



Producer Handbook

Fertile Ground Festival of New Works 2026

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Section 1: Welcome to Fertile Ground 2026

Hello and welcome to Fertile Ground 2026! We are so thrilled to have your “act of creation” in this year’s Festival – happening from April 10-26, 2026!

What makes Fertile Ground unique?

Fertile Ground is:

Citywide - Performances happen in venues throughout the Portland Metro area and beyond. Currently, there are no geographic boundaries limiting who can participate in Fertile Ground.

New work at all stages of development - Fertile Ground projects are everything from a script fragment read aloud for the very first time, to the fully-staged world premiere of a new musical, and everything in between. The only guideline for “newness” is that **the work has not yet been presented in its current form.**

Local - Fertile Ground provides an exclusive opportunity for local artists to showcase and develop their work. Unlike Fringe or other new works Festivals, all projects presented in Fertile Ground are written/developed and performed by (majority) local artists. (Out of town collaborators are welcome, as long as the Producer and majority of the creative team are local.)

Fertile Ground Values Statement

The following values serve as a lens to guide our decisions. We encourage Festival Producers to embrace these values in their own approach to their Festival experience:

Accessibility - We never cease striving to reduce barriers for creating, presenting, and attending work in the Festival. We focus on accessibility to increase the overall diversity, inclusivity, and richness of the Festival, and to improve the quality of experience for all artists and audiences.

Transparency - We believe transparency is essential to integrity, and that the transparency of our processes and decisions help us reap the benefit of collective wisdom. We are happy to share our thinking behind any decisions or policies, and we welcome feedback and questions as an opportunity to grow and reflect.

Mutual Support/Collaboration - PATA (the Portland Area Theatre Alliance), and by extension, Fertile Ground (as a flagship program of PATA), exists to uplift **all** performing artists and arts organizations in the region. We encourage Festival participants to uplift each others' work, celebrate each others' successes, and find creative ways to join forces. While it can be easy to feel like we're all competing for the same audiences, we have the same goals: to get people to the Festival, and guide audiences to the shows that are right for them!

And finally,

Growth - It's more than a metaphor - this is what it's all about. The Festival offers a container to develop new work, but also the opportunity for personal artistic growth, growing your creative network, contributing to the growth of Portland's performing arts community, and building Portland's reputation as fertile ground for new work. We also embrace every Festival as an opportunity for **our** growth. We will continue to listen, to innovate, to try, to fail, to learn, and to come back next year and try again. Thank you for growing alongside us.

Now that we've got some big stuff out of the way, let's get down to brass tacks!

What's new and different about Fertile Ground this year?

Last year, we expanded the traditionally 11-day Festival to 16 days (for our "sweet sixteenth" season)! The longer format worked so well that we're bringing back the longer Festival again this year. The 2026 Festival will run for **17 whole days**, including 3 full weekends. This lets us share more new work, and see more new work - and helps audiences see more of what the Festival has to offer.

1. Fertile Ground Venues! After successfully piloting a Partner Venue program in 2025, we are thrilled to offer this service for a second year. We're grateful for the continued partnership of 21ten Theatre and Fuse Theatre Ensemble (operating the Back Door Theatre). This year, we're excited to introduce a partnership with Portland State University. Projects in Partner Venue spaces pay a discounted rental rate directly to Fertile Ground, and receive some additional producing support, including access to a Technical Director, a house manager, and concessions support. Projects are selected for venues based on a random lottery process before registration opens.*

**Producers selected to participate in the Fertile Ground GROW Program are given placement in a Fertile Ground venue as part of the program benefits. These projects are placed in venues prior to the lottery. For more details about lottery specifics, visit [the venue page on our website](#).*

2. New Ticketing System! This year we're yet again trying out a new ticketing system (Ludus). We hope this will make for an even more user-friendly experience for Producers and audiences. With Ludus, Producers will manage their own event - providing and updating details like show description, dates/times, ticket prices/discounts, relevant accessibility information, and more. Most importantly, as a widely-used and thoroughly established ticketing platform, Producers can expect a high level of consistency and reliability from Ludus.

For more information about Ticketing, see [Section 5](#)

3. Video Pitches!

Fertile Ground continues to prioritize its function as a broad marketing platform for all projects, providing a direct line of communication from every project to local media representatives. We can't guarantee coverage, but we absolutely can engage the local arts journalism community with easy access to the broad range of this year's Fertile Ground projects.

After experimenting with many methods of live engagement, the sheer number of this year's projects requires us to explore a new solution to "the pitch." This year we're asking all Producers to record a 60-90 second project pitch as part of their Marketing submission to Fertile Ground. We will compile and share these pitches and Producer contact info with our media partners who will view and follow up directly if needed. Our Marketing team may also use these pitches to create social media reels and other Festival promotions.

For more information about Media Pitches, see [Section 4](#)

Along with this comes...

4. Producer Showcase Event/Festival Preview Party! As more and more artists choose Fertile Ground as a platform to share their new and developing work, presenting live "pitches" of every project becomes increasingly difficult to achieve within a single event of a reasonable duration. This year, we're trying the solution of video pitches instead of a live pitch event focused on introducing projects to the media. Our hope, goal, and intention is to shift our live event to something that allows both Festival artists and audiences to mingle, explore the Festival, learn more about the year's offerings, and in general take a moment to celebrate as one big Festival family under one roof before we all go in a hundred different directions to make our shows!

5. Expanded GROW Program! While the primary goal of the GROW Program continues to center support for a Fertile Ground project, we are excited to expand the Program this year to include an investment in the continued growth, development, and creative opportunities for an artist, and their work beyond a single Festival. In addition to \$500 in unrestricted project funds, GROW recipients receive free Fertile Ground Registration for the 2026 Festival; guaranteed placement in a Festival Partner venue (rental fees apply); professional photos of their Fertile Ground performance for their portfolio; a featured profile in the Festival Guide, on social media, and on the Fertile Ground website; a pre-Festival panel opportunity to share their work and process; and a one-on-one session with a local creative professional to provide personalized feedback on their Fertile Ground project.

