



City of West Hollywood  
California 1984

# ARTS DIVISION

@WEHOARTS

# OPEN CALL (REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS / SELF-NOMINATIONS)

## I SING THE BODY WEST HOLLYWOOD

Lights twinkling, swanky, wrinkled penthouse delirium embedded in cactus hills.  
High heels ablaze, steam from heated motel pools rising to kiss the night air,  
I sing the body West Hollywood where I met my moonlight, my calm, waiting for me  
here all along waltzing the Boulevard lined with fierce boys, transgender trailblazers,  
warrior women, rainbow logos on cop cars, sun glowing through the canyons,  
hugging the curves of Route 66 all before breakfast. West Hollywood you count  
the beats of my heart, Poker nights and speedo-clad future husbands meet in warm  
rooms bet on happily ever-afters, and for the first time I don't feel different. Drinking  
Michelob at the 4Star - Don't Ask Don't Tell - nights you took the trolley home,  
shoe scuffs moist, how did I get from the Sunset Strip to Westwood without losing

My sanity or my clothes, sounds of memories being made to forget outside my  
window, boom, pulse of the city where I come to search for zebras, sift through racks  
of dusty florescent vintage gowns, where everyone I know doesn't fit anywhere  
but here where Pee-Wee Herman threw Tootsie Rolls at the audience at the Roxy,  
body West Hollywood where my voice can be heard, drunk on books, palm trees, art,  
comedy, food, blood of other freaks like me. "I Will Survive." I used to wonder  
why I couldn't find myself then I realized I was never lost -- one city, one pride,  
vogueurs, drag queens piling into the street, swimming through a pool of books  
as David Hockney stands near by with a towel, air lighter here, where Paul  
McCartney stopped traffic at Book Soup happily signing anything handed to him

Departing The Hudson with Michelle, teetering on stilettos, reveling in our fresh  
freedom, 7-Eleven burns gawking as we clear out the entire stock of Lunchables,  
20-somethings cloaked in the velvet glow of the west as the hairy guy rides his bike  
down Santa Monica wearing only a lime green thong, yes, Tower Records my church,  
Gold Coast my karaoke paradise, work is time to play, I feel home, I feel safe, place  
park, hang, tacos years before the big blue whale. Fire at Micky's, poets lines ablaze  
just sayin' I'm reppin' my gayborhood, headlights lining the boulevard like iced lace,  
will always remember when, and can never forget now: Orange Grove, chain-  
smoking with a German I met in Malaysia, flowered pants, manic stocking capped  
dog walkers, I sing the body West Hollywood because it lets me color

Outside the lines, my Russian neighbor is my friend, air sweet with imagination,  
dreams grow on trees, penguins, reindeer, candy and sausage, found a rock  
in Plummer Park a creation living inside, we sing as gas lamps burn . . . there's a fog  
upon L.A. and my friends have lost their way while at the top of my house, the rain is  
loud, sweeps the roof in waves, strong, then soft, then strong. Rain was the  
soundtrack of my life. Where I'm from, it rains. Rain there is like sunshine here. The  
sky would be bright blue, clear all the way to forever, then rain. I loved it. Still do.  
West Hollywood its hills, skinny sidewalks, cafes, seniors, heroes, sightseers,  
freedom seekers, treasures, my city with a small town feel. I sing the body  
West Hollywood: my past, present & future.

## THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED LINES TO MAKE THIS POEM POSSIBLE!

- Martin Aguilera
- Molly Ash
- Midge Barnett
- Sofia Bartolone
- Charles Becker
- Candice Beroukhim
- Marlon Bright
- Stephanie Berger
- Eric Bumatay
- Cristina Buziacu
- Andrew Campbell
- Amanda Carlson
- R. Carvalho
- Antonio Castillo
- Mike Che
- Kody Christiansen
- Elvis Cole
- Francisco Contreras
- John D'Amico
- Robert DeHart
- Ryan Deist
- Dallas Dishman
- Vincent Dorazio
- Gareth Dutton
- Alex Espinoza
- Karen Eyres
- Abigail Fitzgibbon
- Dr. John Fogarty
- Vic Gerami
- Mikel Gerami
- Joan Gianfranceschi
- William G. G. G.
- Dan Grainger
- Lisa Grainger
- Ron G. G.
- Theresa G. G.
- Debbie G. G.
- Barbara G. G.
- Sien G. G.
- John G. G.

