**ArtsWestchester’s Call to Poets**

**For the role of Westchester County Poet Laureate**

As the designated arts agency of Westchester County, ArtsWestchester will undertake the role of organizing the Westchester County Poet Laureate program by establishing a selection process with an advisory committee, securing the County’s approval and administering the grant. It is ArtsWestchester’s mission to provide leadership, vision and support to ensure the availability, accessibility and diversity of the arts in Westchester County. The Westchester County Poet Laureate program will help to fulfill this mission.

The following is a Request for Proposals for poets to serve as the County’s poet laureate. The laureate will encourage the community to engage with poetry by creating and leading activities that inspire writing and performances of poetry among all age groups while initiating a dialogue between local poets, cultural organizations, and community institutions.

**Eligibility**

The poet laureate must:

* Be a resident of Westchester County, NY for at least 2 years
* Demonstrate a commitment to poetry writing, spoken word performance, and community involvement and outreach
* Have past work that is of high artistic quality (demonstrated by journal publications, chapbooks, books, audio or video)
* Have the ability to engage the public
* Be at least 25 years of age at time of application
* Be able to serve the full two-year term as laureate and maintain residency in Westchester County throughout the term

**Honorarium**

The laureate will receive a stipend of $2,500 for the two-year term. The honorarium will be distributed annually in two payments of $1,250. There will be an additional $500 allotted for program costs.

**Length of Term**

The laureate will be appointed to serve a two-year (24 month) term. The expected term will be from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022.

**Duties and Requirements of the Poet Laureate**

The laureate is expected to provide a minimum of two readings and three community events each year, but is of course free to do more. ArtsWestchester will provide logistical support for organizing and publicizing the events as well as assist the laureate to work with cultural organizations, business owners and other agencies.

• A minimum of two Public Readings Each Year: The laureate will give a public reading of their work during each year of their tenure. The laureate will also present an original poem during each year of their tenure at a County event, such as the 9/11 Memorial ceremony.

• Three Community Events Each Year: The laureate will provide opportunities for community members to write and/or share their own poems.

We are looking for a laureate who can creatively use their individual talents and strengths to elevate the stature of poetry in the community for all Westchester residents.

The laureate will develop and lead their own activities, but possible events could include writing workshops or readings at schools (pending District approval) or community centers. Preferably the Poet Laureate would engage the public through a project-based activity that the Laureate candidate proposes and enacts. The Laureate would be encouraged to work with Westchester’s Youth Poet Laureate. Ultimately the Laureate should be an ambassador for poetry by spreading the “word”. At the end of each year, ArtsWestchester would like to see a self-evaluation/report of the Laureate’s term.

**Application Requirements**

The ArtsWestchester requires that there be one application per poet and all submissions be provided in electronic format only, via Submittable.

The applicant will need to provide:

1. Application Cover Page (Name, address, etc.)

2. Letter of Interest: In 500 words or less, discuss your background in writing and performing poetry; your involvement in community organizations and activities; and describe in specific terms a community project/event that you would develop and lead. Let us know how this community event fits into your overall vision for the laureateship you’d create if selected as the County’s poet laureate.

3. Examples of Original Work: Provide 10 pages of published poetry writing or 3-5 minutes of audio/video.

4. References: Please list two personal or professional references. Include their name, title, email address and phone number, including area code.

5. Curriculum Vitae or Resume: Please provide your Curriculum Vitae or professional resume.

6. Proof of residency.

**Selection Process**

A selection panel will make a recommendation to the County based on the applications and interviews. The selection of the poet laureate will be made by the County. The selection panel will evaluate the candidate’s submissions and make its recommendation based on the proposal submission materials and interviews with short-listed applicants. If necessary, a more detailed proposal may be requested from the candidates. The panel may include professional poets, County representatives, ArtsWestchester Staff or Board.

Selection criteria include:

• Literary and artistic merit as evidenced by the submitted poetry

• Proven ability to undertake successful creative, innovative, and effective approaches in comparable projects

• Demonstrated ability to work creatively with groups of different ages and backgrounds

• Experience with speaking in public venues

• Ability to understand a locale’s sense of place and inspire its residents in written and personal expression

• Demonstrated interest in and commitment to community outreach

• Conformance with ArtsWestchester’s guidelines for public art including but not limited to quality, nature of work, originality, and diversity

ArtsWestchester reserves the right to reject any and all applications.

**Estimated Timeline**

The schedule is contingent upon ArtsWestchester’s schedule and may be changed at any time.

October 19, 2020: Call for Poets Released

November 16, 2020: Applications Due via Submittable

Late November/ Early December 2020: Interviews with Selected Applicants

Mid- December: Selection of Artist Announced following the ArtsWestchester Board of Directors meeting

January 2021 – December 2022: Expected Term of Poet Laureate

**Proposals are due by November 16, 2020 at 11:59 pm**

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing to: [poetry@artswestchester.org](mailto:poetry@artswestchester.org)