



# **Fairfax County Poet Laureate Guidelines**

**Deadline: June 28, 2024**

**ArtsFairfax**  
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## **Introduction**

Fairfax County names the Fairfax County Poet Laureate to honor a poet and elevate the visibility of poetry throughout the County. As Fairfax County's designated local arts agency, ArtsFairfax is honored to coordinate the selection and community engagement project of the Fairfax County Poet Laureate.

## **Purpose of the Poet Laureate**

ArtsFairfax seeks to raise the visibility of poetry through the designation of the Fairfax County Poet Laureate. Through this designation, ArtsFairfax seeks to celebrate and support a poet who can engage new audiences, create new opportunities for poetry to be shared, and encourage the creation of poetry and other literary works. The Poet Laureate program recognizes a professional poet's achievements and their demonstrated history of accomplishments while promoting their continued pursuit of creative work and creating opportunities for connection between the Poet Laureate and Fairfax County communities. The Fairfax County Poet Laureate is a high honor that highlights the importance of poetry and the literary arts in Fairfax County.

## **Role of the Poet Laureate**

The Fairfax County Poet Laureate serves to build awareness and appreciation of poetry through public readings, workshops, and/or presentations in communities, schools, libraries, and other public settings in diverse areas of the County. The Poet Laureate will have the following leadership opportunities:

- Present a reading of their original inaugural poem;
- Consult with ArtsFairfax to create and execute a community service project to be accomplished during their tenure. Project activities will use the arts and humanities to help foster literacy, expand audiences and appreciation for poetry, and create engaging cultural experiences for County residents;
- Help build networks and opportunities for poets to read and engage new audiences with local businesses, book festivals, schools, and other venues;
- Provide an original poem at the end of the Poet Laureate term as a reflection on their tenure; and
- Represent Fairfax County at events as mutually agreed upon with ArtsFairfax.

## **Goals of the Poet Laureate Program**

Through the Poet Laureate Program, ArtsFairfax seeks:

- To recognize and provide support for poets and writers;
- To use the arts and humanities to engage people in cross-cultural and community-wide exchanges of ideas, stories, and traditions;
- To encourage wide participation in poetry through diverse cultural programming available to all residents of Fairfax County;
- To promote opportunities for poets, literary organizations, and writers to create, present, and celebrate their creative endeavors; and
- To be a catalyst for increased private sector support for poetry and other literary activities through leveraged public funding.

## **Poet Laureate Term of Service**

The Poet Laureate will serve a three-year term (October 1, 2024-September 30, 2027) and will be awarded a \$5,000 grant for each year. ArtsFairfax will use supplemental funding to support program activities, specifically the community engagement project, during their tenure.

## Eligibility

Candidates for the Fairfax County Poet Laureate must submit a complete application through our [online portal](#). ArtsFairfax will engage a panel of experts in the field of poetry to review all completed applications submitted by the June 28, 2024 deadline and make recommendations based on the following eligibility criteria:

1. Individuals must reside in Fairfax County for at least 12 months prior to the submission deadline. Submissions must include proof of residency in the applicant's name. Residency is based on the applicant's physical residence [home], not on a P.O. Box, studio/workspace, or other property owned by the applicant. The Poet Laureate must remain a resident of Fairfax County for the duration of their tenure.
2. Individuals must be at least 21 years of age at the time of submission.
3. Individuals must be actively working in and/or deriving income from poetry.
4. Individuals must have demonstrated experience publishing and/or presenting original poetry including at least one work by an established press (please, no self-publications or subsidy press books), or a combination of at least two of the following: poetry journal, magazine, or website that are not predominantly self-curated, personal websites, or personal blogs.
5. Individuals must be identified as a primary author of work(s) described in the application.
6. Individuals must not be enrolled as an undergraduate student in a degree or entry level certification program related to poetry or writing.
7. For the specified three-year period, the individual must be willing and able to: promote poetry; design and implement a community service project; and lead or participate in workshops, readings, and other activities around Fairfax County and the region.
8. Individuals must not have been appointed Fairfax County Poet Laureate previously.

## Grant Restrictions

The Poet Laureate represents Fairfax County and ArtsFairfax through their commitment to the art of poetry. Support provided to the Poet Laureate shall only be used to support legal activities. As Poet Laureate, the individual cannot engage in political advocacy, promote any one faith over another, or participate in events that would be inappropriate for a diverse, multicultural, and multigenerational audience.

## Review Process

Following the Poet Laureate submission deadline, ArtsFairfax staff will verify eligibility and determine whether the submission is complete. Staff may contact poets for information if needed to make an eligibility determination. Incomplete or ineligible

submissions are subject to rejection without evaluation. If a submission is rejected, ArtsFairfax will notify the applicant by e-mail.