How does the Producer/Fertile Ground Partnership work?

Festival Producers independently produce their own projects. Fertile Ground serves as a marketing umbrella, offers events and workshops, and acts as an ongoing resource for Producers. It is important to note that Fertile Ground is not legally liable in any way for your event, and all Producers are asked to sign an Agreement as part of their Festival Registration, indicating their understanding of this.

Your project will be included in Festival press materials distributed to local, regional, national media and will be promoted by PATA and Fertile Ground on social media. Your project(s) will be listed on the Festival website and, as opportunities arise, it may be included in special events, community partnerships, and more. We will do everything we can to support you and your show, but we can only work with what you give us!

We're so glad that you're a part of this year's Festival, and we're looking forward to helping you realize your goals for Fertile Ground 2026, whatever they may be!

Who will I be working with/who should I talk to if I have questions?

The 2026 Fertile Ground Leadership Team is Tamara Carroll (Festival Director); Cassie Greer (Associate Producer); and Sarah DeGrave (PATA Office Manager).

Tamara Carroll (they/them)

fertileground@portlandtheatre.com

Contact Tamara with questions about registration, production support, anything related to Partner Venues, volunteer and collaborative opportunities, GROW Grants, Festival expectations, and general feedback and inquiry.

Cassie Greer (she/her)

cassie@portlandtheatre.com

Contact Cassie with questions about ticketing and updates to your listing in the Festival Guide.

Sarah DeGrave (she/her)

info@portlandtheatre.com

Contact Sarah with questions about PATA membership.

Section 2: Key Dates & Deadlines

- Mon, Jan 5** **Final Day for Regular Registration**
- Sat, Jan 10** **Self-Producing Workshop** with
Tamara Carroll (Fertile Ground Festival Director)
Cassie Greer (Fertile Ground Associate Producer)
11 AM - 1 PM
21ten Theatre (2110 SE 10th Ave, Portland, OR 97214)
- Sat, Jan 17** **Marketing Workshop** with
Nicole Lane - Chamber Music NW Marketing and Communications
Director & former Fertile Ground Festival Director
11 AM - 1 PM
21ten Theatre (2110 SE 10th Ave, Portland, OR 97214)

[REGISTER HERE FOR EITHER/BOTH WORKSHOPS](#)

- January 19** - **Late Registration Closes**
- **Last Day to withdraw from a Venue & receive a full refund**
- **Last Day to request changes to Partner Venue Schedule**
- February 1** - **Producer Access to Ludus Ticketing Page Opens:**
Create and complete a Ludus Event Listing for your project with
date(s)/time(s), location, pricing, performance type, accessibility
info, project description, and image (**yes, even if you're using
your own ticketing system**) – more info in [Section 5](#)
- February 13** - **PRODUCER FINAL INFO DAY!**
- [Marketing Information](#) **Due!** (see [Section 3](#))
- Final day to input info on ticketing site
- **Last Day to withdraw from a Venue & receive partial refund**
- February 23** - **Fertile Ground 2026 Line-up officially announced**
- **Single tickets & Festival Passes go on sale**

TBD **PATA General Auditions**

March 30 **Producer Showcase** - The Armory - 128 NW 11th Ave, evening.
A Festival kick-off aimed at audiences with Producers tabling to share info about their project(s) - exact time TBA

April 4 **Pre-Festival GROW Panel** (time/location TBA)

April 10 - 26 **2026 Fertile Ground Festival!**

Section 3: Accessibility

Thanks to a generous grant in 2023, Fertile Ground leadership received a year of leadership coaching around accessibility from our friends at [The Curiosity Paradox](#). We used this opportunity to explore ways we can make theatre a more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive space for artists and audiences. While Fertile Ground has traditionally left Producers to their own devices on all matters of production – including what information they communicate to audiences – we are asking Producers to help us improve the Festival’s overall accessibility by agreeing to a few key requests:

- Provide accessibility information on your Ticketing Page & in the Festival Guide
- Offer a certain number of discounted tickets for low-income audiences
- Provide a way for audiences to request accommodations, and make a reasonable effort to meet these requests

Providing Accessibility Information on Your Ticketing Page:

If you are setting up tickets through the Festival platform, your page will automatically contain space for key accessibility information, including:

- **An accessibility contact:** a designated person and contact info (email or phone number) for patrons with access questions/concerns, or to make arrangements for an accommodation (i.e. a seat needs to be removed to accommodate a wheelchair, or a parking space needs to be reserved, etc.).
- **Information about show length/intermission:** This is useful not only for people who find it difficult to sit for an extended duration, but also for patrons to determine whether they can make a performance later on the same day. Be as accurate as possible, and update your event listing as you get a better sense of your actual show length.
- **Information about venue accessibility:**
 - Are there stairs leading to the venue? How many? With or without a railing? Is there a wheelchair ramp/elevator?
 - How should someone who uses a wheelchair/walker or other mobility device request and receive the accommodations they need?
 - What are seating options like - ie, high stools without backs? Wooden benches without cushions? Chairs that can accommodate larger bodies upon request?

- What are options for parking? Is the venue accessible by public transportation?
- Does the venue get particularly warm or cold?
- Are masks available at the venue?
- Are there strobe lights, haze, loud noises, or other sources of atypical/extreme sensory input?
- Are there content/language/themes related to common or likely traumatic experiences, ie sexual assault, drug/alcohol addiction/misuse, suicide, childhood abuse, harm to animals, bias-motivated violence/language?*

All of this can significantly impact a patron's experience - and while you might not know all of this information yet, we encourage you to learn what you can, share what you learn, and update your event as new information becomes available.

- **Information about performance-specific accommodations:**

- Are there open or closed captions, or ASL interpreted performances for Deaf/hard of hearing individuals?
- Are there audio described listening devices for blind or vision impaired individuals?
- Are there mask-required shows (where all audience members are masked) for immune-compromised individuals?

