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For Immediate Release

## **Long Beach Public Library, in partnership with the Arts Council for Long Beach, Launches Youth Poet Laureate Program**

The Long Beach Public Library and the Arts Council for Long Beach are launching a new Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate ([LBYPL](#)) program to serve Long Beach youth with year-round literary arts, civic engagement and performance opportunities.

“Adding to the incredible diversity of arts in Long Beach, the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate Program will give kids an opportunity to express themselves creatively through yet another medium with written and spoken word programs,” said Mayor Robert Garcia.

On April 16, 2019, City Council unanimously approved an agenda item, brought forward by Councilmember Rex Richardson and co-sponsored by Councilmembers Jeannine Pearce, Dee Andrews and Roberto Uranga, that would establish a Youth Poet Laureate program in Long Beach.

“From Langston Hughes to Maya Angelou, our most prolific writers began at an early age,” said Councilmember Rex Richardson. “We are thrilled to be joining the National Poet Laureate movement, now in 41 cities across the country, in creating a platform to promote literacy and creativity, while inspiring and amplifying the voices of our diverse and talented teens.”

The purpose of the LBYPL program is to not only to develop and cultivate the active voices of Long Beach youth, but to also develop platforms for them to be heard. To this end, a Laureate and a cohort of Poet Ambassadors will be selected to serve as representatives for literacy, arts and youth expression with ongoing opportunities for performances, mentorship and other projects. Additionally, the Laureate and Poet Ambassadors will each receive a scholarship to further their education. The LBYPL program is supported by Urban Word, a national nonprofit.

All applicants for the 2020 LBYPL program must be Long Beach residents between the ages of 14 and 19 as of March 31, as well as available to serve as Laureate for the program year, May 2020 through April 2021.

Applications will be judged based on artistic merit as well as community engagement and leadership. Each portfolio should include five original poems, specifically about Long Beach—the city, its natural advantages, resources, enterprises, attractions, climate and facilities or the Long Beach experience; a resume; an artist statement; and parent/guardian information (for participants who are younger than 18 years old as of March 31).

Interested teen poets should visit <https://artslb.org/youth-poet-laureate/> for additional information and to apply. The deadline to submit an application is March 31.

The Library will present four workshops, led by local poets, to help applicants to prepare their portfolios, including their resumes and artist statements:

- Saturday, Feb. 22, from 10 a.m. to noon, Billie Jean King Main Library (200 W. Broadway)
- Thursday, Feb. 27, from 5 p.m. to 6:45 p.m., Los Altos Neighborhood Library (5614 Britton Dr.)
- Saturday, Mar. 7, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library (5870 Atlantic Ave.)
- Tuesday, Mar. 24, from 5 p.m. to 6:45 p.m., Mark Twain Neighborhood Library (1401 E. Anaheim St.)

Judging will take place in April, which is National Poetry Month, and up to 15 finalists will be selected to participate in the LBYPL Commencement event. Finalists will be notified no later than April 21, 2020.

### **About the City of Long Beach**

Home to approximately 470,000 people, the multiple award-winning and innovative City of Long Beach offers all the world-class amenities of a large metropolitan city while maintaining a strong sense of individual and diverse neighborhoods nestled together along the California coast. As a full-service charter city, Long Beach is home to the Queen Mary, Aquarium of the Pacific, several museums and theaters, a highly-rated school district, Long Beach Airport, the Port of Long Beach, as well as many award-winning City departments such as Health, Parks, Recreation and Marine, Development Services and more. The City also has a highly-respected university and city college, two historic ranchos, five hospitals, five golf courses, 171 parks, miles of beaches, marinas, bike paths, and a Bike Share program.

For more information about the City of Long Beach, visit <http://longbeach.gov/>. Follow us on social to keep up with the latest news: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

### **About Long Beach Public Library**

Long Beach Public Library, founded in 1896, serves a diverse urban city of close to half a million people. The Long Beach Public Library system includes Main Library and eleven neighborhood libraries and a vibrant online presence. In summer of 2017, the Long Beach Public Library was awarded the National Medal for Library and Museum Services in recognition of successful community-collaborations, innovative STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and literacy-focused programs to the residents of Long Beach. With an emphasis on providing free and equal access to information and support for learning for a lifetime, the Library offers books, media, databases, Internet access, Family Learning Centers, makerspaces, and a variety of events ranging from story times to educational and cultural programs. For more information, visit <http://www.longbeach.gov/library>, “Like” the Long Beach Public Library on [Facebook](#), and follow along on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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