



**Calvin Ball**  
**County Executive**



*HoCoPoLitSo*  
Howard County Poetry & Literature Society

## **Howard County Poet Laureate 2024 – 2026** **Guidelines and Application Instructions**

On October 24, 2023, Howard County Executive Calvin Ball approved the establishment of the position of Howard County Poet Laureate, to elevate poetry in the consciousness of Howard County residents and to help celebrate the literary arts. The Howard County Arts Council (HCAC) administers this program in partnership with Howard County Poetry & Literature Society (HoCoPoLitSo).

The Poet Laureate is an honorary two-year position, in service to the community. The Poet Laureate shall be formally appointed by the County Executive, acting on a recommendation determined through an artistic and community panel selection process coordinated by HoCoPoLitSo.

During their term, the Poet Laureate will act as an advocate for poetry, literature, and the arts and contribute to Howard County's poetic and literary legacy through public readings and participation in civic events.

The Poet Laureate will not be considered an employee of Howard County nor of HCAC and will continue to have individual pursuits.

The next Poet Laureate will serve from April 2024 through March 2026 and will receive a stipend of \$5,000 per year of service, paid in two equal installments of \$2,500 at the beginning and end of the year. In addition, a budget of up to \$500 per year is available for reimbursable expenses related to the Poet Laureate's activities, to be paid at the end of each year.

## **Eligibility Criteria for the Howard County Poet Laureate**

The Howard County Poet Laureate program is a partnership with HCAC and HoCoPoLitSo, working with other community literary organizations. Program requirements include the following:

- The selected Poet Laureate will be available to serve a two-year term.
- The selected Poet Laureate is a current Howard County Resident who has resided in the County for the past three years and has a reputable body of published or recognized poetic work.
- The selected Poet Laureate's poetic interests respond to, or represent, the diversity of arts and cultures in Howard County.
- The selected Poet Laureate has demonstrated a commitment to and passion for poetry as a means of connection and understanding, and embraces the opportunity to engage with the community through the arts.
- The selected Poet Laureate must be at least 18 years of age and not be enrolled in high school or an undergraduate degree, graduate degree, or certificate-granting program in an arts discipline or an arts-related subject area at the time of application.

Individuals that have served as a trustee, employee or board member of HCAC or HoCoPoLitSo in the past year and spouses and immediate family members of HCAC or HoCoPoLitSo Board and staff are not eligible to apply.

## **Duties of the Howard County Poet Laureate**

The Poet Laureate shall undertake projects throughout Howard County that will make poetry more available and accessible to people in their communities and everyday lives, including the following but not exceeding more than 25 events per year:

1. Design and lead events and participate in activities in Howard County for National Poetry Month, including coordinating with HoCoPoLitSo and Howard Community College to participate in the annual Blackbird Poetry Festival in April.
2. Participate in readings and speaking engagements for the Howard County Executive and County Departments. May include selecting and presenting appropriate works at dedications, memorials, and other community events in Howard County. Up to 25 hours per year, as determined and scheduled through HCAC in coordination with the offices of the County Executive and County Council.

3. Serve as a judge for the All-County Writing Competition, in coordination with HoCoPoLitSo and the Howard County Public School System.
4. Readings or other events as designed by and at the selected Poet Laureate's discretion, in coordination with the Poet Laureate program organizers.
5. Actively participate in social media activity related to Poet Laureate events and projects.
6. After their term as Poet Laureate is complete, at their discretion, serve on the selection panel(s) for future Howard County Poet Laureates.

## **To Apply**

[Click here to begin application](#)

Once you have entered the system, please review the complete application and guidelines, which include detailed instructions. Application requirements include: resume, work samples, and ideas for community engagement. Letters of recommendation and reviews are optional.

Applications for Howard County Poet Laureate open on October 24, 2023. The deadline to submit applications is January 9, 2024.

If for any reason you are not able to submit application materials online, please contact Dana Whipkey, HCAC Grants and Special Projects Coordinator at [grantsandprojects@hocoarts.org](mailto:grantsandprojects@hocoarts.org) or 410.313. ARTS(2787).

## **Timeline**

Application opens: October 24, 2023

Application deadline: January 9, 2024

Selection announcement: Late March or early April 2024

## **Review Process**

Applications will be reviewed by a 3-member panel of literary professionals. The panel will select up to 5 Poet Laureate finalists based on the artistic merit and commitment to community engagement of the work samples submitted. Selected finalists may be invited for an interview with the County Executive, HCAC and/or HoCoPoLitSo; the County Executive will make the final decision and announce the Poet Laureate.

## **Review Criteria**

The application for the Howard County Poet Laureate program is competitive. Work samples are critical to each application and are carefully considered during application review. Applicants are encouraged to apply when they have a cohesive body of work that they are prepared to present in a professional manner. The applicant must be the creator of and primary artistic force behind the work.