We understand the practice of **Content Notices is controversial, and we have not reached anything resembling a best practice consensus as a field. The debate is complex and nuanced, and there are multiple valid perspectives and approaches. In keeping with the Festival's value of transparency, we encourage you to consider whether a content notice will help individuals who have experienced trauma either avoid a potentially harmful experience, or help them better prepare to encounter potentially triggering content. **If you have questions or want to collaborate around how to navigate what to disclose and how, please feel free to reach out to us.***

[Jump to "Accessibility Resources" in Section 8 for more information](#)

We are early on this journey, and we are still learning. We want to learn from you, too! Please share your thoughts and knowledge about the practices that support accessibility and inclusion. We may not be able to implement changes immediately, but this is an ongoing conversation, and all voices/experiences are necessary.

Section 4: Marketing Assets & Promotion Info

Each Fertile Ground project will need to fill out a [Marketing Information form](#) by February 13th – though if you are able to get us this information sooner, we will be thrilled! **After you submit this form, you will be provided with a Google Drive folder where any additional marketing and promotional materials can be stored and accessed** – specifically any high-quality [Press Photos](#) you may take as the Festival approaches.

Marketing Expectations of Producers

The Fertile Ground team is excited to promote your project! In order to maintain the consistency, cohesiveness, and ubiquitousness that makes the Festival marketing successful, we kindly ask for the following:

Required:

- Meet all Festival and marketing materials deadlines with complete, accurate information, in the requested format.
- Include the [Fertile Ground Festival logo](#) on your marketing materials, digital ads and printed material.
- Include the below descriptive sentence and web url for Fertile Ground in all media releases related to your production.

This project is produced as part of the 2026 Fertile Ground Festival of New Works – a program of the Portland Area Theatre Alliance – presenting new work exclusively by local artists in Portland and the surrounding areas. The 2026 Fertile Ground Festival runs April 10th-26th. fertilegroundpdx.org

Not Required, but nice if you're able!:

- Include a logo or a description of the Festival on your website (if you have one) linking to the Fertile Ground website (www.fertilegroundpdx.org).
- Promote your show in conjunction with Fertile Ground to your mail or e-mail list, social media, etc.
- Tag the Festival in your social media posts, and use the Fertile Ground social media hashtag block below:

#FertileGround26 #FG26 #FertileGroundFestival #FG #newwork #PDX
#PDXtheatre #theatre #festival #thisisportland #travelportland

- Let us know about other events you're producing that we can promote, or any future life of your Festival show after the Festival is over. We want to know about the future lives of these projects!

Required Marketing Checklist - see details/examples below!

- [Marketing Information form](#) (Due February 13)
 - Project Title
 - Project Description for Guide (60-90 words)
 - Project Type (i.e. reading, staged reading, early/advanced workshop, world premiere full production)
 - Project Genre
 - Project Development Statement
 - Project Image
 - Media Pitch Video
- Ticketing page (Due February 13; you will be given access to your Ticketing Page on February 1, 2026) – see full details about the below in [Section 5](#)
 - Finalized dates/times/show length
 - Content Notices
 - Ticket pricing/discounts
 - Rating or recommended age
 - Accessibility information & offerings
- Fertile Ground logo on all printed/digital material
- "Fertile Ground 2026 Participant" statement on press/promotional material
- Press release (recommended)
- Press photos (recommended)

[Jump to view "Recommended-but-not-Required Marketing Materials" in Section 8](#)

Check out the [2025 Marketing Resources Folder](#) for sample project/press images and press releases.

Guidelines for Preparing Marketing Materials

Project Description

Please provide a brief **60-90 word “teaser” description** designed to quickly pique interest in your project. This will be used as the description for your project in the printed Festival Guide.

Example:

This expressionistic performance adaptation of *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Sue Mach, conceived by Grace Carter, is based on the American short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The story follows Charlotte, a woman confined to a single bedroom for three months in 1890 – a “rest cure” for her postpartum depression. Isolated and under-stimulated, Charlotte turns to an interior world of imagination, obsessing on the room’s ghastly wallpaper, until a trapped woman appears to her in the pattern.

This multidisciplinary installation follows Charlotte’s “mad” journey through constraint, to creativity, transformation and freedom.

You will be able to include a longer project description on your Ludus event, which will serve as the digital listing for your Fertile Ground project. More on this in [Section 5](#).

Project Image or Photo

Please provide an **image or photo** that will serve as the main visual representation of your project. This should be roughly the same image that you use on your Ludus and/or social media event*, and will also be the main image used in the Fertile Ground to promote your project both digitally and in the printed Festival Guide.

Image specifications:

- 1080x1080 pixels (square)
- 300 dpi
- JPG or PNG files only
- Name the image file *NameofProject.jpg* or *NameofProject.png*

**the optimal image size for Ludus is 600 x 250 pixels, so as you are preparing your 1080x1080px version, you may want to create a 600 x 250 px version at the same time*

Also Note: it is helpful to limit the amount of text on the image.

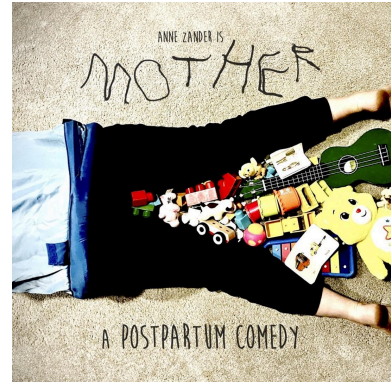
Sample Project Images:



Persistent World.jpg



Exhale_by_Jerilyn_Armstrong.png



MOTHER.jpeg

Project Development Statement

The fact that all Fertile Ground projects are at various stages of development is one of the things that makes this Festival unique! Help us tell the story of your project by providing a brief statement about where this work has come from, where you would like it to go, what you're hoping to get out of the Fertile Ground experience, and any other special notes about your creative hopes and dreams. We will use this information as we share about your project on social media and communicate with various press outlets about the Festival.

