
Dance Division

Local Level Veteran Participation - VA Local Staff Contacts should keep track of all Veterans who enter through their facility and enter Veteran information into **Local Level Veteran Participation Excel sheet**. VA Local Staff Contacts may access the Local Level Veteran Participation Excel sheet in the Microsoft Teams channel: NVCA Competition-Local Staff Contacts or by emailing Arts4Vets@va.gov.

Submit Top Three Finalists in Each Category - Facilities may submit the top three finalists in each category. A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.

National Judging and Results - The national judging will occur in October-December via the digital image judging process with results being announced in January. VA Local Staff Contacts at each facility will be notified of the competition results via E-mail and through Microsoft Teams channel: NVCA Competition-Local Staff Contacts. All first-place winners from the national level of the competition will be invited to attend and participate as chorus members in the live stage show performance at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

***Note:** Not all first-place winners are selected to perform their solo/group entry in the show. Due to time constraints, the Festival show directors will choose approximately 25 dance, drama, and music first-place entries to perform in the show. The remaining first-place attendees will be invited to participate in the Festival chorus.

First-Place National Winning Veterans Invited to the Festival - Veterans invited to the Festival and who accept the invitation to attend must commit to participating fully in the Festival week to the best of their ability. The Festival week is structured with daily workshops, seminars, rehearsals, exhibitions, and the stage show performance. Veterans should not view their attendance at the Festival as a vacation experience. While there are downtimes, attendance and full participation is required at all scheduled events.

Veteran Artists, Writers, Performers who are also VA Employees

VA employees who are eligible to compete and if invited to attend the Festival event, must use annual leave (AL), compensatory time off (CT), sick leave (SL) or disabled veteran leave (DVL) (SL and DVL are only appropriate when the individual's participation is part of their required medical treatment/ordered by their provider), travel CT, or, leave without pay (LWOP). Normal leave approval procedures and rules, as outlined in VA Handbook 5017 and applicable labor agreements, apply.

Tips for Taking Better Video Recordings

Please take a few extra minutes preparing a video correctly to give your Veteran the best chance possible during the judging process and to save hours of time with the judging process for our judges who donate their time.

- **Be sure to check that all videos play with video and audio before submission.**
- **Focus on the performer.** Avoid taping from the back of the room. Stage presence cannot be judged if you cannot clearly see the performer.
- When video recording dance acts, it is necessary to include the whole-body in the entire recording, including the feet.
- **Sound control** is important! Clear audio makes a performance much easier (and enjoyable) to judge. Make sure your sound is good and balanced. Be aware of the accompaniment being too loud. Oftentimes we see/hear the speaker/player is next to the video camera and it is difficult to see/hear the performer.
- Consider holding your local competition/show and then video recording **ONLY** the acts that will be sent forward for national judging.
- **Dance, drama, and music entries** will be accepted digitally (MP4, WMV, MOV, Unlisted Youtube link) through the Arts4Vets App.

Dance Division Rules

1. All entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after October 1, 2023.
2. Veterans need to communicate (as early as January 2024) with their local VA facility to find out their local competition deadline date.
3. Veterans may submit entries in up to three solo categories and three group categories in the dance, drama and music divisions, however they may only submit/be a part of one entry per category. Each entry must be different. The same entry cannot be submitted into two categories within a division.
4. **Veterans may only submit one entry per category.** A Veteran may not have more than one entry in a category moving forward to the national level of the competition.
5. Veterans who have received a gold medal in the same category from any of the 5 divisions (art, creative writing, dance, drama, and music) for two consecutive years must enter a different category the third year. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the entry being disqualified.
6. References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that requires a write-up.
7. Suggested length of performance - no longer than three minutes.
8. Dance entries will be judged based on the style of dance and steps incorporated in the performance as opposed to the style/genre of music selected.
9. Entries that contain a combination of the creative arts (to include visual arts, design, film, literature, dance, dramatic and musical performance) should be entered into the Mixed Arts category in the Drama division – see page 46, Category #13.
10. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
11. Whole-body (head to toe) video recording for dance entries is necessary. Video recording can include close-ups of the body and/or feet but whole-body view should be included as well.
12. It is considered a solo when one Veteran dances with a non-Veteran partner.
13. **Entries MAY NOT be expanded with non-eligible Veterans or any other individual unless it is a partner dance where the partner is necessary to perform the dance movements.** Although the National Veterans Creative Arts program recognizes the therapeutic value of participation of staff,

volunteers, and ineligible Veterans in groups, it is essential in keeping with the fairness of the competition that **only eligible Veterans** are competing against each other.

14. **Audio files** of the dance division entries are **NOT required to be sent to the dance chairperson**. However, should the entry place first in the national competition and the Veteran(s) be invited to perform their entry in the Festival stage show, the audio file must be sent to the NVCAF show planning team.

