

International Festival of *Minnesota*



2026 POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Revised August 11, 2025

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MINNESOTA

HISTORY

The International Festival of Minnesota ('IFest-MN', 'the Festival') is a revival of the Festival of Nations, which was established in 1932 by the International Institute of Minnesota. The Festival of Nations was officially suspended in 2022, with the last event happening in 2019.

IFest-MN leadership consists of past directors and area leads dedicated to bringing this great event back to St. Paul.

MISSION

IFest-MN is an educational event designed to bring Americans of all backgrounds together - native and naturalized citizens alike - to share the ties with our past and take pride in the richness of diverse cultures in our community as we build for the future together.

AREAS OF PARTICIPATION

IFest-MN has five areas of participation:

- Food and Beverage (Café)
- Bazaar
- Entertainment
- Exhibit
- Demonstration

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE

Due to space limitations, only one participant from any ethnic group can participate in each of the program areas (for example, we cannot have two Irish cafes, two Brazilian Bazaars or two Somali dance groups).

The IFest-MN board sets the criteria for vendor and artist participation and has oversight of each area of the festival. The Board set forth three goals for choosing and approving participants:

- Diversity of Participants – IFest-MN's goal is to have the festival represent as many diverse ethnic groups as possible from throughout the world. A Board member will lead each committee area to ensure this goal is achieved and report back to the full Board.
- Traditional & Modern Ethnic Participation – IFest-MN invites both traditional and modern ethnic representations in selecting artists and vendors to participate in the festival. IFest-MN's goal is to connect audiences to historical traditions as well as engaging audiences in representations of their ethnic groups today. A Board member leads this effort.
- Overall Qualifications – The Board's goal is to have high quality participants in all parts of the event. Participants are screened to ensure they are educational, high quality and engaging. The Board oversees each area committee and the operations committee to ensure these goals are met.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

HARASSMENT FREE ENVIRONMENT

IFest-MN expressly prohibits any form of harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding or related medical conditions), marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, membership or activity in a local commission, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under federal, state or local law.

CULTURAL PROMOTION

IFest-MN is designed to promote cultures and ethnic groups in ways that are chosen by the participants. IFest-MN has designated areas of participation, with specific rules to abide by, but each participant may showcase their specific culture in a manner of their choosing. Participants may come from within the city, State or elsewhere in the country and may have many different backgrounds and organization sizes.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

Failure to follow these regulations is a breach of contract and may result in the removal of your booth without any further obligation by IFest-MN, including a refund.

PROMOTIONAL ALLOWANCES

IFest-MN is committed to showcasing the diversity of ethnic organizations, groups, and businesses that exist in our community. Participants will be allowed to share information about the ethnic organizations, groups, and businesses that they represent within the limitations outlined below.

- Participants can have printed materials (business cards, brochures, etc.) that include basic information such as contact information, general descriptions of activities, mission statements, locations, history, or an event calendar.
- Materials cannot contain political messages, language that could be considered derogatory toward another group, or messages or events that conflict with IFest-MN's mission.
- Promotional items may not be installed on café fronts.
- All promotional items must be reviewed by the area committee prior to posting or handing out.

CLOTHING EXPECTATIONS

IFest-MN encourages wearing traditional ethnic clothing where possible, while understanding there is a great diversity in the types of ethnic clothing participants and volunteers can wear. All participants should wear clothing that is significantly identifiable to the ethnic group they are representing. This could include contemporary items and modern designs inspired by traditional patterns and designs.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

All participants, attendees, staff and vendors are expected to treat each other with respect and consideration. All participants are expected to respect the diversity of viewpoints and opinions. All communication should be open and respectful of others, regardless of differences in opinion. Any participants using derogatory language or behaviors may be subject to immediate removal from the event.

NON-PROFIT STATUS

All profit-making participants (café, bazaar) must be or be affiliated with a non-profit entity. This affiliation shall be defined to IFest staff as a 'proof of non-profit affiliation'. This is a document provided each year by the non-profit entity to the participant, on official letterhead, stating their affiliation.



REGULATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

RESTRICTED ITEMS & ACTIVITIES

These items are prohibited from IFest-MN:

- Projectiles (an object which is fired, thrown or otherwise projected), or objects which are self-propelled (such as rockets, or weapons), or decorative knives, whips, guns, clubs, nunchakus, throwing stars or swords, or other weapon-like items.
- Helium tanks, balloons, lit candles, and burning of incense are prohibited by order of the Fire Marshall
- Gambling and other illegal activities
- CBD in any form
- Alcohol in any form
- Carbonated beverages of any kind
- Packaged foods which may be consumed at the event (unless expressly permitted by IFEST's Board or Area Chairperson)
- Any music, noise making devices, or video displays, without prior approval. These must not interfere with the entertainment stages or with the interactions of other vendors and their customers
- Political boundary maps, including reproductions on clothing or objects
- Symbolism/logos of an inflammatory nature
- Drug use, symbols of drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Any item endorsing any political cause or candidate
- Posters, handouts or business promoting items that are not within the promotional allowance guidelines

Any item that poses a safety concern or does not comply with festival regulations will be removed by either the St Paul Police and/or an IFest-MN staff Member, depending on the severity of the item(s).

SAFETY REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

The following are general safety guidelines that must be followed. When constructing your booth or setting up your merchandise, please think about the safety of your customers, the festival volunteers and yourselves!

- Only use LED bulbs in any lighting – other bulbs get too hot and pose a fire hazard. You will be asked to turn off and remove any lighting using other bulbs.
- Any freestanding shelving units must be secured or weighted at the bottom so they cannot tip and pose a safety hazard. Any shelving units deemed unsafe by the IFest-MN staff will be asked to be dismantled immediately.
- Any electrical cords running across the floor need to be entirely taped down or covered to avoid a tripping hazard. Any other cords should be secured out of the way with zip ties.
- Any shelving, tables or racks MUST stay within the confines of your booth. You may display merchandise

outside your booth by either hanging them on the side of your display booth, or by setting larger items just outside your booth, but you may be asked at any time to move items that may block traffic.

