



# MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

## Poet Laureate Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

12:30 p.m. by Zoom

Public registration is through this link. <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/85452500865?pwd=OEN0WStsU3dSUxpCL1FndGpFaE1pQT09>

*Other than the meeting starting time, the times listed are approximate, and agenda items may be rearranged. Public comment is welcome on all items. Written public comment must be received 12 hours before the meeting at [mac@mt.gov](mailto:mac@mt.gov)*

## Agenda

12:30 p.m. Call to Order and Roll Call

12:35 p.m. Public Comment

12:40 p.m. Review of Law, Process, Timeline, and Promotional Plan

12:50 p.m. Job Description with Reimbursement Plan

1:00 p.m. Review Panel Suggestions

1:20 p.m. New Business

1:30 p.m. Adjourn

*The Montana Arts Council makes reasonable accommodations for a person's ability to participate in state government. Request beyond accessible facilities must be made 48 hours before the meeting date to the ADA Coordinator at [kburgoyne@mt.gov](mailto:kburgoyne@mt.gov) or 406-444-6449.*

## Law

### **2-15-242. State poet laureate.**

- (1) There is a state poet laureate.
- (2) Within 30 days prior to the expiration of the state poet laureate's term of appointment or within 30 days after a vacancy in the position occurs, the Montana arts council established in **22-2-101** shall nominate three individuals to be the state poet laureate. The Montana arts council shall provide the list of nominees to the Governor who shall:
  - (a) within 30 days after receiving the list of nominees, appoint the state poet laureate from among the individuals named on the list; and
  - (b) notify the secretary of state and the Montana arts council of the appointment.
- (3) The individual named by the Governor as the state poet laureate shall serve for a term of 2 years beginning on the date of appointment by the Governor.
- (4) The state poet laureate is an honorary position, and the person serving as the state poet laureate may not receive any compensation from the state for serving as the state poet laureate.

## **Process**

### **Criteria**

- Artistic excellence and achievement
- Ongoing contributions to the cultural community
- Worthiness of statewide recognition

### **Eligibility**

- Poet must be a resident of Montana for at least one year.
- Poet may not be a member of the Montana Arts Council, its staff, or their immediate family or household.

### **Nomination**

- Public call for nominations
- Accepted through a web-based survey or hard copy, to include:
  - Poet information
  - Nominator information
  - Favorite poem and why, 600 character narrative
  - Reason poet is deserving of the honor, 600 character narrative
- Nominated poets indicate their intention to accept through web-based or hard copy submission, to include:
  - Contact information
  - Resume or bio
  - Three poems

### **Review**

*The Committee may want to identify a threshold for the number of nominations to advance to the Review Panel. GAA has the Council Committee review all nominations and advances a pool of finalists. In the 2020 GAA process, ten finalists rose from the 69 nominated. In the 2018 Poet Laureate process, there were 13 poets nominated. One nominated poet was ineligible, and one declined consideration, leaving 10 to be reviewed by the panel.*

- Review Panel of five members from outside of the Council, selected by the Committee
- Review Panel to discuss nominees with scores due following the discussion
- Staff will provide a ranked list to the Committee

## **Recommendation Development**

- Council Committee uses review panel ranking and comments to determine recommendations
- Committee Chair submits a recommendation memo to the Council as part of June 2021 meeting materials to include submission materials from recommended poets and a list of nominations received

## **Timeline**

*\*The current Poets Laureate term began on 8/1/2023.\**

<b>February 28</b>	Council Committee meeting via Zoom
<b>March 6</b>	Nomination process opens <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin promotion</li><li>• Three weeks to collect submissions</li><li>• Secure Review Panel</li></ul>
<b>March 20</b>	Nomination process closes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Possible review by Committee to identify finalists</i></li></ul>
<b>March 31</b>	Poet deadline to accept the nomination and submit materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ten days to respond</li></ul>
<b>May 3</b>	Nomination materials to the Review Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two weeks to review materials</li></ul>
<b>May 5</b>	Review Panel discussion via Zoom
<b>May 8</b>	Review Panel scores due
<b>May 11</b>	Committee meeting via Zoom
<b>May 23</b>	Council meeting materials distributed
<b>June 9</b>	Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Committee Chair presents the recommendation for discussion</li><li>• Council votes on recommendations sent to the Governor</li></ul>
<b>By July 1</b>	Council recommendations sent to the Governor
<b>By August 1</b>	Governor announces Poet Laureate

