please include measurable outcomes or examples.

**OR**

- If the plan is a new plan, what challenges or obstacles did you encounter during its creation or implementation, and how were they addressed?

## Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following criteria:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and well-written?
- Is the entry designed and laid out effectively?
- Does the plan demonstrate thoroughness, foresight, and innovation?
- Are risks clearly identified and mitigation strategies clearly defined?
- Does the plan demonstrate collaboration with public safety agencies and partners?
- Are crowd management, communication, and accessibility well addressed?
- Are measurable results, drills, and improvements clearly presented?
- Does the plan reflect the event's professionalism and commitment to safety?
- Have all requirements been met?
- What is the overall impression of completeness, preparedness, and excellence?

# CATEGORIES

## INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE

Honoring innovation, service quality, and outstanding contributions from partners, vendors, and suppliers within the festivals and events industry.

### 62) BEST PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Recognizing excellence in the development and delivery of a product or service that directly benefits a festival or event.

Eligible entries may include innovative technologies, tools, systems, or professional services introduced or implemented between June 28, 2024, and June 25, 2025, that demonstrate clear impact through innovation, efficiency, sustainability, or enhancement of the audience or operational experience.

Both vendors/suppliers and the festivals or events utilizing the product or service are eligible to submit an entry.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include relevant materials to illustrate and support your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples for each area listed below (if applicable):

- Photos or images of the product/service in use
- Promotional, marketing, or educational materials
- Demonstration or user documentation (e.g., how-to guides, training, or specifications)
- Supporting photographs, video stills, or data visuals
- Testimonials or feedback from event organizers or users
- Measurable results (performance data, adoption rates, cost savings, or audience impact)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–h) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page to explain each section:

- Introduction and Description of Product or Service** - Provide the product or service name, purpose, and a brief explanation of how it enhances or supports festival and event operations or experiences.
- Goals & Objectives** - Describe the goals of the product or service – such as improving efficiency, safety, accessibility, sustainability, engagement, or attendee satisfaction.

- Innovation & Development Process** - Outline how the product or service was conceptualized, developed, and tested, and what makes it new, improved, or unique within the industry.
- Application at Festival/Event** - Explain how and where the product or service was implemented, including examples of specific use cases, partnerships, or measurable outcomes.
- Target Market** - Identify the primary users or buyers (e.g., event organizers, vendors, attendees) and describe how the product or service meets their needs or solves specific challenges.
- Measurable Results & Impact** - Provide tangible and intangible outcomes such as increased efficiency, reduced costs, sustainability metrics, audience engagement, or other performance indicators.
- Sustainability, Accessibility, or Community Impact (if applicable)** - Highlight any environmentally sustainable, socially responsible, or inclusive features integrated into the product or service.
- Overall Effectiveness & Success** - Summarize the overall success of the product or service, including adoption rate, feedback, and contribution to advancing industry standards or practices.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- For existing products or services: What improvements or updates were made this year, and what measurable results demonstrate success?
- For new products or services: What challenges or obstacles were encountered during development or implementation, and how were they overcome?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, well-organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and laid out well?
- Does the product or service demonstrate innovation and originality?
- Is it practical, scalable, and beneficial for the festivals and events industry?
- Does it address a specific need or challenge within the industry?
- Are measurable results and real-world applications clearly demonstrated?
- Does the entry reflect the mission, professionalism, and image of the submitting organization?
- Have all supporting materials and measurable results been provided?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE

### 63) BEST VENDOR / SUPPLIER

Recognizing excellence in vendor or supplier partnership that significantly enhances the success, safety, efficiency, or overall experience of a festival or event.

Entries should highlight collaboration, reliability, innovation, and the measurable impact of the vendor or supplier's contribution to the event's operations or attendee experience.

Entries must be submitted by the festival or event on behalf of the vendor or supplier being recognized.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Include materials that demonstrate the vendor or supplier's role and impact. Limit to no more than five (5) examples per area, if applicable:

- Photos or videos showcasing the vendor/supplier's product or service in action
- Marketing, media, or promotional materials
- Documentation of service delivery (e.g., plans, contracts, logistics summaries)
- Testimonials from event organizers or participants
- Measurable results (efficiency improvements, cost savings, audience satisfaction, etc.)

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–j), in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page to explain each section:

- Vendor / Supplier Information** - Provide the name, description, and background of the vendor/supplier, including primary contact and key services provided.
- Website and Social Media Links** - Include links to the vendor/supplier's official website and any active social media accounts relevant to the partnership.
- Description of Products / Services Provided** - Explain the product or service the vendor/supplier delivered, including how it directly supported or enhanced the event.
- Scope, Quality, and Duration of Partnership** - Describe the extent of the vendor's involvement, the quality of their deliverables, and the length or frequency of their relationship with the event.

