

## 2026 Desert Bluegrass Festival Band Contest Rules:

**1. Bands:** Bands may have 3-7 members, all acoustic instruments (electric bass allowed). Bands are not required to buy festival tickets to compete (though of course, are encouraged to do so). No individual may compete in more than one band.

**2. Eligibility:** Paid performers at this year's festival are not eligible to compete.

### 3. Prizes

1 <sup>st</sup>	\$400
2 <sup>nd</sup>	\$250
3 <sup>rd</sup>	\$100

The winning band may be asked to play at the following year's festival.

**4. Entry fee:** \$25 per band, payable at the registration desk on the day of the contest.

### 5. Important Times

- **Pre-registration:** may be completed online to reserve a spot, but registration is not complete until the entry fee is paid on the day of the contest. No more than 10 bands will be allowed to participate.

- **1:30 pm on contest day:** At least one band member must be at the contest registration table at 1:30 pm to pay their entry fee, sign the photo/video/recording release, and draw for their order onstage.

- **1:45 pm:** Bands that have pre-registered but have not paid their fee and drawn for position by 1:45 may forfeit their spots.

- **Contest: Friday, March 13, 2-4 pm**

**6. Amplification:** Bands are required to use a single, omni directional stage microphone. No monitors are provided. Bass players may plug in if they wish.

**7. Styles:** The music should be mainly Bluegrass, Old Time, Western Swing, or New Acoustic/Newgrass, though other acoustic styles are permitted.

**8. Selections:** Bands are required to perform a slow vocal song, a fast vocal song (relative to the slow), and an instrumental, in any order. There will be only one round in this contest.

**9. Time Limit:** Bands should limit their time onstage to 10 min. Small overruns (up to 1 min) are allowed.

### 10. Judging criteria

- 30% Material Selection (taste, difficulty, authenticity/originality...)
- 30% Instrumental Performance (includes ability of soloists and overall instrumental blend)
- 30% Vocal Performance (lead and harmony)
- 10% Stage Presence
- Judges' written comments will be provided to those bands that request them at the registration desk after prizes have been awarded. Judges will be encouraged to provide constructive feedback to contestants. All judges' decisions are final.

**11. Mishaps:** A band that has an unavoidable onstage mishap that affects performance may be allowed a re-start at the judges' discretion.