SMA
SASKATCHEWAN
MUSIC AWARDS

2027 GUIDELINES

SaskMusic will honour excellence and celebrate the achievements of our music industry members with the **2027 Saskatchewan Music Awards**. The awards will be held in Saskatoon on **Saturday, February 20, 2027.**

The following are the rules and eligibility criteria. Updates for clarification may be made to these guidelines throughout the submission period; always refer to the most recent version posted.

If you require assistance in completing your submission, please contact our office well before the deadline at 306-347-0676 (toll-free in Saskatchewan at 1-800-347-0676) or email smainfo@saskmusic.org.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE MIDNIGHT CST NOVEMBER 17, 2026

This year's categories are:

Artistic Awards

- Afrobeats Artist of the Year
- Children's Artist of the Year
- Classical or Broadway Artist of the Year
- Country Artist of the Year
- Electronic Artist of the Year
- Hip Hop Artist of the Year
- Inspirational or Spiritual Artist of the Year
- Instrumental or Ambient Artist of the Year
- Jazz or Blues Artist of the Year
- Metal or Hard Rock Artist of the Year
- R&B Artist of the Year
- Rock Artist of the Year
- Pop Artist of the Year
- Roots or Folk Artist of the Year
- Indigenous Music Makers: Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year
- Indigenous Music Makers: Traditional Indigenous Artist/Group of the Year

- Single of the Year
- Music Video of the Year
- Graphic Piece of the Year
- Album of the Year
- Live Artist of the Year

Industry Awards

- Community Impact Award
- Music Company or Organization of the Year
- Music Professional of the Year
- Producer of the Year
- Venue or Festival of the Year
- Indigenous Music Achievement Award

OVERALL ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA

Residency

- For artistic categories, the artist (or in the case of a band, at least 50% of its regular/core members) must meet **Saskatchewan residency** criteria as follows:
    - **Currently live in Saskatchewan?** The potential nominee resides in Saskatchewan as of November 13, 2026, and has resided here **since at least January 1, 2026**. If you are temporarily located out of the province for post-secondary study, performance opportunities, or other professional work, but maintain a primary residence in Saskatchewan and still self-identify as being from Saskatchewan, you are eligible.
    - **Recently moved away from Saskatchewan?** A potential nominee who was residing in Saskatchewan during the eligibility period, but has moved out of Saskatchewan sometime **after April 1, 2026,** will still qualify. Exception: for **Live Artist of the Year:** the artist must have lived in Saskatchewan for at least 75% of that category's eligibility window, and **Album of the Year** (see category details).

  We reserve the right to request proof of residency of either 1) 2025 tax filing indicating you paid taxes as a Saskatchewan resident; and/or 2) ID including any of the following: a current Saskatchewan Health Services card, a current Saskatchewan driver's license, a student ID card indicating registration in a Saskatchewan educational facility, or a Status Indian card. Alternate methods of verification may be accepted at the discretion of staff.
- For industry nominees, incorporated bands, business, organizations etc, the company must be prepared to demonstrate residency upon request.
- Where eligibility due to residency or band formation is in dispute (e.g. *is this nominee a solo artist who hires side players*, or *is this nominee a band*), we may request more information, and the final decision shall be made by the jury of the category.

Song Submissions

- Where songs are a required part of your artistic submission, at least 2 of 3 songs must be original ('original' means written by the artist themselves, OR, the song has not already been released by another artist and has been appropriately licensed by the artist submitting). Where 2 songs are required, at least 1 of the 2 songs must be original. Exceptions will be made for: Album of the Year; Classical or Broadway Artist of the Year; and submissions of traditional blues; traditional Indigenous; or traditional jazz genres, where 'cover' and traditional songs are typical.
- Where 2 or 3 songs are required with artistic submissions, remixes or alternate versions do not count as separate songs. *(e.g. An album version, radio edit, and acoustic version are the same song, and only the (one) version that you choose to submit for the jury would count towards your song requirements.)*
- Remixes or alternate versions of a song may only stand as one of the artists' qualifying song releases if the artist was not nominated using a version of that same song in a previous awards cycle.

Other General Guidelines

- **Collaborations:** In the case of a duet/collaboration where there is a 'Featured Artist' or one-time duo, credit will go to the main artist (not the featured artist) listed on the track/album. In the event of a track with equal billing, each artist could use the track as one of their own qualifying song submissions. In the event of two collaborators independently making their own submissions using substantially the same material, we reserve the right to contact the submitters and merge them into a joint submission. (eg if John Smith submits 3 songs that state *Featuring Amy Jackson*, and Amy Jackson submits the same 3 songs that state *Featuring John Smith*, they should apply jointly as artist "John Smith and Amy Jackson."
- **Language:** All categories are open to non-English language submissions. Copies of non-English language lyrics translated into English would be appreciated for the benefit of the jury.
- **Minimum submissions:** Where category nominees are determined through a jury process, there must be a minimum of **4 nominees** recommended by the jury in order for that award to be presented in the current year. (The exception is the Indigenous Music Achievement Award, for which only the honouree is named.)

