



## 2026 Upstate Pride Pageant Contestant Eligibility Requirements

### Poe Mill Music

904 Pinkney Street - Greenville, SC 29609

May 17, 2026

Contestants **must** meet the following criteria in order to participate in the 2026 Upstate Pride Pageant:

1. Contestants must be at least 18 years of age. Proof of age is required by a valid driver's license, state ID, passport or any other government issued photo ID.
2. Contestants must reside within a 100-mile radius of the Spartanburg, SC 29301 zip code. Distance will be confirmed via Google Maps driving directions.
3. There are 3 titles for the 2026 pageant – Miss, Mr. and MX.
4. Contestants must pay a registration fee to compete in the pageant. The fee must be submitted at the time of registration. The registration fee is \$75.00 for all contestants registered through 04/15/2026. Contestants who register on or after 04/15/2026 will pay a registration fee of \$100.00. Contestants who register on the day of the pageant will pay a registration fee of \$125.00. This fee is non-refundable.
5. Any Titleholder stripped of their title from year 2018 forward will be permanently banned from participating in any future Upstate Pride Pageant and may at the discretion of the board of Upstate Pride SC be banned from participating in Upstate Pride SC related events.

### PAGEANT RULES & REGULATIONS

The following rules and regulations will apply for the 2026 Upstate Pride Pageant:

1. Judging: 2026 judging will be based on a modified version of the National US of A Style Ranking System with a maximum of 12 points for Presentation, Onstage Question, and Evening Wear and a maximum of 24 points for Talent.
  - a. Upstate Pride has final approval in selecting judges. The Upstate Pride Pageant Coordinator will make recommendations for the judging pool.
  - b. Upstate Pride has final approval in determining judging criteria and scoring guidelines.
  - c. In the event of a tie, the winner will be selected by a final on-stage question to be selected by the judging panel.
  - d. The pageant will have an auditor chosen by the Upstate Pride Pageant Coordinator. The role of the auditor is to collect the scoring sheets from the judges and perform the scoring tally.
2. Categories: All contestants will be judged in the following categories:
  - a. Presentation
    - i. The 2026 pageant theme is "Colors of Pride".
    - ii. This category requires attire based on the theme of the pageant. For 2026, contestants should come dressed in their presentation attire based on their interpretation of "Colors of Pride" – A look that is inspired by a piece of art or artist.
    - iii. The presentation will last only three (3) minutes.

b. On-Stage Question & Formal Wear

- i. On-Stage questions will be created and reviewed by Upstate Pride, the Upstate Pride Pageant Coordinator, the current Reigning Mr & Miss Upstate Pride and the 2026 Pageant Judges.
- ii. The questions will revolve around general concepts related to Pride, Upstate Pride, History, Culture and the general LGBTQIA+ community.

c. Talent

- i. Any type of talent is acceptable, except those that are illegal, or which may cause personal injury to the audience or any other person. No fire, water, liquids, or loose glitter may be used in any talent presentation.
  - ii. Talent will be limited to seven (7) minutes. Prop setup will be limited to two (2) minutes and break down time is limited to one (1) minute.
  - iii. Talent presentations will be timed.
  - iv. All music for each category must be on individual high-quality CD or a USB jump drive. All CDs or drives must be clearly labeled with the contestant's name. The CD or drive may contain only one (1) track. Track one (1) must be the Presentation category selection. Track two (2) must be the Formal Wear selection. Track three (3) must be the Talent selection. Track four (4) must be a crowning number in the event the contestant is crowned as the titleholder.
  - v. Each contestant will be allowed an unlimited number of dancers. However, dancer(s) may not enter the hosting establishment free of charge.
3. The use of any illegal substances is prohibited and is grounds for immediate disqualification.
  4. Theft of, or intentional damage or destruction to any contestant's property or any theft of, or destruction to the hosting establishment's property will not be tolerated and will be grounds for immediate disqualification and ejection from the facility.
  5. Contestants are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Any violent or threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated and will be grounds for immediate disqualification and ejection from the facility.
  6. Each contestant will be allowed one (1) dresser. The contestant's dresser will be allowed to enter the hosting establishment free of charge.
  7. Any contestant that is not at an appointed place at an appointed time may be disqualified.
  8. Silicone and/ or hormone treatments will not disqualify a contestant from participating in the Upstate Pride Pageant.
  9. This pageant is gender inclusive.
  10. Upstate Pride prohibits discrimination against any person on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national or cultural origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or health status.
  11. Upstate Pride reserves the right to request a background check and reserves the right to prohibit a contestant from participating, for any reason.
  12. Upstate Pride reserves the right to make a decision concerning any matters not covered in these rules and regulations and/or the contestant agreement.

