



THE PORTLAND SKETCH COMEDY FESTIVAL SUBMISSION CRITERIA AND FAQ'S

DATES: JULY 23-25, 2026

DEADLINE TO APPLY: APRIL 5, 2026

What is the Portland Sketch Comedy Festival?

The Portland Sketchfest debuted in July 2017 at The Siren Theater, and it will be back for its 8th year in 2026! It is a 2-3 evening showcase of live sketch comedy troupes from all over North America. Each troupe who is accepted will be given a 25-45 minute time slot where they will be able to perform in front of a live audience!

Who is behind the festival?

The Portland Sketchfest is brought to you by Ted Douglass (founding member of sketch troupes The 3rd Floor and Nacho Gold and former director of Portland's Best of the Best Sketchfest which ran from 2003-2009) and Shelley McLendon (Owner/Artistic Director of The Siren Theater and Bad Reputation Productions, founding member of sketch comedy troupes The Aces, The Sisters of Mercy, Lone Wolves and Sweat). They have both performed at various festivals all over the country including the San Francisco Sketchfest, Chicago Sketchfest, Seattle Sketchfest, New York Sketchfest, Women in Comedy Festival Boston and more, and they decided back in 2017 to create a destination sketch comedy festival in Portland!

How can my troupe be considered? READ THIS CAREFULLY

To be considered, troupes must:

1. Already be performing together in front of live audiences. The more experience, the better.
2. Complete the online application and submit all application materials no later than April 5, 2026
3. Submit a 10-25 minute recent video of a live performances in front of an audience. The recording can begin at any point during your show, and we strongly prefer the video be a consecutive 10-25 minutes, rather than a montage of different performances. But... send us what you have! Please edit the video to showcase only the 10-25 minutes you want us to view. Don't send us a video that is 60 minutes long, we won't watch it.

We want to get a taste of what we can expect from the show you will perform at the festival, so please send a video that includes the actual performers and material that will be included in your show.

4. Pay the non-refundable submission fee.

FAQS:

What are you looking for?

We want to fill this festival with the best sketch comics we can find who are also fun to work with! Therefore, preference will be given to troupes who:

1. Are exhibiting smart and fresh writing and performing
2. Are well-rehearsed
3. Are professional and experienced
4. Follow directions well
5. Are current with what is happening in comedy
6. Put on a good show and make us laugh out loud!

My troupe has performed in the Portland Sketch Comedy Festival before. Do I still need to apply?

Yes! Past performers are not guaranteed a spot in future festivals.

What if my troupe doesn't get accepted?

As we will be considering troupes from all over the country and beyond, and we only have a certain number of performance slots, not every troupe can be accepted. Try again next year!

Will you consider solo acts?

We will! However, the show must fall under the category of "sketch comedy" (for example, autobiographical one person shows or stand up comedy will not be considered). It must include predominantly written material and it must be considered comedy.

What about improv, stand up or video projects?

This festival is dedicated solely to live sketch comedy, so we will decline any stand up comedians, comedic musical groups, improv troupes, or filmed works.

Does your festival provide payment or travel stipends?

We wish we could, but unfortunately at this time we cannot offer any financial assistance. We are constantly researching grants and sponsors to enable us to do this so it is definitely a priority! We do try to make your experience at the festival fun and comfortable so we do provide swag and drinks and food when we can!

Are awards given at the end of the festival?

Nope! We appreciate everyone who travels to Portland and participates in the festival equally! Everyone who performs in the festival is the best!

THE PORTLAND SKETCH FESTIVAL CODE OF ETHICS

Participants in the festival must also agree to abide by The Portland Sketchfest Code of Ethics below:

The Portland Sketch Comedy Festival is committed to providing an environment that is fun, positive, collaborative, safe, and free from discrimination and harassment. Therefore, anyone involved with The Siren Theater or The Portland Sketchfest (including but not limited to performers, directors, staff members and volunteers) agrees to treat all other participants with the utmost respect and to refrain from any form of hostility or unwanted behavior.

This includes any form of discrimination, bullying, or verbal, physical or sexual harassment that is directed toward an individual or individuals either in person, via social media, over email, over the telephone, via text message, etc. Anyone participating in this type of behavior will be immediately removed from participating in the festival. Please contact the directors of the festival with any questions or concerns. They can be reached here:

Ted Douglass TedDouglassInc@gmail.com
Shelley McLendon info@sirentheater.com

Thank you for your interest in the festival!