

2026

MIDWEST U.S. UNITED PAGEANT



DELEGATE HANBOOK

Welcome to the *Midwest U.S. United Pageant!*

Our pageant will showcase each contestant on her own merits and personality. We focus on the individual inner beauty of each contestant, as well as her individual achievements, community involvement and personal strengths and talents. We do not believe in comparison judging.

This pageant is open to females who live, work, have property in or go to school in **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin**. Winners from this pageant will advance to the 23rd Anniversary U.S. United national pageant which will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, August 5-9, 2026.

Enclosed is very important information about the Midwest preliminary pageant, and how you can earn your spot in the 2026 Midwest delegation. Please read the information in its entirety. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions



ABOUT THE U.S. UNITED PAGEANT

The U.S. United Pageant was established in 2003 under the leadership of Marchia Mickens. The mission of the U.S. United Pageant is to promote health, fitness and inner beauty among women and children of all ethnic groups while producing positive role models for the community; to develop women that will promote self-confidence, self-worth, moral, academic and social support for our youth; and to publicly recognize women who have obtained personal, professional and community achievements.

U.S. UNITED PAGEANT'S PLATFORM

Breast Cancer Awareness.



The U.S. United Pageant supports Breast Cancer Awareness and Prevention among women/men of all ages. We believe that it is never too early to educate yourself on the true facts, risks, and diagnostic techniques of breast cancer. Early detection can significantly increase a woman/man's survival rate.

MIDWEST PAGEANT DATES, HOST CITY, & HOTEL INFORMATION

MARCH 13-14, 2026, MILWAUKEE, WI, USA
Crown Plaza Milwaukee South



If We're thrilled to host our upcoming event in Milwaukee, Wisconsin—a city known for its vibrant culture, welcoming spirit, and dynamic venues. From its scenic lakefront to its rich heritage, Milwaukee offers the perfect backdrop for connection, celebration, and unforgettable experiences.

**If you need to contact us by phone/text (872) 365-3375,
Or you may email us at MidwestUSUnitedPageant@gmail.com**

TENTATIVE WEEKEND SCHEDULE



FRIDAY – Arrivals, Check-in, Orientation, Pink Gala & Party, Rehearsal



SATURDAY – Interviews (AM), Rehearsal, Pageant, Crowning, Contract Signing



SUNDAY – Queens Breakfast, Check out, Departures

2026 MIDWEST PAGEANT FEES

Your Pageant fee is as follows:

\$25.00 (non-refundable) Application fee

\$275.00 (non-refundable) Midwest Pageant fee*

Total fee is \$300

THIS FEE MUST BE PAID IN FULL BY FEBRUARY 15, 2026

*Once a minimum of \$100 is paid towards the Midwest Pageant fee your local title is confirmed.

If you want a local crown & sash, it is an additional \$75. Please let the regional director know once you submit your application that you want the additional crown and sash so that your invoice can be adjusted.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Application Deadline – December 15, 2025

Entry Fee Deadline – February 15, 2026.

This is when all fees, t-shirt sizes, and all ads must be turned into the Midwest Pageant Office.

COMMUNICATION & UPDATES

Official Communication & updates will come via email and our Official 2026 Midwest Contestants Facebook Group; Please provide the Midwest office with your Facebook Profile information so that you can connect with us and receive real time information and updates from the Midwest Director.



DIVISIONS

All Compete in Personal Interview, Outfit of Choice, and Evening Gown

Little Miss (Age 7-9)

Ms. (Age 30 - 45)

Junior Teen Miss (Age 10-12)

Elite Ms. (Age - 46 and older)

Teen Miss (Age 13 – 17)

Miss Plus
(Ages 18-29 - Must wear Size 16 and above)

Miss (Age 18 - 29)

Ms. Plus
(Ages 30 & older – Must wear Size 16 and above)

COMPETITION CATEGORIES AND JUDGING GUIDELINES

Personal Interview – 40%

Contestants will have a virtual interview with a panel of judges. Contestants should wear fashionable business suits, jumpsuits, or dresses. You should look as though you are going to a job interview or make an appearance. Please be mindful of the length and fit of your outfit. You will be judged on your oral communication skills, confidence, poise, charisma, projection of personality and sincerity of your answers.

