

### **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)**

# 2026 Tucson Poet Laureate

The City of Tucson, in partnership with the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona and the University of Arizona Poetry Center, invites you to apply for the appointment of Tucson's Poet Laureate. The individual selected for this three-year honorary term will be responsible for promoting literary education, expanding access to poetry in schools and communities, and fostering greater awareness of the poetic traditions rooted in Tucson.







## TABLE OF CONTENTS

2026 Tucson Poet Laureate	
TABLE OF CONTENTS	
GUIDELINES AT A GLANCE	3
ARTS FOUNDATION MISSION AND VISION	4
NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT	4
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	5
HONORARIUM	6
DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS	6
ELIGIBILITY	7
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	7
TIMELINE	8
SELECTION PROCESS	9
REVIEW CRITERIA	10
HOW TO APPLY	11
APPLICATION QUESTIONS	12
APPLICATION HELP	17

## **GUIDELINES AT A GLANCE**

PROGRAM NAME	2026 Tucson Poet Laureate
Open To	Tucson residents with a minimum of two years' continuous residency from the date of application.
Honorarium	\$15,000
Term Service	March 1, 2026 – March 1, 2029
Funding department	City of Tucson
Program Partners	City of Tucson Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona The University of Arizona Poetry Center
Application Period	Thursday, October 30, 2025 – Thursday, January 8, 2026
Deadline to Apply	Thursday, January 8, 2026, by 11:59pm Arizona Time
Eligibility	Eligible applicants must be 18 or older, City of Tucson residents for at least 2 years (living locally 9 months per year), recognized in literary or related fields with a record of quality work or service, and able to travel within Tucson.
Submission Requirements	<ul> <li>Letter of Interest (500 words or less)</li> <li>Resume (2-page max)</li> <li>Three (3) work samples (text, audio, or video format)</li> </ul>
Program Webpage	Arts Foundation Tucson Poet Laureate
Application Link	https//artsfoundtucson.submittable.com/submit
Application Help	Email: publicart@artsfoundtucson.org  Call: (520) 264-0595  Submittable: mailto:support@submittable.com

### ARTS FOUNDATION MISSION AND VISION

The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and funding agency with a mission to advance the artistic expression, civic participation, and equitable economic growth of our diverse communities. Through forward-thinking, accountable leadership, the Arts Foundation works to affect systemic change that fosters an accessible, diverse, inclusive, and equitable local arts community.

As the designated local arts agency, the Arts Foundation provides arts and cultural development across Southern Arizona for individual working artists, artist collectives, ensembles, and nonprofit organizations through grant programs, professional development opportunities, and public art program management for the City of Tucson.

The work of the Arts Foundation is made possible through generous support from the City of Tucson, Pima County, Arizona Commission on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, and individual donors. Our service area includes all counties and native sovereign nations South of the Gila River, including 372 miles along the US-Mexico international border in the South and along the 590-mile stretch of the Gila River, which flows west from the New Mexico border to the Colorado River.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona (Arts Foundation) does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, color, country of origin, religion, sex, gender, disability, or any other category protected under state or federal law. This non-discrimination statement applies to all activities of Arts Foundation, including employment opportunities, grant awards, and community engagement opportunities.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Tucson Poet Laureate serves as the City's official ambassador to the literary arts, advancing public appreciation of poetry while reflecting the unique spirit and identity of Tucson. This honorary position affirms poetry as a vital cultural practice that sparks imagination, dialogue, and belonging across our communities.

The Poet Laureate is charged with promoting literary education in schools and neighborhoods, expanding access to the arts for those with limited exposure, and inspiring new generations of readers and writers. Grounded in the lived experiences of Tucson, the role supports the City's cultural values and equity goals by ensuring that poetry remains relevant, inclusive, and accessible.

Applications are reviewed by a community panel representing Tucson's literary, educational, civic, and community sectors, with administration by the Arts Foundation. The Mayor of Tucson makes the final appointment, and the selected individual serves a three-year term.

The Tucson Poet Laureate program is guided by shared values that center community voice, cultural equity, and institutional collaboration. Together, the City of Tucson, the Arts Foundation, and the Poetry Center are committed to celebrating literary excellence, honoring Tucson's cultural richness and diversity, and ensuring transparency and accountability in the selection process.

By design, the Tucson Poet Laureate program elevates local literary artists while strengthening connections between cultural institutions and the broader public. It is both a celebration of creative achievement and a call to expand access to poetry across the City's neighborhoods. The role embodies Tucson's dedication to honoring its history, amplifying community voices, and ensuring that the literary arts remain central to civic life.

