

***Assembling your judging panel should begin as soon as the new pageant year commences since the vetting and actual confirmation of judges availability can take several days to complete.***

## **Panel Diversity**

A judges' panel is comprised of at least five (5) and no more than seven (7) judges and the diversity of your panel is very important. For example, selecting those mostly trained in dance, theater and the arts could produce a subjective outcome, but assembling a mixed group with varied backgrounds will enhance the selection process and ensure the judges' assessment of a contestant's qualifications are applicable to the job description for your state and local titleholders.

Consider the male to female ratio in addition to a panel diverse in industry experience/expertise, for example fields of: beauty, fitness, interview, arts, entertainment, education, fashion, business, state/local leadership, etc.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

One of the cornerstones of our organization which must remain infallible is the integrity of our judging system. Conflicts of interest cannot be tolerated which is why it is important that the judges are properly vetted. In addition to being familiar with the "Judges Eligibility Rules" on pages 7 and 8, be sure to also safeguard against anything that someone may "perceive" as a conflict of interest. It is paramount that everyone does their due diligence when selecting, vetting and approving judges at the local and state levels.

## **Confirming Judges**

The MVO Resource Portal at [missva.com/mvoed](http://missva.com/mvoed) lists the individuals who have completed the Miss Virginia Judges Training class. It is recommended that at least two individuals from that list be asked to judge.

Once a judge is confirmed, send a "Thank You" letter, a copy of the MAO Judges Affidavit listed on pages 9 and 10 and the MAO Judges Eligibility Rules on pages 7 and 8 for them to review and confirm they can perform the duties objectively and they are free from any conflicts of interest. If your complete list of contestants is still pending, notify them that you will forward it to them as soon as it is available. Until they receive the complete list of contestants, they can at least confirm that there are no conflicts of interest at that time. You should only send a complete list of contestants, no partial lists.

Also be sure to forward the Schedule of Events and Judges Orientation Agenda to your judges when available. It is also recommended that you identify a backup judge in case of a last minute schedule conflict or family emergency.

## **MVO Requirement**

At least two weeks before your local pageant, complete and forward the "Local Judges List" signed by the Local Executive Director to the Field Director. The Judges List is found on the MVO Resource Portal. If the Field Director recognizes a possible conflict of interest, you have adequate time to establish a replacement judge.

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# Judges Panel

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## **Judges Checklist**

Along with obtaining their bio and headshot for your program book, the judges are required to review the Judges Eligibility Rules and sign the Judges Affidavit confirming they can perform their duties and are free from any conflicts of interest as described.

A checklist is provided on page 11 which outlines items that your judges may need to review prior to the orientation meeting. Organizing the items for the judges in a binder with page tabs that define each contestant and/or title for easy reference will assist your judges in their preparation. The judges should receive the contestant information at least three (3) weeks in advance of the competition. Follow-up with each judge to confirm they received this confidential information.

You can find the best representative for your organization when your judges take their job seriously. Your preparation of the judges' information to ensure that they have everything needed to adequately prepare before arriving at your pageant will help establish a focused judges' panel.

## **Judges Arrival**

Plan to have a pageant official meet your judges as they arrive and be sure they can locate their destination hotel and accommodations. If a breakfast or lunch is planned prior to the orientation, remind them of the location and time. Make it a warm welcome.

When introducing your judges to each other, be sure to make them aware of each other's backgrounds and inform each of them what it was about them that prompted their selection to judge your pageant.

## **Judges Introduction to Contestants**

If the opportunity is available, it is helpful to have the Judges Chairperson introduce the judges' panel to your contestants. This introduction demystifies the judges for the contestants and puts your contestants more at ease before the competition begins. This brief meeting is not to introduce the contestants to the judges, but a chance for the contestants to hear a little about the judges' backgrounds with a brief statement from each judge.

## **Judges Chairperson's Job Description**

It is recommended that a person other than the Executive Director serve as the Judges Chairperson for the state and local organizations. The Judges Chair should have a pleasing personality, but not an overpowering disposition. The Chair must have a thorough understanding of the MAO judging policies and procedures and capable of "guiding" the judges through the process, not judging. They also must be able to secure the judges for your pageant and follow through on all judging activities, including meals and social activities. Be sure your auditors are also included in the judges' activities.