You have a 20 second introduction that is factored into your total interview score.

Fun Fashion/Outfit of Choice – 30%

This is an outfit of choice that best reflects your personality. You may use accessories. Should you choose to wear a hat, PLEASE be sure your full face is always visible to the judges. You will be judged on poise, personality, charisma, overall presentation, and confidence. Have fun, let your personality shine! This outfit SHOULD NOT be an evening gown; however, you may wear a dress with a high/low hemline.



Evening Gown – 30%

Contestants should wear a floor length gown.

The price of the gown is not important. You will be judged on poise, grace/elegance, overall presentation, eye contact, and confidence while on stage. Be sure your gown fits you well and is not too tight, too long or too short. Make sure it compliments your figure and is appropriate age.

WINNERS MUST OBTAIN AT LEAST A 60% TOTAL SCORE IN ORDER TO ADVANCE TO THE NATIONAL PAGEANT



OPTIONAL COMPETITIONS & FEES

Optional Competitions are a FUN way to showcase the talents of our contestants.

Scores from optional competitions have no bearing on the division winner. Contestants are not required to enter the optional competitions. Winners receive medals unless otherwise noted in description.

Photogenic Competition (\$20.00 fee – 2 photos max)

Contestants in this competition should submit no more than 2 photographs. You should bring them with you and turn in at registration. Please be sure you pick them up before the pageant. Photos will not be mailed. Photographs should be at least a 4 X 6 and no larger than an 8 X 10 and may be either in color or black and white. Photos should be professional and not snapshots. **Photos CANNOT be older than three years.**

Community Service Scrapbook (\$20.00 fee)

Your scrapbook should showcase your activities in your community and should be arranged by the most recent activities first. Bring your scrapbook with you to registration. Please be sure to pick this up after the pageant.

People's Choice - \$1 per vote

The People's Choice is chosen based on the contestant that brings in the most money via the online people's choice voting system, in ads, at registration, and the money collected the day of the pageant. The People's Choice winner will receive a trophy.

Portfolio (\$20 initial fee (includes up to 5 initial photos - \$5 for each additional photo))

Contestants who enter this competition will present a modeling portfolio of 5-10 photographs. Portfolios must be submitted at registration and will be returned immediately after the pageant.

Talent Competition (\$20.00 fee) **

The Talent Competition is an optional competition and does not affect the overall outcome of the pageant. Talent must not be longer than 2 minutes 30 seconds. Music must be submitted in MP3 format one week prior to the pageant and should be timed and cut in advance of submission. Points will be deducted for talents that run over time.

Rip The Runway (\$20.00 fee) **

Contestants who enter this competition will model an outfit of their choice. Judges will be looking for a young woman/woman with style, modeling ability, poise, and style of outfit.

Midwest U.S. United Scholar (no fee)

Contestants who enter this competition will submit an official school transcript and a short essay on why she feels she should receive this award.

Cover Girl (\$20.00 fee)

The contestants who enter this competition will submit up to 2 photos to be judged. Winner will have her photo printed on the program book back cover. **Fees and Photos for CoverGirl must be submitted by January 15, 2026.** Photos will need to be judged ahead of time.

"Best In" Attire Optional (\$20)**

This Mini-Optional competition is a separate school based on attire only. These include Personal Interview Attire, Fun Fashion Attire or Evening Gown. These scores are separate and DO NOT have any bearing on the divisional winner.

