



2024 MIDWEST U.S. UNITED PAGEANT

CONTESTANT HANDBOOK

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.



**The 2024 Midwest U.S. United Pageant will take place
March 1-3, 2024, in Chicago, Illinois.**

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 21st Anniversary U.S. United national pageant which will be held in Atlanta, Georgia.

Enclosed is very important information about the Midwest preliminary pageant, and how you can earn your spot in the 2024 Midwest delegation. **Please read the information in its entirety.** Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

ENTRY DEADLINE:

The pageant's entry deadline is February 1, 2024.

This is when all applications and paperwork and fees must be turned into the Midwest Pageant Office.

COMMUNICATION & UPDATES

Official Communication & updates will come via email and our Official 2024 Midwest Contestants Facebook Group; Please provide the Midwest office your Facebook Profile information so that you can connect with us and receive real time information and updates from the Midwest Director.

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



DIVISIONS

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 and older – Must wear Size 16 and above)



2024 MIDWEST PAGEANT HOST CITY & HOTEL INFORMATION

Host City – Chicago, Illinois USA

Host Hotel - TBA

We will provide you with the official reservation code and booking information in our official Contestant Group & via email for you and your guest to obtain a discounted rate. We are in negotiations with three properties for the 2024 pageant!

All contestants are required to stay at the host hotel.

COMPETITION WARDROBE AND JUDGING GUIDELINES

Personal Interview – 40%

Contestants should wear a fashionable & on-trend business suit or business dress. You should look as though you are going to a job interview or making 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.

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 age appropriate. **The price of the gown is not important, however, fit, style, and overall presentation are!**

Other Clothing Needed

- **Orientation/Meet & Greet** – Fashionable in Fuchsia (*Hot Pink*)
- **Opening Number** – Burgundy Sequin Cocktail Dress, Clear or Nude Heels/Shoes
- **Group Photo** Dark Blue jeans (no shorts or skirts or jeans with holes or rips), white or white blinged out sneakers, and a white fashionable top
- Plus, Comfortable clothes for rehearsals, informal get togethers, and don't forget PJs for the PJ party.

All outfits and shoes should be age appropriate.

And be mindful as photos will be taken throughout pageant weekend

2024 MIDWEST PAGEANT FEES

Your Pageant fee is as follows:

\$25.00 (non-refundable) Application fee

\$400.00 (non-refundable) Midwest Pageant fee*

Total fee is \$425

*Once a minimum of \$75 is paid towards the Midwest Pageant fee your local title is confirmed.

THIS FEE MUST BE paid in full by February 1, 2024



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.

Talent Competition (\$25.00 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.

Photogenic Competition (\$25.00 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 (\$25.00 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 (\$25 initial fee includes the 5 initial required 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. **Photos CANNOT be older than three years**

Rip The Runway (\$25.00 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 (\$25.00 fee)

Contestant 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 31, 2024.** Photos will need to be judged ahead of time.

“Best In” Attire Optional (\$25)

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, 2024

(except for Cover Girl which is due January 15, 2024)

PHOTO SUBMISSION 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. Once your \$75 deposit towards fees is paid, we will post your official announcement via social media.
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 the program book photo is January 31, 2024

Email your headshot in jpg format.

Submit photos to the pageant office at MidwestUSUnitedPageant@gmail.com



HOW DO I PAY MY FEES?

PAYPAL

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 that you can make payments on until paid.*

For other options, such as CashApp, Zelle, or Venmo – please contact the pageant office.

SELL ADS FOR THE 2024 MIDWEST DIGITAL BOOK

This year we will have a digital book to showcase reigning and former Midwest queens, along with our 2024 contestants, supporters, and sponsors.

Ads are not required, but an ad provides the opportunity to show off your platform, your photographers 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 your 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 amounts:

Full page - \$50
Half Page - \$25
Quarter Page - \$15

This means if you sell 5 full page, and 3 half page ads after your \$75 deposit is paid, your Midwest Pageant fees of \$400 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 FEBRUARY 1, 2024. (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/TITLE to be awarded*

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

If any runner up scores that meet the minimum percentage to qualify, she will also receive an invitation to advance to the national pageant.



PRIZE UPDATES WILL BE ANNOUNCED AS SPONSORS CONFIRM PARTICIPATION.

Posted Sponsor gifts are awarded upon fulfillment and delivery of the sponsor,
and not the responsibility of the Midwest U.S. United Pageant.

SPECIAL AWARDS



MIDWEST QUEEN OF QUEENS

Awarded to the single Midwest delegate who received the highest overall score.

She receives:

Commemorative Sash & Scepter
Photo featured on 2025 Midwest Marketing Materials

Additional Special Awards

DIRECTORS AWARD

SPIRIT AWARD

CONGENIALITY

AND MORE SURPRISES!

So, bring your BEST to the 2024 Regionals!



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.

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 to the regional pageant office and pay a fine of \$350 within 30 calendar days of resignation. 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 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Please note that the national office may make divisional and title adjustments prior to nationals based on total number of entries in a division.

Planning and budgeting are important. So 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 regional competitions. We are looking for the phenomenal ladies from Midwest.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Each state winner is required to:

- Purchase the 2024 National Finalist Package - \$545
- 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 Pink Gala

Admissions to Contestant Parties & events

Admission to all Pageant events

Ad in National Program Book

National Pageant T-shirt

And more to be added!

Deadlines will be provided & measurements will be taken at the state contract signing. More details will be provided then, as well as, in the national handbook and when you are added to the national contestants group.

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.

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.



Cell phone use is prohibited during rehearsals and in the 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.

NON-NEGOTIABLES (cont'd)

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.

ALL 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.

At no time are delegates to initiate a conversation with judges during pageant weekend; **Judges' decisions are final.**



We have high expectations of all US United titleholders, whether local or state. You represent a 20 year legacy!

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.

We also have **no patience** for bad winners. Winners are to handle this opportunity with humility and grace. If you cannot remain a queen, follow expectations of the position, and operate in this sisterhood with positivity, you may not deserve to be a keeper of the crown.



Becoming a state titleholder means being handed a job, responsibilities, and opportunities in a split second. As soon as your name is read as the winner, it's time to get to work.

This is an opportunity to impact your local community and your state, so make it a year you never want to forget. Take advantage of the opportunity, take lots of photos, and enjoy the moment!

MIDWEST US UNITED PAGEANT

2024 DIGITAL ADBOOK SUBMISSION FORM

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ADS & PAYMENT IS JANUARY 31, 2024

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: \$ _____

SIGNATURE _____

We will send you an invoice to the email address listed above so that you can remit payment and receive an electronic 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 have to “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 of 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 Lauren Ransom, the Midwest Director directly. Make sure that they inform us that you referred them, and let your director know of the inquiry and to look forward to the communication.

HOW DO I OBTAIN SPONSORS? (cont'd)



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 does everyone benefit? 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.


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 in order 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. And if you make it to nationals, you can do the same and recognize them in the national program book!

Lastly, 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/REIGNING 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, ZeAann 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

PLAN YOUR MIDWEST U.S. UNITED PAGEANT WEEK

Sunday	Thursday
Wednesday	Notes

