

2026 Risk/Reward Festival - MAINSTAGE APPLICATION

PLEASE NOTE:

THIS APPLICATION IS FOR PROPOSALS FOR OUR FESTIVAL MAINSTAGE.

If you would like to apply with a proposal to use a non-theatrical space for a performative/installed, durational, or site-specific piece, please use the other application on our website:

<https://risk-reward.org/event/1554/>

** Indicates required question*

1. Email *

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2026 RISK/REWARD FESTIVAL OF NEW PERFORMANCE

JUNE 11th-14th, 2026 in PORTLAND, OREGON, USA

Applications open: Friday, January 2nd, 2026

Applications close: Saturday, January 31st, 2026, at 10:00pm

Risk/Reward is soliciting proposals for original contemporary dance, theater, music, multimedia, and interdisciplinary performances to be featured in our annual Risk/Reward Festival of New Performance.

Our 2026 Festival will feature 4 to 6 pieces as part of the Festival Mainstage, a formal showcase of new work in the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art's Annex Theater. In addition, we may feature site-specific pieces, interactive installations, and other interesting performances in PICA's open warehouse or other spaces. (If you are interested in proposing a piece for one of these other spaces, please use <THIS FORM>.)

The festival is dedicated to the presentation of new work that pushes the boundaries of the contemporary performance arts. Preference is given to:

- works that are currently in development or that have not been produced fully in the past in Portland, OR
- pieces that doesn't fit neatly into other, genre-specific festivals or presentations
- local (Portland) and regional (Pacific Northwest) performance groups

All works must be MAXIMUM 20 minutes (ideal length: 12 to 15 minutes) and must be appropriate for production as part of a festival.

The festival lineup is curated by a panel of peer artists and administrators from across the region. Applicants will be notified in mid-March. Selected participants may perform each day, Thursday through Sunday, of the festival weekend. More information about the Festival and past iterations can be found on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Risk/Reward will provide a theatrical venue with a standard lighting hang (including some color-changing fixtures), PA system, a high-quality projector, staff support, and an honorarium of \$1,500 USD to each artist. We will also work to match you with a no-cost rehearsal residency before the festival (~20 hours).

Any artist may apply, although preference will be given to artists residing in WA, OR, CA, ID, MT, and AK. Small travel stipends may be available depending on need. We cannot assist with any international performance visas at this time; applicants will need to be able to legally perform in the United States.

To ensure that your application is as competitive as it can be, we strongly suggest that you:

- Include video work samples of a past completed work and raw/in-process footage of the proposed work.

- Include biographical information and a work sample from all key collaborators. (If key collaborators are TBD, indicate the roles you are hoping to fill.)
- If you have not attended the festival in past years, browse the Risk/Reward [blog archives](#) and [YouTube](#) for a sample of the artists and projects we've supported, as well as the information in our [Mission](#).

If selected, the information you provide may be used for marketing purposes.

Questions: Contact our staff - info@risk-reward.org

*****THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN ONE SESSION.**

MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT ALL REQUIRED FIELDS BEFORE PUSHING SUBMIT. (Otherwise, it may not save your responses.)

**YOU MAY DOWNLOAD A REFERENCE COPY OF THIS FORM FOR EDITING OFFLINE AT:
(link to be added)**

CONTACT INFORMATION

2. ARTIST / GROUP NAME: *

3. CONTACT PERSON: *

4. CONTACT MAILING ADDRESS: *

5. CONTACT PHONE: *

6. CONTACT EMAIL: *

PROJECT SUMMARY

7. TITLE: *

8. GENRE(S): *

How do you describe the artistic practice of this piece? e.g. dance, music, theatre, visual art, movement, clown, film literature performance art, comedy, puppetry, drag, multimedia, improv, vogue, etc etc

Feel free to use multiple descriptors, e.g. physical drag comedy, or dance/film/multimedia. This is to help us contextualize your proposal, not to put you in a box.

9. SHORT DESCRIPTION: *

Please describe the project in a short summary of 50 words or less. This section may be used for marketing purposes.

10. LENGTH OF PERFORMANCE: *

20 minutes maximum.

11. NUMBER OF PERFORMERS: *

12. HAS THIS WORK BEEN PERFORMED ELSEWHERE? *

If so, where and when?

13. IS IT BEING CONSIDERED FOR ANY OTHER PRESENTATIONS OR PERFORMANCES? *

If so, where and when?

14. COMMITMENTS AND CONFLICTS: *

Please list any major schedule commitments/conflicts in the range of June 1st to June 21st of 2026

15. KEY COLLABORATORS: *

Please list all key collaborators including yourself - first and last name, role/position - e.g. composer, video artist, set designer, dancer. (If key collaborators are TBD, indicate the roles you are hoping to fill.)

PROJECT DETAILS

16. PROJECT NARRATIVE: *

Please provide a clear description of the proposed project and how your participation in the festival would affect the development of this project.

- How do you envision the project?
- How will it look and feel to an audience?
- How will this work fit within a festival context?
- What are your artistic goals with this project?
- What do you hope to gain by participating in the Risk/Reward Festival?