## JUDGES ELIGIBILITY RULES (Rules for Judges) EXHIBIT "B" Local Organization Agreement - Section One

1. The judge's panel should consist of five (5) to seven (7) individuals. At least one of these individuals should be a "novice" judge. "Novice" is defined as anyone who has never judged a local or state pageant within the Miss America system.
2. Judges may judge up to 2 state pageants and 4 local pageants in any given "pageant year." This is not "Calendar year." Locals are defined by the number of local contestants sent to any state pageant. Therefore, if an individual judges a dual or double pageant in one state which crowns two (2) winners and a dual or double pageant in another state which crowns two (2) winners, that judge has judged the four (4) local pageants. It is defined as the number of contestants sent to a state pageant.
3. Individuals, their company/business, spouse, domestic partner or significant other, who in any way benefit, financially or otherwise, from working with contestants or the organization are barred from judging. This means that a pageant coach, pageant vocal coach, hairdresser, retailer, make-up artist, fitness trainer, wardrobe specialist, interview coach, choreographer, or any other profession which works directly with contestants, may not judge. This also means that a person who works with any contestants may not judge any other contestants, not just the ones with whom they work.
4. Individuals who are related to contestants through blood relation, by marriage, through business contacts (including with contestants' families), or social contacts (including with contestants' families) may not judge that/those contestant(s).
5. State Board Members may not judge locals within the state they serve. We do recognize that some states have rules in place that require the state organization to place judges on first year local pageants. In those cases, the judges placed on those local judge's panels may not have direct contact with contestants during the state competition.
6. Relatives of state/local board members may not judge the state/local pageant for which the relative serves as a board member. One should also use discretion in using any person, which could compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of the judging process. This would include such relations as business associates, social relationships, etc.
7. Parents and other relatives of a contestant may not judge any pageants. Parents/relatives of a contestant at the local level may not judge local pageants in the state in which the contestant is competing. Parents/relatives of a contestant competing in a state pageant may not judge local or state pageants in any state, regardless of the state in which the contestant is competing.
8. Former contestants and their family members, whether from a local, state, or national Miss America Pageant or a pageant similar in nature to the Miss America Pageant, and regardless if they won one of said pageants, cannot judge until a minimum of three (3) years after they have stopped competing and may never judge any contestant with whom they have competed. "Stopped Competing" is defined as either "ages out", gets married, won a state title, or otherwise can no longer compete in the Miss America Program. Additionally, using a woman of competition age, even though she may have never competed in the Miss America system, may prove to be a problem if she elects to compete in the program once she has judged. Judges who may be potential contestants, including MAOT titleholders, MAOT contestants and their family members, are not allowed to judge in any level of the Miss America program until the criteria set forth above is met.

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9. A judge may not judge any contestant at the State Pageant, whom they judged in any other pageant, including but not limited to the MAOTeen Program. Only at the Local Pageant Level may a judge be able to judge a contestant whom they previously judged, however, they must do so with absolute objectivity and without bias. It is important that the Local Organization's leadership, to the best of their ability, limit the number of judges who have previously judged the contestants competing in their local competitions.
10. Judges who are related by blood or marriage, romantically involved, business associates, or roommates may not serve on the same judging panel. The reason is that we cannot give the impression that two judges may collude on the panel because of their close relationship.
11. While it is not a violation of the rules to use a person from another pageant system, except in the event the person serves, has served, or plans to serve as an official, key position, partner, sponsor, employee, spokesperson or titleholder, we request that discretion be used and our judging process is not used in any way, to promote another pageant system.
12. Judges may not judge the same pageant two consecutive years. This applies to both local and state pageants.
13. At the local level, two individuals from the same local organization may judge another local in the same year, but no members of a local board may judge the same local two consecutive years.
14. Sponsors, partners and contributors (financial or in-kind), as well as their employees and family members are barred from judging.
15. State organizations may have rules regarding local judging which are more restrictive than the rules mentioned above. In addition to the MAO Judges Eligibility Rules, please be aware that the state organization makes final determination on additional rules regarding judging for its locals. If you have questions regarding the interpretation of these rules as they apply to local pageants, please contact your state pageant office for clarification.

