

ILKW Contestant Guide and Application 2027



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Purpose of Contest

The ILKW Contest serves three distinct purposes for the Indiana Leather community:

1. Provide a fun and unique social and educational experience to the pet, trainer, kink, fetish and leather community as a whole. Historically, contests have been established to bring the community together. In that spirit, this contest exists to allow new connections to be built and to educate the community on resources while providing an outlet to share common interests.
2. Provide positive representation of the Indiana pet, trainer, kink, fetish and leather community at events, contests, and throughout our community during their title year.
3. Educate contestants and the public about the importance of events, such as the Indiana Leather & Kink Weekend Contest, by building and supporting a stronger community identity with shared interests and ideals. This is done through open-to-the-public educational opportunities leading up to the contest, educational opportunities at the event itself, and explicitly sharing contest goals and judging criteria during the contest to build enthusiasm around the titles and their potential for the community.

Titles Available & Prerequisites

ILKW Provides different titles representing various aspects of our community. You may run for only one title and will be judged based on the criteria for that title. Note that some judging criteria is altered for different titles, and some titles have different prerequisites underlined in the description. For all titles, you must have been

Prerequisites For all titles

- Must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age on or before the first day of the contest.
- Must have resided in the state of Indiana for the six months leading up to the contest **or** reside at least 6 months in a surrounding state (Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky) without an equivalent title with the intention of representing Indiana during your title year.
- Agree to participate in all contest categories while conforming to all state and local regulations pertaining to nudity and obscenity in the venues.
- Permit photography or other recordings of themselves for use in the promotion of the ILKW Contest for both current and future events.
- Own all gear worn during the contest.
- If declared a winner, represent the ILKW title for the title year following the contest and abide by the expectations outlined in this document.

Titles Available – note underlines denoting any special requirements:

- **Indiana Pet** represents any animal (such as puppy, pony, cat, fox, etc.) in role-play that often sets aside their human characteristics in favor of the animal they're representing. Doesn't necessarily mean "pet", could be "critter" or another similar label, but the contest had to pick one to run with, imperfect as it may be.
- **Indiana Trainer** represents Trainers and Handlers associated with pet play.
- **Indiana Puppy** - 2025 was the year that we depreciated the Puppy title and instead have everyone sign up for Pet. Of course, puppies are encouraged to run for the Indiana Pet title. In the event we have 2 or more non-puppy pet contestants and three or more puppies, we'll split the Pet contestants into both Pet and Puppy titles to allow for more representation.
- **Mr / Sir** a represents the Leather aspect of a dominant male-identifying person. This title can be whichever honorific you relate to most.
- **Ms** represents the Leather aspect of a female-identifying person.
- **Mx** represents those that are gender-neutral / non-binary / gender-expansive in the leather community.
- **Boy** represents the Leather aspect of a more submissive male-identifying boy.
- **Fetish** represents the kinkier aspect of play within our community.
- **Power Exchange** represents two or three people (competing together) in a relationship dynamic involving power exchange. Power Exchange must have been in that relationship dynamic for at least two years prior to competing.
- **Master (and) slave** and education focused title for those identifying in a Master / slave dynamic within the Leather community. Master and slave must have been in that relationship dynamic for at least two years prior to competing.
- **Person of Leather** an education focused title for those wishing to represent and encourage the greater leather community with their own personal pride.
- **Bootblack** for those with a passions for the service of bootblacking our amazing leather.

Contestant Resources

ILKW is, in part, an educational event for both the general community and the contestants. It is not unreasonable to expect that many who enter this contest have no prior competition experience in a similar event. Not only does it take courage to get up on stage and be judged by your peers, but the lack of knowledge and experience can make it difficult to contemplate applying. Our contestants can provide a peek into our collective future, and we all have a stake in helping them succeed, regardless of the outcome. A contestant's enthusiasm and our passion for

the contestant's success are powerful drivers within the community. Without aspirations and gumption to follow through, our community would potentially be devoid of leadership to make events and gatherings happen.

Pre-Contest Training

ILKW wants to take the community, as well as potential contestants, on a behind-the-scenes look at the hows and whys of the contest system. We also want to encourage and reassure potential contestants that we are here because of them, as well as walk them through the contest process before they ever step on stage. Check our ilkw.org event page for event dates as to when we will be covering topics such as what our ILKW titles are, as well as in-depth discussions and demonstrations of how to prepare and what to expect for each component of the ILKW T Contest. These educational opportunities are open to the public – feel free to sit in, participate, and learn with our contestants!

