



HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE PROGRAM

HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE APPLICATION CALL

The Hillsborough Arts Council is seeking the Town of Hillsborough's next Poet Laureate!

The Town of Hillsborough, Mayor Mark Bell, and the Hillsborough Arts Council are thrilled to announce the relaunch of Hillsborough's Poet Laureate Program! Our next Poet Laureate will serve a two-year term from spring 2025 to spring 2027. By broadening our requirements for citizen-poets at any stage of their literary journey, we hope to attract a diverse applicant pool in background, perspective, and poetic craft.

The next Poet Laureate for the Town of Hillsborough, North Carolina will act as a public servant and Hillsborough's public poetic voice. The Poet Laureate fosters the appreciation of poetry in all its forms by developing programming and hosting opportunities for the community to engage with poetry and literature.

The application deadline is **Friday, February 28, 2025** before midnight.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY & CRITERIA TO APPLY

A Poet Laureate applicant must:

- Reside in Orange County; and
- Be at least 18 years of age or older.

A strong Poet Laureate Candidate will demonstrate the following:

- **Community Ties:** Applicants must have traceable ties through personal or professional connections to the Town of Hillsborough, a strong interest in serving the local community, and subject relevance in their submitted works.
- **A Passion for Poetry:** Applicants must demonstrate a passion for poetry, performance, and public speaking.
- **A Developed & Unique Poetic Voice:** Applicants will be evaluated based on the effectiveness, clarity, and engagement of the written work, as well as a unique and strong poetic voice and perspective.
- **Engaging Performance Quality:** Applicants will be evaluated based on their comfort with public speaking and ability to engage an audience.



HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE PROGRAM

HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Hillsborough Poet Laureate must be a citizen-poet who cares deeply about community service and poetry advocacy in Hillsborough. Ideally, they will develop a town presence during their two-year term, nurturing the appreciation of poetry and literature in Hillsborough by conducting public readings, workshops, lectures, or presentations in diverse public settings.

While the expectations below are the Hillsborough Arts Council's ideals for our future Poet Laureate, we are flexible and want our applicants to bring their own skill set, expertise, and perspective to the position. We welcome your input during the application process and contract negotiation.

The Poet Laureate shall be expected to:

- Have the ability to fulfill the responsibilities of their full, two-year term from spring 2025 to spring 2027
- Participate and perform at the following Town and County events:
 - 2025 Poet Laureate Inauguration, April 2025
 - At minimum, two Last Fridays per calendar year
 - 2 additional town or county events per calendar year
 - 2027 Inauguration of the next Poet Laureate, spring 2027
- Develop poetry programming alongside the Hillsborough Arts Council that complements HAC's upcoming programming schedule, brand identity, and mission of enriching community through the arts. Examples of potential projects might include:
 - Workshops or educational series open to all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels
 - Public service or poetry advocacy offering access to underserved audiences and communities
 - For example, open mic nights, public performances, free workshops, or readings at a veterans organization, domestic violence shelter, or correctional institution
 - Work already planned or scheduled by the poet may be considered.
- Keep a record of poems performed as Poet Laureate for historical documentation



HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE PROGRAM

HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE PAYMENT

Honorarium: \$6,000/term (\$3,000/year)

Payment Timeline:

- \$1,500, start of the term, April 2025
- \$1,500, 1st quarter check-in, June 2025
- \$3,000, January 2026

There may be potential for the Poet Laureate to have access to additional funds for poetry programming through the Hillsborough Arts Council during their term.

We encourage our Poet Laureate to pursue additional paid opportunities as long as it does not interfere with Poet Laureate duties and obligations. The Hillsborough Arts Council does not take on the role of an agent for the Poet Laureate, and all additional opportunities outside of their HAC contract should be managed directly by the Poet Laureate.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Please submit the following:

- **CV:** A 1-2 page curriculum vitae or résumé that details the course of the applicant's career
- **Statement of Purpose:** A 500-600 word statement which explores the applicant's interest in the Hillsborough's Poet Laureate position, community connections, their point of view as an artist, and ideas for programming to bring poetry to the community
- **Poetry Samples:** 4-5 written works of poetry within the last five years. These can be previously published works or unpublished works.
- **Live Performance Example:** A video no longer than three minutes of the applicant reading or performing their poetry. These videos can be self-recorded in an applicant's home, recorded at open-mic nights, or events at which the applicant read or performed.
No favor or preference will be given to those who have had the opportunity to perform live at events.

Personal information, such as name and contact information, will be redacted by a designated HAC staff member from all written submitted application materials – CV, Statement of Purpose, and Poetry Samples – to ensure a semi-blind jurying process.



HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE PROGRAM

SELECTION PROCESS

The Hillsborough Poet Laureate selection process is managed by the Hillsborough Arts Council. All proposals will be reviewed by a jury, composed of a team with combined knowledge about poetry, prose, creative writing, public programs, and the Town of Hillsborough, NC.

Stage 1 – Digital Application

Please submit your application with all materials – CV, Statement of Purpose, Written Poetry Samples, and Live Performance Example – before the application deadline of **Friday, February 28, 2025** via [this Google Form](#).

Stage 2 – Application Review by Jury

The jury will be provided a digital rubric to review the applications. Our jurying process will be conducted in a semi-blind fashion with applications being reviewed in two stages.

First, all written materials – CV, Statement of Purpose, and Written Poetry Samples – will be reviewed and scored by jurors. Personal information, such as name and contact info, will be redacted to ensure this stage is conducted as semi-blind as possible. We cannot guarantee examples of poetic work or CV experience will not be recognized by our jury, but they will be asked to judge the work objectively based on applicant eligibility and application criteria.

After jurors complete the written material jurying process, they will review applicants' live performance samples, judging the applicants performance quality and scoring accordingly.

An applicant's written score and performance score will both be taken into consideration when determining the finalists.

Stage 3 – Finalist Interviews & Performance with Jurors

During the week of March 17, applicants will be notified if they are a finalist. Finalists shall perform before and be interviewed by a subset of the jury to demonstrate their work and discuss their vision for the upcoming term. The interviewing jury will identify the stand-out poet through discussion after the interviews. **Evening interview times will be available to ensure accessibility for all applicants.**



HILLSBOROUGH POET LAUREATE PROGRAM

Stage 4 – Final Decisions & Contract Negotiations

Former Piedmont Laureate and HAC Board Member, John Claude Bemis, will notify the awarded poet in **early April**, initiating contract negotiations with the HAC Programs & Marketing Director, Ivana Beveridge. The inauguration of Hillsborough's next Poet Laureate will occur at **April 2025's Last Friday & the Art Walk** to close out National Poetry Month!

CONTACT

Questions about the application process should be addressed to The Hillsborough Arts Council at programs@hillsboroughartscouncil.org.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The Hillsborough Arts Council is an equal opportunity contractor that is committed to diversity and inclusion. We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other protected characteristic as outlined by federal, state, or local laws.