OPTIONAL FEES ARE DUE FEBRUARY 15, 2026

(except for Cover Girl which is due January 31, 2026)



PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. **Social Media Announcement:** Once your application is accepted, the first photo needed is for your social media announcement. Please submit a solo photo of yourself, with no one else, that is clear and not blurry.
2. **The Digital Program Book.** This should be a professional headshot photo. This photo will appear in the program book. It must be a resolution of 300 dpi. & 600 - 700 pixels in size. A release from the photographer must accompany your headshot, if needed. The Midwest office has the right to reject headshots that are of poor quality. Low-res cell phone pictures are not acceptable for the book.

Crown headshots are not permitted.

Deadline for submission is January 31, 2026

Email your headshot in jpg format. Submit photos to the pageant office at
MidwestUSUnitedPageant@gmail.com



HOW DO I PAY MY FEES?

PAY PAL

PayPal payments can be made using your bank account, Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express card; or your balance if you have a PayPal Balance account.

The pageants Paypal address is MidwestUSUnitedPageant@gmail.com. *We will send you an invoice for your fees so that you can make payments on.*

For other options, such as CashApp, Zelle, or Venmo – please contact the pageant office MidwestUSUnitedPageant@gmail.com for additional details.

SELL ADS FOR THE 2026 MIDWEST DIGITAL SOUVENIR BOOK

This year we will have a digital book to showcase reigning and former Midwest queens, our 2026 contestants, supporters, and sponsors.

Ads are not required, but an ad provides the opportunity to show off your platform, your photographer's work, or your sponsors. Any business is welcome to purchase an ad space to promote their business as well. Families and friends may use an ad to wish their favorite contestant luck in the upcoming competition. PLUS, you can earn credit towards your fees and/or people's choice votes!

We are offering 3 ad sizes.

- Full Page (8.5 x 11 full color) Ad \$100
- Half Page (8.5 x 5.5 full color) Ad \$60
- Quarter Page (4.25 x 5.5 full color) Ad \$45

Here's what you can earn towards fees and people's choice vote.

For each ad form with YOUR NAME in the contestant line you earn a credit that will be applied to your fees in the following amount:

Full page - \$50
Half Page - \$25
Quarter Page - \$10

This means if you sell only 5 full page ads your Midwest Pageant fees are covered, and anything after that can be applied to optional fees or your People's Choice votes!

ADS MUST BE SUBMITTED AS A JPG OR IN PDF FORMAT BY JANUARY 31, 2026. (see ad book form for additional information and to use for your sponsors and supporters to submit)

Awards/Titles/Prizes

All Midwest U.S. United Divisional Winners Receive

Official State Crown & Official State Embroidered Sash
Entry into the National U.S. United Pageant
Gifts from our Sponsors*

1st Runner Up Divisional Winner Receives
Commemorative Award

2nd Runner up Divisional Winner Receives**
Commemorative Award

***MUST have a minimum of 8 ladies in a division for this prize to be awarded*

WINNERS MUST OBTAIN AT LEAST A 60% TOTAL SCORE IN ORDER TO ADVANCE TO THE NATIONAL PAGEANT

PRIZE UPDATES WILL BE ANNOUNCED AS SPONSORS CONFIRM PARTICIPATION

Sponsor gifts are awarded upon fulfillment of the sponsor, and not the responsibility of the Midwest US United Pageant.



Today's the Day to Join the Sisterhood!!

WHAT HAPPENS IF I WIN?

HERE'S A FEW THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW....

STATE QUEEN'S CONTRACT

Each winner will be required to sign a queen's contract immediately after the competition. These contracts spell out, in detail, what is expected of you if you win a regional or state title.

All queens are required to make a \$195 deposit towards their national finalist fees within 7 days of regional crowning. Additional deadlines will be given by the national office upon completion of the contract signing.

If you do not sign the queen's contract you will forfeit the title, awards, and all prizes and must surrender your crown and sash, trophies, and any items awarded to Midwest director immediately.

If a queen signs the Midwest/State Queens contract and chooses not to compete, she **MUST** return her state crown and sash, awards and any prizes received within 7 business days of resignation/termination to the regional pageant office and pay a fine of \$350 within 30 calendar days of resignation/termination. **This clause is included in the queens' contract and will be enforced.** Some exceptions do apply on an individual basis at the regional office discretion.

