



## **Los Angeles Poet Laureate, a service-contract position**

**co-managed by the  
City of LA Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and the  
Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL)**

### REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

#### **Program Background**

The Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, is pleased to announce the continuation of the City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate partnership, which is managed as a collaboration between the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL). Just as the National Poet Laureate works from within the Library of Congress, the City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate will work from within the Los Angeles Public Library system, guided by a service contract from DCA.

The Poet Laureate Program was established in August of 2012 and opened in the following years. The “job” of Poet Laureate (two one-year cycles of collaborative planning, presenting, and performing) is connected to LAPL’s National Poetry Month (April).

#### **Program Goals and Objectives**

The City seeks to name one Poet Laureate to serve as an official ambassador of LA’s vibrant creative scene, promoting the City’s rich literary community and celebrating the written word.

The shared objectives of the Poet Laureate position and LAPL’s National Poetry Month are to:

- Enhance the creation and appreciation of poetry and the literary arts;
- Create multiple focal points for the expression of culture through the literary arts;
- Raise awareness of the civic importance of literature, poetry, and the spoken word;
- Inspire an emerging generation of critical thinkers, writers, storytellers, and literary artists;
- Encourage both the reading and writing of literature;
- Bring the literary arts classes and/or events to people in Los Angeles who have limited access to poetry or have few opportunities for exposure to expressive writing; and
- Create and/or collect a series of 15 or more new literary works that commemorate the diversity and vibrancy of the LA region.

The next City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate will be selected through this open-call process. Direct proposals are welcome from master writers with 7 or more years of published works. Proposals will be reviewed by a small panel, so that one superb candidate can be appointed by the Mayor in April 2020.

## **Review Process**

The Application Review Committee will be a small team of persons with combined knowledge about: creative writing, public programs, and the City of LA.

The selection process is coordinated by DCA for LAPL and the Mayor's Office. The guiding principles for the program are as follows:

1. An open application process with stated eligibility criteria, judging, and performance expectations is offered to engender inclusiveness, transparency, and fairness;
2. Applicants for the contract-position of Poet Laureate should reside in Los Angeles County and demonstrate either a residential or professional relationships to the City of Los Angeles through venues/presentations named on their resume;
3. The Department of Cultural Affairs will coordinate a two-stage review process. In stage one, open submissions will be reviewed. Applicants are asked to submit (electronically via <https://culturela.slideroom.com/>): a 7-10 sentence biography, four recent poems (from the past three years), a full resume, and a short narrative of no more than 2 pages estimating how they would fulfill the position (addressing the framework provided below as Scope of Work); and
4. In the second stage, three to five finalists will be interviewed by the Mayor and/or his designates, so that one Poet Laureate can be appointed by the Mayor in April 2020.

## **Poet Laureate Honorarium**

The Los Angeles Poet Laureate will be contracted by DCA and receive a \$10,000.00 annual fee. This honorarium will be made in three payments of approximately \$5,000.00, \$3,500.00, and \$1,500.00 based on benchmarks established in the legal contract. After the services of the first year are completed, a review of the contract will be conducted by the DCA and LAPL to determine if the Poet Laureate has successfully completed terms and responsibilities. If so, a second year agreement for another \$10,000.00 contract will be considered and offered.

Because the City operates with single-year budgets, DCA and LAPL retain the right to suspend this program between cycles for financial or other reasons.

## **Standard Eligibility Criteria**

Finalists for the position of City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate must be able to demonstrate via their professional resume:

- A residential address within Los Angeles County and a live or work relationship to the City of Los Angeles; and,
- Seven years of experience (not including years as student) in either publishing poetry or presenting poetry, or both, with a demonstrated record of being included or invited to present works within poetry journals, magazines, websites, and/or programs that are not predominately self-curated, personal websites, or personal blogs.

## **Scope of Work**

Over the course of the two-year appointment (renewable after the first year), the City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate will carry out the following duties during each year:

- Provide no less than six public classes or workshops at various LAPL branches as well as six public readings of either: original works created for these events, past work appropriate to the occasion and audience, and/or historic works by past or living Los Angeles poets. In the end, at least 12 official Poet Laureate activities will take place in locations across the city. In addition to these officially requested activities, the Mayor's Office may recommend 5 more optional activities in schools, universities, conferences, or private gatherings wherein audiences may be limited to enrolled members or invited guests;
- Participate in the coordination of no less than one festival-style event at the Central Library in April 2021 to celebrate National Poetry Month, with the specific goal to spotlight the high-quality and social-value of poetry in Los Angeles;
- Engage Los Angeles residents, visitors, civic and elected leaders, young people, adults, seniors, and students of all ages about the value of poetry, the written word, and creative expression through six or more self-coordinated or community-partnered activities that are reviewed and approved by DCA;
- Submit content for one poetry blog on the LAPL website to be updated on at least a quarterly basis. The purpose of the blog is to excite discussion, exchange, and participation in poetry, as well as educate readers about the culture of written and spoken word in Los Angeles,
- Use social media as often as possible, or work with City staff to prepare social media communications that encourage excitement about poetry, literacy and literary events, and related issues; and,
- Write one or more commemorative poem(s) each year related to a theme or topic integral to Los Angeles. Use the premiere of this/these poem(s) as a way to announce an open-call to all regional poets (emerging and masters, living or working in LA City) to submit poems for placement on sidewalks, streetlights, or related design-sites. Poet Laureate shall rank no less than 15 poems each year for use by the City on plaques, banners, or typographic displays for purposes of creative-placemaking. These poems shall be ranked in descending order and available to be integrated into/onto public surfaces in the two years following their selection by the Poet Laureate and submission to DCA.

## **Review Criteria**

All first-round submissions will be reviewed and scored on the following two criteria:

- 4 Points – Ability for the panel to assess the candidate's prior experiences on her/his resume and/or website or other means, and
- 6 Points - The quality of poetry samples in relation to the excellent talent-pool and multi-cultural nature of LA.

## Submission Materials

Each applicant should prepare to provide the following information on no more than 3 pages:

1. An application cover page of personal contact information including:
  - Full name of applicant
  - Professional name (if different)
  - Residence address (must be within the County of Los Angeles)
  - Primary work address (optional, but may be used to demonstrate connection to the City of LA)
  - Contact phone number
  - Contact email address
  - Website address (optional)
  - Biography (7-10 sentences)
2. Four PDF copies or weblinks to demonstrate 4 published poems or 4 performed poems, originated during the past 3 years
3. Professional resume submitted as a PDF or weblink. Please customize your resume so that the review-panel can easily isolate: your years of experience (7 or more) as well as your relationship to the City of LA (either residential by home or work address, or professional through past performances).
4. Brief narrative (1-2 pages) addressing how the candidate would approach fulfilling the Scope of Work.
5. Signed Certification Statement: “I certify that the information contained in this nomination/ application form, including all attachments and supporting materials, is true and correct. If the contract is awarded to my nominee/myself, it is understood that the selected Poet Laureate would be financially, administratively, and programmatically responsible for all aspects of the services including proper documentation, invoicing, and reporting. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the City of Los Angeles maintains the right to cancel this program opportunity for any reason prior to selecting a candidate.”

## Instructions for Submitting an Application

Applications must be received online by 8:00 AM on Monday, **March 9, 2020**.

Please use this link (<https://culturela.slideroom.com/>) to access the online application platform.

Questions about the application process should be addressed to the DCA Grants Office at [dca.grants@lacity.org](mailto:dca.grants@lacity.org) or by calling 213.202.5566.