

EASTERN COLORADO VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



2020 CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL LOCAL COMPETITION

CREATIVE WRITING DIVISION HANDBOOK

Presented by

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Overview

Welcome to the 2020 Eastern Colorado Health Care System's Veterans Local Creative Arts Competition and National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Nationwide, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Veterans enrolled at VA health care facilities around the country compete in a local creative arts competition. Through a local then national judging process, first, second and third place entries in each category are determined. First place winners at the national level of the competition have the opportunity to be invited to the National Creative Arts Festival where the Veterans participate in various workshops, seminars, stage show, and more.

Both the General and Art Division Handbook explain how to participate in the Eastern Colorado Local Competition to have the opportunity to advance to the National Competition. Please read through all paperwork in each handbook carefully. We look forward to seeing your talents shine!

Location for the 2020 Festival is undetermined at this time. Local Coordinators will inform participants of the location once available.

NVCAF LOCAL COORDINATORS FOR EASTERN COLORADO

Sarah El Hage
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Jessie Durham
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APPLICATIONS DEADLINE

FEBRUARY 14, 2020

2020 Timeline

January 31 10:00a – 12:00p Informational meeting & assistance with applications at RMRVAMC Auditorium

February 8 and 13 – Assistance with filming at VA (RSVP required for time slot)

February 14 – APPLICATIONS DUE

- All paperwork including entries for creative writing, dance, music, and drama due Feb. 14
- Physical artwork entries must be at VA no later than Feb. 27

February 27 3:00p – 6:00p - Drop off art entries at RMRVAMC Auditorium

February 27 – June 27 Artwork will be on display at RMRVAMC

March – Local Judging and winning entries are submitted to National

April 16 1:00-3:00 - Local NVCAF Awards Ceremony, Readings and Performances

June (Date TBD) - Pick up Art entries at RMRVAMC Auditorium

September National Winners Celebration

October/November - National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Dates and Location TBD

Definitions and Abbreviations

DIVISIONS are Art, Creative Writing, Dance, Drama, and Music

CATEGORIES are the types of pieces inside the division. Examples of categories inside the Art division are oil painting, color photography, carving, and leather kit. Creative Writing are poetry, essay, short story, etc.

ECHCS (VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System). Veterans entering competition must receive care within any VA/CBOC within this VA system. This includes Colorado Springs, Pueblo, etc. If you receive your primary care in another system, you must enter at that VA facility s.

RMRVAMC (Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center) located in Aurora, CO. This is the main VA facility within the ECHCS system. Local coordinators, meetings and art display are located at this facility.

NVCAF (National Veterans Creative Arts Festival) – The Festival is located in a different city each year where the national winners of the competition participate in a weeklong festival of workshops, stage shows, and more.

ECHCS Local Competition – The first phase of the NVCAF competition. Each VA facility holds competitions at the local level, winners at the local level advance to the national phase. Local requirements may vary based on location and resources of each VA facility.

Local Coordinators – VA Staff organizing the local competition and liaison between National Coordinators and Veteran participants. Local coordinators will assist in process from the local to national phase of the festival. Local Coordinators at ECHCS are Sarah El Hage and Jessie Durham.

Rules for All Divisions

1. **Eligibility: Veterans must be enrolled to receive care at a VA medical facility before entering your local competition.** This facility should be the site where he/she receives their primary care. He/she can submit an entry in creative writing, dance, drama or music categories with a Veteran or group from another VA facility, but still represents and must go through his/her originating VA facility to enter the competition.
2. **All eligible Veterans will be given the opportunity and encouraged to participate regardless of degree of talent and experience**
3. Eligible Veterans are only permitted to enter through one VA facility competition each year.
4. Each Veteran must work with a VA staff person from the VA facility at which he/she receives his/her primary treatment to submit entries into the competition, or risk disqualification.
5. A 10-3203 form (Consent for Production and Use of Verbal or Written Statements, Photographs, Digital Images, and/or Video or Audio Recordings by VA) and additional local release forms must be completed and signed by every Veteran entering the local and national level of competition.
6. Entries created/recorded/written by Veterans who have passed away prior to the national deadline in March 2020 are not eligible to be submitted to the national level of competition.
7. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three art categories and one group category in the art division. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three creative writing categories in the creative writing division. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three solo categories and three group categories in the dance, drama and music divisions. Veterans can have only one entry per category in each division.
8. First-place ties in a category at the local competition **MUST** be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility. A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged.
9. Veterans may not expand the number of their entries in any one division using a different name (for example: pen names, stage names, different artist names, etc.).
10. A single entry may not be submitted into two or more categories within the same division. It is acceptable for an entry to be submitted into multiple divisions if the rules are followed for each division.
11. Send only the first-place winners from your competition. Only one entry for each category will be accepted from a VA facility.
12. For ALL divisions: 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.
13. Veterans may not enter the same art, creative writing, dance, drama and music entry again once it has won first-place nationally. Failure to comply with this rule will result in disqualification of the entry. Additionally, Veterans should be encouraged to enter new material each year rather than repeat entries.

14. Veterans in national first, second and third place groups of up to four in art, creative writing, dance, drama and music will each be presented a medal. Groups of 5 or more will be presented a medal if possible or will be provided an award certificate. Non-Veterans and Veterans serving as accompanists, or dance partners, or dramatic readers that enhance an entry will not receive medals or certificates.
15. Prior to submitting entries in the competition, eligible Veterans who are also VA employees should discuss leave options/restrictions with their supervisor in the event they might be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.
16. Final results of each of the five divisions of competition will be sent via E-mail to staff contact persons by mid-June. A list of Veterans invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival will also be sent to the staff contact persons of the invited Veterans by mid-June.
17. Funding and arrangements for travel to and from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for returning Veterans invited to attend the NVCAF is the responsibility of the Veteran. Lodging, meals and ground transportation during the Festival week will be provided through national Festival funds. These expenses will be provided for up to 8 eligible Veterans invited in the Group Categories
18. Stage show performance costumes for winning acts invited to the Festival will be the responsibility of the participant(s). Male participants will be requested to bring black pants and a white collared, long-sleeve dress shirt. Other production number costumes such as vests, ties, etc., will be provided. Women participants will be provided a Festival chorus dress.
19. Veterans who are invited to the Festival must be prepared to send an E-mail including the lyrics for music and dance and words/narration for drama entries in order for this to be placed in the show script.

