

Poet Laureate Program — Town of Branford, CT



The mission of Branford's Poet Laureate Program is to celebrate the value of poetry and use poetry as a means to inspire, inform, and entertain the community at large. The Branford Poet Laureate serves as the ambassador of the community's vibrant literary life, promoting its literary community and celebrating the written word.

Objectives of the Poet Laureate Programs

- Promote reading, understanding, and writing of poetry
- Promote poetry as a form of communication having value—informing, teaching, inspiring and entertaining—in the everyday life of town residents
- Inspire an emerging generation of critical thinkers and writers
- Encourage the reading and writing of literature and poetry
- Promote poetry as a form of literature that has deep roots among people of all ages and cultures
- Read poems or other examples of literature either self-authored or otherwise relevant to public events (e.g., swearing-in ceremonies, holiday celebrations, convocations, graduations) and community-based group events
- Represent Branford in the CT Coalition of Poets Laureate

Terms of Service

- The term of the Branford Poet Laureate is three years, from January to January. The Poet Laureate may apply for multiple terms, as long as they are not consecutive. In the event of a vacancy between terms, an interim Poet Laureate may be appointed by the Search and Review Committee to serve until the following January.
- The poet laureate of Branford is an honorary position and carries no stipend.

Eligibility

- To be considered, a nominee must be a recognized poet and meet the residency requirement for obtaining a library card at one of the Branford public libraries, 18 years of age or older, and available and willing to collaborate with other town poets to develop and present poetry-related activities that address the objectives of the laureate program.
- Interested poets can self-nominate or be nominated by others.

Criteria

- Breadth of experiences in poetry and public readings of poems, including writing, publishing, teaching, critiquing, leading groups, planning and presenting activities, and attending courses related to poetry.
- Comfort level with public speaking.
- Ability and willingness to advance poetry in the public domain, and to participate in various public gatherings and educational sessions throughout his or her term.
- Distinguished achievements.

Application Review and Selection Process

A Search & Review Committee, the members of which are appointed by the James Blackstone Memorial Library, will be comprised of the following representatives:

- A member of the library board
- The Library Director
- A member(s) of the local education community with appropriate credentials
- A representative of the Branford Arts & Cultural Alliance
- The present or a former poet laureate from Branford, if available and not a nominee

Application Process

All nominees must submit the following information:

- A completed application form, available for download from the Blackstone Library's website
- A brief author's statement or personal philosophy that describes how the nominee intends to approach the scope of the work and the objectives of this program
- A sample of up to five poems by the nominated poet, citing sources if the work has been published
- A resume or CV
- Two letters of recommendation

Application Deadline: **October 16, 2026**

All materials must be addressed to the Blackstone Library Poet Laureate Search & Review Committee. Hand deliveries must be received no later than 5 p.m. on the deadline date. Applications may be submitted in person, by mail or by email. Mail deliveries must be postmarked on or before the deadline date. Submissions will not be returned.

Email submissions to Library Director Katy McNicol: kmcnicol@blackstonelibrary.org

Mailing & Hand Delivery Address:

Blackstone Library
758 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

Search Committee review of all nominations will be completed by the end of October. Announcement of Poet Laureate by Blackstone Library Board of Trustees in November. Reception for the Poet Laureate will take place in January of the following year.

For more information contact:

Katy McNicol, Library Director
James Blackstone Memorial Library
758 Main Street
Branford CT 06405
203-488-1441 x 312

kmcnicol@blackstonelibrary.org (write "Poet Laureate" in the subject line).

Adopted by the Board of Trustees July 12, 2023



James Blackstone Memorial Library Poet Laureate Application Form and Materials

Submit application along with the following documents: brief artist's statement or personal philosophy that describes how the nominee intends to approach the scope of the work and the objectives of this program; a sample of up to five poems (published or unpublished); a copy of nominee's resume or CV; two letters of recommendation to: Library Director Katy McNicol at kmcnicol@blackstonelibrary.org or Blackstone Library ATTN: Poet Laureate Search Committee, 758 Main Street, Branford, CT 06405. Applications will be accepted through October 16, 2026.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please include the following, if applicable (attach separate page if necessary):

Memberships in literary organizations:

Publications where your work has appeared:

List literary awards and dates awarded:

List of poetry-related experience including writing, publishing, teaching, critiquing, leading groups, planning and presenting activities, attending poetry courses, and reading poems in public.

Please be sure the applicant's name appears on every page submitted. Materials will not be returned to the applicant.

I, _____, authorize my name to stand for nomination for the position of Poet Laureate of Branford, CT and affirm that I am 18 years of age or older and that I currently reside in Branford. I also verify that the representations made in this application are true and complete and that the work samples submitted with my application are my own work.

Applicant's signature: _____ Date: _____

**Applications must be received no later than 5:00 pm on October 16, 2026.
Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.**