Be concise and specific. Along with Work Samples, the Project Narrative is the most heavily weighted part of your application.

SUGGESTED WORD COUNT: 300 - 500 words

17. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: *

Please include short biographies of the key artists/groups/collaborators.

Please keep the TOTAL word count of this section under 500 words, if possible. Links to websites and/or press is welcome.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

The following section includes questions about the physical and technical format of your piece, as you envision it. As part of a festival, it is important that we are able to transition into and out of your piece quickly, in only 2 to 3 minutes.

PLEASE NOTE: If the work has extensive special requirements, Risk/Reward may not be able to meet it with our equipment. Please make your technical requirements flexible within a festival format.

18. VENUE / FORMAT:

VENUE: The Festival Mainstage Performances will take place in PICA's ANNEX theater of ~115 seats, configured as an end theater (audience on one side of the playing space, limited backstage and wings). See below for an example from 2025 (Honey Hart's performance for the Portland Drag Theatre Workshop).

PICA's Annex Theater includes:

- A theatrical lighting system, including color-changing abilities, some dance-style side light, and limited "special" fixtures focusable for specific needs*
- A large-venue, HD projector (12,000 lumens), projecting onto a white backdrop*
- A PA system (mains, monitors, subwoofers) and a limited number of wireless and wired mics*
- Black marley (vinyl) floor laid on plywood and foam - * not a fully-sprung wooden dance floor **

We are ALSO open to proposals for site-responsive, site-specific, or interactive-installation works that take place in PICA's warehouse or another space. If you are interested in proposing something outside of the Mainstage, use the "Everything Else" application here: <https://risk-reward.org/event/1554>



19. Are you working with any designers (e.g. lighting, video, etc)? If so, are they planning on being present at the Festival? *

20. Do you need any specific equipment, specific stage lay-outs or set-ups, or any particular physical elements for your piece? If so, please describe them. *

21. Are you planning on making a mess? Any food onstage? Does your piece have extensive clean-up, strike, or set-up requirements? *

Do you plan to utilize fire, glitter, or children? (These are insurance / venue-rental flags. They are not immediately disqualifying.)

22. Does your piece rely on being in a specific place in the program? (e.g. you must be the first piece in the Festival.) *

23. Do you have any special technical requests not covered by these other questions? *

WORK SAMPLES:

24. PRIMARY WORK SAMPLES: *

Please include: Link to Vimeo or YouTube, with any applicable password.

For each sample please provide:

- 1) Title/Date/Location of work sample.
- 2) A brief description of each clip/track.

You may include up to 5 minutes of video with your submission. Include a timestamp to start/stop at if you'd like us to view a section of a longer video.

See below for more information on what we're looking for. Work Samples are a heavily-weighted element of your application.

25. OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL WORK SAMPLES:

If you would like, please provide additional, supplemental, non-video work samples. Examples could include web links to audio files, sketches of costume design/set design, text/script of proposed project. Please include a description and link for each material. If they aren't online, you may email them to info@risk-reward.org after you submit your application and we will upload them for the panelists.

Depending on the length of work samples, the panelists may only spend one or two minutes reviewing this material.

*MORE INFORMATION ABOUT **WORK SAMPLES***

The work sample that is included with your application should be a thoughtful representation of your past work, both individually and collaboratively, if applicable. Be sure to choose documentation that best spotlights your work in the context of what you are proposing for the festival. A rough sample of both the proposed work and completed past work is typically very helpful in assessing your application.

If your proposal includes multiple collaborators coming together specifically for this project, you may include one work sample per collaborator. If it is a group that has worked together before, a work sample of your past joint efforts is preferred.

We are looking for up to 5 minutes of high quality primary work samples. Please provide a time code for longer videos, as selection panelists have a limited amount of time to review each application. Providing clear instructions for exactly what you would like reviewed is the best way to help ensure your samples are reviewed fully. It is often very difficult for panelists to assess applications with no visual representation of past or proposed work. Links to Vimeo or YouTube tend to work best.

The selection panel may not get to all of the work samples provided, so think about what is most important for the panel to review and arrange things in order accordingly. **Along with your Project Narrative, Work Samples are typically the most heavily weighted portions of the application.**

If you have any questions or difficulties in presenting links, videos, images, or setting time-stamps, please reach out at info@risk-reward.org.

DEMOGRAPHICS / FEEDBACK

These questions are important for us to know who we're reaching, and also as we seek support from government grants and foundations. These answers are not included in the packet of information given to the curatorial panel.

26. Age(s) of Artist(s): *

27. Ethnicity & Race *

Please self-identify, include all artists in proposal

28. Gender Identity -

*

Please self-identify, include all artists in proposal

29. Do you have any accessibility requirements you would like for us to be aware of?

30. How did you find out about Risk/Reward and our 2026 Festival?

31. How long did it take you to prepare your application materials? Is there anything on our end that would've made it easier for you to complete?

32. Anything else? THANK YOU FOR APPLYING!

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