

THE CLEVELAND HEIGHTS / HEIGHTS ARTS OFFICE OF POET LAUREATE

PURPOSE OF THE LAUREATESHIP

Heights Arts, with the endorsement of the City of Cleveland Heights, established the Office of Poet Laureate in 2000 to celebrate and elevate poetry as an art form for the benefit of the community's residents. Every two years Heights Arts' Heights Writes Community Team* conducts a process to solicit applications and select a local poet to serve in this post. The Team is comprised of volunteers with expertise in the literary arts, supported by Heights Arts staff.

BENEFITS OF THE LAUREATESHIP

The poet laureateship will raise your profile in the community; give you experience writing occasional poems; and increase your awareness of Cleveland Heights communities, organizations and individuals you may not have met before. You will have a deep connection with Heights Arts and will collaborate with artists across genres. Serving will increase your future funding possibilities as this role adds prestige to your resume along with a network within Heights Arts who can assist with certain grant proposals. Our outgoing poet laureate in 2022 was awarded a substantial grant from the Academy of American Poets as a direct result of his role as CH poet laureate in collaboration with Heights Arts staff and the Heights Writes Community Team.

TERM OF SERVICE AND ELIGIBILITY

The Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate serves for twenty-four months beginning in April of odd-numbered years and concludes their service at the end of March. The laureate must commit to the full term and maintain a significant relationship to the Cleveland Heights community throughout the full two-years of service.

HONORARIUM

Heights Arts will provide an honorarium of \$1,500 per year to the laureate in compensation for services. This Honorarium will be paid in two installments each year: September and March.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate:

- Will deliver a report to Heights Arts at the end of each year, which captures the laureate's activities and provides feedback on the experience so that the position can continue to be improved.
- Will serve on the Heights Writes Community Team during the term and at least one year after the term ends, for a minimum of three years.
- Must be a champion for Cleveland Heights and share enthusiasm for the community through their work as laureate.
- Should be able to write or offer occasional poems to celebrate or commemorate key events in the life of the city, when asked.

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SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The laureate must acknowledge their role as the Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate and Heights Arts' sponsorship of their position at all public or private events during their two-year term.

Heights Arts' On-site Programming

- **Curate:** With support from staff and the Heights Writes Community Team, the laureate curates and produces four *Ekphrastic – Artists Talk and Poets Respond** events in each of their two years of service.
- **Participate:** The laureate also writes and reads at least two ekphrastic poems inspired by the work in each exhibition as part of every Ekphrastic program and ensures that every artist is represented by at least one poem.

Community Engagement and Off-site Programming: As part of the Office's mandate to expand community engagement with the art form, the laureate will accomplish the following:

- **Engage:** Arrange a minimum of six readings (three per year) at city council meetings or other events presented by the City of Cleveland Heights.
- **Present:** arrange and present a minimum of six (three per year) solo or group readings or workshops at external venues in the greater Heights community over their two-year term. The laureate will likely have additional opportunities to read outside of the above required duties. Heights Arts encourages this.**
- **Celebrate:** As a celebration of their tenure, the laureate will be the focus of a featured reading at the end of their term of service (March/April timeframe). The new laureate will be introduced at the event and read a poem, and former laureates will be invited to each read a poem as well.

SELECTION PROCESS

Eligibility

Poets must be residents of Cleveland Heights, or have a significant relationship to the Cleveland Heights community, and commit to serve the full 24-month term of service if selected.

Identification of Candidates

Any poet who meets the eligibility criteria and can commit to the term of service, may submit an application for consideration. Applications may be submitted anytime between November 1 and the deadline of December 31. In the absence of sufficient quality applications, the Heights Writes Community Team may reach out to local poets to solicit applications.

Application Information

The application deadline is *December 31* of even-numbered years. Interested candidates must apply online. The application form can be found at <https://www.heightsarts.org/portfolio-item/2020-2022-cleveland-heights-poet-laureate/>

The application will ask for important demographic and contact information. Applicants will be asked to submit their credentials and resume, a sample of no fewer than six recent poems. A short essay that helps the selection committee understand what the applicant appreciates about the City of Cleveland Heights, and why they are seeking this position, will also be required.

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Following the deadline, the Heights Writes Community Team will review all applications and determine no more than three poets for final consideration. Those not being considered will be notified by the end of January.

Finalists will meet with members of Heights Writes Community Team in separate interviews in early February with a decision on the winning applicant by mid-March. Term of service commences April 1.

**The Heights Writes Community Team will help develop contacts for external events, but the laureate will create the focus and content of each community engagement event.*

***Ekphrastic is a signature program of Heights Arts in association with our curated group exhibitions. The laureate works with the Heights Writes Community Team to invite and select participating poets, encourage poets' engagement with a diversity of artworks represented in each exhibition and organizing and hosting the events.*