LOCAL CANDIDATE HEADSHOT INSTRUCTIONS

Your headshot is one of the first things people may see when they meet you online or through your Miss America preliminary. The good news? You don't *need* an expensive photo shoot to get a great headshot! Here are some tips and recommendations!

Option 1: Professional Headshots

For a polished, pageant-ready look, consider working with a professional photographer who specializes in portraits, pageants, or seniors.
Highly Recommended: If you choose the professional route, Matty Jacobsen with Magic Dreams Productions comes highly recommended. A professional can help with posing, lighting, wardrobe, and creating an image that feels like you.

- Bring a few outfit options.
- Share examples of headshots you love.
- Communicate that the photo will be used for your Miss America preliminary.
- Ask about hair/makeup recommendations and what digital images are included.

Option 2: Senior Photos

Already have senior photos you love? Use them! Look for a close-up that is:

- Clear and high resolution.
- Well-lit.
- Free of distracting backgrounds.
- Current and representative of you.

You may already have the perfect headshot in your photo gallery!

Option 3: Use Your Phone

You can absolutely take a great headshot yourself!
For the best results:

- Use natural light—face a window or stand outside in open shade.
- Choose a simple, uncluttered background.
- Use your phone's back camera when possible.
- Keep the camera at eye level.
- Don't use digital zoom.
- Take lots of photos with different expressions and angles.
- Skip heavy filters and editing. You should look like your headshot in real life!

What to Wear

Choose something polished and comfortable that makes you feel confident. Solid colors, simple dresses, blouses, or blazers work well. Avoid busy patterns and logos. Also, excessive jewelry can also be distracting. Fun earrings are definitely on trend, though!

Final Check

Before submitting, make sure your photo is:

- Clear and high resolution
- Well-lit
- Current
- Cropped

Most importantly, don't overthink it! Whether you work with a professional, use senior photos, or take it on your phone, your headshot should showcase your personality and confidence.

Examples:















