

Indiana Leather Pride Bootblack Contestant Guide and Application 2026



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Purpose of Contest

The Indiana Leather Pride Contest serves three distinct purposes for the Indiana Leather community:

1. Provide a fun and unique social and educational experience to the leather community as a whole. Historically, contests have been established to bring the community together. In that spirit, this contest exists to allow new connections to be built and to educate the community on resources while providing an outlet to share common interests.
2. Positive representation of the Indiana Leather Pride community at events, contests, and throughout our community during their title year.
3. Educate contestants and the public about the importance of events, such as the Indiana Leather Pride Contest, by building and supporting a stronger community identity with shared interests and ideals. This is done through open-to-the-public educational opportunities leading up to the contest, educational opportunities at the event itself, and explicitly sharing contest goals and judging criteria during the contest to build enthusiasm around the titles and their potential for the community.

Contestant Resources

Indiana Leather Pride Contest is, in part, an educational event for both the general community and the contestants. It is not unreasonable to expect that many who enter this contest have no prior competition experience in a similar event. Not only does it take courage to get up on stage and be judged by your peers, but the lack of knowledge and experience can make it difficult to contemplate applying. Our contestants can provide a peek into our collective future, and we all have a stake in helping them succeed, regardless of the outcome. A contestant's enthusiasm and our passion for the contestant's success are powerful drivers within the community. Without aspirations and gumption to follow through, our community would potentially be devoid of leadership to make events and gatherings happen.

Pre-Contest Training

Indiana Leather Pride Contest wants to take the community, as well as potential contestants, on a behind-the-scenes look at the hows and whys of the contest system. We also want to encourage and reassure potential contestants that we are here because of them, as well as walk them through the contest process before they ever step on stage. Check our Facebook page for event dates as to when we will be covering topics such as what our Indiana Leather Pride Contest circuits are, as well as in-depth discussions and demonstrations of how to prepare and what to expect for each component of the Indiana Leather Pride Contest. These educational opportunities are open to the public – feel free to sit in, participate, and learn with our contestants!

Den-Person

Like many other contests, we have a den person (however, this person can pick their own preferred title, i.e., den daddy!) assigned to chaperone our contestants before, during, and after the contest weekend, as well as help take care of any last-minute issues. The den person is there to focus on the success of each contestant, assisting our contestants with (most!) anything related to the contest. Depending on your needs, this person will help make sure you are where you need to be when you need to be there, all while looking and feeling your best. This person is also great at providing last-minute advice and any other behind-the-scenes support to those competing. The den person is introduced to the contestants after the

application deadline has passed and is available to help answer any questions and provide insight on preparing for the weekend, including providing support and walking the contestants through the weekend competition.

Contestant Prerequisites

To compete in the Indiana Leather Pride Contest, you must first meet the following criteria.

1. Must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age on or before the first day of the contest;
2. Must be an Indiana resident for a minimum of six months leading up to the contest;
3. Agree to participate in all contest categories while conforming to all state and local regulations about nudity and obscenity in the venues;
4. Permit photography and/or other recordings of themselves for use in the promotion of the Indiana Leather Pride Contest for current and future events;
5. Own all gear worn during the contest;
6. Represent the Indiana Leather Pride title for the title year following the contest, abiding by all expectations outlined in this document, if winning a title.

Contest Components

Each contestant of the Indiana Leather Pride Contest will be judged in five different areas. Besides the judging criteria below, any component of the contest may have points deducted by the judges for tardiness, unsportsmanlike conduct, or generally egregious behavior.

Open Shine/Weekend Image – 20% of Overall Score

Evaluation of the contestant from the time the contestant is introduced to the public on Friday evening until the beginning of the on-stage contest on Saturday evening. Judges will award points based on how each contestant behaves and interacts socially. Contestants offer Bootblack services during the meet and greet with eventgoers to demonstrate how they will perform and conduct themselves during their title year. Qualities the judges observe are skills, knowledge, chair management, personality, and an appropriate level of professionalism &/or (if negotiated by boot wearer & bootblack) eroticism.

