

Library Commission
Meeting

December 4, 2024

Desk Item

Item #2

Fiscal Year 2024-25 City

Work Program Poet

Laureate Playbook

Update



Poet Laureate Playbook - DRAFT

Updated 12/4/2024

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Established in 2010, the Cupertino Poet Laureate program's vision is to stimulate cultural and literary awareness in Cupertino, introduce youth and adults to the personal and community benefits of poetry both as personal reflection and as reflective of our history and culture, reveal, recognize, and engage literary talent residing in the community, and promote our Library as a cultural center in Cupertino.

The Poet Laureate is a two-year honorary appointment as the literary ambassador for the City of Cupertino. A stipend of \$500 will be awarded to the Poet Laureate and is sponsored by the Cupertino Library Foundation for each year of service.

As part of the two-year appointment as Poet Laureate for the City of Cupertino, the Poet Laureate duties shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide at least two free public workshops at the Cupertino Library
2. Provide at least two public readings of either original works created for these events or past works appropriate to the occasion and audience
3. Participate in two City-sponsored events such as cultural festivals or flag raising ceremonies
4. Attend at least six Library Commission meetings to provide updates on programs and events

To apply for selection as the Poet Laureate, an individual must meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant must demonstrate a significant and meaningful tie to the Cupertino community
2. At the time of appointment, the applicant must be at least 18 years old and a high school graduate
3. The applicant must have demonstrated a commitment to poetry through prior publication
4. The applicant must have demonstrated an ability to teach workshops and lead collaborative community partner events

A selection panel chaired by the Cupertino Library Commission's Poet Laureate Subcommittee will review all applications, and those qualified will be contacted and given an opportunity to interview. The panel will select a Poet Laureate candidate to recommend to the Library Commission. The Library Commission will review the selected candidate and recommend for approval to the Cupertino City Council. The Council will review and formally appoint the Poet Laureate. The appointment will be for an honorary two-year term, beginning in February of every other year.

HISTORY

A grassroots effort, the Poet Laureate program was envisioned and created by a committee composed of volunteers from The Friends of the Cupertino Library, the Cupertino Library Foundation, and local teachers and poets. The Poet Laureate program was sanctioned by the Cupertino City Council through Resolution No. 10-230 on December 21, 2010.

Since 2010 the Cupertino Poet Laureate Program has welcomed seven poet laureates, each one bringing a new and unique voice to the honorary position. Over the years countless poetry-related programs, events, contests, and projects have been embraced and celebrated by the Cupertino community.

For historical context the original Poet Laureate Playbook can be found [here](#).

VISION STATEMENT

It is the vision of the Cupertino Poet Laureate program to stimulate cultural and literary awareness in Cupertino; introduce youth and adults to the personal and community benefits of poetry both as personal reflection and as reflective of our history and culture; reveal, recognize, and engage literary talent residing in the community; and promote our Library as a cultural center in Cupertino.

MISSION

To provide the residents of Cupertino programs, workshops, and events which introduce and reinforce poetry as an enriching cultural art form open and accessible to all.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. To raise awareness of poetry as a viable cultural art form for Cupertino residents in the 21st century, as measured by media presence, event variety, and increasing participation
2. To build interest in the various poetry forms, as measured by event and workshop participation
3. To build a desire within residents to be involved in further art and cultural activities, including poetry, as measured by attendance at offerings through the Library, schools, theatres, museums, centers, and presentation venues
4. To increase active participation in all art forms, especially poetry, by all ages and ethnic communities which form the rich fabric of Cupertino, as measured by offerings and involvement

EXPECTATIONS OF THE POET LAUREATE

Each succeeding Poet Laureate brings a unique set of skills, attributes, and interests to the position along with different approaches to poetry. As part of the two-year appointment as Poet Laureate for the City of Cupertino, the Poet Laureate duties shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

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2. Provide at least two public readings of either original works created for these events or past works appropriate to the occasion and audience
3. Participate in two City-sponsored events such as cultural festivals or flag raising ceremonies
4. Attend at least six Library Commission meetings to provide updates on programs and events

With support from the Cupertino Community Librarian and the Library Commission Staff Liaison the Poet Laureate is encouraged to use their creativity in the design and execution of the aforementioned workshops and events.