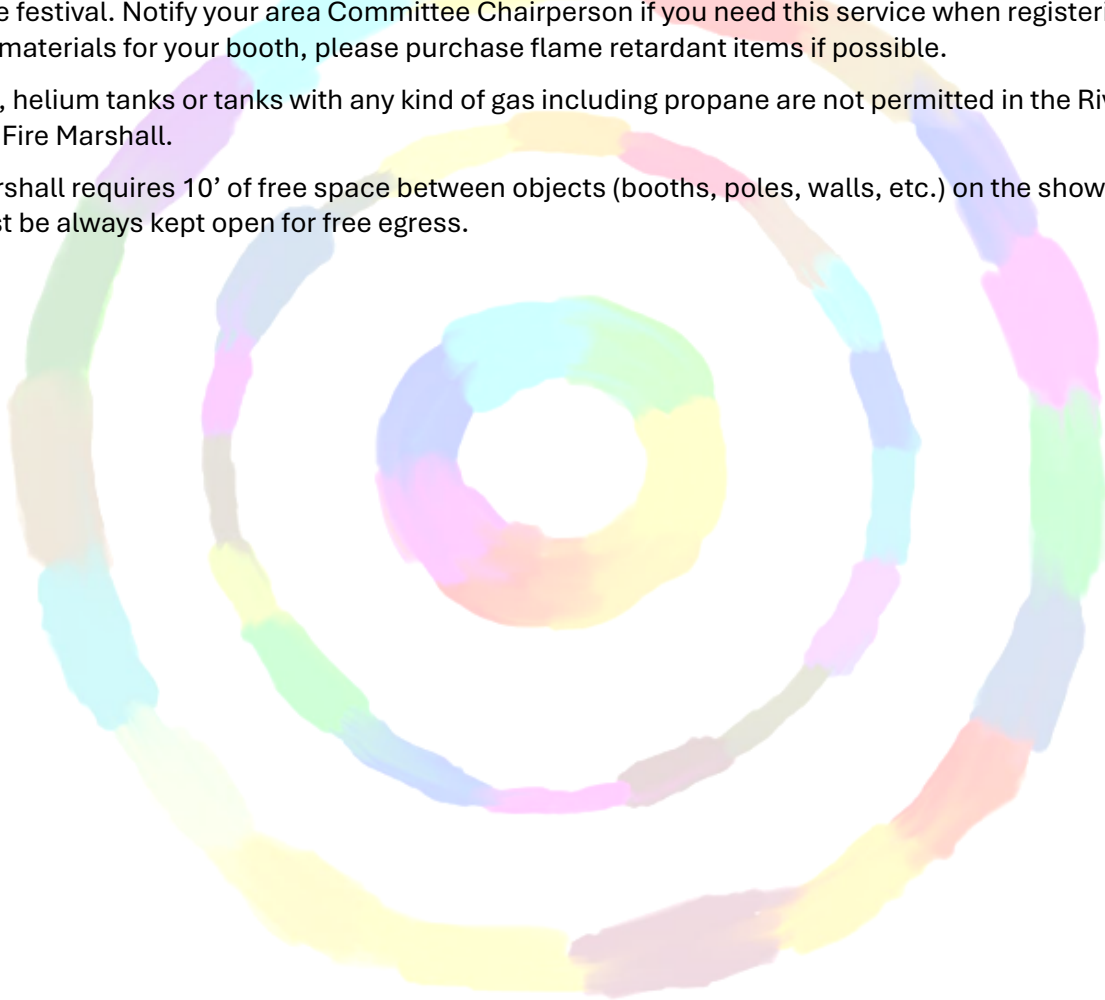
- Do not overload pipe and drape provided by IFest-MN. Pipe and drape are not load bearing and cannot support heavy loads.
- IFest-MN staff may remove hazardous items at their discretion and when necessary to remedy safety hazards.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS

Saint Paul Fire Department regulations require that all flammable material (such as fabric used anywhere throughout the festival) be flame proofed. IFest-MN will provide a spray applicator with a liquid solution that meets all fire code regulations for flammable natural fibers. This service is available at no cost to the groups prior to the set-up of the festival. Notify your area Committee Chairperson if you need this service when registering. If purchasing materials for your booth, please purchase flame retardant items if possible.

Open flame, helium tanks or tanks with any kind of gas including propane are not permitted in the RiverCentre by order of the Fire Marshall.

The Fire Marshall requires 10' of free space between objects (booths, poles, walls, etc.) on the show floor. These spaces must be always kept open for free egress.



SCHEDULE AND FEES

KEY DEADLINES

October 2025	Initial participant selections will be made, participants will be notified
November 7, 2025	All Booth Fees Due
November 2025	'Kick Off' Meeting – details forthcoming
February 2026	Entertainment Technical Reviews – Date TBD
March 1, 2026	All paperwork must be submitted for all areas in full or participation may be revoked (or earlier as directed by area chair)
TBD	Participant Tickets distributed
April 9	Participant Load-in
April 10-11	IFest 2026 is open
April 11-12	Participant Load-out

FEE SCHEDULE

Café	Fee
Café Booth Fee	\$500.00
Stove Rental – includes energy charges and hookups	TBD
Refrigerator Rental – includes energy charges and hookups	TBD
Freezer Rental – includes energy charges and hookups	TBD
220/208-volt appliance hookup fee, per vendor supplied appliance	\$50.00
220/208-volt appliance energy charge, per vendor supplied appliance	\$50.00
Freezer or refrigerator energy charge, per vendor supplied appliance	\$50.00
110/120-volt appliance energy charge, per vendor supplied appliance	\$30.00
Bazaar	Fee
Bazaar Booth Fee (per space)	\$500.00
Demonstration	Fee
Demonstration Booth Fee	\$0.00 if selling items made in booth

ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT PARTICIPATION

All participants must comply with general IFest-MN Policy and Procedures. Failure to follow policy and procedures is a breach of contract and may result in revocation of participation without any further obligation by IFest-MN. Any fees or other services paid or rendered will be forfeited and no refunds will be made. Ethnic groups desiring to perform should contact IFest-MN staff for consideration. Due to time limitations, not all who apply may be able to perform at the event. Overflow participation requests will be placed on a waiting list.