Den-Person

Like many other contests, we have a person (they get to pick their own preferred title!) assigned to chaperone our contestants before, during, and after the contest weekend, and help take care of any last-minute issues. The Den Person is there to focus on the success of each contestant - assisting our contestants with (most!) anything contest-related. Depending on your needs, this person will help make sure you're where you need to be when you need to be there, all while looking and feeling your best. This person is also great at providing last-minute advice and any other behind-the-scenes support to those competing. The den person will be introduced to the contestants after the application deadline has passed, to help answer any questions and provide insight on preparing for the weekend and will support and walk the contestants through the weekend competition.

Contest Components

Each contestant of the ILKW Contest will be judged in five different areas. Besides the judging criteria below, any component of the contest may have points deducted by the judges for tardiness, un-sportsmanlike or generally egregious behavior. Note that depending on the title, you will either be providing an educational session, a fantasy, headspace scene or Technical Boot as noted in each section below, and for the bootblack title only, you will be performing a judged Open-Shine as the major component of your Weekend Image score.

Open Shine / Weekend Image – 20% of Overall Score

Evaluation of the contestant from the time the contestant is introduced to the public on Thursday evening until the beginning of the on-stage contest on Saturday evening. Judges will award points

based on how each contestant behaves and interacts socially with the community and judges representing while the Title they are running for. Friday night is considered a “bar night”, so the contestant should show off casual bar-wear they might wear while representing at a bar at a community event.

Contestants running for the Bootblack Title will be scheduled a two hour window to offer Bootblack services (Open Shine) during the weekend with eventgoers to demonstrate how they will perform and conduct themselves during their title year. Qualities the judges observe are skills, knowledge, chair management, personality, and an appropriate level of professionalism &/or (if negotiated) eroticism.

Interviews – 30% of Overall Score

An opportunity for the judges to directly assess the aptitude, capabilities, and potential of the contestant to fulfill the role of the title holder. Each contestant will be presented to the judging panel for a public 15-minute interview. The head judge and, if necessary, the Producer will moderate the interview, ensuring each judge is allowed to ask questions, intervening if any question is deemed inappropriate. All contestants need to be in the vicinity during the interview process so that they may be recalled for further questions, if necessary.

Technical Boot – 15% of Overall Score (Bootblack)

Contestants are tasked with revitalizing and shining a boot to showcase their technical skills for judges to compare the work of other bootblacks, using the untouched boot from the pair as an additional reference. The contestants will be given one hour to complete this task and return the boot to one of the Tally Masters.

Headspace Scene – 15% of Overall Score (Pet, Pup and Trainer)

This section of the contest is where the contestants demonstrate their headspace as a Pup, Pet, or Trainer. Contestants are given 5 minutes to show the judges and audience how they personally experience and embrace the headspace of the title they are running for. During this section, contestants may enlist the help of up to two additional (non-judged) helpers to assist in creating the atmosphere that showcases their headspace. Music or backing soundtrack may be provided (mp3 preferred) to contest ahead of time to be played during the scene, and a microphone can be made available as well – alternatively, contestants may ask the DJ for a generic backing track to be played if desired. Props may be used with an expectation that it will take less than 1 minute for setup and teardown, and that there is no room provided to store elaborate sets – the goal is to demonstrate the contestant’s headspace, not their decorating skills. Pup mats will already be set up in the scene area, so take care not to damage them as they will be under paw...

Presentation – 15% of Overall Score (Person of Leather, Master/slave, Power Exchange)

The presentation category is designed to judge the contestants' ability to speak in a seminar-type format related to their title. The contestants are required to make a brief (no more than 10 minutes) presentation on a topic of their choice either relating to the Master/slave or Power Exchange dynamic (for those respective titles) or of interest to the Leather / BDSM community for Person of Leather. For titles with a relationship dynamic, all parties to the title must speak during the presentation. Contestants are permitted to use a device to aid them in keeping time during their presentation and will not be penalized in any way for doing so. Contestants are permitted to use props or visual aids in their presentations, but are not required to do so. Contestants must provide all handouts, props, or visual aids at their expense. Judges are not expected to ask questions of the contestant(s) unless there are no questions from the audience. The Producer will monitor the question-and-answer time, and their decision on the propriety of a question from the audience or judges is final. The time for questions and answers will not exceed 5 minutes for any contestant. Contestants are judged on your ability to clearly present on a topic relevant to your title and the community, engaging the audience and knowledge and integrity of the information shared.