- Collaboration & Communication** - Outline how the vendor/supplier worked with the event team, including coordination, responsiveness, and professionalism throughout planning and execution.
- Innovation and Added Value** - Highlight unique approaches, technologies, sustainable practices, or creative problem-solving that distinguished the vendor from others in their field.
- Onsite or Program Activation** - Describe any onsite presence or brand activation provided by the vendor/supplier, and how it engaged attendees or supported the event's goals.
- Impact on Event Success** - Explain how the vendor/supplier's contribution improved operations, attendee experience, safety, or sustainability.
- Measurable Results** - Provide tangible and intangible outcomes such as time or cost savings, enhanced attendee experience, improved efficiency, or increased engagement.
- Why This Vendor / Supplier Stands Out** - Summarize why this vendor/supplier represents the best in the industry – what makes them a valued, reliable, and exceptional partner.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page):

- If this was an existing vendor, how has your relationship with this vendor or supplier evolved over time to strengthen operational efficiency or event quality?  
**OR**
- If this was a new vendor, how did your team identify, select, and successfully integrate this vendor or supplier into your event operations?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry well-designed and visually effective?
- Does the vendor/supplier demonstrate innovation and creativity?
- Does the partnership clearly add measurable value to the event?
- Is the relationship collaborative, professional, and sustainable?
- Does the vendor/supplier reflect positively on the event's image and mission?
- Are measurable results and supporting materials clearly provided?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## MEDIA RELATIONS

Recognizing excellence in the strategy, execution, and measurable success of a comprehensive media relations campaign.

**64) BEST OVERALL MEDIA RELATIONS CAMPAIGN**  
Recognizing excellence in the development and execution of a comprehensive media relations campaign that strategically elevates awareness, engagement, and attendance for a festival or event.

Entries should highlight innovation, planning, and measurable results across all media channels – including traditional outlets, digital platforms, social media, influencer partnerships, and community engagement – demonstrating how an integrated approach effectively amplified the event's story and reach.

### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any relevant supporting materials throughout your entry, limited to no more than five (5) examples for each area listed below (if applicable):

- **Traditional Media Coverage:** Press releases, media kits, news articles, television and radio segments (provide links or QR codes), print ads, billboards, inserts/supplements.
- **Digital & Social Media Evidence:** Screenshots, analytics, sample posts, engagement metrics, influencer collaborations, hashtags, and reach data.
- **Creative Content:** Examples of videos, photography, graphics, paid ads, or interactive content used to drive engagement.
- **Partnership Materials:** Collaborations with influencers, media outlets, or content creators that extended campaign reach.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Campaign reports, media summaries, or analytics dashboards showing success metrics.

### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–j), in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page to explain each section:

- a. **Introduction & Description of Main Event** - Provide the event's name, date(s), location, and general overview.
- b. **Purpose & Objectives of the Media Relations Campaign** - Outline the key goals (e.g., awareness, attendance growth, tourism impact, community engagement, sponsor exposure).

- c. **Campaign Strategy & Implementation** - Provide a detailed outline of your entire media relations campaign, including timeline, editorial calendar, and coordination across traditional media, digital channels, and influencer or partner activity.
- d. **Media & Communication Channels Used** - List all mediums and platforms used – including traditional outlets (TV, radio, print), digital media, social platforms, influencer partnerships, and paid advertising.
- e. **Creative Approach & Messaging** - Describe your campaign's creative direction – key visuals, tone, storytelling approach, and content themes that connected with your target audiences.
- f. **Target Audiences & Demographics** - Identify primary and secondary audience groups, including age, interests, geography, and engagement behavior.
- g. **Market Reach & Geographic Scope** - Describe how your campaign targeted local, regional, national, and/or international audiences, and why.
- h. **Interactive & Engagement Tactics** - Provide examples of innovative engagement tools (contests, polls, quizzes, hashtags, user-generated content, influencer collaborations) that encouraged two-way interaction and audience participation.
- i. **Results & Impact Metrics** - Include quantitative and qualitative results such as:
  - Media coverage volume and percent of outlets engaged
  - Social and digital analytics (impressions, shares, engagement, demographics)
  - Attendance, website traffic, sponsorship visibility, or revenue increases attributed to campaign performance.
- j. **Overall Effectiveness & Takeaways** - Summarize how well the campaign met its objectives, including lessons learned, unexpected successes, and potential improvements for future campaigns.

### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- For existing campaigns: What was updated or changed from the previous year, and were the updates successful? Provide measurable results or examples.
- For new campaigns: What challenges or obstacles did you face in creating or executing your campaign, and how did you overcome them?

### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and presented effectively?
- Does the campaign demonstrate creativity and originality?
- Is the campaign compelling, engaging, and results-driven?
- Does the campaign successfully represent the image and mission of the event?
- Are measurable results clearly defined and supported?
- Does the campaign show strong strategy and execution across multiple media types?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Celebrating educational institutions and programs that prepare the next generation of event professionals.

### 65) BEST EVENT MANAGEMENT BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Recognizing excellence in curriculum design, industry integration, experiential learning, and student success in preparing graduates for careers in the festivals and events industry.

Entry should focus on the overall structure, innovation, and outcomes of an Event Management Bachelor's Degree program offered by a college or university.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any relevant supporting materials for the program throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area (if applicable):

- Student recruiting or promotional materials
- Student application or admission materials
- Program overview, brochure, or digital catalog listing
- Course outlines, syllabi, or curriculum flowcharts
- Reading or resource list for students
- Sample project briefs, assessment examples, or capstone guidelines
- Internship descriptions, partnerships, or student project summaries
- Alumni testimonials or graduate outcome data

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–l) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page to explain each section:

- Introduction & Institutional Overview** - Provide a brief history and description of the college/university and its mission as it relates to the events, hospitality, or tourism industry.
- Purpose & Objectives of the Event Management Degree** - Outline the overall goals of the degree program, including its role in preparing students for careers in event planning, production, and management.
- Program Foundation & Structure** - List the year the program was founded, duration of study, and key focus areas (e.g., festivals, live events, business, hospitality, sustainability).

- Curriculum Overview** - Provide a summary of the required coursework, including event-specific, business, and experiential learning components.
- Faculty & Staff** - List the number of faculty members and describe their relevant academic and professional experience; include student-to-staff ratios.
- Enrollment, Graduation, and Demographics** - Provide current enrollment data, graduation rates, and student demographics, including diversity and international representation.
- Experiential Learning & Industry Partnerships** - Detail internships, practicum opportunities, live-event collaborations, and partnerships with festivals, venues, or organizations.
- Innovation in Teaching & Learning** - Describe innovative teaching methods or technologies (e.g., hybrid instruction, simulation, AI applications, sustainability practices, or inclusive event design).
- Student Development & Career Readiness** - Explain how students develop practical skills (communication, budgeting, logistics, risk management, leadership) through coursework and projects.
- Financial Information** - Provide an overview of tuition costs, available financial assistance, and scholarship or industry-funded support.
- Program Outcomes & Alumni Success** - Highlight measurable success indicators such as job placement rates, alumni achievements, certifications earned, or industry awards.
- Overall Effectiveness & Future Vision** - Summarize the program's ongoing impact on students, the community, and the events industry, and how it continues to evolve to meet future needs.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- **If the program is established:** What updates or innovations were introduced in the past year (e.g., DEI, sustainability, technology, hybrid learning), and were they successful? Provide measurable examples.
- **If the program is new:** What challenges or opportunities were encountered in developing the degree, and how were they addressed?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and presented effectively?
- Does the degree program demonstrate innovation and originality?
- Does the curriculum reflect current industry trends and best practices?
- Does the program show strong connections with the events industry?
- Does the entry demonstrate measurable success and student outcomes?
- Does the program align with the mission and image of the institution?
- Have all supporting materials and measurable results been provided?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 66) BEST EVENT MANAGEMENT MASTER'S DEGREE

Recognizing excellence in graduate-level education designed to develop advanced leadership, research, and strategic management skills for the festivals and events industry.

Entry should focus on the overall structure, innovation, and outcomes of an Event Management Master's Degree program offered by a college or university.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include relevant supporting materials for the program throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area (if applicable):

- Graduate recruiting or promotional materials
- Admissions information or application guidelines
- Program brochure or catalog listing
- Course outlines, syllabi, or curriculum maps
- Reading lists, research project examples, or capstone summaries
- Examples of student theses, research, or professional projects
- Partnership or internship documentation with industry organizations
- Alumni testimonials, success stories, or placement data

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–l), in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page to explain each section:

- Introduction & Institutional Overview** - Provide a brief history and description of the college/university, and its commitment to advancing event management education and leadership.
- Purpose & Objectives of the Master's Degree Program** - Describe the mission and goals of the program – e.g., leadership development, research, innovation, sustainability, or global event strategy.
- Program Foundation & Structure** - List the year founded, length of study (full-time/part-time/online/hybrid), and core areas of academic focus.
- Curriculum Overview** - Summarize required coursework, elective options, and areas of specialization (e.g., event strategy, risk management, experiential marketing, tourism, sustainability).
- Faculty Expertise** - List number of faculty, describe their

academic and professional qualifications, and note guest lecturers or industry partnerships.

