

## Six Cities in California with Poets Laureate

### 1. Emeryville, California

In **Emeryville** the Poet Laureate serves as the City's literary ambassador during a two-year term commencing mid-year.

The request for proposals includes the following criteria:

- The selected poet lives or works in Emeryville, and be at least 18 years of age.
- The selected poet has demonstrated a commitment to poetry through prior publication and submission of a body of work of no less than twenty poems, and/or a performance record such as spoken word, poetry slams, film, new media or other performance-related venues.
- The selected poet embraces a willingness to engage the community in a discourse about poetry, to present his or her work to the public and Emeryville K-12 students.
- The selected poet is willing to allow selected poems to be published on the City website, to be duplicated as posters for distribution at events or in the schools, to be framed for installation in City Hall, and possibly for use in visual art installations.

The duties of the **Emeryville** Poet Laureate include:

- Represent the City of Emeryville and the poetic arts through participation in poetry events and interviews.
- Present poetry at no more than four events per year. These events may vary from year-to-year, but could include readings at scheduled City events and in the schools.
- Accept invitations, as schedule permits, to present his/her poetry at community events or with community groups, in interviews with the media, and to submit works for publication on the City website and other outreach vehicles.
- Act as an advocate and resource for poetry and literary events in Emeryville

### 2. Albany, California

In **Albany**, the honorary position of Poet Laureate is given to a writer who uses poetry to express and celebrate a spirit of community throughout the year and to foster a love of poetry and literature among citizens young and old. Published poets who live or work in **Albany** are eligible to apply.

The Poet Laureate writes poems throughout the year and participates in community events, education, and readings. Each year the **Albany** Poet Laureate will:

1. Publicly present to the City at least 4 new poems for public occasions (example: Arbor Day Memorial Day Services, July 4th, Dinner with Albany)

2. Hold at least one free public youth poetry event, which may include workshops during or after school, and youth poetry slams or readings.
3. Offer a public reading of your work and that of other poets at the library or other designated venue.
4. Participate in other activities that promote poetry throughout the community.

**Length of Appointment:** The appointment of Poet Laureate is for 1 year with an option for renewal.

**Payment:** The position of the City of **Albany** Poet Laureate is entirely honorary.

**Qualifications:** The person appointed as a Poet Laureate must:

- have lived or worked in **Albany** for at least 6 months prior to the application deadline date (“work” means that you work in **Albany** at least 20 hours a week)
- have presented poems publicly for at least 5 years, preferably published poems in circulation magazines and/or books. Online publications, public performances and readings may also be considered.
- have a record of active contribution as a poet, as acknowledged by peers and by community involvement in the form of teaching, judging, or performance

**To apply:** Submit 1 digital (via CD or email) and 5 hard-copy sets of the following materials:

- evidence that meets the above qualifications (photocopies of published works, statement of residence or employment, news clips, web printouts, etc.)
  - a resume and contact information
  - 2 personal or professional references (maximum 300 words each)
  - no more than 20 pages of selections from your work, published or unpublished
  - a personal statement not to exceed 500 words about why you are interested in the position and what activities and goals you want to pursue during your appointment
  - [optional] a video, recording, or YouTube or other link of you reciting your work
- Deliver your submission before Sunday, July 7, 2013 to:

Albany Poet Laureate Program

c/o Albany Arts Committee

1249 Marin Avenue Albany, CA 94706

Email digital files and links to: [albanyartcalendar@gmail.com](mailto:albanyartcalendar@gmail.com)

Note:

- The Arts Committee is not responsible for loss or damage No packets will be returned.
- Failure to maintain residency or work location in Albany during the term of appointment may result in termination of the appointment by the City.
- The candidate selected will be required to sign a contract with the City. Due to the public nature of this position, the candidate must agree that any work submitted will meet certain criteria with regard to content.
- All works submitted during the Poet Laureate’s term remain the property of the Poet, who grants the City a permanent license to archive and reproduce them.
- See the Poet Laureate website at <http://www.albanyca.org/index.aspx?page=725> for more information.

