



2021
NATIONAL
VETERANS
CREATIVE ARTS
FESTIVAL

**EASTERN COLORADO
VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
LOCAL COMPETITION**

**Dance Division
Handbook**

Presented by



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



American Legion
Auxiliary

Message from the Director

While COVID-19 continues to impact our lives daily, we know the benefits of creating art can have far reaching effects on one's overall health and well-being. Studies show that spending time on a creative arts project can relieve stress, strengthen thinking skills and improve memory. Through art you can inspire and encourage others. No matter how far apart we are, art can help us to relax and bring us closer together.

The 2021 local creative arts competitions may look different this year. Each VA facility is taking preventative measures out of concern for the safety and well-being of Veterans, including visitors and staff at VA facilities. There may not be in-person art/writing/performance shows taking place this year on VA campuses. Veterans may need to submit their own images, videos, and text to the VA staff contact persons rather than dropping things off in person.

The following are competition rules and categories. There **are many changes** in the competition handbook this year. Please take the time to review this handbook carefully. If you have further questions or need assistance, you may contact the national chairpersons or me at any time.

Veterans, we thank you for sincerely for sharing your creativity with us and staff, we thank you for supporting Veterans in their creative endeavors.

Amy Kimbler, MT-BC
Director, National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) LOCAL COORDINATORS FOR EASTERN COLORADO

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VHAECHRMRArtCommittee@va.gov

2021 Timeline

February 12 – Applications due for RMR Art Display (This is not the competition, display at RMR only)

February 23 at 1:00-2:30pm - Virtual Informational NVCAF Meeting

Call (404) 397- 1596 , enter code 1992809978# then # again when prompted

February 25 – RMR Art Display Rotation (This is not the competition, display at RMR only)

Creative Arts Local Competition Applications accepted between February 25 – June 11, 2021

- All paperwork including entries for art, creative writing, dance, music, and drama due June 11
- Physical artwork entries must be at VA on or before June 24
- Assistance with filming for dance, music and drama is available during this timeframe (RSVP required)

June 11 – Application paperwork due

June 24 - Drop off art entries at RMRVAMC Auditorium

June – October – Competition artwork will be on display at RMRVAMC

Fall (Dates TBD) - Local NVCAF Awards Ceremony, Readings and Performances

October 1 – Local judging and winning entries are submitted to National

October 28 - Pick up Art entries at RMRVAMC

Winter (Date TBD) – National NVCAF Winners Celebration and Awards Ceremony

April 18-24, 2022 - National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in St. Petersburg, FL

Definitions and Abbreviations

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

CATEGORIES are the types of pieces inside each 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.

VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS). 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.

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.

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.

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 Allision Robbins

How to Participate

Any Veteran receiving their care at any VA Facility may participate in the NVCAF. Veterans receiving care at ECHCS, to include RMRVAMC and Clinics around Eastern Colorado, may participate in the ECHCS Local Competition. If a Veteran is receiving care at another VA Health Care System, please contact the NVCAF Local Coordinators at that facility, typically Recreation, Creative Arts and/or Music Therapy Departments. If you need assistance finding the appropriate Local Coordinator, please contact us for more information.

CAREFULLY READ THROUGH ALL INFORMATION IN EACH OF THE DIVISION HANDBOOK(S) YOU ARE ENTERING (ART, CREATIVE WRITING, MUSIC, DANCE, DRAMA). If you don't have the handbook you are interested in, see below for options.

OBTAINING INFORMATIONAL HANDBOOKS AND APPLICATIONS:

1. **Go online** to download and print at www.denver.va.gov/services/recreational_therapy.asp or scan this QR code from your smart phone
2. **Contact Recreation Therapy using MyHealthVet** - You may request handbooks, ask questions and submit applications using this secure site.
3. **Email vhaechrmrartcommittee@va.gov** - Do not provide any patient information as this is not secure, please only provide your division of interest and we will send you a copy of the application(s). For Patient Privacy, DO NOT SUBMIT APPLICATIONS USING THIS EMAIL, IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND WE CANNOT REPLY. You may ask questions, obtain applications and submit photos using this email address.
4. **Call Local Coordinators** to have one mailed to you or to pick up at RMRVAMC. Allow extra time for this option. Contact Numbers are on page 2.



Applications and information how to submit your application and entry can be found in the respective division handbook. In efforts to save paper, division handbooks and applications are mailed to you only if you have indicated what division you are interested in entering. If you did not receive the handbook you would like to enter, please contact us to update your division of interest and obtain copies using the options above.

Submitting Drama Applications and Entries

Review “DIGITAL IMAGE/DVD REQUIREMENTS” Section(s) in your respective Division Handbook on how to submit CD/DVD’s, photos of artwork, Creative Writing entries along with your digital or hard copy of your application. Each Division has specific requirements on how to submit your entries. Review each handbook carefully.