*I Sing the Body West Hollywood*, an homage to Walt Whitman, is a collaborative poem using lines from residents of and visitors to West Hollywood, weaved together by West Hollywood City Poet Laureate, Kim Dover: [www.kimdoverpoetry.com](http://www.kimdoverpoetry.com)

For more info on the West Hollywood City Poet Laureate program, managed through WeHo Arts, please visit: <http://bit.ly/wehocitypoet>



@WeHoArts

Image: City of West Hollywood Collaborative Poem  
(photograph by Tony Coelho, courtesy of the City of West Hollywood)

# 2026 - 2029 WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY POET LAUREATE

DATE RELEASED: MARCH 31, 2026

DEADLINE TO APPLY: MAY 13, 2026 (5:00PM, PT)

## INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The City of West Hollywood's Arts Division is accepting self-nominations for its sixth West Hollywood City Poet Laureate. The City of West Hollywood Poet Laureate serves as the official ambassador of West Hollywood's vibrant literary culture, using the position as a platform to both promote poetry in West Hollywood, and promote West Hollywood through the artform of poetry.

The West Hollywood City Poet Laureate will serve for a term of three years from October 2026-October 2029. The West Hollywood City Poet Laureate program was established in 2014. For more info on the City Poet Laureate program visit: <http://weho.org/residents/arts-and-culture/literary-arts/city-poet>. Previous West Hollywood City Poets include Steven Reigns (inaugural West Hollywood City Poet Laureate, October 2014-2016), Kim Dower (October 2016-2018), Charles Flowers (October 2018-2020), Brian Sonia-Wallace (October 2020-2023), Jen Cheng (October 2023-2026).



The honorary role of the West Hollywood City Poet Laureate will serve as an ambassador to:

- Enhance the presence and appreciation of poetry and the literary arts in West Hollywood;
- Raise awareness of the power of literature, poetry, and spoken word art in West Hollywood;
- Celebrate the spirit and the special qualities of West Hollywood through the literary arts and, over a period of time, create a new body of literary works that commemorate the diversity and vibrancy of the City.
- Promote partnerships with the West Hollywood Library;
- Provide a forum for "cross pollination" of art forms;

- Create or participate in creative community events including writing workshops; and
- Inspire an emerging generation of literary artists.

The City of West Hollywood City Poet Laureate serves for three years and works with the City's Arts Division, along with other community partners, to carry out the West Hollywood City Poet Laureate duties.

Specific duties include:

1. Attend an Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission meeting, which will also serve as the official City Poet Laureate installation ceremony.
2. Participate in a media training with the City's Communication Department at the beginning of the term. This training will only take place in the first year of the agreement.
3. Attend the annual AB1234 training.
4. Attend the Library Cultural Programming Committee Meeting.
5. Contribute to the West Hollywood National Poetry Month program by proposing two living poets annually to be honored on street-pole banners to be unveiled in April during National Poetry Month.
6. Create an original poem celebrating West Hollywood, which will be featured on the West Hollywood City website and other CITY materials and channels.
7. Organize one poetry writing workshop (in coordination with and subject to approval by the West Hollywood Library) or poetry reading event (in coordination with and subject to approval by WeHo Reads).
8. Serve as an ambassador for the City of West Hollywood by attending a minimum of three (3) and up to fifteen (15) events or meetings to read poems and/or conduct a writing workshop. Events may include City events (such as WeHo Reads, WeHo Pride, the Russian-speaking Community Cultural Festival, Women's History Month, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Disabilities Awareness Month, Black History Month, Transgender Awareness Month, Children's Roundtable, City art openings, Artists Roundtable, City Council meetings, Mayoral Installation event, and Board and Commission meetings), City co-sponsored events, events at West Hollywood schools or the West Hollywood Library, or others as assigned. Appearances must be pre-approved, in writing, by Arts Division Staff, and will be scheduled in close coordination with the City Poet Laureate.
9. Submit a brief annual summary report outlining the official activities.
10. Assist in the selection of next West Hollywood City Poet Laureate.