15. Veterans who are invited to the Festival and accept the invitation to attend must commit to participating fully in the Festival week to the best of their ability. The Festival week is structured with daily workshops, seminars, rehearsals, exhibitions, and the stage show performance. Veterans should not view their attendance at the Festival as a vacation experience. While there are downtimes, attendance and full participation is required at all scheduled events.

Dance Categories

All categories include solo and group performances and are inclusive for Veterans who are ambulatory or use assistive devices for movement (i.e. wheelchair, crutches, walkers, etc.). Veterans may only submit one entry per category.

1. **Ballroom** - Pattern of movement in a choreographed routine. Structured ballroom dances such as the waltz, jitterbug/swing, hustle, disco, polka, lindy hop, fox-trot, quick step. Veteran(s) should maintain physical contact with partner for greater part of dance.
2. **Latin Ballroom** - Latin style structured ballroom dances such as samba, cha-cha, salsa, Meringue, Machida, rumba, tango, etc. Veteran(s) should maintain physical contact with partner for greater part of dance.
3. **Country/Western/Folk/Ethnic/Cultural** - Country/western dances such as: Two-step, cowboy or traveling cha-cha, polka, schottische, promenade dances, square dance. Choreographed wheelchair dances associated with various cultures or countries. Examples may include: Clogging, Jewish Hora, Jig, May Pole, Mexican Hat, etc.
4. **Modern/Contemporary** –Expressive dance that combines elements of several dance genres. Contemporary dance stresses versatility and improvisation.
5. **Tap, Jazz or Ballet** - Traditional tap, jazz, or ballet patterns of movement choreographed to music in a routine.
6. **Line Dance** - Set pattern of movements where the individuals end up facing 2 or 4 walls. Suggest a minimum number of 3 to form the line. **All group members must be Veterans unless the line dance requires a partner where the partner is necessary to perform the dance.**
7. **Interpretive Movement** - The movements tell a story or interpret feelings through hand movements or gestures. Wheelchair does not need to move. Examples may include sign language or other hand movement and dance meditation. Stretching to music does not qualify entry into this category.
8. **Freestyle/Hip-Hop** - Non-choreographed/non-patterned movements that can involve any style of dance. Movements are spontaneous/improvisational. Entries into this category may contain many diverse steps and movements allowing dancers to use freedom of expression to enhance their dance style. Example: Freestyle, hip-hop, popping, breaking, etc.
9. **Novelty** - A routine consisting of original, imaginative, or innovative dance movements that incorporate a theme concept or characterization throughout the entire performance.

10. Special Recognition - Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through use of dance while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where an individual uses artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes.

Entries in this category **MUST** also include:

- **A written statement/narrative** (50 to 250 words) by a VA staff person or the Veteran of why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition.
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Sample Dance Judging Criteria

- **Technical Skills** - body placement, quality of movements
- **Musicality** - rhythm, timing/phrasing, movement related to music
- **Stage Presence** - confidence, focus, artistic expression, mastery of choreography

Sample Dance Judging Score Sheet

Category Number:	Category Name:
Title of Entry:	

CRITERIA	POINTS									
Technical Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Musicality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Stage Presence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

TOTAL SCORE _____

How to Submit Entries to the National Competition

Entries may be submitted **only by VA Local Staff Contacts** to the national level of the competition using the Arts4Vets App.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

File Naming Convention: There is no required file naming convention. Files uploaded to the Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data.

Dance Division Entry Form

Solo Entry

Veteran Name:		Email:	
Gender:		Phone #:	

**Gender information used only for national participation data collection.*

Group Entry

Veteran Name and Gender

Veteran Phone Number and Email

**Gender information used only for national participation data collection.*

Group Name:	
Number of Veterans in Group:	

Category Number and Name:	
Title of Entry:	
Title of Music Selection <i>(if different from Title of Entry):</i>	
Non-Veteran dance partner name(s):	
Was the entry choreographed by the Veteran(s)?	YES or NO

***Veterans:** By entering this competition, you acknowledge that your name, email, phone number, entry, and entry detail information may be uploaded into the VA Arts4Vets/Salesforce Application for the purpose of collecting and organizing competition entries.

Veterans: *I/we have read all the rules for the division in which I/we am/are entering. If my/our entry places first at the national level, I/we understand that I/we will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. It is required that I/we attend and participate in rehearsals for the entire event. I/we have signed the required Consent for Picture/Voice form (VA form 10-3203).*

Veteran(s) Signature(s):

VA Staff Checklist

- Meets the competition eligibility criteria
- Is approved to enter the NVCA Competition as a representative of this VA facility
- Has signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345) – reference Page 10 for links to form