### HONORARIUM

The Tucson Poet Laureate will serve a three-year term, appointed by the mayor, with the possibility of serving no more than two consecutive terms. This honorary position recognizes the Poet Laureate's contributions to the literary and cultural life of Tucson and supports the Poet's efforts to engage the community through poetry and related programs. To acknowledge the time, expertise, and public service required of the position, an honorarium of \$15,000 will be provided for the full term, distributed in equal installments of \$5,000 per year. This honorarium is intended to help the Poet Laureate dedicate resources toward fulfilling the responsibilities of the role, including community outreach, educational programming, and public events.

### **DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

The Tucson Poet Laureate is expected to serve as a dynamic ambassador for poetry, spoken word, and the literary arts across the city. The Poet Laureate will:

- o Participate in a launch reading at the 2026 Tucson Festival of Books.
- Envision and lead a community-centered poetry program that engages diverse communities and Elevates Tucson's cultural richness.
- Travel throughout the region to meet responsibilities.
- Provide documentation of public readings, programs, and other engagements to the Arts Foundation for inclusion in social media, newsletters, and other public communications.
- Participate in citywide projects or events at the request of the Mayor's Office or Arts Foundation, including activations of the Somos Uno Cultural Heritage Strategy, up to three times per year.
- Compose a poem commemorating the city of Tucson.
- Attend the annual State of the City address, reinforcing the Laureate's role as a visible and active cultural leader.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

To be considered for the role of Tucson Poet Laureate, the candidate must meet all the following eligibility criteria at the time of application:

- 1. Be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- 2. Be of recognized stature in the literary, cultural, educational, or academic communities.
- 3. Demonstrate a record of high-quality published or documented work and service through the literary arts.
- 4. Have resided in the City of Tucson for at least two (2) years prior to the date of submission.
- 5. Live in the City of Tucson for a minimum of nine months each calendar year.

#### The ideal candidate should possess the following qualities:

#### **Experience and Vision**

The applicant demonstrates substantial experience as a poet within literary, cultural, or academic communities and presents a clear and compelling vision for engaging Tucson communities through public programming, outreach, education, or other literary initiatives.

#### **Artistic Strength**

The applicant's work demonstrates skill, originality, artistic excellence, and professional achievement with meaningful recognition or impact within literary, cultural, or academic communities.

#### **Leadership and Impact**

The applicant shows collaborative leadership, meaningful community engagement, and the ability to serve as an ambassador for poetry, spoken word, and the literary arts citywide, including fostering participation and building partnerships.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No elected members or officers, commissioners, nor employees of the City of Tucson, the University of Arizona Poetry Center, Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, Arts Foundation board members, nor their immediate family members are allowed to apply to this opportunity. Any person in a position to receive financial gain from the selection of the artist will be ineligible to serve on a public art community panel. All panel members must declare any conflicts of interest and recuse themselves if a conflict arises.

## **TIMELINE**

Thursday, October 30, 2025	Request for Qualifications Application Posted
Thursday, January 8, 2026	Application Deadline at 11:59 p.m. Arizona Time
Thursday, January 22, 2026	Panel Meeting 1 (Panel only): The Panel will select three (3) finalists to interview. All applicants will be notified of their status. Finalists will begin preparations for Panel Meeting 2.
Thursday, January 29, 2026	Panel Meeting 2 (Panel and Finalists): The Panel will interview Finalists during a recorded meeting. Finalists will deliver a 15-minute presentation, followed by a 10-minute question and answer session with the panel.
February 2026	Mayoral Review: The mayor will review all three interview recordings, along with each finalist's application materials. All finalists will be notified for their status.
March 1, 2025	Official Announcement of Tucson Poet Laureate: The selected Tucson Poet Laureate will be announced publicly.
March 14, 2025	Formal Installation of Tucson Poet Laureate: The Mayor will formally appoint and present the Tucson Poet Laureate during the Annual Festival of Books.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

Artists are chosen through a fair and equitable process by a **panel of five to seven members representing Tucson's literary, educational, civic, and community sectors**. Application materials will be assessed based on eligibility, completeness, and clarity, as outlined in the review criteria provided in this document. Arts Foundation staff do not directly select finalists or appointees. The role of staff is to facilitate the panel discussion and ensure the process runs smoothly.