## INSURANCE AND CONTRACT

The West Hollywood City Poet Laureate must be able to maintain City-required insurance and sign a contract with the City. The contract which contains current City insurance requirements is attached as Attachment A (please review prior to applying).

## HONORARIUM

The West Hollywood City Poet Laureate receives a \$15,000 honorarium each year. Please review the contract in Attachment A for details on duties, reimbursement and insurance requirements.

In addition, each year, the West Hollywood City Poet Laureate may serve as an Ambassador at up to one (1) event that takes place outside of City limits. An event could look like a presentation at a conference, participation in a cross-city collaboration related to the Laureate position, or something similar that aligns with the goals of the City Poet Laureate position. All travel requests are subject to the City Travel Administrative Regulation and must comply with the City's employee reimbursement policy. Travel requests must be pre-approved by staff in advance of the event. Travel expenses will be reimbursed upon CITY's receipt of a completed City Travel Expense Report and receipts for pre-approved travel and may not exceed \$5,000 per fiscal year.

## APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Poets interested in serving as the West Hollywood City Poet Laureate are asked to self-nominate themselves by completing this online application and submitting it by the deadline.

Applications must be submitted online: <https://form.jotform.com/253424739328968>

Applications are reviewed by the West Hollywood Library Cultural Programming Committee which includes representatives from City of West Hollywood staff, the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission, West Hollywood branch of the LA County Public Library, Friends of the West Hollywood Library, and the current and former West Hollywood City Poet Laureates.

The Library Cultural Programming Committee will forward its recommendation for West Hollywood City Poet Laureate to the City Council for final approval.

Evaluation criteria for the selection of the City Poet Laureate includes:

- The literary excellence of the writer's work, including published work;
- The impact of the poet on other writers and/or on West Hollywood literature;

- The poet's proposed public engagement projects and the ability of the poet to conduct these projects;
- The broader reputation of the writer and the writer's work locally, regionally, nationally; and
- Writer's connection to the City of West Hollywood.

ONLY poets with a significant connection to the City of West Hollywood will be considered. Such connections may be that the poet lives in the City, works in the City, has volunteered on a regular basis for community programs that deliver services in the City, and/or has organized or participated in multiple literary events that were co-sponsored by and/or took place in the City of West Hollywood. Please refer to [www.weho.org/streets](http://www.weho.org/streets) to confirm that your residence, work address and/or the activities in which you took part in are actually in the City of West Hollywood.

## SCHEDULE

The following dates represent the schedule that will be followed. The City reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to adjust this schedule, as it deems necessary.

March 31, 2026	RFQ released
<b>May 15, 2026</b>	<b>Deadline to Apply. RFQ closes</b>
June 2026	Review of applications
June 2026	Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission review
August 2026	City Council review and approval
September 2026	Contracting and orientation/planning meeting with City
October 22, 2026	City Poet Laureate is sworn in at Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting
October 2029	City Poet Laureate term ends

## CULTURAL EQUITY STATEMENT

The City of West Hollywood's Arts Division and Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission believe that arts and culture have the power to enhance inclusion, engagement, and diversity, and we aspire to ensure cultural equity in all arts policies and practices. We invite and encourage artists and organizations representing diverse populations and diverse artistic disciplines to apply. Read the Cultural Equity Statement in its entirety at <https://www.weho.org/community/arts-and-culture/cultural-equity-statement>.

## CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

The City of West Hollywood, known as the "Creative City," was incorporated in 1984. It is 1.9 square miles in area and is bounded by Beverly Hills to the west, Hollywood to the east, and Los Angeles to the north and south. West Hollywood serves many diverse communities and cultural traditions. Its audiences include older immigrants from repressive political environments, children, families, singles and a large LGBTQ population. The City is home to approximately 37,000 residents and over 3,500 businesses. Approximately 40% of the City's residents identify as LGBTQ, 10% are Russian-speaking immigrants, and close to 20% are senior citizens. <https://www.weho.org/business/business-resources/interactive-data-tools/demographics>

The City of West Hollywood delivers a broad array of arts programs including: Art on the Outside (temporary public art), Summer Sounds, Winter Sounds, WeHo Reads, Free Theatre in the Parks, Arts Grants for Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Individual Artists, Library Exhibits, WeHo Pride Arts Festival, and Urban Art Program (permanent public art). [www.weho.org/arts](http://www.weho.org/arts) (@wehoarts). For more information on other Arts Division programs, please visit [www.facebook.com/WeHoArts](https://www.facebook.com/WeHoArts), and [www.instagram.com/WeHoArts](https://www.instagram.com/WeHoArts).

## QUESTIONS

For all questions related to this RFQ contact Mike Che, Arts Coordinator, [mche@weho.org](mailto:mche@weho.org) or 323-848-6377

*The City of West Hollywood reserves the right to cancel or postpone this RFQ at any time.*



*Image: Brian Sonia-Wallace reads at Poetry Spa 2024 (photograph by Tony Coelho, courtesy of the City of West Hollywood)*



*Image: Jen Cheng interacting with public to create custom poems at 2025 Holiday Poetry Hotline writing workshop (photograph by Jonathan Moore, courtesy of the City of West Hollywood)*

## CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY POET LAUREATE AGREEMENT

This CITY POET AGREEMENT (“Agreement”) is made on this xx day of xxx, xxxx at West Hollywood, California, by and between the City of West Hollywood, a municipal corporation, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, California 90069 (hereinafter referred to as the "CITY") and xxxxx, West Hollywood, CA 90069 (hereinafter referred to as the "CITY POET LAUREATE").

### R E C I T A L S

- A. The West Hollywood City Council created the honorary position of City Poet Laureate for the CITY on May 19, 2014, in recognition of its long tradition of support of the arts.
- B. The CITY’s objectives in establishing the position are, among others, to enhance the presence and appreciation of poetry and the literary arts in West Hollywood; create a focal point for the expression of West Hollywood culture through the literary arts; raise awareness of the power of literature, poetry, and the spoken word; contribute to the professional growth of the selected City Poet Laureate; promote partnership with the West Hollywood Library, Friends of the West Hollywood Library and other organizations; provide a forum for “cross pollination” of art forms; celebrate the spirit of the people and the special qualities of West Hollywood; inspire an emerging generation of literary artists; and create, over a period of time, a new body of literary works that commemorate the diversity and vibrancy of our city.
- C. In accordance with the City Poet Laureate Program Guidelines, xxxx has been selected as the CITY POET LAUREATE to serve between xxxx - xxxx.
- D. This Agreement will set forth the terms and conditions for the CITY POET LAUREATE.

**NOW THEREFORE**, in consideration of the foregoing and the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, the parties agree as follows:

1. **APPOINTMENT AS CITY POET LAUREATE.** xxxx is hereby designated the CITY’s honorary City Poet Laureate for the term of this Agreement.
2. **SERVICES.** The CITY POET LAUREATE shall champion poetry, language and the arts and raise the consciousness of residents and visitors in the value of the literary arts. The CITY POET LAUREATE, in their official role as West Hollywood City Poet Laureate, shall perform the following services:
  - 2.1. **Installation.** In the first two months of term, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall attend an Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission meeting, which will also serve as the official City Poet Laureate installation ceremony. This will only take place the first year of the agreement.
  - 2.2. **Media Training.** In the first four months of contract, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall participate in a media training with the City’s

Communication Department. This training will only take place the first year of the agreement.

