



2026 New Mexico Gay Rodeo Association Royalty Handbook

Updated: August 2026

PRE-REGISTRATION

- A. Royalty competition information/registration packets will be made available by the current royalty team. Packets shall include copies of Royalty Standing Rules, Competition Guidelines, Judges Sheets, Horsemanship pattern and tentative competition schedule.
- B. Prospective candidates can obtain information from current Royalty, who are required to make themselves available for consultation.
- C. It is recommended candidates also collect information needed for competition by attending out of town rodeos, working the Zia Regional Rodeo, IGRA convention and IGRA Finals Rodeo/Royalty Competition.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

- A. All candidates must be an active member of NMGRA and may reside in the State of New Mexico.
- B. All requirements must be met and verified by a member of the Royalty Committee not less than thirty (30) days before the competition.
- C. All entries must include a non-refundable entry fee of \$100.00. This can be paid by the candidate or a sponsor as part of an independent fundraiser for NMGRA. This fee will be used toward expenses of candidate sashes.
- D. Must be in good standing with all LGBTQ+ bars/nightclubs in New Mexico at the time of submitting the application and maintained throughout candidacy and reign. This is to be verified by the Royalty Committee.

PARTICIPATION

- A. All candidates must be approved by the Board after their application has been submitted.*
- B. Attend both days of the Zia Regional Rodeo and either volunteer or compete each day.
- C. Attend at least one association meeting prior to competition.
- D. Attend a minimum of three (3) NMGRA meetings/sponsored events during the current rodeo year to be completed from the first date of competition (in addition to the Zia Regional Rodeo).
- E. Waiver of Eligibility Requirements:
Candidates who do not meet one or more of the eligibility requirements listed above may request a waiver from the NMGRA Board of Directors. Waiver requests must be submitted in writing prior to the application deadline and should explain the circumstances preventing the candidate from meeting the requirement(s). Approval of a waiver is at the sole discretion of the NMGRA Board of Directors and must be granted before the candidate is eligible to compete.

The Board reserves the right to approve or deny any waiver request based on the best interests of the Association.

(*attending an out of state rodeo can substitute for one of the three events – must be approved by competition committee chair in advance).

FUNDRAISING FOR NMGRA

A: 501c3 verification and contact information must be presented to the treasurer and royalty chair prior to the competition.

Must raise a minimum of \$500 via fundraising, sponsorship etc.

- \$400 will go to the New Mexico Gay Rodeo.
- \$100 will go to a 501c3 charity of their choice.
- Charity must be identified in the contestant form.
- Funds to be dispersed once contestant has completed all requirements.

B: Upon raising the contestant's first \$100, a contestant sash will be ordered by current royalty chair or Vice-President. The Royalty buckle will be ordered upon winning their title by the Vice President.

C: Fundraising requirements must be met no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Royalty Contest.

COMPETITION

Royalty Candidates will be judged in the following categories:

1. Personal Interview
2. Entertainment or Horsemanship
3. Western Wear
4. On Stage Question (Public Presentation)

Candidates may elect to participate in either Entertainment or Horsemanship. Candidate must notify the Royalty Committee Chair as to which category they intend to compete in, no later than (30) thirty days prior to competition date. Entertainment, Western Wear and On Stage Question will be open to the public. Personal Interview will be closed to the public.

POINT VALUES

Personal Interview 100 PTS

Entertainment or Horsemanship 50 PTS

Western Wear 50 PTS

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On Stage Question (Public Presentation) 50 PTS Total
points awarded 250 PTS

QUALIFICATION FOR TITLE

A contestant must attain a minimum of 65% of the total overall points available from Four (4) categories consisting of Personal Interview, Western Wear, On Stage Question (Public Presentation) and Entertainment or Horsemanship, in order to place on the Royalty Team.

B. All judges sheets will be tallied and reviewed by two members of the NMGRA Board who will serve as auditors for the entire competition. The royalty auditors will determine if each candidate has achieved the minimum of 65% of all results to become part of the royalty team. This may be waived by the Royalty Committee Chair or Vice President with approval from Board.

Final results will be given to the chair of the royalty competition and the host to be announce at the end of the competition.

Individual results are not made public or shared with contestants during the competition but may be mailed to each contestant after the competition if requested in writing by the contestant to the Vice President.

TIE BREAKER PROCEDURE

In the Event of a Tie:

In the event that multiple contestants receive the same total score, the tie is broken by which contestant received the highest score in a specific competition. The competitions are checked in the following order to break a tie:

- Personal Interview
- Public Presentation
- Entertainment/Horsemanship
- Western Wear

In the event of a tie following the above tie breaking procedure, the royalty committee will break the tie via secret ballot vote of those members present. If there is a tie following that vote, the president of the board of directors will break that tie.