All applications undergo a technical review process. Submission materials will be reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and compliance. Eligible and complete applications are then forwarded to community panelists for assessment, scoring, ranking, and commenting on applications based on the published criteria. The panel will then convene for two deliberation meetings:

- Panel Meeting 1 The panel will examine the online rankings, deliberate on the findings, and determine which applicants advance as finalists. The finalists will be invited to present at Panel Meeting 2.
- 2. **Panel Meeting 2** Each finalist will present to the panel their qualifications and demonstrate their ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the Poet Laureate appointment. Presentations will be followed by a question-and-answer(Q/A) session with the panel to inform the final decision by the mayor.
- 3. **Mayoral Selection** The Mayor will select the new Tucson Poet Laureate from among the panel's nominated finalists, following a review of all submitted materials, recorded presentations, and Q/A session with the panel from the recorded meetings.

### REVIEW CRITERIA

The following criteria will be considered by the panel during the review of applications, based solely on the materials submitted by the applicant.

#### **Experience and Vision**

The applicant demonstrates substantial experience as a poet within literary, cultural, or academic communities and presents a clear and compelling vision for engaging Tucson communities through public programming, outreach, education, or other literary initiatives.

#### **Artistic Strength**

The applicant's work demonstrates skill, originality, artistic excellence, and professional achievement with meaningful recognition or impact within literary, cultural, or academic communities.

### **Leadership and Impact**

The applicant shows collaborative leadership, meaningful community engagement, and the ability to serve as an ambassador for poetry, spoken word, and the literary arts citywide, including fostering participation and building partnerships.

Panelists will score each application using a 5-point scale.

(Strongly Agree = 5 points | Agree = 4 points | Neutral = 3points | Disagree = 2 points | Strongly Disagree = 1 point)

Panelists will be asked to provide comments as additional feedback on the applicant's strengths, areas for growth, and/or overall suitability for the role of Tucson Poet Laureate. Comments should substantiate the score, highlight notable qualities in the application, and capture any observations that may assist the panel in making a final recommendation. All comments will be reviewed and discussed during Panel Meeting 1.

### HOW TO APPLY

Carefully review the duties, expectations, and eligibility of this opportunity prior to submitting your application. Applications are only accepted through the *Submittable* online portal. Materials emailed or mailed will not be considered.

Applicants should submit materials that demonstrate their experience in the literary arts, their record of community engagement, and their vision for serving as a dynamic ambassador for poetry and the literary arts across Tucson's diverse communities.

#### PREPARE APPLICATION MATERIALS

- 1. **Prepare your Letter of Interest.** A letter of interest should highlight why you are well-suited to serve as Tucson Poet Laureate, emphasizing your artistic vision, qualifications, and meaningful connection to the city and its communities. Limit: 500 words
- 2. **Prepare your resume**. Two (2) page maximum. Acceptable file types: .pdf
- 3. **Prepare three (3) samples of your work**. Upload three (3) unique writing samples that best represent your work. You may submit your sample in written form, as spoken word audio, or as a video recording. Writing samples must be no more than five (5) pages long. Audio and video submissions must be no longer than five (5) minutes long. Uploaded submissions must be in PDF, MP3, or MP4 format.

#### **SUBMIT APPLICATION**

- 1. Go to Submittable: artsfoundtucson.submittable.com/submit
- 2. Select the Tucson Poet Laureate program from the list.
- 3. Log in or sign up for an account.
- 4. Complete all applicant Information.
- 5. Write your Letter of Interest.
- 6. Upload your resume.
- 7. Upload three (3) samples of your work.
- 8. Review your application
- 9. Submit form.

A confirmation email will be sent to the email address you used to create your Submittable account.

You may be contacted regarding your application via Submittable, email, or by phone.

## **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

NOTE: Questions provided below are for reference purposes only. The full application materials must be submitted online through the *Submittable* Portal.

### **SECTION 1: Applicant Profile**

Complete the Applicant profile. Responses in this section <u>will not</u> be shared with panelists or used as a factor in the review of your application.