- **Genre:** Each artist/project will be able to stand as a nominee in **one** genre-based category. During the submission process, applicant will be asked to select their main, and backup genre categories. If there are insufficient submissions to proceed with a genre category, the artist's submission may be moved into their backup choice. Staff will not pick your main genre for you.
- **Code of Conduct:** All applicants must consent to SaskMusic's Code of Conduct, posted here: https://www.saskmusic.org/about-us/code-of-conduct. Individuals/businesses found to be operating/behaving in a manner that contradicts the Code are subject to removal from nomination consideration. This applies to individuals previously found to be in breach of the Code by SaskMusic, as well as those found to be in breach during or after the nomination period by a Code of Conduct review committee.
- **Authority:** SaskMusic reserves the right to disqualify an applicant or submission for failing to meet any of the guidelines noted herein, and to amend these guidelines as they deem appropriate.
- **Entry:** There are no submission fees.
- We are aware that due to the period of time elapsing since our last Awards in 2025, most of the 2027 awards categories will cover activities happening over a period of two years. We are still using the language "**of the Year** 2027" for consistency across the awards over time.

Release Date

Unless otherwise noted, a release date is defined as:

- The **first available date that the material is widely available**, in that it can be purchased by the general public, and/or streamed legally in its entirety on a royalty-generating music service. The primary source used to verify the release date shall be Apple Music; secondary verification methods will be accepted at the discretion of SaskMusic. Demonstration versions or live performances of songs, such as artist live streams on TikTok, would not be considered an official single release.
- A **single** is considered released on the day the single itself or the album on which it is on is **first made available for public consumption** as described above, **or** the date the track was submitted to Canadian radio as a single, using the earliest date. The primary sources used to determine 'date of release to radio' are DMDS and !earshot Distro, but other third-party forms of verification (ie radio tracker contract, media release, etc) will be considered.

Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in creative submissions

AI-generated music is music that is created with artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in its creation (composition) or production. AI systems use algorithms and machine learning techniques to analyze vast amounts of existing music data and generate content based on patterns, styles, and structures found in the data. Generative AI has broadly been trained on the intellectual property of artists without their knowledge or consent. It can be impossible to attribute credit to the original copyright owners of art used in AI derivative works.

AI **tools** may be used in a limited manner in eligible projects, but generative AI cannot be a primary or core component. Human(s) must be the primary creative contributor(s) of all submitted work(s). Where AI is used, it must be done so in an innovative/creative way that enhances the human art but does not replace human contributions. The completed work must be original and copyrightable* by a human at the time of submission. (**With the exception where pre-existing cover songs are acceptable submissions.*)

- Ineligible:
    - Where the lead or another primary vocal in a song has been generated by AI;
    - Where a lead or another prominent instrument in a song has been generated by AI;
    - Where lyrics and/or melody were AI-generated in whole or in part (as opposed to being used only as inspiration towards a final original lyric or melody).
- Eligible: where AI has been implemented as an editing tool/effect or for mastering.
- For the music video category:
    - The song used in the video must be eligible considering the above;
    - Any AI-generated visual elements or voiceovers do not infringe on the voice or likeness of a human actor and are not foundational elements of the video;
    - Any underlying art used in generative AI can be properly attributed and credited. (e.g. original visuals created for the video could be further manipulated using generative AI);

- AI tools may be utilized in the editing process.

AI-generated elements must be disclosed within the category submission. Staff may follow up to request further information on AI usage at our discretion. Final decisions on AI eligibility of a submission will be at the discretion of SaskMusic. Any nominated content later found to be in breach of these guidelines will have their recognition revoked.

Staff and Board Conflicts

As per SaskMusic's policies, SaskMusic staff and board members are eligible to submit for nomination as long as they have no involvement or influence in the jury selection nor tabulations for their submitted category(ies). Care is taken to ensure that any such applicants do not have access to information about other submissions or the category jurors, nor receive any benefits that are not made available to all other category applicants. Intent to submit to category(ies) is disclosed by staff at the time of submissions opening, so that they can be removed from discussions around and work processes for that category.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Nominees may nominate themselves, or be nominated by a manager/label/third party.

ARTISTIC Guidelines

Artistic: Artist of the Year by Genre Categories

The following genre-based categories will be determined through evaluation of the **Artistic Merit** of the music submitted (75%), as well as the **artist's activities and achievements** provided to us (25%). It is up to the person submitting the nomination to ensure that the nomination submission is complete, including the written components. The nominees and the winner in each category will be determined through the process described farther below.

Artists may become a nominee in one genre category only. Submitters will be asked to identify a main genre, and backup choice of genre. The second choice will be utilized only if there are not enough submissions to mount your first choice of category; applicants in this case would have the option to move into their secondary category, **or** to extend their qualification for their first choice forward to the next occurring SMAs. Please note: if your main choice of category does not proceed, there is no guarantee your second category will have enough submissions to proceed either.

