

Illinois Poet Laureate Guidelines 2025

State of Illinois

JB Pritzker, Governor
MK Pritzker, First Lady

Illinois Arts Council

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Link [About the Illinois Poet Laureate](#)

Link [About the Illinois Arts Council](#)

Link [IAC Salesforce Grant Portal](#)

Accessible Guidelines

To obtain accessibility information regarding applications and written materials contact the Illinois Arts Council’s ADA/504 Access Coordinator.

IAC 504/ADA Coordinator

Teresa Davis

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Tel. 312-814-6753

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IAC Contacts

For any questions on the Poet Laureate application or process, please contact Jackie Banks-Mahlum. For technical assistance with Salesforce please contact Jasmine Roberson.

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Illinois Poet Laureate Summary

The Illinois Poet Laureate office appointment is made possible by the Office of the Governor and is collaboratively supported and administered by the [Illinois Arts Council](#) (IAC), [Illinois Humanities](#) (IH), and the [Poetry Foundation](#). The Illinois Poet Laureate advances the awareness of and appreciation for literary arts and humanities within the state. As a distinguished poet, the Poet Laureate represents and celebrates the diversity and history of Illinois by promoting literacy and the art of poetry through making content available and presentations at a range of public, educational, private, and electronic venues – including, but not limited to, schools, libraries, universities, community colleges, local writing groups, online, and social media. As a champion of the state’s literary community, the Poet Laureate endeavors to promote the many cultural and artistic achievements of the state of Illinois and demonstrates a commitment to promoting and celebrating the literature of Illinois’ diverse cultures, ages, abilities, orientations, and rural and urban regions.

Who’s Eligible

- Be age 21 or older
- Be a current resident of Illinois with at least 5 years of residency.
- Be willing and available to travel throughout the state.
- Have at least four published works and/or performances in established publications (print, online, poetry journals, magazines, websites, or video) over the past three years that are not predominantly self-curated, personal websites, or personal blogs (not published in a vanity press).
- Have an established history of promoting poetry and activity in Illinois’ literary community, including readings, publications, presentations, education, and/or advocacy.
- Have critical acclaim as demonstrated by special honors, awards, and/or other recognition.

Compensation for Service

- \$35,000 annual compensation
- \$10,000 to be used for anticipated expenses related to programs/events, awards, reimbursements, marketing/promotion, and other approved expenditures as allowed under the grant program
- Compensation will be administered by Illinois Humanities.

Application Information

- The application requests written information, video, work sample, and letters of recommendation. There are form fields, checkboxes, and supporting materials.

Key Dates

- Application deadline: March 5, 2025 at 11:59pm.
- The Illinois Poet Laureate is an honorary state office appointed by the Governor and the individual selected will serve an at-will four-year term to end June 30, 2029. Additional terms are at the discretion of the Governor’s office.

Illinois Poet Laureate Details

The first Illinois Poet Laureate, Howard B. Austin, was named in 1936. Only four other poets have held the title, Carl Sandburg (1962-67), Gwendolyn Brooks (1968-2000), Kevin Stein (2003-2017), and Angela Jackson (2020-2024). Also, in June 2020, John Prine was posthumously declared an Honorary Poet Laureate of Illinois.

Term Expectations

- The Poet Laureate must be able to commit to an announcement event in Springfield, IL that will take place on April 29, 2025.
- As a condition of appointment, the Illinois Poet Laureate will provide *at minimum* four in-person public readings every year during their term, two of which must annually be located outside of the Chicagoland area.
- The Poet Laureate will seek to ensure that people in all geographic regions of the state have access to at least one reading during their term of service.
- In coordination with the Office of the Governor, the Poet Laureate will establish programs to promote access and community awareness of the literary arts and to encourage citizens to develop their own creative interests.
- If schedule allows, the Poet Laureate would be expected to attend the One State Together in the Arts Conference(s), Poetry Out Loud final competitions, Gwendolyn Brooks Youth Poetry Awards, and Road Scholars events.

Applicants must:

- Apply utilizing a Salesforce grant portal account registered to the applicant.
- Submit all required application materials prior to the deadline.
- Acknowledge that if their application advances to the final review stages, they will have a background check conducted by the Governor's office.

Applicant / Application Restrictions

- Applicants may only submit one application.

Deadline

The Poet Laureate application deadline is Wednesday, March 5, 2025. The application must be successfully submitted by 11:59 PM CST to the [IAC's Salesforce grant portal](#).

Please note that all draft applications will be removed from the IAC system 30 days after the deadline.

