

2026 Florida Strawberry Festival® Queen's Scholarship Pageant



Sponsored By:
The Plant City Lions Club

January 17th, 2026

TICKETS : \$20

Charlie Grimes Family Agricultural Center

2508 W Oak Ave.

Plant City, FL 33563

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Applications Available: online, www.flstrawberryfestival.com & www.plantcitylions.org

MANDATORY ORIENTATION: ARTHUR BORING CIVIC CENTER located on Festival Grounds at 2406 West Reynolds Street, Plant City, FL 33563, the corner of West Reynolds and North Edwards Street

3:00 P.M. - Sunday, September 14, 2025 or
5:30 P.M. - Monday, September 15, 2025 or
5:30 P.M. - Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Applicant must be accompanied by a Parent or Guardian only if under the age of 18 years of age and you only need to attend one of the mandatory meetings above

Application Deadline: Wednesday, October 1st, 2025 by 5:00 P.M.

The Florida Strawberry Festival® Queen's Pageant is sponsored by the Plant City Lions Club, which will conduct the pageant through the selection of the five finalists and coronation ceremony of the 2026 Florida Strawberry Festival® Queen and her court at the Florida Strawberry Festival Grounds on January 17, 2026.

- A. LIMITED NUMBER OF CONTESTANTS: The contest will be limited to thirty-five who will be accepted on a first come basis. **These will be kept on file if any of the thirty-five applicants drop out prior to October 10th, 2025. On or after Oct. 10th, 2025 no contestant will be replaced.**
- B. FILING OF APPLICATIONS: Applications can be obtained on the Florida Strawberry Festival website, www.flstrawberryfestival.com and the Plant City Lions Club website, www.plantcitylions.org. Completed application, with **one identification wallet-sized photo of the applicant attached, a \$25.00 entry fee and document that shows permanent domicile address, and a PRINTED TRANSCRIPT WITH MOST CURRENT DISTRICT GPA SIGNED BY REGISTRAR** must be HAND DELIVERED to the Festival Media office located at 2107 West Oak Avenue, on or before 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 1st, 2025.
- MAILED APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED! You must drop off your applications to KellieAnne Kirkland at the Florida Strawberry Festival Administration Office.**
- C. AGE, SEX AND SCHOOL STATUS: The applicant must have been born a female whose age must be at least sixteen years of age and cannot be more than twenty years of age as of March 1, 2026. The applicant must be a junior or higher and must be enrolled in and attending high school, a home school program or attending a post secondary education or training. The applicant must have a **3.0 weighted Grade Point Average** and (must attach a **PRINTED TRANSCRIPT WITH MOST CURRENT DISTRICT G.P.A SIGNED BY REGISTRAR**) and whose permanent address is within our current area boundaries.
- D. PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS: The Lions Club Sponsoring Committee will pick up the completed applications from the Festival office and will determine the eligibility of the applicants as related to residence, age, schooling, and other general rules of the contest. Each applicant will be informed of her acceptance or rejection as a contestant after October 10th, 2025.
- E. COMPLIANCE WITH RULES AND REGULATIONS: The applicant's signature on the application will be considered as evidence that the applicant has read all the rules and regulations of the contest, and that the applicant agrees to abide by all rules and regulations and understands that information provided will be verified. Applicants must attend all announced meetings and rehearsals. Failure to follow this rule without just cause will be cause for elimination from the contest.
- F. AREA BOUNDARY FOR CONTEST: **MUST SHOW PROOF OF RESIDENCY, WILL ONLY ACCEPT COPY OF TAMPA ELECTRIC BILL. ONLINE PAYMENTS; AN ELECTRONIC PRINT-OUT OF PAYMENT IS ACCEPTABLE.**

High school Boundary Maps for Plant City High School, Durant High School, and Strawberry Crest High School and our existing boundary description. You are eligible to participate if you have a permanent address within the designated boundaries and/or

NORTH BOUNDARY: BEGINING AT THE INTERSECTION OF US 301 AND THE HILLSBOROUGH/PASCO COUNTYLINE, GO EAST ALONG THE COUNTYLINE TO THE HILLSBOROUGH/POLK COUNTYLINE

EAST BOUNDARY: FROM THE NORTHEAST HILLSBOROUGH COUNTYLINE GO SOUTH TO INTERSECT THE IMAGINARY EASTERLY EXTENSION OF STATE ROAD 672 (BALM PICNIC ROAD)

SOUTH BOUNDARY: FROM THE INTERSECTION OF BALM BOYETTE ROAD AND STATE ROAD 672 (BALM PICNIC ROAD) GO EAST AND CONTINUE THE IMAGINARY EASTERLY EXTENSION OF STATE ROAD 672 TO INTERSECT THE HILLSBOROUGH/POLK COUNTYLINE.