All genre categories are **broadly defined - pick the closest genre to your musical style.** There are no sales qualifications for these categories.

Musical submissions are required for a category nomination. **3 tracks** must be provided that have been commercially released (made available to the public) during the period of **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026.** Apple Music and other providers will be used to verify the release date. Information about the artist's achievements is mandatory and must refer to the same time period, including career highlights such as show dates/online concerts, streaming/social statistics, sync placements, other award recognition, etc. We may request additional information or independently verify the information contained in your artist information. We will also request a promotional **photo** that we may use if you become a nominee.

An artist who was a final nominee for the 2025 Saskatchewan Music Awards cannot submit the same song(s) for consideration in this cycle, *even if the material would qualify based on release date.*

- **Afrobeats Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to Afrobeats, Afrobeat, Afro-electronic, Afro-fusion, Amapiano, Afro-pop, Afrohouse, Afro-soul, Alte, HighLife and all Afro-influenced genres and styles.
- **Children's Artist of the Year:** Artists creating music intended for children under the age of 12. Production and songwriting quality, creativity, and development of or impact on the listener will be considered. The artist information submitted should include information on how you are representing and marketing yourself as a Children's Music artist (community engagement with families, show or live stream notes, social media channels, etc).

- **Classical or Broadway Artist of the Year:** Artists working in musical styles including but not limited to theatrical productions; public domain classical music including baroque, classical, romantic, and modern-era; and new classical or theatrical compositions. *Artists performing instrumentally may either choose this, or the Instrumental category as their main genre category.*
- **Country Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to mainstream and traditional country.
- **Electronic Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to dance, electronica, and instrumental electronic.
- **Hip Hop Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to hip hop, rap, and urban R&B.
- **Inspirational or Spiritual Artist of the Year:** Artists whose music incorporates faith-centred lyrics (including Gospel artists), inspirational or positive messaging, and/or with spirituality as their primary context or theme. The artist information provided should include how you are representing and marketing yourself as a faith-based, inspirational or spiritual artist, ie how the artist and music is marketed, live performance/festival appearances, and fan communications.
- **Instrumental or Ambient Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to acoustic instrumental, trip hop, chillout, original score, and others.
- **Jazz or Blues Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to experimental jazz, jazz rock, neo-jazz, traditional or contemporary blues, and related genres.
- **Metal or Hard Rock Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to all forms of metal, hard rock, noise rock, punk, heavy alternative, and heavy instrumental.
- **R&B Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to soul, funk, and R&B.
- **Rock Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to those considered to be mainstream or alternative rock, rock blends and sub-genres.
- **Pop Artist of the Year:** Artists working in genres including but not limited to those considered to be mainstream or alternative pop, synth pop, alt pop, dream pop, K pop and adult contemporary.
- **Roots or Folk Artist of the Year:** Genres including but not limited to roots, folk, singer/songwriter, and Americana.

How Artist of the Year by genre is determined

1. Nomination submissions are checked for completeness and eligibility by SaskMusic.

2. Submissions are presented to a panel of industry jurors who decide, by an assignment of marks, a ranking of the submissions. This ranking determines the number of nominees presented in each category. Submissions are determined through evaluation of the **Artistic Merit** of the music submitted (75%), as well as the **artist's activities and achievements** provided (25%).

3. Winner is determined by these same jury marks. If ties occur in the final jury marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

4. A unique panel of jurors is assembled for each juried category, so while jurors may evaluate more than one category, no two categories will have the same exact panel of jurors. Jurors are knowledgeable industry professionals of various gender identities, industry experience, and geographical locations (from both inside and outside Saskatchewan) to maximize impartiality and appropriate music experience.

All jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias.

Artistic: Indigenous Music Makers

These two categories provide additional recognition for self-identifying Indigenous artists who make music in any genre. They are intended to celebrate and elevate Indigenous artists across all genres, highlighting their contributions to Canada's music landscape.

Solo artists must self-identify as Inuit, First Nations, or Métis. For groups, at least 50% of regular members must identify as Inuit, First Nations, or Métis. SaskMusic's Indigenous Advisory may be consulted to confirm category eligibility.

For these two categories, submission requirements are:

- **2 songs** for the jury to consider. Songs must have been made available to the public during the period of **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026.** in any format, including: digital platforms (ie Apple Music, Bandcamp, Spotify, etc), music videos (ie YouTube), and/or on a physical release.
- Artist information that informs the jury of career achievements, impact, and artistic journey during the eligibility period.
- A promotional **photo** we can use should you become a nominee.

The following two categories will be determined through evaluation of the **Artistic Merit** of the music submitted (75%), as well as the **artist's activities and achievements** provided (25%). It is up to the person submitting the nomination to ensure that the nomination submission is complete, including the written components. The nominees and the winner in each category will be determined by a jury of industry members and peers who participate in the Indigenous music industry, from both inside and outside of Saskatchewan.

