



**THE CITY OF PETERBOROUGH  
POET LAUREATE PILOT PROGRAM 2021  
PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

*“A centuries-old tradition, a Poet Laureate is an appointed artist who primarily composes and presents poems at official occasions.”*

**INTRODUCTION**

Dozens of cities across Canada have recently developed or rejuvenated Poet Laureate programs in their municipalities as a way to acknowledge and appreciate poetry, support outstanding living artists, and bring new vision and voice to the identity of their city, adding grace and substance to official civic occasions. Poets Laureate bring deeper meaning and reflection to all the work that the City does to create a vibrant community for its citizens. Poet Laureate programs enhance the value of literacy and the literary arts by building a deeper knowledge and understanding of our lives and the place where we live.

The City of Peterborough is pleased to launch its Poet Laureate Pilot Program for 2021-2022. This honorary position has been established to recognize the excellence and outstanding achievement of professional poets (both print/page and spoken word) living and working in our city and to enhance our

civic identity. The Poet Laureate Pilot Program will be launched in April 2021 and the first official term will run from June 30, 2021 to April 30, 2022.

The City of Peterborough is responsible for the Poet Laureate Pilot Program, which is administered by the Electric City Culture Council (EC3) under the guidance of the City of Peterborough's Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee (ACHAC).

### **POET LAUREATE PROGRAM IMPORTANT DATES**

Poet Laureate Pilot Program Launch: **April 29, 2021**

Nomination Period Opens: **May 3, 2021**

Information Session (Workshop and Q&A): **May 10, 2021**

\*\*Nominations Due: **May 25, 2021**

Announcement: **June 23, 2021**

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

- The City of Peterborough defines the Poet Laureate as a professional, print/page poet or spoken word artist, resident of Peterborough or Peterborough County who has achieved excellence in their practice, as recognized by their peers, and whose body of work demonstrates a connection with and relevance to Peterborough and the surrounding region and its citizens.
- This is an honorary position.
- The Poet Laureate will serve a **one-year term**. The Pilot Program will take place from June 30, 2021 to April 30, 2022.
- The Poet Laureate will be paid an honorarium of **\$2,000** for their term.

### **PROGRAM GOALS**

- The Peterborough Poet Laureate Pilot Program supports outstanding professional literary artists in the creation and presentation of new work that speaks to our lives in this place called Peterborough/Nogojwanong.

- The Poet Laureate acts as an advocate for poetry and spoken word art, as an ambassador for the arts in general, and for the literary arts and literacy in particular, and for the City of Peterborough and its residents.
- The Poet Laureate contributes to civic identity and place-making by exploring and reflecting the histories, interests, issues, and perspectives of the varied and multiple communities and individual residents of the municipality.
- Poets Laureate create markers of our history, reflect on our contemporary experience, and explore our future.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Poet Laureate creates new work, presents it to the public, and engages the community in activities, programs, and events that demonstrate the positive impact of the arts in general, and of literature, poetry, and spoken word arts in particular.

### **The Poet Laureate will:**

- Compose and present poems for Peterborough City Council and other official City of Peterborough events and occasions, including at least **once** a year to Peterborough City Council during **National Poetry Month (April)**, and a minimum of **three other official municipal events**, to be determined annually in coordination with City staff and/or EC3 (**total of four new works and four public readings**).
- Make public presentations as the Poet Laureate at a variety of civic or community events annually, at the discretion of the Poet Laureate. The Poet Laureate may accept additional fees for this work.
- Liaise with City staff and/or EC3 on a quarterly basis and provide a written report on their experience at the conclusion of their term.
- Work with City staff and EC3 to develop a legacy project.
- Participate in the following year's Poet Laureate Selection Committee.

### **EC3 will:**

- Coordinate the nomination process.
- Facilitate the selection process, including the appointment of the Selection Committee and the management of its work.

- Provide administrative support to the Poet Laureate, project coordination and, where possible, will work in collaboration with City Communications staff on publicity and promotion.
- Work with City staff to coordinate the Poet Laureate Announcement Event.

## TERM AND SUPPORT

- One-year term commencing in June 2021.
- An honorarium of **\$2,000** to be paid in two installments.
- Additional program resources may be available (e.g. travel, venue rental, photo documentation, marketing and communications, sign language interpretation).
- The City of Peterborough is responsible for the Poet Laureate Pilot Program, which is administered by the Electric City Culture Council under the guidance of the City of Peterborough's Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee. All artworks produced by the Peterborough Poet Laureate remain the intellectual property/copyright of the Poet Laureate.

