

Contact: Julienne Malecot, Senior Librarian – Youth Services
(your name)
E-mail: Julienne.Malecot@lbpl.org
Phone: (562) 570-6366
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PRESS RELEASE

Long Beach Public Library, in partnership with the Arts Council of Long Beach, Launches New Youth Poet Laureate Program

The Long Beach Public Library and the Arts Council of Long Beach are launching the new Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate (LBYP) program in February 2020. This program will serve Long Beach youth with year-round literary arts, civic engagement and performance opportunities, with support from Urban Word, a national nonprofit.

The idea for a local Youth Poet Laureate program was placed on the City Council agenda by Councilman Rex Richardson last year. The Long Beach Public Library was identified to spearhead the proposal, due to its position as an educational and recreational resource for the youth in our community. That proposal was brought back to City Council last Fall and was adopted as a citywide initiative to be administered by the Long Beach Public Library in partnership with the Arts Council of Long Beach.

“The National Youth Poet Laureate initiative began in New York City over ten years ago and is now in more than 41 cities across the country. We are thrilled to be joining this network of communities in creating a platform to amplify the voices of our talented and diverse teens,” said Mayor Robert Garcia. “We believe that young people represent the future of our society. Our aim is to provide them with opportunities to be heard and celebrated.”

The purpose of this program is to not only 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 our community 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.

During the inaugural year of the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate program, applications will be accepted from talented Long Beach writers to create a citywide community of young poets. Long Beach teens who are leaders, engaged and active in Long Beach are encouraged to apply.

- All applicants for the 2020 LBYPL 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 - 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 CV/resume; an artist statement; and parent/guardian information (for participants younger than 18 years old as of March 31).
- Interested teens 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 cv/resumes and artist statements:
 - Saturday, February 22, from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM at the Billie Jean King Main Library
 - Thursday, February 27, from 5:00 - 6:45 PM at the Los Altos Neighborhood Library
 - Saturday, March 7, from 2:00 - 4:00 PM at the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library
 - Tuesday, March 24, from 5:00 - 6:45 PM at the Mark Twain Neighborhood Library

Judging will take place in April 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.

We invite the entire Long Beach community to join us on Saturday, May 16 at 2:00 PM in the City Council Chambers for the Commencement. A reception will immediately follow in the Civic Center Plaza.

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](#).

About Arts Council for Long Beach

Arts Council for Long Beach is a private 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that promotes, advocates for and helps fund the arts. Our mission is to foster creativity and culture, enliven communities and enable a thriving creative economy. For more information visit artslb.org