Indigenous artists may apply to one of the genre-based Artist of the Year categories above (meeting criteria detailed above for the category) **as well as** to either the Contemporary Indigenous or Traditional Indigenous Artist/Group of the Year category. Genre categories and Indigenous Artist categories are evaluated independently by separate juries. Nomination or selection outcomes in one category do not affect consideration or marks in another.

- **Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year:** This category will recognize Indigenous artists and groups performing in any contemporary music style, as well as genre-blending and crossover works.
- **Traditional Indigenous Artist of the Year:** This category will recognize Indigenous artists and groups performing in traditional Indigenous forms of music (including but not limited to Pow Wow, Round Dance, Hand Drum, Flute, Métis fiddle music, Inuit throat singing, and unaccompanied singing in Indigenous languages of Turtle Island.
  It may also include artists creating music that heavily incorporates elements of traditional instrumentation, rhythms, and/or Indigenous languages within contemporary or fusion styles. Songs submitted for this category may include Traditional songs, and/or original compositions recorded in a Traditional style.

How Indigenous Artist of the Year categories are determined

1. Nomination submissions are checked for completeness and eligibility by SaskMusic.

2. Submissions are presented to a panel of industry jurors who decide, by an assignment of marks, a ranking of the submissions. This ranking determines the number of nominees presented in each category. Submissions are determined through evaluation of the **Artistic Merit** of the music submitted (75%), as well as the **artist's activities and achievements** provided (25%).

3. Winner is determined by these same jury marks. If ties occur in the final jury marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

4. A unique panel of jurors is assembled for each juried category, so while jurors may evaluate more than one category, no two categories will have the same exact panel of jurors.

Jurors for these categories are industry members and peers who participate in the Indigenous music industry in Canada, from both inside and outside of Saskatchewan, representing various gender identities, types of industry experience, and geographical locations (from both inside and outside Saskatchewan) to maximize impartiality and appropriate music experience. All jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias.

Artistic: Single of the Year

Single of the Year will recognize the top commercial Saskatchewan song of the year released during the period of **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026** (*see definition of 'release,' above*). If a single was released BEFORE the current eligibility period (ie: a pre-album release single that was sent to radio), that single will be considered ineligible for this category, even if an album containing it was later released during the current eligibility period. Singles that were nominated in 2025 cannot become nominees again this year, even if they are eligible based on dates. While the artist must meet residency requirements (see general criteria above), the song can be written by the artist, or written or co-written by a non-Saskatchewan songwriter. The award is presented to the artist.

This category is not juried. The nominees and winners of this category shall be determined solely based upon a numerical calculation of industry data to determine the artist with the largest outcome of said metrics for a single during the reporting period beginning closest to November 1, 2024 and up to the time of category calculations post-deadline, including: Canadian airplay, digital song downloads, and streaming obtained through our data provider(s); as well as consideration of Spotify overall streaming and YouTube video views. It is the responsibility of the artist to ensure their data is available through industry data portals such as Mediabase (for commercial airplay tracking) and, to ensure their single is not overlooked, to submit it for consideration in this category.

Artistic: Music Video of the Year

Music Video of the Year: This category recognizes an exceptional music video officially made available for public viewing during the period of **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026** (for example: uploaded to YouTube or posted to a public artist profile/website).

- The video must be a **minimum of 90 seconds in length**, and must have received **at least 500 views** on YouTube and/or its primary viewing location, by the deadline of November 13, 2026.
- The award will go to the nominated director, filmmaker, producer, or production company, as named in the nomination submission. If the Artist performing the song is submitted as a nominee or co-nominee, they must have made significant contributions to the video-making process, aside from being the performer of the song, appearing in the video, and/or financing the project.
- The nominee(s) must meet residency criteria (see above); in the case of multiple names submitted in connection to a video, at least 50% of those listed must meet residency (or if a corporation, its legal head office must be in Saskatchewan). The artist performing the song does **not** need to meet Saskatchewan residency requirements.
- Up to three entries may be submitted for each potential nominee, but a maximum of two videos per nominee (their two videos receiving the highest marks from the jury) would be eligible for inclusion on the final nomination list.
- All videos in consideration must be available for public viewing and be for the purpose of supporting a song. (Spoken word videos will not be accepted into this category.)
- Any style of video may be submitted, including but not limited to: lyric videos, live concert videos, rehearsal space-style 'raw' videos, full storyboard videos, etc.
- The song must be original (written by the artist themselves) OR, not previously released by another artist and appropriately licensed by the artist submitting. Exceptions will be made for: classical; traditional blues; traditional Indigenous; and traditional jazz genres.
- Music videos that were nominated in the 2025 SMAs cannot become nominees again this year, even if they are eligible under other criteria.
- Final nominees and the winner results are based on artistic merit, without regard to the amount of views/plays the video may have garnered.

How Music Video of the Year is determined

1. Nomination submissions are checked for completeness and eligibility by SaskMusic.

2. A preliminary committee of industry professionals pre-screens all submissions received in this category. The top submissions, to a maximum of 40, proceed to jury. This step is due to the large volume of submissions received for the category (typically over 100).

