



## COSPLAY CRAFTSMANSHIP COMPETITION 2026

The METROCON Cosplay Craftsmanship Competition is a runway contest show all about costume craftsmanship! All contestants will attend pre-judging the morning of the contest. Our competition will be judged by our Cosplay Special Guests, and they will be looking closely for excellence in cosplay crafting. Craftsmanship contestants will take a turn on stage during the competition to show off their amazing work. Awards will be presented at the end of the show.

### RULES AND REGULATIONS

The cosplay craftsmanship competition & runway show will take place on **Saturday, Aug 1** at the Tampa Bay Convention Center.

All contestants must have a valid pass for **Saturday** of METROCON.

All entrants must fill out an online application form on the METROCON website to be considered. You must use your legal name and information on the application (preferred name will be used onstage). There will be NO onsite applications available at the convention.

Contestants must be age 13+ (please refer to the Junior Cosplay Showcase for entrants 12 and under). Contestants under 18 must be accompanied to the show by a legal adult that is their responsible party (Parent, Guardian, Sibling, Cousin, Teacher, Friend etc.).

Applications will close **May 15, 2026 at 11:59 PM**. Applications are not "first come, first served" but reviewed by a juried process and contestants notified of acceptance or denial by **May 30, 2026**. At this time, applications may reopen if there is still room.

Costumes may not exceed a PG13 rating (at the discretion of the cosplay leadership). Costumes may not be historically or culturally offensive. Please reach out to [cosplay@metroconventions.com](mailto:cosplay@metroconventions.com) with questions regarding this policy.

All props must comply with METROCON prop policy and must be checked for safety prior to entering the convention.

Contestants may not throw anything into the audience or enter the audience during the contest.

All contestants must arrive at check-in **one hour** to the contest start for lineup, staging, and technical checks. All contestants must arrive in costume and stage ready.

Models may be used for costumes; however both the creator and model must be present for pre-judging and the contest (models will walk on alone). Only one set of prizes will be given for awards won.

If a contestant requires assistance getting on a stage, please notify cosplay staff in the application so that reasonable accommodations may be made.

Handlers are allowed for any reason, but cosplay staff must be notified of the handler (including their name) when applying, for the safety of our staff and contestants. Handlers are to adhere to all cosplay rules and policies while in pre-judging or backstage. If alone and needing assistance, please notify staff in the application. For contestants providing their own handler, the handler must have a valid pass to METROCON. Contestants are still required to walk onstage alone.

The results of our judges are binding and final. Harassment of Judges or Cosplay Staff over disagreement of awards will not be tolerated and may result in being banned from future METROCON costume contests. If feedback is desired from judges, please request this after the contest via email to [cosplay@metroconventions.com](mailto:cosplay@metroconventions.com).

METROCON staff reserves the right to disqualify a contestant for misconduct or any reason at their sole discretion.

By submitting an entry, contestants confirm that they have read and agree to all of the rules and regulations of the METROCON Cosplay Craftsmanship Competition, which can be modified until the day of the contest according to the needs of the organization.

Contestants must fill out an application and submit supplemental material as required on the application. Contestants are not required to have finished the costume at time of application.

**The following items are REQUIRED at application and must be submitted per the application instructions as one combined PDF file.**

- Reference images including but not limited to: front of character, back of character, and any prop references.
- Work-in-progress photos
- Examples of previous work (where applicable)

**Optional items that can be submitted:**

- Detailed build plan or build book if already completed.
- Photos of completed costumes.

A build book is required and must be submitted to [cosplay@metroconventions.com](mailto:cosplay@metroconventions.com) by **11:59pm on July 19, 2026** prior to the contest. Build books must NOT exceed 15 pages for individuals, 20 pages for groups, must be in PDF format, and must include reference photos and work in progress photos that include contestants actively participating in the build. Build

books may NOT include links, and must NOT exceed 5MB in size. **You MUST use the following naming convention for your file: stagename.buildbook.craftsmanship26.**

Applications will be accepted based on whether contestants adhere to the rules, costume has been proven to either exist or will exist (to prevent drop-outs) and proven quality for competition.

Contest will be limited to 40 participants.

Groups will be allowed up to 4 participants. Groups will have a singular award and prizes for the entire group. The entire group will be judged in the category of the highest ranked person in the group. Costumes need to be from the same series.

Contestants will be assigned a prejudging time slot on **Saturday, Aug 1, 2026 starting at 9am at the convention center.** Contestants will have 3 minutes for solo entrants and 5 minutes for groups to present their cosplay to guest judges and exchange questions. Late arrivals will be pushed to the back of the line, and may not be judged if time does not allow. No-show contestants may be disqualified from winning awards.

Please arrive at pre-judging in full costume and makeup.

75% of the costume must be hand-made. Generally this means some base materials do not need to be fabricated from scratch such as wigs, shoes, and common accessories. Sourcing premade print files, embroidery files, and otherwise premade patterns is allowed, but will count against your hand-made percentage. More consideration will be given to those that create their own files.

Original designs will be accepted if based on existing source material. Please provide references of the source material and references of the full intended design.

Each contestant may participate in only one entry into the contest.

Costumes that have won any 'Best of' awards in any previous contests at any convention are not permitted, regardless of upgrades or modifications. Contestants **MUST** compete in the costume chosen by the jury at application **UNLESS** it has won a Best in Show award after acceptance into the contest and prior to the convention, or there are other extenuating circumstances evaluated by the Cosplay Department.

Contestants will need to walk up several steps onto the stage and have approximately 20 seconds and 3 poses. METRO has a catwalk-style stage and pose spots will be marked.

Prizes for awards **can** include but are **not limited to**: cash prizes, medals, trophies, METROCON merch, METROCON weekend passes for 2026, vendors room swag, professional photoshoots, and donations of gift cards by sponsors for wigs, makeup, cosplay supplies, and more!

## **CRAFTSMANSHIP JUDGING**

Craftsmanship judging categories are as follows:

- Cleanliness
- Creativity
- Accuracy to reference material
- Technical skills
- Overall look and presentation

**Skill Levels:**

**Novice:** Contestant has won 2 or less major craftsmanship awards.

**Journeyman:** Contestant has won 3-5 major craftsmanship awards.

**Master:** Contestant has won 5+ major craftsmanship awards.

Judges may move a cosplayer into a different category at their discretion due to years of experience, the level of skill, work presented, or if the contestant does costume fabrication in a professional capacity.

**CRAFTSMANSHIP AWARD CATEGORIES** (may include but are not limited to)

- Best in Show
- Best in Show Runner Up
- Best Masters
- Best Journeyman
- Best Novice
- Best Group
- Best Wig
- Best Prop
- Excellence in Armorsmithing
- Excellence in Stitchery
- Excellence in SFX/Makeup
- Judges Awards