WEST BOUNDARY: FROM THE HILLSBOROUGH/PASCO COUNTYLINE GO SOUTH ON US 301 TO THE INTERSECTION OF MCINTOSH ROAD. GO SOUTH ON MCINTOSH ROAD TO THE INTERSECTION OF JAUDON ROAD. FROM THAT INTERSECTION GO SOUTHERLY ON A STRAIGHT LINE TO THE INTERSECTION OF BALM BOYETTE ROAD AND STATE ROAD 672.

OTHER THAN THE COUNTYLINE BOUNDARIES ELIGIBILITY IS OPEN TO ADDRESSES ON EITHER SIDE OF A BOUNDARY ROAD.

SEE BOUNDARY MAP ON PAGE 9

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT GAIL DOMEDION AT (813) 967-6366

G. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY: Former Florida Strawberry Festival® Queens or Court Members are **not** eligible to compete.

H. PERSONAL STATUS: An applicant must be single, who's fixed, permanent and principal home for legal purposes is within the area boundary for the contest. The applicant must never have been married or have had a marriage annulled. The applicant must not be pregnant or ever have borne a child.

I. MARRIAGE OR PREGNANCY: Because marriage or pregnancy could interfere with their fulfilling their responsibilities to the Festival, if the queen and/or any member of the court marries or becomes pregnant during the year she is responsible to the Florida Strawberry Festival®, she will be removed.

J. MORAL CHARACTER: Applicant or contestant must never have been arrested. She must not have been suspended (out of school) during the current or previous school year.

K. PRIOR CONDUCT: Applicant must have never performed any act or engaged in any activity or employment that is or could reasonably be characterized by the Florida Strawberry Festival® General Manager as dishonest, immoral or indecent. Social media is considered an activity and will be examined for all contestants.

L. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE QUEEN AND MEMBER OF THE COURT: After the final selection of the queen and members of the court, the queen and members of the court will be responsible for participation in all events scheduled by the Florida Strawberry Festival® Board until a new queen and court are selected. The queen and each member of the court shall portray good conduct, good morals, and good manners. They will conduct themselves with dignity and always be a credit to the Florida Strawberry Festival®. Failure to follow this rule will be considered cause for dismissal. If at any time, actions or behavior is inconsistent to the Florida Strawberry Festival®, disciplinary action or removal of title will be at the sole discretion of the Florida Strawberry Festival® Board of Directors.

M. ABDICATION OR DISQUALIFICATION: In the event the queen should abdicate her title or become disqualified, the first maid shall become the queen. In the event the first maid or a court member should abdicate or become disqualified, no successor will be named nor will a new court member be appointed. **In case of any abdication or disqualification of the reigning queen or member of the court, said queen or court member may be asked to return all gifts and gratuities that she has received in relation to the event. Any unused scholarship will be forfeited.**

N. ACTIVITIES RESTRICTED FOR CONTESTANTS: Upon acceptance into the Florida Strawberry Festival Pageant, contestants may not participate in any other pageant or activity which conflicts with the Florida Strawberry Festival® Queen's Pageant including all rehearsals. Failure to follow these rules will be considered cause for elimination from the contest. In the event these rules are not followed by any contestant, a Lions Club representative, Florida Strawberry Festival® President and Queen Coordinator will determine the course of action. Members of the 2026 Queen & Court will not be permitted to participate in any other pageants, (except for school sanctioned events, i.e. Calendar Girl, Homecoming, etc.) until their commitment to the Florida Strawberry Festival® has been completed.

