



2025 HEARTLAND WHISKEY COMPETITION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Heartland Whiskey Competition sanctioned by American Craft Spirits Association
hosted by West Fork Whiskey Co.

Registration Deadline: **Monday, June 30, 2025**

Receiving Deadline: **Monday, July 7, 2025**

Dear Craft Distiller,

We're delighted you are considering submitting your spirits for the **fifth Biennial Heartland Whiskey** competition.

Corn growers in 21 states are once again delighted to celebrate the importance of this crop to production of spirits in the heartland states and beyond. Further, it specifically honors the role corn plays in the craft spirits industry as it relates to the production of fine craft whiskey.

You know that too and now is your time to SHINE.

Products may be shipped starting June 1, 2025. Shipping instructions will be email from ACSA no later than May 23, 2025.

For questions contact: stephanie@americancraftspirits.org or (720) 312-0350

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Whiskey categories that will be evaluated include:

- Straight Whiskey
- Bourbon Whiskey
- Corn Whiskey
- Blended Whiskey
- Four Grain Whiskey (Corn Plus 3)
- Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey
- Rye Whiskey (Corn Mash)
- RTDs (“Whiskey Base” Ready to Drink-MUST include CORN)
- Light Whiskey

with sub-categories for the following age ranges:

- Un-aged
- Aged- two years and under
- Straight, under four years
- Straight, four years and over

Although any producer of craft whiskey can participate regardless of home state, the following states as active participants will have a “Best of State” presented at the awards assembly:

California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin.

- Top Farmer-Distiller Trophy — Awarded to the distillery with the highest average score across three different entries, this is considered the competition’s most challenging and prestigious honor;
- Best Farmer-Distilled Bourbon — Recognizing the highest-scoring bourbon produced by a farmer-distiller;
- Best Farmer-Distilled "Beyond Bourbon" Whiskey — Honoring the top whiskey outside of the bourbon category made b

the bourbon category made by a farmer-distiller.

Farmer-distillers are distilleries whose owner(s) also operate farms that grow corn. The Top Farmer-Distiller program celebrates the agricultural heritage behind some of America’s finest whiskeys. In the 2023 competition, more than 30% of entries for the Heartland Whiskey Competition were farmer-distillers.

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JUDGING PROTOCOLS

Your Spirits will be blind tasted and evaluated by a panel of distinguished professionals. The judging panels are a spirited mix of highly-regarded professionals within the spirits industry. No judge with a vested interest in any specific category of spirit will judge.

Medalists will be announced by the fall, 2025. Besides the accolades, if you medal, you will receive a bottle ribbon, award, and be part of a PR campaign which recognizes your achievement. Of course, the tasting notes will also give you bragging rights (and perhaps some new marketing copy).

COMPLIANCE GUIDELINES

- ALL products must have a valid COLA from TTB. We reserve the right to request a copy of your COLA should there be a question as to an individual submission. Each spirit must have received formal approval for the “fanciful name” with a corresponding COLA by the date of judging or that spirit will be ineligible for evaluation.
- You must identify whether your spirit is *Third Party* (made using a base spirit distilled off-site) or *Made from Scratch* (distilled on premise). You may classify a spirit as *other* or with some specific identifier. If your product is a blend of *Third Party* distillate and *Made from Scratch* distillate, please classify this as *other* and note the blend. The Judging Board reserves the right to re-classify a submitted spirit based on its professional judgment.

Products may be shipped starting June 1st, 2025. Shipping instructions will be sent from ACSA no later than May 23rd, 2025.

ENTRY FEES

- **ACSA Members: \$135 per spirit (\$175 normally)**
- **Non-Members: \$155 per spirit (\$195 normally)**

Payment should be made by credit or debit card at time of registration of spirits.

DISCLAIMER

All products submitted will be considered property of the Heartland Whiskey Competition. The Judging Board retains the right not to award a medal, if, in its professional consensus, no medal is deserved in a specific category. Neither the Heartland Whiskey Competition, ACSA, or West Fork Whiskey will accept responsibility for entries damaged or lost in shipment.

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