

The 2026 Sara Bickman Music and Arts Summer Internship Award

The Department of Visual and Performing Arts is now seeking proposals for the Sara Bickman Music and Arts Summer Internship Award.

Deadline: Proposals must be received by **Friday February 27, 2026** at noon (no exceptions!).

Send proposals to the V&PA Department Administrator, Christina McGovern at chmcgovern@clarku.edu

What is the Bickman Award? The Sara Bickman Music and Arts Summer Internship Award was established by James Bickman, a member of the class of 1939, and his sons Martin and David Bickman, in memory of his wife and their mother, Sara Bickman. The fund shall be used to support summer internships for undergraduate students majoring in the visual and performing arts. Awards shall be made to students in their junior year for projects to be conducted between their junior and senior years.

Who is eligible? Any student majoring in one of the V&PA programs in their junior year is eligible to apply. The project proposed must be completed in the summer between the junior and senior year.

What is eligible for funding?

Projects can fall into one of two categories for this award:

1. Formal summer internship, workshop, symposium, courses, etc.

- a.** These types of programs often require applications and have very structured costs and schedules. Program details can also be attached or linked as supplemental information in the application.
- b.** Proposals that involve application to an internship or program should proceed to apply, with the understanding that upon formal acceptance they will be able to receive the funding approved by V&PA.
- c.** In some cases, students may want to indicate possible alternate plans, especially if the primary plan involves as-yet unknowns (such as acceptance to a program). In the event that a program falls through, are there other possible uses for the award, or not? Be concrete about these alternate plans in your application. An application with reasonable “backups” will likely be judged more viable than one without.

2. Independent research and/or creative work

- a.** Proposals of this type will need fuller explanation than those that involve participating in a structured program. Requests to fund equipment, living expenses, and other costs will be considered. Because equipment purchases revert to the awardee, requests involving equipment must be especially clear and precise about their necessity to the proposed project, and must explain why this equipment cannot be borrowed from existing sources.
 - b.** Students with proposals for independent projects will need to work closely with a faculty sponsor to formulate an agreed-upon plan of action, schedule, and budget.
- NB:** While Bickman funds are typically used for travel, equipment, fees, etc., under certain circumstances they may also be used for housing and food in support of a project that would otherwise not be possible.

How to apply

1. Discuss your project with a relevant faculty mentor, who agrees to serve as your advisor for the project.
2. Complete the project proposal following the format outline later in this document
3. Submit the proposal to the V&PA Department Administrator, Christina McGovern at ChMcGovern@clarku.edu by noon on February 27, 2026.
4. The V&PA faculty committee will review applications in March and inform applicants of decisions promptly.
5. Proposals that involve an application to an internship or program should proceed to apply, with the understanding that upon formal acceptance they will be able to receive any funding approved by V&PA.

How the application will be judged

Very importantly, your proposal cannot all be written in a predictive/exploratory mode—i.e., it cannot be just a series of “I plan to explore” or “I plan to locate” statements. Instead, the proposal must make very clear that you have already done your research and have formulated a solid, workable plan for the project.

Please note that in each award category—formalized program and independent project—your application must demonstrate a level of seriousness, forethought, organization, and ability typical of successful past Bickman awardees.

The point of this application is not only to tell the faculty what you plan to do, *but also to unequivocally demonstrate that you are fully capable of doing this work*, in an extended and serious way, over the course of one summer. Proposals that evince a lack of effort, sloppy presentation, or an inability to “self-start” the project are likely to be rejected. The stakes of this document—and faculty’s decision-making process—are very high because, once begun, the student must go on to complete the project on their own, making proper use of the funds awarded.

Requirements after receiving a Bickman Award

Final Project Report: Submitted by due date tba September, 2026

Participate in Fall Fest: Fall semester 2026

Proposal Format

1. Cover Sheet (one page)

Project Title:

Student Name:

Email Address:

Student's Major:

Faculty Mentor Name:

Faculty Mentor Email:

2. Narrative

A brief narrative describing the rationale for the project (maximum 600 words). This may include the significance of the proposed work and goals. You should show how you are qualified to complete the project. You may also wish to discuss how this project furthers your intellectual/creative/academic development at Clark.

3. One-page resume of student applicant.

4. Budget

A detailed budget (one-page maximum) including all categories of anticipated expenditures must accompany the proposal, amount requested, and additional funding sources (if applicable).

5. Timeline

Proposals must also include a brief timeline (one-page maximum) that outlines a plan for accomplishing the project's goals.

6. Faculty letter of support

The faculty advisor for your project must write a letter in support of your application to the V&PA chair. Please allow ample time for this!