Fantasy – 15% of Overall Score (Mr / Sir, boy, Ms, Mx, Fetish)

Fantasy is your opportunity to share with the audience specific interests, fetishes or experiences that are meaningful to you as you represent your respective title. A fantasy scene should convey a brief story to the audience, engage the audience and be relevant to the title you are running for. Please, no nudity or live sex acts, no motorcycles, no power tools, no flames other than candles, and no live animals on stage. You will have 1 minute to set up, 4 minutes on stage to perform your fantasy. 1 minute to break down and exit the stage. Within these restrictions you are permitted up to two additional (non-judged) helpers to assist in conveying the story (performing in the scene), and any props you can set up and remove within the given time constraints. This is not a set-decorating or dialog contest – rather, how well you can share your fantasy with those present. Contestants will be judged based on how well you convey your story / scene, how it engages the audience and relevance to your title.

Speech – 20% of Overall Score

The speech is an opportunity for the contestant to share something they are passionate about with their community. Judges will award points based on speech content and delivery. The speech should last between ninety (90) and one hundred and twenty (120) seconds. Running over will incur an automatic 10% penalty for points awarded in the category (ex. 70 points awarded will

have 7 points deducted); however, the contestant will not be interrupted or stopped once the time has expired.

Questions From The Public – 15% of Overall Score

Possibly the most difficult component of the contest to prepare for – all contestants will be brought on stage and be asked questions from their community. Questions may be very serious – such as “What’s the first thing you’d introduce to a new pet to help them explore head space?” or funny and non-sensical such as “What’s your favorite Disney princess and why?” Contestants will be awarded points for engaging the MC and audience, comfort in answering questions, and the ability to land on their verbal paws when presented with a challenging or ridiculous question.

Contestant Basket – 0% (Not judged)

All contestants are expected to provide an auction “basket” of items to auction / raffle or otherwise utilize for fundraising during the event, OR a single high-retail-dollar item worth \$100 or more. Auction baskets (or high-dollar items) should appeal to those in attendance and should shy away from including alcohol, as the event is 18+. You do not have to spend any or lots of money on a basket - traditionally, baskets included items donated from friends/vendors or from your own collection. The basket may have a theme or simply be a lot of fun and useful items packaged together. The baskets are not judged – they will be auctioned off during the weekend to help cover the winner(s) travel funds. Baskets SHOULD include an itemized list of items included and approximate retail value.

Judging Method

Each year, a panel of judges is selected by the Producer. All efforts will be made to make the panel as diverse as our community. The judges will have knowledge and experience that help make them qualified to subjectively judge the contestants. A head judge is assigned to lead the group and, as necessary, moderate segments. The head judge will also have the responsibility to ensure that the panel is following guidelines spelled out by the contest, both explicitly and in the spirit of the contest and title. If necessary, the head judge will bring any concerns or requests for clarification to the Producer. Every judge is not just assigning a score to a contestant, but also actively providing notes on what went well and what can be improved upon for next time. The notes judges provide to each contestant are candid feedback to help the contestant assess their performance, explain the scores received, and provide feedback on what went well or could use improvement – they are a private communication between the contestant and individual judge and are understood not be for public consumption.

Contestants are encouraged to get to know the judges and interact with them. Contestants shall be prohibited from having private meetings or engaging in any sexual activity or intimate play

scenes with the judges before the announcement of the contest results. To help avoid accidental violation of this policy, contestants and judges must display their ID badges at all times during the contest weekend.

Olympic Scoring will be used to determine final scores and placement of contestants. In Olympic Scoring, high and low scores for each contestant, in each category, are dropped, with the remaining scores totaled for each contestant. The contestant with the highest point score will be declared the winner, and the second-highest contestant declared runner-up. Additionally, total scores must be above 70% of available points for a winner or runner-up to be declared, regardless of the number of contestants. In the event of a tie, the high and low scores will be added back into each category to determine the winner. In the very unlikely event there is still a tie, the tally masters shall oversee a judges' secret ballot to determine the winner.

Scoring will be tabulated by two tally masters (two members of the community who will individually tabulate the scores and confirm each other's work). These two have the somewhat tedious job of evaluating and requesting clarification on judges' scoring sheets, adding up and determining the component and final scores, while maintaining full confidentiality of the running totals. They are also responsible for typing up the judges' notes for each contestant.