A panel of experts will review all eligible submissions for Poet Laureate. Panelists will include poets and other professionals with a particular knowledge of, or expertise in poetry or otherwise engaged in the poetry community. The panel review meeting is open to the public.

The ArtsFairfax Board of Directors will make the final selection based on the recommendations of the panel and the overall goals of the Poet Laureate Program. **NOTE:** If warranted, ArtsFairfax reserves the right to alter the monetary award and length of tenure.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The selection of the Poet Laureate is made on a competitive basis. The review panel will be comprised of 4-6 individuals who have no conflict of interest. ArtsFairfax selects panel members for their knowledge of or expertise in poetry, or other engagement in the poetry community. Panelists will evaluate each submission on its own merit based on the criteria below:

- Record of professional poetry activity and achievement.
- Artistic merit.
- Poetry Engagement: Proposed Community Engagement Project

Evaluation criteria are equally weighted. Professional poetry activity and achievement may be demonstrated through evidence of poetry engagement (listing of readings, workshops, lectures, etc.), listing of works, awards, honors, etc. Examples of artistic merit include reviews/critical responses/acclaim, originality, innovation, impact, mastery, and reach.

### **Conditions of the Poet Laureate Award**

The selected Poet Laureate must agree to comply with the following conditions:

#### **Announcement of Award**

ArtsFairfax will notify submitting poets of a final decision by September 2024.

#### **Eligibility Status**

The Poet Laureate must continue to meet all of the program eligibility requirements throughout the three-year appointment period. The Poet Laureate is required to notify the ArtsFairfax Education & Community Engagement Manager in writing of any major changes to their circumstances, such as a change in residency, performance plans, or similar relevant factors.

#### **Publicity**

By submitting an application for the Fairfax County Poet Laureate, the poet grants ArtsFairfax a non-exclusive license to use, reproduce, record, exhibit, edit, broadcast,

and perform in any manner and by any means or media of every nature, whether known or unknown, the name, biography, performance, film/new media, photograph, recording, literary works, and any and all copyrighted materials owned or controlled by applicant (including, but not limited to, any and all materials submitted in support of the Poet Laureate application), singularly or in conjunction with other materials, solely in and in connection with the promotion, advertising, and marketing of the Poet Laureate and/or ArtsFairfax.

### **Publication**

The Poet Laureate permits a non-exclusive license to ArtsFairfax to publish a chapbook of their work and its use during the tenure of the Poet Laureate. The Poet Laureate also permits a non-exclusive license to ArtsFairfax to publish the Poet Laureate's created work during their tenure.

### **Payment and Reporting Procedures**

- The Poet Laureate is required to develop benchmarks at the start of each year and submit progress reports at the end of each year based on their activities toward accomplishing benchmark goals.
- At the end of their tenure, the Poet Laureate will compose a final poem as a reflection on their term.
- The Poet Laureate will receive a \$5,000 grant in October, at the start of each year of their three-year tenure, contingent upon evaluation of the prior year.

### **Application Preparation Assistance**

ArtsFairfax will conduct a free virtual information session to instruct prospective submitters on the application process. ArtsFairfax encourages attendance, but an applicant's attendance at the session will not affect the evaluation.

Tuesday, April 23, 2024  
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

ArtsFairfax will post a recording of the presentation on its [website](#). To register, visit <https://artsfairfax.org/poetry/> and to obtain further information please contact Education & Community Engagement Manager Shannon Smith by email at [ssmith@artsfairfax.org](mailto:ssmith@artsfairfax.org) or by telephone at 571-395-4622.

### **Required Proof of Eligibility**

#### **Identification**

Please provide a scan (PDF format) or photo (jpeg format) of a valid public identification (such as a driver's license, passport, or similar government-issued form of identification). Name the document as **ID\_First Name-Last Name, example ID\_Joe/Jane-Doe**. Do not include blank spaces in the file name.

## **Proof of Residency**

Please provide a copy of your Proof of Residency in Fairfax County for the past 12 months (i.e., a copy of a lease, rental agreement or mortgage, or matching billing statements (utility bills) for a 12-month cycle up to the present month. Combine all documents in one PDF file and upload. Name the document as **PR\_FirstName-LastName**, *example PR\_ Joe/Jane-Doe*. Do not include blank spaces in the file name.

## **Work Samples, Resume, and Supplemental Materials**

Submission of Required Documents, Work Samples, and Supplemental Materials are mandatory. Work Samples and Supplementary Materials should describe **recent** (within the last three years) activities.

You may include links to Work Samples and Supplementary Materials including large video files using the required cover sheet.

Acceptable file format types to upload are: **pdf, doc, docx, jpg, mp3, mp4, wav, mov, xls, and xlsx**.

