

Northern Focus 2026 Rules, Guidelines, and Information

Welcome to our *seventh* annual *Northern Focus* Photography Project! This spring we are asking for up-and-coming or recreational photographers to send us their best work taken in ND and MN to grace our downtown Main Library location in a photo exhibit. This year we will select one lucky photograph for the cover of *Northern Narratives 2026* and an additional 14 images to be featured in the *Northern Narratives 2026* book!

If you are interested in submitting your work to *Northern Focus 2026*, thank you! **Please read the Rules and Information thoroughly before sending us anything, as not adhering to the guidelines may result in disqualification.** If after reading the below information you need help with submitting your photo or if you have questions about the *Northern Focus* Photography Project, please call Nicole at 701.476.5974 or email nhofer@fargolibrary.org.

RULES

- The project is open for up-and-coming or recreational photographers (age 13+) only. An up-and-coming or recreational photographer is an individual who earns **less than 50%** of their income from photographic work.
- There is no submission fee.
- The deadline for photo submissions is **May 31, 2026**.
- Each participant may submit one photo to the 2026 *Northern Focus* photography project. If the photo was submitted in a previous year of *Northern Focus*, it **cannot** be resubmitted.
- Photo submissions will be accepted from **April 1 – May 31, 2026** using our [official online entry form](#). You will automatically receive an email confirmation after submitting. Hard-copy photos **will not be** accepted.
- Your photo entry must be a **JPEG** or **PNG** attachment that is no larger than **10 MB**, with a minimum of **300dpi** or **2400 x 3000 pixels**. If you submit an image under the minimum requirement, **it may result in disqualification for being selected for the *Northern Narratives* cover**. In addition, your photo may be either portrait or landscape orientation. However, we will not crop or otherwise manipulate a photograph to make it fit a book cover; **therefore, if you choose to use landscape please be aware that the image will be used for the entire cover (back & front) and should have the focal point on the right side.**
- All submissions must be an original photograph and must be taken by the person submitting. No logos or watermarks, or it will result in disqualification. By submitting a photo, you also certify that you did not use any type of AI software/program to generate part or all of the work for you.
- The photographer is responsible for obtaining necessary permissions if the photo contains an identifiable individual.

- All photos must be taken regionally (**within ND/MN**) and convey a sense of the people, places, and/or happenings that make up our great and diverse community.
- Photo entries can be of any photographic medium (black/white, color, digital, manipulated, etc.). **No** AI software/program may be used to generate part or all of the work for you.
- Submitted photos must be suitable for public display and community viewing as determined by the library. Obscene, provocative, or otherwise questionable content will not be considered. In other words, it will neither be displayed in the project exhibit, nor judged for the *Northern Narratives* cover contest.
- The Fargo Public Library reserves the right to decide what constitutes inappropriate content.
- The Fargo Public Library reserves the non-exclusive right to use the photographs at our discretion.
- Photographers retain the copyright to their photographs. By entering the project, photographers agree to have their submitted photographs displayed at any of the Fargo Public Library locations, the library's website, and the library's social media, including being used to promote and publicize future library photo projects/contests or the Fargo Public Library itself, without any fee or other form of compensation.
- Please see additional information below.

EXHIBITION

- All photographs submitted to the *Northern Focus* project will be on display at the downtown Main Library (101 4th St N) from September through October 2026.
- The *Northern Narratives* cover contest winner and honorable mention recipients featured in the book will be gifted a free copy of *Northern Narratives* 2026 book at a reception event in the fall. The event date will be announced after selections are made. If it is not possible to hold or attend the event, featured photographers will be contacted about how to receive them instead.

Exception: Any entries that do not meet the above rules will not be put on display. Please read all rules and information carefully and contact us with questions or concerns so you are not left out!

JUDGING for the NORTHERN NARRATIVES COVER CONTEST

- Photographs submitted to the project will also be evaluated by judges as part of a contest to be on the cover of *Northern Narratives* 2026 and featured photographers within the *Northern Narratives* 2026 book, as long as they meet the rules and guidelines. Entries will be put through a blind judging process by a selection committee. The photography will be judged based on the purposeful, creative use of the following criteria: vision, composition, focus, lighting, and overall emotional impact while conveying a sense of the people, places, and/or happenings that make up our great and diverse community.

- When using landscape orientation please be mindful that the image will be used for the entire cover (back & front) and should have the focal point on the right side as we **will not** crop or otherwise manipulate a photograph just to make it fit. Please check out previous editions of *Northern Narratives* to see how the composition of a photo has to support a book title, etc.

While all evaluated photographs will be put on display, the committee will choose only one as the cover of *Northern Narratives 2026* and 14 additional photographers to be featured within *Northern Narratives 2026* book, to be published later this year. Decisions by our judges are final.