O. USE OF CONTESTANTS: During the selection process, no attempt should be made by anyone to use any of the contestants in any kind of program, presentation, performance, or representation unless approved in advance by the Lions Club Sponsoring Committee, the Florida Strawberry Festival® President and Queen Coordinator. No person who is not approved in advance by the Lions Club Sponsoring Committee shall have anything to do with the orientation meeting of the contestants or the elimination contests.

P. MANAGEMENT CONTRACT OR ENDORSEMENTS: During the pageant process the contestants (and following the pageant, the queen and court) may not:

- A. Sign a management contract with any individual, business or corporation.
- B. Give verbal or written endorsement of any mercantile commodity or any commercial organization.
- C. Permit photographs of herself to be used with any advertised commodity or service. The Florida Strawberry Festival® General Manager and Plant City Lions Club must be notified of any prior commitments or contracts at the time of her application to determine her eligibility.

Q. JUDGING PROCEDURE: Announced decisions will be final. Documents pertaining to judging decision will be destroyed.

R. CLOTHING/DRESS/APPEARANCE GUIDELINES:

Each contestant is responsible for providing her own clothing and accessories, which should include casual wear, a career dress or coordinate, and an evening gown. Guidance regarding attire will also be provided by the Lions Club Director. All wardrobe selections (including the evening gown, interview outfit, etc.) must be age-appropriate. Please note the following requirements:

- **No plunging necklines permitted.**
- **All-cut outs must be completely filled with solid material or matching trim/rhinestones so that the illusion of flesh is not perceived.**
- **Outfits should not be see-through, super short, or excessively revealing.**
- **Jeans with holes, shorts, and strapless tops are not allowed.**
- **Formal wear must consist of a full-length evening gown. Two-piece designs are permitted if they are tasteful, with no cut-outs or exposed midriff.**
- **Dress slits should not extend higher than 3 inches above the knee; necklines must not be low-cut.**
- **Shoes should complement the dress and be of a tasteful style and heel height.**
- **Proper undergarments are required at all times.**
- **Accessories such as earrings, necklaces, rings, and bracelets are allowed.**
- **No visible tattoos or body piercings (except traditional ear piercings) are permitted.**

All attire must be submitted in a video for approval by the pageant director at least two weeks prior to the pageant or as soon as your outfit has been finalized. Clothing that does not adhere to these guidelines will result in a 10-point deduction from your score.

S. CONSENT OF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS: An applicant under eighteen years of age must have signed, notarized permission of her parent or legal guardian to participate in the contest. The signature of the parent or legal guardian on the application will be considered as their consent.

T. DRESSING ROOM TO BE CLOSED: **The dressing room will be closed to everyone except contestants and pageant directors. Rehearsal is closed to everyone except participants and pageant directors.**

U. GIFTS AND OTHER INCENTIVES: The Florida Strawberry Festival® will provide the following gift incentives included, but not limited to:

1. Wardrobe provided for Festival events
2. A crown for the queen
3. Trophies and sashes for each of the five finalists
4. Other gifts and incentives

V. SCHOLARSHIPS TO BE AWARDED: The Plant City Lions Club will provide a \$2,500 scholarship for the 2026 Florida Strawberry Festival® Queen, a \$1500 scholarship for the First Maid, \$1000 scholarships for each of the three court members, and \$500 scholarship for Miss Congeniality 2026. The Florida Strawberry Festival® will offer several scholarships for the 2026 queen and court members over a four year period. The Queen will receive a \$1,400.00 annual scholarship, a \$1,200.00 annual scholarship for the First Maid, and \$1,000.00 annual scholarship for each of the three court members for 2026. The scholarships will be issued to the college of their choice or post secondary education or training facility and they must maintain acceptable grades and GPA upon receipt of official registration.

W. Anyone participating in this contest by way of entry, hereby agrees and consents to the use of any picture of contestant in any or all publications, TV, publicity brochure, internet, etc., that the Florida Strawberry Festival® may desire.

Failure to attend any one of the mandatory meetings listed below may result in disqualification from the contest.

