

## 2024 FY25 City of Boston Poet Laureate Call

*Ends on September 30, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.*

*Please review the information below and read the full guidelines before applying.*

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**Somali - Af Soomaali:** MUHIIM AH! Dukumintigaan ama arjigaan waxaa kujira macluumaad muhiim ah oo ku saabsan xuquuqdaada, waajibaadkaaga iyo/ama dheefahaaga. Aad ayey muhiim u tahay inaad fahamto macluumaadka ku qoran dukumintigan iyo/ama dalabkan, waxaana ku siin doonnaa macluumaadka ku qoran luqadda aad doorbidayso iyadoo aan lacag lagaa qaadaynin. Haddii aad u baahatid iyaga, fadlan nagala soo xiriir [arts@boston.gov](mailto:arts@boston.gov), [LCA@boston.gov](mailto:LCA@boston.gov) ama 617-635-4445.

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## City of Boston Seeks Submissions for the Poet Laureate of Boston

### **BACKGROUND**

Starting Tuesday, August 6, 2024, the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture will be accepting applications for the 2025 Boston Poet Laureate program. Established in 2008, the Boston Poet Laureate Program has been a cornerstone of Boston's creative sector, drawing residents into the rich and transformative world of the literary arts. Poetry has the unique power to capture our history, illuminate the present, and spark hope and change for the future. The Poet Laureate serves as an ambassador for Boston's literary and creative communities, working in tandem with these communities to elevate the role of poetry in the everyday lives of Bostonians and inspire critical reflection through written and spoken word.

### ***Current Poet Laureate***

Porsha Olayiwola, Boston's current Poet Laureate, is a kinetic force in the poetry community, both locally and nationally. In addition to being an advocate for Boston poets, Porsha's works fiercely addresses LGBTQIA+ rights and examines Boston's progress on issues of race and class. During her tenure, Porsha launched the inaugural Youth Poet Laureate Program, founded the Roxbury Poetry Festival, and amplified the Celtics tribute to legend Bill Russell. Porsha has collaborated with numerous organizations, including The Academy of American Poets, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and Button Poetry.

### ***Previous Poets Laureate***

Haitian-born poet Danielle Legros Georges, who grew up in Mattapan, served as Boston's Poet Laureate from 2015 to 2019. During her influential tenure, she

spearheaded several initiatives, including "Raining Poetry" with Mass Poetry and the Mayor's Mural Crew, where poetry appeared on city streets when it rained; "The Languages We Live In" on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a multilingual event celebrating translation, associated with Lawrence Weiner's mural "A Translation From One Language to Another"; and a poetry workshop program for seniors in several Boston eldercare facilities, where she coordinated and compensated teaching artists to lead classes.

Sam Cornish was Boston's inaugural Poet Laureate. Sam, who passed away in 2018, was an educator at Emerson College and other Massachusetts schools; he was an editor, reviewer, bookstore owner, and author of ten poetry collections, including "Dead Beats" (2011) and "Folks Like Me" (1993). Sam was associated with the Black Arts Movement and wrote extensively of African-American history in his poetry. In addition to serving as Boston's Poet Laureate, Sam was a member of Boston bluegrass band, The Lemonshiners.

## **OVERVIEW**

The Poet Laureate will be a significant fixture in Boston's cultural landscape, creating a unique artistic legacy through public readings, civic events, and community engagement. The Poet Laureate will be able to learn, teach, and be a part of the great literary traditions of Boston. They will attend a variety of civic functions, participate in poetry events, and oversee special civic projects.

The term of service for the Poet Laureate term is four years. Moving forward, MOAC is shifting the Poet Laureate timeline to follow the fiscal year (July 1 - June 31). While the Poet Laureate will be announced in January 2025, the official beginning of the four year term will begin July 1, 2025. There will be some programming between January 2025 and July 2025.

A Poet Laureate may serve for one term, with the option to extend their term at the Mayor's discretion. The role is ceremonial and not a political appointment. If the Poet Laureate cannot fulfill their term due to illness, relocation, or inability to perform, the Laureate Selection Panel shall select a new Poet Laureate to complete the term.

## **Responsibilities**

Some duties of the Poet Laureate include, and are not limited to:

- Present thematically relevant works at civic events and attend official functions as a literary ambassador.
- Develop public programming across the City, including workshops and showcasing events.
- Enhance current Boston Public School and Boston Public Library poetry programs through events, engagement, and outreach.
- Act as the juror for the Mayor's Poetry Program at City Hall.
- Serve as a resource during National Poetry Month each April.
- Participate in the Youth Poet Laureate application and selection process.
- Mentor the Youth Poet Laureate through regular meetings, public event preparation, published works, and relationships with Boston Public Schools and Boston Public Libraries.
- Work with MOAC to produce virtual and social media content.

## ***Compensation***

The Poet Laureate program is budgeted \$25,000 each year, to be allocated in the following ways:

1. Honorarium will total \$5,000 per year.
2. Programmatic and administrative expenses will total \$20,000 per year and will be administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture.