## ELIGIBILITY: NOMINEES

**Artists must be nominated by someone else; there are no self-nominations.**

To be eligible, the nominee must be a professional artist who is:

- 18 years of age or older
- A current resident of the city of Peterborough or Peterborough County
- A Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident
- Prepared to accept the responsibilities of the position and is accustomed to citizen engagement and community outreach
- Professionally published according to the eligibility criteria outlined below
- Have made a significant contribution to poetry, or spoken word arts, and the literary life of the municipality and/or of the surrounding region

### Eligibility Criteria (Print/Page Poets)

The nominee must meet at least one of the following publishing criteria. Assessment of the poet's work as "published text" will be at the discretion of the Selection Committee:

One book of poetry published by a literary or trade publisher

**OR**

One self-published book of poetry professionally marketed and distributed, as determined by the Selection Committee

**OR**

Two chapbooks that have been professionally marketed and distributed, as determined by the Selection Committee

**OR**

A body of work that demonstrates professional commitment and proficiency, which includes poetry published or presented in professional markets; this can be any combination of chapbooks, broadsheets, anthology contributions, or publication in literary magazines.

In the Nomination Letter, please outline in detail the Nominee's publication history and involvement with the poetry community. In your Support Materials, please also include examples of the Nominee's work that the Selection Committee can read.

### **Eligibility Criteria (Spoken Word Poets)**

The nominee must have a body of work that demonstrates professional commitment and proficiency in the field of spoken word poetry, as determined by the Selection Committee.

A body of work may include a combination of the following:

- A recorded studio album
- Participation on a spoken word team, including touring and competing for at least two years
- Three curated, featured performance sets of at least 15 minutes each
- Print materials, including chapbooks, anthology contributions, publication in literary magazines, etc.
- Commitment to the community through teaching and/or creating performance spaces for other artists

In the Nomination Letter, please outline in detail the Nominee's performance history and involvement with the spoken word community. In the Support Materials, please also include links to any audio tracks or videos that the Selection Committee can listen to or view online.

### **ELIGIBILITY: NOMINATORS**

- Nominators must also be residents of Peterborough or Peterborough County, a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident, and be 18 years of age or older
- Nominators must know the artist, be familiar with their work, and be able to comment knowledgeably on their ability to undertake the duties of a Poet Laureate
- Nominators may not be related to the nominee through familial or employment connections or through any of the connections in the Conflict of Interest Guidelines criteria outlined below for jurors
- Nominators may nominate only one artist per year for Poet Laureate

## **NOMINATION PACKAGE AND PROCESS**

This is a two-part selection process. Eligible nominees must agree to participate in **both** phases, the submission of the Nomination Package and, if shortlisted, an interview with the Selection Committee.

### **Poet Laureate Nomination Package**

Submissions must include the following:

- **Poet Laureate Nomination Form**
  - Signed, completed application in DOC/DOCX format.
- **Nominee's Curriculum Vitae (CV)** (maximum 3 pages)
  - A professional CV that demonstrates the nominee's achievements and their formal and informal training.
- **Confirmation of Residence**
  - Photocopy of driver's licence, property tax bill, utilities bill, etc.
- **Nomination Letter from the Nominator** (maximum 500 words)
  - This letter should introduce the nominee to the Selection Committee and describe the artist's achievements and professional practice. It should address the Assessment Criteria, communicate how the artist is involved in and has contributed to Peterborough's arts community in general and the literary arts community in particular, and make a strong case for why the artist is worthy of the appointment of Poet Laureate.
- **Letter of Intent from the Nominated Artist** (maximum 750 words)
  - This letter should address the following:
    - a) The applicant's goals and objectives (why they want to be the Poet Laureate and what they hope to achieve in the position).

- b) The applicant's interest in serving in and capacity to hold a public position (how they would represent the Municipality).
  - c) How the applicant would engage the public (including communities and issues of interest to the nominee).
  - d) How the applicant would engage with the Peterborough Public Library and other local arts, culture, and heritage organizations and institutions.
  - e) How the applicant might use digital engagement and social media platforms to interact with the community and advocate for the literary arts.
- **Support Materials**
    - Five examples of work from the past 10 years, as outlined in the Eligibility Criteria and the Support Material Section of the Nomination Form.
  - **Artist Bio** (maximum 250 words)

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

### **Phase 1: Review and Assessment of Nomination Packages**

All eligible nominations are reviewed by a Selection Committee composed of jurors that will include:

- Peers who have achieved excellence in the field
- A City representative (e.g. library staff member)
- Citizens who are related professionals in the field (teachers, educators, etc.)