3. The top submissions go forward to a jury of Canadian film/TV directors and music industry peers. Final nominees and the winner in this category will be determined by the jury, by an assignment of marks based on artistic merit. The jury ranking determines the number of nominees presented for the category. All jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for

which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias. A unique panel of jurors is assembled for each juried category, so while jurors may evaluate more than one category, no two categories will have the same exact panel of jurors.

4. Winner is determined by these same jury marks. If ties occur in the final jury marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

Artistic: Graphic Piece of the Year

(New for 2027) Graphic Piece of the Year: This category will recognize an exceptional visual piece created in support of a music project that was manufactured, designed, released, or intended for release between **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026.** For the purposes of this category, a submitted piece does not need to have been commercially released. For example, an album cover concept that was created and pitched as a potential release design, but was not selected as the final artwork, remains eligible for submission, as long as consent is obtained from any affiliated artists/companies for whom the work was created.

The award will go to the creator of the work ("visual artist"). The visual artist must meet general residency criteria (above). The music artist or business for whom the piece was created does not need to meet Saskatchewan residency requirements.

- Up to three entries may be submitted for each potential nominee, but a maximum of the top two pieces per nominee (their two entries receiving the highest marks from the jury) would be eligible for inclusion on the final nomination list.
- Eligible submissions include, but are not limited to:
    - Album and single artwork
    - Concert and event posters
    - Artist, band, or music business branding, logos, and visual identities
    - Merchandise designs, including apparel, hats, stickers, and similar product (submitted as photographs or visuals of the physical item)
    - Handbills, lanyards, or other promotional items created for an artist or music business
    - A collection of related materials may be submitted as a single entry. For example, a visual identity applied to merch, promotional materials, and signage may be submitted as one body of work. However, this is optional; only one piece is required per entry.
- All elements incorporated into the submitted work must be appropriately licensed, commissioned, or cleared for use. For example, any photographs, illustrations, fonts, or other third-party assets must be used with proper permission.
- Pieces incorporating generative artificial intelligence at any stage of the final creative **output** are **ineligible**. This includes, but is not limited to, AI-generated imagery, backgrounds, characters, typography, and other compositional elements. eg use of assistive AI tools such as a background remover would be acceptable; but using generative AI to create a new background would not.

How Graphic Piece of the Year is determined

1. Nomination submissions are checked for completeness and eligibility by SaskMusic.

2. Submissions are presented to a panel of jurors consisting of graphic artists and music industry professionals from both inside and outside of Saskatchewan, based on the artistic merit of the piece submitted. This ranking determines the number of nominees presented in each category.

3. Winner is determined by these same jury marks. If ties occur in the final jury marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

4. All jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias. Jurors are knowledgeable graphic artists and music industry professionals of various gender identities, industry experience, and geographical locations (from both inside and outside Saskatchewan) to maximize impartiality and appropriate music experience.

Artistic: Album of the Year

Album of the Year considers the musical merit of an album as a whole package, without consideration of its commercial success, released during the period of **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026.** This is a submission-based category. Artists/labels are invited to submit releases in any genre for consideration.

A major change for this category for the 2027 cycle: A public vote will not be held to determine a portion of the final marks. Rather, the winner will solely be decided by jury.

To be considered in this category, an album:

- Is **a) at least 25 minutes in length, or**
  b) at least 5 tracks and at least 18 minutes in length.
- Was first released to the public for sale or streaming between **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026.** The primary verification for the release date will be its date of release on Apple Music. If album is not listed on Apple Music, we'll accept other confirmations of "release date" and "commercial release" at our discretion. The album must still be available to the public for sale or streaming as of the submission deadline (November 13, 2026) in order to qualify ('fanclub-only' limited releases are ineligible).
- **Special residency rules for this category:** An album will qualify if it was released by an artist who primarily resided in Saskatchewan **at the date of the album's release**, regardless of where the artist is living at the time of the submission deadline. This reflects consideration that essential processes behind the album's creation (songwriting, recording, etc) have likely occurred while the artist was residing in Saskatchewan. Artists who were temporarily out of the province for study, performance opportunities, or other professional work at the time of the album's release, as long as they maintain(ed) a primary residence in Saskatchewan and self-identified as being from Saskatchewan, would qualify.

  Proof of residency may be requested at the discretion of staff, including a tax filing indicating you paid taxes as a Saskatchewan resident for that period, and/or other documentation.
- A maximum of two albums per artist name will be accepted into this category. Collaborations/featured appearances by an artist do not count towards the artist's maximum. e.g. an artist could submit 2 albums that were released under their own name, and 1 album released by a band that they are also part of.
- Official reissues/remixes/compilations of previously released material, released as a new package with a new UPC number, will only be considered if 3 or more previously unreleased/new songs are included in the package.
- Albums that made the short list of albums (nominees) in a previous SMA year will not be in consideration this year, even if reissued and even if they qualify in other regards.

