



# Florida Youth Poet Laureate

## 2026 Application Instructions

Submission Period: February 1–March 31, 2026

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### Overview

The Florida Youth Poet Laureate (FYPL) program recognizes exceptional young poets across the state of Florida who demonstrate artistic brilliance, civic engagement, and commitment to the power of poetry as a vehicle for creative expression and positive social impact. Each year, one outstanding young poet is selected to serve as the Florida Youth Poet Laureate, representing the state at literary events and serving as an ambassador for the literary arts.

A Youth Poet Laureate will be selected from each of the following eight regions by a panel of distinguished judges: Northwest, North Central, Northeast, West Central, Central, East Central, Southwest, and Southeast. From among the eight regional laureates, a single Florida Youth Poet Laureate will be selected and honored.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for the Florida Youth Poet Laureate competition, an applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be between the ages of 13 and 18 at the time of application.
- Have been nominated and recognized by a school or local community, or have otherwise had original poetry published.
- Reside in the state of Florida.

### Application Deadline

**All application materials must be submitted by March 31, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time.** Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. Applicants are urged to submit materials well before the deadline.



## Application Components

A complete application consists of the following seven components. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

### 1. Poetry Portfolio

Please upload eight original poems that reflect your current poetic achievement and sensibility. Your portfolio should demonstrate range, craft, and your emerging voice as a poet.

**Length.** Each poem should be between 12 and 60 lines. This range is intended to accommodate a variety of poetic forms, from tightly crafted shorter works to more expansive narrative or free-verse compositions.

**Content.** At least four of the eight poems should be appropriate for general audiences, including children.

**Format.** All eight poems should be compiled in a single document. Please title the document using the following naming convention:

*FIRSTNAME\_LASTNAME\_FloridaYouthPoetLaureate\_2026*

### 2. Video Introduction

Please submit a video introduction of no fewer than one minute and no more than three minutes in length. In this video, please address the following:

- a. Tell us who you are and share relevant biographical details.
- b. Explain what you appreciate about poetry and why you believe it is an important medium for creative expression.
- c. Describe your enthusiasm for serving as Florida's Youth Poet Laureate.

This video should offer the judges insight into your personality, your passion for poetry, and your readiness to serve in a public literary role.



**Format.** Accepted file formats are .mov and .mp4. Please title the video using the following naming convention:

***FIRSTNAME\_LASTNAME\_VideoIntro\_2026***

*Note: The quality of video production will not be an evaluation factor. The purpose of this video is to enable judges to hear you speak naturally about your poetry and your aspirations.*

### **3. Filmed Reading or Recitation**

Please submit a video of no more than three minutes in which you read or recite one of the poems from your application portfolio.

**Format.** Accepted file formats are .mov and .mp4. Please title the video using the following naming convention:

***FIRSTNAME\_LASTNAME\_PoetryReading\_2026***

*Note: You are not required to memorize or perform your work in any particular style. Please film yourself reading or reciting your work clearly. If your selected poem exceeds three minutes in length, you may present an excerpt.*

### **4. Civic Engagement and Social Impact Statement**

Please submit a written statement of no more than 250 words describing your leadership, civic engagement, and service to your community. This statement should address how you have used or intend to use your voice—through poetry or other means—to contribute to your community and effect positive change.

In your statement, you may wish to address any of the following:

- Volunteer work, community organizing, or service projects you have led or participated in.
- Ways in which you have used poetry or the literary arts to engage with social issues or to uplift others.
- Leadership roles you have held in school, community organizations, or literary groups.
- Your vision for how you would use the platform of Florida Youth Poet Laureate to make a meaningful impact.



## 5. Letter of Recommendation

Please upload one recommendation letter from a current or former teacher. The letter should speak to the following areas:

- **Literary and artistic achievement.** The recommender should address the applicant's development as a poet, including the quality, originality, and maturity of the applicant's work.
- **Civic engagement.** The recommender should comment on the applicant's involvement in community life, public service, or activities that demonstrate a commitment to civic responsibility.
- **Social impact.** The recommender should describe how the applicant's work or actions have contributed to the well-being of others, fostered dialogue, or inspired positive change.

The letter should be submitted as a PDF or Word document (.pdf or .docx) and should be uploaded by the applicant as part of the complete application package.

## 6. Current Photograph

Please upload a recent, high-quality headshot photograph of yourself. This photograph may be used in connection with the program if you are selected as a regional laureate or as the Florida Youth Poet Laureate.

## 7. Short Personal Biography

Please upload a short personal biography written in the third person (200 words or fewer). This biography should highlight your background, interests and work as a poet.

## Evaluation Criteria

All submissions will be evaluated by a panel of distinguished judges using the same rubric. The evaluation is organized into two broad categories: Artistic Achievement and Civic Engagement and Social Impact.



## **Artistic Achievement**

The artistic merit of each applicant's work will be assessed according to the following three criteria:

### **Creativity**

Judges will look for works that are original, fresh, and inventive and that contain a strong concept or feeling at their core.

### **Dedication to Craft**

Judges will look for technical competence as demonstrated through a mastery of language and the skilled employment of form and convention. In addition, judges will value inventive style and will be attentive to works that demonstrate the writer's willingness to take risks and experiment when appropriate.

### **Promise**

Judges will look for the emergence of the writer's unique style, sensibility, and perspective.

## **Civic Engagement and Social Impact**

In addition to artistic achievement, judges will evaluate each applicant's demonstrated commitment to civic engagement and social impact. This assessment will be based on the applicant's Civic Engagement and Social Impact Statement and the Letter of Recommendation. Judges will consider the depth of the applicant's community involvement, the quality and sincerity of the applicant's leadership, and the extent to which the applicant has used or aspires to use poetry as a force for positive change.

## **Selection Process**

The highest-ranked poets from each of the eight regions will be chosen to represent their respective regions as Regional Youth Poets Laureate. From among the eight regional laureates, a single Florida Youth Poet Laureate will be selected and honored. The Florida Youth Poet Laureate will be the poet who best exemplifies artistic brilliance, presents a compelling body of work, and demonstrates a deep commitment to the craft and to promoting poetry.

**The Florida Youth Poet Laureate is announced each year in the fall.**



## **Awards**

The Florida Youth Poet Laureate will receive the following:

- An official title and recognition as the Florida Youth Poet Laureate.
- An invitation to represent Florida at state and national literary events.
- A professional portfolio featuring the laureate's poetry and artistic work.
- A \$2,000 college scholarship to support the laureate's continuing education at the college or university the laureate attends.
- Mentorship and professional development in literary arts and creative leadership.

## **Florida Regions**

For purposes of the FYPL competition, the state of Florida is divided into the following eight regions:

1. Northwest
2. North Central
3. Northeast
4. West Central
5. Central
6. East Central
7. Southwest
8. Southeast

## **Application Checklist**

Before submitting your application, please confirm that you have included all of the following:

- Poetry Portfolio: Eight original poems compiled in a single document.
- Video Introduction: A one- to three-minute video (.mov or .mp4).
- Filmed Reading or Recitation: A video of up to three minutes (.mov or .mp4).



- Civic Engagement and Social Impact Statement: A written statement of no more than 250 words.
- Letter of Recommendation: One letter from a current or former teacher (.pdf or .docx).
- Current Photograph: A high-quality headshot.
- Short Personal Biography: A third-person biography of 200 words or fewer.

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