

FOCO FRINGE



RAW. BEAUTIFUL. UNEXPECTED.

FoCo Fringe Artist Handbook 2026

Revised March 10, 2026 with updated timeline

focofringe.org/artists

LETTER TO ARTISTS

Dear 2026 Fort Collins Fringe Festival Artist,

Welcome and congratulations! Whether this is your first time joining the Fringe or you've been part of our wild, creative history before, we're thrilled to have you with us as we **revive the Fort Collins Fringe Festival** after a too long hiatus.

This year's return marks more than a festival. It's a **reawakening** of the experimental, collaborative spirit that was hard to miss when the Fringe grew every year from 2013 to 2019. We owe deep gratitude to **our founding directors, Heather Ostberg Johnson, Dulcie Willis, and Jessica MacMaster** whose vision first brought this platform to life in Fort Collins, and to the many artists, volunteers, and audiences who have kept the Fringe flame alive through the years.

The Fringe has always been a space for risk-taking, for boundary-pushing, and for authentic creative expression. As we step into this new chapter, we're excited to gather, create, and connect through creative expression and performance art.

This handbook is your guide to performing at FoCo Fringe. Your go-to resource for everything from tech and fees to ticketing and promotion. Please take the time to read it fully, highlight what matters most to you, and reach out to our team with any questions. Our goal is to make your experience as seamless, inspired, and rewarding as possible.

We are beyond excited to welcome you to the **2026 Fort Collins Fringe Festival**, a celebration of resilience, creativity, and community. Together, we're writing the next act in the story of the Fringe.

Thank you for bringing your art, your courage, and your voice to this revival.

With creativity and gratitude,

Analía Alegre-Femenías Weber & Charles Howes

ABOUT FOCO FRINGE

FoCo Fringe is Fort Collins' open-access performing arts festival, created to champion independent artists and celebrate bold, original work. Like Fringe festivals around the world, our model is built to uplift artists rather than gatekeep creativity.

FoCo Fringe is non-juried and non-curated. All artists are welcome to apply, and when applications exceed available spaces, we use a lottery system and maintain a waitlist to make the process fair and transparent. Our team reviews applications with the goal of supporting as many productions as our resources and venues allow.

Our festival provides a platform for performers to share new or experimental work with audiences by offering venue space, technical support, front-of-house staff, ticketing services, and festival-wide promotion. We believe the arts thrive when barriers are low, so we aim to keep participation fees manageable and ticket prices affordable.

At its heart, FoCo Fringe exists to expand access—to give performers room to take risks and to give audiences a chance to experience something unexpected, inspiring, and uniquely Northern Colorado.

IMPORTANT DATES*

Application window opens: January 6, 2026

Application window closes: February 12, 2026

Performer confirmation letters sent: ~~March 2, 2026~~ March 10, 2026

Signed contract, liability waivers, and production fees due: ~~March 15~~ March 26, 2026

Production information submitted: April 1, 2026

Performance schedule set: May 1, 2026

Tech rehearsals at venues: June 9-12, 2026

Fringe Kickoff: ~~June 10, 2026~~ June 11, 2026

Dates of festival: June 11-14, 2026

Dates of performances: June 12-14, 2026

** Timeline adjusted slightly given time needed to review applications and work behind the scenes for the FoCo Fringe revival.*

WHAT FOCO FRINGE PROVIDES

FoCo Fringe is designed to remove as many barriers as possible so artists can focus on creating and performing their work. As part of your participation, we provide:

- Performance venues for your tech rehearsal and all scheduled festival shows
- Essential lighting and sound equipment at each venue
- Technical support and front-of-house staff to help your production run smoothly
- Ticketing services along with walk-up ticketing at venues
- Volunteers to greet audiences, manage lines, and scan tickets
- Festival-wide publicity.
- Opportunities to connect and grow through panels, workshops, meetups, and other community gatherings

Our goal is to create a supportive, artist-centered environment that encourages experimentation, collaboration, and creative risk-taking.

What FoCo Fringe does *not* provide:

To keep the festival accessible and affordable, there are a few things artists are responsible for managing on their own.

- Rehearsal space outside of your scheduled tech time
- Costumes, props, or set pieces
- Specialized or advanced lighting and sound equipment beyond the basic setup provided
- Crew to load in, set up, or strike your show
- Guaranteed storage for sets, props, or costumes at any venue
- Individual show publicity or promotion beyond your listing on our website
- Guaranteed audience numbers (though we'll work hard to bring people your way!)

Performance artists are expected to actively promote their shows to maximize attendance and ticket sales.

We encourage artists to plan with a “Fringe-friendly” mindset—portable, flexible, and ready to plug into our shared festival infrastructure.

WHAT IS A FRINGE SHOW?

At FoCo Fringe, we welcome bold, original, and innovative performance work. To participate in the festival, your show should meet the following guidelines:

- Be an original piece (new work, newly devised, or a fresh interpretation you created)
- Run between 30-45–60 minutes
- Use simple, flexible technical requirements
- Be safely and effectively performed in a modest, adaptable playing space
- Fit within one of our performance categories: burlesque, cabaret, circus, clown, comedy, dance, devised work, drag, kids' theatre, immersive theatre, improvisation, magic/illusion, musical theatre, physical theatre, puppetry, solo performance, spoken word, storytelling, or theatre

If your work doesn't neatly fall into these categories, reach out—we love discovering new forms and creative experiments.

Artists may apply with only one show. If you have participated in FoCo Fringe previously, your submission must be a different piece of work from prior years.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted between January 6, 2026 and February 12, 2026 along with your non-refundable \$25 application fee. We welcome all work in the categories listed whether it is a premiere or has been performed elsewhere, and we understand that your performance may still be in development at the time you apply. We welcome national and international performers, but we reserve a percentage of performance slots for Colorado artists.