	iew or your application.
Question 1.	Primary Individual Applicant Legal Name
Question 2.	Pronouns
Question 3.	Primary Contact: Phone Number
Question 4.	Primary Contact: Email
Question 5.	Mailing Address - Street
Question 6.	Mailing Address - City
Question 7.	Mailing Address - State
Question 8.	Mailing Address - County
Question 9.	Mailing Address - Zip Code
Question 10.	Social media
Question 11.	Website
Question 12.	Applicant: State Legislative District
	o District 1
	o District 2
	o District 3
	o District 4
	o District 5
	o District 6
	o District 7
	o District 8
	o District 9
	o District 10
	o District 11
	o District 12
	o District 13
	o District 14
	o District 15
	o District 16

	o District 17
	o District 18
	o District 19
	o District 20
	Does Not Apply   No aplica
	Search address to find out: https://irc-
	az.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=424810a4667049388ef6
	df4f0c73098b
Question 13.	Pima County Supervisory District:
	<ul> <li>Does Not Apply   No aplica</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Pima County Supervisory District 1</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Pima County Supervisory District 2</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Pima County Supervisory District 3</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Pima County Supervisory District 4</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Pima County Supervisory District 5</li> </ul>
	Search Adress to Find Out:
	https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b07b1470c24648aa94a
	<u>ce298cd88239c</u>
Question 14.	Applicant: Federal Congressional District
	Does Not Apply   No aplica
	o District 1
	o District 2
	o District 3
	o District 4
	o District 5
	o District 6
	o District 7
	Search address to find out: https://irc-
	az.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=ffc3e1bac1ed435092360
	8ae8e3544c7
Question 15.	Tucson City Ward
	Does Not Apply   No aplica
	o Ward 1
	o Ward 2
	o Ward 3
	o Ward 4
	o Ward 5
	o Ward 6
	Search Address to Find Out:
	https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b07b1470c24648aa94a
	ce298cd88239c
Question 16.	Tribal Nations

Does Not Apply   No aplica
Ak-Chin Indian Community   Comunidad Indígena Ak-Chin
<ul> <li>Sovereign Nation of the Cocopahs   Nación Soberana de los Cocopahs</li> </ul>
O Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation   Tribu Quechan de la
Reserva Indígena Fort Yuma
<ul> <li>Gila River Indian Community   Comunidad Indígena del río Gila</li> </ul>
o Pascua Yaqui Tribe   Tribu Pascua Yaqui
<ul> <li>Tohono O'Odham Nation   Nación Tohono O'Odham</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>San Carlos Apache Nation   Nación Apache San Carlos</li> </ul>

#### **SECTION 2: Application Materials**

Before submitting your application materials, please review the *How to Apply* section in the Request for Qualifications Guidelines. Responses in this section <u>will</u> be shared with panelists or used as a factor in the review of your application.

	our application.
Question 1.	Artist Name
Question 2.	Write a Letter of Interest
	A letter of interest should highlight why you are well-suited to serve as Tucson Poet
	Laureate, emphasizing your artistic vision, qualifications, and meaningful connection
	to the city and its communities. Limit: 500 words
Question 3.	Upload Resume
	Upload your Resume. Two (2) page max. Acceptable file types: .pdf
Question 4.	Upload Poetry Sample 1
	Upload three (3) unique writing samples that best represents your work. You may
	submit your sample in writing, spoken word audio, or video recording. Writing
	samples must be no more than five (5) pages long. Audio and video submissions
	must be no longer than five (5) minutes long. Uploaded submissions must be in PDF,
	MP3, or MP4 format.
Question 5.	Upload Poetry Sample 2
	Upload three (3) unique writing samples that best represents your work. You may
	submit your sample in writing, spoken word audio, or video recording. Writing
	samples must be no more than five (5) pages long. Audio and video submissions
	must be no longer than five (5) minutes long. Uploaded submissions must be in PDF,
0 6	MP3, or MP4 format.
Question 6.	Upload Poetry Sample 3
	Upload three (3) unique writing samples that best represents your work. You may
	submit your sample in writing, spoken word audio, or video recording. Writing
	samples must be no more than five (5) pages long. Audio and video submissions
	must be no longer than five (5) minutes long. Uploaded submissions must be in PDF,
	MP3, or MP4 format.

#### **SECTION 3: Disclosure and Signature**

Responses in this section <u>will not</u> be shared with panelists or used as a factor in the review of your application.

#### Question 1. Media Release

- Yes
- o No

I agree the Arts Foundation and its assigns and designees may use any media uploaded in this application to educate and inform the public about Arts Foundation programs or to educate about the Arts Foundation in any of the ways outlined in Media Release below.

I agree The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona and its assigns and designees may use enclosed media (work samples, photography, video files, etc.) to educate and inform the public about Art Foundation programs or to educate about the Arts Foundation in any of the ways outlined in Media Release:

**Print Media.** The Arts Foundation may use the media in print materials.

**Lectures.** The Arts Foundation may utilize the media for presentations about Arts Foundation programs which are open to the public.