Interviews – 30% of Overall Score

An opportunity for the judges to directly assess the aptitude, capabilities, and potential of the contestant to fulfill the role of titleholder. Each contestant will be presented to the judging panel for a public 15-minute interview. The head judge and, if necessary, the Producer will moderate the interview, ensuring each judge is allowed to ask questions, intervening if any question is deemed inappropriate. All contestants need to be in the vicinity during the interview process so that they may be recalled for further questions, if necessary.

Technical – 15% of Overall Score

Contestants are tasked with revitalizing and shining a boot to showcase their technical skills for judges to compare the work of other bootblacks, using the untouched boot from the pair as an additional reference. The contestants will be given one hour to complete this task and return the boot to one of the Tally Masters.

Speech – 20% of Overall Score

The speech is an opportunity for the contestant to discuss a topic they are passionate about with their community. Judges will award points based on the content and delivery of the speech. The speech should last between ninety (90) and one hundred and twenty (120) seconds. If a speech runs over this period, a 10% penalty will automatically be incurred for points awarded in the category (ex., 70 points awarded will have 7 points deducted); however, the contestant will not be interrupted or stopped once the time has expired.

Auction Basket – 0% (Not judged)

All contestants are expected to provide an auction “basket” of items to auction off during the event, OR a single high-retail-dollar item worth \$100 or more. Auction baskets (or high-dollar items) should appeal to those in attendance and should shy away from including alcohol, as the event is 18+. You do not have to spend any or lots of money on a basket - traditionally, baskets include items donated from friends/vendors or from your own collection. The basket may have a theme or simply be a lot of fun and useful items packaged together. The baskets are not judged – they will be auctioned off during the weekend to help cover the winner(s) travel funds. Baskets SHOULD include an itemized list of items included and the approximate retail value.

Questions From The Public – 15% of Overall Score

This component of the contest is possibly the most difficult to prepare for – all contestants will be brought on stage and asked questions from their community. Questions may be very serious, such as “What’s the first thing you would tell someone interested in leather?” or funny and nonsensical, such as “What’s your favorite Disney princess and why?” Contestants will be awarded points for engaging the emcee and audience, for the ease with which questions are answered, and for the ability to land on their verbal paws when presented with a challenging or ridiculous question.

Judging Method

Each year, a panel of judges is selected by the Producer. All efforts will be made to make the panel as diverse as our community. The judges will have knowledge and experience that help make them qualified to subjectively judge the contestants. A head judge is assigned to lead the group and moderate the necessary segments. The head judge will also have the responsibility to ensure that the panel is following guidelines spelled out by the contest, both explicitly and in the spirit of the contest and title. If necessary, the head judge will bring any concerns or requests for clarification to the Producer. Every judge is not just assigning a score to a contestant, but also actively providing notes on what went well and what can be improved upon for next time. The notes provided by the judges to each contestant are candid feedback to help the contestant assess their performance, explain the scores received, and provide feedback on what went well or could use improvement – they are a private communication between the contestant and individual judge and are understood to not be for public consumption.

Contestants are encouraged to get to know the judges and interact with them; however, contestants shall be prohibited from having private meetings or engaging in any sexual activity or intimate play scenes with the judges before the announcement of the contest results. To help avoid accidental violation of this policy, contestants and judges must display their ID badges at all times during the contest weekend.

Olympic Scoring will be used to determine the final scores and placement of contestants. In Olympic Scoring, high and low scores for each contestant, in each category, are dropped, with the remaining scores totaled for each contestant. The contestant with the highest point score will be declared the winner, with the second-highest contestant declared runner-up. Additionally, total scores must be above 70% of available points for a winner or runner-up to be declared, regardless of the number of contestants. In the event of a tie, the high and low scores will be added back into each category to determine the winner. In the very unlikely event that there is still a tie, the tally masters shall oversee a judge's secret ballot to determine the winner.

Scoring will be tabulated by two tally masters (two members of the community who will individually tabulate the scores and confirm each other's work). These two have the somewhat tedious job of evaluating and requesting clarification on judges' scoring sheets, adding up, and determining the component and final scores while maintaining full confidentiality of the running totals. They are also responsible for typing up the judge's notes for each contestant.

