
National Rules



1. All required forms must be completed and **postmarked to the National Chairpersons no later than Friday, March 25, 2016** in order for Veterans to be eligible to compete at the national level.
2. Eligibility: Veterans must be **enrolled to receive care at a VA medical facility or Outpatient Clinic before entering** your local competition. This facility should be the site where he/she receives their primary treatment. 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.
Note: Each **Veteran must work with a VA staff person from the VA facility at which he/she receives his/her primary treatment** in order to enter the competition, or risk disqualification.
3. Eligible Veterans are only permitted to enter through **one** VA facility's competition per year.
4. All entries in art, creative writing, dance, drama, and music must be accompanied by the appropriate **entry form, and a signed, witnessed and dated 10-3203 form (Consent for Production and Use of Verbal or Written Statements, Photographs, Digital Images, and/or Video or Audio Recordings by VA)**. Each division has entry forms that are specific for their division. Please use the forms provided in this handbook to make the necessary copies.
5. 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.
The **divisions** are: **Art** with 51 categories, **creative writing** with 15 categories, **dance** with 15 categories, **drama** with 21 categories, and **music** with 45 categories. Individual categories are listed within each division. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to another category if the one listed is not appropriate. 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. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.
6. 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.).
7. 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.

The national chairpersons and judges of the competitions reserve the right to disqualify an entry if the above rules are not followed.

National Rules – The Competition Phase

1. 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. Non-Veterans and Veterans serving as accompanists, or dance partners, or dramatic readers that enhance an entry will not receive medals or certificates.
2. Each **Veteran must work with a VA staff person from the VA facility at which he/she receives his/her primary treatment** in order to enter the competition, or risk disqualification.
3. 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 in October.
4. Final results of each of the five divisions of competition will be sent out via E-mail and regular mail to staff contact persons in 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 in mid-June.

National Rules – Art Division

5. **All artwork entered** (except for the Military Combat Experience, category 15) **must have been created after April 1, 2015.**
6. **Art entries** must be submitted as **digital images only. Do not submit the actual art, slide images or photographs of the art as they will be disqualified** (see page 22).
7. **There are two phases to the national level of the art competition.** The first phase is by a **DIGITAL** format and will determine the top three entries in each category. By the end of April, the staff contact person listed on the entry form of each of these top three entries will be notified and requested to send the actual artwork to Jackson, Mississippi for the final phase of the national art competition. The phase two judges will determine 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each category. **All 1st place gold medal winners from the National Art Division Competition will be invited to the Festival.**
8. Groups in art **are not limited in number of group members.** However no more than 8 eligible Veterans from the first place national competition winning entry in the Group Art category will be funded by the Festival.
9. Visual art entries may be submitted via CD or via the NVCA Competition SharePoint site <https://vaww.visn23.portal.va.gov/stc/NVCACompetition>.

National Rules –

Dance, Drama, Music and Creative Writing Divisions

10. All entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2015.
11. Dance, drama and music entries **must be video recorded and must be approximately three minutes or less in length**. Creative Writing entries do not need to be video recorded but the text submitted **must adhere to the text length and spacing indicated within each category description**.
12. **Send only the first place winners from your competition**. Only one entry for each category will be accepted from a VA facility.
13. **Once an entry has placed first** in the creative writing, dance, drama and music divisions at the national level of competition **it is NOT eligible to be entered again**. **Creative writing, dance, drama, and music entries which have not placed first** at the national level of competition **should not be entered more than two consecutive years**.
14. **Entries must be recorded live. No voice-over dubbing will be allowed**.
15. Groups in dance, drama and music **are not limited in number of group members**. However no more than 8 eligible Veterans in one group from the dance, drama, and music divisions will be funded by the Festival.
16. **Title Slides for SharePoint entries, CDs, DVDs:** 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.*
17. **Labeling CDs and DVDs:** Be sure to label the CDs and/or DVDs sent to each division (creative writing, dance, drama, and music) chairperson. Label it with the name, city and state of your VA facility.



18. There are **two options** for submitting video recorded entries into the dance, drama and music divisions. Please review page 56 (dance division), page 72 (drama division), and page 91 (music division) as each option is explained in more detail. The options are listed as follows. **Note: Entries submitted on VHS Videotapes will no longer be accepted.**

Option 1: Digital media files uploaded to the NVCA Competition SharePoint site <https://vaww.visn23.portal.va.gov/stc/NVCACompetition>.

Option 2: Digital media files provided on individual CDs or DVDs.

National Rules – The Festival



1. 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 2016 Festival stage show performance. **Some** of these first place-winning Veterans will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival to be hosted by the Jackson VA Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi October 10 – October 17, 2016. Those invited to attend the Festival will be notified by mid-June, 2016 via their staff contact person. All national first place-winning Veterans from the **art division** and selected first place-winning Veterans from the **creative writing division** will be invited to attend the Festival and will be notified via their VA staff contact person by mid-June, 2016.
2. **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.
3. 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.
4. **Funding support and arrangements for travel to and from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for those Veterans invited to attend the NVCAF is the responsibility of the local VA facility, although Hero Miles is an option for sponsoring air travel for Veterans.** Housing, meals and ground transportation during the Festival will be provided through national Festival funds. These expenses will be provided for up to 8 eligible Veterans in the Group Art category and up to 8 eligible Veterans in the group categories of the dance, drama, and music divisions.
5. Those invited to participate in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival will be notified via an E-mail to the VA staff contact person listed on the entry form, no later than mid-June, 2016. **Veterans who are invited and accept the invitation must submit initial paperwork by July 15, 2016.** Invited participants **must submit all required Festival registration forms to Jackson, Mississippi host site of the 2016 Festival no later than August 1, 2016.**
6. Performance costumes for winning acts invited to the Festival will be the responsibility of the participant(s). All participants will be requested to bring black pants and a white collared, long-sleeve dress shirt, but other production number costumes such as vests, hats, ties, etc., will be provided.
7. **Veterans who are invited to the Festival** must be prepared (either themselves or through their staff contact person) 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. E-mails can be sent to Suzanne.Anderson4@va.gov.