



2026

Costume Contest Rules and Entry Form

This year's costume contest will be held Saturday, August 1, 2026, at 4:00 pm on the Gen Con Main Stage in the 500 Ballroom. Contestant check-in will be in the 500 Ballroom Reception Room.

Contest Basics

Costume entries may be simple walk-on-and-pivot displays or may involve a short presentation. Performances are limited to two minutes. You may perform your own speech, drama, song, or other skill, or you can simply model while our emcee narrates text that you provide. Either way, the emphasis of judging is on the costumes.

Advance registration by mail is highly recommended. The costume contest is limited to 70 entries. If any category receives 14 entries, that category will be closed. Entries will be accepted on a first-come, first-entered basis. When the contest reaches capacity, a waiting list will be created. Entries on the waiting list will be admitted to the contest if a registered entry drops out or does not appear at check-in.

To register, fill out the form below. This form does not register you for the convention—only the costume contest. You must also register for the convention. A valid convention badge and TWO \$2.00 generic tickets will be required when you sign in at Costume Contest Check-In. Cash will not be accepted.

Emcee Introduction: Our emcee will introduce you as you appear on stage. Write a short introduction for yourself that you would like the emcee to read. Type it or write it neatly and attach it to your entry form. This is your chance to impress the judges; include a description of the construction of your costume or a story about the character you're portraying. This description is limited to 100 words. We reserve the right to edit material.

On-site entries: Fill out the entry form (your introduction for the emcee must be attached and typed or neatly written) and drop it in the "Costume Contest Entry" box located at the Information Booth in the Main Concourse by 9:00 A.M. on Saturday. If you miss this deadline, come to Costume Contest Check-In and we'll see if we have room for you.

Contestant Check-In: All contestants must check in at Contest Check-In. Mailing or dropping an entry form reserves a space for you, but you are not officially registered until you appear at check-in. Contestants who do not appear at check-in are considered dropped. Check-in takes about 30 minutes.

Costume Contest Rules

1. Any item or activity that presents the possibility of damage to the entrants, their costumes, the audience, or the facility is prohibited. Carrying or displaying weapons or weapon replicas of any sort is prohibited by Convention Management *except during the Costume Contest*. In other words, you may bring secured weapons directly to the contest, but you *cannot* wear or carry weapons into the convention areas or halls. Weapons must be removed and securely wrapped immediately upon leaving the stage. Prohibited items worn into the convention areas will be confiscated. Functional firearms are not permitted at any time in the convention or the costume contest. Fire and liquids are not permitted on stage.
2. Please be sure to read Gen Con's policies regarding costumes and cosplay before entering; see [Policies and Show Info](#) on the website. In addition, good taste must be used in creation and presentation of costumes and talent. Gore, graphic violence, nudity, swearing, or other objectionable elements may be grounds for disqualification as determined by the Costume Contest Staff. The Costume Contest attracts many families each year and Gen Con wishes to maintain a comfortable atmosphere for all spectators (PG-13).
3. Any participant may be disqualified from the contest by Gen Con Show Management or Costume Contest Staff for failure to observe any of these rules. All decisions made by the judges are final. All prizes will be awarded at the conclusion of the contest.
4. Special stage requests will be considered but cannot be guaranteed. Requests should be submitted in writing along with the registration form.
5. **All contestants must check in and be pre-judged. A valid convention badge will be required at check-in, as well as TWO generic tickets.**
6. **No entries will be accepted after check-in has concluded. Contestants who do not appear at check-in will be dropped.**
7. Restrooms are available in the convention center. Entrants are responsible for their own belongings. Gen Con is unable to provide a secure area for personal items. Contestants may bring an assistant to help with belongings.
8. **Contestants may supply music** to be played during their performance. Music must be submitted at check-in and must be on a CD or a flash drive in MP3 or MP4 format. Gen Con is unable to connect electronic devices to the house sound system.
9. Questions about Costume Contest rules and registration may be addressed to the Costume Contest Coordinator. Contact Anne Brown at genconcostumelady@gmail.com. Please do not send entries via email; emailed entries will be ignored. Include the words "Costume Contest" in the subject line.
10. **Pre-registrations: Emcee introductions must be emailed to the Costume Contest Coordinator by midnight on July 22, 2026. See Rule #9.**
11. If you use spam-blocking software, please adjust your settings to accept email from the Costume Contest Coordinator (see Rule #9) so you can receive communication via email.
12. Any prize money not claimed by Sunday at 4 pm at the close of the convention will be forfeited.
13. A maximum of three awards will be presented to winners of the Group category.

