

NEWS RELEASE

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City of Nanaimo seeks next Youth Poet Laureate

Calling all young poets to apply for Nanaimo's literary leadership opportunity

Summary

The City of Nanaimo is now accepting applications for the role of Youth Poet Laureate. Open to youth ages 13 to 24, this unique opportunity invites emerging literary talent to serve a two-year term (beginning January 2026) as the City's literary ambassador. Applications will be accepted until Oct. 19, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. (Pacific Time).

The Youth Poet Laureate plays a vital role in amplifying youth voices, fostering a culture of creativity, inclusivity and civic engagement. Appointed by City Council, the selected poet will create original work, present at civic events and lead youth-focused poetry initiatives in the community. The role is meant to inspire young people to express themselves through poetry and spoken word while creating connection across generations and communities.

The selected Youth Poet Laureate will be mentored by Nanaimo's current Poet Laureate, Neil Surkan and will have opportunities to collaborate with local partners including the Nanaimo Harbourfront Library. Past Youth Poet Laureates have left an indelible mark on Nanaimo's cultural landscape, including Kailey DeFehr (2017 – 2018), Valina Zanetti (2019-2021) and Paige Pierce (2024-2026).

Young poets interested in applying should demonstrate a passion for the literary arts, a history of community engagement and a vision for how they would contribute to Nanaimo's cultural life in the role. Public speaking skills, originality and the ability to connect with youth audiences will also be considered.

Complete guidelines, eligibility details and application information can be found on the [Youth Poet Laureate page on the City website](#)

Strategic Link: The Poet Laureate program aligns with the goals of the City of Nanaimo's City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined by recognizing culture as a significant contributor to the city's quality of life, recognizing and promoting the role that culture and the creative sector play in the community with respect to community identity and quality of life.

Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo is now accepting applications for the role of Youth Poet Laureate. Open to youth ages 13 to 24, this unique opportunity invites emerging literary talent to serve a two-year term (beginning January 2026) as the City's literary ambassador.
- Appointed by City Council, the selected poet will create original work, present at civic events and lead youth-focused poetry initiatives in the community.
- Applications will be accepted until Oct. 19, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. (Pacific Time).

Quotes

"Our youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, they are the cultural creators of today. The Youth Poet Laureate program provides a platform for bold, creative expression that helps shape the identity and spirit of our city. I look forward to seeing the talent and vision our next Youth Poet Laureate will bring to Nanaimo."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"We're proud to support young poets in stepping into leadership through the arts. The Youth Poet Laureate program gives space for creative expression, connection and advocacy – led by youth, for youth. We invite young poets to bring their talent, insight and imagination to this exciting opportunity."

Jaime-Brett Sine
Culture Coordinator
City of Nanaimo

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View the online edition for more information -

<https://www.nanaimo.ca/NewsReleases/NR250716CityOfNanaimoSeeksNextYouthPoetLaureate.html>