If directed by the RiverCentre, Health Department, Fire Marshall or Entertainment Committee, participants may have modified regulations and requirements during the event. The Entertainment Committee will advise each group of impacts to their performance.

The International Festival of Minnesota Entertainment Committee is responsible for the scheduling and coordination of the World Stage [located in the Café area of the RiverCentre] and the Atrium Stage [located at the bottom of the escalator in the Café area of the River Centre], and the bazaar or other peripheral stages.

- **World Stage** - Participation includes adult and teen dance groups and accompanying musicians and singers. The Festival Entertainment Committee may invite or select dance groups based upon IFest-MN Board priorities.
- **Atrium Stage** is for musicians, singers and/or choirs. The Atrium Stage performers are coordinated by the Festival Entertainment Committee. Adult dance groups may request to perform on the Atrium Stage. However, there are a limited number of slots available.
- **Additional Stages and Performers** – Participation includes smaller groups and musicians that can perform with minimal infrastructure or may be able to roam throughout the event. These performers shall be coordinated by the Entertainment Committee, including scheduling and expectations for performances.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR DANCE GROUPS ON THE WORLD STAGE

Adults

- Minimum number of performers 8 dancers or 4 couples or more.
- Age limit is 16 and above
- Time limit is 8 minutes
- Each adult dance group will be assigned one time slot on the World Stage.

Teens

- Minimum number of performers 8 dancers or 4 couples or more
- Age limits 13 to 19
- Time limit 5 minutes
- Teens perform on Saturday between 10:00 am and 12:00 pm. Each teen dance group will be assigned one time slot on the World Stage.

Student Day [Friday between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm]

- Adult or Teen dance groups may request to perform on Student Day
- Minimum number of performers 8 dancers or 4 couples
- Age Limit – 13 and above

- Time limit 5 minutes
- Each group will perform twice

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR DANCE GROUPS ON THE ATRIUM STAGE

Legacy Adult dance groups may request to perform on the Atrium Stage. Space is limited to 12 adult dancers only and performance length is limited to 20 minutes, which includes setting up and taking down. Dance groups are required to include an audience participation dance in their 20-minute segment. If a dance group does not include audience participation in its performance, they will not be scheduled in the Atrium the following year. If an ethnic group wishes to suggest singers and/or musicians to perform on the Atrium stage, you may also use this form or email the suggestion to the Festival Entertainment Producer. There may or may not be slots available for dance groups on the Atrium Stage

ENTERTAINMENT FORMS

Each participating dance group will be emailed an electronic information packet containing several forms and information sheets that must be returned by the date listed in the Schedule and Fees section of the Policy and Procedure manual. The packets will be emailed to the ethnic dance groups' point of contact, [preferably the Artistic Director of the Dance Group] in early fall. The packet will include the following:

- World Stage Questionnaire for Adult and Teen dance groups
- World Stage Schedule
- Music Submission Instructions
- Introduction Submission Instructions
- Additional Time performance request form. Adult groups only. Additional Time performances may or may not be available. The Festival Entertainment Committee acts on requests on a first in / first-scheduled basis.
- Atrium Stage Request Form
- Student Day Performance Request Form
- Technical Rehearsal Schedule

MUSIC

Each dance group must deliver to the Festival Entertainment Producer music that will be used for their performance. You may submit your music on a CD or other media or share a Dropbox folder, or a Google Drive link for the Festival Entertainment Producer to access and retrieve your music (.wav file preferred). The music must be of good quality for consideration. Please consider that your music will be played on a quality system. **Please follow the specifications and deadline dates found in the music letter in the electronic folders.**

Dance Groups that perform to live music must submit their music in an electronic version to the Festival Entertainment Producer in case of an issue with their musicians.

