



Hamilton

POET IN PLACE PROGRAM

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The City of Hamilton is accepting applications for the *Poet in Place* program. This program will recognize a poet or spoken word artist who engages the local community through their work, has a strong artistic voice and excellent performance abilities, and who has a demonstrated interest in placemaking. While serving a two-year term, the *Poet in Place* will help shape public spaces through projects and programs and use poetry to connect the citizens of Hamilton to their community.

A citizen jury will select one poet or spoken word artist to serve a two-year term as *Poet in Place*.

Please review eligibility requirements on page 3 prior to applying.

Support:

\$20,000 over the two-year term paid out in annual installments.

Application Deadline: Friday, November 3, 2023 at 4:00 PM (EST)

Applications will be accepted via Submittable.

Webpage with application information and link to Submittable www.hamilton.ca/PoetInPlace

Program Information Meeting:

Wednesday October 11, 2023 at 6:00 PM (EST) *Via Video Conference (Zoom)*

Applicants are invited to view a presentation on the program guidelines, application requirements, and selection process. This is not a mandatory meeting.

To register email brianne.gascho@hamilton.ca on or before October 10 for virtual meeting details.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility:

The City of Hamilton's Tourism and Culture Division is committed to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. While all qualified candidates are invited to apply, we invite applications from those who identify as women, persons with disabilities, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, members of racialized, marginalized or equity deserving communities and 2SLGBTQ+ persons.



BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2022 Hamilton City Council passed a motion for the Tourism and Culture Division to develop a Poet Program. After conducting research, consulting with the community, and developing a framework for poetry-driven placemaking, the *Poet in Place* program was created. A poet or spoken word artist will be selected through a community-led adjudication process to serve as the *Poet in Place*. Through placemaking activities, the selected poet will use poetry to enhance our public spaces, adding authenticity to place, and providing the community with greater access to the poetic arts.

OVERVIEW

The City of Hamilton will be a leader in government poetry programming by departing from the traditional approach of Poet Laureate programs found at other organizations. Both the colonial tradition and historical connotations of Poet Laureate programs can make them exclusionary and, sometimes, inaccessible to equity-deserving groups. For example:

- The word “Laureate” is tied to the ancient classical tradition of honouring high achievers with crowns of laurel leaves.
- The first Poet Laureate position was created in 17th century England, eventually becoming an appointment of the royal household.
- A Laureate position is often one of prestige, meant to honour the most established or esteemed poet in a community.
- Poet Laureate applicants are often evaluated based on merit, academic achievements, and awards.

The *Poet in Place* program is rooted in placemaking, which we define as “...a collaborative process by which citizens, businesses and government shape our public realm to maximize shared value, strengthen the connection between people and place, and reflect the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution”.

Hamilton’s *Poet in Place* program, which strongly links a formal civic poet role with placemaking to further Hamilton’s identity as a community, is the first of its kind in Canada. This program will not only bring visibility to the local literary community, but it will empower literary artists to participate in placemaking activities, providing the selected poet with resources and support to develop and implement meaningful projects. Through placemaking projects, the *Poet in Place* program will enhance public spaces and provide opportunities for Hamiltonians to experience poetry and spoken word in new, impactful, and more accessible ways.



OBJECTIVES

- Contribute to placemaking initiatives in the city by enhancing experiences in public spaces through poetry and spoken word.
- Engage the community through poetry and spoken word.
- Increase the accessibility of the poetic arts for the community.
- Raise awareness of the poetic and literary arts in the City of Hamilton.
- Increase collaboration across the local arts community.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Poet in Place is a flexible position that does not have a specific weekly or monthly time commitment. The poet will be expected to fulfill all responsibilities of the role, including developing and leading a series of projects and performances that will be carried out over their two-year term. The poet will be required to meet with city staff regularly. During their term, the *Poet in Place* will:

- Write and perform original works of poetry at events or programs as determined by city staff. A minimum of 5 and maximum of 10 performances will occur during the poet's term.
- Develop and implement 2 placemaking poetry projects in consultation with city staff.
- Develop and facilitate 2-4 programs for National Poetry month in collaboration with Hamilton Public Libraries.

Other opportunities that may arise for the poet will be addressed on an ad-hoc basis.

