



2024 - 2026 Alaska State Writer Laureate Nomination Criteria

About The Alaska State Writer Laureate Program

In the early 1960s, the Juneau Poetry Society created the Poet Laureate Program to honor an Alaska poet and poetic literature. Since then, the program has evolved into the Alaska State Writer Laureate program. The program's mission is to advance the literary arts and strengthen the literary community in Alaska by engaging writers, readers, and bearers of oral traditions in our state.

Every two years, the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the Alaska Humanities Forum solicit nominations for this honorary, non-salaried position. We appreciate the commitment and passion that the selected State Writers have brought to Alaska during their respective terms. As illustrated by the names of the people who have held this position in the recent past (a complete list is on our website) it is obvious that this title, while voluntary, is one that is critical not only to the citizens of Alaska, but also to the field of writers and readers throughout our state and nationwide.

During their term, each State Writer will complete a project of their choosing that will advance the literary arts in Alaska. Fairbanks playwright Anne Hanley (2002-2004) wrote a regular poetry column in the Anchorage Daily News. Jerah Chadwick, a poet from Unalaska (2004-2006) put together a terrific poem-a-day program during National Poetry Month. Poet and novelist John Straley from Sitka (2006-2008) taught writing workshops to at-risk students. Nancy Lord (2008-2010) visited numerous communities across the state conveying her passion for writing, books and libraries. Peggy Shumaker (2010-2012) developed the Alaska Literary Series. In addition, John Straley and Nancy Lord wrote and published books during their tenure.

The Duties of Alaska's State Writer Laureate include:

- Development, implementation, and completion of a statewide Literary Arts project that provides a vital service in the promotion of literary arts in Alaska communities
- Submitting quarterly activity reports and a final report
- Attendance in Anchorage at the Governor's Arts and Humanities Awards, October 29, 2024

Other duties may include:

- Attendance at conferences, related public events, and receptions
- Attendance at the National State Writer conference or equivalent literary arts conference

The Alaska State Writer will receive:

- Recognition by the Alaska State Legislature

- Support for travel and expenses for presentations, workshops, lectures, and readings, subject to availability of funds

Conditions:

- All rights to work produced during the term will be retained by the author
- A State Writer is not eligible for a Governor's Arts & Humanities Award while serving
- Travel and project budget is limited to funds available each fiscal year, but funding usually ranges from \$1,000 to \$5,000

Program Principles

The State Writer Laureate program commits to the following principles, understanding that while no individual Writer Laureate can fulfill them, the administrators of the program must apply these principles to the nomination and selection processes within the program's historical context:

- Alaska State Writer Laureates should be representative of the diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, experiences and identities of people in our state.
- The collective body of work of Alaska State Writer Laureates should advance awareness and understanding of the diverse life experiences of Alaskans.

State Writer Laureate Criteria and Eligibility Requirements**Criteria**

Body of work

- Literary excellence and quality
- Meaningful influence on Alaska

Capacity to serve as a literary ambassador

- Commitment to a public audience
- Experience with and ability to coordinate and lead a public project (if selected, State Writer Laureates develop and implement a public project).
- Exceptional talent in published works, depth and length of career

Advancement of the Writer Laureate program's principles

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Limitations

Applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Currently be a citizen of the United States and legal resident of Alaska
- Intend to remain a resident of Alaska throughout the two-year term
- Live within the borders of the state at least 18 months over the 24-month period
- Not be a full-time student enrolled in a college or university degree program

Eligibility Requirements

To be considered, the nominee should have a body of work in the literary arts that has been professionally published, produced, and/or publicly exhibited. This body of work may consist of traditional, nontraditional, mixed-genre, multimedia, or genre-bending material. While there is no minimum size requirement for a body of work to be considered, it is unlikely a single poem, story, or essay published in a larger anthology will be sufficient to be competitive with other nominees.

Non-Eligible Submissions

The following writing types may not be used to establish eligibility:

Collaborative Work

Scholarly Writing

Instructional Writing

Interviews

Journalism

Book Reviews

Student Publications

Editorials

Self-Publications: work that has appeared in a publication for which you are the editor, publisher, or staff.

Vanity Press Publications: includes publications that do any of the following: requires individual writers to pay for part or all of the publication costs; asks writers to buy or sell copies of the publication; publishes the work of anyone who subscribes to the publication or joins the organization through membership fees; publishes the work of anyone who buys an advertisement in the publication; or publishes work without competitive selection.

Please do not submit manuscripts.