



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Durham Poet Laureate Pilot Program

101 City Hall Plaza, Durham NC 27701

The City of Durham's Cultural and Public Art Program (referred to as "City") is seeking Poets, preferably based in Durham, (referred to as "Candidates") to serve as the City's ambassador to promote public appreciation of poetry and literature through public readings, special events, and learning sessions. Poets must have significant publication or published works and demonstrated previous commitment to promoting awareness of poetry.



Figure 1: Design Concepts by Tim Stallman and William Paul Thomas

If you are interested in being a part of this pilot program and contributing to the Durham's community, submit requested all information and any questions to dcab@durhamnc.gov.

Candidates who have already registered with the City of Durham's [Pre-Qualified Artists Registry](#) **must** submit all requested RFQ materials as outlined below.

RFQ Deadline: Friday, May 6, 2022 by 3:00 p.m. EST

PILOT PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In May 2021, at the request of City Council, the Durham Cultural Advisory Board (DCAB) received a presentation from local poets regarding creation of a Durham Poet Laureate. Poet Laureate programs are opportunities for jurisdictions or entities to formally recognize poets' contributions to literary culture and society, while also providing education and exposure to the literary arts to residents. Communities across North Carolina appoint or support poets laureate, who serve as advocates for the literary arts. In August 2021, after consideration during its June and July monthly meetings, DCAB leadership drafted a letter to recommend appointment of a Durham Poet Laureate. DCAB shared its letter of recommendation with City Council on August 29, 2021. City Council approved the Poet Laureate Pilot Program on October 4, 2021.

Regional cities, Carrboro and Hillsborough, have created this position in the last 20 years and Chapel Hill appointed their first poet laureate position in 2019. Successful poet laureate positions exist at the state, regional and local levels.

- The North Carolina Poet Laureate is appointed for a two-year term by the governor, typically with the advice of a committee assembled by the North Carolina Arts Council (NCAC). The NCAC supports the poet laureate by coordinating and publicizing speaking events, and provides a stipend for expenses.
- The Piedmont Laureate is appointed for a one-year term, and is co-sponsored by the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, Durham Arts Council, Orange County Arts Commission, and United Arts Council of Raleigh & Wake County with an honorarium provided annually.
- The Chapel Hill Poet Laureate position was established in 2019, providing an honorarium for a two-year term.

The goal of the poet laureate pilot program is to champion the art of poetry and the spoken word in the City of Durham, and provide free, educational opportunities for all.

The selected Candidate(s) will serve a one-year term beginning on July 1, 2022 in order to:

- Champion the art of poetry and the spoken word in the City of Durham;
- Celebrate the city's cultural heritage by attending literary and other cultural events;
- Read poems at ceremonial events that will benefit the community, at City Council or other public meetings;
- Provide up to 5 - 10 public readings; and

- Host, lead, and implement at least three (3) hands-on educational opportunities for adults and children that are free and open to the public, which may include visits to public entities, schools and/or events for young people.

Resources

Program Information:

- Poet Laureate Pilot Program website:
www.durhamnc.gov/4724/Durham-Poet-Laureate-Pilot-Program

External Webpages:

To provide broader context on poet laureate positions through the United States of American, and locally in North Carolina, please visit the resources below.

- Library of Congress Poet Laureate: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-literature/poet-laureate/>
- Poet Foundation: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>
- North Carolina Arts Council: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/poetry-and-literature/poet-laureate/>
- Piedmont Laureate Program: <https://piedmontlaureate.org/>
- Chapel Hill: <https://www.chapelhillarts.org/poet-laureate/>
- Town of Carrboro: <https://poets.org/academy-american-poets/winner/prizes/academy-american-poets-laureate-fellowships/poet-laureate-town>

City of Durham’s Cultural & Public Art Program

The Cultural and Public Art Program believes that Durham’s rich cultural heritage is an important part of what makes Durham’s neighborhoods thrive, attracts tourism and business development, and what brings the community closer together. The program seeks to bring public art into the everyday experience of Durham residents through the implementation of community-informed placemaking practices. The program works to invest and create public art experiences – both downtown and in neighborhoods – that illuminate residents’ history, sparks reflection and dialogue, and enhances daily life.

