

**AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS
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**Ronald G. Pogorzelski and Lester D. Yankee Memorial Scholarships
Frequently Asked Questions**

Do I need to be a member of the American Guild of Organists to apply for the Pogorzelski-Yankee Memorial Organ Scholarship?

No, you do not need to be a member of the Guild to apply for this scholarship. We encourage all students who meet the criteria to apply.

I haven't applied to any colleges yet. Can I wait to see if I win the award and then apply to some colleges?

While your college selection may be pending at the time of the scholarship deadline, it is expected that students would have already applied to at least one college by the time the scholarship application is due. We are seeking students who are serious about the pursuit of organ and sacred music and expect that they would have already identified and applied to possible colleges, universities or conservatories.

In Fall 2020, I plan to attend college in a country other than where I live now. Can the scholarship be used in another country?

No, the 2020-21 awards may only be used in US colleges, conservatories, or universities. In the U.S., the scholarship must be used at an institution that holds national or regional accreditation.

My parent is my organ instructor. Can he or she write one of my letters of recommendation?

Yes, if your parent is your primary organ instructor and is providing significant instruction. We will not accept recommendation letters from parents under any other circumstances.

I am home schooled. Can I still apply?

Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria and can provide the same level of documentation as other students.

How many other people are applying for this scholarship? How many scholarships will be awarded?

We do not know how many people will apply.

Can someone accompany me on the organ or another instrument during my video performance?

No. The Guild expects each candidate to submit a solo performance. We do allow another person in the video for page turns or stop adjustments but the scholarship candidate is the only performer allowed in the video.

How do I know if my recommenders submitted their letters on time?

Each recommender will receive an automated email request after the application form is successfully submitted. The applicant will also receive a notice when a letter has been submitted. You may also call AGO Headquarters to confirm the letters have been submitted. The AGO is not responsible for recommenders who fail to submit a supporting letter by the deadline. Please choose your recommenders carefully.

Why do you need my family’s financial information? What happens to that information?

The founders of this scholarship were clear that the scholarship funds must be awarded to students with “financial need.” The scholarship committee needs basic financial information about your family and the college you plan to attend to make a fair assessment about financial need. In addition to providing figures and dollar amounts, you have an opportunity to describe your financial need in the essay. The information you share on your application is entered through a secure website with strong privacy protocols. Your individual information will only be viewed by AGO staff and committee members who are working on the scholarship judging process and it will be held in strict confidence. Aggregate information, about all students, will be de-identified and shared in general reports about the range of financial need among those who applied.

What if I don’t meet the deadline?

If you cannot submit a complete application by the deadline of February 15, 2020, then you will not be considered for the scholarship. A complete application must include all of the required information, file uploads, and attachments, including the letters of recommendation from your recommenders. TIP: Allow ample time to gather and upload the necessary materials. The AGO will not be held responsible for any late applications and will not review any late applications.

What can I use the scholarship for? Tuition only? Room and board? Travel?

The scholarship will be applied to the scholarship recipients’ accounts at their post-secondary institutions and can be used for the full cost of attendance. Depending on how the scholarship is used, it may be tax-free or taxable. Consult your financial aid office and the [IRS for more information](#). *It may be in your best interest to apply the scholarship to tuition first, then other qualified college-related expenses, and lastly, room and board, if necessary.*

Scholarships used in the following categories are deemed tax-free by the IRS:

- Tuition and fees required to enroll at or attend an eligible educational institution, and
- Course-related expenses, such as fees, books, supplies, and equipment that are required for the courses at the eligible educational institution. These items must be required of all students in your course of instruction to be considered tax-free.

Expenses that are not considered “qualified educational expenses” (by the IRS) and a scholarship used for these expenses may be taxable, include:

- Room and board,
- Travel,
- Research,
- Clerical help, or
- Equipment and other expenses that are not required for enrollment in or attendance at an eligible educational institution.

When will I find out if I have been awarded a scholarship?

The committee will notify all applicants and award winners on or near April 1, 2020. The committee may also contact applicants to verify information or conduct phone interviews prior to that date.

If I am awarded the scholarship, when will I receive the money?

The Guild will distribute the funds directly to the college where the student is enrolled and ask the bursar's office to apply the funds to the scholarship recipient's account. It is up to the student to report all scholarship awards to the college, and if necessary, to the IRS, depending on how the student chooses to use the funds.

If I switch colleges, may I take the scholarship with me?

Yes, this scholarship follows the student as long as the student continues to meet all of the eligibility criteria and the subsequent college is regionally or nationally accredited.

Is the scholarship renewable?

The scholarship is renewable for freshman, sophomore, and junior undergraduates. The scholarship is renewable for those students only if they maintain good standing, meet the continuing criteria, and provide verification of such.

For other questions related specifically to this scholarship, please contact American Guild of Organists Headquarters at: info@agohq.org or 212-870-2311, ext. 4318.

We will attempt to respond to all inquiries about the scholarship but may not be able to respond to all inquiries in the days leading up to the deadline. PLEASE plan ahead.

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