



**CALL FOR ARTISTS**  
**Request for Proposals (RFP)**  
**City of Wausau Poet Laureate**

**INTRODUCTION**

The city of Wausau (City) is seeking applications from interested and qualified artists to provide literary art services for the Wausau Poet Laureate Program. The Artist selected through this competitive RFP process would become Wausau's second Poet Laureate.

Funding for the Poet Laureate is provided by the City. The City's Arts Commission will administer the process of Artist selection and oversee the Artist during the two-year Poet Laureate term.

This RFP describes the project, the required scope of services, the Artist selection process, and the information to be included in the Proposal (i.e., application). Failure to submit information in accordance with this RFP's requirements and procedures may be cause for disqualification.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE**

The selected Artist will become the City's official Poet Laureate, serving as an ambassador and advocate for poetry, spoken word and the literary arts. The Poet Laureate is expected to produce quality original works inspired by and in response to local conditions, as well as facilitate appreciation of the art form through public readings and engagement.

The goals of the City's Poet Laureate Program are to:

- Promote poetry as an art form
- Expand access to the literary arts
- Connect the community to poetry
- Promote poetry as a voice that contributes to a sense of place

The Poet Laureate is expected to represent Wausau and the literary arts through activities related to poetry and spoken word; create and present original works at selected City events, which may include readings at Common Council meetings and

City events; and participate in the annual Central Wisconsin Book Festival at the Marathon County Public Library.

Writers are encouraged to talk with city leaders, planners and the mayor's office, as well as local organizations, about possible venues or events for presenting their original poetry and/or giving readings from others' published poetry. Projects could take the form of reading poems at City Council meetings or kicking off events like Concerts on the Square or the Whitewater Release or could celebrate the first local sign of a robin in spring or "back to school" in fall. Preference is for some in-person readings, though plans for involving even more of the community could lead to creation of poem films (for example) to be shared on social media or other publications in traditional local media--or poems in chalk during Chalk Fest. Creativity is encouraged, and ideas could be shared in the applicant's cover letter.

The position will last two years from the time of contract execution. The selected Artist is expected to collaborate periodically with City staff, including the Mayor, and the Arts Commission. A new Poet Laureate will be selected through a competitive RFP at the end of the full term.

## **BUDGET**

To honor the poet laureate's achievements and defray expenses incurred in presenting poetry at City-sponsored events, the City of Wausau will award the poet laureate a stipend of \$400.00 (\$200.00 per year of the two-year term). The Poet Laureate is encouraged to accept honoraria or remuneration from other organizations hosting events that include the poet laureate or events in which the poet laureate presents poetry.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants must live or work in Wausau, or otherwise be able to make a case in their cover letter for their strong connections to Wausau and ability to be here in person for at least some occasions during their tenure as poet laureate.

Applicants must be over 16 years of age. No preference will be given to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, military status, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical or mental disability. Individuals with conflicts of interest are not eligible.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

A jury of three to four members, approved by the city's Arts Commission, shall be convened to review the Poet Laureate applications. The selection jury will recommend to the full Arts Commission a Poet Laureate. The Commission's

recommendation will be communicated to the Common Council for formal acceptance or rejection.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

EVENT	DATE
Release Request for Proposals (RFP)	June 5, 2023
Application Deadline	July 17, 2023
Review of Applications by Jury and Arts Commission	July 17-24, 2023
Final Selection of Poet Laureate (by Common Council)	August 8, 2023
Agreement Executed with Final Scope	September 1, 2023

### SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Contents of the application shall include a cover letter and samples of past work.

The cover letter shall include full contact information and contain information for the jury that may not be conveyed through the work samples. In addition, the cover letter should:

- 1.) Outline the applicant's vision and plan for their work in this role,
- 2.) Convey relevant background experiences,
- 3.) Discuss work history, connections to Wausau, or other information to help support the application.

A maximum of five (5) original poems and/or videos of original performed spoken word may be included. All written materials shall be submitted in .pdf format and limited to nine (9) pages total. Any videos to be used as work samples shall be accessible to the review committee via web link(s).

**Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. Central Standard Time, Monday, July 17, 2023.**  
**Please email the proposal to Brad Lenz, City Planner at:**  
**brad.lenz@ci.wausau.wi.us.**

### CRITERIA

The jury will review each application for aesthetic quality, community involvement, and capacity for public engagement in the literary arts, all weighted approximately equal.

#### *Aesthetic Quality*

- Do the written or recorded work samples exhibit strong aesthetic merit?

- Are the works consistently strong? Does the applicant produce poetry on a regular basis?

*Community Involvement*

- Does the applicant demonstrate a history of involvement and activity within the literary arts?

*Potential for Engagement*

- Does the proposal support the poet's ability to engage Wausau's citizens in meaningful ways to further the literary arts in our community?

**ADMINISTRATION**

The selected Poet Laureate will enter into an agreement with the City. The Poet Laureate will manage their own schedule, be the point of contact for all programming inquiries from the public, arrange details for their programs and coordinate press releases with the City's staff.

If a poetry reading at an official City occasion is one item on the agreed scope of work, the City reserves the right to review the proposed poem(s) beforehand (either their own or the work of another poet(s)).

The Poet Laureate will help to facilitate and transition the successor Poet Laureate. The City reserves the right to cancel or discontinue the Poet Laureate term of service at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice to the poet or public.

**ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

All statements of qualifications received will be evaluated by a jury selected by the Arts Commission. Once a finalist or group of finalists is selected, answers to specific questions may be requested orally or in writing.

Selection will be based on the overall strength of each application, and the evaluation is not restricted to considerations of any single factor.

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications or portions thereof without stated cause. In the selection of a finalist, the City by its proper officials shall attempt to negotiate and reach a final agreement with the finalist. If the City, for any reason, is unable to reach a final agreement with this finalist; the City then reserves the right to reject such finalist and negotiate a final agreement with another finalist who has the next most viable proposal. The City may also elect to reject all proposals and re-issue a new RFQ.

The City is not bound to accept the proposal with the lowest cost but may accept the proposal that demonstrates the best abilities and qualifications to meet the needs of the City. The City reserves the right to waive any formalities, defects, or irregularities, in any application, response, and/or submittal where the acceptance, rejection, or waiving of such is in the best interests of the City. The City reserves the right to disqualify any application, before or after opening, upon evidence of collusion, intent to defraud, or any other illegal practice on the part of the applicant.

Any current licensure or non-discrimination claims against you/your organization and those having occurred in the past five years, especially any resulting in claims or legal judgments against you must be disclosed in the proposal.

**SIGNATURE BLOCK**

Please return this page with your application or duplicate the information in your cover letter.

The undersigned hereby certifies:

- ( ) familiarization with all terms, conditions, and specifications herein stated,
- ( ) artist/organization is qualified to perform work and services as proposed,
- ( ) that the application submitted is valid until \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number