



CALL TO POETS
City of El Cerrito, California
Art in Public Places Program
Poet Laureate Program

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Deadline Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

www.el-cerrito.org/poets

The City of El Cerrito announces the release of a Request for Proposals for poets to serve as the City's poet laureate. The laureate will encourage the poetic energy of our community by creating and leading activities that inspire writing and performances of poetry among all age groups while initiating a dialogue between local poets, cultural organizations, and community institutions. In an effort to promote literature and the arts in the City, the laureate will bring attention to poetry in less traditional settings and encourage residents in their writing and personal expression.

Eligibility

The poet laureate must:

- Be a resident or work full-time in the City of El Cerrito, CA
- Demonstrate a commitment to poetry writing, spoken word performance, and community involvement and outreach
- Be at least 21 years of age at time of application
- Be able to serve the full two-year term as laureate and maintain residency/work status in El Cerrito throughout the term

Honorarium

The laureate will receive a stipend of \$2,400 for the two-year term. The honorarium will be distributed semi-annually in four payments of \$600.

Length of Term

The laureate will be appointed to serve a two-year (24 month) term. It is anticipated the term will be from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2018.

Duties and Requirements of the Poet Laureate

The laureate is expected to provide a minimum of two readings and three community events each year, but is of course free to do more. The Arts and Culture Commission and its staff liaison will provide logistical support for



organizing and publicizing the events as well as assist the laureate to work with business owners and other agencies if use of non-City venues are planned.

- **Two Public Readings Each Year:** The laureate will give a public reading of their new work during each year of their tenure. The laureate will also present a poem during each year of their tenure at a City event, such as the annual Earth Day, Martin Luther King Day, or October Arts Day celebrations.
- **Three Community Events Each Year:** The laureate will provide opportunities for community members to write and/or share their own poems. The City is looking for a laureate who can creatively assert his or her individual interests and strengths to raise the status of poetry in the everyday consciousness of El Cerrito residents.

The laureate will develop and lead their own activities, but possible events could include pop-up booths, where the laureate and community members write poems-on-demand; open mic sessions; poetry walks; and poetry and art and craft-making tables at community events. The laureate could also conduct writing workshops at the City's public schools (pending District approval) or at the Open House Senior Center.

The Commission envisions that the laureate's events could take place at a variety of interesting locations, with proper approvals of the owners/operators of venues such as KECG-FM Radio 88.1; Off the Grid Food Truck Market; local businesses and institutions such as Down Home Music, the El Cerrito Library, and local schools. City facilities such as City Hall, the Recycling + Environmental Resource Center, the Community Center or neighborhood clubhouses, as well as City co-sponsored events such as the El Cerrito Free Folk Festival might also serve as locations for events.

- **Creative/Professional Development** (optional): The Arts and Culture Commission may cover expenses for the poet laureate to attend a Bay Area poetry conference or seminar of his or her choice (upon approval of the Commission).

About El Cerrito

El Cerrito is located in western Contra Costa County and forms part of the highly urbanized area along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay. This 3.9-square-mile City is blessed with a pleasant climate year-round, and the hilly areas of El Cerrito provide spectacular views of its famous neighbor, San Francisco. El Cerrito is a well-educated community, with 70 percent of people 25 and over



having attended college. Its population, approximately 24,000, has a history of civic involvement. El Cerrito is located along Interstate 80, and its extensive transportation system includes two Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations. Its major commercial corridor runs the length of San Pablo Avenue. El Cerrito residents enjoy abundant park and open space recreational areas and public facilities, including the 108-acre Hillside Natural Area and 2.7 mile Ohlone Greenway multi-use path that runs along the BART right of way the length of the City and is popular with walkers, runners and bicyclists. The City operates a Community Center, Swim Center, Recycling and Environmental Resource Center, as well numerous neighborhood clubhouses. El Cerrito is home to Contra Costa Civic Theatre, Rialto Cinemas Cerrito, KECG 88.1 FM and 97.7 FM, a public radio station broadcast service of the West Contra Costa Unified School District. El Cerrito is within the West Contra Costa Unified School District and also home to a number of private schools serving grades K-12. The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce operates a twice weekly farmer's market and Off the Grid operates a weekly food truck market.