Mandatory Meetings:

***ORIENTATION** - For the 2026 Queen contestants on Sunday, September 14th, 2025 at 3:00 p.m., or Monday, September 15th, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. or Tuesday, September 16th, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the ARTHUR BORING CIVIC CENTER on the Florida Strawberry Festival Grounds. (**Only needs to attend one meeting.**)

***SOCIAL** – Sunday, November 2nd, 2025 at 1:30PM in the Directors Lounge in the Teco Expo Building.

***REHEARSALS** – January 6th , 2026 Arthur Boring Civic Center 6:00PM

January 8th, 2026 Arthur Boring Civic Center 6:00PM

January 13th, 2026 Arthur Boring Civic Center 6:00PM

***PAGEANT REHEARSAL** – Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., Friday, January 16, 2026 at 5:30 p.m., in the Florida Strawberry Festival Grimes Agriculture Arena.

***PAGEANT AND CORONATION NIGHT** - 6 p.m., Saturday, January 17, 2026 in the Florida Strawberry Festival Grimes Agriculture Arena. Contestants must arrive at 5:00 p.m.

FITTINGS AND PREPARATIONS: A Florida Strawberry Festival® representative will be in contact with the new queen and court on the fittings and preparations.

***OTHER EVENTS AS SET BY THE LIONS CLUB PAGEANT COMMITTEE.**

THE COMPETITION

The contestants will be judged on the four divisions of Personal Interview Competition, Public Speaking Competition, Casual Wear and Evening Gown Competition. Of the total points awarded for the above divisions, the following percentages will be awarded:

Personal Interview Competition 25%

Public Speaking Competition 15%

Casual Wear 30%

Evening Gown Competition 30%

No less than four judges will be used for the Pageant. Judges will be chosen from a list of accredited judges.

PHASE ONE: The personal Interview will take place on Saturday, January 17, 2026, (time and place to be announced later). All contestants are required to meet with the judges. The attire for this interview is career dress or coordinates. The same outfit must be worn for the Public Speaking Competition of the pageant. In this division, the contestants will be judged on the personal interview only, with no relation to their other qualifications. The criteria for this division are as follows:

The young lady selected as the Florida Strawberry Festival® Queen will represent the Florida Strawberry Festival® and the City of Plant City, both locally and elsewhere. Her overall appearance and her personality will be observed for desirable traits. She should be able to speak effectively and should be well versed on information concerning the Florida Strawberry Festival®, Strawberry Industry and the City of Plant City. In responding to questions and in discussion of the industry she expects to represent, she should portray sincerity, enthusiasm, friendliness, and congeniality. She should appear to be at ease with adults and should demonstrate a desirable degree of maturity. Because making appearances and speaking or promoting the Florida Strawberry Festival® for a full year will be her responsibility, she should not plan to enter other contests or assume other responsibilities that would conflict with her obligation to the Florida Strawberry Festival®. Finally, she should be of good moral character and should be the kind of young lady whom the Florida Strawberry Festival® and the people of the community would be proud to have represent them.

THE PAGEANT

Florida Strawberry Festival Grounds, Saturday, January 17, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

PHASE TWO: A continuation of the competition begins with this phase. The contestants will be judged on Casual Wear only, with no relation to their other qualifications. The criteria for this division are as follows: --

Casual wear is defined as denim jeans and a top.

In this division, the contestants will be judged on beauty, poise, posture, carriage, stage presence and stage personality.

PHASE THREE: The contestants will now be judged on the Public Speaking Competition only, with no relation to their other qualifications. The attire is to be the same career dress or coordinates as worn in the personal interviews.

- A. In an opening introduction of the contestant and her sponsor, the contestant presents a speech of not more than 30 seconds pertaining to her sponsor. She will be judged, in part, on the effectiveness of her speaking voice, proper grammar and diction over the microphone. (A 1-point deduction will be taken off the score for every second over the allotted time limit).
- B. Stage Presence : Each contestant will be judged on her walk, carriage, general presentation, posture and stage personality.
- C. Overall look on stage: Each contestant will be judged on her beauty, poise, and choice of attire.
- D. No props can be used.

PHASE FOUR: The contestants will be judged on the Evening Gown Competition only, with no relation to their other qualifications. The criteria for this division are as follows:

A. Stage presence: Each contestant will be judged on her walk, carriage, general presentation, posture and stage personality.

B. Overall look on the stage: Each contestant will be judged on her beauty and poise.

The judges will score the contestants separately for each phase of the competition. Neither the judges, chairman, nor auditor should disclose any information concerning the scores. In case of a tie vote in the tabulation of semifinalists, the auditor will inform only the chairman of the judges' committee of the tie vote.