Video Pitch for the Media!

What it is: a 60-90 second video "pitch" introducing your project to the media.

In order to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to pitch their project to our local arts journalists, and to provide more arts journalists with access, we've decided that instead of the live, in-person pitches for the media we've hosted the past 2 years, this year we're going to collect short "project pitch" videos from each Producer and compile them for the media to view on their own time.

As in previous years, this is your opportunity to help members of the media understand the style, tone, vibe, and content of your project in a way that is difficult to convey in a written summary. As with live pitches, the primary goal of these video pitches is accurately communicating what to expect from your project. We encourage you to be creative, but stay focused on the goal of accurately representing your project. The most creative, memorable, show-stopping pitch video that ultimately fails to help the viewer get a better sense of the project it's pitching has the potential to backfire.

Some additional tips/guidelines:

- DO choose to film in either “portrait” or “landscape” orientation – just know that if you film in landscape, the edges of your video may get cut off if portions of it are used on social media.
- DO begin by introducing yourself/yourselves, and the name/title of your project.
- DON'T take time to list the dates/times of your show. That information will accompany your Video Pitch wherever sent or posted.
- DO select your location and costume strategically to help communicate the unique elements of your project. Be fun, flashy, catchy - perform a tiny piece of your show, give us a little taste of what we're in for! But...
- DON'T worry too much about being fun, flashy, catchy, costumed, or performative! Some of the best pitches are simply well-rehearsed, tight, energetic event descriptions. The purpose is to accurately communicate your show's vibe. Creativity is a plus, but accuracy is a must.

**Since we have no time constraints in the presentation of these, if desired, Producers with multiple Fertile Ground projects may record a video pitch for each project instead of trying to squeeze all projects into the same video.*

Section 5: Ticketing & Box Office

Ludus: The Official Fertile Ground Ticketing Platform

ALL Producers, regardless of whether you are selling/issuing tickets through Ludus or not, are required to create a Ludus event. This ensures that your event is searchable as part of the Festival and provides audiences with all of the information the Festival wants to make available for accessibility purposes, all in a consistent format. For Producers not using Ludus to actually sell tickets, the page will link to your own homepage or ticketing platform.

Setting Up Your Ludus Event

Each Producer will receive an invitation to join the Fertile Ground Ludus team on February 1, 2026. The Ludus listing of Fertile Ground projects will serve as the “Festival Lineup” page on the Fertile Ground website, as it is sortable, searchable, and a more efficient ticket-buying experience. If you’re more of a visual learner (or just want to see what exactly we’re asking for), you can find a video walk-through of how to set up a basic Ludus event [here](#).

Important Elements of your Ludus Event

Your Ludus “Event Detail” will also include:

- A 600 x 250px version of your main project image
- A Project Description
- Performance Dates, Times
- Ticket prices - Ludus allows you to set up multiple tiers of ticket prices, student/senior discounts, sliding scale options, and more.
 - If you are using Ludus, you will set up a ticket that is *specifically* for Festival Pass-Holders, so it’s clear exactly which ticket they should select to use their pass.
- Show length/whether there is an intermission
- Any Content Advisories/Notices
- Project Type (select from the below options)
 - Fully-Staged World Premiere
(i.e. this is a complete production that has received a full rehearsal process; actors are off-book and technical elements have been incorporated by a team of designers)

- Advanced Workshop
(i.e. this piece has been workshopped before and is moving closer to a full production/premiere – it is in the process of being fine-tuned)
- Early Workshop
(i.e. this is one of the first times we're getting this piece on its feet; workshops typically include staging/blocking and may include the use of some technical elements)
- Staged Reading
(i.e. this piece is being shared aloud by performers with scripts in hand, and may include some light bits of staging/blocking/movement to help tell the story)
- Reading
(i.e. this text is being shared aloud by performers who are reading from a script, typically while standing or sitting at music stands)
- Genre/Performance Style (select as many as apply from the below options)
 - Theatre
 - Musical Theatre
 - Dance/Movement-Based
 - Devised
 - Performance Art
 - Young Audience/Children's Theatre
 - Film
 - Clown
 - Puppetry
 - Circus
- "Rating" or Recommended Age
- Accessibility Info (including things like parking, stairs, type(s) of seating, etc.), including an Accessibility Contact Person and Contact Information. The Accessibility Contact Person is someone for potential audience members to be able to get in touch with, should they have any questions about your show and their ability to experience it; this individual should have a solid knowledge of all aspects of your Fertile Ground project, including content, design elements, and venue features and/or limitations (or the ability to find this info).
- Specific Accessibility Offerings (select as many as apply from the below options)
 - ASL/Interpreted Performance(s)
 - Captions
 - Sensory-Friendly/Relaxed Performance(s)
 - Audio Described Performance(s)
 - Touch Tour(s)
 - Wheelchair Access

- Event Keywords – any key words that give more information about the content of your project, and help the audience understand what they can expect (i.e. Drama, Comedy, Horror, Work-in-Progress, Audience Participation, Etc.)

You will also be able to set a variety of ticket prices, as well as upload/create seating maps for your venue and/or include the venue capacity. You can see video walk-throughs for each aspect of the ticket set-up process under the [Events tab in the help videos](#).

Other Helpful Ludus Support Links

- [Setting ticket prices](#) - create different pricing tiers, seat maps, special pricing for previews vs regular performances, etc.
- [Pay What You Can Tickets](#)
- [Waitlist](#) - Create and manage waitlists for sold out shows
- [Event Messaging](#) - Send a message to patrons attending a specific performance date/time

Box Office (i.e. Issuing Tickets & Checking Patrons In at the Door)

Ludus provides several options for taking tickets at the door/checking in patrons, including printed tickets, digital tickets, and will call. Patrons even have the option to transfer their tickets to another person if they aren't able to use them.

