



## **SPJ Georgia Annual High School Scholarship 2026**

**ATTENTION: HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS**

**WHAT:**

High school seniors enrolled in a public school in Georgia – and who plan to declare journalism their major in college – are encouraged to apply to this scholarship from The Georgia Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

**FORMAT:** Entrants can submit into one of the following three categories:

Digital Essay: Write a 500-word essay on one of the questions below.

Podcast Episode: Record a 5-minute audio episode on one of the questions below.

Broadcast Segment: Tape a 1:30 to 2-minute video segment on one of the questions below.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. How can journalists distinguish their work from that of bloggers, influencers, citizen journalists, and others providing content online?
2. What journalist (print, online, TV, radio) has most shaped your vision of what a journalist should be?
3. Explain one of the principles of journalism and why it remains critical today.
4. How does artificial intelligence (AI) shape the way you contribute to student media and/or journalism/media in general?

**APPLICATION PERIOD:**

November 1, 2025 to April 1, 2026 (closes at 11:59 p.m. EST)

**ENTRY FEE:**

\$0 (FREE!)

**AWARD:**

The first-place winner in each category will receive a \$500 stipend toward college fees, funded by SPJ Georgia, SPJ Region 3, and private donors.

Winners will be notified via email, and the names of winners will be announced in May 2026. The winning digital essay, podcast episode, and broadcast segment will be posted on <https://spjgeorgia.com>, and the winners will be featured on SPJ Georgia's social media channels.

**GENERAL RULES:**

1. Entries shall be submitted via email to [spjgeorgia@gmail.com](mailto:spjgeorgia@gmail.com), either as attachment or, for larger files, using a download link. Contestants must add a short cover letter including the name of their high school and where they are planning to go to college.
2. Contestants must compose original work with limited-to-no guidance from others. Be creative and apply your journalistic skills.
3. The Society of Professional Journalists Georgia Chapter will have the right to edit, publish, or otherwise duplicate any digital essay, podcast episode, or broadcast segment entered into the contest without payment to the original author.
4. Due to the volume of entries received, only first-place winners will be directly contacted.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. The contest is open to high school seniors enrolled in a public school in the state of Georgia. The student must have plans to declare Journalism as their major in college.
2. Contestants may submit only one essay, podcast episode, or broadcast entry during any given contest year.
3. No individual who has previously won a national SPJ essay scholarship, including other multimedia efforts, will be eligible to compete for this scholarship opportunity.

**CONTEST RULES FOR ESSAY, PODCAST EPISODE, AND BROADCAST SEGMENT:**

1. Participants must answer one of the four questions provided above.
2. Entries must be submitted by 11:59 pm on Friday, April 1, 2026

**3. Digital essays must:**

- Be written in English
- Be typewritten and double-spaced,

- Contain at least 350 words, but no more than 500 words.
- Properly identify any quotations or copyrighted material used. Failure to identify non-original material (footnotes) will result in disqualification.

**4. Podcast episodes must:**

- Be recorded in English
- Be 5 minutes in length
- Include at least 2 voices
- Include at least one sound element that is not a person talking
- Be submitted in mp3, m4a or wav format.

**5. Broadcast Segments must:**

- Be recorded in English
- Be 1:30 to 2 minutes in length
- Be in the format of a television news segment
- Include at least two soundbites
- Include a stand-up
- Include B-Roll/video, audio/voice over and natural sound
- Be submitted in .mov or .mp4 format.

**JUDGING/TIMING:**

Judging will be completed by a panel of qualified SPJ members. All winners will be notified in May 2026.

**MORE ON THE MISSION OF SPJ:**

The Society of Professional Journalists is a national organization dedicated to the perpetuation of a free press as the cornerstone of our nation and our liberty.

**SPJ GEORGIA SUPPORTS THE MISSION BY:**

- Upgrading the journalistic profession wherever possible throughout Georgia. Cooperating with and assisting colleges and universities in developing strong journalism schools and departments.
- Encouraging diversity among journalists and developing a profession that is representative of the public it serves.
- Informing and educating the public on issues concerning freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and speaking out on such issues.
- Encouraging freedom of information and preserving and protecting public access to its government.
- Supporting journalists fighting to maintain the First Amendment, the public's access to government, and the public's right to know.
- Supporting and encouraging professional development and continuing education of journalists.