Note: The *Poet in Place* will be required to share all works that will be performed with city staff prior to the performance.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must:

- Be a practicing poet or spoken word artist who has published work or has performed their work in front of audiences at organized public events.
- Have some works that are relevant to Hamilton and its citizens.
- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be a resident of the City of Hamilton for a minimum of 1 year and must be able to provide proof of residency.
- Be able to represent the values of the City of Hamilton.



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The following are not eligible to apply:

- Students currently enrolled in educational programs.
- City of Hamilton employees and employees of its outside agencies, boards, and commissions.

Please note that applications must be submitted in English. A working proficiency in the English language is required to participate in this program.

TERM

The Poet in Place will serve a two (2) year term from January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025

SUPPORT

The Poet in Place will receive \$20,000 for the entirety of the term, paid out in annual installments. Additional funds to support projects as part of this program will be provided.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible poets or spoken word artists are invited to submit an application that includes the following:

- a. **Artist bio, resume, and references.** A short artist bio, relevant resume information, and 2 references who can speak to your artistic work and your community engagement experience. Maximum 3 pages, single sided, PDF.
- b. **Original works of poetry and/or spoken word.** Provide 3 to 5 works of original, published and/or performed work submitted as text copy. Maximum 6 pages, single sided, PDF.
 - **Published works** must have a publication credit, including name of publisher and publication date.
 - **Performed Works** do not need to be published but must have been performed in front of an audience at a recognized public event or program. Include organizer, name, location, and date of event for each performed work.
- c. **Performance videos.** Links to 2 videos of you reading or performing a work of original poetry or spoken word. One of the videos must be a reading of a work that you submitted as text copy in section c. Maximum 1 page, links embedded in PDF.



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- d. **Community Engagement Statement.** Using the section provided in the Submittable application, share how you have engaged with or contributed to the community through your poetry or spoken word and how your work connects with Hamilton. Maximum 250 words.

- e. **Poetry Project Proposal.** Using the sections provided in the Submittable application, provide a brief proposal for a placemaking-based poetry project that you could implement in Hamilton. The following sections are required for the proposal:
 - **Project Overview:** What is the project? Why are you doing this project and how will you implement it? (max. 250 words)
 - **Deliverables:** What will your project provide? What can the community expect from your project? (max. 150 words)
 - **Timeline:** When will you develop and implement this project? (max. 150 words)
 - **Budget:** What will your project cost? Provide a budget breakdown. (max. 150 words)
 - **Impact:** How will your project contribute to placemaking? How will your project impact the community? (max. 150 words)
 - **Evaluation:** How will you evaluate the project during and/or once it is completed? (max. 150 words)

SELECTION PROCESS

A jury comprised of poets, literary artists, and individuals with project and placemaking expertise will adjudicate all eligible submissions using the selection criteria. One non-voting member from the Tourism and Culture Division will participate in the discussion. The identity of the jurors is kept confidential until the *Poet in Place* is announced.

Shortlisted applicants may be required to attend an interview.

Selection Criteria

All eligible proposals will be evaluated using this selection criteria:

- a. **Poet's Voice** – the works demonstrate a strong poetic voice and excellence in poetry or spoken word.

- b. **Performance Ability** – the poet demonstrates an ability to communicate effectively through their performance; their performance is compelling and connects with the audience.



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- c. **Community Engagement** – the poet demonstrates the ability to engage and inspire the community through their work; their work reflects or connects with Hamilton and its citizens.
- d. **Project Planning** – the poet has demonstrated their ability to develop and deliver projects that use poetry as a placemaking tool that will help shape public spaces; the poet has demonstrated their ability to effectively lead and manage projects.
- e. **Experience** – the poet has experience in the literary field as demonstrated through their practice, which may include developing and leading programs, publishing or performing poetry or spoken word, or training/mentorship in their field.
- f. **Capacity** – the poet has demonstrated the capacity to fulfill the role as outlined; the poet's other commitments are not likely to inhibit their ability to fulfill their responsibilities in the role.

SUBMISSION FORMAT AND DEADLINE

Applications will be received via Submittable up to and including:

Friday, November 3, 2023 at 4:00 PM (EST)

Late applications will not be accepted.

Reserved Rights and Privileges of the City

The City of Hamilton reserves the right to not award the commission to any poet or spoken word artist and to cancel or re-issue the call at any time.