[Check out Options for Accepting Tickets with Ludus](#)

The easiest way to manage checking people in and selling tickets at the door is by using the Ludus App.

The Ludus app allows you to operate a box office that can:

- Check in patrons who have purchased tickets in advance
- See a list of attendees
- Perform regular ticket sales with cash or credit cards, in addition to issuing Pass-holder tickets, student tickets, Arts for All tickets, etc.

Your box office will need to be equipped with a device that can either operate the Ludus [iOS](#) or [Android](#) app, or access the Ludus website, and access the internet through either wifi or cellular data. **The Ludus app will work on an apple device running iOS 16.0 or later, OR any android running 8.0 or later.**

If you do not have a device that is able to run the Ludus app, or if you only have a tablet and not a smartphone, you can also operate your box office through the Ludus website.

In this version of your box office, you will need to manually enter credit card information (or purchase a generic credit card reader like [this one](#)) for any at-the-door sales.

Checking in patrons with presale tickets:

[Print Patron List](#)

[Check in or scan tickets](#)

Ludus offers digital, paper, or will-call ticket options. If you are using the Ludus app, digital tickets presented on patron's phones can also be scanned with your device so you don't need to search through a list of attendees to check them in. Patrons can also simply provide their name and be checked in on the Ludus app, or checked off on a printed door list. Remember to check for any specific identification you're asking for (Oregon Trail Card/Student id, etc)t.

If you have concerns about your ability to use Ludus on the day of the performance at your venue – either with the app or on a computer – we recommend that you set a cutoff time for online ticket sales a few hours before the start time of your event. This will enable you to print off a hard-copy list of attendees before you head over to your performance space without missing anyone on the list. If you choose to go this route, note that you will not be able to sell any last-minute or at-the-door tickets, so we don't recommend this unless necessary.

Providing Accessible Ticket Options

Regardless of what ticketing platform you use, **Fertile Ground suggests that all Producers offer some number of [Arts for All](#) tickets** (\$5 tickets for audiences with an Oregon Trail/SNAP card). The particulars of this offer (i.e. number of Arts for All tickets available, whether these may be reserved in advance or are only available at the door, number of AfA tickets that may be purchased by a single buyer, etc.) are at the discretion of each Producer regardless of whether or not you are using Ludus.

Additionally, **we strongly encourage all Producers to offer a student ticket option**, helping to make the Festival accessible to the emerging creators and appreciators in our community.

Note: As part of our collaboration with PSU, current PSU students can purchase a PSU Student Festival Pass which provides free entry to a single performance of any show at the Boiler Room during the Festival. Producers will be reimbursed 50% of the *student*

ticket rate for tickets reserved with a PSU Festival Pass. As with the regular Festival Pass, reimbursement is only valid if the ticket is claimed at the box office.

Ticketing Fees

Fees to Ticket-Buyers

- **Ticketing System:** Ludus takes a 5% +\$0.75 fee per ticket
- **Fertile Ground:** Each transaction that includes single ticket purchases will include an extra \$1 Festival fee that goes directly to Fertile Ground. This fee helps cover our administrative costs – including the ability to reimburse Ludus Producers for a portion of Festival Passes used.

Ticket Payouts

Ticket income via Ludus will be disbursed by Fertile Ground after the Festival, and Producers will be paid out for all ticket sales by Wednesday, April 30, 2026.

Using Your Own Ticketing Platform

Producers *not* presenting in a Partner Venue may use their own ticketing system, rather than Ludus. If you are using your own ticketing platform, please note the following (which are also covered in Sections 6 and 7):

1. Fertile Ground Festival Passes - We strongly encourage you to offers *some* sort of discount code for Patrons who have purchased the **Unlimited Festival Pass** (it is less important to offer a discount for patrons who offer a punch-pass, but you are welcome to offer something if you like!!).
 - a. Please use the discount code **PDXFG26** for any discount offered with Unlimited Festival Pass. This code will be provided to patrons who purchase an Unlimited Pass, and it is ideal for them to be able to use the same discount code, regardless of what show they're attending.
 - b. The discount/deal you provide is at your discretion! You can offer free tickets, a percentage discount, a rush deal, a BOGO - whatever works for you.

- c. Please clearly indicate what (if any) discount you are providing for Festival Pass-holders on both your Ludus event page, AND your own ticketing page/website. If you are **not** providing a discount (no shade), please just also make that clear. Patrons will reach out to us, and we will not have good answers for them.....
 - d. We encourage you to check Festival Passes at the door for anyone who has purchased tickets with the Pass discount code.
 - e. If you are selling tickets at the door, make sure your box office attendant knows how to apply the discount in case any walk-ups want to use their pass.
2. Audience Data reporting - We request that you send a final attendance report to the Festival by the end of April, 2026. This report should include:
 - a. Total number of tickets sold per performance.
 - b. Ideally, actual attendance numbers (if it differs from tickets sold)
 - c. Discount codes used (esp Arts4All, Festival Pass, and any senior/student tickets, or any other promotions)

**Most (if not all) of these things should be easily tracked by your ticketing system.*

Again, even if you elect to use a different ticketing system, you will be asked to create a Ludus event by February 13, 2026 so that your event will be searchable through the Ludus database. This page will forward customers to your own website/ticketing platform to purchase tickets.

If you're on the fence about using Ludus and want more info, jump to the ["Is Ludus Right for Me"](#) section at the end of [Section 8](#).

Section 6: Festival Passes

The Festival Pass is a critical part of Fertile Ground - it's one of the things that creates the "Festival" experience and encourages audiences to see as many "acts of creation" as they can manage over the course of the Festival.

