

City of Orlando - 2025 Poet Laureate Program Guidelines

OVERALL MESSAGE

Orlando is an international city, which offers its residents, businesses and visitors a variety of arts and cultural offerings. Mayor Buddy Dyer and the Orlando City Council acknowledge the cultural, economic, and quality of life value of the arts in Orlando through the city's strong support of visual, performance and literary arts. Orlando is a young, vibrant city with many important stories to tell. Orlando's Poet Laureate will be the city's official storyteller.

On October 3, 2021, Shawn Welcome was appointed the second Poet Laureate. He is finishing up his four-year term and Mayor Dyer has announced the search for the city of Orlando's third Poet Laureate. The purpose of the Orlando Poet Laureate position is to promote poetry and an appreciation of poetry among the general public and to inspire an emerging generation of literary artists and readers of literature. The Orlando Poet Laureate will serve as an ambassador for the City of Orlando and the greater Central Florida community, fostering public appreciation of and participation in poetry and literary arts. The Poet Laureate will reflect the spirit of the community by promoting literary education in our schools and communities, and by sharing poetry with the people of Orlando. Each Poet Laureate will bring their unique and different emphasis to the position.

The process of selecting Orlando's third Poet Laureate will be conducted in partnership with [United Arts of Central Florida](#) and [Burrow Press](#), an Orlando-based literary publisher. Both organizations are committed to helping the City foster a robust literary community in Orlando and Central Florida.

PROJECT DETAILS

Program Timeline

- Mid April - Mayor Dyer announces the search for the City Poet Laureate and introduces the city's Poet Laureate Search Committee members representing: University of Central Florida, Valencia College, Rollins College, Seminole State College, Orange County Library System, Burrow Press, Florida Humanities Council and accomplished local poets, with United Arts CEO serving as an Ex-Officio member. Selection process is managed by United Arts of Central Florida, with the Mayor choosing Orlando's third Poet Laureate from three finalists selected by the panel.
- April 27 – June 30 applications accepted
- June 28 (3 pm) last day to ask United Arts staff questions about the application
- June 30 (midnight) deadline for applications
- August 2025 Search Committee Panel Meeting
- August 2025 Mayor interviews finalists
- Oct. 1 Mayor announces Orlando's Poet Laureate – National Arts and Humanities Month.
- Oct. 2025-Oct. 2029 4-year term of Poet Laureate, who serves at the pleasure of the Mayor, and requires annual renewals.

[Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowships Eligibility & Guidelines](#) | [Academy of American Poets](#)

Eligibility

The nominee must:

- Be a documented resident of Central Florida (Orange, Osceola, Seminole, or Lake County) for at least one year and must reside in Central Florida for at least six months of each year.
- Have ties to the City of Orlando and a strong interest in serving the city.
- Show evidence of achievement in the art of poetry, including substantial publications (books, literary magazines, and/or digital media).
- Have received significant recognition or awards.

- Demonstrate excellence in promoting awareness or enjoyment of poetry.
- Understand and embrace Orlando's varied cultures and history.
- Have documented experience in public speaking, teaching, community engagement and/or public performance.
- Be at least 21 years of age and not currently enrolled in an undergraduate academic program.
- Be able and willing to conduct a minimum of 6 in person public engagement duties of the Poet Laureate
- Be willing to sign a Letter of Agreement with the City specifying terms.

Past Poets Laureate are not eligible for additional years after the end of their three-year term of service.

Selection Process

Mayor Buddy Dyer appoints the Poet Laureate Search Committee, a group of poets, scholars, and literary experts, to assist in the selection process. The Mayor's office partners with United Arts of Central Florida will convene and facilitate the selection process. This committee includes representatives from University of Central Florida, Valencia College, Rollins College, Seminole State College, Orange County Library System, Burrow Press, and accomplished local poets, with Orlando's current Poet Laureate Shawn Welcome serving as an Ex-Officio member.

The search committee will review all eligible applications, which will be scored on a 30-point scale, with up to 20 points for artistic merit of the work samples, and up to 10 points for experience and background. The names of three finalists with committee rankings will be forwarded to Mayor Dyer for final selection. Finalists will be interviewed (in person or via Zoom) in August 2025. The Poet Laureate will be announced in October 2025, during National Arts and Humanities Month.

Functions/Duties

- The Poet Laureate shall present original works of poetry at up to four of the Mayor's and/or City's annual events per year, as requested by the City of Orlando.
- The Poet Laureate will present at a variety of community events with a focus on students, immersing writers and in locations such as schools, libraries, and community centers. The Poet Laureate will proactively seek events, connect with students, community groups, Main Street Managers and City Commissioners.
- The Poet Laureate will be featured in United Arts' directory of available education programs on www.https://artists.unitedartscfl.org/.
- The City of Orlando, United Arts or Burrow Press will work with the Poet Laureate to facilitate press coverage for related to key activities.
- The Poet Laureate will be featured in an issue of United Arts' bimonthly publication, *Artistry*.

Terms & Compensation

- The Poet Laureate serves at the pleasure of the Mayor, is appointed for a term of one year, with annual renewals by the Mayor for a total of up to four years based on the City of Orlando's evaluation.
- The Poet Laureate will receive an honorarium of \$5,000 per year for up to a four-year term renewal, plus reimbursement for approved, related expenses.
- The annual stipend honors the poet's achievements and helps to defray expenses not reimbursed by individual organizations where the Poet Laureate is a guest. The Poet Laureate is permitted to accept honoraria or remuneration from host organizations during the term of service, with the City's prior approval.
- The Poet Laureate reserves the rights to any compensation from their poetry during their term. However, the City of Orlando may publish and/or distribute such poetry without charge to the City, except covering production and distribution costs.
- The Poet Laureate will sign an Agreement with the City specifying terms.