Applications are evaluated by an independent panel of literary arts professionals with expertise and experience in poetry. The role of each panelist is to review and score each eligible application based on the materials submitted and the established criteria cited below:

### **Concept**

The application and work samples demonstrate the applicant's creative and original theories, ideas, interpretations and/or perceptions. (Up to 30 points)

### **Cohesion**

The application and work samples demonstrate a clear and cohesive body of work. (Up to 20 points)

### **Demonstrated Command of Form**

The application and work samples demonstrate the applicant's exemplary technical capabilities. (Up to 20 points)

### **Impact**

The application and work samples demonstrate the applicant's creative practice has both sustained resonance, impact, or value and strengthens the diversity and vitality of Howard County's arts ecosystem. (Up to 30 points)

## **Work Samples**

Work samples are critical to each application and are carefully considered during application review. Applicants should pay close attention to the content of work sample submissions and how they are labeled and should adhere to the work sample instructions outlined below or risk ineligibility for consideration of selection as Poet Laureate.

All work samples must have been completed within five (5) years of the application deadline. Work in progress and work created outside of the 5-year limit will not be reviewed.

## **DIGITAL FILE FORMATS**

You may submit up to ten (10) poems (or excerpts) typewritten that represent your best artistic achievements, not to exceed twenty (20) pages total.

Compile all of your poems typewritten in English along with a cover page listing the titles of each in order into a single .PDF document. Use Times, Helvetica, or equivalent font, no smaller than 12-point in size and formatted with at least 1" margins on all sides.

The total page length of all poetry samples and cover page combined should be 21 pages or fewer. Additional pages will not be reviewed. Copies from journals or books will not be accepted.

Name your .PDF file accordingly: *last name\_first name\_poetry samples*.

## **VIDEO PERFORMANCE SAMPLES**

Provide up to two (2) links to recorded poetic work samples that show your delivery of your poems in a live setting. All samples must be hosted on online platforms, such as Soundcloud, Vimeo or YouTube.

In the space indicated on the entry form, provide a link to the video(s) and briefly describe your video samples in 500 words or less, including the date, venue, and titles of the works performed.

If the video work sample(s) include a group or ensemble, the applicant must be an equal partner and/or the featured artist for at least 50% of the time and the work sample must be cued to the applicant's performance. Provide as necessary descriptive information so that the applicant's role in the work is clear.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (OPTIONAL)**

You may submit up to three (3) supporting documents such as letters of recommendation or literary reviews, not to exceed two (2) pages each and uploaded in .PDF format.

Name your .PDF file(s) accordingly: *last name\_first name\_supporting document\_1*

## **Review Process**

Only complete applications successfully submitted online through [Submittable](#) will be accepted and reviewed. Once the application deadline passes, no alterations

or additions may be made to the application unless clarification is requested in writing by HCAC staff. Applicants must then meet any revision deadlines as specified in writing or the application will be withdrawn.

The Howard County Poet Laureate application has a 3-step review process:

**Step 1: HCAC Staff Review**

Initial review of applications for compliance with eligibility and submission requirements is made by HCAC staff. If staff detects issues, they may call upon applicants to clarify information, to furnish proof of eligibility, etc.

Should an applicant be asked to clarify and/or revise their application, the applicant must meet all revision deadlines as specified by staff or the application will be withdrawn.

**Step 2: HoCoPoLitSo Artistic Review Panel**

Specific personal information is removed from applications and work samples prior to review by an independent panel of literary arts professionals coordinated by HoCoPoLitSo.

Each panelist first reviews the applications and work samples on their own; the full panel then meets together via in-person or online video conference to discuss, score, and finalize nominations for finalists recommended to the County Executive.

To ensure the Howard County Poet Laureate program is free from conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflicts, panelists are required to disclose any current or prospective affiliations they or their immediate family members have with an actual or potential applicant and/or disclose any past or current adversarial relationships with applicants. Panelists are not permitted to participate in discussions or scoring of any applicant with whom they have an affiliation or conflict.

HoCoPoLitSo will coordinate the Artistic Review Panel meeting, go over the meeting protocols, and ensure that all eligible applications are reviewed and discussed in an orderly manner. Members of HoCoPoLitSo and HCAC's Committee on Grants and/or staff will be present during the full panel review to observe the process and/or answer questions from the panel about the program. These representatives will not participate in the panel discussions, only clarify eligibility of applicants, ensure review protocols are adhered to, and answer questions about the program and application process.

The Artistic Review Panel is strongly encouraged to score each application but

reserves the right to decline to score and/or decline to make a recommendation if they feel that an application, or the entire pool of applicants, does not warrant it.

### **Step 3: County Executive Final Review**

The Artistic Review Panel final scores of all applications reviewed are presented to the HCAC Committee on Grants, who then submit up to five (5) finalists to the County Executive for final approval. The County Executive's decision is final.

HCAC and HoCoPoLitSo reserve the right, at their sole discretion, to revise, withdraw, and/or reissue the Howard County Poet Laureate opportunity at any time and for any reason, which includes, but is not limited to, the right to extend the deadline and timeline, reject all submission entries, revise and/or not award funds, and/or solicit additional applications.

If you have any questions, please contact Dana Whipkey, Grants and Special Projects Coordinator at [grantsandprojects@hocoarts.org](mailto:grantsandprojects@hocoarts.org) or call 410 313 2787.