We are largely repeating the same Festival Pass system we piloted last year – we'll outline the details for you below (**these apply only to those using Ludus as their ticketing system, but it's good for everyone participating to know how the Passes work!**):

1. Punch card Passes will again be options in 2026 (see below for details), with the idea that limiting the number of shows available to be viewed per Pass *should* limit the number of people who reserve tickets and then don't show up (no-shows have been a problem with the Festival Pass in the past).
2. There is no limit to the number of Pass-holders who can reserve tickets to a particular performance.
3. A punch card is good for **1 ticket per show** (i.e. someone with a Pass cannot purchase 2 tickets to the same performance, or 1 ticket to 5 performances of the same show). This is an adjustment from last year!
4. The Festival will reimburse Producers for 50% of every Pass-holder ticket* **only if the ticket is claimed/used**. These reimbursements will be paid out automatically with each Producer's total ticket revenue by the end of April.

**Reimbursement only applies to Producers selling/issuing tickets through Ludus.*

Festival Pass Options

This year, we will be offering four different options for a Festival Pass. All Festival Passes can be used to secure **one ticket per show** (i.e. Pass-holders can only use the pass to secure **one** free ticket to **one** performance per show – not multiple tickets to the same performance or single tickets to multiple performance dates/times of a single show.)

1. 5-Show Punch Card: 5 free tickets
Cost: \$60
2. 10-Show Punch Card: 10 free tickets
Cost: \$100
3. Unlimited Show Pass: Unlimited free shows throughout the Festival
Cost: \$150
4. PSU Student Pass: Unlimited shows **at the Boiler Room** venue for current PSU students
Cost: \$30

All Festival participants (Producers, actors, directors, etc.) can use the discount code PASS4ME to receive 10% off any of the Festival Pass options.

Festival Pass FAQs

Q: I'm offering sliding scale ticket prices - what price level will I be reimbursed for?

A: Honestly, this will vary depending on the range. Each project will create a "Festival Pass" ticket so that patrons know exactly which ticket to select when using a Festival Pass to secure tickets. We encourage you to set the Festival Pass ticket price at whatever level you would consider "General Admission," or the median ticket price of your scale.

Q: I'm offering VIP or "Supporter" level tickets for folks who want to pay extra to support our project. Will people be able to reserve those tickets with a Festival Pass, and if so, will our reimbursement reflect the higher ticket price?

A: People will only be able to reserve tickets for the Festival Pass ticket level - generally equal to General Admission. If folks have the resources to pay more for a ticket as a way to support your project, that's awesome! Paying more is their choice and privilege - but they can't pay half the price of a VIP ticket and have the Festival subsidize the other half. We are but a poor Festival.

Q: Can people use a Festival Pass to obtain tickets at the door?

A: Yes - people will expect to be able to use their Pass at the door. If you are selling tickets at the door at all, make sure your box office attendant knows how to issue a ticket with a Festival Pass. If you're **not** selling tickets at the door, please make sure to clearly indicate this on your ticketing page!! (Learn more about selling tickets at the door in [Section 5](#))

Q: Do people still pay ticket fees when they buy tickets using a Festival pass?

A: No! If the ticket is free (either because the event is free for all, or because they used the Pass to make the ticket free) there are no fees – for either the Producer or the ticket-buyer.

Q: What happens to the money from Pass sales?

A: The revenue earned from Pass sales will be used to reimburse Ludus-using Producers for 50% of the cost of every full-priced ticket obtained with a Festival Pass (or student ticket, in the case of a PSU Festival Pass).

For Producers Using non-Ludus Platforms

We strongly encourage you to honor the Festival Pass in some way. We ask that all Producers use the code **PDXFG26** as their Festival Pass discount code, so that customers only need one code to obtain tickets using their pass. However, you are welcome to decide what that discount is (i.e. a completely free ticket, a percentage off, a certain dollar amount off, etc.), and all other aspects of how the pass works for your show.

We ask that you are extremely clear and explicit about what sort of discount you are offering Pass-holders on your Ludus event, as well as on your own ticketing page. Transparency and accessibility are paramount Festival values, and we ask all Producers to join us in taking care of our audiences by providing them as much information as possible.

Section 7: Data Collection

There are many reasons it's helpful for us to have information about who is seeing Fertile Ground shows, as well as when and how they heard about the shows, etc. Therefore, we appreciate your help collecting data at each of your Festival performances. Please reach out to us if you have concerns about your ability to meet any of the following expectations.

Expectations

1. We will provide each Producer with a stack of demographic surveys. We expect these to be put out on patrons' seats before the house opens, mentioned in the curtain speech (if one exists), and collected after each performance.
2. We reserve the right to send out a digital survey to ticket-buyers after the Festival is over, including single-ticket buyers whose information we are able to access through Ludus. (Note: we will not sign anyone up for a mailing list or any sort of continued promotions - just a one-time survey following the Festival)
3. Following the Festival, each Producer will receive one survey to answer themselves, and one to share with their entire creative team(s). We appreciate your response and help in distributing these!
4. **If you are not using Ludus**, we request that you send a final attendance report to the Festival by the end of April, 2026. This report should include:
 - Total number of tickets sold per performance
 - Total actual attendees (if different from tickets sold)
 - Discounted tickets issued (especially Arts4All tickets, Festival Passes used, and any student tickets sold)

**Most (if not all) of these things should be easily tracked by your ticketing system.*

Section 8: Additional Resources

Actors Equity Association

Producers who are interested in **hiring members of Actors' Equity Association** need to sign AEA members to an appropriate AEA contract. For details, please reference [AEA's "How To Hire Me" Letter](#) and/or contact Tyler Keeling, AEA Business Representative, for more information about this: (323) 978-8080 x 123 or tkeeling@actorsequity.org

Collecting Donations

We know some of you prefer to offer free events, or provide options for patrons to donate in lieu of a ticket purchase. Ludus allows you to set "free" as a ticket price, and if you are interested in asking for donations - either in conjunction with ticketing or as an extra way for Festival-goers to support your work - there are many helpful resources for accepting secure donations online. Here are a few suggestions:

- [PayPal Donations](#)
- [Eventbrite](#)
- [Donate Kindly](#)
- [Fundly](#)
- [Venmo](#)
- [Zelle](#)

Recommended (but not required) Marketing Materials

Check out the [2025 Marketing Folder](#) for example press photos and press releases.

