



State Poet Laureate of New Mexico

2025-2028 Program Guidelines



Program Guidelines

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Purpose

The New Mexico State Poet Laureate program seeks to be actively present in communities in every part of New Mexico offering accessible and enjoyable explorations in poetry reading and writing for both experienced poetry enthusiasts and novices alike.

Objectives

- Engage directly with New Mexicans in both urban and rural communities across the state, with a goal to visit as many of the 33 New Mexico counties and 23 recognized Tribes as reasonably possible during the three-year term.
- Facilitate the enjoyment of reading and writing poetry through interactive programs for New Mexicans of all ages with a focus on those communities in geographically and culturally diverse areas.
- Celebrate and increase the visibility of poetry, arts, and culture throughout the state.

Duties

- Read original poems at state events, such as the Opening of the NM Legislative Session, the Poetry Out Loud State Finals event, and others as identified.
- Develop and execute educational outreach programs in NM communities to encourage the exploration of both reading and writing poetry in people of all ages. This will require travel across the state and may take the form of readings/open mics, workshops, conversations, lectures, presentations, poetry slams, teen library programs, local school visits, attending conferences, or other public programs that will promote and inspire poetry
- Create a statewide poetry project to showcase writing from communities across the state. This may take the form of a printed anthology, an online collection, a regular zine, blog, or other special project as identified by the Poet Laureate in collaboration with New Mexico Arts and the State Library and may be created in conjunction with the educational and outreach programs.
- Serve as a juror for a maximum of two DCA poetry writing competitions per year and on the selection committee for the next State Poet Laureate.



Selection

Priority

Applications from poets representing a rich variety of cultures, geographies, and types of poetry are strongly encouraged.

Personal Qualities

Priority is given to poets that demonstrate:

- Commitment to and understanding of the Poet Laureate Program and its objectives
- An ability to engage openly, honestly, and sincerely with a wide range of people
- An eagerness to represent New Mexico in its entirety
- Commitment to bringing poetry to a wide range of places and people
- Passion for poetry and an ability to communicate it

Eligibility

Individuals must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 21 years of age at the time of application
- Agree to the conditions and terms of appointment
- Able to enter into a professional services contract with the Department of Cultural Affairs
- May not be a previous State Poet Laureate
- Submit to a background check

Residency

- Must be a current NM resident who has lived in NM for at least three years
- Must remain a NM resident for the term of the appointment
- Must have or be able to obtain a New Mexico Business Tax Identification Number (NMBTIN)
- Have made a significant contribution to New Mexico poetry

Published Work and Engagement

- Have a compelling portfolio of published work
- Demonstrate an established history of activity in New Mexico, e.g., readings, publications, public presentations, etc.
- Provide evidence of achievement in the art of poetry, including having a body of publicly accessible work (books, literary magazines, and/or digital media)
- Is widely considered to be a poet of stature
- Have received significant recognition or awards

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- Poets of all subgenres (e.g., prose, slam poetry, cowboy poetry) and styles will be considered

Conduct

- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to interact with a diverse public
- Willingness to travel to all parts of the state of New Mexico
- Be able to appropriately represent the poetry and arts community at state functions and ceremonies, being respectful of other cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs
- Must be prepared to undertake the public role required of the laureate
- Capacity to foster public appreciation of and participation in poetry through readings, public presentations and teaching, in diverse communities

Selection of Committee Members

Committee members are selected by the New Mexico Arts and the NM State Library to represent a variety of geographies, poetics, and cultures. The Selection Committee may include past Poet Laureates. Members should be able to attend online Committee meetings. Committee members should reveal and seek to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Role of the Committee

The Selection Committee is provided a copy of the Program Guidelines. Members are tasked with selecting a Poet Laureate that can fulfill the responsibilities per the guidelines. Special emphasis is placed on priority areas. The NM Arts Director will chair the meeting or delegate this role to another DCA employee. The Chair will not be a voting member of the Committee.

Application Process

Poets living in New Mexico may apply to be the NM State Poet Laureate.

Required Materials to be Submitted with the Application/Nomination

All applications/nominations must include the following documentation:

- Letter of interest including a description of your interest in the position (one page maximum in .doc or .pdf file format)
- Proposal for statewide poetry project (one page maximum in .doc or .pdf file format)
- Biographical information (one page maximum in .doc or .pdf file format)
- Resume or curriculum vitae including bibliography of published works and relevant awards/recognitions (four pages maximum in .doc or .pdf file format)

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- Samples of original poetry. (Five poems max. within a seven-page limit in .doc or .pdf file format)
- Audio and/or video samples of you reading your work. Submit links to audio or video files (e.g., on a personal website, YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)
- Contact information for up to three references who we will contact directly for letters of support.

Interviews

A short list of up to five candidates will be interviewed by the Selection Committee via Zoom and a small meeting stipend of \$100 will be provided for committee members with the exception of the current State Poet Laureate who will serve as part of their official duties.

The short list will be determined by NM Arts and the NM State Library in collaboration with the current Poet Laureate.

Terms of Service

The Poet Laureate shall serve a three-year term, running July 1, 2025 (or when professional services contract is fully executed) to June 30, 2028. Individuals shall not serve back-to-back terms. If a Poet Laureate cannot fulfill the contract for any circumstances, the Selection Committee will be asked to identify a replacement to fill the remainder of the term, with the option to extend to another full term at the Committee's discretion, and contingent on approval of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Payment

Poet Laureate is paid \$20,000 per year to cover all expenses incurred in the course of fulfilling the responsibilities of the position—including travel. The Poet Laureate shall receive a quarterly payment of \$5,000 upon completion of adequate documentation of activities as contracted.

Copyright and Licenses

The Poet Laureate will reserve every right available in common law and under the Federal Copyright Act. The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs requests copyright license in perpetuity to publish and distribute written works and audio created as part of the Poet Laureate's agreement including advertising, media, brochures, podcasts, online journals, etc.

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Abandonment of or Removal from Post

The Poet Laureate shall provide at least 60 days' notice of abandonment of the post to NM Arts. Documentation for any work completed shall be submitted to NM Arts for final payment. Per the Terms of the Contract between the Poet Laureate and NM Arts, the Poet Laureate may be removed within 60 days' notice.

The Selection Committee may be convened to consider any recommendations to remove the Poet Laureate from their post. By majority vote the Selection Committee shall instruct the Department of Cultural Affairs to submit a removal letter to the poet, make payments on any work already done, and re-open the selection process for a new Poet Laureate and new term.

For questions, please contact Therése Schoeppner at New Mexico Arts:

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