All winners ages 7 and older are required to compete in the national pageant August 5-9, 2026, in Atlanta, Georgia.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Please note that we may make divisional and title adjustments prior to nationals based on total number of entries in a division. Planning and budgeting are important.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

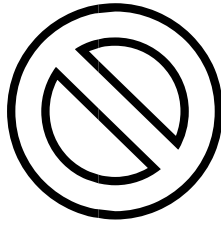
Each state winner is required to:

- Purchase the \$595 2026 National Finalist Package*
- Purchase the Opening Number Dress/Outfit selected by National office.
- Cover her own travel and hotel accommodations to and from nationals.

The Finalist Package includes*:

All National Activities including *Admission to Breast Cancer Event; Admissions to Contestant Party & Gift Exchange; ¼ Page Ad in National Program Book, National Pageant T-shirt, and more to be added!*

NON-NEGOTIABLES



All pageant fees must be paid by the deadlines provided in this handbook or on our website. When in doubt, refer to the handbook or seek clarity from your state Director; If your fees are not paid you are not able to compete. Need help figuring out your budget? Just ask!

Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

At no time are delegates to initiate a conversation with the judges.

Tattoos must be covered when you are wearing your crown and or sash and during all facets of competition. If you need help with make-up recommendations, please ask!

With the exception of pierced ears, visible body earrings must be removed during competition.

No make up for contestants under age 13; Age appropriate make up for teens.

ALL the Queens and courts must stay for the group photos immediately following the pageant. Newly crowned queens MUST stay for the photo shoot and contract signing.

Cell phone use is prohibited during rehearsals, orientation, and in dressing areas. The pageant is not responsible for lost or stolen cellphones. All cellphones should be turned off or placed on vibrate during rehearsals and Orientation. You may, however, use your cellphone for taking photos at appropriate times and official gatherings pageant weekend. Phones may be used during breaks. If there is a personal emergency that requires use of the cell phone, the delegate must notify the director.

The pageant, venue, and hotel staff assume no responsibility for items left in the dressing room. Do not leave your purse or money or other valuable items unattended in the dressing room or anywhere in the hotel.

We have no tolerance for sore losers. If you cannot handle defeat, pageantry probably is not for you. If you cannot be a gracious loser, you do not deserve to be a winner.

Judges' decisions are final.

WINNERS MUST OBTAIN AT LEAST A 60% TOTAL SCORE IN ORDER TO ADVANCE TO THE NATIONAL PAGEANT

MIDWEST US UNITED PAGEANT

2026 DIGITAL ADBOOK SUBMISSION FORM

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ADS & PAYMENT IS JANUARY 31, 2026

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE PLEASE SUBMIT ONE FORM PER AD

CONTACT NAME

NAME OF BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION *(if applicable)*:

CONTACT PHONE

CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS

WEBSITE *(if applicable)*

DELEGATE NAME *(if applicable)*

AD SIZE (CHOOSE ONE):

- Full Page (8.5 x 11 full color) Ad - \$100
- Half Page (8.5 x 5.5 full color) Ad - \$60
- Quarter Page (4.25 x 5.5 full color) Ad - \$45

Do you need us to create your ad? Yes _____ No _____ *(If yes, please add \$50 to your final cost)*

AMOUNT TOTAL DUE: \$ _____

SIGNATURE _____

We will send you an invoice to the email address listed above so that you can remit payment and receive receipt immediately.

ADS MUST BE CAMERA READY AND SUBMITTED IN JPG OR PDF FORMAT.

Artwork must be emailed with this form to: MidwestUSUnitedPageant@gmail.com

OTHER HELFUL RESOURCES

HOW DO I OBTAIN SPONSORS?