Costume Categories:

Choose a category for your costume and check it on the entry form. If your costume fits multiple categories, pick the category you prefer. We will review your costume at check-in to make sure you are in the right category. Categories may be closed depending on the number of entries.

- Pop Culture (Robots, aliens, spaceship pilots, heroes, villains, and so on.)
- Fantasy / Historical (Wizards, barbarians, pixies, mermaids, warriors, Renaissance citizens, and so on.)
- Child (Ages 0–13, all costume types)
- Groups: Teams of two or more costumers.
- Game Characters (Characters from video games, board games, role-playing games, and so on).
- Professional (To keep the contest fair, you must enter the Professional category if you meet any of the following criteria, regardless of your age: 1) You are a past first-place winner of a Gen Con costume contest or other major costume contest TWICE within the past 5 years; 2) Your costume was constructed by a professional in the garment or costume industry, whether it was you or someone else; 3) Your costume was constructed by someone who earns the majority of their living in the construction of costumes or clothing. 4. First-place winners in the child category will be evaluated for the Professional category on a case-by-case basis. Costumes made by adults will be moved to the Professional category. Children who make their own costumes may be allowed to remain in the Child category.)
- Pot Luck (Anything not mentioned above!)

SATURDAY TIMETABLE

- 9:00 am — Deadline to drop entries at the Information Booth
- 9:30 am - 1:30 pm — Costume Contest check-in (500 Ballroom Reception)
Note: No one will be entered in the Costume Contest after check-in has closed.
- 3:00 pm - Participants line up for Costume Parade (outside Hall A)
- 3:30 pm - Pre-show entertainment on the Main Stage (ICC 500 Ballroom)
- 3:45 pm — Contestants report for the Costume Contest.
- 4:00 pm — Costume Contest begins!

Gen Con Indy 2026 Costume Contest Entry Form

To preregister, MAIL this form to: **Anne Brown, Costume Contest Coordinator, 7028 W. Van Beck Ave., Milwaukee, WI, 53220.** Must be postmarked by July 17, 2026. EMAIL your emcee intro by July 22, 2026; see Rule #10.

To register onsite, deposit this form in the box marked “**Costume Contest Entry Forms**” at the Information Booth **in the Main Concourse** before 9 am on August 1 or bring it directly to Costume Contest Registration.

Contestant Name: _____

(Your legal name, not the name of the character you will represent.)

Cosplay Handle (optional): _____

Home Address: _____

City, State: _____ **Zip:** _____

Primary Phone: _____ **Alternate Phone:** _____

Email Address: _____

Name of Entry: _____

Name of Costume Source: (Game, movie, book, comic, etc.) _____

Category: Please note the rule regarding the Professional category before making a selection.

Pop Culture Fantasy/Historical Child Game Character

Professional Pot Luck Group

Approximate Length of Your Presentation (limited to 2 minutes): _____

Special Requests (if known): Music Microphone Other (Specify) _____

Be sure to attach your typed or neatly written emcee introduction (100 words or less)!

Read and agree to the following before signing:

I agree to comply with the 2026 Gen Con Costume Contest Rules, and I further consent to the use of my picture, video footage, and the likeness of my costume by Gen Con Management for streaming, VOD, and any future promotional efforts.

I understand that my personal information will be stored by the Costume Contest Coordinator only and will not be shared with any outside party other than Gen Con LLC or its designees.

I understand that I must appear at Costume Contest Check-In on the day of the contest to complete the entry process; if I do not appear, I will be dropped from the contest.

Signature: _____

(Parent or Guardian must sign for entrants under 18 yrs. old)

Note: This form enters you in the Costume Contest ONLY; visit the registration area in the Indiana Convention Center to register for Gen Con.