The Albany Poet Laureate Program is administered by the Albany Arts Committee.

### **3. Los Gatos, California**

**Los Gatos** appointed as its first Poet Laureate a person who served in a community volunteer position the first two years and helped to establish the procedure now used.

#### **Purpose of the Poet Laureate in Los Gatos**

- To encourage the appreciation and advancement of the literary arts in Los Gatos
- To stimulate the cultural awareness of the community
- To introduce the youth of the community to the wonders and benefits of poetry as a part of history and culture

#### **Advantages for the Town**

- Reflects the enlightened and educated community that is Los Gatos
- Enhances the Town's cultural credibility
- Potential source of fund raising
- Stimulates creative engagement in the community for old and young alike
- Minimal impact on Town budget (voluntary position; however, some expenses for supplies may be required)

#### **Selection process**

Form a volunteer committee to select candidate to recommend to the Town Council, composed of a selection of the following:

- Member of Library Board
- Member of Arts and Cultural Commission
- An educator
- Member from Friends of the Library
- Member of Town Council
- Member from the Museums Board
- Member from the Community-at-large
- Professional poets
- Boards and/or directors of literary organizations
- Town staff

#### **Criteria for appointment**

- Must be resident of Los Gatos
- Evidence of body of work, published or unpublished
- Over 18 years of age
- Must agree to fulfill duties of poet laureate for length of term
- Public speaking ability
- Two personal or professional references

## **4. West Hollywood**

The City of West Hollywood through its Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission and the inter-agency West Hollywood Library Cultural Programming Committee are seeking qualified applicants to the West Hollywood Poet Laureate Program. The City of West Hollywood Poet Laureate serves as the official ambassador of West Hollywood's vibrant literary culture, using his or her position as a platform from which to promote poetry in West Hollywood, the transformative qualities of poetry, and the written word throughout all parts of the community. The Poet Laureate serves for a term of two years from Sept 2014-2016

The City Poet will highlight the City of West Hollywood through the literary arts and, over a period of time, create a new body of literary work that commemorates the diversity and vibrancy of the City. He will also serve as an official ambassador of West Hollywood's vibrant literary culture, promote poetry in West Hollywood, stimulate the transformative impact of poetry in the local community, and create excitement about the written word. His term as City Poet will last for two years.

## **5. Cupertino, California**

Poet Laureate is an honorary volunteer position sponsored by the City of Cupertino and seated in its public library. Sponsors and support network include the Library Commission, Friends of the Cupertino Library, and the Cupertino Library Foundation. The Poet Laureate is a practicing poet with professional recognition and a talent for performance. The Poet Laureate is expected to create and host public events that promote the literary arts in our community and inspire creativity in all residents. Such events might include poetry contests, writing workshops and lectures, public readings, etc. The Poet Laureate works in collaboration with the City, sponsors, and support network to schedule and promote events.

Applications for the Poet Laureate of Cupertino will be accepted through 5 pm, July 10, 2015. The formal application, deliverable to Cupertino City Hall, can be downloaded through this webpage, or can be picked up at Cupertino Library Reference Desk or at a number of locations around the City, including City Hall and Quinlan Community Center.

In December 2010, the City Council of Cupertino unanimously adopted a resolution establishing the office of the Cupertino Poet Laureate. The individual selected by the Cupertino Poet Laureate Committee, through an application and interview process, will be the second person in Cupertino to officially promote poetry and other literary forms to the City's diverse population.

The Poet Laureate will preside for two years, until January 2018. Through personal presentations and hosted educational events, the Laureate will

introduce adults and youth to the benefits of personal and community expression, highlighting living and working in Cupertino.

Applicants for the Poet Laureate position must be 21 years of age, reside or have worked in Cupertino in the last two successive years, and have been published or otherwise publicly recognized as a poet. Applicants with disabilities, even speech, and candidates fluent in languages in addition to English, are encouraged to apply. Poems must be submitted in English.