## ***Intellectual Property***

All writings, notes, and original materials produced by the Laureate (as distinct from the poet) during the tenure of the Poet Laureate shall remain the property of the Poet Laureate. However, the City of Boston will have the right to reproduce these works.

## ***Eligibility***

The future Poet Laureate will meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Be a City of Boston resident who has lived in the City for a minimum of two years prior to nomination.
- Display a strong commitment to the community.
- Be active as a professional poet (i.e. a poet whose work has been published and or presented through a process of independent editorial or curatorial review).

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- Have produced work that:
  - Demonstrates poetic flexibility (i.e. more than one style),
  - Reflects the vibrancy and life of the City of Boston, and
  - Is significant to the citizens of Boston.
- Capable and enthusiastic to fulfill duties.

## TIMELINE

Application and nomination form open	Tuesday, August 6, 2024
Office hours/Information Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• September 6, 2024, 1 p.m.</li><li>• September 12, 2024, 6 p.m.</li></ul>
Nomination Form Closes	September 13, 2024
Application closes	Monday, September 30th, 2024 by 5:00pm <b>Please note: this is not a postmark date.</b> Mailed applications must arrive at The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture no later than the end of the due date.
Review Process	October 2024
Notification of interview	November 2024
Final Announcement	January 2025
Poet Laureate Term	July 1, 2025 - June 31, 2029*  <i>*The Poet Laureate program will move from the calendar year to the fiscal year with the next poet laureate, resulting in a 4.5 year term. Some funds will be available for the January to July transition time.</i>

## APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

### ***Application Guidelines***

A Call for Entries will be distributed through various print and online media. The full Boston Poet Laureate 2025 application is available on [Submittable here](#).

Community members may [nominate someone here](#) by September 13, 2024, and MOAC will reach out to nominees to invite them to apply if they meet all eligibility criteria.

All eligible applicants will need the following to apply:

- A curriculum vitae or résumé;
- Four examples of past published work (may include compact video recordings, disc recordings and audio files);
- A proposal, no longer than five pages, that details how the laureate will benefit, represent, and interact with the citizens of Boston, in accordance with the poet laureate mission statement.
- Confirmation of City of Boston residency.
- Eight legible copies of the application (for those not applying digitally.)

While digital entries are preferred and strongly encouraged, printed entries are also welcome and will be given equal consideration. To submit a printed application:

- [Go here for a printout of the application](#).
- Mail to: The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture Attn: Boston 2025 Poet Laureate Selection Panel Boston City Hall, Room 802, 1 City Hall Plaza Boston, MA 02201
- All entries must be submitted in a conventional font (such as Times New Roman) at 12-point size.
- Photocopied poems from publications are acceptable, however, name and/or address cannot be included. Do not staple documents.
- If return of materials is desired, enclose a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.
- Faxed or emailed applications will NOT be accepted.

### ***Selection Process***

The selection process will consist of two-phases. After an initial screening of eligible applicants, the Laureate Selection Panel will evaluate all entries and choose

their top candidates. The Selection Panel will then hold interviews with the final candidates. During the interview, candidates will be asked to read some of their works, along with answering questions related to how they will make use of the Poet Laureateship.

**Contact for Questions and/or Application Accommodations**

For further information, or if you need accommodations or assistance with your application, please contact Tom Johnston in the Mayor’s Office of Arts & Culture at 617-635-1238 or [thomas.johnston@boston.gov](mailto:thomas.johnston@boston.gov).

**Commitment to Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging**

The Mayor’s Office is committed to building and maintaining a diverse community. Qualified applicants will be considered regardless of their sex, race, age, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, military and veteran status, or other protected category. Statistics show that women, LGBTQIA+, BIPOC and other structurally marginalized groups apply for opportunities only if they meet 100% of the qualifications. If this program excites you, you are encouraged to apply. No one ever meets 100% of the qualifications. We look forward to your application.

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*\* Indicates questions are mandatory*

**THE BASICS**

**Full Name of Applicant\***

*Please include your first and last name.*



**Artist Name**

*If you use an artist name, please feel free to include that here. This is optional.*

**Pronouns**

*Sharing your pronouns is optional.*

**Email Address\***

*Our team may contact you through Submittable. In that case, the message will be sent to the email address you used to set up your Submittable account. If we need to contact you directly by email, please include the email address here that you are most likely to check regularly.*

**Phone Number \***

*Please include the best phone number to reach you.*

**Street Address\***

*Please include the address where you currently live.*

Country

Address

Address Line 2 (optional)

City

State, Province, or Region

Zip or Postal Code

**Eligibility Certification**

- I confirm that I meet the eligibility requirements of the City of Boston Poet Laureate Program listed below.\*

**By checking the box above, you confirm that you meet the following eligibility requirements:**

- You are at least 21 years of age.
- You have resided in the City of Boston for a minimum of two years prior to nomination.
- You have a strong commitment to the City of Boston.
- You are active as a professional poet (i.e. a poet whose work has been published and or presented through a process of independent editorial or curatorial review).
- Have produced work that:
  - Demonstrates poetic flexibility (i.e. more than one style),
  - Reflects the vibrancy and life of the City of Boston, and
  - Is significant to the citizens of Boston.
- You are capable and enthusiastic to fulfill all duties outlined in the Poet Laureate call.

