

WJA FOUNDATION LAUNCHES NEW DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS FOR GIA EDUCATION

March 16, 2022 (New York, NY) - The Women's Jewelry Association Foundation (WJA Foundation) is pleased to announce a generous pledge from GIA® (Gemological Institute of America) to fund new diversity scholarships for students wishing to take on-campus or eLearning courses through GIA Education. In 2022, WJA Foundation will award \$25,000 in student scholarships to support underrepresented communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities.

"We know that access to education and capital are two important factors preventing well-deserving students and emerging designers from succeeding in the industry. WJA Foundation is thrilled to receive this generous funding from GIA to enable our organization to support more students who wish to enter the industry and professionals who are seeking to finish their studies without taking on a heavy financial burden." – Brandee Dallow, WJA Foundation President.

Applicants are able to select from a variety of offerings, including GIA's online Applied Jewelry Professional (AJP®) diploma program and Diamond Essentials and Diamonds and Diamond Grading courses, or its on-campus Graduate Colored Stones diploma program and Jewelry Design certificate course. To make the opportunity even more flexible, WJA Foundation is extending the awards to include scholarship applicants who are already pursuing their credential through GIA's Distance Education Program and are seeking funds to register for their next course or lab class. To learn more about GIA education, visit <https://www.gia.edu/gem-education/programs-courses>.

The announcement coincides with the launch of WJA Foundation's third charitable pillar focused on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion education initiatives. Through its multi-dimensional funding framework, the WJA Foundation focuses its charitable giving on general jewelry education and business development, and responsible sourcing and sustainability education. Now, with GIA's pledge, WJA Foundation is able to positively impact more talent and improve the professional outcomes of students and designers from underserved communities.

"WJA Foundation is dedicated to providing educational and business opportunities that allow individuals to reach their full potential. We recognize that we operate in an industry that has many barriers to entry, especially for those from underserved communities. WJA Foundation is committed to being a more inclusive organization and will continue evaluating its funding model to enable more emerging talent to start and elevate their careers in jewelry, gemstones or timepieces. We aim to continue growing and learning as an organization, and presenting more opportunities like these in the future." – WJA Executive Director, Jennifer Markas.

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About the Women's Jewelry Association Foundation

WJA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that offers a variety of scholarships and grants to support the career growth and educational endeavors of professionals in the jewelry and watch industries. To learn more and donate to WJA Foundation, please visit: <https://www.womensjewelryassociation.com/foundation>

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