**The Internet.** The Arts Foundation may utilize the media on its website or through electronic mailings.

**Television.** The Arts Foundation may utilize the media in television segments or programs to be aired on local, public, cable, satellite, and/or digital TV.

**Social Media.** The Arts Foundation may utilize the media on social media networking sites. Opt-out available.

**Successor Technologies.** The Arts Foundation may utilize the media in subsequently developed technologies.

I recognize that any educational materials containing the media may be distributed or broadcast nationwide. I release the Arts Foundation and its assignees and designees from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the media. I certify that I have all rights necessary to agree to these terms. Estoy de acuerdo en que Arts Foundation y sus cesionarios y designados puedan utilizar cualquier medio de comunicación cargado en esta solicitud para educar e informar al público sobre los programas de Arts Foundation o para educar sobre la Arts Foundation en cualquiera de las formas descritas en el Permiso de Divulgación en los Medios presentado a continuación.

Acepto que The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona y sus cesionarios y designados pueden usar medios adjuntos (muestras de trabajo, fotografías, archivos de video, etc.) para educar e informar al público sobre los programas de Arts Foundation o para educar sobre Arts Foundation en cualquiera de las formas descritas en el comunicado de prensa:

- 1. **Medios de comunicación impresos**. Arts Foundation puede utilizar los medios en materiales impresos.
- 2. **Conferencias**. Arts Foundation puede utilizar los medios para presentaciones sobre los programas de Arts Foundation que están abiertos al público.
- 3. **Internet**. Arts Foundation puede utilizar los medios en su sitio web o por correo electrónico.

	4. <b>Televisión</b> . Arts Foundation puede utilizar los medios de comunicación en segmentos de televisión o programas que se transmitirán en televisión local, pública, por cable, satelital y / o digital. 5. <b>Redes Sociales</b> . Arts Foundation puede utilizar los medios de comunicación en los
	sitios de redes sociales. Exclusión disponible.
	6. <b>Tecnologías sucesoras</b> . Arts Foundation puede utilizar los medios en tecnologías
	desarrolladas posteriormente.
	Reconozco que cualquier material educativo que contenga los medios de
	comunicacion puede distribuirse o transmitirse a nivel nacional. Libero a Arts
	Foundation y sus cesionarios y designados de todas y cada una de las reclamaciones y
	demandas que surjan de o en conexión con el uso de los medios de comunicación.
	Certifico que tengo todos los derechos necesarios para aceptar estos términos.
Question 2.	How did you find out about this opportunity?
	<ul> <li>TV News Station   Canal de noticias de televisión</li> </ul>
	o Radio
	o Podcast
	Article in the Newspaper   Artículo en el periódico
	o From a Friend   Por un amigo
	<ul> <li>Social media from Arts Foundation   Redes sociales de Arts Foundation</li> </ul>
	(Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)
	<ul> <li>Social media from Another Account   Redes sociales de otra cuenta</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Ward/District/County/ Tribal Government Newsletter or social media  </li> <li>Boletín o redes sociales del gobierno del distrito / condado / tribal</li> </ul>
	Arts Foundation Email Newsletter   Boletín electrónico de Arts Foundation
	<ul> <li>Arts Foundation Website   Sitio web de Arts Foundation</li> </ul>
	Other Specify   Otro (complete la respuesta)
Question 3.	Select other Arts Foundation opportunities that you are interested in:
	<ul> <li>Social Media Influencer Program   Programa de influencer en las redes sociales</li> </ul>
	Newsletter Feature Interview   Entrevista destacada del boletín
	<ul> <li>Nothing now, Thanks!   Nada por ahora, gracias!</li> </ul>
Question 4.	Is there anything else you would like to share with Arts Foundation?
Question 5.	I acknowledge that I have read this application and approve its submission. I verify that the information submitted above is true.
Question 6.	Submit Form

## APPLICATION HELP

If you have questions about the application process or the content of your application, please email us at <a href="mailto:publicart@artsfoundtucson.org">publicart@artsfoundtucson.org</a> or call (520) 624-0595. If you encounter any technical issues with the online application platform, please email the <a href="mailto:Submittable">Submittable</a> at <a href="mailto:support@submittable.com">support@submittable.com</a> or call (855) 467-8264. To find out more about our public art opportunities, sign up for our monthly newsletter here <a href="https://artsfoundtucson.org/newsletter">https://artsfoundtucson.org/newsletter</a>