- Enrollment & Diversity Data** - Provide number of current students, graduates, and demographic data (including domestic/international student representation).
- Research & Applied Learning** - Highlight research projects, case studies, internships, or consulting opportunities that connect theory with real-world event practice.
- Innovation in Teaching & Technology** - Describe how the program integrates modern learning technologies, hybrid or online delivery, and innovations such as data analytics, AI, or sustainability practices.
- Professional Integration & Industry Partnerships** - Detail collaborations with event organizations, associations, or major events, including mentorship programs, site visits, and conference participation.
- Financial Overview** - Provide tuition information, financial assistance options, and scholarships or fellowships offered.
- Graduate Outcomes & Alumni Impact** - Highlight alumni employment, leadership roles, research publications, or contributions to the events and hospitality industry.
- Overall Effectiveness & Program Evolution** - Summarize how the program continues to evolve to meet current and future industry needs, including plans for growth or curriculum expansion.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- **If the program is established:** What new courses, technologies, or partnerships have been introduced in the past year, and how have they strengthened the program? Provide measurable results.
- **If the program is new:** What challenges or opportunities were encountered during development or launch, and how were they addressed?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and presented effectively?
- Does the program demonstrate innovation and leadership in event management education?
- Does the curriculum align with current and emerging industry trends?
- Does the program emphasize research, experiential learning, and professional growth?
- Are measurable outcomes and alumni achievements clearly demonstrated?
- Does the program reflect the mission and reputation of the institution?
- Have all supporting materials and measurable results been provided?
- Have all requirements been met?

# CATEGORIES

## ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 67) BEST EVENT MANAGEMENT PH.D. PROGRAM

Recognizing excellence in academic rigor, original research, mentorship, and the advancement of knowledge that contributes to the evolution and professionalism of the festivals and events industry.

Entry should focus on the overall structure, innovation, research, and impact of a Ph.D. (Doctoral) Program in Event Management or a related field offered by a college or university.

#### ENTRY INFORMATION:

- Entry requirements, supporting materials, and category questions have been updated and revised. Please review carefully.
- Entry will be reviewed online by the judging panel.
- Entry must be submitted as: One (1) PDF file to include ALL entry information and supporting materials. Max size: 8.5" x 11" (A4); Font: Minimum 11 pt; Must be written in English.
- Provide complete responses to Sections 1–2 in the order listed below, embedding all relevant supporting materials throughout the entry where appropriate.
- Points will be awarded to the individual sections in addition to the overall Judges Criteria.
- If a requested item is not applicable to your event, clearly state so and/or describe any comparable component in its place to avoid point deductions.
- A minimum score of 60 points is required to qualify for Gold, Silver, or Bronze recognition.
- Entry must comply with IFEA Content and Copyright Standards

#### HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRY:

Entries must be submitted through the online entry form.

#### Supporting Materials: (10 Points)

Please include any relevant supporting materials throughout your entry, limiting materials to no more than five (5) examples per area (if applicable):

- Student recruitment and promotional materials
- Admissions requirements and program structure overview
- Course syllabi or curriculum maps
- Dissertation and research project summaries
- List of current and past dissertation titles
- Publications, conference presentations, or research collaborations
- Partnerships with industry organizations or applied research sponsors
- Alumni success stories or post-graduate placement data

#### 1. Overview Information: (50 Points)

Please provide a detailed overview explaining the following information (a–l) in the order listed below, using no more than one (1) page per section:

- Introduction & Institutional Overview** - Briefly describe the university/college, including its mission, research focus, and relevance to the events and tourism sectors.
- Purpose & Objectives of the Ph.D. Program** - Outline the program's academic mission, intended outcomes, and contributions to the advancement of the event management discipline.
- Program Foundation & Structure** - List the year founded, length of study (full-time/part-time), and core academic structure (e.g., coursework, qualifying exams, dissertation stages).
- Curriculum Overview & Research Framework** - Summarize required coursework, areas of concentration, and the research methodologies emphasized (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods).

