



BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS APPLICATION OVERVIEW

The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards wants to celebrate you and the vital role you play in your school's production!

WHO CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR AN AWARD?

Students whose work or contributions fit in any of the following areas may submit a digital portfolio to be considered for a Behind-The-Scenes recognition. Please select the category that best fits the work. Only one entry per category will be accepted per school.

Accepted Categories:

- Direction
- Music Direction
- Lighting
- Sound
- Scenic
- Props
- Costumes
- Hair/Makeup
- Choreography
- Dramaturgy
- Stage Management
- Technical Direction
- Video Production (used as part of the show)
- Marketing and Publicity
- Video Production (used for promotion)
- Front of House Management (event management, ushers, box office, etc.)
- Playbill/Program Design

Please note: Students serving in assistant capacities may also be considered.

Also note: students may only submit ONE portfolio as an individual contribution or as the head or co-head of a team contribution. Schools are limited to 6 submissions, please ensure with your director before submitting.

WHY SHOULD I APPLY FOR AN AWARD?

There are many reasons to apply for an award! In addition to being uplifted for your work, consider...

Behind-The-Scenes Awards Program

Head or Co-Heads receiving an Outstanding Achievement for a Behind-The-Scenes Role award will be invited to represent their work at a special day of networking, learning, and celebration of their work. In addition, their work will be honored and celebrated as part of the end-of-year showcase.

College applications

Strengthen your college applications by listing your recognition or sharing your portfolio.

Future theater work

List your recognition on your growing theater resume; share your newly-created portfolio with directors or others to showcase your capabilities.

Growth as an artist

Creating your portfolio and interviewing with the panel are great learning experiences in and of themselves. You will solidify your learning from the production process, articulate your decisions, and more.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO BE CONSIDERED FOR AN AWARD?

There are two components to be considered for a Behind-The-Scenes achievement award.

Step One: Submit a Portfolio

Applying students will submit a self-created, digital portfolio in support of their work on the production. Portfolios consist of:

A short personal essay about your experience with the production. Teams may submit co-written essays about multiple experiences or by a representative about the collective experience of the team.

Select between the following formats for your essay:

- 1-2 page written essay, double-spaced
- 2-4 minute video essay of you responding to the prompts on camera
- 2-4 minute audio essay of you responding to the prompts via voice recording

(If choosing the video or audio format, please run your recording through a voice-to-text program and copy/paste the transcript into your submission form. This will provide an easy additional reference for adjudicators if they need to re-visit your essay during your follow-up interview.)

Supplemental artifacts that demonstrate your work on the production. Possible artifacts include scans of renderings, sketches, prompt book, crew or shift lists, lighting plots, videos* and photos. Multiple artifacts are encouraged.

On the submission form, you will be able to submit various types of digital files, such as PDFs, audio recordings, photos, or video recordings.

Additional Information about Artifacts:

Any artifact videos should be two minutes or less. If your video file is longer than two minutes, you will be asked to indicate a start and ending time stamp for the portion you would like adjudicators to watch as they review your portfolio.

Some students prefer to organize their artifacts into PDF document(s) that includes the digital artifacts that show their relationship to one another. If creating documents, include your name, school, and production title in the top left of your artifact document(s). *Please upload as a PDF. If you include links to google docs / sites, please ensure that the sharing permissions are set to "Anyone with the Link can View".*

Find more information on effective artifacts and a planning guide for collecting your artifacts in Appendix A, starting on page 4.

Step Two: Interview with Adjudicator Panel

A brief virtual interview will be scheduled between a panel of adjudicators and you after the portfolio is received. This is an opportunity for the adjudicators to ask clarifying questions and for you to provide additional insight into your process.

Adjudicators will then be asked to assess your portfolio and interview based on a rubric.

TECHNICAL, CREATIVE AND BUSINESS CATEGORY RUBRICS

(note that rubrics are periodically updated)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Decide whether you are applying for individual contributions or as a team. If as a team, decide who will be the point person for your application. *Note: Students are only allowed to submit ONE individual contribution portfolio OR ONE team contribution portfolio as the lead / co-lead.*

Review the portfolio deadline and interview dates below. Note that deadlines are based on what month your school's production is held.

Create your personal essay, collect your artifacts, and organize them into your artifact document(s) for uploading.

Submit your materials online at ihsmta.awardsplatform.com under the "Behind-The-Scenes Submission" award category.