**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS**

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**Why are we asking?** Answers to these questions should reflect the demographic information of the person filling out the application. We are asking for the information below so that we know who we are reaching through our grant applications, and who we are missing. We hope we can use this information to ensure we are reaching artists from all backgrounds in Boston equitably. All questions include an option to not answer if that is your preference, and questions that are asked just for research purposes are labeled. If you choose to answer these questions, all answers will be subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law and will be disclosed upon lawful request.

## **What is your age?\***

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 34-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 years or older
- I prefer not to answer.

*This question is asked for research purposes only.*

## **How do you describe your racial and ethnic background? (please check all that apply)\***

- African/African American/Black
- East Asian (including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Taiwanese)
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Native American/Alaskan Native
- Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
- South Asian (including Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Indian, Nepali, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan)
- Southeast Asian (including Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Mien, Singaporean, Thai, and Vietnamese)

- White
- Another race or ethnicity or not specified above
- I prefer to self identify
- I prefer not to answer

*This question is asked for research purposes only.*

**If you would like, use the space below to self identify your race.**

*This question is asked for research purposes only. This question is also optional.*

**If you would like, use the space below to self identify your ethnicity.**

*This question is asked for research purposes only. This question is also optional.*

**Do you consider yourself a member of the disability and/or deaf community?\***

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say
- I do not identify with a disability

*This question is asked for research purposes only.*

**What's your gender identity?\***

- I identify as a cisgender woman
- I identify as a cisgender man
- I identify as a transgender woman
- I identify as a transgender man
- I identify as agender
- I identify as gender non-binary, genderqueer, or gender non-conforming
- I identify as Two Spirit

- I prefer not to answer
- Other (write in)

*This question is asked for research purposes only.*

**Optional write-in to self identify gender identity.**

*This question is asked for research purposes only.*

**What's your sexual orientation?\***

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Heterosexual straight
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Unsure or questioning
- I prefer not to answer
- Other (write in)
- Other (write in)

*This question is asked for research purposes only.*

**Optional write-in to self identify sexual orientation.**

*This question is asked for research purposes only.*

**Is there any other information you would like to provide regarding the above listed demographics? This could include self identifying on**

aspects of your identity that did not fully capture your identity in the above options. You can also skip this question.

*Limit: 100 words*

## **CREATIVE WORKS QUESTIONS**

**Website and/or Social Media Profiles**

*If you have them, please include links to your artistic website or social media account(s) here.*

**Professional Biography\***



*Limit: 200 words*

*A brief biography highlighting your background, including your experience as a poet, writer, or artist. Mention any relevant education, training, or workshops. Highlight any awards, recognitions, or previous appointments (if applicable).*

**Statement of Intent\***



*A detailed statement outlining your vision for the poet laureate role. Please discuss what you would like to achieve. Some points may include (but are not limited to):*

- *How you plan to engage with all of Boston's communities*
- *Partnerships, projects, workshops, readings, or events you would like organize or participate in*
- *Themes most important to you*
- *How you will use poetry to reflect the diversity and vibrancy of the city's communities*

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

Please include the following documents with your completed application:

### **1. Work Samples\***

- a. A selection of five original poems, showcasing your range, style, and voice. If possible, include poems that reflect on the city's culture, history, or communities. Each sample should be formatted as follows:
  - i. *All entries must be submitted in a conventional font (such as Times New Roman) at 12-point size; each sample on a separate document*
  - ii. *So we can approach reviewing applications without bias, please do not include any identifying markers on your sample work, such as name and/or address, etc.*



**2. CV or Resume\***

- a. Please attach a detailed CV or resume that includes your professional experience, publications, performances, teaching experience, and any other relevant activities.

**3. Additional Materials**

- a. Please provide up to 5 documents and/or links for any other supporting materials that demonstrate your engagement with poetry and the community, such as media appearances, videos of performances, projects or workshops you've organized, interviews, reviews of past work, or articles. This is optional.

**4. Three Letters of Support\***

- a. Please provide the email addresses of three people you'd like to serve as a reference, and provide some context of your relationship to them. Your reference will receive an email with a link to upload a reference letter.

**5. Proof of Boston Residency \***

- a. Please provide one of the following documents to verify that you have resided in the City of Boston for a minimum of two years prior to the application:
  - i. Heating bill (oil, gas, electric)
  - ii. Electric Bill
  - iii. Car Insurance Coverage Page
  - iv. Phone Bill
  - v. Bank Statement
  - vi. Credit Card Bill
  - vii. Mortgage statement
  - viii. Property Tax Statement, Property Deed, Homestead Exemption
  - ix. Lease agreement (first page & signature page)