

NEWS RELEASE

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City of Nanaimo invites applications for 2027–2029 Poet Laureate

Local poets are invited to apply for a two-year term celebrating and advancing literary arts in Nanaimo

Summary

The City of Nanaimo is inviting applications for the position of Poet Laureate for the 2027–2029 term. Serving as the City's literary ambassador, the Poet Laureate raises the profile of literary arts in Nanaimo by creating and presenting poetic works and activities that reflect our community, our place and our times. The successful candidate will engage and inspire residents while collaborating with community partners to celebrate the power of poetry.

Since the program was established in 2014, the City of Nanaimo's Poet Laureates have included Naomi Beth Wakan (2014-2017), Tina Biello (2017-2020), Kamal Parmar (2021-2024) and current Poet Laureate Neil Surkan (2024-2026). Each has made meaningful contributions to Nanaimo's literary community by fostering creativity, encouraging dialogue and connecting people through poetry.

Nanaimo's next Poet Laureate will have a demonstrated history of engaging with the literary community and will bring their own artistic vision, experience and community connections to this civic role. Throughout the two-year term, the Poet Laureate will collaborate with City staff and community organizations to develop poetry initiatives, present original work and create opportunities for people of all ages to connect through the literary arts. Through public readings, workshops, civic events and other community initiatives, the Poet Laureate helps make poetry accessible and meaningful while celebrating Nanaimo's diverse voices, stories and sense of place.

Complete program guidelines, eligibility requirements and application information are available on [the City's website](#).

Applications for the 2027-2029 Poet Laureate program must be submitted by Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. (Pacific Time).

Strategic Link: The Poet Laureate program aligns with the goals of the City of Nanaimo's City Plan by creating a vibrant culture of innovation, stewardship and partnership to encourage a diverse and healthy economy now and into the future, supporting arts and culture as an integral part of everyday life.

Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo is accepting applications for the 2027–2029 Poet Laureate.
- The Poet Laureate serves as Nanaimo's literary ambassador, creating opportunities for residents to experience and engage with poetry.
- Complete program guidelines, eligibility requirements and application information are available on the City's website: <https://www.nanaimo.ca/parks-recreation-culture/poetry/poet-laureate/apply-to-be-nanaimo-s-poet-laureate-2027-2029>.
- Applications for the 2027-2029 Poet Laureate program must be submitted by Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. (Pacific Time).

Quotes

"The Poet Laureate plays an important role in celebrating creativity and fostering connection throughout our community. Through poetry, this position encourages reflection, conversation and belonging while helping showcase the richness of Nanaimo's literary community. We are grateful to our current Poet Laureate, Neil Surkan, for his creativity, dedication and the meaningful contributions he has made during his term. I encourage local poets to apply for this unique opportunity to share their voice and help shape our city's cultural landscape for years to come."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

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View the online edition for more information -

<https://www.nanaimo.ca/NewsReleases/NR260715CityOfNanaimoInvitesApplicationsFor20272029PoetLaureate.html>