FOR PATIENT PRIVACY , EMAILS OF APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Submitting photos via email and/or text will only be accepted if arranged and approved by Local Coordinators. Unsecured emails with patient information will be immediately deleted and VA staff will not reply. If available to assist Veteran, any VA Staff may send ENCRYPTED applications via VA email

If Veteran is located outside of the Denver Metro area contact Local Coordinators to assist and provide you with information about delivery options. Arrangements must be made by the application due date by June 11

Application and entries must be at RMRVAMC by due dates, not postmarked by due date. If there is a concern it will not arrive on time, contact Local Coordinators for more information and potential options.

REQUIRED APPLICATION CHECK LIST

✓	<u>Division</u>	<u>Required Paperwork</u>	<u>File type and submission requirements</u>
	Music, Dance, Drama	DVD Video of Performing Arts Entry	Rewritable DVD’s only with editable options. Videos sent on a CD or Cell Phone will not open on VA computers.
	All – One set of forms per participant	Signed VA National and Local Consent Forms (2 Forms)	Hard copies or PDF’s only.
	All – Only if noted in the category number	A written statement/narrative	Word document only. No hard copies, PDF’s or other file types
	All – One form for each entry	Application Entry Form(s)	Hard Copy, Word Document or PDF’s only.
	Creative Writing	Creative Writing Entry	Word Document Only. No Hard Copy, PDFs or other file types
	Art	Photo(s) of artwork	Hard copy or JPEG image(s) only. No PDFs or other file types
	Art – One form per participant	RMRVAMC Agreement and Application for art display only	Hard Copy, Word Document or PDF’s only.

WHEN READY TO SUBMIT APPLICATION PAPERWORK AND PHOTOS,
THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS ARE AVIALABLE :

1. **Drop Off** hard copies and digital files saved on a CD/DVD in locked grey box located in Voluntary Service (Bldg G, First Floor) Monday – Friday 7:00am – 4:00pm.
2. **Make Appointment** with Local Coordinators for hand delivery (Contact info on page 2)
3. **MyHEALTHeVet VA Secure Messaging:** Instructions provided separately
4. **Mail** hard copies of application with digital files saved on a CD/DVD to:

Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center
1700 N. Wheeling St.
Attn: Recreation Therapy #117 - NVCAF
Aurora, CO 80045

Drop-off and hand delivery options may not be available at times due to Covid-19 and/or VA hospital restrictions. For safety reasons please consider mailing or using MyHealtheVet. If you are unsure what is available, contact coordinators for updates

Digital Image/DVD Requirements

- **DVD-R (Rewritable) Only** – Other CD or DVD's will not open on VA computers
- **Be sure to allow DVD to be edited** and do not set restrictions on the video or DVD during the burning process. Video cannot be sent to National or shown during the Awards Ceremonies if we are unable to download from the DVD
- **Record on a blank DVD only. CD's will not be playable**
- **NO USB or any other external drives will be accepted**, they also will not open on VA computers
- One DVD is acceptable to submit all required paperwork and images. Multiple DVD's can be submitted if the files are too large for the DVD
- There are no longer restrictions on file size or types (such as .mov, .mwv, .mp4, etc.)
- **Labeling DVDs:** Be sure to label the CDs with Veteran name(s) and title of entry(ies)
- **Title Slides for entries:** Each entry must have a title slide displayed prior to the entry being shown. This is crucial to the judging process. The title slide can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping of the Veteran. A handwritten sign can be held up that states the **category, title of piece and name of Veteran or Veterans in the entry**. *Please do not include elaborate menus or graphics*

(More on next page)

- **Length of video should be no longer than 3 minutes.** Anything recorded after 3 minutes may not be viewed therefore any finales after 3 minutes risk not being viewed. Be sure to WOW the judges at the beginning of your video to capture their attention
- **No filming from smart phones,** it will not convert properly
- **DVDs cannot be returned.** Please make duplicate copies of the media files and all paperwork for your records.

If you need assistance with filming your video or creating DVD's call Local Coordinators

The IdeaLab at the Denver Public Library is a great resource for assistance with photos, formatting CDs and learning other computer skills. Virtual classes available. Covid-19 restrictions may be in place, check website for current offerings at denverlibrary.org

TIPS FOR RECORDING VIDEO ENTRIES

- **Drama entries must be recorded live.** No voice-over dubbing will be allowed. No lip syncing to a pre-recorded track will be allowed
- **Be sure to check that all videos play with video and audio before submitting**
- **Focus on the performer,** not the accompanists. 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 background/accompaniment being too loud. Oftentimes we see/hear the speaker/player is next to the video camera and it is difficult to hear the performer.
- Check your DVDs before mailing them and **make sure every act and performer you intend to be on there is in fact there.**
- **All Veterans must contribute significantly to the presentation and be seen on the video** in order for an entry to be submitted into a group category. (Note: If one Veteran is speaking and another is playing an instrument as accompaniment this would NOT qualify as a group entry but rather a solo entry with accompaniment.)
- Accompanist do not have to be a Veteran however only the Veteran(s) competing will be judged, be sure to highlight ALL Veteran performers