Only the judges will be involved in breaking a tie vote. Neither the judges, the chairman, nor the auditor should disclose any information concerning the tie vote, or the way it was resolved, except as indicated above.

After the ballots have been tabulated and points awarded in each division, the auditor will prepare a list of the names of the ten semifinalists for the first elimination in random order. Contestants are not to be listed in the order of points received.

FINAL ELIMINATION

The 10 semifinalists will now be competing against each other and will be judged on the following criteria:

Impromptu Public Speaking 25%

Overall Look 40%

Stage Presence 35%

Impromptu Public Speaking: The semifinalists will be asked the same impromptu question on her opinion of the Florida Strawberry Festival®, strawberries or Plant City. She will be judged on her ability to speak effectively in public, her speaking voice and her diction over a microphone.

Overall look on the stage: Each contestant will be judged on her beauty, poise and appearance in her gown.

Stage presence: Each contestant will be judged on her walk, carriage, general presentation, posture and stage personality. The judges will score the contestants and record these scores on their ballots. From the judge's tally sheet, the auditor will determine the five finalists who received the highest number of points.

In case of a tie, the scores from the preliminary competition will be used to break the tie. From these finalists, a queen, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th runners-up will be selected according to the highest number of points scored.

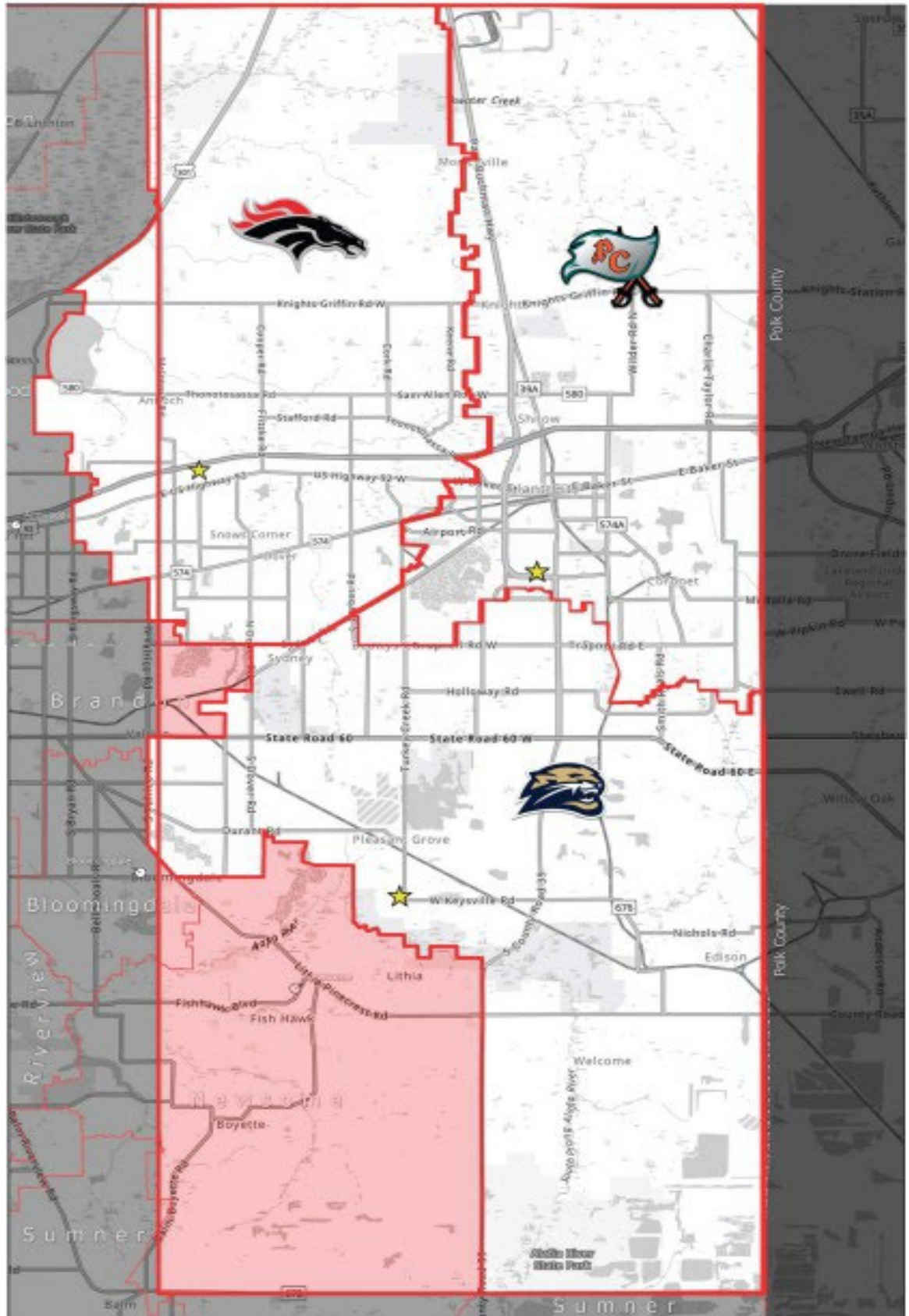
The placement of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th runners-up will not be announced.

