

Illinois Poet Laureate – 2020 Guidelines

Statement of Purpose

The Illinois Poet Laureate shall seek to advance the awareness of and appreciation for literary arts and humanities within the state. As both a state citizen and distinguished poet, the Poet Laureate shall represent and celebrate the diversity and history of Illinois by promoting literacy and the art of poetry through making content available and presentations at a range of public, educational, private, and electronic venues – including, but not limited to, schools, libraries, universities, community colleges, local writing groups, online, and social media. As a champion of the state’s literary community, the Poet Laureate shall endeavor to promote the many cultural and artistic achievements of the state of Illinois, as well as demonstrate a commitment to promoting and celebrating the literature of Illinois’ diverse cultures, ages, orientations, rural and urban regions.

Term of Service

The Illinois Poet Laureate is an honorary state office appointed by the Governor in which the individual selected will serve at-will in a four-year term. The term is renewable only by the Governor’s reappointment for one more consecutive term. A Laureate may reapply after a hiatus of one term if two terms are served consecutively.

Term Expectations

As a condition of appointment, the Illinois Poet Laureate shall provide *at minimum* four in-person public readings every year during his or her term, two of which must annually be located outside of the Chicagoland area. The Poet Laureate will seek to ensure that people in all geographic regions of the state shall have access to at least one reading during his or her term of service. In coordination with the Office of the Governor, the Poet Laureate will establish programs to promote access and community awareness of the literary arts and to encourage citizens to develop their own creative interests.

Search Committee

A Search Committee made up of qualified individuals representing a diverse group of literary experts, writers, educators, and advocates from across the state shall be appointed by the Governor. The committee will receive, review, and submit nominations in consideration for the position of Illinois Poet Laureate. Upon completion of the process, the Search Committee shall present their recommendation of three (3) ranked finalists to the Governor and First Lady for final review and appointment.

Qualification Criteria for Nomination

Eligible nominees for the position of Illinois Poet Laureate must meet the following requirements:

- Be a current resident of Illinois, with at least 10 years of residency.
- Be willing and available to travel throughout the state.
- A proven history of digital or print media publication, individual performances, poems and/or books, including at least one work that is not self-published or by a vanity press.
- An established history of promoting poetry and activity in Illinois' literary community, including readings, publications, presentations, education, and/or advocacy.
- Critical acclaim as demonstrated by special honors, awards, and/or other recognition.

Nomination Process

Who may nominate?

Nominations shall be accepted by public submission from any individual or organization and by the Search Committee. Self-nominations will not be accepted. All nomination submissions will be anonymous when provided to the Search Committee by the Governor's office.

What must a nomination include?

Each nomination must contain:

- 1) **Letter of Nomination** – This document (two-page maximum) shall include the name and short biography of the Poet and detail the candidate's qualifications for the position. The letter should contain why the *nominator* considers the candidate and their work of the highest quality and most representative of the state, including the candidate's relevant publications, portfolio, record of community outreach, and experience promoting the art of poetry. The *nominator* shall include their Name, Address, Title (if any), Organization (if any), Phone, and Email and any description of specific qualifications of the *nominator* and/or *nominating organization*.
- 2) **Poetry Sample** – A print or digital sample of five (5) poems shall be submitted to represent the best qualities of the candidate's creative work. *Failure to comply with the requirements will result in automatic ineligibility of the nomination.*

Upon nomination, the Search Committee will ask the *candidate* to provide:

- 1) **Personal Statement** – A document (two-page maximum) that gives an overview of the candidate's proposed approaches and ideas to fulfilling various duties and responsibilities that support the position's State of Purpose. The Search Committee will request such statement from the candidate upon confirmation of interest in consideration.
- 2) **Current Resume or CV** – This document (two-page maximum) shall list the candidate's professional background, publishing history, experience promoting the art of poetry, and critical acclaim as demonstrated by special honors, awards, or other recognition. Candidates under consideration will be subject to background vetting.

Submission of Nominations and Deadline

Nominations will be accepted beginning **July 1, 2020 through August 15, 2020** via email or mail (recommended use of FedEx or UPS when submitting by mail). Faxed, incomplete, or nominations received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Complete nominations may be submitted to:

IllinoisPoet2020@illinois.gov

or

Illinois Poet Laureate Search Committee

c/o Office of the Governor

207 State House

Springfield, IL 62706

A full description of the position and nominating requirements will also be available on the website of the Illinois Poet Laureate at www.illinois.gov/poetlaureate and partner websites.

For more information or questions regarding the Illinois Poet Laureate nomination process and position, please contact: **IllinoisPoet2020@illinois.gov**.

The Governor will announce the selection of the next Illinois Poet Laureate in the Fall of 2020.