Making Arts Accessible to All

Accessibility in the arts provides inclusive participation of people with disabilities in all cultural and creative spaces. Recipients of IAC funds are expected to make reasonable efforts for any public art activities and programs to be as accessible as possible. For further information and resources on how to do this please see the [Accessibility Resources](#) page on the IAC website.

Illinois Poet Laureate Review Criteria

The Illinois Poet Laureate applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

1. Quality of the Applicant's work.
2. Have received critical acclaim from the field as demonstrated by special honors, awards, and/or other recognition.
3. Have a substantial publication history of published works and/or performances in established publications (print, online, poetry journals, magazines, websites, or video).
4. Have demonstrated commitment to promoting awareness of poetry across diverse communities.
5. Be comfortable serving as a representative of the State of Illinois in a variety of public spaces and convenings.
6. Ability to develop and deliver public programming to all ages.
7. Ability to travel the state of Illinois.

Illinois Poet Laureate Process and Notification

Search Committee

The Governor's office, the Illinois Arts Council, Illinois Humanities, and the Poetry Foundation will appoint a Search Committee made up of qualified individuals representing a diverse group of literary experts, writers, educators, and advocates from across the state to oversee the application and first round of selection.

Review Process

- When the applicant creates the online application, the Salesforce grant portal will issue an application number that will be used in future communication regarding that application.
- Applications that have been ruled ineligible or incomplete will not be reviewed.
- Applications will be reviewed against the review criteria in the guidelines by the search committee.
- The Search Committee will review all eligible applications and will select three (3) final recommendations to be presented to the Governor and First Lady for final review and appointment.
- The selected applicant will be notified, and details of the appointment will follow.
- The Governor will announce the selection of the next Illinois Poet Laureate in Spring 2025.

Notification

Activity within Salesforce such as starting, and submitting, an application will generate automatic emails confirming this activity.

All applicants will be notified of the selection decision once the Governor and First Lady have confirmed the appointment selection for Illinois Poet Laureate.

The selected Poet Laureate will receive separate communications from Illinois Humanities regarding payment. Artists with a disability are encouraged to look at services provided by [IL ABLE](#) to assist with managing award funds.

Application Overview

IAC utilizes an [online grant portal](#), powered by Salesforce, to accept applications.

For instructions go to the [Using Salesforce](#) section of the IAC website. There is also a [user manual](#) for the online grant portal on our website to help guide the application process. Please review this carefully and use as a reference.

How to Apply

- Verify eligibility (see page 3)
- Prepare all required supporting files (see page 8)
- Log into [IAC Salesforce grant portal](#)
- Click on the Applicant Information tab from the top header in Salesforce
 - New Applicants should add an individual applicant account and fill in all required form fields.
 - Returning Applicants should make sure all information is up to date.
- Click on the Grant Programs tab
- Select the “Poet Laureate – 2025” application and click “Apply”
- Complete the form fields in the application
- Upload or link to all required attachments
- Successfully submit the application to IAC Salesforce grant portal

Application Components

1. Applicant Information

Under this tab, please create or update the entity applying for the grant. **For Poet Laureate applicants, this must be an individual.** Applicants must apply utilizing a Salesforce grant portal account registered to themselves.

This tab requires the following information:

- Individual Name and General Contact Information
- Primary Discipline Selection – select one
- Any additional disciplines reflected in programming – select as many as applicable
- Checkboxes if individual identifies as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) or has a disability.

Please note the information in the Applicant Information tab may be updated at any time. Please keep the contacts current to ensure communications from IAC reach you.

2. Grant Programs Selection

Under the Grant Programs tab select the “Poet Laureate – 2025” application. If the user has multiple applicants set up, the system will prompt the selection of the applicant organization to move forward.

On this main section please provide confirmation that:

- The Applicant Information tab has been updated
- You have been established as an Illinois resident since at least 2020.
- You are legally able to receive taxable income in the U.S. (e.g., citizen, permanent resident, and/or any other person who can provide a W9 and SSN or ITIN).
- You are 21 years of age or older.
- You are able to attend an announcement event in Springfield, IL on April 29, 2025.
- You consent to a background check if your application reaches the final stages of review.

- IAC may use images of you in our communications and outreach.
- You consent to a potential interview with IAC’s communications team. The IAC regularly connects with its grantees and artists to help promote the work they do and to celebrate arts and culture in Illinois. IAC outlets include the Muse newsletter, website, and social media.

If any of the checkboxes listed above are left blank, the application will be made ineligible and not considered for funding.

Please note that after any application is started it will appear on the home screen in the Salesforce grant portal. Within the grant application the requirements/sections will be listed along the left-side of the screen.

