

FY 2026 Arts Scholarship - GUIDELINES

Application Calendar

October 1, 2025	Scholarship applications available online at hac.gosmart.org
January 22, 2026	Deadline for applications. Applicants can submit up to 11:59 PM.
May 1, 2026	Earliest announcement of grant award or rejection

General Information

The Howard County Arts Council is a private, non-profit organization that serves the citizens of Howard County by fostering the arts, artists, and arts organizations. In keeping with its mission, the Arts Council established a scholarship fund to provide opportunities for emerging artists to study, develop and practice their art.

The goals of the Arts Scholarship Program are to:

- Encourage students to pursue a career in the arts.
- Assist students with tuition costs and fees.

For questions about the Scholarship Program or application, please contact the Arts Council office at 410.313.2787, Monday through Friday between the hours of 9AM and 5PM.

Eligibility

- Applicant must be a legal resident of Howard County.
- Applicant must plan to enroll at an accredited college or university in a full-time (at least 12 credits per semester) undergraduate degree program in the arts or, if no degree program is available in the student's discipline, the student must plan to enroll in a general program with an emphasis in the arts.
- Scholarship funds must be used primarily for tuition and fees. Students whose tuition and/or fees are being covered by other scholarships should contact the Arts Council office to determine alternative ways in which scholarship funds may be applied.

Deadline

The deadline to submit your Arts Scholarship application is **January 22, 2026 by 11:59PM.**

Review Process

There is a three-step review process:

- The Arts Council staff will review applications for eligibility, completeness, and accuracy.
- A Scholar Review Panel made up of artists and academics will review the applications and recommend finalists to the Scholarship Committee. The make-up of the Scholar Review Panel will be determined by the disciplines of students submitting applications.

Applicants will be reviewed by at least one professional working in the discipline in which they are applying.

- A Scholarship Committee, made up of Arts Council Directors and staff as well as community members, will then interview recommended finalists and select scholarship recipients. Finalists will be asked to audition or bring in work for this formal review.

Review Criteria

Each applicant will be reviewed based on the following criteria as demonstrated in work samples and other application materials submitted:

- Artistic merit or excellence.
- Demonstrated understanding of artistic discipline.
- Ability of the student to articulate artistic concepts and influences.
- Commitment to a career in the arts.
- A successful record in an academic setting.

Required Materials

- Two (2) signed, sealed, and completed recommendation forms from teachers or artists who are familiar with the applicant's artistic work mailed to Howard County Arts Council, 8510 High Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043 (until November 30) Send to 8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City, MD 21043 after December 1. A link to download these forms is provided within the application.
- One (1) official copy of the applicant's school transcript, sealed by the school mailed to 8510 High Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043 (until November 30) Send to 8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City, MD 21043 after December 1. Student or parent/guardian must request this from the current high school.
- Upload work samples that reflect applicant's best work and artistic ability. Upload no more than a total of 10 minutes of video sample, 20 digital images, or 8 pages of text, not to exceed 500MB total.

Do not submit additional materials other than what is requested.

Notification

Applicants will be notified in writing no earlier than **May 1, 2026** as to the status of their application once the selection process is complete. If possible, the Arts Council will publicly recognize Scholarship recipients during the Arts Council's annual gala, Celebration of the Arts..

Disbursement of Funds

Scholarship funds will be sent directly to the bursar or registrar's office of the recipient's choice, only after the Arts Council receives verification that the applicant is enrolled full-time (at least

12 credit hours per semester) in an arts-based degree program at an accredited two or four year college, university, art school or conservatory.

The Scholarship Committee is not required to award all of the scholarship monies available and reserves the right to forward any un-awarded monies to the following year's fund.

Application Guidelines

- Only complete applications will be considered. An application which is incomplete, unclear, conditional, or which contains irregularities of any kind may be rejected without evaluation.
- Do not submit materials other than those required. Additional items such as hard-copy photographs, color copies, programs, articles, etc. will not be included in the review process.
- All application materials must be received by **January 22, 2026 by 11:59PM**. No late or incomplete applications will be accepted.
- All decisions of the Scholarship Committee and the Howard County Arts Council are final. Submission of an application constitutes an understanding and agreement of the conditions set forth in these guidelines.