



MONTANA POET LAUREATE GUIDELINES

Montana has a magnificent literary heritage reaching back through two centuries of poetry and literature and beyond, into ancient ages of storytelling. The Montana Poet Laureate program celebrates this rich heritage by engaging poets—each for a two-year term—in engaging Montanans everywhere in the love of poetry and the spoken word.

Objectives of the Poet Laureate program

- Engage directly with Montanans in both urban and rural communities across the state, with a goal to visit as many of the 56 Montana counties and seven Indian reservations as reasonably possible during the two-year term.
- Facilitate the enjoyment of reading and writing poetry through interactive programs for Montanans of all ages, in a variety of settings, reaching beyond the art and literary communities into every corner of life.
- Celebrate and advance the poetic arts promoting the appreciation of poetry as an ancient and ongoing form of expression.

Duties of the Poet Laureate

- Read original poems at state events, such as the Poetry Out Loud state finals event, legislative events as requested, and others as identified.
- Collaborate with the Montana Arts Council on poetry projects and events as needed and as manageable within the poet's schedule.
- Contribute one essay and one poem per quarter to *State of the Arts*, the statewide newspaper of the Montana Arts Council.
- Participate in Humanities Montana's Speaker's Bureau to schedule school and community events throughout the term of service.

By statute, the Poet Laureate is an unpaid position. Poets may be paid speaker fees and collect travel and lodging reimbursement throughout their term.

How the Poet Laureate is selected

Any Montanan can nominate someone for the position, or can nominate themselves. A panel drawn from members of the literary community select finalists from among the nominations. The finalists are submitted to the Montana Arts Council board for review and approval. Three finalists are submitted to the Governor, who appoints the Poet Laureate.

The Poet Laureate is chosen on the basis of three criteria:

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

Nominees must participate in or agree to the nomination, and present a proposal for how they would fulfill the position if appointed.

Qualifications

Nominees must currently reside in Montana, and either have lived here for at least three years or demonstrate a deep connection to Montana (if they grew up here, and recently returned, for example). Nominees must be able to demonstrate artistic excellence, enduring achievement, and a commitment to nourishing the field of poetry in Montana.