

ANCHORAGE, AK – 20 October 2026 – The Juneau Arts & Humanities Council, Alaska State Council on the Arts, and National Endowment for the Arts present Poetry Out Loud™ in partnership. This national arts education program encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country. This program helps students master public speaking skills and build self-confidence, while also learning more about both classic and contemporary poetry. Registration for Alaska Poetry Out Loud in 2026-2027 is open for schools and students in grades 9-12!

Benjamin Brown, Chairman of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, noted, “*Poetry Out Loud* is truly one of the most amazing programs ever initiated by the National Endowment for the Arts. Since its launch in 2005, it has engaged over 4.6 million students and 89,000 teachers from more than 22,000 schools across the nation. A whole generation of Americans have grown up with the opportunity to participate in Poetry Out Loud, which has greatly enriched the lives of so many young Alaskans and other Americans.”

We encourage all to participate, whether you’re representing your school or participating as an individual; we intend participation in Poetry Out Loud to be simple and accessible to all! Prior to winter break, schools are invited to register for Alaska Poetry Out Loud (through November 16, 2026) and then hold classroom and school wide contests. At-large individual students participating in Poetry Out Loud—where a school program is not available—may also register by November 16, 2026. School representatives and at-large students advance to regional competition, and 10 students from across Alaska will advance to a state competition to be held in Juneau on March 1, 2027 at KTOO. Non-school organizations, such as after school clubs, libraries, or nonprofit organizations, may also choose to run Poetry Out Loud local competitions in partnership with schools.



Image: 2026 Alaska State Poetry Out Loud Champion Cassie Lumba recites at the National Poetry Out Loud Competition in Washington DC. Photo by James Kegley.

Complete information including registration, program guide, timeline, and contact for the Alaska State Poetry Out Loud Competition is available on the Juneau arts & Humanities Council website at <https://www.jahc.org/education/alaska-poetry-out-loud/>.

Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA) represents, supports, and advances the creative endeavors of individuals, organizations, and agencies throughout Alaska. ASCA is a public corporation housed in the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and is governed by eleven council members appointed by the Governor. It is supported with general funds appropriated by the Alaska State Legislature and partnership funds through the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support for arts education programs from Rasmuson Foundation.

The Juneau Arts & Humanities Council (the Council) incorporated in 1973. It is the formal arts agency for the Capital City of Juneau, Alaska and operates the Juneau Arts and Culture Center (JACC), a vibrant community center; providing a location for concerts and events, rotating gallery, and a lobby gift shop. The Council offers programming in performance, visual, literary, and arts education as well as grants, scholarships, and helpful resources for local artists.

Information about the National Poetry Out Loud Competition is linked from the Alaska State Poetry Out Loud website and includes resources such as the Official Poetry Out Loud Anthology, Lesson Plans, and information about Organizing a Competition (both in-person and virtual) available at <https://www.poetryoutloud.org/>.

State champions will advance to the national finals, which are planned to take place in Washington, DC, April 26 - 28, 2027, where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be distributed.

Why Should I Participate in Poetry Out Loud as an Educator?

- Poetry Out Loud encourages students to develop a personal connection with both classic and contemporary poetry.
- The process moves students beyond surface-level comprehension, by asking them to analyze a poem deeply in order to understand and perform it effectively.
- It strengthens memorization skills—an increasingly uncommon skill in today's technology-driven world.
- Poetry Out Loud Connects the written word with performance arts and gives students the opportunity to perform and be recognized at the local, state regional, national levels.
- Alaska State Poetry Out Loud builds a sense of community among educators and students across the state of Alaska. Hosting local programs can enhance school culture and connectedness of students and educators through a shared endeavor.

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