We ask that you apply with a stand-alone solo performance of at least 45 minutes or a group show that meets our requirements. If you don't have a stand-alone show and if you wish to explore the potential of being placed into a show as a solo performer, please email us at artists@focofringe.org.

If you are applying with a family-friendly production for our Kids Fringe please keep in mind we look for kids shows that are between 30-45 minutes.

Applications are submitted via our website at <https://focofringe.org/artists/apply/>

*****When completing the online application: please prepare your application responses in a document you've saved in case you encounter a problem when submitting online.*****

All applicants will be notified by March 2, 2026 regarding acceptance or placement on the waitlist. To confirm your spot in the festival, you must submit your Production Contract, Liability Waiver, and production fee by March 15, 2026.

PERFORMANCE VENUES & FEES

FoCo Fringe partners with a variety of performance spaces throughout Fort Collins, including traditional and nontraditional venues. Some may be intimate black boxes or gallery-style rooms; others may be unconventional spaces that invite creative staging. All venues include basic lighting and sound capabilities, though the level of equipment varies. Because of this, we strongly encourage tech-light, flexible productions.

If you are proposing a site-specific work, you may submit your preferred location in your application. While we can't guarantee your first choice, we will ask you to rank venue types that best fit your show, and we will do our best to match your production with an appropriate space.

**Production fees may vary based on the venue type, the number of performances assigned to your show, and tech production staff needs or complexity.*

Tier	Example	Seating	Production Level	Fee to Artist
Tier I Venue	Bas Blue Theatre	100+ Seats	Theater setting with more comprehensive lighting options	\$450 - \$500
Tier II Venue	Soundbar	90 Seats 100+ Standing	Performance space with some lighting options	\$300 - \$450
Tier III Venue	Wolverine Farm	30 - 50 Seats	Performance space with sound system and limited light options	\$250
Tier IV Venue	Soundbar Back Alley	20-40 Seats	Performance space with basic tech	\$150
BYO (Bring your own venue)	Downtown Cafe or Bar	20 - 30 Seats	For site-specific productions or if you wish to make your own arrangement with a venue in the Old Town area. Venue must be pre-approved by FCF and must provide your own tech	\$150

PRODUCTION FEES

Production fees range from \$150 to \$500, depending on venue type and number of performances. Our goal is to offer a range of options so artists can select what best supports their work.

In your application, you'll be asked to indicate your preferred venue type and performance count. If accepted, FoCo Fringe will confirm your assigned venue and finalize your performance schedule before contracts and payment are due.

ACCESSIBILITY

FoCo Fringe is committed to making the festival accessible for artists and audiences. If you or anyone on your team has ability-related needs, please include that information in your application. We will take these needs into account when assigning venues and scheduling performances.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Artists will be asked to **submit complete show materials by April 1, 2026**. This includes your title, a short description, a full description, cast and crew bios, promotional images, and an optional (but encouraged) trailer link. These materials will be used for your show page on our website, in the festival program, and may also be included in media outreach and FoCo Fringe promotional efforts.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The finalized performance schedule—including your assigned venue and show times—will be shared with artists by May 1. You can expect:

- 1–3 performance slots at the same venue, scheduled on a rotating basis throughout the festival
- A venue guide outlining the space, layout, and available sound and lighting capabilities
- A shared basic lighting and sound system (no advanced tech packages)
- Basic Tech support staff* to run your lights and sound, plus a short tech rehearsal (generally no longer than one hour; *support staff depends on venue tier and technical complexity)
- Ticketing services, front-of-house management, and online advance ticket sales
- A full listing for your show on our website, in the festival program, and across festival marketing channels
- Artist badges that give you and your core team free access to other FoCo Fringe performances
- Seventy (70) percent of your net box office revenue, issued within four weeks of the festival

WHAT'S EXPECTED OF YOU

FoCo Fringe is a shared community festival, and we ask all participating artists to:

- Sign the FoCo Fringe Artist Agreement and Liability Waiver
- Submit all required materials and fees by the stated deadlines
- Secure rights for any music, artwork, or media included in your production
- Actively promote your show through social media, press outreach, posters, postcards, busking, email, and word-of-mouth (the more you market, the better your audience turnout!)
- Design your production so it can be set up and struck within 15 minutes, ensuring quick transitions between shows
- Honor your assigned performance schedule and call times
- Notify FoCo Fringe by April 15 if you need to withdraw from the festival

****Artists who do not meet deadlines or contractual responsibilities may incur additional fees and risk forfeiture of their festival placement.***

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Before you apply, we encourage you to review our Performer FAQ for additional details about expectations, logistics, and festival operations. More FAQs are on our website here:

<https://focofringe.org/artists/#faq>

FOR OUT-OF-TOWN PERFORMERS

If accepted, please plan to be in Fort Collins for the full duration of FoCo Fringe. Our opening night gathering will include a ticketed kick-off event and an opportunity for artists to participate in a short “speed preview” performance to help audiences discover new work.

If you are traveling from outside the area and need housing, we will do our best to connect you with a local host, though availability cannot be guaranteed

FOR LOCAL PERFORMERS

FoCo Fringe hopes to build year-round opportunities to support Northern Colorado’s creative community, including meetups, networking events, workshops, and pop-up performance nights. Stay tuned for upcoming offerings—we want to help you create, collaborate, and keep experimenting beyond the festival itself.

THE FINE PRINT

FoCo Fringe reserves the right to photograph or record your production for marketing, documentation, or archival purposes.

All information in this handbook is subject to change, and we will notify applicants of any updates that may affect participation.

If you have questions about the application or the festival process, please reach out to us at artists@focofringe.org.