



CALL TO LITERARY ARTISTS

2023-2025 Tacoma Poet Laureate

Application Deadline: January 30, 2023, 11:59 pm

Stipend: \$4,000

Additional Project Budget: \$1,000

OPPORTUNITY

The Tacoma Arts Commission is accepting applications for the 2023-2025 Tacoma Poet Laureate position. Literary artists who are emerging, professional, or established artists producing poetry in any form, genre, or style are encouraged to apply. We will also consider writers who work in additional genres whose work intersects with poetry. The Poet Laureate will build community, amplify what is unique about Tacoma, and provide opportunities for people's voices to be heard.

The Tacoma Poet Laureate will hold the title for a period of two years, from May 2023 to April 2025, and receive a stipend of \$4,000 paid in 4 installments over the two-year term. The Poet Laureate will have access to an additional project budget of up to \$1,000 to help implement programming. The individual will actively contribute to and advance Tacoma's literary community in meaningful ways through readings, performances, workshops, presentations, publications and/or special projects – whether in-person or virtually; participate in Tacoma Arts Month each October; and help produce the 2025 Tacoma Poet Laureate ceremony to announce the next Poet Laureate. The individual should actively strive to engage the breadth of Tacoma's residents, expanding access to the literary arts to underserved/underrepresented audiences. The Poet Laureate is expected to determine the direction, focus, and appropriate public components for their term of service.

Current Tacoma Poet Laureate Lydia K. Valentine will curate and host a poetry event at which the winner of this year's Poet Laureate competition will be awarded. The event date will be announced in early 2023.

In alignment with Tacoma City Council [Resolution 40622](#), the Tacoma Arts Commission is committed to sustained and transformational anti-racist work, including programming supported through the Tacoma Poet Laureate program. As stated by Mayor Victoria Woodards, "Dismantling more than 400 years of systemic racism will not happen overnight. This must be a sustained effort that invites the whole community to join us in radically reimagining our institutions and the services they provide."

The Tacoma Arts Commission is striving toward social justice. We are committed to supporting equitable opportunities to broaden artistic expression while encouraging inter-sectional communities through

inclusive relationships and outreach. Arts and culture are uniquely positioned to touch every person and every part of Tacoma. We are committed to supporting the entirety of our community.

We invite applicants to consider how their proposed community engagement work can help build a more [Compassionate Tacoma](#) with projects that are equitable and inclusive, offer opportunities for connection and relationship building, and contribute to the social, emotional, and physical well-being of our residents.

All projects of the poet laureate must follow state and local health regulations; the selected poet laureate should be prepared to make adjustments, as needed, in response to the current public health situation at the time of production.

DUTIES

The artist selected as Tacoma Poet Laureate must be willing and able to:

- Offer a minimum of two free public workshops in Tacoma each year – in-person or virtually – (four workshops total over two-year term of service.)
- Actively contribute to and advance Tacoma’s literary community in meaningful ways through readings, performances, workshops, presentations, publications, special projects, etc. – in-person or virtually – as agreed upon with the City’s Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality staff.
- Participate in Tacoma Arts Month programming each October (can be participation in a public event that the City is already producing).
- Competently handle administrative duties including being the point-of-contact for all programming inquiries from the public, managing a schedule, arranging details for programs, and coordinating marketing with City’s Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality staff.
- Help produce, with the assistance of the City’s Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality, an event in Tacoma in April 2025 to announce the winner of the 2025-2027 Tacoma Poet Laureate program.

PRIORITIES

The Tacoma Arts Commission is committed to investing in communities most impacted by racial, social, and economic inequity. The intention of Priorities is to foster programming that addresses historic and structural inequities, as we work toward justice for all.

All applications will be reviewed, and decisions made, using the Selection Criteria. An applicant’s community engagement strategies do not need to meet any of the Priorities listed below to be considered. But, as part of the review process, the panel will prioritize the position for applicants whose community engagement strategies meet one or more of the following:

- Strategies that primarily give voice to one or more of the following:
 - Racial justice and/or social justice
 - Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) / African, Latinx, Arab, Asian, Native-American (ALAANA) communities
 - Economically or socio-economically marginalized communities
 - LGBTQIA+ communities
 - People with disabilities
- Strategies that will address emergent community needs

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicant must live in Pierce County and be actively engaged in Tacoma’s creative community. Staff will verify addresses against a [map of Pierce County](#)
- Applicant must be an active literary artist, dedicated to producing work on a regular basis.
- Applicant must be 18 years or older.
- Applicant cannot be a previous Tacoma Poet Laureate titleholder.
- Applicant cannot be a current Tacoma Arts Commission member, City Council member, City of Tacoma staff member, or Tacoma Poet Laureate selection panel member.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Artistic Quality (as exhibited in written and recorded work samples)
- Demonstrated history of involvement and activity within the literary arts
- Vision and strategies to engage with Tacoma’s residents in meaningful ways to further the literary arts in our community

TACOMA POET LAUREATE BACKGROUND

The Tacoma Poet Laureate position was founded in 2008 by Urban Grace Church as a way of focusing attention on Tacoma’s literary talent by organizing and hosting public readings and workshops in local schools and community events.

In 2011, upon the request of Urban Grace Church, the administration of the Poet Laureate program transitioned to the City of Tacoma’s Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality. Urban Grace Church is recognized as the founding partner of the program. Past poets laureate include William Kupinse (2008), Antonio Edwards Jr. (2009), Tammy Robacker (2010), Josie Emmons Turner (2011), Lucas Smiraldo (2013), Thy Nguyễn (2015), Kellie Richardson (2017), and Abby E. Murray (2019). The current poet laureate is Lydia K. Valentine (2021).

TIMELINE

Application deadline:	January 30, 2023, 11:59 pm
Notification:	by March 17, 2023
Tacoma Poet Laureate ceremony:	To be announced
Term of service:	May 2023 – April 2025

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted through the Tacoma Poet Laureate online application form at <https://tacomaarts.submittable.com/submit>. The application form will ask for the following items:

1. Proof of Residency

Such as a photo of your Washington State ID, Driver’s License, housing lease, or current utility bill to indicate your current residency within Pierce County.

2. Short Responses

Answers to the following four questions. Limit each answer to no more than 250 words.

- Describe your relationship to Tacoma.
- How would you serve the community as Tacoma Poet Laureate?
- Outline your proposed community engagement strategy. How will you connect with and/or give voice to underserved/underrepresented poetry audiences?

- Briefly summarize two sample workshops or projects you think might appeal to public audiences that you would consider presenting as Tacoma Poet Laureate.

3. Artist Resume or Bio

4. References

Names and contact information for two references who can speak to how you would serve in a public role promoting poetry.

5. Work Samples with Descriptions

- **5 written poetry samples** of your own composition, and
- **1 to 2 recorded poetry samples** - submit URLs or digital video or audio recording samples of you reading or performing your own compositions. At least one recorded piece should be the same composition as one of the written poetry samples you are submitting.

QUESTIONS?

For questions or assistance, please email Chevi Chung at cchung1@cityoftacoma.org or call (253) 591-5171.