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## 2026 Walton County Artist of the Year Application

**Deadline: Application and all required materials must be submitted by Sunday, May 31, 2026 by 5 p.m. CDT.**

**Attn: Lisa Foster**  
**Walton County Tourism Department**  
**25777 U.S. Highway 331 South**  
**Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459**  
[Lisa@WCFLTourism.com](mailto:Lisa@WCFLTourism.com)

### **Evaluation Process:**

A panel of judges from marketing, public relations and art backgrounds will review all submitted artwork and evaluate each artist to determine the best candidate to represent Walton County. Judges score the originality, authenticity, marketability and overall appeal of the artists' work. Three finalists will be invited to attend an in-person interview and bring three (3) pieces of artwork to present to a panel of judges. One artist will be chosen as the 2026 Artist of the Year and announced at the Walton County Tourism Annual Meeting in October 2026.

### **Benefits include:**

#### **The Artist Award**

The Walton County Tourism Department awards \$4,000 to the winning artist for a unique commissioned piece to be displayed in the Visitor Center. The artwork should represent the style of the Artist of the Year and support WCT's mission as well. The artwork will be celebrated, displayed and publicized respective of the medium.

#### **Media Pitching**

Included in media pitching to local, regional and national media, when deemed appropriate by Walton County Tourism based on story angle or overarching theme.

#### **FAM Tours**

Inclusion in travel writer familiarization tours, when deemed appropriate by Walton County Tourism based on story angle or overarching theme.

- Artist information included in press kits used throughout the year.
- Web page features on [VisitSouthWalton.com](http://VisitSouthWalton.com). and [WaltonCountyFLTourism.com](http://WaltonCountyFLTourism.com).
- Regular inclusions or mentions on the Tourism Department's social media channels.
- Additional opportunities to represent Walton County may be possible throughout the year.



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**Deadline for submissions is Sunday, May 31, 2026 by 5 p.m. CDT.**

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Industry Relations Specialist Lisa Foster at (850) 333-2728 or [Lisa@WCFLTourism.com](mailto:Lisa@WCFLTourism.com) or visit the Artist of the Year website [WaltonCountyAOY.com](http://WaltonCountyAOY.com).

“The TDC does fantastic work in promoting and building so much of the lifestyle we all enjoy here in Walton County, including promoting the arts and the value that brings to county visitors and residents. Their reach is really amazing!

As Artist of the Year, you have the opportunity to use that partnership and that reach, to broaden **your** voice...not just about your work or your vision...but to communicate your own passion for what the arts do for our world. It’s a tremendous opportunity for any artist who cares about what their work—and the arts in general—means to our Walton County community.” — Doug Foltz, 2020 Walton County Artist of the Year.

## **2026 Walton County Artist of the Year Application FAQs**

- 1. Who qualifies to apply for Artist of the Year?** Any artist who has lived in Walton County at least since January 2026 and/or has owned and operated an art gallery/studio with its primary headquarters in Walton County since then. Previous overall Artist of the Year winners will be excluded from reapplying.
- 2. When will the award be announced?** The 2026 Artist of the Year will be announced at the Walton County Tourism Annual Meeting in October 2026.
- 3. Can you submit an actual piece of artwork for representation?** Yes! However, you must still submit three (3) files of your artwork and all required materials outlined in this application by no later than **5 p.m. CDT on Sunday, May 31**. Any physical artwork must be delivered to Lisa Foster at 25777 US Highway 331 South, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459. Artwork can be picked up after pre-judging is completed on or after July 10. All artwork must be picked up no later than July 31.



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## 2026 Walton County Artist of the Year Application

PLEASE PRINT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

**CATEGORY:** Please circle or highlight the category that best describes your artwork:

**Oil | Watercolor | Acrylic | Pastel | Mixed Media | Video | Photo | Digital  
Sculpture | Metal | Clay | Fiber | Performance | Music**

**Other** \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE CHOOSE ONE SUBMISSION METHOD & PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

**Physical Submissions:** A 4 x 6 photograph of each of three art submissions, numbered one, two and three on the back. Include the dimensions, medium used, and artist's initials on the back of each photograph. If you are submitting artistry that cannot be conveyed through photograph see below for "Performer or Other." A CD containing the three images saved with the corresponding number of the photographs (i.e., #1, #2 and #3) is required. Images must be a minimum of 300 dpi. Write your name & phone number on the CD.

**Electronic Submissions:** Submit 3 files as examples of work and required documents digitally. Images cannot be larger than 3MB each, and should be submitted electronically via DropBox, Google Drive, or emailed to [Lisa@WCFLTourism.com](mailto:Lisa@WCFLTourism.com). Each of the three submissions should be named with submitting artist's name and numbered one, two and three as the file name (i.e. LisaFoster\_1.pdf); also include the dimensions, medium used, in each file name (i.e. LisaFoster\_1\_36X48\_Acrylic.pdf). PDF, PNG and JPG file formats will be accepted. If you are submitting artwork that cannot be conveyed through photography, see below for "Performer or Other." Images must be a minimum of 300 dpi and not exceed 3MB in size.

**Performer or Other Submissions:** If you are submitting as a performing artist or in the other category you must submit three performances or three examples. With the examples please include the name of the venue and what you are performing. Example--Three songs on a CD or three videos on a DVD, or digital files can be submitted electronically via DropBox or Google



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Drive and shared with [Lisa@WCFLTourism.com](mailto:Lisa@WCFLTourism.com). Please note: A maximum of 15 minutes will be previewed for any video submissions.

## 2026 Walton County Artist of the Year Application

### **A complete application consists of:**

**Biography:** Include an artist biography placed on a separate sheet.

**Statement of Work:** Include an artist statement of work placed on an additional separate sheet that explains your body of work or inspiration.

**Agreement:** By signature of this application, I have read and understood the criteria listed in this application and verify that I have been a resident of Walton County and/or owned and operated an art gallery/studio with its primary headquarters in Walton County since January 2026.

I understand that I must submit all the information required above (submissions of art, biography, statement of work and this application) to be considered for the 2026 Walton County Artist of the Year.

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Printed Name

Signature

Date