To further help artists connect with opportunities, the City has also launched a [Durham Calls for Artists](#) page on its website, which lists a number of upcoming opportunities for artists in and around Durham. Artists and other stakeholders who would like to be notified of current and future art-related opportunities and news can now sign up for alerts through the [Cultural and Public Arts Calls for Art mailing list](#). For more information about the City’s Cultural and Public Arts Program, visit the City’s [cultural and public arts page](#).

PILOT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The City of Durham’s Cultural and Public Art Program in collaboration with the Durham Cultural Advisory Board are seeking a poet to serve as the Durham Poet Laureate to promote public appreciation of poetry and literature through public readings, special events, and learning sessions. The selected Durham Poet Laureate should be comfortable with teaching and interacting with community members and stakeholders as an ambassador of the City. Poets must have significant publication or published works and demonstrated previous commitment to promoting awareness of poetry.

SITE

Various Locations within the City of Durham and the County of Durham.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To reflect the community’s voice, the selected Candidate will plan and facilitate inclusive and accessible community engagement activities to encourage public input and participation as outlined in the “Scope of Work” section below. The selected Candidates will be expected to lead, host, facilitate, and participate in community and staff engagement activities and learning sessions. The City of Durham may use virtual platforms that include SMS capabilities, geo-tagging, and surveys to assist the Candidates throughout the engagement sessions.

RFQ ELIGIBILITY

This RFQ is open to Candidates with connections to the Durham community and/or who are connected to and aware of the history of the area. The Poet Selection Panel encourages the selected Candidate to be a resident in the County of Durham.

Candidates must have significant publication history including books, articles, media, journals, etc. (excluding self-published). Significant publication history is defined as at least two or more publications.

Candidates must be authorized to work in the United States, and age 18 and older.

The City of Durham opposes any discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, familial status, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or protected hairstyle. The City encourages people from diverse backgrounds to apply.

RFQ SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS & NOMINATION PROCESS

Submission by Candidates

Submissions must be received by Friday, May 6, 2022 by 3:00 p.m. EST via email to dcab@durhamnc.gov. The program manager, Rebecca Brown, will distribute all questions and answers to those respondents who have requested RFQ's from the City. No other City official or employee is empowered to speak for the City with respect to this RFQ.

If a Candidate(s) does not receive confirmation receipt from the City by Monday, May 9, 2022 at 3:00 PM EST, it is the responsibility of the Candidate(s) to contact the City to confirm submission by Tuesday, May 10, 2022 by 3:00 PM EST to be considered eligible.

The RFQ submissions shall include the following:

1. **Statement of Interest:** narrative outlining the Candidates' qualifications and interest in this program, including descriptions of past engagement and teaching work within the Durham community or other communities and/or interest in community engagement and teaching work. Candidates are encouraged to include information on how they may identify and engage residents and community organizations within Durham neighborhoods to expand the literature arts. In addition, Candidates are encouraged to consider the Durham Poet Laureate position's roles and how the position will promote diversity.
2. **Work samples:** representations of completed works that demonstrates the Candidates' qualifications for the program. Candidates must have significant publication (published or released works) and demonstrated previous commitment to promoting awareness of poetry (excluding self-published).

In order to be considered for this program, the Candidate must submit at least three (3) examples of at least three (3) previously completed works, with the option to submit up to five (5) examples of no more than five (5) previously completed works. Works is defined as anthology, books, chapbooks, journals, recorded and released performances. Each example should have an accompanying summary of the title, location (if applicable), and date associated with the work(s).

3. **References:** each Candidate team should provide at least three (3) current references (non-familial) or recommendation letters with contact information for each reference, who can speak to the Candidates' work ethic, skills and strengths.

NOMINATION PROCESS

For residents of Durham County, a nomination can be made on behalf of the potential Candidate to indicate their interest. The potential Candidate must submit the required RFQ information as outlined above by the establish deadline to be considered for selection. If a potential Candidate does not submit the required information, then the Candidate is not eligible for consideration for the Durham Poet Laureate position for this RFQ.