CONTESTANT MEETING

Royalty Committee Chair or Vice President shall hold a contestant meeting prior to the start of the Royalty Competition and will include but not limited to the following:

1. Collection of Western Wear Description and Entertainment Flash Drive.
2. The Contestant order will be as followed:
 - a. Mr. NMGRA Contestants
 - b. Ms. NMGRA Contestants
 - c. MX NMGRA Contestants
 - d. Mister NMGRA Contestants

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e. Miss NMGRA Contestants

3. Give general competition information and answer any questions.
4. Contestant(s) must check in one (1) hour prior to contest night starting time with Royalty Committee or Royalty Committee Chair. If any contestant(s) check in after designated check in time this will result in 5 point penalty per judge.

JUDGES

Judge selection is as follows:

- A: The Royalty Committee will provide the names of six (6) qualified judges and one (1) alternate for each competition. Three (3) judges will be assigned to the Interview category, while three (3) judges will evaluate Horsemanship, Entertainment, and Public Presentation.
- B. Judges may be from past NMGRA Royalty, out of state Royalty, other IGRA Sanctioned associations, or other current or past NMGRA officers. If qualified judges cannot participate, alternative decisions on judges can be made by the Royalty Committee and Vice President.
- C. The Royalty Committee shall obtain a commitment from the individuals willing to judge a competition and submit the names and qualifications to the Board for approval.
- D. Any vacancies occurring after the thirty (30) day deadline will be filled by the Royalty Committee with the approval of the Board.

The following are the general rules for judging:

- A. The judges will meet prior to the competition and select a presiding judge to act as the spokesperson for the judges.
- B. The presiding judge coordinates with the representative of the Royalty competition Chair to insure that all contestants have adequate opportunity to compete.
- C. If a judge does not attend the scheduled competition for any reason, the competition will continue and the missing judge will be replaced with the designated alternate judge.
- D. The results of any competition will not be announced.
- E. The judges are directly responsible to the Vice President or Royalty Committee Chair.
- F. For western wear/public presentation, entertainment, and Horsemanship up to 2 (two) judges may be filled by current IGRA or NMGRA officers or local community members.
- G. Current IGRA or NMGRA royalty may NOT serve as judges or alternate judges.

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COMPETITION GUIDELINES & RULES- PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Judges will be looking for: Poise, Confidence, Familiarity of gay rodeo, NMGRA and its benefits to the gay community, Casual western wear (MISS will appear in male attire).

SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS

The Royalty Committee will put together a pool of 25 questions. Questions will be submitted by the current Royalty, Royalty Committee and any member of the NMGRA board. The NMGRA board will vote on fifteen (15) questions. From these fifteen questions the interview judges will select ten (10) questions for interview, The 10 (ten) questions will be the same for all contestants.

Questions must be comprised of the following: IGRA history, bylaws and standing rules, rodeo rules, and personal opinion.

Once questions are asked of each candidate, the candidate is escorted by the royalty chair out of the venue so as not to talk to the other candidates.

Any judge may ask one time for a clarification of a contestant's response.

ENTERTAINMENT

Talent competition will be a presentation of a "show" routine that is country western in nature.

1. Five (5) minute time limit.
2. Any recorded material used must be on a USB Thumb Drive or email to Royalty Competition Chair. The material must be submitted to the Competition Committee during the contestant meeting prior to competition and the contestant by doing so commits to use the material submitted for the entertainment portion of the competition.
3. Presentation shall be done solo.
4. Audience will be asked not to tip during presentation
5. Contestant will not receive any assistance in setup or teardown of props in any way. Any assistance will result in penalty on each score sheet.
6. Setup and teardown (in needed) are included in the time allotted for performance.
7. If the talent number exceeds 5 minutes, this will result in a two (2) point penalty per judge.

Horsemanship

1. These rules are basically the same rules governing the modified reining pattern of the American Quarter Horse Association as amended and approved by IGRA.