- 2.3. **AB 1234 Training.** Each year, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall provide proof of completing the annual AB1234 training.
- 2.4. **Library Cultural Programming Meeting.** In the first six months of term, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall attend the Library Cultural Programming Committee Meeting, to be coordinated with City Arts Division staff.
- 2.5. **National Poetry Month Banners.** Each year, by February 1, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall contribute to the West Hollywood National Poetry Month program by proposing two living poets to be honored on street-pole banners to be unveiled in April during National Poetry Month. The CITY POET LAUREATE shall be responsible for obtaining rights to a high-resolution photo that the CITY may use to create the banner, photo credit, and to work with the selected poets to identify a short, appropriate poetry excerpt to feature on the banners.
- 2.6. **Original Poem Celebrating City of West Hollywood.** Each year, by March 1, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall create an original poem celebrating West Hollywood, which will be featured on the West Hollywood City website and other CITY materials and channels, and will be approved CITY. Provide the CITY with an audio-recording of this original poem and/or present this poem at an April City Council meeting for National Poetry Month.
- 2.7. **National Poetry Month Event.** Each year in National Poetry Month (April), the CITY POET LAUREATE shall organize one poetry writing workshop (in coordination with and subject to approval by the West Hollywood Library) or poetry reading event (in coordination with the WeHo Reads program and subject to approval by the City).
- 2.8. **City Events.** Annually, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall serve as an ambassador for the City of West Hollywood and attend a minimum of three (3) and maximum of fifteen (15) events to read a poem or conduct a writing workshop when invited. Events may include City events such as WeHo Reads, WeHo Pride, the Russian-speaking Community Cultural Festival, Women's History Month, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Disabilities Awareness Month, Black History Month, Transgender Awareness Month, Children's Roundtable, City art openings, Artists Roundtable, City Council meetings, Mayoral Installation event, and Board and Commission meetings, City co-sponsored events, events at West Hollywood schools or the West Hollywood Library, or others as assigned. Appearances must be pre-approved, in writing, by City Arts Division Staff, and will be scheduled in close coordination with the City Poet Laureate.

- 2.9. **Annual Summary Report.** Annually, by October 30, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall submit a brief annual summary report outlining official activities conducted as CITY POET LAUREATE including the name and date of each event, approximate number of attendees at each event, number of new poems/artworks created at each event and throughout the year, and general impressions and any testimonials received about the poet laureate program.
- 2.10. **Selection of Next City Poet Laureate.** In the final year of the term, the CITY POET LAUREATE shall attend the Library Cultural Programming Committee Meeting to assist in selection of next West Hollywood City Poet Laureate.
- 2.11. **Travel Stipend.** Each year, the CITY POET LAUREATE may serve as an Ambassador at up to one (1) event that takes place outside of CITY limits. An event could look like a presentation at a conference, participation in a cross-city collaboration related to the Laureate position, or something similar that aligns with the goals of the CITY POET LAUREATE position. All travel requests are subject to the City Travel Administrative Regulation and must comply with the City's employee reimbursement policy. Travel requests must be pre-approved by staff in advance of the event. Travel expenses will be reimbursed upon CITY's receipt of a completed City Travel Expense Report and receipts for pre-approved travel and may not exceed \$5,000 per fiscal year.

### 3. PAYMENT

- 3.1. **HONORARIUM.** The CITY POET LAUREATE shall be paid an honorarium of \$45,000, or \$15,000 per year for the three-year term of this Agreement. This Honorarium will be inclusive of all services under Sections 2.1 to 2.10. The CITY POET LAUREATE may invoice for \$15,000 at a time no more frequently than on the following dates: xxx, xxx, xxx. CITY shall pay each invoice within 45 days of receipt.
- 3.2. **TRAVEL STIPEND.** Travel expenses incurred and adhering to Section 2.11 will be reimbursed upon CITY's receipt of a completed City Travel Expense Report and receipts for pre-approved travel and may not exceed \$5,000 per fiscal year.