How Album of the Year is determined

1) The awards intake will collect eligible releases for consideration. Submissions are checked for completeness and eligibility by SaskMusic.

2) Qualifying albums will be divided into pools with similar genres, and distributed to multiple jury panels consisting of industry professionals and peers with knowledge of those genres. All jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias. Juror pools include various gender identities, types of industry experience, and geographical locations both inside and outside Saskatchewan to maximize impartiality and appropriate music experience.

   Jurors will listen to the qualifying albums and evaluate them based on songwriting, quality of musical performance, production quality appropriate for the genre, and overall theme/flow of the album. Scores from the jury process will be used to determine a Long List. The number of albums included on the Long List will be determined based on jury scores.
   For albums consisting primarily of non-original or traditional material - where the songwriting mark is not applicable - greater weight will be assigned to the other decision markers so that these albums are not disadvantaged in the adjudication process.

3) The Long List will then be distributed to jurors for a further round of voting. This round will determine the short list (nominees).

4) The nominees will be announced. This nominee announcement may take place at a later time than other SMA category nominees, due to the multiple stages of juries. The top-ranked album as determined through this jury process will receive the SMA for Album of the Year. If ties occur in the final jury marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

Artistic: Live Artist of the Year

Eligibility period for this category only: October 15, 2025-October 15, 2026

Live Artist of the Year will recognize an artist who, during the eligibility period, delivered exceptional live music performances and built connections with their audience. Given the challenge of adjudicating a whole body of live performances taking place in many different physical locations over a year, the winner will be determined through a combination of data, jury, and public vote. This category is open to any artist – from solo to full bands, and whether original, cover/tribute or DJ – who meeting the baseline criteria of having performed at least of 15 performances over the eligibility period under one artist name.

The evaluation points for this category are intended to recognize artists who are musically strong, play frequently, and are making efforts to engage their audience during and beyond their live shows. The jury process serves as a quality check; combined with show data and fan engagement, the artist's overall scores should reflect an impactful live artist.

What does 'under one artist name' mean? The name on the bill/booking contract is consistent or substantially consistent, and the repertoire performed is similar – just with different/more players. For example, "Paul James" (original solo folk artist) and "The Paul James Band" (when he brings a 4-piece band) would count as one artist for this category. Whereas "Paul James" (original solo folk artist) and "The Memphis Project" (a blues cover band he sings lead in) would be considered two different artists for this category, and could be entered as 2 separate submissions, provided each had enough bookings under their name to qualify.

Number of live show bookings in the eligibility window: The count of individual bookings and/or calendar dates. For example: A booking for Friday and Saturday night at a club counts as 2 dates. A Friday where you did a private breakfast gig for a company in the morning, and then a bar set that night, counts as 2 bookings. A showcase festival where you played 3 different times at 3 different venues over the course of the festival counts as 3.

Types of shows that are counted: All sizes of solo to band performances of all types in coffee shops, house concerts, live music venues, weddings, DJ events, festivals, and showcases, whether the event was open to public attendance or not, and regardless of whether the event had an admission cost or not. Additionally, live performances broadcast on radio (e.g. playing live on air) and TV (e.g. the first date recording show filmed in-studio, intended for broadcast – such as Telemiracle – regardless of whether an audience was present in the room or not) are eligible. Live concert streams hosted by someone other than the artist are eligible.

Shows that are not eligible for the count:

- Open mic and busking performances where the artists are unpaid, and where artists are not promoted by individual name in advance. If the show was promoted – meaning a fan could see your name on the bill, and choose to attend specifically to see you – it is eligible.
- Workshop presentations where the speaker may or may not perform a song.
- Self-hosted online performances, including social media livestreams.

As it's the first year offering this category, SaskMusic reserves the right to determine eligibility on scenarios not covered above, and clarify these decisions in guideline updates.

A show list similar to the following will be required with your submission:

Date	**Venue/City** **(or: house concert; or corporate event)**	**Solo/duo or band**	**Type of show:** - set on a multi-artist bill - single song - concert (headliner) - festival (non mainstage) - festival (mainstage) - official showcase (you're in the program) - unofficial showcase - live on air song/set
July 1	The Exchange, Regina	Band	Set on multi-artist bill
July 10	Corporate event, Delta Hotel Saskatoon	Solo/duo	Concert
July 11	Breakfast TV, Calgary	Band	Live on air
July 11	Somewhere Folk Festival, Calgary	Band	Festival mainstage

How Live Artist of the Year is determined

Live Performance Reel (Mandatory) – 30% of possible mark - Determined by jury
A video (or separate videos) of at least 5 minutes and no more than 12 minutes in total length, showcasing a live performance of the artist. No significant post audio editing should have been done to the video(s) – e.g. post mixing is fine, but pitch correction or beat quantizing is not. The video should have clear enough audio to give a sense of the live sound of the artist, including the vocals if applicable, and various instruments. Jury will be looking for overall musical/artistic excellence and stagecraft. The technical quality of the video is not important, as long as the audio is clean enough to get a feel of the performance. In the absence of a video shot at a performance with an audience present, this may be a video taken during a rehearsal.