Sponsor involvement is most easily obtained via personal relationships and business contacts. Basically, if a sponsor believes in you and your “mission”—they will sponsor you! Often, one sponsor may pay the total amount. However, if this isn’t the case, graciously accept their sponsorship because every little bit helps. Sponsors can also offer in-kind support and donate items that you need for competition.

It is difficult to obtain a sponsor over the phone. A personal interview and conversation will work best. You must “sell yourself”, just as you would in a job interview or the judge’s interview at the pageant. This is great preparation for the pageant interview! Look nice when you call on potential sponsors—dress up and look the part of a beauty pageant contestant. Tell the sponsor about yourself, why you want to participate, and why they should sponsor you.

Be sure to pick the right time of day (not during peak business hours), to talk to the decision-maker, be original, friendly, prompt, and have the right answers. Read all your information and have a full understanding of the pageant. You never know what a potential sponsor may ask. Answer questions sincerely and intelligently. Show them ad pages from last year’s program book, social media pages, etc.

Very important: If the sponsor asks when you need the money, the answer is “now”. You may think that you have a commitment only to have the sponsor back out at the last minute, leaving you no time to find a replacement.



What does the sponsor get? Sponsorship is a form of advertising and/or promotion for a business or organization. You may offer modeling or promotional services in return for sponsorship, which aids you in participating in the pageant. **All arrangements are strictly between you and the sponsor.** There is no form from the pageant for the sponsor to complete. They are sponsoring YOU not the pageant itself.

If you are asked about sponsorship to the pageant, have the business owner contact the Midwest office directly, make sure that they inform us that you referred them, and let your director know of the inquiry.

Whom do I start with? Some delegates are sponsored by companies where they or their family members work. Personal connection is one of the easiest ways to generate sponsorship and support.

Remember that you can be sponsored by your family, employers, your school, civic/social organizations, friends, or yourself. You may have the best success with businesses you and your family patronize.

Suggested businesses to contact: Find businesses that are near you, that you frequent, and that are in YOUR community. i.e. grocery store, doctor, dentist, cleaners, gas station, beauty salon, boutique, photo studio, community/your local bank, your church, dance studio, shopping center, sports team, advertising firm, auto dealer, amusement park, chamber of commerce, cosmetics shop, modeling agency, health studio, restaurant, sorority, fraternity, construction company, real estate office, insurance firm, accounting firm, law firm, Jaycees, Elks Club, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, Rotary Club, other civic clubs and organizations. The list is endless—be creative!

Why everyone benefits: The sponsor should get more than his money's worth in services and promotion from the contestant, and at the same time he is doing her a favor and performing a public service. Moreover, any donation provided by a business or organization is considered a form of advertising and/or promotion and may be considered tax deductible. The entrant, on the other hand, receives the necessary financial backing and can take part in this worthwhile and spectacular event. And who knows—you could be the next one to win the state and national title!

Most importantly...Never give up! Many have been discouraged for one reason or another but continued to seek sponsorship, and it paid off. You may even want to obtain a few more sponsors than needed to meet your obligations to the pageant to help with your wardrobe, hotel, etc. You may have as many sponsors as you need. If you have several sponsors, you may want to purchase a program ad page where you can list them and give them recognition.

Follow with a thank you note.



It is your job to keep them interested and informed and follow through on YOUR commitment to them.

YOU'VE GOT THIS! YOU CAN DO IT!



ADVICE FROM FORMER QUEENS



When starting a journey with US United, it is imperative that one understands this is a working system. We give our Queens guidance and support; however, we fully believe in our Queens and their abilities to make a difference in their communities. Being part of the US United System and advocating for breast cancer should not intimidate. A Queen does not have to be an expert on this matter, just passionate about raising awareness and sharing the resources that are available to educate communities. Love you!! ***Teresa McDonald (Georgia), Ms. US United 2018, US United Queen's Ambassador 2019, US United Royal Ambassador 2020, US United Lifetime Queen***

