



Sacramento Poet Laureate Program Guidelines

The Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission invites poets residing in Sacramento County to submit an application for the position of Sacramento Poet Laureate. The Sacramento Poet Laureate program brings the power and beauty of poetry to the Sacramento community while increasing awareness of the literary arts through community engagement and outreach. The Poet Laureate title is an honorary one, awarded through a competitive process to a person who writes poetry of high artistic quality, has an established presence in Sacramento, a demonstrated commitment to and a passion for poetry, and embraces the opportunity to engage in civic discourse. The ideal candidate enjoys inspiring audiences and the community through readings of his/her work and the works of others.

A poet is honored with the title of Poet Laureate to distinguish a career in writing exemplary poetry and for the role they have played in sharing poetry with the broader community. The Poet Laureate will act as an ambassador of the literary arts by reading poems and giving talks at public schools, City Council and County Board meetings and other community organizations.

Program Goals

The goal of the Poet Laureate program is to encourage greater literary awareness by the general public. It seeks to engage diverse voices and perspectives in shaping and furthering the literary arts, culture, and creative expression.

The Poet Laureate is a liaison, advocate, and leader who will leverage their artistic excellence and literary achievements to inspire the diverse residents of Sacramento County to read, write, perform, and appreciate the written and spoken word.

The Poet Laureate is a mentor to the annual Youth Poet Laureate, selecting, coaching, and sharing the stage, as appropriate.

Application deadline is Friday, November 8, 2019.

All applications must be submitted at sacmetroarts.submittable.com/submit by **11:59 pm** on Friday, November 8, 2019. Applications will not be accepted in hard copy, by fax or e-mail. The Arts Commission reserves the right to reject late and incomplete applications. If you do not have access to the internet or to a computer, please contact Arts Commission staff for assistance. Translation services are also available upon request.

Public Record

The Arts Commission is a government agency; applications become public record after

submission. All information received, whether in connection with an application or in connection with any funded activities performed, will be disclosed upon receipt of a request for disclosure, pursuant to the California Public Records Act. The Arts Commission reserves the right to use application materials for training purposes with confidential information removed.

Inquiries

Arts Commission staff provides general technical assistance to interested applicants. Contact Ray Gargano at rgargano@cityofsacramento.org business hours (Monday - Friday 8:00 am-3:00 pm).

Timeline

Guidelines/Applications Available	October 7, 2019
Application deadline	November 8, 2019
Public Panel	December, 2019
Arts Commission approves new Poet Laureate	December, 2019
Notification to all nominees	December, 2019
Commission and Council Presentation of Poet Laureate	Jan/Feb, 2020
Year 1	2020
Year 2	2021
Year 3	2022
Poet Laureate term will end December 31, 2022*	

* The Poet Laureate may be asked to bear the title of Poet Laureate until a new Laureate is chosen.

Eligibility

Only one application per poet will be accepted. The nominator must be a resident of Sacramento County, and actively involved in the Sacramento literary arts community.

An eligible applicant must:

1. Have past work that is of high artistic quality.
2. Have the ability to achieve the mission and purpose of the Poet Laureate program.
3. Be at least thirty-five (35) years of age.
4. Be a Sacramento County resident for at least the past five years.
5. Have a demonstrated history of community involvement.
6. Have the ability to engage the public.

Applicant Review Process

The selection of the Poet Laureate is a competitive process. A public panel comprised of literary experts and a member of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission will recommend the best candidate to serve as Poet Laureate. Panelists will base their recommendations on the application materials submitted and the review criteria outlined in these guidelines. The panelists will individually review all of the nominees' submitted materials in advance of the panel date, and then meet to discuss the applications and select finalists for the position.

Finalists will be asked to read two poems and participate in a short interview with the selection panel. The reading and interview will be timed; each applicant will have a maximum of 15 minutes, total. Finalists will be notified of the panel date and time in advance. After all of the finalists' applications have been reviewed, the panel will recommend one poet to the Arts Commission to serve as the next Sacramento Poet Laureate. The panel makes recommendations independent of the Arts Commission staff members who serve as facilitators for the panel process. All Arts Commission meetings, including committee meetings and panels are open to the public; nominators are welcome to attend as observers.

The Arts Commission reserves the right to decline all applications for Poet Laureate. If the panel agrees that no candidate meets the needs and goals of the position, they may recommend that the application process be re-opened for additional nominations.