In the event the contest has eight (8) or more contestants competing for a single title, there will be an elimination of the lowest-scoring contestants until only five (5) remain. The elimination will occur based solely on the Weekend Social Image, Interview, and Fantasy / Headspace / Education / Tech Boot scores (65% of scoring complete) and will occur before the on-stage portion of the contest. This is done to ensure that both the community and the judges are able to spend ample time with each of the remaining contestants during the most time constrained portion of the contest.

Expectations of the Winner

The primary responsibility of the winner of any ILKW title is to build and maintain a positive and respectful image of the contest as well as the greater leather, kink, BDSM, fetish, pet, pup, and trainer community. There are a few specific minimum expectations listed below, but it's mostly up to the Winner to decide how they want to and are best able to represent - each Winner is unique in their goals and aspirations, and is encouraged to exceed these minimum requirements based on their personal ability and enthusiasm. Failure or inability to fulfill the listed minimum requirements of the Winner can result in revocation of the title.

Community / Public Representation

It's important for the contest and our community that our titleholders maintain a positive and respectful public image during their title year. Tarnishing the reputation of the contest or the title

can lead to revocation of the title. Instead of a list of exactly what to do or not to do, this statement is intentionally vague and basically boils down to don't make an ass of yourself, the contest or our community – having a controversial viewpoint or unusual passion is fine as long as it's with grace and respect for your title and our community. The winner always has the option to and is encouraged to consult with the producer or with others they trust before embarking on something they are unsure of.

Communication with Producers

The Winner will maintain an open dialogue with the Producer regarding the Winner's goals and plan of action. This is important so that the Producer can promote the Winner and the contest while being consistent with the Winner's goals. The Producer and the Winner will work together to achieve the Winner's goals.

Event Attendance

The Winner is expected to attend and represent at a minimum of five (5) pet/puppy/trainer-related events during their title year:

- Be in attendance at a minimum of one (1) next-level contest your title qualifies you for (as a contestant or just representing with your presence).
- Consider representing Indiana at the next level contest by competing – we have a wonderful community that would love to see us represented at the next level, and is available to provide guidance and support!
- Attend four (4) additional events or community activities that are related to your title with a minimum of two (2) of those being local to Indiana, such as Indy PAH events, community gatherings or participating in the Indiana Pride Parade.

The Winner will notify the Producer of planned event attendance with enough time that the Producer may also attend or provide assistance and determine compliance with the event attendance requirement.

Attending Successor Contest

Winner agrees to attend, provide a step-aside speech, and assist in whatever manner deemed necessary by the Producer at the following year's contest when their successor is determined.

Competition in Other Title Contests

The Winner needs the explicit permission of the ILKW Producer (Producers) to compete in any other title contests during the period of time that the Winner represents the ILKW Contest – this is to prevent conflicts of interest in potentially representing more than one title at a time.

Resignation or Termination of Title

If the Winner is unable to fulfil their duties or their title is revoked, the Winner will return all title items to the Producer.

Making the ILKW Contest Successful

Everyone associated with the ILKW Contest is a volunteer. No one gets paid, but we are just as excited as the contestants about having a successful and enjoyable event. The Producer (Producers) provide overall guidance and final word on any contest issue, but without help from others, no contest would happen. It takes judges, tally masters, MC's, Den-Daddies, Judges Assistants, Contestants, other volunteers, and support from the community for any successful contest to occur.

Weekend Schedule

Times and locations are subject to change. Contestants are required to participate in all activities except the community fair/educational sessions and Brunch (attendance at non-required portions are of course, allowed/encouraged):

Thursday, September 17th

- 7 PM Gather with your den staff and other contestants (Location TBD)-drop off basket
- 8-12 AM Opening Ceremonies in the Hall of Champions for the introduction of Contestants and Judges, mingle with the public

Friday, September 18th

- 10 AM - 1 PM (or later as necessary) interviews split into two days, depending on the number of contestants, break for lunch
- 11 AM – 5:30 PM Educational Sessions
- 8 PM Headspace scenes, fantasies and education - and potentially speeches depending on the number of contestants
8PM – 12AM Mingle With the Public

Saturday, September 19th

- 10 AM – 1 PM (or later as necessary), interviews second half, depending on the number of contestants, break for lunch
- 11 AM – 5:30 PM Educational Sessions
- 8 PM Contest: Start headspace scenes, fantasies, education and , split into two nights, and speeches depending on the number of contestants

Sunday, September 20th

- 11 AM – 1 PM Brunch

Entry Deadline

Applications must be received by the Producer by 12 AM (Midnight Saturday night), September 6th, 2026. Applications may be emailed to Info@IndianaPupAndTrainer.org. Don't worry about signing - the producer will print paper copies of the waiver and indemnification for you and have you sign when you arrive Thursday evening.

