



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Library, Arts and Culture, re: Poet Laureate Pilot Program Recommendation

1. Motion approving the City to pilot a Poet Laureate Program.
2. Resolution of appropriation in the amount of \$20,000 from the General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance to support the Poet Laureate Program for FY 22-23.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Consent Calendar

Approved for September 27, 2022 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the July 12, 2022 Regular Meeting of City Council, Library, Arts and Culture staff were asked to prepare a report on the creation of a Poet Laureate for the City of Glendale. Library, Arts & Culture staff reviewed documents from Poet Laureate programs nationwide, and spoke with several program coordinators. Library, Arts and Culture believe the Poet Laureate Program would contribute to Glendale's reputation as an arts destination and recommend piloting a Poet Laureate program in FY22-23 and FY23-24.

Library, Arts and Culture requests a resolution of appropriation in the amount of \$20,000 from the General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance to pilot the program for FY 22-23.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Glendale Library, Arts & Culture recommends that the City Council adopt (1) a Motion approving the Poet Laureate Pilot Program, and (2) a Resolution appropriating \$20,000 budget from the General Fund for FY22-23.

BACKGROUND

During the July 12, 2022 Regular Meeting of City Council, Mayor Kassakhian asked Staff to prepare a report on the creation of a Poet Laureate program for the City of Glendale, and Council Member Devine seconded.

Library, Arts & Culture (LAC) staff reviewed documents from Poet Laureate programs in Southern California and nationwide, and spoke with several program coordinators. All levels of government throughout the US maintain Poet Laureate programs, with similar goals:

- City of Los Angeles: “Serve as an official ambassador of LA’s vibrant creative scene, promoting the City’s rich literary community and celebrating the written word.”
- City of West Hollywood: “Serve as an official ambassador of West Hollywood’s vibrant literary culture, promoting poetry in West Hollywood, stimulating the transformative impact of poetry in the local community, and creating excitement about the written word.”
- State of California: “To advocate for the art of poetry in classrooms and boardrooms across the state, to inspire an emerging generation of literary artists, and to educate all Californians about the many poets and authors who have influenced our great state through creative literary expression.”

Most organizations administering a Poet Laureate program go through an application and interview process, reviewed by a selection panel comprised of poets, educators, staff and elected or appointed officials. Selection criteria often include a residency requirement, past publishing, community involvement, and a strong proposal to engage the community in poetry writing and/or appreciation. Larger cities with active communities of poets make these requirements more specific (i.e., Los Angeles requires “Seven years of experience (not including years as student) in either publishing poetry or presenting poetry”).

Duties for Poets Laureate often include:

- creating a community-based program to celebrate poetry;
- leading workshops and holding poetry readings, often with other poets;
- writing or collecting poems that commemorate special events, reflect on the community, etc.;
- reading poems at special events; and,
- coordinating or participating in National Poetry Month events.

Terms are usually 2-3 years. Stipends for Poets Laureate range from \$1,000 per year to \$35,000 per year, depending on the scope of work, and the majority of organizations had contracts or MOUs with their Poets Laureate. Most organizations allocate a budget to support the Poet Laureate’s activities, and staff time to coordinate activities varied widely based on the scope of work.

ANALYSIS

Based on research and recommendations from other successful programs, LAC proposes the following baseline scope of work for the Poet Laureate:

- Develop a project that engages community members of all ages in poetry writing and appreciation. Project should include at least four programs per year.
- Write one poem that celebrates Glendale’s rich culture and diversity, which will be

read aloud at an Arts & Culture Commission (ACC) meeting and a City Council meeting during National Poetry Month (April).

- Read poetry for at least 4 other special events throughout the City.
- Submit a poem or blog post to be shared on the LAC blog at least once per quarter.

Selection criteria for the Poet Laureate should include at minimum:

- Current Glendale resident
- History of publishing and/or performing poetry and a demonstrated record of being included or invited to present works within poetry journals, magazines, websites, and/or programs that are not predominately self-published or self-curated.
- Experience with community service and/or volunteering.
- Experience in public speaking, teaching and/or public performance.
- Able to make a commitment to serve as Poet Laureate for at least 1 year.

A selection panel would include staff, 1-2 ACC Commissioners, 1-2 poetry experts (i.e., Poets Laureate from other communities), and 1-2 other stakeholders (partners at GUSD, etc.). Poets would submit written applications, including a writing sample; a resume showcasing publication history, experience in public speaking, teaching, and/or public performances, and community outreach service and/or volunteering; and a brief proposal for a community outreach program that engages communities of diverse backgrounds. The panel would interview finalists, and the selected Poet Laureate would be announced at a City Council meeting

The timeline for the pilot if approved would be:

- October 2022
 - Reach out to community partners to recruit selection panel
- November 2022
 - Convene selection panel and finalize the selection criteria and process
 - Open applications and advertise Poet Laureate program
- December 2022
 - Close applications and interview finalists
- January 2023
 - Finalize scope of work and contract with Poet Laureate
 - Announce selected Poet Laureate at a Council meeting
- February 2023 – January 2024
 - Implement Poet Laureate Pilot Program based on scope of work
 - Determine feasibility to extend Poet Laureate Pilot Program into an on-going effort

While a Poet Laureate Pilot Program would contribute to Glendale's reputation as an arts destination, the program does not align with the Urban Art Program Plan that guides the ACC's use of the Urban Art Fund (UAF). The requested budget will support a stipend for the Poet Laureate, general supplies needed for their programs, and part-time staff hours, which are needed to support marketing for Poet Laureate events and to backfill full-time staff's existing responsibilities while they are engaged in coordinating the selection process, planning and promoting Poet Laureate programs, events and readings, and

providing support to the Poet Laureate on an on-going basis.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

Staff plan to reach out to the following organizations to recruit a selection panel, promote the program to potential applicants, and be partners in future programming:

- Local cities with existing Poet Laureate programs: Los Angeles, West Hollywood and South Pasadena
- Organizations that have poetry programming: Junior High,
- Bookstores: Abril Bookstore, Once Upon a Time, Barnes & Noble
- Educational partners: Glendale Community College and Glendale Unified School District

Additionally, staff will promote the program through the City's and LAC's social media channels and outreach to print and television media outlets.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Poet Laureate Program will cost \$20,000 which was not included as part of the FY2022-23 approved budget. Therefore, staff is requesting for an appropriation of \$20,000 from the City's fund balance. Since the program will line up with the calendar year, LAC will request unspent funds be rolled over to FY23-24 as appropriate. The appropriation request is outlined below.

Requesting Appropriation			
Amount	From (Account String)	To (Account String)	Funding Source
\$10,000	GL: 25300-1010-000	GL: 41300-1010-LAC-6000-P4105	General Fund – Undesignated Fund Balance
\$5,000	GL: 25300-1010-000	GL: 43110-1010-LAC-6000-P4105	General Fund – Undesignated Fund Balance
\$5,000	GL: 25300-1010-000	GL: 45350-1010-LAC-6000-P4105	General Fund – Undesignated Fund Balance

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

Because no possibility exists that the activity in question (Poet Laureate Program) may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA review under the common sense exemption set forth in 14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15061(b)(3).

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: The City Council may adopt:

- A Motion approving the City to pilot a Poet Laureate Program.
- A Resolution appropriating \$20,000 budget from the General fund to pilot the Poet Laureate Program.

Alternative 2: The City Council may decline to adopt a Motion and Resolution of Appropriation and, thus, decline the creation of the Poet Laureate Program.

Alternative 3: The City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Prepared by:

Nicole Pasini, Assistant Director

Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

Not applicable.