3. Supporting Documents

The supporting documents to be provided are:

1. Personal Statement
2. Current Artist Resume or CV
3. Letter of Recommendation 1
4. Letter of Recommendation 2
5. Video Interview
6. Work Sample 1
7. Work Sample 2
8. Work Sample 3
9. Work Sample 4
10. Valid Driver’s License or State ID

Supporting Documents utilizing video or audio files submitted via a link (ex. YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, etc.):

- Have no size restriction
- Must be public and without password protection
- May not link to sites that require an account (e.g., Instagram)

Supporting Documents submitted via upload:

- May be no larger than 25 MB in size.
- Salesforce will accept the formats listed below:
 - Audio acceptable formats are: mp3, .wav, .ogg.
 - Video acceptable formats are: .vi, .mov, .mpeg, .mpg, .swf
 - Document and Visual Files acceptable format is: .pdf, .jpg

Please refer to the “Supporting Documents” section on page 8 for instructions.

4. Submit / Certification

Please note this is a two-step process to both certify and submit your application. Once the application is complete click the Submit Button in the lower left-hand corner. A pop-up will require certification of eligibility and application content. After certification there is a submit button which must be clicked to complete the application in the [IAC Salesforce grant portal](#). The application will not be successfully submitted until the second submit button is clicked.

Supporting Documents

Personal Statement

The personal statement is limited to two (2) pages and should give an overview of the applicant's proposed approaches and ideas to fulfilling various duties and responsibilities that support the position's purpose.

Submit this document as a pdf file named: Applicant Name_Personal Statement

Current Artist Resume or CV

The artist resume or CV provided should be current and should list:

- The applicant's professional background
- Publishing history
- Experience promoting the art of poetry
- Critical acclaim demonstrated by special honors, awards, or other recognitions

Submit this document as a pdf file named: Applicant Name_Resume

Two Letters of Recommendation

Applicant should submit two letters of recommendation in support of their poetry and potential service as the Illinois Poet Laureate. The letters should be limited to one (1) page.

Submit this document as a pdf file named: Applicant Name_Recommendation 1 and Applicant Name_Recommendation 2

Video Interview

Provide a video submission up to five (5) minutes in length and answer the questions below. Please read the question out loud before each answer to identify it.

Questions:

1. What is the purpose of poetry?
2. As Poet Laureate, how would you interact with diverse communities across the state?
3. What project or program would you create in your first year that will engage youth and/or address statewide and /or local issues?
4. How would you incorporate technology into your role as Poet Laureate?
5. How much time do you feel you should invest in the laureateship? And how would that fit in with your current commitments?

If uploading a file, it should be named: Applicant Name_Interview

Four Work Samples

Provide four (4) work samples of original poetry. A minimum of one (1) of the work samples must be a video.

Video Work Sample(s) must be a recording of one (1) poem, not to exceed five (5) minutes in length.

Written Work Sample(s) must be a pdf of one (1) poem, not to exceed ten (10) pages in length.

Each work sample has a corresponding field to describe it in a maximum of 1,000-characters. In the Work Sample Description field, applicants must provide the following for each work:

- Title of work
- Date of completion
- Optional additional details

If uploading files, they should be named: Applicant Name_Work Sample 1, Applicant Name_Work Sample 2, Applicant Name_Work Sample 3, and Applicant Name_Work Sample 4

Driver's License or State ID

The Illinois Poet Laureate application requires a valid Illinois Driver's License or Illinois State ID.

If your application does not meet the residency verification the application will be ineligible.

Submit this document as a PDF file named: Applicant Name_Residency

For general information contact:

Illinois Arts Council

115 S. LaSalle St., Suite 2202

Chicago, IL 60603

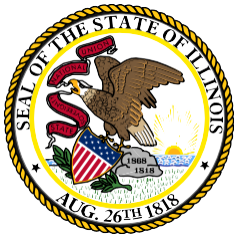
312-814-6750

Toll free in Illinois 800-237-6994

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Email: iac.info@illinois.gov

Web site: www.arts.illinois.gov



Visit the [Illinois Arts Council Board Members](#) page for a complete list of current board members.

It is illegal for the Illinois Arts Council or anyone receiving assistance from the Illinois Arts Council to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, non- binary and gender non-conforming employees, sexual harassment, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, beliefs, age, order of protection status, any other non-merit status, marital status, pregnancy, arrest record, military status, veterans status or unfavorable discharge from military service. Any individual who has been subject to such discrimination may file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Human Rights at +1 (312) 814-6200 or TTY +1 (312) 263-1570.

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