

62nd Annual McHenry County Fair Talent Contest ☆ 2026 ☆

CONTEST RULES & INFORMATION

(Please read carefully as some rules have changed for 2026)

1. The *McHenry County Fair Talent Contest* is open to any individual or group who is 21 years of age or younger and who lives in or attends school in McHenry County. First place winners of the 2025 Contest are ineligible to compete in their same division until 2027.
2. Contestants who are 14 years old or younger as of August 7, 2026 will compete in the Junior Division. Those who are 15-21 years old as of August 7, 2026 will compete in the Senior Division. Proof of age may be required. Group entries will be placed in the division according to the oldest member and all members must meet eligibility requirements.
3. All entries MUST be in the fair office by 5 pm on Friday, July 24, 2026. There is a \$10.00 non-refundable entry fee for each act. The talent committee is not responsible for postal delays. If it is getting close to the deadline, please drop off your entry at the fair office: 11900 Country Club Road, Woodstock.
4. The Contest will be held on Friday, August 7, 2026 at the Hansen Pavilion. The Junior Division will begin at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Senior Division at approximately 8:30 p.m. Contestants should plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before their division begins.
5. This is a judged competition, and all judges have been selected from qualified individuals with expertise in the performing arts. Judging decisions are final.
6. Acts will be judged in the following six categories for a perfect score of 100 points:

<i>Entertainment Value</i>	=	30 points	<i>Natural Ability</i>	=	30 points
<i>Appearance</i>	=	10 points	<i>Audience Contact</i>	=	10 points
<i>Choice of Material</i>	=	10 points	<i>Showmanship</i>	=	10 points
7. Acts must be four (4) minutes or less. Any act longer than four (4) minutes will be disqualified. Set-up time is limited to five (5) minutes. The timing of your act begins when your music starts, you make your first movement, or you speak to the audience. Timing stops when your act is fully completed.
8. You may only participate in one act and one division. Accompanists may participate in only one act per division. All persons assuming visual importance in the act must meet eligibility requirements.
9. NO voices, synthesized voices or vocal utterances are allowed on any pre-recorded accompaniment used by a vocal act. NO taps or tap effects are allowed on a recording used by a tap dancer. In an instrumental solo, the only accompaniment allowed is a live or pre-recorded acoustical piano. In piano solo, no accompaniment is allowed. In the use of any electronic keyboard, the contestant must create all sounds live on stage.
10. The first, second, and third place winners of each division will receive \$200, \$150, and \$100 respectively.
11. The first-place winner in each division will be eligible to represent McHenry County at the State Talent Competition in Springfield, Illinois, in January 2027.
12. In the event the first-place act cannot perform at any scheduled time, the runner-up will be invited to attend.

13. A **Rehearsal Day** will be held on Saturday, August 1, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. at the Hansen Pavilion. The Rehearsal will give you a chance to see the stage, rehearse your act and ask questions. Qualified individuals will be there to help you and give suggestions on how to improve and polish your act. A short talk will be given on what the judges will be looking for. An explanation of the judging categories and helpful hints will be shared. The Sound Tech Manager will also be there to work with your act to ensure it sounds its best.
14. Attendance for the Rehearsal Day is not mandatory, but it is HIGHLY recommended. However, the Rehearsal Day MAY become a mandatory Semi-Finals elimination round if the number of entries exceeds the limit of 8 per division. If this day does become mandatory, you will be notified as soon as possible after July 24.
15. Parents, teachers, and family members are encouraged to attend both the Rehearsal Day and the Contest. Bring a cheering section!
16. Performance order for the Contest will be chosen on a random number drawing on the Rehearsal Day.
17. The size of the stage is 13 feet deep by 27 feet wide. Electrical outlets, hand-held corded microphones, lighting, and an electrical keyboard will be furnished. Please notify the talent committee if you have any special needs. You need to supply your own musical accompaniment. A sound system will be available for use with connections for MP3 players and Smartphones.
18. For further information, contact Nancy Lammers at 847-567-8363 / e-mail mommager@sbcglobal.net or contact Kathy Thomas at 815-245-6085 / e-mail KT10501@aol.com.
19. To enter, completely fill out the attached Official Entry Form and mail it along with your \$10.00 entry fee to:

McHenry County Fair Talent Contest
P.O. Box 375
Woodstock, Illinois 60098

or visit www.McHenryCountyFair.com to enter on-line



** Make entry fee checks payable to: McHenry County Fair Association. **

Entries must be received in the fair office by 5pm on Friday, July 24, 2026.

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OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

To participate in the *McHenry County Fair Talent Contest*, fill out this form and mail it along with your \$10.00 entry fee to the address at the bottom of this page. If this is a group entry (more than ONE (1) contestant), all other members of the group MUST list their names, addresses, ages, and birth dates on the reverse side of this entry form. All members of the group must meet eligibility requirements and should be familiar with the rules and information of the Contest.

Name of contestant (or group leader): _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-Mail: _____

Age of contestant: _____ Birth date of contestant: _____

Division: ☐ Junior (Age 14 & Under) ☐ Senior (Age 15 to 21)

Type of act: _____

Number of persons in act: _____ (All other members MUST list names, addresses, ages, and birth dates on reverse)

☆☆ I have read and understand all the Contest rules. I agree to abide by the rules and guidelines established by the organizers of the competition and to conduct myself in a courteous and sportsmanlike manner. ☆☆☆

Signature of contestant (or group leader)

Date

Please fill out this form completely and mail it along with your \$10.00 entry fee to:

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