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2. Horsemanship judging shall be conducted live and in person before the competition. Judging will be based on the modified reining pattern outlined in the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) Handbook. Contestants will perform the required pattern before the judges, who will evaluate each performance in real time according to the established judging criteria. Contestants are responsible for being prepared and ready to perform when called.
3. The contestant rider will be judged on ability to control mount. Contestant must demonstrate poise, confidence, sportsmanship and showmanship.
4. The Miss contestants complete this portion of competition in male attire.
5. A hackamore, curb or snaffle bit is permissible. Chain curbs are permissible, but must be at least one-half inch (1/2") in width and must lie flat against the lower jaw of the horse with a two (2) finger allowance between jaw and chain. No wire curbs, regardless of how padded or covered, nor any chain strap narrower than one-half inch (1/2") will be permitted.
6. The following pattern and routine are prescribed. It is essential that judges and riders adhere to it. (Refer to Exhibit A for pattern.)
7. Begin pattern at the end of a defined area comparable to IGRA, standard arena. The pattern begins with contestant mounted and walking horse to the first recommended change area.
8. At recommended change, mounted contestant should be in a trot until next recommended change area.
9. At recommended change, mounted contestant should change from trot to lope until the next recommended change area.
10. At recommended change, mounted contestant should break from a lope to a trot and turn towards center of arena.
11. Upon reaching center of arena, mounted contestant should stop and back their mount five (5) feet.
12. The rider may ride with reins in the style in which he/she has been taught. Rider may change hands as necessary.
13. Riders' hands shall be clear of horse and saddle while horse is in motion. Riders' free hand may be resting on riders' thigh while horse is in motion.
14. Romals, quirts crops, if worn or carried may not be used.
15. The contesting horse must be properly groomed and in sound condition. All equipment used must be in good and safe repair.

WESTERN WEAR

1. Each contestant will model contemporary formal or casual western fashion such as could be found in today's western wear catalogues or in quality western stores.
2. Miss may not wear stage costumes.
3. A western wear description will be read during modeling.
4. Modeling is limited to stage and/or designated area to be determined by the State Royalty Committee Chair. Failure to comply will result in a two (2) point deduction per judge penalty

PUBLIC PRESENTATION / ON STAGE QUESTION

Contestant will be asked one (1) question immediately following Western Wear Category and judged on Poise, Stage Presence, Content of answer, and Confidence.

Question(s) may be related to gay rodeo and education or the gay community as a whole.

Questions will be chosen by current royalty and Vice President.

REQUIREMENTS OF ROYALTY TEAM

Responsibilities

- A. Upon assuming their respective titles, NMGRA Royalty team members will become co-chairs of the Entertainment and Fundraising committee and members of the Zia Regional Rodeo committee, with runners-up serving as committee members
- B. Each NMGRA Royalty titleholder is required to contribute a minimum of \$1,500 by the start of the annual Zia Regional Rodeo. Titleholders may raise the full amount through fundraising or raise \$500 through fundraising and the remaining \$1,000 through advertising sales, sponsorships, or other approved contributions.

If a titleholder chooses to compete for IGRA Royalty, the required IGRA contestant contribution will be deducted from the \$1,500 requirement. The remaining balance will be applied toward the NMGRA Zia Regional Rodeo.

If a titleholder chooses not to compete for IGRA Royalty, the full \$1,500 will be applied toward the NMGRA Zia Regional Rodeo.

- C. To help organize and host the following years the Royalty Contest, Zia Regional Rodeo, candidate and judge's meetings.
 1. Royalty Contest dates and packets are to be announced no later than 6 months in advance by the current royalty team and is to take place 30 days before the first sanctioned rodeo with respect of other area Royalty competitions.

- D. Winners will represent NMGRA for one rodeo year. (Culminating with the following Royalty Competition. Winning represents a possible two-year commitment.
1. All monies, donations and tips raised at all NMGRA events and shows must be turned over to the Treasurer's possession within 48 hours of receipt of said monies and to be retained in the Royalty Fund of the NMGRA General Account. The following is the procedure for monies collection, retention and deposit.
- A. All funds collected after a number will be given to the NMGRA Royalty Chair/NMGRA Vice President, or NMGRA Treasurer.
 - B. After show concludes, the NMGRA fundraising tracking document must be completed, and all funds counted and certified by TWO people. One will be the NMGRA Treasurer, and the other a NMGRA board/member (or designated by NMGRA Royalty Chair.)
 - C. After funds are counted, monies will be locked in NMGRA "lock bag" and retained by NMGRA Royalty Chair or NMGRA Treasurer.
 - D. Money will be deposited within 48 hours by NMGRA Treasurer or other NMGRA Board member. NMGRA fundraising tracking document and deposit receipt sent to NMGRA Treasurer.
2. Only time that royalty are allowed to keep their tips is at their step down.
- E. In coordination with the Public Relations/Media Director, Royalty shall serve as spokesperson for NMGRA, always keeping the organization's image and best interest in his or her mind.
- F. Royalty are required to attend a minimum of one (1) out of state rodeos, the Zia Regional Rodeo. In addition, should if possible, attend any other rodeo related events and IGRA University, IGRA Finals or Convention.
- G. NMGRA Royalty may choose whether or not to compete in the IGRA Royalty Competition. If a NMGRA Royalty chooses to compete, they will represent NMGRA, and NMGRA will pay the required \$100.00 entry fee.
- H. Royalty sashes, buckles and crown are the financial responsibility of NMGRA. NMGRA royalty, Vice President or the rodeo director may seek sponsorship for the buckles and/or crown.
- I. Royalty title-holders will be awarded a Royalty Buckle, all royalty member will be award a Sash and the Miss will be award a crown. Title-holders and runners-up will have the honor of wearing the sash for that title. Sashes, buckles and Crown are the property of NMGRA. At the completion of responsibilities and rodeo year, Royalty will be allowed to keep their sash(es) and buckle. Financial responsibility for a replacement crown, if needed, is that of the Royalty member.
- J. Dependent on the number of candidates each category (Mr./Ms./Miss/MsTer/Mx) will have a title-holder and first runner-up.