Performance/Show List (Mandatory) – 65% of possible mark - calculation
Number, type, location etc of performance dates during the period. Artist will have performed a minimum of 15 performances in the eligibility period under one artist name to be eligible to submit. An administrative score will be awarded based on number, type, location etc of shows (ie a single festival date will receive more administrative points than a single song performance). Thus the highest scoring will not necessarily be the artist with the highest number of performance dates overall. We reserve the right to independently confirm the information provided by looking for public show promotions or contacting venues/bookers.

Supporting References (Mandatory) – 5% of possible mark - Determined by jury
2-3 letters in support of a nomination from event bookers/presenters/venues or other industry professionals. In absence of a letter of support, a screenshot of public post by a third party recognizing the artist's performance (venue/festival/event presenter/media outlet) may be provided.

Artist biography (Mandatory) – For information purposes for the jury
Artist will submit a biography and list any additional career highlights, to provide context to the jury and public. No points are allocated for this section; it is for information purposes.

Audience Impact (Optional) – maximum 10% bonus - Determined by jury
We recognize not all live performing artists will have social media followers, an email fan list, and/or merch sales. This section will be optional, but will allow for additional points to be accrued by the artist. Information submitted in this section will be provided to the jury, who may assign additional points as they see fit.

For examples with hypothetical artists, please see the website.

Round 1: Jury + Admin Score
Jury will consider submitted materials and allocate points as noted above. A data calculation of the performance list will be done by SaskMusic staff, as noted above. These two marks will together determine the nominee list. The maximum any artist can receive in round 1 is 100 points. Category jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias. Jurors are knowledgeable peers and music industry professionals of various gender identities, industry experience, and geographical locations both inside and outside Saskatchewan to maximize impartiality and appropriate music experience.

Round 2: Public Voting
The nominee list will be distributed for public vote. One fan vote per verified email will be allowed for the duration of the voting period.

Public votes will then be weighted and converted into a score out of 20 points. The nominee who receives the highest number of public votes will receive the full 20 points. All other nominees will receive a proportional score based on their share of the highest vote total.

Example:

- Artist X receives the highest number of votes: 500 votes = 20 points
- Artist Y receives 250 votes (50% of Artist X's total) = 10 points
- Artist Z receives 375 votes (75% of Artist X's total) = 15 points

This weighted system ensures that public voting contributes up to 20 points toward the nominee's overall score, while preserving the relative difference in support between nominees.

Round 3 (Tallies)
Round 1 marks will be converted to a score out of 80, which is combined with the fan vote (up to 20 points) for a total potential score of 100. Winner is determined by this total. If ties occur in the final marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

INDUSTRY: Guidelines

The following categories refer to a period of work from **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026.**

NEW for 2027: Applicants to **Community Impact, Music Company or Organization**, or **Music Professional** may only submit into **one** of those categories. By "applicant" we mean the potential nominee being named and who would receive the award.

Individuals may be submitted into one category, while the company/organization they work for may be submitted in another. The information provided for evaluation must be unique and appropriate to each category/submission and unique to each applicant.

For example, a music teacher employed by ABC Music School may be nominated as Music Professional of the Year, while the school may be nominated in Music Company or Organization of the Year, as the potential nominee name is different for each category.

Further: studios owned/operated by sole producers may only submit in one of these three categories: **Music Company or Organization, Music Professional,** or **Producer of the Year**.

One type of exception will be made: Producers who have a significantly different role in addition to music production can submit under Producer, and also Music Professional or Community Impact, depending on the nature of the other role. For example, if the Producer is also a music publicist. The information provided in each submission must be specific to that role and category and not overlap.

Community Impact Award (formerly called the **Industry Achievement Award**): This category recognizes individuals and organizations helping to strengthen the music community of Saskatchewan. Their work or volunteerism has contributed momentum to the scene and has created new opportunities for performance, provided support for equity-deserving artists/industry members, and/or provided services serving the wider good. Potential nominees can include individuals, groups, or organizations, and submissions should be focused on how their role supports the music industry, and their **community impact,** specifically providing information about their activities over the period **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026**. Up to 3 statements of support may be submitted but are optional. The nominee must reside in and pay taxes in Saskatchewan, however, the scope of their work can be national and/or international. Venues and festivals are not eligible in this category, as they may submit in Venue or Festival of the Year.

Music Company or Organization of the Year: This category recognizes a music business, organization or company that has demonstrated excellence in sales, services, or craftsmanship in their offerings to the public and/or music industry over the period **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026**. The physical address of the company nominated must be in Saskatchewan, or the company must pay taxes in Saskatchewan, although their clientele can be national and/or international in scope. Venues and festivals are not eligible in this category, as they may submit in Venue or Festival of the Year.