Creative Writing Division Rules

Entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division will be judged based upon the merit of the original work, creative content, message clarity, use of language, originality of topic or idea, and overall strength. The top three creative writing winning entries will be included in a booklet that will be distributed by November 2020.

All gold medal winners from the national competition in the creative writing division will be invited to attend a writing seminar at the 2020 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The Creative Writing Division differs from categories in the Drama Division which are judged on *performance* qualities (such as stage presence, expressiveness, and interpretation) and participate in the national stage show instead of the writers seminars.

1. All entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2019.
2. First-place ties in a category at the local competition MUST be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility.

3. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate regardless of degree of talent
4. All entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division must be original compositions written solely by the eligible Veteran who is submitting the entry.
5. Each entry must be submitted as a WORD DOCUMENT ONLY. Do not send PDF attachments. HARD COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.



6. Do not send Word documents that have pictures or graphics in the background. Only the text of the entry will be judged.

7. The Veterans name, VA facility, and title of the piece must be included in the Word document.
8. Follow the rules for the category you are entering
9. If an entry has won a gold medal in the creative writing division at the national level in any category it MAY NOT BE re-submitted into the Creative Writing division in a subsequent year.
10. Collections of poems, essays, stories, etc. submitted as one entry will not be allowed.

Creative Writing Judges' Score Sheet

Judges at the 2020 National level of competition will be ranking each creative writing entry based on the following criteria. Please consider using this score sheet for your local competitions.

CRITERIA	POINTS									
Creative Content	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Message Clarity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Use of Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Originality of Topic or Idea	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall Strength of Composition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Note: References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the entry or Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that require a write-up.

Creative Writing Categories



Each entry must be typed in a Word document using 12-point font. Do not include pictures or graphics in the background of the Word documents.

1. **Poetry – Humorous** - A verse composition of humorous nature, **no longer than 48 lines** in length, written by one eligible Veteran.
2. **Poetry – Inspirational** - Same as #1, but of an inspirational nature.
3. **Poetry – Patriotic** - Same as #1, but relating to American patriotism.
4. **Poetry – Other** - Same as #1, but does not more appropriately meet the definitions of poetry-humorous, inspirational or patriotic categories.
5. **Essay – Humorous** - An essay, **no longer than 850 words**, written in ordinary speech or writing (not poetry) by one eligible Veteran that is **a discussion of a topic from the author’s personal point of view** as influenced by subjective experience and personal reflection, is a non-fiction work, often expository, and humorous in nature. Entries submitted into this category must have an introduction, a statement of viewpoint, supportive points, and a conclusion summary.
6. **Essay – Inspirational** - Same as #5, but of an inspirational nature.
7. **Essay – Patriotic** - Same as #5, but reflective of American patriotism.
8. **Essay – Other** - Same as #5, but does not more appropriately meet the definitions of essay-humorous, inspirational or patriotic categories.
9. **Personal Experience – Humorous** - A story or situation of humorous content, **no longer than 850 words**, that is **written by one eligible Veteran in the first person** and conveyed about one’s self.
10. **Personal Experience – Inspirational** - Same as #9, but with inspirational content.
11. **Personal Experience – Patriotic** - Same as #9, but with content that relates to American patriotism.
12. **Personal Experience – Other** - Same as #9, but does not more appropriately meet the definitions of personal experience-humorous, inspirational or patriotic categories. Could include wartime-related experiences, though stories/situations with wartime-related content may also be suitable for personal experience-humorous, inspirational or patriotic categories.
13. **Short, Short Story** - A short story, **no longer than 1,000 words in length** that is written by one eligible Veteran. The story must have a beginning, middle, and an end. Entries received that contain more than 1,000 words will be disqualified.



14. **Short Script** - Part of a short script for one or more characters written by an eligible Veteran, documenting the movement, actions, expression, and dialogue of the characters. **Entries in this category must be no longer than 850 words in length.**

Creative Writing Special Recognition

15. **Special Recognition** - Individual or group. Original entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the use of creative writing 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 and their accompanying written statements from the Veteran's VA staff contact person should focus on how the arts are used by the individual(s) to rise above severe limitations.

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

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 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.

2020 Creative Writing Division Entry Form

Be sure the text entries are submitted in Word document format and are typed in 12-point font.

Category Number:	
Category Name:	
Title of Piece:	

Individual Entry – For entries submitted by one Veteran.

Veteran Name:	
Veteran E-mail:	
Veteran Phone Number:	
Branch of Service	

Group Entry – For an entry submitted by a group of Veterans into Category #15 – Special Recognition.

Group Name:	
Number of Veterans in Group:	

First Name	Last Name

First Name	Last Name

Veterans:	Initial
I/we confirm that this piece is written entirely by me/us.	
I/we have read all the rules for the creative writing division.	

VA Staff:	Initial
I confirm that the Veterans entering the competition above meet eligibility criteria as specified on page 7 and are approved to enter the 2020 NVCA Competition as representatives of this VA facility.	
I confirm that the Veterans entering the competition above have signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345) to enter the 2020 NVCA Competition.	

Signature of Veteran(s)

VA Staff Contact Signature

