

KWC USA 2026 Competition Rules

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

These rules and conditions of entry apply to Karaoke World Championships United States of America in 2026

By entering this competition entrants are bound by these 'Conditions of Entry'.

The organizers of KWC USA reserve the right to determine an entrant's eligibility over and above these Conditions of Entry. No correspondence will be entered into. All decisions will be final.

1. Who is eligible to enter:

1.1. All entrants must be, at the time of entry into the competition

a) *Adults Division: 18+ years and over;*

Juniors Division: 5 to 17 years old at the time of audition. *USA Only*

b) The contestant must represent our country, the United States of America at the World Finals Event. Therefore they must have lived in the country for over 3 years, or have citizenship (i.e. a national passport and social security number) of the country they will be representing.

c) Singers who have represented the United States in the KWC world finals from previous KWCUSA seasons are welcome to compete again after 1 full year off from their placing division.

1.2. The Karaoke World Championships is open to any artist at any level in their musical career as long as the following does not apply:

a) Does not have a currently signed management contract or a recording contract as a singer with a major label or a production company.

b) Participants in major vocal television shows will be considered as eligible singers as long as they did not win the show they were on and/or were not included in the final rounds of the aired competition rounds and were not given any contractual obligations that might be in conflict with participating in the full KWCUSA competition season.

1.3. Employees (as per definition below) of the following are not eligible to enter the competition -

a) Country partners are not eligible. If you are the person (or one of the persons) responsible for producing your national competition and forming your national jury, you cannot participate as a singer.

b) Karaoke World Championships USA Officials, KWCUSA State Partners, KWCUSA Talent Recruiters, Judges, or Program Coaches are not eligible to compete in the season they are actively holding that role.

c) Employees of participating venue teams cannot enter trials at the venue where they work. They are eligible to try out at any other participating venue team in their state. Previous employees of a participating venue team must have left employment at the venue by December 31st, 2025 to be eligible to try out for that venue team in the 2026 season.

Definition of an Employee – An employee is anyone whose services are rendered or subcontracted, whether paid or not, by the associated business.

1.4. Direct Family Members (as per definition below) of employees (as per definition above) cannot enter trials where their family works. They may enter the competition trying out at another participating venue.

Definition of Direct Family Members – Includes direct family members, domestic partners whether married or unmarried, fiancées, boyfriends, girlfriends, and anyone who lives in the same household (whether they are related or not).

2. Entry Conditions

2.1. All entries are subject to the competition's full Conditions of Entry. If an entrant is unsure of their position, they must contact KWC USA via www.kwcusa.org for verification of eligibility;

2.2. Contestants may try out for any participating venue team within their State during the competition series. Once they have won a place on that team, they may NOT continue to compete for a place on other venue teams within that state.

2.3. Once a contestant has won a place on a venue team they will immediately secure their place in the State Final Tournament. They may no longer enter the competition again at the venue team level.

2.4. If a contestant is unsuccessful in a venue trial final making a team, they may try out for any other participating venue team for the duration of State trial rounds.

2.5. Venues may require a minimum attendance of contestants during the team trials. It is the entrant's responsibility to check with their karaoke operator regarding individual venue team trial requirements;

2.6. The organizers reserve the right to disqualify any contestant whose manner, or that of their associates, is disrespectful towards other singers, coordinators, sponsors and organizers of the event. No correspondence will be entered into.

2.7 Any contestant, family member or associates who argue the decision of officials may be considered unruly and the contestant may be disqualified from advancing in competition. Should the argument concerning the official outcome of a final event, and the contestant be awarded a prize, that contestant may be stripped of the prize and such prize awarded to another contestant.

2.8 Contestants, their family members, or any of their associates who exhibit offensive behavior during any portion of the contest will disqualify that contestant from future competition. If the contestant, their family or associates exhibit offensive behavior after the contestant has competed, and such behavior is on KWCUSA trial, tournament, or finals location property, even after the winners are announced, that contestant's score will be nullified. If the contestant whose score has been nullified is a winning contestant, the next contestant in scoring position for that particular category shall be the winner. It will not be the responsibility of KWCUSA or any of its representatives to recover any money or prize awarded to a contestant who is later disqualified or found to be ineligible following final review and decisions of the officials.