Review Criteria

Panelists will assign a score to each application. The maximum score a candidate may receive is 50 points. The panel will base its decisions on the following criteria:

1. Letter of nomination and letters of recommendation. (10 points) Panelists will assess the letters by considering the following:
 - Do the letters speak to the applicant's skill as a respected poet?
 - Do they speak to his/her record of community involvement?
 - Do they speak to his/her impact on the Sacramento community?
 - Is it shown how he/she encourages and inspires others regarding the literary art form?
 - Does the letter of nomination specify why the applicant should serve as the next Poet Laureate?
 - Did the applicant include at least one letter of recommendation from a member of the literary community?
2. Poetry submission that shows the artistic merit of the nominee. (13 points) Panelists will determine if the poetry submission shows the artistic merit of the nominee by considering the following:
 - Quality of artistic expression,
 - Effectiveness and clarity of form,
 - Freshness of vision,
 - Openness and accessibility,
 - Mastery of language,
 - Technique.
3. Personal statement. (10 points) Panelists will examine the statement and determine if it speaks to the applicant's:
 - ability to lead,
 - vision of what it is to be Poet Laureate,
 - vision for the program during his/her term, and
 - why he/she is interested in serving as poet laureate.

Panelists will also consider:

- Does the applicant have a history of collaboration and community involvement in the literary arts?
 - Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to inspire and encourage?
 - Is there a demonstration of his/her qualifications as a poet of distinction?
4. Resume or CV. (5 point) Panelists will rate the resume or CV and the optional publication record based on the following:
- Does it speak to the applicant’s qualifications as a poet of distinction?
 - Does it show a history of community collaboration and involvement?
 - Does it show professional activities and achievements representing a continued aesthetic contribution to the field?
5. Demonstration of engagement: “live” reading. (12 points) Panelists will assign a score to this criterion after the applicant has completed the interview portion on the day of the panel. Panelists will consider if the applicant demonstrates:
- Clear communication,
 - High level of engagement,
 - Quality of artistic experience,
 - Ability to engage the panelists in the poetry reading,
 - Ability to answer panelists’ questions,
 - Ability to present in a professional manner.

Application Instructions

The application packet should demonstrate the nominee’s artistic accomplishments, a history of leadership in the community, and the poet’s vision for the program during his/her term. The application and the reading/interview is the only information that will be used to determine eligibility and to make a final decision on who will serve as the next Poet Laureate.

General Information

- Read these guidelines carefully to ensure that all points necessary have been addressed. Assume that reviewers have no information on local poetry efforts, poets, etc. Be specific and thorough.
- Carefully edit answers for spelling errors.
- Be clear and concise in responses. It is a good idea to have a person not involved with writing the application read through the materials.
- Make sure that the contact information submitted on Submittable is accurate.
- The nominator(s) and the poet should work together on the application packet. Make sure that the poems submitted are of good quality and include no more than ten (10) poems or ten (10) pages.
- Since the application is being submitted online, there is no need to submit a hard copy.

Application Components

The following items will comprise your application. Failure to submit all components will result in an incomplete application, which will not be considered.

- I. Letter of Nomination: This part of the application is written by the nominator(s) and should describe why, in the nominator's opinion, the applicant should serve as the next Poet Laureate.
- The nomination letter must be no more than 1,000 words.
 - The letter should outline the candidate's qualities and attributes as a poet; and
 - Explain how s/he inspires others to be enthusiastic about the literary form; and
 - Give examples of his/her community involvement and artistic merit.
 - Nominator(s) must be involved in the Sacramento poetry community; it is preferred if the lead nominator resides in Sacramento County.
 - Self-nominations will not be accepted.
 - If more than one person acts as nominator, one person must be designated as the lead nominator. The lead nominator will act as the secondary contact person for the application.
- II. Personal Statement: The applicant's personal statement should describe his/her artistic vision and why s/he is interested in serving as Poet Laureate. The applicant should demonstrate that his/her goals for the Poet Laureate tenure align with the Poet Laureate program goals.
- The personal statement must be no more than 1,000 words.
 - Please consider the following questions when writing the narrative:
 - Why are you interested in serving as Poet Laureate, what do you envision doing during your tenure, and how does this vision align with the program goals?
 - How will you inspire and engage Sacramento County's unique and diverse public? (Sacramento County demographics: 58.7% white, 41.3% non-white, specifically, 30.4% Hispanic/Latino, 9.9% African American, 15.3% Asian, 1.1% Pacific Isander.)
- III. Electronic Attachments:
1. Letter(s) of Recommendation:
 - No more than three (3) letters of recommendation will be accepted.
 - The letters must be signed and should describe the applicant's impact on Sacramento including community involvement (readings, teaching, etc.) and poetry expertise.
 - Unsigned letters will not be accepted; e-mail letters are acceptable but should include a signature line.
 - Include at least one letter from a member of the local literary community.
 - Letters must be attached as PDF files; you can scan in hard copy letters and attach them in Submittable.
 2. Current Résumé or Curriculum Vitae (CV):
 - No more than two (2) pages will be accepted.
 - The document must be attached as a PDF file.
 - TIPS for the résumé or CV:
 - Focus the résumé/CV on your experiences and education most relevant to the

Poet Laureate position.

- The résumé/CV should include the applicant's volunteer work, awards, and other literary accomplishments.