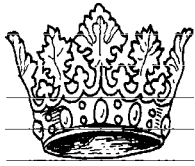
THE CORONATION

The coronation will begin with the abdication of the current queen and court and presentation of the new

queen and court. Immediately after the coronation of the new queen, the auditor will destroy all tally sheets.

BOUNDARY MAP





FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL
2026 QUEEN'S SCHOLARSHIP PAGEANT
Pageant Sponsored by the Plant City Lions Club



DEADLINE: Wednesday, October 1st, 2025 5:00 P.M.

Contestant's application will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis and limited to 35 contestants. Applications must be hand-delivered to Festival Office (Mail-in applications WILL NOT be accepted). Application must be accompanied by a \$25.00 entry fee made payable to Florida Strawberry Festival®, one wallet size photograph, a copy of TECO Bill (proof of residency), and a **PRINTED TRANSCRIPT WITH MOST CURRENT DISTRICT GPASIGNED BY REGISTRAR**

.....

Name _____ Date of Birth _____
first middle last

Home Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Hm Ph# _____ Cell Ph# _____ Other Ph# _____

Email Address _____

Mother's Name _____ Phone _____

Father's Name _____ Phone _____

High School Attendance _____ Junior ☐ Senior ☐ Graduate ☐

College Attendance _____ Year in College _____

Post Secondary Education or Training _____

College Plans/Area of Study _____

High School or College Activities/Clubs (Limit 3) _____

.....

Are you currently involved with a management contract or endorsement of a commodity? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been expelled from school? Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime? Yes _____ No _____

If yes please explain: _____

I hereby acknowledge that I have read the **Official Rules and Regulations** of this Pageant and that I am in compliance. I agree to comply with all rules & regulations set forth in this contract and that the personal information provided by me is correct. I understand that if I am not in compliance I may be subject to disqualification. By signing this application and agreement, if selected, I understand that it is my responsibility to fulfill designated assignments by Florida Strawberry Festival® Board of Directors to include participation in parades and other functions in which I represent the Festival. Further, I hereby agree and consent to the use of any picture of said applicant, in all publications, television, publicity, brochure, etc., that the FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL® may desire. I will not hold the Florida Strawberry Festival® responsible for any injuries, accidents or damages that may occur during said contest. It is understood that all the above information is subject to verification by the Florida Strawberry Festival® and any discrepancies may be cause for elimination from the contest.

The undersigned parent or guardian of the above named applicant, does hereby agree and consent to the use of any picture of said applicant, in all publications, T.V., publicity, brochures, etc. that the Florida Strawberry Festival® may desire. We will not hold the Festival responsible for any injuries, accidents or damages that may occur during said contest. And further, we agree to abide by all rules and regulations as set forth for the Pageant. We certify that the above information is correct as set forth regarding the applicant. It is understood that all information above is subject to verification by the Florida Strawberry Festival® and any discrepancies found may be cause for elimination from the contest.

Signed _____
Applicant's Full Name

Signed _____
Signature of Parent or Guardian

State of Florida

County of _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 20_____
by _____, who is personally known to me or who has produced
_____ as identification.

Signature of Notary

Printed name of Notary

My Commission Expires

(Seal of Notary)