



Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a cost to audition?

NO! It is free to enter.

Who can participate?

High school students in the 10 eligible counties of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit and Wayne.

My mom lives in Cuyahoga County and my dad lives in Ashland County, can I participate?

It depends where you attend high school. If in Cuyahoga, then yes; if in Ashland, then unfortunately, no.

I am starting community college in the fall, can I audition?

No. The competition is for high school students with a graduation date of 2027-2030 at the *time* of The Finals. So, 8th graders who will be freshmen in the fall can audition, as well as present 9th, 10th and 11th graders.

I am home-schooled, can I audition?

Yes. Home-schooled students who live in the eligible 10 counties can audition. If you should win the \$10,000 scholarship, the public high school music department of your city will receive the \$2,500 bonus prize.

I watched the recap video of last year's show online and didn't see anyone performing songs I like to sing, what should I do?

Sing what you're comfortable singing! Any genre of music is welcome. Just because we didn't have a finalist in your genre, doesn't mean you can't be the first. You can choose rap, rock, soul, R&B, musical theater, opera, etc.

What should I sing in my audition video?

- Choose a song from any music genre that you love which truly showcases who you are! Your song should highlight your skills and your connection to the piece.
- This song will likely stay with you as your performance piece throughout your Shining Star CLE 2026 journey (subject to the sole discretion of the artistic director), so choose wisely!
- We prefer that you sing a cappella or with your own instrumental accompaniment, but recorded accompaniment is allowed.
- Song submission should not exceed **three** (3) minutes.
- **Please avoid singing any of the following songs from last year:**
What Remains (Drew Gasparini), *A Song For You* (Donny Hathaway), *For Her* (Jason Howland, Nathan Tysen), *Killing Me Softly* (Fugees), *I'm Alive* (Aaron Tveit), *Creep* (Radiohead), *I Have Confidence* (Rodgers and Hammerstein), *Wait a Bit* (Anthony Drewe, George Stiles), *I Will Always Love You* (Whitney Houston), *Fallin'* (Alicia Keys), *Astonishing* (Mindi Dickstein, Jason Howland), *I'm Still Hurting* (Anna Kendrick) and *For Good* (Wicked).

If I won a scholarship, do I qualify to audition again the next year?

Yes and No. If you are a junior and younger and won less than the \$10,000 prize, then YES! And, we strongly encourage you to enter. If you are a senior, then no, because you have "aged out" and will not be a high school student the following year. If you won the \$10,000 prize, then no, but we sure hope you continue pursuing music!

continued on page 2



What if I am not in a formal music program (my school doesn't have an arts program), but I love to sing, can I still audition?

ABSOLUTELY! Please do! We can't wait to hear your natural talent.

Do I have to hire a vocal coach or use a music studio to record my audition?

ABSOLUTELY NOT! If you can sing, you can audition. We don't care if you set up your own phone to record in the bathroom (the sound is best in there) or in your bedroom, or even in a quiet backyard, as long as we can hear and see you putting your best foot (and voice) forward!

What if I want to audition, but don't have a cell phone?

Please contact our team directly and we will assist. Contact Kate Martin at 216-593-6214 or kmartin@mandeljcc.org.

Can my audition be of me singing a solo from my high school choir concert?

Yes, although we prefer that you perform a cappella, with a personal instrument or with piano accompaniment only. Auditions should be three (3) minutes maximum.

When will I find out if I advance to the next rounds?

Online auditions go from April 1-June 14. Once each round of auditions are closed, the judges will review the submissions and email invitations will be sent within days.

Do I need to have my parent on screen for the virtual audition (Zoom) round?

No. However, if you are under 18, we ask that your parent/guardian sign the two agreement forms that can be found online.

Are the virtual auditions first-come first-serve or is it by appointment?

They are by appointment. Emails will be sent out stating that a student will be moving forward. Students will be given a date and time slot for their virtual audition and a Zoom link. They will be asked to be online 30 minutes prior to their scheduled audition.

What if I cannot make my assigned virtual audition time slot?

Please let us know ASAP and, although we can't promise anything, we will try to fit you in at another time that day or on another scheduled audition day.

Do I need to come with a parent to the Semifinals?

No. However, at the beginning each session, we will have a "Parent Orientation" to explain the process, who and what we are, and what to expect if you advance to The Finals.

If I have a conflict with the Semifinals date, can I audition on a different date?

Unfortunately, no. Due to the number of students scheduled, we can't accommodate one without accommodating all. So please make sure to keep the audition date free.

If I was a Semifinalist last year, do I have to audition again this year to move forward to the virtual audition round?

Yes. Although you automatically make it to the virtual audition round, you should submit a video in the same format and manner as everyone else.

Is there a charge for parking at Semifinals?

No. We have ample free parking at Mandel JCC in Beachwood, where it will be held.

Is there somewhere for my ride to wait while I am auditioning at the Semifinals?

Yes. We will have a room set up for chaperones and contestants to sit and relax, have a snack and wait.

If I make it to The Finals, will my family receive tickets?

YES! Each finalist and the two alternates receives FOUR patron tickets that will get them access to The Finals at 6:30 pm.



**Watch 2025
Shining Star CLE**