Eligible nominees in this category may include but are not limited to:

- Booking agencies
- Instrument manufacturers
- Music equipment stores (if a chain, individual locations)
- Music schools
- Production companies
- Recording studios

Music Professional of the Year: This category recognizes an **individual** demonstrating excellent sales, service, or skills over the period **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026**. Potentially nominees could be self-employed, or an outstanding employee at a company. This category highlights individual talent, assistance and/or engagement with the music community of Sask. Producers are not eligible in this category, as they may submit in Producer of the Year. Information on their activities over the period must be included with the submission. Up to 3 statements of support may be submitted, but are optional.

Eligible nominees in this category might include but are not limited to:

- Accountants with demonstrated music industry clientele
- Artist managers
- Booking Agents
- Event coordinators/planners
- Freelance musicians
- Instrument makers, eg luthiers
- Lighting techs
- Mastering professionals
- Media personnel who cover entertainment/music
- Music lawyers
- Music teachers of all kinds, including post secondary educators
- Promoters
- Publicists
- Sound engineers, whether studio or live

Venue or Festival of the Year: This category will recognize live music venues and music festivals that celebrated and presented live music during the period of **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026**. The performances must have been presented in Saskatchewan. The category will consider both in-person shows/events, and alternate programming initiatives from the presenter over the period. as well as excellence in artistic direction and community engagement. Qualifying nominees will provide a list of at least 10 artists they presented during the period that demonstrate an intention toward gender and cultural equity, and a description of their achievements over the period. A history of fair payment to and equitable treatment of artists is a pre-requisite of nominees.

How Community Impact, Music Company or Organization, Music Professional, and Venue or Festival of the Year are determined

1. Nomination submissions are checked for completeness and eligibility by SaskMusic.

2. Submissions are presented to a panel of industry jurors who decide, by an assignment of marks, a ranking of the submissions. This ranking determines the number of nominees presented in each category. Jurors are knowledgeable industry professionals of various gender identities, industry experience, and geographical locations (from both inside and outside Saskatchewan) to maximize impartiality and appropriate music experience.

A unique panel of jurors is assembled for each juried category, so while jurors may evaluate more than one category, no two categories will have the same exact panel of jurors. All jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias.

3. The list of nominees is presented to the public for voting. Public votes may come from anyone in the world, and will be limited to one vote over the entire voting period, per unique and validated email address.

4. The winner will be determined through a combination of jury marks (50% weight) and public voting (50% weight). If ties occur in the final tally of marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

Producer of the Year: This award will recognize excellence in music production by a producer residing in Saskatchewan, who was the credited producer for a submitted project(s) released during the period of **November 1, 2024-November 1, 2026**. A song producer (or record producer) guides the overall creative, technical, and logistical process of turning a raw musical idea or song into a finished, polished recording.

Nominees can be submitted individually, as a cast of producers, or a combination of producer and studio name. In the case of co-productions, co-producers would stand collectively; all team members in this case must meet residency requirements. The artist(s) performing the submitted songs do not need to meet Saskatchewan residency requirements. Nominations must include **4 songs** produced by the nominee(s) and released during the eligibility period, which demonstrate the producer's skill. Submitted songs may be performed by one artist, or various artists. A producer who was a final nominee for the 2025 Saskatchewan Music Awards cannot submit the same song(s) for consideration in this cycle, *even if the material would qualify based on release date.* A producer's biography, including achievements during the period, is required with the nomination submission.

How Producer of the Year is determined

1. Nomination submissions are checked for completeness and eligibility by SaskMusic.

2. Submissions are presented to a panel of jurors consisting of music producers and other music industry professionals from both inside and outside of Saskatchewan, marking on the production qualities of the music submitted (75%) and achievements submitted (25%). This ranking determines the number of nominees presented in each category.

3. Winner is determined by these same jury marks. If ties occur in the final jury marks, these will be reflected in the awards presentations. Staff will not break ties.

4. All jurors are advised of our Conflict of Interest policy, stating they will not jury submissions for which there may be real or perceived conflicts of interest or bias. Jurors are knowledgeable graphic artists and music industry professionals of various gender identities, industry experience, and geographical locations (from both inside and outside Saskatchewan) to maximize impartiality and appropriate music experience.

SPECIAL HONOURS: Indigenous Music Achievement Award

The Indigenous Music Achievement Award recognizes excellence in an individual demonstrating musical impact, leadership, innovation and/or community-building which has created a positive and lasting impact on the Indigenous music community. A potential honoree may be, for example: an established music artist; a music manager or label owner; and/or a music teacher, so long as the activities they are nominated for are centred on music practices. This award is intended to honour a long-term commitment to integrity and involvement in music which has inspired and uplifted others, and will take into consideration the individual's work over their career.

The SaskMusic Indigenous Advisory will make the selection for this year's recipient. As this is a lifetime award, recipients can only receive the award once.

Additional information on the awards may be found on the SaskMusicAwards.com website.