In the event the contest has eight (8) or more contestants competing for a single title, there will be an elimination of the lowest-scoring contestants until only five (5) remain. The elimination will occur based solely on the Weekend Social Image, Interview, and Headspace Scene scores (65% of scoring complete) and will occur before the on-stage portion of the contest. This is done to ensure that both the community and the judges can spend ample time with each of the remaining contestants during the most time-constrained portion of the contest.

Expectations of the Winner

The primary responsibility of the winner of the Indiana Leather Pride title is to build and maintain a positive and respectful image of the contest as well as the leather community. There are a few specific minimum expectations listed below, but it's mostly up to the winner to decide how they want to represent and are best able to represent the contest and community - each winner is unique in their goals and aspirations and is encouraged to exceed these minimum requirements based on their ability and enthusiasm. Failure or inability to fulfill the listed minimum requirements by the winner can result in revocation of the title.

Community / Public Representation

It's important for the contest and our community that our titleholders maintain a positive and respectful public image during their title year. Tarnishing the reputation of the contest or the title can lead to revocation of the title. Instead of a list of exactly what to do or not to do, this statement is intentionally vague and boils down to don't make an ass of yourself, the contest, or our community - having a controversial viewpoint or unusual passion is fine as long as you conduct yourself with grace and respect for your title and our community. The winner always has the option to (and is encouraged) to consult with the producer or with others they trust before embarking on something they are unsure of.

Communication with Producers

The winner will maintain an open dialogue with the producer regarding the winner's goals and plan of action. This is important so that the producer can promote the winner and the contest while being consistent with the winner's goals. The producer and the winner will work together to achieve the winner's goals.

Event Attendance

The winner is expected to attend and represent at a minimum of five (5) leather/BDSM/fetish events during their title year:

- Be in attendance at a minimum of one (1) next-level contest (as a contestant or representing Indiana Leather Pride).
- Consider representing Indiana at the next level contest by competing – we have a wonderful community that would love to see us represented at the next level and is available to provide guidance and support!;
- Attend and participate in the Indiana Pride Parade.

The winner will notify the producer of planned event attendance with enough time so that the producer may also attend or provide assistance and determine compliance with the event attendance requirement.

Attending Successor Contest

The winner agrees to attend, provide a step-aside speech, and assist in whatever manner deemed necessary by the producer at the following year's contest when their successor is determined.

Competition in Other Title Contests

The winner needs the explicit permission of the Indiana Leather Pride Contest producer (producers) to compete in any other title contests during the period that the winner represents the Indiana Leather Pride Contest – this is to prevent conflicts of interest in potentially representing more than one title at a time.

Resignation or Termination of Title

If the winner is unable to fulfill their duties or their title is revoked, the winner will return all title items to the producer.

Making the Indiana Leather Pride Contest Successful

Everyone associated with the Indiana Leather Pride Contest is a volunteer. No one gets paid, but we are just as excited as the contestants about having a successful and enjoyable event. The producer (producers) provide overall guidance and final word on any contest issue while recognizing that without help from others, no contest would happen. It takes judges, tally masters, emcees, den daddies, judges, assistants, contestants, other volunteers, and support from the community for any successful contest to occur.

Weekend Schedule

Times and locations are subject to change depending on the number of contestants. Contestants are required to participate in all activities except the educational sessions and brunch (attendance at non-required portions is, of course, allowed/encouraged):

Thursday, September 11th

- 7 PM Gather with your den staff and other contestants (Location TBD)-drop off basket
- 8-12 AM Opening Ceremonies in the Hall of Champions for the introduction of Contestants and Judges, mingle with the public

Friday, September 12th, in the Hall of Champions

- 10 AM - 1 PM (or later as necessary) interviews split into two days, depending on the number of contestants, break for lunch

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- 11 AM – 5:30 PM Educational Sessions
- 8 PM Contest Start: Start headspace scenes or fantasies, split into two nights, and speeches depending on the number of contestants

Saturday, September 13th, in the Hall of Champions

- 10 AM – 1 PM (or later as necessary), interviews second half, depending on the number of contestants, break
- 11 AM – 5:30 PM Educational Sessions
- 8 PM Contest: Start headspace scenes or fantasies, split into two nights, and speeches depending on the number of contestants

Sunday, September 14th, Winner's Brunch in the Restaurant

- 11 AM – 1 PM Brunch

Entry Deadline

Applications should be received by the producer by midnight on September 8th, 2022. Applications may be emailed to Info@IndianaPupAndTrainer.org. Don't worry about signing - the producer will print paper copies of the waiver and indemnification for you and have you sign when you arrive Friday evening.