## **6. Los Angeles, California**

The City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate serves as an official ambassador of LA's vibrant creative scene, promoting the City's rich literary community and celebrating the written word.

The objectives of the City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate Program are to:

- ☐ Enhance the presence and appreciation of poetry and the literary arts in Los Angeles;
- ☐ Create a focal point for the expression of Los Angeles culture through the literary arts;
- ☐ Raise awareness of the power of literature, poetry, and the spoken word;
- ☐ Inspire an emerging generation of critical thinkers, writers, storytellers, and literary artists;
- ☐ Bring the literary arts to people in Los Angeles who have limited access to poetry or have few opportunities for exposure to expressive writing; Encourage both the reading and writing of literature; and,
- ☐ Create a new body of literary works that commemorate the diversity and vibrancy of the LA region.

The Los Angeles Poet Laureate receives a \$10,000 honorarium each year for the two year period he/she holds the position.

For more information go to

[www.culturela.org/.../Poet Laureate Program Guidelines 5.23.14.pdf](http://www.culturela.org/.../Poet_Laureate_Program_Guidelines_5.23.14.pdf)



## **A Poet Laureate for Culver City**

Before a Poet Laureate can be appointed for Culver City, some very important details need to be explained. First, the City Council and citizens of Culver City should be aware of the history of the post. Then, they need to be aware of the duties and responsibilities of a Poet Laureate and what that would entail for our city. A list of cities throughout California with Poets Laureate is included along with their population. The selection processes used by three of the cities, Albany, Emeryville and Los Gatos are provided in detail for comparison. You will note that they are very different and range from the simple to the complex. Finally, a plan to move ahead with the idea of focusing on the Centennial year 2017 is included.

### **History and Definition:**

A Poet Laureate (plural: Poets Laureate) is an honorary title, originating from the ancient Greeks' practice of crowning their artists and athletes with laurels. A Poet Laureate is officially appointed by a government or conferring institution and is often expected to compose poems for special events and occasions as well as advancing the knowledge and enjoyment of literary arts through public readings, education and community events. In the 1300s, two Italians were the first to be crowned Poets Laureate and in Henry VII of England's day, he crowned the Poet Laureate. Today more than a dozen national governments continue the Poet Laureate tradition. In the U.S., the Librarian of Congress identifies a poet he'd like to serve as Poet Laureate, confirms that the poet is willing and able to serve as Poet Laureate and then appoints the poet to the position. He often seeks suggestions from the Library's Poetry and Literature Center and other poets before he makes the final decision. There are other Poets Laureate in addition to those named by countries, states and cities such as the Children's Poet Laureate designated by the Poetry Foundation.

### **Procedures in California Cities:**

Many Poets Laureate are selected by a literary group in a given country, state or city. As you see above, the selection in the U.S. is done by an individual who asks for suggestions if he doesn't already have someone in mind.

The following list is of California cities which have appointed a Poet Laureate:

California Cities w/Poets Laureate	Population
<b>Emeryville</b>	<b>10,080</b>
<b>Albany</b>	<b>18,539</b>
Windsor	26,801

Benecia	26,997
<b>Los Gatos</b>	<b>29,413</b>
<b>West Hollywood</b>	<b>34,399</b>
<b>Culver City</b>	<b>38,883</b>
Dublin	46,036
Brentwood	51,481
<b>Cupertino</b>	<b>58,302</b>
Davis	65,662
San Ramon	72,148
Alameda	73,812
Salinas	150,441
Oakland	390,724
Sacramento	466,388
Fresno	494.665
San Francisco	805,235
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>3,792 621</b>

The first two on the list, Albany and Emeryville, are smaller in size than Culver City, but have very different procedures. Emeryville has a much simpler procedure while Albany's is more complex. Los Gatos is closer in size to Culver City, and differs somewhat from the other two. West Hollywood has appointed its first poet laureate, but there is no application available on the web site. I have contacted the city manager's office, but have not received a copy. Cupertino has just appointed its second poet laureate and has put an announcement out for the third. Los Angeles has developed a very detailed selection process, which is understandable since they pay an honorarium of \$20,000 over a two year period. Procedures used by of the six cities highlighted provided the ideas for a procedure we could establish here in Culver City.

