Art Guild of Clifton
Helen K. Rusnak
Visual Arts, Music, and Performing Arts Memorial Scholarship

Application may be submitted using Email [or] US Postal Service.

- **Email Art Guild of Clifton at: artguildofclifton@gmail.com**
- **Regular mail to:**
  Art Guild of Clifton
  P.O. Box 288
  Clifton, VA 20124

Deadline: Must be received by June 15, 2026

(if a postmark date – provide email to AGC of pending delivery)

PURPO5SE: This scholarship program honors the memory of Helen K. Rusnak (1940–2022), a founding member of the Art Guild of Clifton and a lifelong patron of the arts. We are proud to establish this distinguished commission in Helen's name to nurture the next generation of talented students in visual arts, digital arts, vocal and instrumental music, dance, and performing arts.

Helen dedicated her life to the performing arts, particularly vocal and theater arts, sharing their beauty with her family, friends, colleagues, and the public. Her work, marked by creativity and insight, celebrated the profound impact of all the arts on humanity. As a driving force behind the founding of the Art Guild of Clifton, she demonstrated unwavering passion and vision.

Through this scholarship, we continue Helen's legacy by supporting graduating high school seniors from Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) in their pursuit of undergraduate education in visual, musical, and performing arts.

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Program Requirements and Criteria

Applicant Requirements:

- Must be a High School Senior graduating in the Class of 2026.
- Must attend an FCPS high school in Fairfax County, VA
- Must have a minimum 2.5 GPA on a scale of 4.0 and demonstrate artistic talent.
- Applicants must supply two letters of recommendation from their teachers, with at least one and preferably both in their related arts field.
- Applicants must be undergraduates focusing on visual, musical, or performing arts.

Key Selection Criteria for Visual Arts:

Submission of an original body of work in the visual arts. Visual Art portfolios must contain a maximum of three works, photographed and submitted as JPEG (.jpg) file format with this application. Files should be at least **300 dpi**. Each JPEG file should be no greater than 7 megabytes. Each work of art must be accompanied by a submitted image.

AGC use only: *Applicant's ID*: 2026AGC_____

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Film submissions could be in the form of a trailer of a film they created. If a film is a group project, the applicant needs to describe their role in each aspect of filmmaking, script, storyboard, sets, costumes, camera, and sound production, as well as direction. The teachers' recommendations should also include their knowledge of the student's participation in the creative and production aspects of the film.

Submitted images will use this naming convention in the file name:

LastName_First Name_SchoolName_Category_Title or Part of Title.jpg

Example: *Taylor_Alyssa_Robinson_DigitalArt_Surreal Landscape.jpg*

Art forms of expression are Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Mixed Media, Collage, Mosaics, Photography, and Film. Mediums are only limited by imagination. **Painting** will be considered to be art created by applying pigment to a two-dimensional surface (examples include, but are not limited to: Oil, acrylic, watercolor, gouache, tempera, ink, encaustic, fresco, spray paint, etc. applied on canvas, canvas board, paper or any flat surface). **Film** applicants submit a sample of one piece (monologue or piece from a film), and not snippets of various other performances. Works copied from published photographs, the internet, or existing works as well as AI created works should not be submitted. Copyright infringement and plagiarism results in disqualification.

All works should demonstrate technical skill, personal voice or vision, and originality.

Recommendation from the teacher/instructor. At least one recommendation, and preferably both, must be from a teacher or instructor in a related arts field.

Key Selection Criteria for Music and Performing Arts:

Submission of an original body of work in musical or performing arts must contain two audition or performance tape/video, 3-5 minutes in length. If submission is a group project, the applicant needs to describe the extent of their role in each of the typical aspects of performance: singing, playing, composition, sets, costumes, camera and sound production, as well as direction. The teachers' recommendations should also include their personal knowledge of the student's participation in the creative and production aspects of the group's performance.