## **Promotion Plan**

- In Spring SOA
- Call for nomination press release
- Direct messages to:
  - Council
  - Past Poets Laureate
  - Higher Education English Departments
  - Public libraries
  - MAC eNews subscribers
- MAC social media
- Possible promotional recognition, such as:
  - Commissioned design for a print of a poem
  - Bookmarks with featured poetry
  - Poetry projections in public spaces
  - Series of videos that capture poet recitations

## **Job Description with Reimbursement Plan**

### **Job Description**

The Montana Poet Laureate is an honorary position with no official duties and no compensation from the state.

As part of the selection process, the Montana Arts Council (MAC) prioritizes poets that have demonstrated on-going contributions to the cultural community. This metric's emphasis identifies poets that will voluntarily leverage their Governor appointment to promote poetry appreciation.

The appointed Poet Laureate will have access to the following opportunities:

- Contributions to the MAC *State of the Arts* newspaper published quarterly
- Inclusion in the Humanities Montana Speaker's Bureau program
- Engagement with the Montana Poetry Out Loud program

Within the limitations set in law, MAC can reimburse expenses related to engagement that meets MAC's mission and priorities. Reimbursements are limited to those allowed to state officials as laid out in the Montana Operations Manual. MAC has allocated up to \$ *(to be determined by the Committee)* for public presentations that serve the following:

- Federally recognized tribes
- Tribal colleges
- Community colleges
- Public broadcast programs
- Communities with a population of less than *(to be set by the Committee)*
- Communities more than *(to be set by the Committee)* miles from a population center of *(to be set by the Committee)* people
- Organizations and entities outside of traditional arts and literature audiences
- Service organization such as Lions, Rotary, and Kiwanis

The Poet Laureate is encouraged to determine the appropriateness of eligibility before the event. Reimbursement requests must be submitted before May 30 of each calendar year and within 30 days of the end of the appointment.

## Review Panel Suggestions

- Mark Gibbons, 2021 Poet Laureate (male)
- [Sandra Alcosser](#), 2005 Poet Laureate (female)
- [Minerva Allen](#), Fort Belknap (female, Native)
- [Rick Bass](#), Yaak Valley; 2018 GAA honoree, writer; 2009 review committee (male)
- [Peggy D. Bennett](#), Bozeman; educator, author, speaker (female)
- [Judy Blunt](#), Missoula; Director of Creative Writing at U of M (female)
- [Heather Cahoon](#), Missoula; 2015 AIA awardee; on 2019 review committee (female, Native)
- [Victor A. Charlo](#), Dixon; nominated in 2015 (male, Native)
- [Roger Dunsmore](#), Missoula; nominated in 2007 (male)
- [Dr. Ann Ellsworth](#), Bozeman; English professor at MSU) (female)
- [Tami Haaland](#), Billings; 2013-2015 Poet Laureate; 2005 review committee (female)
- [John Haines](#), Missoula; nominated in 2005 (male)
- [Greg Keeler](#), Bozeman; nominated in 2005 (male)
- [Gillian Kessler](#), Missoula (female)
- [Joanna Klink](#), Missoula; UM English professor (female)
- [Mary Jane Nealon](#), Missoula (female)
- [Rick Newby](#), Helena; 2016 GAA honoree; on 2009 review committee (male)
- [Sheryl Noethe](#), Missoula; 2011 poet laureate; on 2015, 2017 review committee (female)
- [Robert Pack](#), Missoula (male)
- [Henry Real Bird](#), Garryowen; 2009 Poet Laureate; on 2019 review committee (male, Native)
- [Annick Smith](#), Bonner; 2018 GAA honoree, writer, and filmmaker (female)
- [Barb Theroux](#), Missoula; Fact and Fiction founder; on 2019 review committee (female)
- [Paul Zarzyski](#), Great Falls; 2005 GAA honoree (male)

## **Review Panel Suggestions (new additions 2023)**

- Anna Paige, Billings; writer, poet, musician, photographer (female)
- Tyler Knott Gregson, Helena; writer, poet, photographer (male)
- Chelsia Rice, Helena; bookseller; (female)