Nominations shall include the following:

- Name of Candidate(s)
- Contact information of Candidates, including active phone number, email address and/or mailing address.
- Website of Candidates (if available)

Nominations must be submitted via email to dcab@durhamnc.gov by Friday, April 15, 2022, which is at least three weeks prior to the RFQ deadline on Friday, May 6, 2022 by 3:00 p.m.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. The Selection Panel will include staff from the City and may at the City's discretion include representatives from the City of Durham's General Services Department, other City department, local stakeholders, poets, and others.
2. The Selection Panel will review submissions for completeness and may reject incomplete or non-responsive submissions.
3. The Selection Panel will evaluate applications based on criteria that may include, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Excellence of past projects.
 - b. Examples of past community engagement and/or teaching experiences Experience, success, and/or interest in community engagement in the process of creating their work.
 - c. Proven track record of methods appropriate for this program.
4. The Selection Panel may invite up to five (5) Finalists to interview with the committee or committee members.
5. Finalists may be required to meet with staff at site location and interview in-person or online with the Selection Panel (in compliance with all local, state, and federal guidelines regarding COVID-19).
6. After the interviews, the Selection Panel will recommend the Candidates to the City of Durham Mayor and City Council, who will make the final determination as to which Candidates are selected.
7. The City and selected Candidates will enter into a written contract detailing mutual responsibilities and the full scope of work, including the budget.

SCOPE OF WORK

The services and obligations that will be required from the Candidate during the contract period include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Leading, planning and facilitating learning sessions for at least three (or more) community sessions within the one-year appointment,
 - Sessions should include in-person or virtual community conversations, an online element and at least one on-site event (if local and state COVID-19 guidelines allow).
- Travel across Durham to engage writers and readers of all ages in a variety of settings
 - including schools, libraries, and community centers;
- Communication and coordination with City departments for events and readings, in addition to online media and writing
- Create Commemorative poems for historical or culturally important occasions.
- Completing the scope of work within agreed upon term of service (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023).

PROPOSED TIMELINE

- April 4, 2022 – May 6, 2022: Call for Poets
- April 15, 2022: Deadline for Nomination Process
- May 6, 2022 by 3:00 p.m.: Deadline for RFQ Submissions
- May 11 – May 17, 2022: Selection Panel Meeting
- May and/or June 2022: DCAB vote on recommendation from Selection Panel. DCAB recommendation shared with Mayor for consideration & appointment.
- June 2022: Contracting
- July 2022 – June 2023: Pilot year
- October/November 2022: DCAB committee Program Evaluation

COMPENSATION

The selected Candidate will be paid a total of \$5,000 for services including poet laureate/artist fees, community engagement, learning sessions, and documentation of the pilot program. Payments will be made to the Candidate based on Candidate's submission of deliverables and/or reports by established deadlines outlined in the contract. The City will determine the payment schedule (e.g. quarterly, monthly).

The City of Durham will support the selected Candidate by coordinating and publicizing speaking events.

DISCRETION OF THE CITY

- A. The City of Durham reserves the right to reject any or all RFQs.
- B. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this document or in any addendums to this document, unless the contrary provision refers specifically to this provision, the City reserves the right (i) to negotiate changes of any nature with any candidate with respect to any term, condition, or provision in this document and/or in any RFQ application, whether or not something is stated to be mandatory and whether or not it is said that a RFQ application will be rejected if certain information or documentation is not submitted with it, and (ii) to enter into an agreement for some or all of the work with one or more persons, firms, or corporations that do not submit SOQs. For example, all deadlines are for the administrative convenience or needs of the City and may be waived by the City in its discretion. This subparagraph B applies to the entire RFQ.
- C. Where the City asks or tells candidates to do stated things, such as that a proposal and/or RFQ application should follow a stated format or that the candidate should do stated things in seeking the contract, the City may reject a proposal and/or RFQ application because it does not comply with those requests, so the candidate is adding to its risk of rejection by non-compliance. Still, the City may, in its discretion, waive non-compliance. This subsection (C) does not limit subsections (A) and (B).
- D. Once a contract is signed, the parties to the contract may enforce the contract according to its terms as allowed by applicable law.

NON-COLLUSION AFFIDAVIT

The Selected Candidate, referred to as “I” below, will be required to submit a signed, notarized Non-collusion Affidavit to the City. The Non-collusion Affidavit may state the following: “By executing this proposal, I certify that this proposal is submitted to the City of Durham competitively and without collusion. I am authorized to represent the candidate or bidder named below both in submitting this proposal and in making this Non-collusion Affidavit. To the best of my knowledge and belief, (1) the candidate or bidder has not violated N. C. General Statute section 133-24 in connection with the proposal, (2) the candidate or bidder has not entered into any agreement, participated in any collusion, or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competitive bidding in connection with its proposal, and (3) the candidate or bidder intends to do the work with its own bonafide employees or subcontractors and is not bidding or making a proposal for the benefit of another contractor.”