Judges Panel



JUDGES AFFIDAVIT
STATE/LOCAL COMPETITIONS

Name: Street Address:

Occupation: Title/Position: Company:

Phone: Fax: E-mail:

1. I have received and read the Judges Eligibility Rules (Rules for Judges) and confirm that I meet the eligibility to participate as a judge.

2. I agree to serve as an unpaid Volunteer Judge in the finals of the Miss Program, to be held on in, State or Local)

3. I affirm that I, my company/business, spouse, domestic partner or significant other, have not and will not provide for profit or otherwise (compensated or uncompensated) any product or service directly or indirectly to any potential or actual contestant in any Miss America competitions other than in the normal routine duties as an official of the pageant organization.

4. I also attest that, including this competition, I have not judged more than four (4) Local Competitions and no more than two (2) State Competitions this year. (Double or Dual Pageants count as two competitions in the same year. Holdovers count for the next competition year.)

5. I acknowledge that I have been provided with and understand the judging criteria and methods of scoring for the competition. I will, to the best of my ability, objectively apply the judging criteria. In performing my duties as a judge, I will not permit geography, race, religion, age, type of talent, or choice of platform of a contestant to interfere with my objective application of the judging and scoring criteria.

6. I understand that I have been/will be provided with information about each participant in the competition that I will judge and score. I will review the information and disclose any Conflicts of Interest which may or will likely not permit me to objectively judge any participant.

7. "Conflicts of Interest" for this purpose shall include: any facts or circumstances which would from the common sense standpoint of a member of the general public be perceived as compromising the ability of a judge to objectively perform his or her duties; and specifically, any relationship or interest of a judge, the employer, the business or the family of a judge, with a participant in the competition, the family of a participant, or the local or state organization from which the participant in the competition has been a part.

8. I have not judged any of the contestants competing at the State Pageant in any other pageant, including the MAOTeen Program or any other program or system.

8a. I understand that only at the local pageant level may I judge a contestant whom I may have previously judged. I will disclose the contestants whom I knowingly judged previously on point number twelve of this affidavit and promise to judge this local pageant and all contestants with absolute objectivity and without bias.

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# Judges Panel

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9. I will perform my duties in a dignified and professional manner which is appropriate and sensitive to the feelings and impressions of the women who are participating and I will maintain an environment to the end that each and every contestant receives a fair, objective and unbiased opportunity to compete.

10. I will maintain the confidentiality of the information entrusted or known by me by virtue of my position as a judge regardless of the source of the information (i.e. contestants, pageant personnel or any other person). I will not allow, under any circumstances, any person to exert or try to exert any influence upon me in my capacity as a judge. If anyone should attempt to influence me, then I, as part of my fiduciary responsibility, agree to immediately disclose such attempted influence to the Field Operations office of the Miss America Organization (1-800-282-6477) as soon as it is practical.

11. (If applicable) In the interests of maintaining the actual and perceived objective integrity of the judging and scoring system, listed below (or attached) are, to the best of my knowledge, any facts of circumstances which may constitute a Conflict of Interest or may be perceived as a Conflict of Interest. I request a prompt review of these disclosures to advise me if they may be perceived as Conflicts of Interest.

12. Disclosure: \_\_\_\_\_  
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If I am found to be in violation of any portion of this affidavit, I understand and agree that I will be prohibited from judging at any level of the Miss America Organization's Competition System.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Judges Panel