El Cerrito Poet Laureate Program

The El Cerrito Poet Laureate Program was approved by the Arts and Culture Commission ("Commission") in October 2015. The poet selected for the 2016-2018 term will be the first poet laureate in the City's history. The program is funded by the Art in Public Places Program, established with the passage of the City's Public Places Ordinance (Section 13.50 ECMC). In order to realize the vision of enhancing art in public places, new building projects with development costs of \$250,000 or more shall devote an amount not less than 1% of the development costs to the funding of public art installations, acquisitions, and activities. The poet laureate program is therefore funded on a committed, continuing basis, and not dependent on annual City allocations, grants, or other awards or contributions for its support.

Application Requirements

The City requires that all submissions be provided in electronic format only, either via electronic submission of PDF documents via email or on one PC-compatible CD or one USB flash drive. The flash drive or CD should be clearly labeled in permanent ink with the artist's name and contact information and will not be returned.

The applicant will need to provide:

1. [Application Form](http://www.el-cerrito.org/poets): This form is available as a fillable PDF from www.el-cerrito.org/poets



2. Letter of Interest: In 500 words or less, discuss your background in writing and performing poetry; your involvement in community organizations and activities; and describe in specific terms a community event that you would develop and lead if selected as the City's poet laureate. Note: You do not need to have permission from the owner/operator of the proposed venue at this time.
3. Examples of Original Work: Provide no fewer than 10 and not more than 25 pages of published, self-published, or unpublished poetry writing.
4. References: Please list two personal or professional references. Include their name, title, email address and phone number, including area code.
5. Curriculum Vitae or Resume: Please provide your Curriculum Vitae or professional resume.

Selection Process

A selection panel will make a recommendation to the Arts and Culture Commission based on the applications and interviews. The selection of the poet laureate will be made by the Commission.

The selection panel will evaluate the candidate's submissions and make their recommendation based on the proposal submission materials and interviews with short-listed applicants. If necessary, a more detailed proposal may be requested from the candidates. The panel may include professional poets, a member of the City's Arts and Culture Commission, City residents, or City staff.

Selection criteria include:

- Literary and artistic merit as evidenced by the submitted poetry
- Proven ability to undertake successful creative, innovative, and effective approaches in comparable projects
- Demonstrated ability to work creatively with groups of different ages and backgrounds
- Experience with speaking in public venues
- Ability to understand a locale's sense of place and inspire its residents in written and personal expression
- Demonstrated interest in and commitment to community outreach
- Conformance with the City's guidelines for public art including but not limited to quality, nature of work, originality, and diversity



The City of El Cerrito is committed to reflecting the diversity and cultural richness of our City in the selection of the poet laureate. References provided as part of this application will be contacted prior to any poet interviews.

The contract, including terms of the honorarium and the laureate's project plan will be worked out with City staff. The laureate will be required to submit an IRS 1099 form to the City. The ACC reserves the right to reject any and all applications.

Estimated Timeline

The schedule is contingent upon the City's schedule and may be changed at any time.

April 1, 2016:	Call for Poets Released
June 1, 2016:	Applications Due
June 7-14, 2016:	Interviews with Selected Applicants
July 2016:	Selection of Artist

September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2018: Anticipated Term of Poet Laureate

Deadline

Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m., June 1, 2016 at:

City of El Cerrito Poet Laureate Request for Proposals
10890 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
siarla@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Inquiries

All questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing by May 13 and are to be directed to Suzanne Iarla, Assistant to the City Manager, City of El Cerrito, 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530 (510) 215-4318 siarla@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.