2.9 KWCUSA will be present during all phases of the KWCUSA competition, a representative to answer any complaints concerning the KWCUSA competitions. No KWCUSA representative shall answer a complaint concerning official judge scores or the opinions of the judges or outcomes of any judged event.

2.10 Complaints, not made in person at the event, concerning any breach of KWCUSA rules must be made in writing and sent by registered mail to KWCUSA 5047 Auburn Skyline Ave Las Vegas NV 89139. A complaint must reach the KWCUSA office no later than one week after the tournament or finals in question to be considered for action. Such a complaint should include all relevant facts concerning the complaint. If the complaint concerns the eligibility of a winning contestant the complaint must include relevant documentation. Any statements of fact are to be notarized, including statements by witnesses.

3. Entry Requirements

3.1. All entrants must be eligible to obtain a United States passport should they be crowned 'Karaoke World Champion United States of America Champion'.

3.2. Passports must be obtained and in hand at least 45 days prior to any international travel dates to the Karaoke World Championships World Finals. Contestants not holding a current and active passport at that time will forfeit their position as the US Representative and all prizes may be null and void. If time permits the next runner up may be sent in their place.

3.3. All entrants are responsible for ensuring they are fit for national and overseas travel and have no apparent reason for being ineligible to travel or for entry into another country. Proof may be required. * (* This includes any proof of vaccinations that may be required)

3.4. The organizers reserve the right to make the final decision regarding an entrant's eligibility over and above these conditions of entry. Entrants may be asked to sign legal documents and provide proof of eligibility.

3.5. All issues regarding any entrant's eligibility must be addressed, clarified and cleared within 7 days prior to National Finals. Proof of claim will be required.

3.6 If you have been removed or prohibited from any of the participating KWCUSA contest venue locations within your state competition circuit for any reason you will not be eligible to compete at the State Finals Event.

4. State Prize Package

4.1. Winner(s) from any State Finals event will represent that state at the KWCUSA National Finals event August 10th-12th, 2026.

4.2. One winner from each Official State Finals event will win accommodations and airfare to the KWCUSA 2026 National Finals.

4.3 Prizes for the KWCUSA 2026 National Finals will be listed at www.kwcusa.org

4.4. If the top State Final winner is not available to make the National Finals event for any reason, they will forfeit their prize and it will be awarded to the next scoring contestant to ensure at least one team representative is sent for every participating State. Provided there is time upon finalization of details regarding the original winner, the runner up will take their place and will be subject to the same conditions of participation.

4.5. The winner will be responsible for all costs that are not offered as part of their prize including, but not limited to, resort fees & taxes, travel costs to and from all airports, travel insurance, food & drinks and any additional travel outside the offered prize package, including but not limited to, any costs incurred during their trip to compete as the KWCUSA State representative at the Karaoke National Championships.

4.6. Any additional travelers going with a winning contestant to the Karaoke National Championships Finals event will travel entirely at their own expense.

4.7. Prizes are not transferable or redeemable for cash. Venue team winners are required to attend their respective Venue and State Finals. State Team Final winners are required to attend the National Finals. Entrants who do not attend their respective finals will forfeit any prizes not already presented to them.

4.8. The State Finals Winner(s) is/are required to attend & represent their State at the Karaoke USA National Championships Finals.

5. Competition Format

5.1. Trials will be held for various venue teams across the USA. Variations may occur for certain venue teams including, but not limited to, the number of trials conducted, the number of entrants selected at each trial and the number of representatives selected for the team. All variations, including but not limited to, the number of representatives selected for each venue team to move on, are at the sole discretion of KWCUSA State Partners and official KWCUSA organizers only.

5.2. A select number of winners will make a team and be eligible to compete in the State Final Tournament for their participating state.

5.3. Contestants may sing any song of their choice during the trials and venue finals with no single contestant repeating the same song within the team trials competitions unless otherwise noted.

5.4. It is the sole discretion of the State Partners as to how many songs will be performed by each contestant at each Venue team selection final and State Finals.

5.5. It is the State Partners decision as to how often songs can be repeated by different contestants in any venue trial or State Final and if duplications are allowable. Having reached this level of competition contestants should have a small repertoire of songs at the ready and register their songs early if possible.