The Selection Committee will choose three finalists for the shortlist of candidates to be interviewed.

### **Phase 2: Selection Committee Interviews**

Shortlisted nominees will take part in a finalist's interview with the Selection Committee, to take place virtually via Zoom. The Committee will then select the Poet Laureate.

## **SELECTION COMMITTEE**

The Selection Committee (the jurors) will be inclusive and reflect the diverse nature of our community. The Committee will consider all eligible nominees and will endeavour to reach unanimous decisions in the selection process. In occasions where unanimity is not achieved, a decision may be reached by majority vote. In cases where a suitable candidate is not found within the field of nominations, the

Peterborough Poet Laureate Selection Committee reserves the right to make no appointment in any given year.

## **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The Selection Committee will assess nominations according to the following criteria:

- **Community and Professional Standing:** Contribution to field and impact of work.
- **Excellence in Practice:** Quality of work in relation to expectations of position. Candidate has demonstrated significant and outstanding achievement.
- **Citizen Engagement:** Preparedness to accept the responsibilities of the position. Candidate is accustomed to public presentation, citizen engagement, and community outreach and will create enthusiasm for the Poet Laureate Program.
- **Goals and Objectives:** The Candidate's goals for the one-year program are realistic, achievable, and relevant to the Program and the City of Peterborough.

## **RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL**

EC3 will report the outcome of the selection process to ACHAC, who will then approve the appointment of the Poet Laureate.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Shortlisted nominees and the approved Poet Laureate will be notified by EC3.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Board members and staff of the Electric City Culture Council may not nominate or be nominated for Poet Laureate, and may not serve on the Selection Committee. Members of the Selection Committee may not nominate or be nominated for Poet Laureate.

All Selection Committee members will be provided with EC3's Conflict of Interest Guidelines in advance of the Committee meeting and must sign a Conflict of Interest Declaration before their appointment is final and/or the jury process begins.



If, in the course of the Selection Committee's deliberations, any member becomes faced with a conflict of interest, that person is expected to declare such conflict and withdraw from the selection process. A conflict of interest refers to a situation in which private interests or personal considerations may affect a committee member's judgment in acting in the best interest of the awards adjudication process. Specifically, a conflict of interest exists where a Committee member (1) has a financial interest in the success or failure of a candidate; (2) has a personal interest in a specific candidate other than what is normally expected of an interested member of the arts community; or (3) has any other reason which makes them unable to evaluate the candidate objectively.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Members of the Selection Committee are not disclosed until the day of the announcement event to mitigate lobbying and potential conflicts of interest, and their deliberations and decisions are strictly confidential. Nominators and nominees must agree to keep all information regarding the process strictly confidential.

They must agree to not publicize, promote, or advertise nominations until announced by EC3 and further agree to keep confidential any information they may have about the status of the appointment.

### **ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY**

EC3 is committed to establishing fair and equitable practices for all of our programs and services in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Persons with disabilities are encouraged to come forward at any stage of the application process to request accommodations, if needed. Members of our team will consult and can adapt processes wherever possible to provide individuals with disabilities with equal opportunity to apply.

EC3 encourages applications for the Peterborough Poet Laureate from all those who live in our diverse community and advocates for equal opportunity for all applicants in the nomination and selection process. EC3 is committed to supporting and promoting diverse artists, artistic practices, and arts communities that represent a wide cross-section of Peterborough and the surrounding area, including artists who are Indigenous, Black, or people of colour, as well as artists with disabilities, Deaf artists and those who are members of marginalized religious, sexual orientation, and gender identity

groups. EC3 strives to make our juries, selection, and assessment committees equitable and inclusive by ensuring broad representation from the communities outlined above.

Nominations can be submitted by email to [peterboroughpoetlaureate@gmail.com](mailto:peterboroughpoetlaureate@gmail.com) with the subject line “Nomination for the Peterborough Poet Laureate 2021”.

**The submission deadline is [May 25, 2021](#). Late or incomplete nominations will not be considered.**

**For further information contact:**

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