- K. All results of the competition will become a matter of corporate record will be made available after announcement of winners. Results will also be distributed to candidates within thirty (30) days after competition.
- L. Cost incurred for travel, lodging, etc., with the exceptions listed in standing rules, is the sole responsibilities of the title-holders.
- M. Past royalty must make itself available to future royalty for guidance.
- N. In the event a title-holder is unable to complete all responsibilities of his/her title before IGRA competition deadline, the title will then be passed to their runners-up. Runners-up should be prepared to accept all the responsibilities of his/her title or forfeit. In the event there is no representative for that title, at the board's discretion, the title can be passed to former royalty.
- O. NMGRA Royalty titleholders are not required to reside in the State of New Mexico during their reign. However, all titleholders are expected to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their title, including attending required events, meetings, and functions as outlined in these rules and regulations.
- P. Mr./Ms./Miss/MsTer/MX NMGRA may not seek, compete, or accept any other titles in any other organization during their reign except for IGRA. NMGRA royalty may accept honorary titles given to them by other organizations.
- Q. All title-holders **MUST** be in sash at all NMGRA Events and IGRA events.
- R. All title holders shall not be under the influence of alcohol and or drugs while wearing their sash.
- S. Failure to comply with rules governing Mr./Ms./Miss/MsTer /MX can result in probation up to revocation of title.

Revocation Procedures

- A. Any member of current Royalty or current Board may initiate probation up to revocation procedures.
- B. Probation Procedure will consist of the following:
 - 1. Verbal Warning from board.
 - 2. If issue continues, a written warning will be issued
 - 3. Revocation Process.
- C. Revocation petition must be in writing indicating specific examples of failure to conform to obligations as set out in these standing rules.
- D. Time and date is to be set by Board for examination of petition and presentation of rebuttal, if any.
- E. A larger than two-thirds vote of board members present (quorum) is required for revocation.

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F. Royalty member(s) in question will not have a vote during revocation procedures.

Absentee ballots will not be allowed for revocation procedures.

Competing in IGRA Royalty Competition

- A. All contestants must be the current and official titleholder or 1st runner-up of a member association. Each association can send up to two representatives in each category.
- B. All contestants must complete the following requirements no later than 60 days prior to the competition.
- C. Submit to the IGRA Vice President at least one high resolution, professional quality portrait photograph in digital form. Cell phone pictures point and shoot selfie pictures, or poorly lit snapshots are not acceptable.
- D. Submit to the IGRA Vice President a contestant biography of approximately 200 word narrative. A simple list of accomplishments or titles held is not acceptable.
- E. Compete in a minimum the two (2) sanctioned rodeo events in different categories or volunteer under a certified official for two (2) rodeo days at a single rodeo.
- F. Each title-holder must raise a minimum of \$500 dollars for IGRA to retain title and remain eligible to compete at the IGRA Royalty Competition. The NMGRA Treasurer shall forward any monies raised with the IGRA Fundraiser Deposit Form to the IGRA Treasurer
- G. In addition, a \$250 minimum of one (1) fundraising event for a 501(C) non-profit organization for a non-profit entity under the laws of and in good standing with the State during their reign, prior to the IGRA application deadline. Monies in the royalty funds shall be retained in the NMGRA General Account.
- H. Submit to the Vice President a completed and signed Royalty Competition Entry Form along with a \$100 entry fee.
- I. At contestant check-in before the competition, contestant must provide a written plan of action consisting of goals for the IGRA Royalty Team. Plans must be turned in along with a Western Wear description and either a Horsemanship video or Entertainment music to the Vice President. The Vice President reviews the plans with the competition winners to build the teams's final plan of action for the following year. Failure to provide a plan of action will result in a two (2) point deduction from each judge's score sheet in the interview segment.

Contestants for the IGRA competition must be familiar with IGRA royalty rules as well as other IGRA requirements.