Application Checklist

- Headshot photo – a digital photo including your shoulders to the top of your head. This photo will be provided to the judges along with your application. Please email the photo to the address above with your application. This photo does not need to be professional or artistic – it's used as a behind-the-scenes "cheat sheet" so the judges can easily recognize you and is not intended for public consumption, usually thumb-nail sized on paper. For Master/slave and Power Exchange, please provide one image for each person.
- Contest Application – Feel free to use the PDF text feature to type your application and save it before printing or emailing it to the address above. You don't need to sign this – it will be signed in witness on Friday evening of the contest.
- Contest Fee for your entry fee is the normal non-discounted registration.
- A copy of your driver's license or a current photo ID indicating your date of birth. (This remains confidential and is simply to validate age and identity.)
- Is your auction basket ready?

2026 ILKW Contestant Registration & Application

For Master/slave (M/s) and Power Exchange (PE) Titles (with two or three people competing together) please use the additional (2 and 3) fields for demographic information. Legal names and other sensitive contact information is not provided to the judges or general public.

Pet / Stage Name	Pronouns
Stage Name 2 (M/s, PE)	Pronouns 2 (M/s, PE)
Stage Name 3 (PE)	Pronouns 3 (PE)
Title You Are Running For	What animal do you primarily identify as (pet only)
Human / Legal Name	Cell Phone
Full Street Address	Email
	Date of Birth
Legal Name 2 (M/s, PE)	Cell Phone 2 (M/s, PE)
Full Street Address 2 (M/s, PE)	Email 2 (M/s, PE)
	Date of Birth 2 (M/s, PE)
Legal Name 3 (PE)	Cell Phone 3 (PE)
Full Street Address 3 (PE)	Email 3 (PE)
	Date of Birth 3 (PE)
Have you ever been convicted of a felony or any criminal activity? If so, please explain:	Have you ever appeared in any pornographic photos, films, or videos? If so, please explain:

Body Modifications (piercings, tattoos, brandings, etc.):	List any clubs/organizations you are involved with (if applicable):
How long have you been involved in the (insert title here) lifestyle / scene? What got you involved?	
What makes you a (insert your title here)?	
How have you integrated leather, S/M, fetish or pet (insert title here) into the rest of your life and relationships?	

What is your favorite piece of leather, fetish, S&M, pet or Trainer paraphernalia?
What other fetishes / BDSM / leather lifestyles do you have an interest in or associate with?
Why do you want to become the title holder for 2027?
Tell us something unique and surprising about yourself that others in the community may not know about:

Photographic & Image Release Waiver

I, the undersigned, hereby give ILKW (the contest), its photographers, legal representatives, agents, or assigns, the right and permission to copyright, use, reuse, broadcast, and/or publish any Photographic Pictures (including digital images and pictures) of me, which shall be taken during the contest, or as a result of my preparation for the contest, or as a result of my having Participated in the contest, Pictures, as herein, shall include Portraits or reproductions thereof,

including audio and videotapes, made through any media. I further assign the right to use such pictures in conjunction with my stage name, and through any media outlets, for any purpose deemed appropriate by the Producer (Producers). I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished Pictures or the method of their eventual use, including any related audio, video, or printed copy that may be used in conjunction therewith. I hereby release, discharge, and agree to save harmless Indiana Leather Pride Contest and the Producer(s), their photographers, legal representatives, agents, or assigns, including those publishing and/or distributing the finished product, in whole or in part, from and against any liability or claim as a result of the use or publication of said pictures, including from any distortion, blurring, alteration, optical illusion or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking, processing or reproduction of the pictures, their publication or distribution. I have read the foregoing Release and Waiver before signing below. I warrant my full understanding of its contents, and that I am of legal age to give my consent in this state.

Indiana Leather Pride Contest Indemnification

I hereby certify that I have attained at least twenty-one (21) years of age and that I, based upon mutual covenants and considerations (including granting me the privilege of attending and participating in the ILKW Contest) will not hold the Producer(s), nor the individual and collective owners, officers, agents and employees thereof liable for any injury to my person or property during the period of ILKW, and I further agree to indemnify and save harmless the producer(s), the individual and collective owners, officers, agents and employees thereof from any liability, injury or economic loss or other damage.

Date: _____

Printed Name 1: _____ Signature: _____

Printed Name 2: _____ Signature: _____

Printed Name 3: _____ Signature: _____

Witnessed by (Contest Representative): _____