## Judges Checklist

Items Forwarded to Judges At Least Two (2) Weeks Prior to Competition

Check	Item	Details	Date Sent	Date Receipt Confirmed
	Thank You Letter (send immediately after confirming to ensure no conflicts of interest – pending contestant list)	Confirm commitment, copy of Judges Affidavit & Judges Eligibility Rules for initial review		
	Judges Affidavit	To be read, signed and returned		
	Judges Eligibility Rules	Included as “Conflicts of Interest” reference		
	Judges Book (Contestant Info)	Includes contestant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Platform Statement</li> <li>• Resume</li> <li>• Photo (optional)</li> <li>• State Titleholder Job Description</li> <li>• On Stage Grouping</li> <li>• Scoring Values</li> </ul>		
	Full Judges List with Contact Info	List of addresses, phone numbers and email information for all Judges		
	Judges Orientation Agenda	Organized and precise agenda for the orientation meeting		
	Judges Activities Schedule	Complete schedule for the judges that includes contact information for the Judges Chair and Judges Committee Members		
	List of Planned Social Events	List of social events that could include dinners, galas, etc. to assist with wardrobe planning		
	Accommodations	Includes contact information and directions for hotel/lodging facility		
	List of Pageant Covered Expenses and List of Personal Expenses	List of all expenses: Organization covered and potential personal		

## **MVO Code of Conduct**

### **For Persons in Contact with Judges**

(Judges have their own forms)

ANYONE INVOLVED WITH THE COMPETITION WHO HAS CONTACT, OTHER THAN INCIDENTAL CONTACT, WITH THE JUDGES IS REQUIRED TO SIGN. THOROUGHLY REVIEW, SIGN AND RETURN TO THE ORGANIZATION PRIOR TO THE START OF COMPETITION

1. As a part of the due diligence of prospective judges, the Judges Committee, Staff, Television Partners, Production (Television and Theater) Staff, etc. should take every effort to ensure the selected judges for the competition do not have any issues which may impact the integrity of or the appearance of integrity in the judging process. If I become aware of such issues, I will inform the Ethics Committee immediately of this matter. All matters of this type will be documented and concluded by the Ethics Committee in minutes, and these minutes will include the results of discussions and conclusions reached.

I fully understand that anything which could impact the integrity or the appearance of integrity with the judging process includes *any* contact with the judges prior to their arrival to the competition and throughout the competition. Any issue which is deemed to significantly impact the integrity or impact the appearance of the integrity of the judging process can result in the disqualification of the judge.

2. I have reviewed the Judges Eligibility Rules and Judges Protocol. To the best of my ability, I will ensure that each judge complies with the provisions listed in these statements. Any compliance deviations by the judges from the provisions listed in the Judges Eligibility Rules and Judges Protocol of which I become aware will be immediately reported to the Ethics Committee.
3. I will ensure no guidance regarding the criterion for selection of Miss (State/Local) will be provided to the judges other than the official guidance provided by the State/Local Organization during the Judges' orientation sessions and any such deviations of which I become aware will be immediately reported to the Ethics Committee.
4. Discussions with the judges, regarding matters facing the Local, State or Miss America Organization (i.e. the policies, procedures and organizational structure) are not appropriate and as such, I will not engage in such discussions and will immediately report to the Ethics Committee any such discussion of which I become aware.
5. Discussions with the judges, regarding matters facing the Production (Television and/or Theater), the wishes of Producers of such (Television and/or Theater), information received during any non-competition production elements with the contestants, and "goals" of such production are strictly prohibited. The judging process must be based upon the scoring of the competition, whether a Single or Multi-Night, without outside influence or "directional" comments which may influence the outcome of the pageant. I will not engage in such discussions and will immediately report to the Ethics Committee any such discussion of which I become aware.



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# Judges Panel

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6. The Judges shall not be in view of, nor speak to the contestants outside of the judging process, unless in the normal course of scheduled events, such as initial introductions and as such. I will immediately report to the Ethics Committee any interactions between the judge and a contestant outside of the judging process or in the normal course of scheduled events.

**ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS, ONLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE JUDGES COMMITTEE:**

7. I will ensure that the chairperson of the judges committee, or designee, will be present at all times when judges are given instructions. During these instructional sessions with the judges, I will ensure that the only guidance provided will be scripted to conform to Miss America Guidelines.
8. I will ensure that a member of the Judges Committee and/or the Auditors will be present at all meetings among the judges (including any social or informal sessions).
9. I will help ensure that the judges do not discuss the contestants or their scores with one another or anyone else during the judging process.
10. I understand the matters discussed herein, and as contained in the Judges' Certification/Conflict of Interest Statements and will abide by these principles during pageant week.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_