5.6. Venues and karaoke operators may conduct their trials and finals in a manner that suits their own venue using the provided KWCUSA program options. At all times they are requested to adhere to the 'Conditions of Entry' & KWC judging criteria & conduct their trials and finals in a fair manner.

5.7. Venues and karaoke operators are to use legally purchased karaoke tracks from a private one to one ration library with a or use a professional level karaoke subscription service for any official KWCUSA audition or final events. YouTube tracks are not considered legal for competition in any live venue audition rounds.

5.8. All contestants are responsible for their own travel & accommodation costs to and from all trials, venue team finals, tournaments & State Finals.

5.9 It is the contestant's responsibility to be present when their name is called for competition regardless of the estimated and posted start or performance time. Contestants who do not appear when their name/number is called will be eliminated from the competition. It is suggested that contestants be available 30 minutes prior to your scheduled competition time. Check with your local State Partner for any specific rules.

5.10 Upon completion of performances the contestant is given a brief moment to bow and take audience applause, then must immediately exit the stage. A delay

by a contestant to leave the stage area may result in points being deducted from the contestant's score.

5.11. Singers may select any song of their choice on a first come first served basis for the National Finals Event with no single contestant repeating the same song during the course of the National Finals week. Once a song is registered by a finalist it will no longer be available for entry by any other singers for the 2026 KWCUSA National Finals.

5.12. At the KWCUSA National Finals Event contestants are permitted to use their own commercial karaoke tracks/discs or digital downloads ACCEPTED FORMATS: original discs that are clean and not scratched, digital links provided in advance with proof of purchase included for the tracks/discs/downloads. CDG & VCD formats are permitted. FORMATS NOT ACCEPTED: Pirated discs, homemade Tracks, Youtube links and digital formats moved to disc, tracks from streaming services such as Tidal, Spotify, Smule, etc. No responsibility will be accepted by the organizers for formats not being available in all venue talent trials and at all finals. Please check with your karaoke operator running local trials as to their operating system specifications. USB of songs are acceptable as long as you have a valid receipt of the songs on the USB. At National Finals contestants may use commercially available CDG+ or instrumental tracks with or without scrolling lyrics if they so choose. Check your local organizers for any specific restrictions in your area.

5.13. KWCUSA Finals producers have the right to refuse the use of a contestant's disc or song format if they feel it is in violation with US pirating laws or doesn't play on their system properly.

5.14. No responsibility will be accepted for contestants' discs at any stage of the competition.

5.15 Reasonable care is taken by KWCUSA, its sponsors, representatives and the State Finals location/National Finals Location, to provide equal and adequate equipment for all contestants to the best of their ability. All contestants will be required to sign an affidavit when submitting their KWCUSA Registration Form, holding KWCUSA and any of its sponsors or representatives and the State Finals location/National Finals Location harmless should any problem occur as a result of malfunctioning equipment or disc failure during competition.

5.16 Due to time constraints, a song that fails to play, skips mid-performance, or has any other malfunction does not give the contestant the right to start over or use a different song during the competition. The cause of the malfunction may or may not be taken into consideration in allowing a contestant to continue. A contestant who has performed at least 60 seconds of their song prior to any malfunction may or may not have their performance cut short. In the case of such action the officials will be instructed to judge the contestant as though the contestant completed the song.

5.17 The language used in singing may be chosen freely by the contestant and the use of own backing tracks is allowed, however if the language used is not English a translation of lyrics must be delivered if KWCUSA requests it.

5.18 As we are providing an all ages platform we ask that you refrain from songs with explicit language or themes for competition purposes.

5.19 The lyrics of the competition songs may not include messages that conflict with the values of the spirit of this competition. KWC is as unpolitical as possible but stands for equality, human rights, peace, the LGBTQ+ community and mutual appreciation. We compete between countries for fun and fun only.

5.20 If any error is found with the song or the track, signers have 45 seconds of the song play to stop and indicate the issue. Any songs played longer than that will need to be completed by that contestant or result in an instant disqualification for that competitor.

6. Judging Criteria

6.1 It is recommended that contestants dress to suit their song choice at all final levels so as to maximize judging points.

6.2. Judging will be based on the following criteria for the 2026 season:

Juniors (ages 5-11): Vocal Ability, Rhythm & Tempo, Artistry, Stage Presence, and Overall Entertainment Value.