Descriptions for each of the six cities are in a separate document.



## **D R A F T**

### **Procedure for Selection of a Poet Laureate for Culver City**

#### **The Position of Poet Laureate in Culver City**

In Culver City the Poet Laureate will serve in an honorary [NOTE: No stipend as in Los Angeles.] position as the City's literary ambassador during a two year term. [NOTE: Commencing mid-year – July – is recommended.] The Poet Laureate will be a practicing poet with professional recognition and a talent for performance who is expected to create and host public events that promote the literary arts in our community and inspire creativity in all residents. Such events might include poetry contests, writing workshops and lectures, public readings, etc. The Poet Laureate will work in collaboration with the government of Culver City, sponsors, and support network to schedule and promote events. [NOTE: Culver City's first Poet Laureate will be expected to work with the Centennial Celebration Committee in preparation for 2017]

#### **Duties:**

- Through personal presentations and hosted educational poetry events, the Poet Laureate will introduce adults and youth in Culver City to the benefits of personal and community expression through the poetic arts, highlighting living and working in Culver City
- Present poetry at events and for public occasions throughout each year including those scheduled by Culver City and community groups
- Act as an advocate and resource for poetry and literary events in Culver City, especially those showcasing our city
- Hold at least one free public youth poetry event yearly
- Develop and organize poetry contests each year [NOTE: During the 2017 Centennial]
- Offer public readings of her/his work and that of other poets at the library or other designated venue
- Participate in other activities that promote the transformative qualities of poetry, and the written word throughout all parts of our community

#### **Criteria for appointment:**

The selected poet

- has been a resident of Culver City for the past 5 years

- is at least 21 years of age
- has an educational background including literary arts
- has a multilingual/multicultural background
- has demonstrated a commitment to poetry through prior publication and submission of a body of work of no less than twenty poems, and/or a performance record such as spoken word, poetry slams, film, new media or other performance-related venues
- has demonstrated a willingness to write and develop poetry for the community in public venues and by teaching classes and workshops
- has provided service to the Culver City community
- has demonstrated public speaking ability .
- must agree to fulfill the duties of Poet Laureate for the length of term
- has submitted two personal or professional references

**Application Procedure:** [NOTE: The application should be available at City Hall and on-line. A web link will need to be set up.]

Submit the application with five original poems (published or unpublished), a current resume and two letters of recommendation for the position to the Culver City Poet Laureate Selection Committee, Culver City City Hall. Alternatively, you may submit a PDF to .....culvercity.org All entries are due no later than .....

The application should include the following:

Name

Residential Address

Daytime Phone      Evening Phone      Email

Circle Yes or No for each of the following items:

- I have been a resident of Culver City for the past five years.
- I am at least 21 years old.

- I am an active poet and have been published or been publicly recognized for my contributions to poetry.
- I have been educated in the literary arts
- I have a multilingual/multicultural background
- I am willing to write and develop poetry for the community in public venues and by teaching classes and workshops
- I have provided service to the Culver City community
- I am comfortable speaking in public.
- I agree to fulfill the duties of Poet Laureate for the entire 2 year term

Each application should be accompanied by”

- A resume and contact information
- Evidence that meets the above qualifications: copies or photocopies of unpublished or published works either in hard copy or digital format (via CD or email)
- A personal statement not to exceed 500 words about why you are interested in the position and what activities and goals you want to pursue during your appointment
- [optional] A video, recording, or YouTube or other link of you reciting your work

Deliver your submission before .....2015 to.....Culver City City Hall or by email to ....: [culvercity.org](mailto:culvercity.org)