



**BUS
ART
CONTEST**

WATA 
Williamsburg Area Transit Authority

+ **culturefix**

OVERVIEW

The WATA 2026 Art Contest invites artists of **all** ages to create original digital artwork for display on transit buses. Selected artwork will be printed as a full-size bus advertisement.

Submissions can be hand-drawn or created digitally.

The final printed artwork size is approximately 406" w × 103" h, but all artists will design using one of the provided templates set up at 1/10th of the original scale.



HAND DRAWN ART

Drawings or paintings should be on smooth white paper, showing adequate contrast for printed reproduction in vinyl. The art must fill the entire template provided in the Appendix. Art can be scanned to at least 600 dpi in JPEG or TIFF format and emailed to ixo@gowata.org. Hand-drawn art should be mailed to:

WATA

Attn: Bus Art Contest
7239 Pocahontas Trail
Williamsburg, VA
23185

[DOWNLOAD THE OFFICAL HAND DRAWN TEMPLATE](#)

DIGITAL ART

File Setup

For digital art, all entries must follow the same basic setup so your artwork prints clearly on a big bus.

- You'll design on the provided template.
- The template is 1/20 the size of the real bus ad.
- This keeps your file small enough to work in, while still printing clearly.

Template Size (Important!)

Work at: 11" inches wide × 8.5" inches tall

Why 1/10 Scale?

Because a full-size bus ad is HUGE, the art program (especially Procreate) can't handle a canvas that big without crashing. Working on a 1/10 scale keeps everything clean, simple, and printable.

Before You Start:

- Open the template.
- Do not resize it.
- Do not change the proportions.
- Keep the guide layer(s) locked.
- Put all your artwork on the layer labeled "Artwork".

[DOWNLOAD THE
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR
TEMPLATE](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE
AFFINITY or
PROCREATE
TEMPLATE](#)

TEMPLATES

Artists can submit digital artwork using one of the approved digital formats below.

OPTION A

Adobe Illustrator (AI) — Preferred Format

Paid Application

You must have an active Adobe Creative Cloud subscription to use this product.

Required Canvas Setup

- If you use the template provided in the link above, all of this is already set up for you!

File Requirements

- All fonts converted to outlines or font files included.
- All images/links embedded.
- Artwork must remain vector-based where possible.

Using the SLM Adobe Illustrator Template

- Open the provided template.
- In the Layers Panel, the top and bottom layers (Template Guide) is locked. Do not edit.
- Select the middle layer named “Artwork”.
- Place all design elements on the “Artwork” layer.
- Design to the full bleed edges.
- Keep artwork clean, legible, and high-resolution.

Required Export Files

- Please export and supply your Adobe Illustrator artwork in both export formats listed here:
 - **AI** (Save As an Adobe Illustrator File - meeting requirements above)
 - **Exported as PDF** - at highest or print quality export with bleed included
 - Do not resize the template. Do not submit screenshots of artwork.

TEMPLATES

Artists may submit artwork using one of the approved digital formats below.

OPTION B

Affinity by Canva (FREE Vector Alternative)

Affinity by Canva is a free digital design tool that can be used to create high-resolution vector artwork for this contest.

Required Canvas Setup

- If you use the template provided in the link above, all of this is already set up for you!
 - Canvas Size: 11"w × 8.5"h
 - Bleed: 0.125" on all 4 sides
 - DPI: 600 dpi
 - Color Mode: CMYK
 - Image Placement: Prefer Embedded
- Using the Template:
 - Guide and bleed layers are locked. Do not edit or delete.
 - Locate the layer labeled "Artwork".
 - Place all artwork and text on the Artwork layer only.
 - Design edge-to-edge and include bleed.
 - **TURN OFF THE BUS TEMPLATE LOCKED LAYER BEFORE FINAL EXPORT.**

Required Export Files

- Please export and supply your Affinity artwork in both export formats listed here:
 - **AF** (Save As an Affinity File - preferred for highest quality)
 - **Exported as PDF** - at highest or print quality export with bleed included
 - Do not resize the template. Do not submit screenshots of artwork.

TEMPLATES

Artists may submit artwork using one of the approved digital formats below.

OPTION C

Procreate

Procreate submissions are allowed when exported at the highest resolution available, like a .PSD file.

Paid Application

Procreate for iPad has a one-time app installation fee of \$12.99 which comes with a ton of art brushes to use.

Required Canvas Setup

- If you use the template provided in the link above, all of this is already set up for you!
 - Canvas Size: 11"w × 8.5"h
 - DPI: 600 dpi (or as high as Procreate allows)
 - Color Mode: CMYK
- Using the Template:
 - Guide layers are locked. Do not edit or delete.
 - Locate the layer labeled "Artwork".
 - Place all artwork and text on the Artwork layer only.
 - Design edge-to-edge.
 - **TURN OFF THE BUS TEMPLATE LOCKED LAYER BEFORE FINAL EXPORT.**

Required Export Files

- Please export and supply your Procreate artwork in both export formats listed here:
 - **PSD** (preferred for highest quality)
 - **JPEG** - at highest or best quality export

Important Notes

- Procreate does not export vectors. Use the highest resolution possible, like our template is provided to you in.
- Do not resize the template. Do not submit screenshots of artwork.
 - Procreate does not have a Bleed function. Please design to all edges of the canvas.

DESIGN TIPS

Make it bold. Make it bright. Make it easy to see!

If your artwork is chosen as a winning submission, it will be displayed BIG on the side of a WATA bus. Simple, clean artwork works best. Here are some helpful tips to help you get started:

Keep It Simple



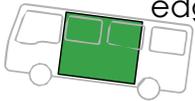
Use strong shapes, bold colors, and clear messaging.

Design for Distance



Artwork will be viewed from far away on a moving bus. Avoid small text or fine detail work.

Fill the Space



Use the full design area from edge to edge.

Clean Composition



Limit clutter and focus on one clear concept.

Keep it Simple



A bus is really big, but people driving by only see it for a moment.

Be Creative



Use your imagination. Make something fun, original, and you!