As part of the information form, you will also indicate your availability for your Zoom interview with the adjudicator panel. Assigned interview times will be communicated to students shortly after the portfolio submission deadline.

KEY DEADLINES AND DATES

PRODUCTION MONTH	PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION DEADLINE	INTERVIEWS SCHEDULED
October-November	November 20, 2026 @ 4pm	December 2-3, 2026
December-March	April 2, 2027 @ 4pm	April 7-8, 2027
April-May	April 28, 2027 @ 4pm	May 5-6, 2027

APPENDIX A

ARTIFACT PLANNING RESOURCE

Students or teams applying for a Behind-The-Scenes award are required to complete an application requiring three components: a short essay about your experience, an interview with a panel of adjudicators, and a portfolio of artifacts. This resource is focused on collecting your artifacts.

WHAT IS AN ARTIFACT?

An artifact is a representation of your or your team's work on a production. Artifacts can be any form of digital media that represents the planning, creation, or final product produced by your role.

Prior to your interview, the adjudicator panel will review your artifacts and essay. Adjudicators will not have seen your production nor any of the process and rehearsal leading up to the final performances. As such, your artifacts will be the only insight into your work and the overall production for adjudicators.

TIPS FOR STRONG ARTIFACTS

Tell the Story of Your Process

Showing different stages of your work, from brainstorming to rehearsal to final performances, will help adjudicators understand your whole contribution and how your contributions developed over time. The ability to plan and execute a vision are also showcased.

Use a Variety of Media

Utilizing a variety of media types for your artifacts can help to showcase different elements of your work. For example, a video of lighting cues is an effective artifact but becomes stronger when paired with a lighting plot and a cue sheet.

Focus on Key Elements of Your Work

What were the main functions of your position? Does this artifact showcase those functions and your overall goals?

Include Challenges

What problems did you face? How did you overcome them? Showcase your skills and specialized knowledge by demonstrating how you adapted your work in the face of adversity or change.

COLLECTING ARTIFACTS

The best practice for collecting artifacts is to save and document your work as it happens.

Take Photos and Videos

Every moment of work is important. Take a few minutes to document your work to help to provide plenty of media to shape the story of your artifacts at the end of the process.

Collect Planning Materials

Scans or photographs of sketches, research, inspiration, outlines, meetings, etc. are all great artifacts; save and copy them for future use.

Represent the Final Product

Capture your work in its completed form. Remember, the adjudicator panel will **not** have seen your production; try to showcase the culmination of your efforts in the context for which they were intended. It is never too late to start collecting your artifacts! Here are some suggestions to collect artifacts later or after your process, in the event you did not collect along the way:

Work Backwards

What gave you inspiration; what did you research? If you do not have artifacts from early stages, create a representation of your inspiration or planning to help show the transformation of your ideas.

Utilize Available Documentation

Did your school have photos or videos of the production that show your work in context? Are there social media posts? Promotional materials? Did your friends or colleagues record any moments of rehearsals?

Map Your Process

Every creative process requires a series of developmental steps to achieve the final product; create a map or outline/timeline representing those steps and how they played a role in the process.

EXAMPLES OF ARTIFACTS

Vision or thematic boards	Rehearsal reports	Digital files of advertisements
Blocking Charts	Sign-in sheets and schedules	Photos of promotions in public
Choreography charts	Video of scene transitions	Social media posts
Script annotations	Cue sheet	Before and after images
Initial drawings	Progress plans and timelines	Job charts
Makeup face charts	Video of cue-to-cue	Meeting notes
Models	Photos of work in-progress	Business plans
Compiled research	Mic plots	Engagement data
Design presentations	Built-in board cues	Market research

BRAINSTORM

A little planning now can help make collecting artifacts easier. Use the brainstorm worksheet on the next page to capture ideas about the type of artifacts you may be able to use or capture.

Planning

What showcases the early stages of your work? How can you portray the preparation and research that goes into your role?

Creating

What showcases the developmental stages of your work? How can you demonstrate the effort and changes your work went through?

Presenting

What showcases the final product of your work? How can you represent your work in the context of its finalized format?

BRAINSTORMING SPACE

PLANNING Artifacts related to the planning, brainstorming, idea generation of your role	CREATING Artifacts related to the process of your work leading up to the performance	PRESENTING Artifacts related to the final displays of your work