

BEST

OF SPRINGFIELD

2026

VOTING RULES

VOTE ONLINE AT illinoistimes.com/bestofspringfield

We love local: Keep it local
and vote local when possible.

Step 1 - Nominate (Aug. 6-17)

Nominate your Springfield favorites in our write-in ballot at illinoistimes.com/bestofspringfield from 1 a.m. Aug. 6 through 11:59 p.m. Aug. 17, 2026. Nominate in at least 20 categories for your ballot to count. Paper ballots must be received by 5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17 at 1240 S. Sixth St., Springfield, IL 62703. Complete all contact information—unreadable or incomplete ballots will not be counted.

Step 2 - Vote (Sept. 10-21)

Vote for the top nominees from 1 a.m. Sept. 10 through 11:59 p.m. Sept. 21, 2026. Winners will be announced in the Best of Springfield® 2026 issue on Oct. 29 and celebrated that evening at the Best of Springfield Party at the BOS Center. Tickets: illinoistimestix.com.

Vote online: illinoistimes.com/bestofspringfield

“ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT”	CIVIC & COMMUNITY			CANNABIS
Abraham Lincoln historic site	Apartment community	Winery	Hot dog	Biggest cannabis selection
Art studio/gallery	Business giving back to the community	FOOD	Ice cream or froyo	Biggest CBD selection
Charity event	City official	Asian	Indian	Budtender and location
Director of local theater	Clergy person	Bakery	Italian	Cannabis dispensary
Drive-time radio show name and station	County official	BBQ	Lake club	Cannabis strain
Festival	Facebook page	Biscuits and Gravy	Late-night eats location	CBD store
Free entertainment	Nonprofit	Breakfast	Mexican restaurant	Edible
Holiday Event	Place to volunteer	Brunch	New restaurant (opened after 8/1/25)	Health and beauty cannabis-infused product
Local comedian group	Unsung hero	Build your own bowl	Outdoor dining	Place to buy accessories for cannabis use
Local individual comedian	Up-and-coming leader	Burger	Overall restaurant	
Local living author	DRINK	Cajun seafood	Pizza	GOODS & SERVICES
Local podcast	Bartender & location name	Caterer	Place for date night	Accountant
Local sports team & sport Museum	Beer garden	Chef and restaurant name	Place for Steak	Auto service
Place to buy local art	Beer selection (on tap)	Chicken strips	Restaurant for dessert	Bank
Place to go downtown	Coffee house	Chili	Seafood	Barber & location
Place to see a play or musical indoor	Craft brewery	Cookies	Server & location	Barber shop
Place to see a play or musical outdoor	Happy hour	Diner	Soul food	Car wash - automatic
Place To Take A Selfie	Juice or smoothie bar	Donut shop	Soup	Collision center
Play or musical	Margaritas	Drive thru	Sports bar and grill	Credit union
Portrayal of a female lead in a theatrical production	NA cocktail	Farm-to-table restaurant	Sub/Sandwich	Dry cleaner
Portrayal of a male lead in a theatrical production	New bar (opened after 8/1/25)	Fine dining	Sushi	Event planner
Public art/mural (intersections)	Overall bar	Food truck	Tacos	Event rental company
Radio personality & station	Place for darts	French Fries	Take out only (No indoor dining)	Financial advisor & name of institution
Tourist spot in Springfield not related to Abraham Lincoln	Place for pool	Fried chicken	Thai	Flower shop
Visual artist	Specialty cocktail & location name	Fried fish	Vegetarian-friendly	Funeral home
	Sports bar	Gluten-free menu	Wedding cakes	Hair salon
	Trivia night	Gyro	Wings	Hair stylist (name of location)
	Wine bar	Horseshoe		Insurance agency & agent national

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Insurance independent agent & agency	Gym under 100 members	Handyman		
Junk removal	Hair Removal	Home builder	Martial arts studio (kids)	Bicycle shop
Lawyer & firm name	Health food grocery store	Home furnishings	Orthodontics	Bookstore - used
Mortgage lender	Holistic-health center	Home improvement store	Pediatrics center	Cashier
Moving company	Home care	Home Inspector	Playground	Clothing store - men
Nail salon	Hospice	Home remodeling company	Private school	Clothing store - used
Photographer	Hospice Care	Kitchen design	Public school (9-12)	Clothing store - women
Real estate agency	Independent-living community	Landscape company	Public school (K-8)	Consignment & resale store
Real estate team	Lasik	Landscape designer	Summer camp	Convenience Store
Realtor & name of agency	Martial arts studio (adult)	Landscape supply	Swim lessons	Gift Store
Tattoo artist and name of shop	Massage therapist & spa name	Lawn care	Tutoring or learning center	Grocery Store
Tattoo shop	Medical doctor & practice name	Nursery		Jewelry store
Tire shop	Medical equipment	Paint store	MUSIC	Liquor store
Towing service	Medical facility	Painter	Bass player	
Veterinarian clinic	“Medical spa (Botox, filler, etc.)”	Paving	Choral group	Meat selection
Wedding venue	Minor emergency clinic	Pest control company	Cover music band	Natural food or supplement store
	Nurse & practice name	Place to buy a mattress	DJ - their name and club name	New business downtown (opened after 8/1/25)
PET SERVICES	Orthopedic care	Plumbing company	DJ Wedding	New business not downtown (opened after 8/1/25)
Dog-friendly bar or restaurant	Personal trainer certified	Pool & spa supplies	Drummer	
Mobile pet grooming	Pharmacy	Pool builder	Guitarist	Optical shop
Pet boarding	Physical therapy	Power washing	Horn player	Pawn shop
Pet daycare	Pilates studio	Roofing company	Keyboardist	Place to feed the slots
Pet event	Practice your golf swing	Tree farm	Live music venue - large	Produce selection
Pet grooming	Spa (no injections used)	Tree trimming/removal	Live music venue - small	Retail shop
Pet retail store	Weight-loss clinic	Window & siding company	Music festival	Seafood selection
Pet sitting	Women’s healthcare center		Open mic	Thrift store
Pet training	“Yoga instructor, certified”	KIDS STUFF	Original music band	Vape shop
Pet waste removal (pooper scooper)	Yoga studio	Children’s clothing store	Overall band & their genre	Wine store
		Children’s support organization	Place for karaoke	
HEALTH & WELLNESS		Dance studio	Place to dance	Complete info below to submit nomination
Assisted-living community	HOME & GARDEN	Day care center	Songwriter	
Chiropractor (name & name of clinic)	AC/Heating company	Family fun spot	Vocalist female	
Cosmetic surgeon	Air duct cleaning	Gymnastics	Vocalist male	
Dentist & name of dental office	Carpet & flooring	Kids birthday party place		
Dermatology Practice	Cleaning service (residential)	Kid-friendly place	RETAIL	
Dietitian (person’s name and company name)	Electrical company	Kid-friendly restaurant	Antique or vintage store	
Esthetician	Foundation repair	Kids’ art classes	Appliance Store	
Golf course	Furniture store	Kids’ eat free	Auto dealer new	State:
Gym or fitness center	Garden center	Kids’ events/day camps	Auto dealer used	
			Auto salesperson (first and last name & dealer)	Zip: