



Oakland Youth Poet Laureate 2021

<http://oaklandlibrary.org/youthpoets>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



APPLICATION

When are applications open?

Friday, January 1st, 2021 to [Monday, February 1st, 2021](#).

Where is the application found?

<http://oaklandlibrary.org/youthpoets>

What needs to be included in my application?

Your complete application must include the following:

- **3 original poems** showing excellence in *Content*, *Craft* and *Voice* and totaling no more than 10 pages typed. You will upload the poems to your online application.
 - Preliminary judging is anonymous; DO NOT include your name in the submission of your poems.
 - *Please be sure your written work is spell-checked.*
- **Name and contact information for an Adult Sponsor**
 - If you advance to the final round, you will ask your adult sponsor to write you a letter of recommendation. *Tips: Choose someone who knows your writing, school performance or community involvement Ask someone for this well in advance! Letters of recommendation will be due March 24th, 2021.*
- **Artist Statement**
 - Introduce yourself; Tell us who you are and what poetry means to you. If you advance to the final round, this information will be used to build your bio. (250 words max).
- **Optional: List of any Awards, Community Service, or Activism**
- **Name and contact information for your Guardian/ Parent**, unless you are 18 on February 1st, 2021.

JUDGING

What is the judging process?

- **The first round** of judging will be anonymous and based on the *Content*, *Craft* and *Voice* of the three written poems, only.
- The poets who score the highest in the first round will move on to the second and **final round of judging**. These Finalists will be judged, additionally, on *Performance* and *Leadership*, based on the letter of support, the artist statement, and any awards and community service, as well as a **mandatory in-person reading and interview** before the panel of judges, *April 17th, 2021*.



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- The **2021 Youth Poet Laureate** will be the one poet who scores the highest total of both rounds. The Vice Laureate will have the 2nd highest score. Both will be announced June 4th, 2021 at a public event with all the Finalists.

What are the exact criteria the judges will use?

Please review [this document](#) to see the exact criteria the judges will use.

GUIDELINES

Am I eligible to enter?

To enter the 2021 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate contest, you must

- be an Oakland resident
- be between the ages of 13 and 18 as of February 1st, 2021
- be available to serve as Laureate for the program year,
June 2021 - June 2022:
 - be living locally through the program year
 - not be enrolled in college full-time during the program year
(Unfortunately, this means many senior high school students are not eligible to apply).

What does it mean to be the Oakland Youth Poet Laureate and what is the time commitment?

- Every eligible applicant will be invited to enter into a community of young poets and youth advocates.
- The Oakland Youth Poet Laureate and the Finalists will be invited to perform at public events throughout the program year and beyond.
- The Laureate will be asked to represent Oakland and its youth at public and private events and be a model for other youth.
- The Laureate may be asked to share their experiences with the press and through blogs, videos and social media.
- The Laureate will have the opportunity to develop their own poet-leader project.
- To be available to serve as Laureate through the program year, **June 2021 – June 2022**, you must be living locally and not enrolled as a full-time college student. (Unfortunately, this means as a high school senior you may be ineligible to apply.)
- After **completing** the program year, The Laureate will receive an educational scholarship of \$5,000, managed by Scholarship America.



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What support would I receive as the Oakland Youth Poet Laureate?

Oakland's Youth Poet Laureate will be in the spotlight, and will receive support from Oakland Public Library staff in developing public speaking skills and in the role of city representative. Scholarship America also offers financial, cultural, and social support.

What does “*Family member eligibility*” include, and does this apply to me?

To be fair, we cannot consider applications from family members of current judges, funders and program sponsors who have significant influence over the contest criteria or outcome. If someone in your family is actively working on this year's contest, you are not eligible. This “conflict of interest” policy applies only to those partners who are “coordinating, influencing or judging” the 2021 competition. Call us if you have any questions.

I am a teacher or youth worker; can I nominate someone?

Yes! You can submit the application on behalf of a young person as long as you can provide complete information for the nominee(s), including 3 poems, name of an Adult Sponsor and accurate contact information. You may nominate up to 3 students. Please confirm their ability to complete the program year (June 2021-June 2022) should they advance to the final round.

When will the 2021 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate be announced?

There will be a public Oakland Youth Poet Laureate event June 4th, 2021 where all Finalists will perform and the new Laureate and Vice Laureate will be announced.

What does it mean to be a Finalist? When will I be notified that I'm a Finalist?

Finalists are all the applicants who advance to the final round of judging. Finalists will be notified in early March 2021, at which time you'll be asked to provide a letter of support from an adult sponsor. April 17th, 2021, all Finalists participate in a mandatory in-person judging round where you will be judged on Performance and Leadership. Finalists will have opportunities to meet experienced writers and perform at public events throughout the year and beyond.

Who are the judges?

There are five judges, representing a diverse group of experts from literacy, arts and educational organizations as well as local celebrity authors, artists and activists. Past judges have included U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, poets and playwrights Chinaka Hodge and Aimee Suzara, community organizer and Poetry for the People alum Maria Poblet, literary journal editor Kiala Givehand, NAACP image award nominee Arisa White, KQED Columnist Pendarvis Harshaw, award-winning writer MK Chavez, former Oakland City Councilmember Wilson Riles, Hip Hop for Change Founder and Executive Director Kahfre Jay, author, musician, educator, and community organizer Tyson



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Amir, current and former Oakland Youth Poets Laureate and Finalists, as well as many other local authors and community leaders.

What are the criteria the judges will use to choose the Finalists and the 2021 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate?

Your poems will be judged anonymously on *Content*, *Craft* and *Voice* in the first round. The Finalists will be judged, additionally, on *Leadership* and *Performance* and participate in an in-person second and final judging round. Please review [this document](#) to see the exact criteria the judges will use.

If I win, how will I receive the \$5,000 award?

Scholarship funds will be sent directly to the school or arts program of your choice. You must complete your full year as Poet Laureate to receive your award. The scholarship is managed through Scholarship America which also offers financial, cultural, and social support.

What if the Poet Laureate doesn't complete the full program year?

We expect a pool of very talented applicants, from which we will name a Vice Laureate. This person will step into the role if the Youth Poet Laureate is unable to finish the year.

I live in San Leandro, Piedmont or Berkeley, can I apply?

You may only apply if you currently live in Oakland (though you can attend school in other towns). While we aren't able to expand the contest to other cities right now, we welcome interested agencies from other cities to contact us with questions.

Who can I contact with questions?

Email oaklandpoets@gmail.com, or call the Oakland Public Library at (510) 761-7636.

APPLICATION HELP & TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

When can I apply?

Applications for the 2021 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate are open Friday, January 1st, 2021 to Monday, February 1st, 2021 (11:59pm).

Where do I apply?

Please go to <http://oaklandlibrary.org/youthpoets> for the link to the online application.

Do I have to have a Google account?



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Yes. You cannot complete the application without a Google account. You can get one here: <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>. In the application, please give us the email address you check most often; you do **not** have to use your Gmail address for your contact email. Contact us with further questions.

How do I submit my poetry?

You will submit each of your three poems in *one* document uploaded in your application. **Your poems cannot contain your name or any other identifying information.** The first round of judging is anonymous.

We can only accept your poems in a **.pdf** file. If you do not know how to make your file into **.pdf**, please read these instructions:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Convert-a-File-Into-PDF>. Contact us with further questions.

Do I have to finish my entire application in one sitting?

You must complete all the required questions at one time and submit. There is no way to save your work. But after you submit, you will be sent a link enabling you to edit your application until the deadline. You will have to email us a new pdf of your poems, though. We recommend that you look at the questions on the application and then prepare and proofread your responses over time in a savable document. Then you can copy and paste your perfect responses into the online application and have your poems ready for uploading in **.pdf** form.

I don't have Internet access. How do I apply?

You can visit your local library or school and use the internet there to submit your online application. You can get help from a [computer tutor at the Oakland Public Library](#). If these remain closed due to COVID-19, or if you otherwise have no other means to submit your application online, a [paper application](#) is also available for you to download and mail in. Contact us to send you one by snail mail: OYPL, Teen Services, Oakland Public Library, 125 14th St., Oakland CA 94612.

How do I go back to change something in my application?

Changes may be made to your entry before the deadline by using the "Edit Response" link in your confirmation email. The pdf file of your poems *cannot* be changed. If you would like to apply with a different pdf document, before the deadline you can forward your confirmation email to oaklandpoets@gmail.com with the document attached and explain that you would like to replace your poems.

Who can I contact if I'm having technical trouble with my application?

Email oaklandpoets@gmail.com, or call the Oakland Public Library at (510) 761-7636.