TIMELINE

Poet Laureate Application and Selection Process Timeline	
February	Library Commission selects Poet Laureate Subcommittee
February – March	Program outreach and advertising
March 20 – May 5	Applications available online
May 5, 5:00 p.m.	Applications due
May 6 – May 20	Applications reviewed by selection panel
May 21 – May 31	Interviews
June – July	Final candidate is selected and completes fingerprinting and TB test
August	Selection panel presents their recommendation to Library Commission
September	City Council formally appoints the Poet Laureate
October – January	Incoming Poet Laureate shadows outgoing Poet Laureate
January	Poet Laureate Reception
February	New Poet Laureate term begins

The timeline allows for a four-month overlap so that the incoming Poet Laureate is able to shadow and confer with the outgoing Poet Laureate. This approach allows for program continuity and provides support and direction to the incoming Poet Laureate.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Poet Laureate is a two-year honorary appointment as the literary ambassador for the City of Cupertino. A stipend of \$500 will be awarded to the Poet Laureate and is sponsored by the Cupertino Library Foundation for each year of service.

To apply for selection as the Poet Laureate, an individual must meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant must demonstrate a significant and meaningful tie to the Cupertino community
2. At the time of appointment, the applicant must be at least 18 years old and a high school graduate
3. The applicant must have demonstrated a commitment to poetry through prior publication
4. The applicant must have demonstrated an ability to teach workshops and lead collaborative community partner events

Applications will be available for submission online March 20 through May 5, at 5:00 p.m. All applications must include a minimum of five original writing samples, two letters of recommendation, and a current résumé.

In addition, the newly selected Poet Laureate will need to complete fingerprinting and TB test in order to work with minors.

SELECTION PROCESS

With the goal of soliciting as many prospective candidates as possible, the selection process is composed of several distinct components.

The Selection Panel

The Selection Panel will be chaired by the Library Commission's Poet Laureate Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will extend panel invitations to the City's Arts and Culture Commissioners and Teen Commissioners, with the goal of a maximum of seven panelists. The Selection Panel will be responsible for reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and making a formal recommendation to the Library Commission.

Recruitment and Promotion

Working closely with the Library Commission, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Cupertino Library will take the lead on recruitment promotion via social media channels, websites, email blasts, and flyers and other printed materials. Applications will be available on the City's website, along with all program details.

Candidate Review and Interviews

The Library Commission Staff Liaison will review all applications to ensure they meet minimum qualifications. All passing applications will be forwarded to the Selection Panel for further review and evaluation. The top three candidates will be invited for 30-minute, in-person, interviews. Each candidate will be asked to recite one to two original poems during their interview. After interviews conclude the Selection Panel will deliberate and reach a conclusion. The preferred candidate will be called to confirm their willingness to serve. Once the invitation has been accepted, the candidate will work with the Library Commission Staff Liaison to complete fingerprinting and TB testing.

Recommendation

At the Library Commission's August meeting the Selection Panel will present their final recommendation. The Library Commission will review the selected candidate and recommend for approval to the Cupertino City Council. Through the Consent Calendar, City Council will review and formally appoint the Poet Laureate. The appointment will be for an honorary two-year term, beginning in February of every other year.

Poet Laureate Reception

In January a Poet Laureate Reception will be held to recognize the outgoing Poet Laureate and formally introduce the incoming Poet Laureate. The reception will take place at the Library or Quinlan Community Center.

BUDGET

The budget for the Poet Laureate program is comprised of funds from the City of Cupertino and the Cupertino Library Foundation. The City contributes \$2,000 annually and these funds are designated for program expenses such as the Poet Laureate reception. In addition, the Poet Laureate may request to use these funds for materials and supplies, awards, etc. The Library Foundation contributes \$500 annually. Those funds are exclusively used for the Poet Laureate's stipend.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM PARTNERS

City of Cupertino

- Promote Poet Laureate events, programs, and readings
- Organize the VIP reception honoring the outgoing Poet Laureate and welcoming the incoming Poet Laureate
- Assist Poet Laureate with festival and event registration and information
- Manage and track program budget
- Arrange and cover the cost of fingerprinting and TB testing for incoming Poet Laureate

- Monitor program cycle and work with Library Commission on recruitment timeline
- Organize welcome meeting with Poet Laureate, Library Commission Staff Liaison, and Community Librarian to discuss program logistics

Cupertino Library

- Provide library space for workshops and programs
- Promote Poet Laureate events, programs, and readings
- Meet with the Poet Laureate as needed to discuss program offerings at the Library

Cupertino Library Commission

- Form a Poet Laureate Subcommittee for recruitment, selection, and support of Poet Laureate
- Promote Poet Laureate events, programs, and readings
- Receive programming updates from the Poet Laureate at Library Commission meetings

Cupertino Library Foundation

- Provide funding for the Poet Laureate stipend—\$500 for each year of service