Music used in all performance areas must be in public domain.

Dance group participant tickets – tickets will not be released to the dance groups until an acceptable audio recording and an introduction has been submitted to and accepted by the Entertainment Producer and the Entertainment Dance Chair.

INTRODUCTIONS

Each performing group is required to submit an Introduction to be read prior to its performance. Your introduction should identify the ethnic group you are representing, the name of your dance group and an introduction of not greater than **75 – 80 words** either describing the dance[s], or your ethnic attire, or the history of the group or

historical information about your ethnic group such as when they first came to Minnesota, where they settled, etc. Introductions greater than **75 – 80 words** will be shortened by the Script Editor. Introductions may be emailed to the Script Editor or provided in another electronic format.

TECHNICAL REHEARSALS

Approximately six weeks prior to the Festival, each participating dance group in the World Stage is required to attend a technical rehearsal on the date and time assigned by the Entertainment Committee-Dance Chair. Failure to participate in the scheduled technical rehearsal will result in the cancellation of your performance. Every dance group is to present its complete performance in the ethnic attire it intends to wear, or if not possible, at least one male and one female participant should be so attired. Dance groups will be timed. The timing starts with the beginning of the music and concludes when the dancers exit the dance floor. If the performance exceeds the time limit you will be required to shorten your performance and resubmit your music. Dance groups with less than 2/3rds of their members present will be required to attend an alternate technical rehearsal. Failure to shorten and resubmit your music prior to the date participant tickets are distributed will result in cancellation of your performance.

The ability to present your ethnic traditions of dance depends on you. For the World Stage to run smoothly, it is essential that your performance group attends the technical rehearsal and presents your performance to the Entertainment Committee. The Technical Rehearsals serve two purposes:

- To assist the Entertainment Committee to ensure that the music will be properly cued, the announcers will be prepared, and the entrance/exits will be orderly. It takes the commitment of each performing group to ensure that we have a successful show
- They are the means of determining the number of participants tickets your dance group will require.

CONTINUITY OF WORLD STAGE

Each dance group must arrive and check in with the backstage manager at least thirty minutes prior to performance time. Failure to arrive 30 minutes before performance time could result in the cancellation of your performance. All performers must remain in the dressing room area until the backstage manager calls your dance group to line up for its performance.

Backstage Etiquette:

- Please be mindful of the dance group that is currently performing on-stage and keep backstage noise to a minimum. PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES IN THE BACKSTAGE AREA.
- Upon exiting - do not stop at the exit to discuss your performance; proceed to the dressing room area.
- Please ask family and friends of dance performers to sit in the audience. Only performers are allowed in the backstage area.
- A plastic bin will be provided for each dance group to stow valuables such as wallets, purses, watches, glasses or shoes. The dance group will have custody of the bin while in the staging area and will leave it backstage in a designated spot to be retrieved as they exit. For large items left in the dressing room[s], designate a person to sit with these items. The International Festival of Minnesota is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEO TAPING

Photographs and videos taken during the World or Atrium Stage performances are permitted for personal use only. No photographers are permitted on the dance floor or are allowed to interfere with or obstruct viewing of the performances. The Festival has the right to photograph and videotape performances for promotional purposes.

PROPS

Dance group wishing to use props in its performance must bring them to the Technical Rehearsal to be cleared by the Entertainment Committee. Props must be carried on and off during allotted performance time. Props such as flowers or trinkets may not be thrown to the audience. Use of weapons as props that might injure the audience or participants and/or use of objects of religious nature are not allowed. Flags are not allowed.

CANDLES/FLAMES

St Paul City ordinance prohibits live flames including candles to be used by anyone in any part of the RiverCentre. Battery operated candles are permitted.

IFEST-MN REGULATIONS

Failure to follow any stated regulations is a breach of contract and may result in the removal of your booth without any further obligation by IFest-MN, including a refund.

Please make these rules known to all participants in the World Stage.