4. **TERM AND TERMINATION.** This Agreement shall commence on xxxx for a three-year term and shall expire on xxxx unless earlier terminated as provided herein. The CITY POET LAUREATE serves in their position at will and may be removed from their position by the City Manager at any time at the City Manager's discretion without cause. Further, CITY may without penalty of any kind terminate the City Poet Laureate program at any time in its sole discretion. Either party may terminate this Agreement, with or without cause, at any time by prior written notice to the other party. This Agreement may be renewed by mutual agreement of the parties following an assessment of CITY POET LAUREATE's performance hereunder.

5. **INDEMNIFICATION.** Neither party shall be liable for any damages proximately resulting from the gross negligent or wrongful actions or omissions of the other parties, employees, or agents in the performance of this Agreement and each party shall indemnify, defend, and save harmless the other party from such damages or liability resulting from the gross negligent or wrongful actions or omissions of the other party.
6. **INSURANCE.** CITY POET LAUREATE shall maintain and provide written evidence of automobile liability insurance covering bodily injury and property damage for all activities arising out of or in connection with the services to be performed under this Agreement, including coverage for owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles.
7. **ASSIGNMENT.** This Agreement is not assignable nor is the performance of the CITY POET LAUREATE's duties delegable. Any attempted assignment of any of the rights or obligations of the CITY POET LAUREATE shall be void and of no effect.
8. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT; MODIFICATION.** This Agreement supersedes any and all other agreements, either oral or written, between the parties and contains all of the covenants and agreements between the parties. Each party to this Agreement acknowledges that no representations, inducements, promises, or agreements, oral or otherwise, have been made by any party, or anyone acting on behalf of any party that are not embodied herein. Any agreement, statement or promise not contained in the Agreement, and any modification to the Agreement will be effective only if signed by both parties.
9. **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR.** The CITY POET LAUREATE is and shall at all times remain as to the City a wholly independent contractor. Neither the CITY nor any of its agents shall have control over the conduct of the CITY POET LAUREATE, except as herein set forth. The CITY POET LAUREATE shall not at any time or in any manner represent that they are in any manner an agent or employee of the City. CITY POET LAUREATE is not entitled to any benefits of any kind ordinarily provided to employees of the City.
10. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** To the best of their knowledge, the CITY POET LAUREATE confirms that they have no financial, contractual or other interest or obligation that conflicts with or is harmful to performance of their obligations under this Agreement. The CITY POET LAUREATE shall not knowingly obtain such an interest or incur such an obligation, nor shall they employ or subcontract with any person for performance of this Agreement who has such incompatible interest or obligation.
11. **USE OF THE ARTIST'S NAME/LIKENESS/WORK.** The CITY POET LAUREATE authorizes the CITY to use the CITY POET LAUREATE's name, likeness, biographical information, literary work and services created under Section 2 by the CITY POET LAUREATE for the purpose of promoting the CITY's City Poet Laureate program through press releases, advertisements, direct mail pieces, public service announcements, programs, and any other

methods chosen by the CITY. Any written work created under Section 2 by the CITY POET LAUREATE during their term will remain the intellectual property of the CITY POET LAUREATE.

12. **NOTICES.** All Notices permitted or required under this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be deemed made when delivered to the applicable party's representative as provided in the Agreement. Such notices shall be deemed made when sent via email to the other party. The City email contact shall be Mike Che, mche@weho.org. The ARTIST can be notified by email at: xxxx.

CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD:  
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard  
West Hollywood, CA 90069-6216  
Attention: Mike Che, mche@weho.org, 323-848-6377

CITY POET LAUREATE:  
xxxx

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement the \_\_\_\_  
day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 xx.

CITY POET LAUREATE:

xxxx

\_\_\_\_\_

xxxx

CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD:

\_\_\_\_\_

Laura Biery, Economic Development Director

\_\_\_\_\_

Jackie Rocco, City Manager

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_

Melissa Crowder, City Clerk