- Faculty & Research Mentorship** - Provide details on the number and expertise of faculty, their research areas, and how they mentor doctoral students.
- Enrollment & Completion Data** - List the number of current doctoral candidates, total graduates, and program completion rate. Include demographic and international diversity if applicable.
- Research Output & Industry Impact** - Highlight dissertations, published papers, collaborative research, and studies with measurable industry or community outcomes.
- Innovation & Interdisciplinary Collaboration** - Describe innovations such as cross-departmental partnerships, sustainability-focused research, technology integration, or global event perspectives.
- Student Professional Development** - Explain how doctoral students gain teaching, presenting, or leadership experience through assistantships, conferences, or professional associations.
- Funding & Financial Assistance** - Provide details on tuition, research funding, scholarships, assistantships, or grants available to doctoral candidates.
- Alumni Achievements & Global Contributions** - Summarize alumni placements, publications, leadership roles, and contributions to academia, government, or the global events industry.
- Overall Effectiveness & Program Evolution** - Describe how the program continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of the global events industry and academic research standards.

#### 2. Supporting Questions: (10 Points)

Please answer one of the following questions using no more than one (1) page:

- **If the program is established:** What innovations or updates (e.g., new research areas, partnerships, or delivery models) were introduced this year, and what measurable impact have they had?
- **If the program is new:** What challenges did you face during development, and how did you address them to establish credibility and academic excellence?

#### Judging Criteria: (30 Points)

Your entry will also be judged based on the following:

- Is the entry professional, organized, and easy to understand?
- Is the message clear, concise, and informative?
- Is the entry designed and presented effectively?
- Does the program demonstrate academic rigor and innovation?
- Does the curriculum reflect current and emerging research priorities?
- Does the program advance the field through meaningful research and publication?
- Does the program demonstrate strong faculty mentorship and student achievement?
- Are measurable outcomes and alumni success clearly supported?
- Does the program align with the mission and reputation of the institution?
- Have all supporting materials and measurable results been provided?
- Have all requirements been met?

## 2026 IFEA/HAAS & WILKERSON PINNACLE AWARDS ENTRY CHECKLIST

Before, during, and after submitting your entries, please review the following checklist to ensure your submission is complete, accurate, and accepted without delay:

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- **Review** all award categories in the 2026 IFEA/Hasas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Brochure.
- **Confirm Eligibility Dates** – all materials entered must have been first produced or used **between June 26, 2025, and June 24, 2026.**
- **Review Entry Deadlines: April 15, 2026 | June 24, 2026**
- **Decide** which categories your festival, event, or organization will enter.
- **Read all category descriptions and specific entry requirements carefully – details have been updated for 2026.**
- Gather all supporting materials, images, links, and documentation required for each category.

### PREPARING YOUR ENTRY

- **Create your entry** – be sure to include **everything required** for your selected category.
- **Proof your entry** for accuracy, clarity, and completeness before submitting.
- **Save** your entry in the correct file format (PDF, JPG, PNG, or direct online link), as specified in the brochure next to each category.
- **Name your file correctly** using the official 2026 IFEA Pinnacle File Naming Format (page 2) as applicable for the category.
- **Ensure links are active** and accessible (no passwords required) through **November 20, 2026.**

### SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY

- **Submit** your entry using the official online entry form:
- [www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/thisyear/EnterHere](http://www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/thisyear/EnterHere)
- **Review** the “To Submit an Entry” and “Important Notes” sections on that page for upload and payment details.
- **If paying by check or invoice**, contact **Nia Hovde, CFEE** at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com) **before** beginning your online entries.
- **Complete** all sections of the online entry form for each entry (Sections 1–3).
- **Upload ONE (1)** high-resolution copy of your **organization or event logo** with your first entry. (Only one logo will be used across all entries.)
- **Proof** each entry form carefully before selecting **Submit.**
- **Choose** “Continue Shopping” to add more entries, or “Check Out” when finished.
- **Watch for a confirmation email** and itemized receipt from [ifea@ifea.com](mailto:ifea@ifea.com).
  - Check your **spam/junk folder** if it does not appear in your inbox.

### AFTER SUBMITTING

- **Continue entering** additional submissions any time before the **final deadline.**
- **Review Tips & Pointers** from previous entrants for best practices:
- [www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-tips--pointers](http://www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-tips--pointers)
- **Check FAQs** for common questions and clarifications:
- [www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-faqs](http://www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/pinnacleawards/pinnacle-faqs)

### NEED HELP?

- Contact: **Nia Hovde, CFEE**, Vice President / Director of Marketing & Communications at [nia@ifea.com](mailto:nia@ifea.com)