



Oakland Youth Poet Laureate 2017

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Applications are due by February 5th, 2017.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Your complete application must include the following:

- **3 original poems** showing excellence in *Content*, *Craft* and *Voice* and totaling no more than 10 pages typed. You will upload each poem to your online application or include them with your form if you are mailing it in.
 - Preliminary judging is anonymous; **DO NOT** include your name in the submission of your poem.
 - *Please be sure your written work is spell-checked.*
- **Name and contact information for an Adult Sponsor**
 - If you advance to the final round, you will ask your adult sponsor to write you a letter of support. *Tip: Ask someone for this well in advance!*
- **Artist Statement**
 - Introduce yourself; Tell us who you are and what poetry means to you (250 words max).
- **Optional: List of any Awards, Community Service, or Activism**
- **Name and contact information for your Guardian/ Parent**, unless you are 18 on February 5th, 2017.
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PROCESS AND JUDGING

- **The first round** of judging will be anonymous and based on the *Content*, *Craft* and *Voice* of the three written poems, only.
- In the **final round of judging**, candidates will be judged, additionally, on *Performance* and *Leadership*, based on the letter of support, the artist statement, and any awards and community service, as well as an ***in-person reading and interview before a panel of judges.***
- The **2017 Youth Poet Laureate** will be announced at The Oakland Book Festival on Sunday, May 21, 2017.

Please review [this document](#) to see the exact criteria the judges will use.



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CONTEST GUIDELINES

What does it mean to be the Oakland Youth Poet Laureate and what is the time commitment?

The Youth Poet Laureate is the top literary honor you can win in your city. You'll be a hometown hero! If you advance to the final round, you will have opportunities as a Finalist to meet experienced writers, publish your work and appear at public events throughout the year. You may also be asked to share your experiences through blogs, videos and social media. If you are chosen as the Laureate, you will need to be living locally so you and your poetry can represent Oakland and Oakland youth at various events, in the media and as a mentor to other young people. You will have to complete the full year in order to receive your educational scholarship. The time commitment will vary and you will not be required to do anything that causes a hardship.

What if I am not really comfortable in the spotlight?

We know lots of poets prefer the page to the stage. This competition is for all kinds of poets, writing in all different styles. As Oakland's Youth Poet Laureate you will be in the spotlight, but you will also receive support to gain public speaking skills and develop your strengths.

What does *Family member eligibility* include, and does this apply to me?

To be fair, we cannot consider applications from family members of current judges, funders and program sponsors who have significant influence over the contest criteria or outcome. If someone in your family is actively working on this year's contest, you are not eligible. This "conflict of interest" policy applies only to those partners who are "coordinating, influencing or judging" the 2017 competition. Call us if you have any questions.

What does it mean to be a Finalist? When will I be notified if I win?

Finalists are all the applicants who advance to the final round of judging. Finalists will be notified in early March 2017, at which time you'll be asked to provide a letter of support from an adult sponsor. Finalists will have opportunities to meet experienced writers, publish your work and appear at public events throughout the year. You may also be asked to share your experiences through blogs, videos and social media.

I am a teacher or youth worker; can I nominate someone?

Yes! You can submit the application on behalf of a young person as long as you can provide complete information for the nominee(s), including 3 poems, name of an Adult Sponsor and accurate contact information. You may nominate up to 3 students. Please confirm their ability to complete the program year (June 2017-June 2018) should they advance to the final round.



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Who are the judges?

There are five judges, representing a diverse group of experts from literacy, arts and educational organizations as well as local celebrity authors, artists and activists. Past judges have included U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, poets and playwrights Chinaka Hodge and Aimee Suzara, community organizer and Poetry for the People alum Maria Poblet, literary journal editor Kiala Givehand, local poet/publisher Raphael Cohen, NAACP image award nominee Arisa White, Kelsey Street Press member MG Roberts, former Oakland City Councilmember Wilson Riles, current and former Oakland Youth Poet Laureates and Finalists, as well as more than a dozen local authors and community leaders.

What are the criteria the judges will use to choose the Finalists and the 2017 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate?

Your poems will be judged on *Content*, *Craft* and *Voice* in the first round. The Finalists will be judged, additionally, on *Leadership* and *Performance*. Please review [this document](#) to see the exact criteria the judges will use.

If I win, how will I receive the \$5,000 award?

Scholarship funds will be sent directly to the school or arts program of your choice. You must complete your full year as Poet Laureate to receive your award. Adjustments to this policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

What if the Poet Laureate doesn't complete the full program year?

We expect a pool of very talented applicants, from which we will name a second place Laureate. This person will step into the role if the Youth Poet Laureate is unable to finish the year.

I live in San Leandro, Piedmont or Berkeley, can I apply?

You may only apply if you currently live in Oakland (though you can attend school in other towns). While we aren't able to expand the contest to other cities right now, we welcome interested agencies from other cities to contact us with questions.

Who can I contact with questions?

Email oaklandpoets@youthspeaks.org, or call the Oakland Public Library at (510) 761-7636.



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APPLICATION HELP & TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

How do I submit my poetry?

You will submit each of your three poems in separate documents attached to your application. Acceptable formats are .txt, .pdf, .doc, .docx, and .odt. We recommend .pdf which is the best format to assure the formatting of your poem is kept the way you want it. If you are mailing in your application, you will need to include printed copies of your poems.

Do I have to finish my entire application in one day?

No, once you have started the application, you can save your progress and return to the form to finish later. *Just make sure you remember your login and password and finish before the deadline.*

I don't have Internet access. How do I apply?

You can visit your local library or school and use the internet there to submit your online application. There will also be application workshops at local community centers where you can submit your online application. Or, you can call us for in-person help and computer access: (510) 761-7636. Finally, if you have no other means to submit your application online, a [paper application](#) is also available for you to download and mail in.

How do I go back to change something in my application?

As you go through the online application, you can click on *Save my progress and resume later* at the bottom of any page. You will then be asked to enter an email address and a password with which you can log in again later and you will receive a confirmation email that your submission has been saved.

Changes and additions may be made to your entry before final submission. You will be able to review your whole application before confirming your final submission; once you click "Confirm" no more changes are allowed. So make sure you are completely done before clicking "Confirm"!

Who can I contact if I'm having technical trouble with my application?

Email oaklandpoets@youthspeaks.org, or call the Oakland Public Library at (510) 761-7636.