Application Checklist

- Headshot photo – a digital photo including your shoulders to the top of your head. This photo will be provided to the judges along with your application. Please, email the photo to the address above with your application. This photo does not need to be professional or artistic – it's simply used as a behind-the-scenes "cheat sheet" so the judges can easily recognize you. This photo is not intended for public consumption – it will not be blown up to a large scale or used for publicity, but rather just used in thumb-nail size on paper provided to the judges.
- Contest Application – Feel free to use the PDF text feature to type your application and save it before printing or emailing it to the address above.
- Contest Fee – Since this is our inaugural year we are charging a contestant above normal registration.
- Photographic & Image Release, Waiver, and Indiana Leather Pride Contest Indemnification – printed and signed, while witnessed by the producer or representative, and handed over before the start of the contest.
- A copy of your driver's license or a current photo ID indicating your date of birth. (This remains confidential and is simply to validate age and identity.)
- Is your auction basket ready?

2024 Contestant Registration & Application

Legal Name:		Stage Name:
Street Address:		Phone # (indicate if mobile):
City/State:	Postal Code:	Email:
Date of Birth:		Pronoun(s):
Boot Blacking Experience?		
Have you ever been convicted of a felony or any criminal activity? If so, please explain:		Have you ever appeared in any pornographic photos, films, or videos? If so, please explain:
Body Modifications (piercings, tattoos, brandings, etc.):		List any clubs/organizations you are involved with (if applicable):
How long have you been involved in the leather S/M, fetish lifestyle?		

How have you integrated leather, S/M, fetish into the rest of your life and relationships?
What is your favorite piece of leather?
What other fetishes / BDSM / leather lifestyles do you have an interest in?
Why have you decided to run for the Indiana Bootblack title?

Tell us something unique and surprising about yourself that others in the leather community may not know about:

Photographic & Image Release Waiver

I, the undersigned, hereby give Indiana Leather Pride Contest (the contest), its photographers, legal representatives, agents, or assigns, the right and permission to copyright, use, reuse, broadcast, and/or publish any Photographic Pictures (including digital images and pictures) of me, which shall be taken during the contest, or as a result of my preparation for the contest, or as a result of my having Participated in the contest, Pictures, as herein, shall include Portraits or reproductions thereof, including audio and videotapes, made through any media. I further assign the right to use such pictures in conjunction with my stage name, and through any media outlets, for any purpose deemed appropriate by the Producer (Producers). I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished Pictures or the method of their eventual use, including any related audio, video, or printed copy that may be used in conjunction therewith. I hereby release, discharge, and agree to save harmless Indiana Leather Pride Contest and the Producer(s), their photographers, legal representatives, agents, or assigns, including those publishing and/or distributing the finished product, in whole or in part, from and against any liability or claim as a result of the use or publication of said pictures, including from any distortion, blurring, alteration, optical illusion or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking, processing or reproduction of the pictures, their publication or distribution. I have read the foregoing Release and Waiver before signing below. I warrant my full understanding of its contents, and that I am of legal age to give my consent in this state.

Indiana Leather Pride Contest Indemnification

I hereby certify that I have attained at least twenty-one (21) years of age and that I, based upon mutual covenants and considerations (including granting me the privilege of attending and participating in the Indiana Leather Pride Contest Weekend) will not hold the Producer(s), nor the individual and collective owners, officers, agents and employees thereof liable for any injury to my person or property during the period of the Indiana Pet, Pup And Trainer Contest Weekend, and I further agree to indemnify and save harmless the producer(s), the individual and collective owners, officers, agents and employees thereof from any liability, injury or economic loss or other damage.

Compliance

By signing below, I agree to comply with all rules and regulations set forth by the Indiana Leather Pride Contest.

I certify that all information provided on the accompanying forms is accurate.

I certify that I meet all qualifications specified in the Qualification Statement.

I understand that if I win the contest, I will be expected to fulfill the duties of the title as outlined in this guide.

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____

Witnessed by (Contest Representative): _____