### **1. Identification**

### **2. Proof of Residency**

### **3. Poet Biography**

Summarize where you are from, your past and most recent work, and highlight your most major award(s), readings/lectures/publications, and other accomplishment(s). Who are you as a poet and what are your artistic goals? Please include a summary of your influences, poetry passions, training, and experiences that would contribute to serving as Poet Laureate, as well as any contributions to promoting poetry locally, regionally, or nationally. (Suggested word count: 300 - 500)

### **4. Poet Statement**

A poet's statement contextualizes your work and the ideas that inform it. It should discuss your work as a poet, such as your view of the purpose of poetry, the use/possibilities of language, the role of the poet in society, and/or what poets and experiences have shaped your work. Your statement should clearly reference or relate to the work samples that you have submitted – you may even refer to a specific poem as an example of something that typifies your style or technique. (Suggested word count: 300 - 500)

### **5. Community Service Project**

The Poet Laureate is expected to design and implement a community service project that addresses the goals of the program. Specifically, the community service project must use poetry to engage people in cross-cultural and community-wide exchanges of ideas, stories, and traditions. Outline your vision for the community service project by describing the activities that you would pursue, including possible partners (organizations and/or individuals), settings, and audiences. Ultimately, this is your vision for the impact of your three-year tenure – include

how you will document the outcomes of this project and its legacy. Explain how your qualifications and experience are directly relevant to the proposed community service project activities. If selected, you will dedicate a portion of the first year of your term to expand on this outline. (Suggested word count: 300 - 500)

## 6. Work Samples

Applicants are required to submit samples of their poetry. The poems, published or unpublished, should reflect the highest professional standards and be representative of your work. The panel's judgment of artistic merit will be based upon the quality of the work submitted. Each poem should include the work's name, date of creation, and date of publication, if applicable.

- Poetry Portfolio: Submit up to 10 examples of original poems, published or unpublished, not to exceed 10 pages. Submit all examples in one document, as a PDF or MS Word format file. Please submit work produced in the last three years.
  - Name the Poem Portfolio as **Portfolio\_FirstName-LastName**.
- List of Publications: Submit a list of publication credits up to one page. Include individual publications of your work, followed by inclusion of your poems published as part of collections, journals, magazines, e-zines, and websites.
  - For the publication list, include title, date of publication, and publisher.
  - For poems published elsewhere, include poem title, collection or publication name, name of publisher, and date of publication.
  - Name List of Publications as **Work Sample\_FirstName-LastName**.

## 7. Supplemental Materials

The panel's judgement of professional poetry activity and achievement will be based in part on the extent of engagement in the poetry community as evidenced in the supporting materials.

- Supplemental materials could include, but are not limited to, programs and other promotional materials for readings or workshops, newspaper reviews, articles, testimonials, letters of support, or awards. You can submit up to 10 items. Materials must describe recent activities (within the last three years).
- Name each submission **SM\_FirstName-LastName\_01**. For example, label the first submission SM\_ Joe/Jane-Doe \_01; the next submission SM\_ Joe/Jane-Doe \_02, etc.

## 8. Video Introduction

Digital video introduction (up to five minutes). Choose a favorite poem/poet, describe why you appreciate the work/poet and how the poem/writer's poetics intersect with and amplify the experiences of County residents. This serves both as an introduction and how you would present this topic to an audience. Share a link to your video (Use YouTube or Vimeo).

## 9. Resume



Resume (up to two pages) is a list of your professional experience. It should take the form of an organized list—not a paragraph—of, readings, teaching or lecturing experience, awards, press, collections, and your own education (BA, BFA, MFA). If you have many years of experience, you may want to include only “selected readings, workshops, etc.” with the most recent or prominent examples. Submit your resume in a MS Word or a PDF format. Name the file **RES\_FirstName-LastName**.

## 10. Submission Notes

Optional: Please provide any additional context supporting or explaining your uploaded files.

### Required Documents

1. Identification
2. Proof of Residency
3. Poet Biography
4. Poet Statement
5. Community Service Project
6. Work Samples
7. Supplemental Materials
8. Video Introduction
9. Resume
10. (OPTIONAL) Submission Notes

### Submission

All Fairfax County Poet Laureate submissions must be uploaded online at <https://artsfairfax.submittable.com/submit> no later than **7:00 pm ET on June 28, 2024**.

Late applications will not be accepted. The decision of ArtsFairfax on the selection of the Poet Laureate is final.

### About ArtsFairfax

ArtsFairfax is the nonprofit designated as Fairfax County’s local arts agency. Dedicated to the belief that arts are essential to a thriving community, the ArtsFairfax mission is to expand support for and access to arts and culture opportunities for Fairfax County’s more than 1.2 million residents. By offering informational, financial, and programmatic services, ArtsFairfax promotes the role of arts and culture to deepen social engagement, create a sense of place, and fuel economic growth. Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) since 1964, ArtsFairfax provides these services to all who contribute to and experience arts in Fairfax County, and is funded in part by the County, Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as corporations, foundations, and individuals.