Press Photos

One of the best ways to effectively market your project is with **quality press photos**. As soon as you have strong images of your project you'd like Fertile Ground to use leading up to and during the Festival, please upload them to your individual project folder (which will be shared with you AFTER you submit your Marketing Information Form). These photos may be used on the Fertile Ground website, and social media as pre-marketing materials and advertisements for the Festival. What we're looking for with these:

- High-resolution JPG or PNG files (photos **must** be high quality (300 dpi) or they cannot be used) that are **free of text or other branding**
- Photos that depict striking imagery, emotions, or characters that appear in your project, or that otherwise convey the essence of the piece you're presenting and/or feature the artists who are creating it
- 1-3 images only – please upload your best, most striking promotional images
- The photo files named in the following format:
Name of show_Name of producer_names of people in photos_photographer credit.jpg

Example: *Elsewhere_Forgery Theatre_Fred Smith, Susy Jones_photobyJoeSmith.jpg*

Press Release

In our world of digital and social media, it can sometimes seem like formal statements sent to editors or reporters are outdated. However, press releases are a great way to succinctly demonstrate the newsworthiness of a particular event, person, or group, and you may want to draft one to share about the unique aspects of your project.

Press releases follow a standard format:

1. Headline: Keep it short and sweet and attention-grabbing. Include:
 - a. Name of show
 - b. Note Fertile Ground here or in the subheader
 - c. Most interesting aspect of show expressed as a verb

Example: Get Vulnerable with Dance Naked, a Fertile Ground Festival Project
2. Subhead: Optional, but if you use it, make sure to have a hook, and some added specificity
 - a. Name of key artist/organization
 - b. Opening (premiere) date and location

Example: Eleanor O'Brien adds fresh insights into our relationships with our own (naked) bodies, opening January 23 at Hotbox Studios
3. Dateline: Date and location
4. Lead Sentence: What's the news? Tell the whole story in one sentence.
5. Who. What. When. Where. and Why Do I Care? (AKA the 5Ws): Key facts should be prominent and included in the first paragraph. Ideally the biggest questions will be answered in the subject line and first sentence of your release.
6. Quote: A way for you to talk directly to the press, or a way to introduce a key collaborator.
7. Close: Usually a centered ### lets journalists know that this is the end of the release.

8. Contact Information: This could also be included in the header of your document, but make sure this is correct, comprehensive, and specific.

Here are a few additional press release tips from Festival Director Emerita Nicole Lane. You can get even more of Nicole's words of wisdom at the Marketing Workshop...

- Be Relevant.
 - Mention Fertile Ground Early and Often. (With so many projects over the festival, there is NOTHING on an arts writer's radar that's more relevant than the Festival.)
 - Connect it to the Current Moment. Highlight any connection your project has to current news or cultural events or well-known people or issues.
 - Tailor the email you send with your press release to the perspective or interest area of the journalist you're addressing, or that of their readership. If possible, connect your project to a person, event, or idea that the writer likes to cover.
- Headlines are Key.
 - Journalists are busy. They might only read your header and subheader, so really make those count!
- Be Convenient.
 - Answer the 5Ws as early and as clearly as you can
 - Be Accurate. The First Time. There is very little chance that journalists will read your corrections/updates of your release.
 - Give Them Link Bait: links to website, blog posts, rehearsal video and intriguingly relevant fun facts to help them do their research about your project and what makes it interesting and unique. Make it easy for them.
 - Copy the body of the press release into the email for their convenience!
 - Attach a PDF of the press release.

Accessibility Resources

The Curiosity Paradox created [this brief document](#) that provides a great introduction to the concept of "Access Art" - a practice that "centers the movement and growth of shared resources and opportunities so that Disabled and marginalized people's physical and emotional needs can be met." We offer you this as a window into some of our own learnings and shifts in thinking as an organization.

As you begin thinking about your Fertile Ground project and how to possibly center the idea of access amid all of the other things you're trying to accomplish, we want to offer

some excerpts from the incredibly comprehensive [National Disability Theatre \(NDT\) Handbook](#) for your consideration. We'll put this quoted text in maroon along with some of our own comments in black text, so you know where these thoughts and ideas are coming from.

The National Disability Theater released the NDT Handbook as the organization took its final bow on July 1st, 2023. The NDT Handbook was written by Talleri A. McRae and is freely available for producing theatres, educators, and anyone who is interested in making their theatre practices more access-centered.

“Access is not a checklist but a politic and a practice.”

- [Peoples Hub's Disability Justice and Access Training and Support Group](#)

What does it mean to be Access-Centered (accessible)

If your two options are to make a space accessible or not, you either pass or fail. However, if your goal is to make a space access-centered, there's a spectrum of more and less access. Access is not as simple as give and receive; it is complex, messy. And, the larger the gathering of people, the bigger the chance is for competing or conflicting access needs. In access-centered work, it's not always possible to meet all needs all of the time. On the contrary, access needs will be prioritized, tended to, and implemented by the group in big, small, formal, informal, and imperfect ways.

Access Needs & Services

All people, disabled and non disabled, have access needs. Some needs are met automatically by society, others are not. But what is an access need?

An access need:

- Arises from an interaction between a person and their environment
- Is what is required in order to communicate (input and output) and participate in a given setting

Access needs can be big or small, temporary or permanent. While many people think about access needs as being physical, they can also be sensory, social, cognitive, intellectual, or communication-based.

Today, many performing arts and other cultural venues offer formal access services to audiences, including:

- Assistive Listening Devices

- American Sign Language (ASL) Interpretation
- Audio Description
- Guided or Tactile Tours
- Captioning (open or closed)
- Accessible Seating
- Sensory Friendly or Relaxed Performances

You may or may not offer these formal services as part of your Fertile Ground show - there are no requirements here. That said, if you would like additional assistance or resources that might help you to offer any of these options, reach out to us at fertileground@portlandtheatre.com.