2021, & current National Queens Liaison

Pageantry is another activity like soccer, cheer, football etc. It requires dedication and time to complete the journey. My advice is to be true to your budget and document all expenses. Get sponsorship or be ready to ask for financial support. Sometimes you may have to self fund your journey. I also recommend you get a coach or be ready to research and self-study and self-prepare. Your faith in this journey is all on you, help from others is good but you have the final say. Practice, record and be your own critic as you seek help from others. As a momager, my advice is to pace yourself emotionally. Kids will either be with or against you so pick your battles wisely. Enjoy the Journey Queen! ***LaShawn Freeman (Illinois), Ms. Plus US United 2023, and mom of, ZeAnn Blair (Illinois), Miss Teen US United 2022, US United Queens Ambassador 2023***



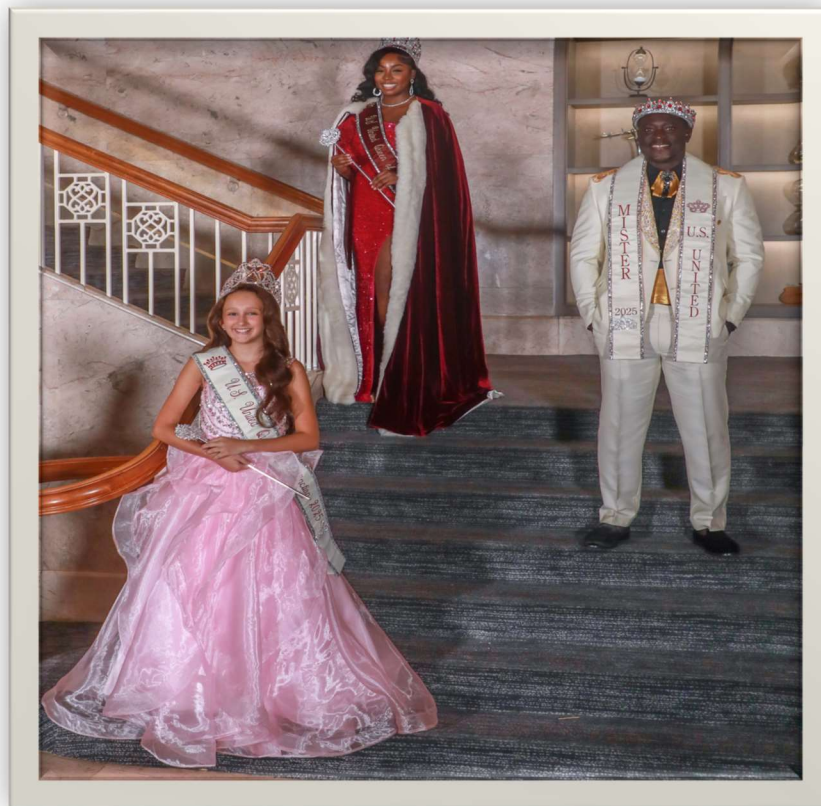


A major component and principle of pageantry is growing as a person, completing tasks, and following through on what you started. Being a U.S. United queen will put you on this path. The journey and experience will test you, push you to be your best self, and expect you to put action behind your vision. In the end the lives we impact are worth it, and it starts with your own! Approach competition with an open mind but be disciplined in your preparation. Learn THIS system, and what we expect. Do the work, own the outcomes, and enjoy the new lifelong sisterhood that you are now a part of. Welcome to the family! -

Lauren Ransom (Illinois), Ms. US United 2014, US United Ultimate Queen of Queens 2023, US United Lifetime Queen 2023, Midwest Regional Director - Director of the Year 2022

Don't hesitate to ask for help, ideas, and suggestions on fundraising and budgeting to help organize your pageant journey. We will be having preparation sessions and workshops to ensure that contestants are ready for the regional selection process.

We are looking for the phenomenal ladies from the Midwest to represent at nationals! .



PLAN YOUR MIDWEST U.S. UNITED PAGEANT WEEK

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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