3. Publication Record (optional):

- Clearly list and label the publication record.
- No more than four (4) pages will be accepted.
- The document must be attached as a PDF file.

IV. Poetry Sample:

- Submit up to ten (10) original published or unpublished poems or excerpts; more than ten poems/ ten pages will not be accepted. The poetry sample must be submitted as one PDF file; do not submit ten attachments.
- Poems may be of any style.
- All poems should be listed in the narrative portion of the application under "List of Submitted Poems."

V. List of Poems:

List the titles of the poems that are included in your poetry sample submission. No more than 10 poems will be accepted. If your poem is meant to be performed, you may include a YouTube or Vimeo link of your performance along with the typed-out words of the poem. Only videos of performance poems are allowed. Videos of poetry readings will be deleted.

VI. Certification:

Enter the years in residence in Sacramento County for the applicant poet and for the lead nominator. If the lead nominator does not live in Sacramento County, enter "0". Proof may be required that the lead nominator is involved in the Sacramento poetry community. The applicant poet must type his/her name under the certification statement to complete the application and certify that everything submitted is true and complete.

Application available on Submittable

The deadline to apply for Sacramento's Poet Laureate 2020-2022 is November 18, 2019. To apply, please visit <https://sacmetroarts.submittable.com/submit>.

Being Poet Laureate

The Arts Commission will consider the panel recommendation at one of their scheduled meetings. Staff notifies all applicants of their status within 2 weeks of the Arts Commission meeting. The selected poet laureate will be asked to sign an agreement (contract) between him/herself and the City of Sacramento. The selected poet will hold a three-year term, with a possible extension, to be outlined in the contract.

A formal presentation ceremony will be held after all applicants are notified. The selected poet will receive resolutions from the Sacramento City Council designating him/her the next Sacramento Poet Laureate.

The Poet Laureate shall be expected to:

- Be available to the public for readings and speaking engagements throughout Sacramento County.
- Give at least fifteen (15) readings or speaking engagements **per year** during their tenure.
- Schedule their own appearances, readings, and activities throughout his/her tenure.
- Communicate to Arts Commission staff where and when presentations take place.
- Provide regular updates to Arts Commission staff. Updates can be provided via email on a monthly basis. Arts Commission staff may withhold payments of the stipend if updates are not received.
- Take responsibility to carry out the duties intended to fulfill the mission of the program. It is up to the Laureate to initiate the activities that will occur in his/her tenure.
- Represent the Arts Commission, the City and County of Sacramento and the Poet Laureate program in a responsible and professional manner for the duration of their tenure.
- Always make sure the Arts Commission as a City agency is credited with activities associated with the Poet Laureate program. All events and publicity generated by the Poet Laureate will be associated with the program. Giving recognition to the Arts Commission helps boost funding for the program and allows the general public and elected officials to better understand the reach of Commission programs.
- Involve the Arts Commission in all high-profile engagements – i.e. those that include City or County officials or the media.
- Promote, to a reasonable extent, the past Poet Laureate projects, including the Sacramento Anthology and Poets on Deck.

Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission staff can be expected to:

- Provide guidance to the Poet Laureate regarding City policies as they apply to the Poet Laureate program.
- Communicate with the Poet Laureate in a timely and effective manner.
- Act as liaison between the Arts Commission and the Poet Laureate.
- Oversee the Poet Laureate budget. Arts Commission staff will have final approval on all expenditures and other matters related to the budget. All budgets are contingent on availability of funding.
- Devote a limited amount of time (four hours per month, to be determined at the discretion of Arts Commission staff) to the Poet Laureate Program, including the administration of the program.

Budget

The Poet Laureate will be awarded an annual stipend of \$2,500. The Arts Commission may provide additional funding for programs or for the Poet Laureate to represent the City or County at conferences.

Funding for the Poet Laureate Program comes from the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission. Funding for this and all programs of the Arts Commission is contingent upon City budget allocation and is subject to annual review and availability.

Additional Information

The person selected to serve as the next Poet Laureate will have a contract with the City of Sacramento in order to receive the annual stipend. All contractors are required by the City of Sacramento to purchase a business occupancy tax (BOT) permit, and if applicable, a Home Occupancy Permit (HOP). The fees associated with acquiring the permits (from \$40 - \$120) are not reimbursable under this program. **You do not need to obtain a BOT/HOP to submit an application.** The Arts Commission suggests that individuals providing programs to the public carry liability insurance, although it is not a contractual requirement. Contact Arts Commission staff for further details about this suggestion.

Information about the BOT number as well as how to apply for it can be found on the City of Sacramento's website at www.cityofsacramento.org/Finance/Revenue/Business-Operation-Tax and can also be obtained through the Revenue Department at City Hall. The Revenue Department can be contacted weekdays, 9 am to noon at 916-808-8500 with questions.