What may be more feasible for you as a producer is to simply think through the experience of an audience member coming to your performance, and consider how this impacts the way you design, rehearse, and communicate about your project...

Thinking it Through

To encourage organizations to start thinking about access in a concrete way, NDT asked collaborators to join us in an exercise that we learned from access consultant Diane Nutting. The questions below evolved over time. We hope that they will serve as a baseline for you to add, subtract, edit, or update as needed.

Think about a recent arts event you participated in as an attendee. Try not to pick an event you had to go to for work, but one you chose to attend. It could have been virtual, in person, or hybrid. Consider:

How did you find out the event was happening?

- Online?
- Through Social Media?
- A friend or colleague?
- Email?
- A paper flier or snail mail?

How did you decide whether or not to attend? Did you consider:

- Cost?
- Internet connectivity or reliability?
- Computer hardware or software?
- Transportation? (public or private, solo or shared?)
- Weather?

- Your energy levels and/or bandwidth?
- Company or social support?
- Caregiver needs for family, friends (children, adults)?
- Your clothes?
- Schedule?
- Food/meals?
- Allergens? (food- or chemical-based)
- Type of restroom? Location of restroom?
- Illness exposure risk?

Once you decided to go, how did you confirm?

- Buy a ticket?
- Make an online reservation?
- Visit a box office in person?
- Coordinate tickets or reservations with others?

Once you decided to go, what did you have to plan?

- Transportation? (public or private, solo or shared?)
- Weather?
- Your energy levels and/or bandwidth?
- Caregiver needs for family, friends (children, adults)?
- Your clothes?
- Your schedule?
- Food/meals?
- Allergens? (food- or chemical-based)
- Masking and/or testing?

The day of, what did you circle back to, confirm, or solve?

Once you arrived, how did you know what to do?

- Was your transportation drop off nearby or far away?
- Did you find your way solo or with others?
- Were you practicing physical distancing?
- Did you need to find the box office?
- Did you need to find a usable restroom?
- How did you know the event was starting?

During the event, how did you know what was going on?

- Were there visual cues you could see?
- Verbal or other audio cues you could hear?
- Tactile cues you could feel?

During the event, how did you know what to do?

- Could you move freely?
- Make noise?
- Use electronics?
- Ask questions? Take turns?
- Get up and sit back down again?
- Use the restroom and return?
- Participate physically with your body?
- Participate verbally with your voice?

How did you know the event was over?

What did you need to do to make your way back home?

As you thought through your own experience, what access barriers were there?

What offered you access support?

What information was good for you to know ahead of time, as you are the expert of your own needs?

What do you as a host already know about venue options, processes, or projects that can offer access support? Ask yourself, what info could be shared in advance about:

- the physical or digital space?
- the sensory environment?
- the information/intellectual environment?
- the social expectations?
- the agenda or schedule?
- the health and safety precautions?

While doing this activity, you might feel curious about the access needs of people who encounter different barriers than you do. If this happens, be mindful of the pity/charity assumption of disability and the give/receive hierarchy of care. While some curiosity is natural, too much can cross a boundary. Be curious, but don't be intrusive. Remember that the process of identifying and naming access needs is deeply personal.

Furthermore, it is almost always unpaid emotional labor. Building trust to communicate access needs can take weeks, months, or years.

Is Ludus Right for Me?

We strongly encourage our Producers to use Ludus as their Festival ticketing system, but also recognize that it's not the best choice for everyone. Here's the deal:

Ludus Features and Benefits

- Ludus automatically creates a searchable database of all Festival events, allowing patrons to search by show name, filter by type of show, dates, and a variety of other tags you can add to help audiences find your work!
- Audiences can purchase tickets to multiple shows in a single transaction.
- The Festival Pass works seamlessly with Ludus, making it easy for audiences to use their pass to secure tickets to any shows using the Ludus platform.
- The Ludus app makes it easy to sell tickets or issue free tickets to Pass-holders at the door.
- Every Producer sets up their own account on Ludus, giving them the ability to edit their event at any time - make adjustments to your description, ticket prices, add your own promo codes - all without having to go through the Festival to make changes.
- Ludus provides an easy, comprehensive ticketing report, which makes it easy to see how many tickets you've sold, what type, and how much revenue you've earned.
- Ludus offers the option to create a seat map for assigned seating, and set different price levels for different seats. The Festival will have access to all ticketing data, removing the burden from Producers to report sales and audience numbers.
- The Festival will reimburse Ludus users for 50% of Festival Pass tickets, reducing the loss of ticket revenue.
- Fertile Ground will do our best to provide technical support, Ludus app compatible devices, and training to anyone using the Ludus system.

Most of all, the more Producers that use Ludus, the more streamlined, consistent, and easeful the audience's ticket purchasing experience will be.

Ludus Drawbacks and Considerations:

- If the show you're presenting for Fertile Ground is part of your regular company season, you may have subscribers to consider, or need to keep all your sales in the same system for ease of pulling data/sales reports/etc.
- You will be required to offer an unlimited number of free tickets to Pass-holders, which could reduce your overall ticket revenue.
- If you have a ticketing system you've used in the past, a new system involves a learning curve - for us, for you, and for patrons!

The Bottom Line:

The Festival ethos is one of inclusion and accessibility - we try to limit the number of hoops you have to jump through and restrictions you have to observe in order to share your work under the Fertile Ground umbrella. We encourage all Producers to consider how to balance their own needs as Producers with what creates the best experience for the patron, and creates the best Festival experience for all. We will do our best to support you, and your audiences, no matter what.

Appendix: Forms

[Marketing/Self-Producing Workshops Registration](#)

[Marketing Information \(Due February 13th\)](#)