### **CONTESTANT MEDIA RELEASE**

1. Contestant authorizes Upstate Pride to use the following personal information:
  - a. Their picture – including photographic, motion picture, and electronic (video) images.
  - b. Their voice – including sound and video recordings.
2. Contestant hereby grants to Upstate Pride, its subsidiaries, licensees, successors and assigns, the right to use, publish, and reproduce, for all purposes, their name, pictures of them in film or electronic (video) form, sound and video recordings of their voice, and printed and electronic copy of the information described in sections (1)

and (2) above in any and all media including, without limitation, cable and broadcast television and the internet, and for exhibition, distribution, promotion, advertising, sale, press conferences, meetings, hearings, educational conferences and in brochures and other print media. This permission extends to all languages, media, formats, and markets now known or hereafter devised. This permission shall continue forever unless the contestant revokes the permission in writing.

3. Contestant Further grants Upstate Pride all rights, title, and interest that they may have in all finished pictures, negatives, reproductions, and copies of the original print, and further grants Upstate Pride the right to give, sell, transfer, and exhibit the print in copies or facsimiles thereof, for marketing, communications, or advertising purposes, as it deems fit.
4. Contestant hereby waives the right to receive any payment for signing this release and waives the right to receive any payment for Upstate Pride's use of any of the material described above for any of the purposes authorized by this release. Contestant also waives any right to inspect or approve finished photographs, audio, video, multimedia, or advertising recordings and copy or printed matter or computer-generated scanned image and other electronic media that may be used in conjunction therewith or to approve the eventual use that it might be applied.

### **TITLEHOLDER'S OBLIGATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The winner(s) (hereafter, "Titleholders") of the pageant will assume the titles of Mr, MX, and Miss Upstate Pride for 2026 and shall retain the title until the following pageant. Titleholders are obligated to and agrees to the following:
  - a. Appear at up to four (4) events chosen by Upstate Pride.
  - b. Volunteer ten (10) hours of community service with Upstate Pride. This is in addition to the event attendance above.
  - c. Perform on the Upstate Pride Festival Main Stage as the reigning titleholders. Performance date and time to be determined.
  - d. Be visible at the festival throughout the day.
2. Titleholders agree to hold the Upstate Pride brands in the highest esteem. While appearing, entertaining, or otherwise representing the Upstate Pride Pageant title or Upstate Pride, itself, during the reigning year, the Titleholders agree to the following:
  - a. Not engage in the use of illegal substances or engage in any illegal activity.
  - b. Not participate in malicious gossip.
  - c. Not undermine the mission, vision, or values of Upstate Pride.
3. Titleholders will provide a satisfactory publicity photograph with crown/sash within ten (10) days of assuming the title, for use by Upstate Pride. Contestant Media Release shall apply, substituting Titleholder for Contestant in all cases.
4. Titleholders will maintain contact with Upstate Pride during the year of reign.

### **UPSTATE PRIDE REMEDIES**

In the event Titleholders are unwilling or unable to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities outlined above, or if the Titleholders default on any of the provisions included in the contestant agreement, Upstate Pride retains the right at its absolute and sole discretion to any one or more of the following:

1. Revoke or rescind the title from the Titleholder(s).
2. Pass the title(s) to the 1st runner up from the pageant.
3. Refuse bookings and appearances of any official nature to the Titleholder(s).
4. Demand the return of all prize monies and/or any other awards given during the period under reign.
5. Refuse entry into any further pageants.
6. Other remedies not listed above.

## HOLD HARMLESS

Contestants/Titleholders agree to indemnify Upstate Pride, its officers, directors, and volunteers or other agents, and hold them harmless with respect to any defense that they shall be required to make in connection with any claim or action arising out of the Contestant's/Titleholder's involvement/participation with pageant, march & festival, including the payment of reasonable attorney's fees.

### 2026 Prize Package

The 2026 Prize Package for each Upstate Pride titleholder will be as follows:

1. \$175 night of pageant.
2. \$175 "give up" at the 2027 Upstate Pride pageant.
3. Two (2) \$75 performances.
4. Crown & Sash

Any questions please contact this year's Pageant Coordinator, Paris Wright

[Paris@upstatepridesc.org](mailto:Paris@upstatepridesc.org)

I confirm that I have read and understand this handbook and the guidelines herein. I also agree that I will abide by all the rules, regulations, and commitments contained within this document. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines can result in my being penalized or disqualified from the pageant up to and including the official removal of the title, crown, and earnings agreed to within this agreement.

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Contestant Name/Signature

Date