



## **WILLIAMSBURG PUBLIC ART COUNCIL**

### **Williamsburg Poet Laureate Program**

#### **Introduction**

Through this program, the City of Williamsburg will name a Poet Laureate to honor and highlight the City's community and culture through the artform of poetry. The Williamsburg Public Art Council (WPAC) will facilitate a selection process to make a final recommendation to City Council who will then appoint the position.

The City seeks to celebrate and support a poet who can engage new audiences and create new opportunities for poetry to be shared and encouraged. This program is a means to spotlight the City of Williamsburg community through a poetic voice that will champion the arts as a whole.

#### **Description of Position**

The Williamsburg Poet Laureate serves as an advocate for the City to build awareness of and appreciation for the impact of poetry through public readings and presentations in meetings, events, schools, libraries, and other public settings in the City.

The Williamsburg Poet Laureate will have the following opportunities:

- Present a reading of their original inaugural poem;
- Work with the WPAC to create and execute a project during their tenure;
- Help build networks and opportunities for poets and other literary, performing, and/or visual artists to create and engage new audiences; and
- Present additional readings at events mutually agreed upon by the City and the WPAC

#### **Term of Service**

The Williamsburg Poet Laureate will serve a two-year term under the City's fiscal year which runs from July 1 through June 30. The Poet Laureate will be awarded a \$1,500 grant for each year of their tenure. The Williamsburg Public Art Council will review requests by the Poet Laureate for additional funding to support programs and/or projects during their tenure.

#### **Eligibility & Requirements**

The following list of requirements is to be considered for the Williamsburg Poet Laureate:

- Must be residing in the greater Williamsburg area at the time of submission and for the duration of the Williamsburg Poet Laureate's term;
- Must be 18 years of age at the time of submission;
- Must have one letter of recommendation from a mentor and/or someone in the writing community (i.e. a teacher/professor, author) that can speak to the applicant's voice and connection to poetry;
- Must present a body of work that is poetry or poetry-based;
- Must be willing and able to promote poetry and implement an approved project through the program; and
- Must be actively contributing to poetry or the literary arts as whole.

*If the WPAC feels a candidate is more fit for the role without having met all of the above requirements, an appeal may be made.*

### **Grant Restrictions**

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

### **Selection Process**

All submissions will be made via the City of Williamsburg's online grant portal.

Following the Williamsburg Poet Laureate submission deadline, City staff and the Williamsburg Public Art Council will verify eligibility. Staff may follow up for additional information as needed. Incomplete or ineligible submissions are subject to rejection without evaluation.

The Williamsburg Public Art Council will review all eligible submissions in a public meeting. The WPAC may invite members of the literary community to provide additional evaluation and feedback.

Evaluation criteria include:

- Merit of the submission itself, including eligibility requirements;
- Record of professional poetry activity and/or achievement (i.e. publications, list of readings/lectures, awards, honors);
- Artistic merit (i.e. reviews/critical acclaim, originality, innovation, audience reach, etc.); and
- Proposed Community Engagement Project.

A list of finalists no greater than three (3) will then be invited to present to the WPAC at a later date and time. Instructions will be given at that time.

Of the finalists, the WPAC will select its recommendation for Williamsburg Poet Laureate. The recommendation will be presented to City Council for final approval and appointment.

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

The selected Poet Laureate must comply with the following conditions:

- **Announcement of Award:** The Williamsburg Public Art Council will notify the applicants of a final decision via email by March 3, 2025.
- **Eligibility Status:** The Poet Laureate must continue to meet all of the program eligibility requirements throughout the two-year appointment period. The Poet Laureate is required to notify the City of Williamsburg’s Tourism Development Specialist in writing of any major changes to their circumstances, such as a change in residency, performance plans, or similar relevant factors.
- **Publicity:** Upon submitting the application, the applicant grants the City of Williamsburg and the Williamsburg Public Art Council 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 the City of Williamsburg.
- **Publication:** The Poet Laureate permits a non-exclusive license to the City of Williamsburg to produce a publication of their work and its use 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, as requested by the Williamsburg Public Art Council, 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 \$1,500 grant at the start of each fiscal year of their two-year tenure, contingent upon evaluation of the prior year.

## **Submission Requirement Checklist**

*The online application form will include the following documentation and materials\*. All written documents should be submitted in PDF format.*

- Brief Biography & Poet’s Statement:** The statement contextualizes your work and the ideas that form it. It should discuss your work as a poet, the role of a poet in society, and/or what experiences have shaped your own work. (Suggested word count: 300 – 500 words)
- Community Project Idea:** The Williamsburg Poet Laureate is expected to design and implement a community project that addresses the intent of the program. Specifically, the community project must use poetry to engage people in exchanges of ideas, stories, and traditions. Please provide a preliminary description of your idea. You may include any activities that you would pursue, possible partners (organizations and/or individuals), settings, and audiences.

Ultimately, this is your vision for the impact of your tenure and beyond. If selected as a finalist, you may be asked to provide additional details on your project idea. The appointed Williamsburg Poet Laureate will dedicate a portion of the first year of the term expanding on this outline. (Suggested word count: 150 – 300 words)

- One (1) Letter of Recommendation:** The letter should be from a mentor and/or someone in the writing community (i.e. professor/teacher, author) that can speak to your voice and connection to poetry.
- Work Samples:**
  - Poetry Portfolio: Submit up to 10 examples of original poems, published or unpublished. (Not to exceed 10 pages)
  - List of Publications: Submit a list of publication credits. Include individual publications of your work, followed by inclusion of your poems published as part of collections, journals, magazines, e-zines, and websites. (Not to exceed one page)
  - Videos: Please provide website links for videos showcasing your poetry readings or public speaking abilities. Accepted links may include social media videos, YouTube, Vimeo, etc.
- Supplemental Materials:** Materials may include, but are not limited to, programs and other promotional materials for readings or events, news articles/reviews, testimonials, letters of support, or awards.

*\*Selected applicants may be invited to provide additional information, including an introductory video.*

## **WILLIAMSBURG POET LAUREATE Timeline**

- **September 2024:** Announce program
- **October 2024:** Open application process
- **December 2024:** Close application process
- **January 27, 2025, WPAC meeting:** Review applicants/select finalists
- **February 2025:** *Interview/review finalists (as needed)*
- **February 24, 2025, WPAC meeting:** Make selection
- **April 10, 2025, City Council meeting:** Announce/Appoint Williamsburg Poet Laureate  
*(April is National Poetry Month)*
- **July 1, 2025:** Term begins (ending June 30, 2027)