Rules for All Divisions

1. **All eligible Veterans will be given the opportunity and encouraged to participate regardless of degree of talent and experience**
2. **Eligibility: Veteran 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.
Eligible Veterans are only permitted to enter through one VA facility competition each year.
3. Eligible Veterans are only permitted to enter through the 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 October 1, 2021 are not eligible to be submitted to the national level of competition.
7. Veteran will be allowed to enter **up to three entries in each division and one entry per category.** In addition, Veterans can also enter into group category outside of their individual submissions.
Example: In the art division, Veterans can enter one acrylic, one watercolor and one drawing, however cannot enter two acrylic entries.
8. It is acceptable for an entry to be submitted into multiple divisions if the rules are followed for each division. Example: A poem entry can be submitted into the Creative Writing division and the Drama division.
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. 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.
11. 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.
12. Veterans in national first, second and third place groups of up to five in art, creative writing, dance, drama and music will each be presented a medal. Groups of 6 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.

13. 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.
14. 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.
15. Final results of each of the five divisions of national competition will be sent via E-mail to staff contact by late -December.
16. 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. Funding for transportation could possibly be supported through donations. 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.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.

Dance Division Rules

All gold medal winners in the dance, drama and music divisions at the national level of 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 will be asked to perform their entry in the show. Due to time constraints, the Festival show directors will choose approximately 25 dance, drama, and music gold medal entries to perform. The remaining gold medalists will be invited to make up the Festival chorus.

1. Dance entries must be accompanied by a live video performing the entry
2. A medley of songs/performances in an entry must be continuous/overlapping. Editing videos or starting/stopping performances to combine multiple videos as one entry will not be allowed.

3. Dance entries must include a video recording of the Veteran(s) performing the entry and last approximately three minutes or less in length. Any recordings after 3 minutes could risk not being viewed by the judges. Be sure to WOW the judges in the beginning of your video.
4. All eligible Veterans will be given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate regardless of degree of talent
5. All entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2020.
6. Once an entry has placed first in the drama division at the national level of competition, it is not eligible to be entered again. (Example: If a Veteran or group places first with a music selection in a category one year at the national level, the Veteran or group may not enter that specific music selection again in the competition but he may enter that category again with a different performance.) Entries that have not placed first at the national level of competition should not be entered more than two consecutive years.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. It is considered a solo when one Veteran dances with a non-Veteran partner.
10. **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.** It should be noted that 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.
11. Groups are not limited in number of group members. However no more than 8 eligible invited Veterans in one group will be funded by the Festival.
12. All Veterans must contribute significantly to the presentation and be seen on the video in order for an entry to be submitted into a group category.
13. Title Slides: Each entry must have a title slide displayed prior to the entry being shown. This is crucial to the judging process. The title slide can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping of the Veteran. A handwritten sign can be held up that states the category, title of piece and name of Veteran or Veterans in the entry. *Please do not include elaborate menus or graphics.*
14. Following the national judging, all of the first place-winning entries from the national competition in the dance, drama and music divisions will advance for viewing and possible selection for inclusion in the 2022 Festival stage show performance.
15. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
The national chairpersons and judges of the competitions reserve the right to disqualify an entry if the above rules are not followed.

Dance Categories

All categories are inclusive for Veterans who are ambulatory or use any assistive devices for movement (i.e. wheelchair, crutches, walkers, etc.).

1. **Ballroom** - Solo or Group. 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** - Solo or Group. 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** - Solo or Group. Country/western dances such as: Two Step, Waltz, Cowboy or Traveling Cha Cha, Polka, Schottische, promenade dances, East Coast Swing, West Coast Swing, Line Dance, 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** – Solo or group. Expressive dance that combines elements of several dance genres including modern, jazz, lyrical, and classical ballet. Contemporary dance stresses versatility and improvisation.
5. **Tap, Jazz or Ballet** - Solo or Group. Traditional tap, jazz, or ballet patterns of movement choreographed to music in a routine.
6. **Line Dance** - Set pattern of movement done with the so individual ends 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** - Solo or Group. The movements tell a story or interpretive 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** - Solo or Group. 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, etc.
9. **Novelty** - Solo or Group. A routine consisting of original, imaginative, or innovative dance movements that incorporate a theme concept or characterization throughout the entire performance.
10. **Special Recognition** - Solo or Group. Wheelchair or ambulatory. Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the 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** (25 to 225 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.

Dance Judges' Score Sheet

- **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 _____

*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.