Juniors (ages 12-17): Vocal Ability, Rhythm & Tempo, Artistry, Stage Presence, and Overall Entertainment Value.

Adults (18+): Vocal Ability, Rhythm & Tempo, Artistry, Stage Presence, and Overall Entertainment Value.

See www.kwcusa.org for a full judging criteria breakdown.

6.3 State Finals shall provide a minimum of 5 Officials for judging the finals and selecting the state team. No audience participation judging is allowed at the state finals level of competition unless a wild card placement is to be decided using this method. Officials may not be employees of the State Finals venue. Officials may not be related to any state finals contestant.

6.4. It is recommended that contestants support the venue where they are competing in trials or have made the team. Some venues may impose a minimum weekly attendance requirement. It is the responsibility of the entrant to check individual venue details with their karaoke operator.

6.5. The officials' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

6.6. All notices, rule changes, contestants advancements, or other pertinent information will be posted on the official website at www.kwcusa.org.

6.7. Contestants, their family members or associates are not allowed to have any contact with any Official during the contest performance periods. Officials on break during a contest period are treated as though they are still judging the contest. Offering bribes of any nature to a judge to help advance a contestant is strictly prohibited. Contestants are not to fraternize with the officials. (It is ok to say hello in passing but there is no reason for you to develop a relationship with them or have conversations while the competition is underway.)

7. Karaoke World Championships requirements

7.1. The National Finals winner will be required to have a minimum of 3 songs prepared for the Karaoke World Championships International Finals. These songs must be submitted by the set deadline by the international KWC panel. These songs can be from any category and are the choice of the National Finalist. Performance order may or may not be required at the time of registration at the discretion of the Karaoke World Championships World Organization. Song choices may be subject to a time limit by the organizers of the Karaoke World Championships due to time restraints. Once submitted, the 3 song selections cannot be changed by the finalist.

7.2. No repeat songs will be allowed at the world finals level. Once a song is entered by a contestant that song is no longer available for any other world finalist to perform.

7.3. The KWC World Finals winner/s will be required to adhere to the conditions of entry of the Karaoke World Championships. Prize money at world finals may be subject to the local tax laws of the host country.

7.4. If the United States representative/s is crowned Karaoke World Champion and is awarded a trip to KWC the following year as a prize, they will be required to attend.

7.5. If the United States representative/s is awarded a recording deal at the world finals, they may be required to sign a contract with an international music producer and may be required to travel outside of the USA for recording sessions at a future date.

7.6. The United States winner/s will be required to make themselves available for media requests for the duration of their seasonal reign.

7.7. The National Final winner will be permitted to use their own karaoke tracks with a digital link to be provided with their registration into the World Finals Event.

8. Indemnity

8.1. By entering this Competition you agree not to hold the Organizers liable for any loss, damage, illness, death, injury or claim whatsoever and to abide by the conditions of entry. Entries remain the property of the Organizers.

8.2. If applicable, any Cash Prizes awarded are to be finalized within 60 days of National Finals.

8.3. By entering the competition you agree to your image, sound and performance from any association of your involvement in KWC being broadcast in any form at any time, both now and in the future while you are performing as an official representative of KWCUSA, and you will not claim any performance rights or fees. Recordings & photographs remain the property of the organizers & photographers.

8.4. By entering the competition you acknowledge that the organizers of Karaoke World Championships USA are not responsible for any changes to the organization, international final destination and prizes by the official world sponsor Singa. The USA organizers reserve the right to change the National Championship prize package details to suit any unforeseeable changes made by Singa & their sponsors.

8.5. The organizers accept no responsibility for changes in prizes provided by sponsors and reserve the right to change the National Championship prize package details to suit any unforeseeable changes made by sponsors.

8.6. The organizers accept no responsibility for prizes offered by venue teams and operators outside of the National Championship prize package.

8.7. The official international organizers of the Karaoke World Championships is Singa.

8.8. The official partners of the Karaoke World Championships USA is Epic Performance Productions

8.9. All decisions made by the organizers are final. No correspondence will be entered into.

8.10. The 'Conditions of Entry' are subject to change without notice. All changes will be posted on the official website www.kwcusa.org