Submission will use this naming convention in the file name:

LastName_FirstName_SchoolName_Category_Title or Part of Title.jpg
Example: *Taylor_Alyssa_Robinson_Title .jpg/mpg/wav*

Musical and performing art forms of expression are vocal, instrumental, dance, theater arts, and music composition. Copyright infringement and plagiarism will be cause for disqualification.

Performing Arts Guidance:

You should be easily identified in your sample video audition recording. If you are not performing a solo, reviewers should not have to search for you as the performer in an ensemble.

- Similarly, it is strongly suggested that you submit samples with few other performers sharing the stage with you. This ensures reviewers can (1) identify you and (2) focus on your performance without taking into consideration the performance of your peers also presented in the sample. If you submit a group performance, please do not include sections where you are not present in the performance.

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- Be aware of the audio and lighting in your sample! Presentation is important. Your sample should be well-lit, clean, and look as professional as you can make it, without extraneous sounds save for an audience.

AREA REQUIREMENTS All Genres:

- At the beginning of your sample, record a twenty second introduction highlighting your name, year, school, the piece or act you will perform, and your career aspirations.
- Vocal: Submit at least two samples of your vocal performance each being a complete song.
- Instrumental Music: Submit two samples of performance, not snippets of various other performance pieces. Your instrumental performance should be easily heard and identified within the piece.
- Acting: Submit two samples of a monologue or piece from film, and not snippets of various other performances.
- Dance: Submit two samples of performance, and not snippets of various choreography. • Inform the reviewers if you or someone else choreographed the piece.
- Theatre: Your samples should include part of a monologue followed by a movement component (song and or dance) as appropriate.
- All works demonstrate technical skill, personal voice or vision, and originality.
- Recommendation from the teacher/instructor. At least one recommendation, and preferably both, must be from a teacher or instructor in a related arts field.

All Program Requirements:

- Application and letters of recommendation must be received by the deadline, **June 15, 2026**.
- An incomplete and/or unsigned application will be ineligible.
- Awarded scholarship checks will be made out to the institution named in the application. If no institution is yet chosen, a check will be written to the institution at time of student's acceptance. No check will be written directly to the student.
- The Art Guild of Clifton's Executive Board will review the scholarship applications.
- Judging will be based upon the following criteria: originality/creativity, composition, skill proficiency of tools and processes, concept/idea, quality, presentation, and fulfilling entry guidelines.
- Notifications to successful applicants will take place by June 30, 2026.

Amount of Scholarship:

Applicants are eligible for up to **$2,000** total per individual scholarship. All scholarships are not necessarily granted depending on the quality of the applications and the works submitted.

Students who do not yet know the program they plan to attend should also apply but will not receive a check until the program is selected. Checks will be written when the student furnishes program information to AGC Board. Checks will be written before **August 15** of the current year, or the scholarship amount will be forfeited.

All Checks are made out to the program selected, not to the student. Please be sure to include this information in your application or to give it to AGC Board as soon as possible.

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Student, please note: Applicants should provide the following guidelines to Instructor(s)/Teacher(s), who will be providing recommendation(s) for your participation in a program. Remember to give your teacher time to write this recommendation.

Guidelines for Teacher Recommendation Letter

Attention Teacher:

In order for the student to qualify for the Scholarship Program, your letter or e-mail of recommendation must be postmarked on or before **June 15, 2026** (provide email notifying AGC of pending delivery).

Please use the following as guidelines when preparing your recommendation letter:

- How long have you known the applicant?
- How focused is the student on his/her chosen arts medium?
- Describe the artistic growth and development of the student.
- How diversified is the student within the medium?
- How is the student's overall academic performance?
- What future course or plan of study has been discussed with the student?
- What guidance have you provided?
- Why would you want this scholarship to be awarded to this student?
- Please include your contact information in the recommendation in case there are questions.

The recommendation letter may be submitted using email [or] regular mail.

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  P.O. Box 288
  Clifton, VA 20124

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