

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -

**POET LAUREATE PROGRAM  
HANDBOOK  
2025-27**



I've heard it in the chilliest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.

*Emily Dickinson*



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**OVERVIEW & MISSION .....2**

**CRITERIA FOR SUBMISSIONS.....2**

**HONORARIUM & TERM.....3**

**SCOPE OF WORK.....3**

**EVALUATION & SELECTION PROCESS.....3**

**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & TIMELINE.....4**

**PANEL REVIEW AND SCORING.....4**

**POET LAUREATE PROGRAM APPLICATION.....5**

**CONTACT INFORMATION .....7**

## POET LAUREATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

### OVERVIEW & MISSION

#### OVERVIEW

The City of Costa Mesa City Council approved an Arts & Culture Master Plan in March of 2021. Goal three (3) of this plan outlines a plan to *“Professionalize and elevate the status of Arts and Culture in City government and to boldly assert Costa Mesa’s ‘City of the Arts’ stature and brand, placing Arts & Culture front and center in all that the City does.”* Part of this larger plan includes the appointment of an Artist Laureate, to be selected on an annual basis with an honorarium and public engagement responsibilities. In the first year of this program, the Poet Laureate Program will be implemented as a pilot program for the Artist Laureate Program.

#### MISSION

To support local artists and to create an opportunity for them to showcase their talents, while contributing to a creative ecosystem in Costa Mesa. The Poet Laureate promotes the literary arts, while also increasing appreciation for the reading and writing of poetry and self-expression.

### CRITERIA FOR SUBMISSIONS

#### ELIGIBILITY & BASIC INFORMATION

The Poet Laureate Program is open to individual practicing poets and is an honorary position with the City of Costa Mesa for two years. Qualifying Applicants must:

1. Have submitted an online application
2. Be at least 18 years of age or older
3. Live in Orange County for at least one year
4. Be able to serve a two-year term
5. Be a practicing poet, dedicated to producing poetry (in any form, genre or style) on a regular basis
6. Contribute to the literary arts scene and participate in community engagement in Costa Mesa
7. Understand that the audiences will be broad-based and of all ages, and in representing the City’s inclusive, non-partisan stance, must use discretion when acting in the capacity of the City’s Poet Laureate

In addition, an ideal candidate will:

- Have literary works published in journals, online, a full-length or chapbook collection of poetry, or self-published chap/books; or have a resume of spoken word performances or facilitation of writing related events

- Have proven track record of community engagement and collaboration, including previous experience hosting events and or teaching and or leading workshops
- Live and/or work in Costa Mesa

### **HONORARIUM & TERM**

Selected poets shall be compensated for their time and community engagements. The amount shall cover costs for the poet's time spent in creating poems, public speaking engagements and occasionally being available for interviews or photo opportunities to be used for promotional purposes.

- The Poet Laureate's two-year term appointment commences on January 6, 2025 and concludes on December 31, 2027.
- Poet will also have prep time before commencing the Poet Laureate appointment and meetings with staff to discuss an individualized Scope of Work
- The Poet Laureate will be paid a **\$2,500 stipend per year (\$5,000 total)**.

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

1. Each selected Poet Laureate will enter into an agreement with the City, and work with City Staff to determine a final scope of work. Poets agree to sign a contract with the City regarding their scope of work. Poets also agree to responsibly handle administrative duties in association with the program.
2. The selected Poet Laureate will offer a minimum of 2 instructional workshops per year
3. Participate in ARTventure in the fall of each year
4. In first year, will be required to present at the next available Arts Commission meeting to introduce yourself and talk about your work as a poet
5. Present at one City Council meeting per year
6. The selected Poet Laureate will also offer a selection of 6-12 poems over the duration of their tenure to display in Poetry Boxes situated throughout Costa Mesa's City Parks.
7. The Poet Laureate fee is an honorarium, and the Poet Laureate may choose to perform additional duties in their work for the City, at their will.
8. If a poetry reading at an official City occasion is one item on the agreed scope of work, the City reserves the right to review the proposed poem(s) beforehand (either their own or the work of

another poet(s)) and accept or decline the reading. If the reading is declined, the Poet Laureate will replace the event in their schedule.

9. Poets agree that the City of Costa Mesa may photograph them during their Poet Laureate workshops and projects.

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & TIMELINE**

### **APPLICATION TIMELINE**

The online application opens September 9, 2024 and closes on October 28, 2024.

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Each applicant must fill out an online application (see paper version on the next page).
- 5 written poetry examples (self-published or published)
- 1 video recording sample of poetry reading or performance of one of the written work samples.
- 500-word proposal of how they would like to engage with the public as the City's Poet Laureate, including audience and engagement strategy, and samples of workshops and or projects that would support the focus or them of their two-year appointment.

## **PANEL REVIEW AND SCORING OF APPLICATIONS**

Submitted applications are reviewed and scored by a peer panel consisting of local and regional artists and arts professionals and one Arts Commissioner. The panel will select one application to serve as the Poet Laureate for the two-year term and then be approved by the Costa Mesa Arts Commission at the next scheduled meeting. If any Arts Commissioner on the review panel or at a regularly scheduled meeting has an affiliation with any of the applicants, they will be required to recuse themselves from the final vote to approve the new Poet Laureate. Arts Commission meetings take place on the first Thursday of every month and begin at 6pm.

### **REVIEW AND SCORING INFORMATION**

- Parks & Community Services staff will begin reviewing applications once the deadline has passed and the application is closed.
- All eligible applications will be forwarded to an external panel of community arts professionals for evaluation and scoring.
- Incomplete applications or applications falsifying information will be deemed ineligible.

### **Aesthetic Criteria:**

The criteria used to select eligible poets shall be evaluated accordingly:

- Do the written or recorded work samples exhibit strong aesthetic merit? Are the works consistently strong? Does the applicant produce poetry on a regular basis?
- Community Involvement: Does the applicant demonstrate a history of involvement and activity within the literary arts?
- Potential for Engagement: Does the proposal support the poet's ability to engage Costa Mesa's citizens in meaningful ways to further the literary arts in our community?

## CITY OF COSTA MESA ♦

---

### POET LAUREATE PROGRAM APPLICATION

♦ Also available online

*The role of the Poet Laureate is to represent and promote poetry and literacy in the community they represent. This position is honorary and includes an honorarium for a two-year term.*

#### POET INFORMATION

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook URL: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Web Site URL: \_\_\_\_\_ Instagram URL: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in Costa Mesa? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you over the age of 18?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Do you have an affiliation with a City of Costa Mesa's Arts Commissioner?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, please write in their name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a statement of no more than 500 words explaining how you qualify and how you would fulfill this role.

---



---



---



---



---

---

---

Please provide a short biography (required). You may also attach a CV with education, work history, etc. below (optional).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**POETRY INFORMATION**

Original Poems:

*Email or upload one document (Word or PDF) with 5 original poems- please include the title of each poem and the year it was created*

---

Videos of Performances:

*Please provide a link to a performance video posted online or to a shared drive*

---

Resume or Curriculum Vitae

*Please email or upload a copy of your most current resume of CV (Word or PDF)*

*Include any literary works published in journals, online, a full-length or chapbook collection of poetry, or self-published chap/books; or have a list of spoken word performances or facilitation of writing related events.*

*Also be sure to include any examples of community engagement and collaboration, including previous experience hosting events, organizing, teaching and/or leading workshops, and/or creative community outreach.*

---

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

A Poet Laureate honorarium in the amount of \$5,000 will be awarded over a two-year period. Checks will be mailed. In order for a payout, the City will need a W-9 filed. Fill out and email or upload as part of your application.

[W-9 Form](#)

Would you be interested in participating in a brief interview for City of Costa Mesa social media platforms to help promote and bring awareness to the program? Please circle one.

Y or N

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROOF OF INSURANCE**

**TBD**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I have read and understand the requirements that have been provided in the handbook for City of Costa Mesa Poet Laureate Program.

I certify that the information contained in this application and attachments are true and correct.

**WAIVER & RELEASE**

I represent that I am the author of and owner of all rights in and to the Artwork and that I have the sole and exclusive right to make within the grant of rights, including but not limited to moral rights, that neither I nor anyone else has any contractual or other arrangements which will interfere with rights herein granted and warrant that the rights herein granted will not infringe on the rights of any third party and that the consent or permission of no other party is required by City in connection with the use of the Artwork. I agree to indemnify and hold City harmless from and against any and all liability, damages, claims and demands of whatever kind and nature, either in law or in equity, which arises or may hereafter arise from the City's use or display of the Artwork or in connection with the breach or alleged breach of my representation and/or warranty made hereunder. I understand and agree that the City may remove my artwork at any time without prior notice. I further acknowledge the City will make an effort to inform me as the artist in advance of the removal of the artwork, but any such removal will not be dependent on advance notice being given.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Laurette Garner**

City of Costa Mesa

Arts Specialist

[laurette.garner@costamesaca.gov](mailto:laurette.garner@costamesaca.gov)

(714) 754-5322

Thank you for completing this application form and for your interest in the Poetry Laureate Program. If your application is selected, you will be contacted via email. Please ensure your email address is correctly displayed above.