

How does this work?

- The first round of judging will be anonymous, based solely on the *content*, *craft*, and *voice* of the submitted poems.
- Notifications will go out mid-May, at which time the applicants moving to the second round will be asked to provide a letter of support from an adult sponsor.
- The poets who score the highest will move to the second round. They will be judged on *performance* and *leadership* based on the letter of recommendation, artist statement, any awards or community service included in the application, as well as their performance in the live virtual reading and interview panel before the judges June 4th.
- The Youth Poet Laureate will be the poet who scores the highest total in both rounds. The Vice Laureate is the poet with the second highest score who would become the Laureate if the Laureate cannot complete the full year. Both will be announced at a virtual event held early August at the public event with the three other finalists. These 5 poets will have opportunities to create projects, or host programs, or perform at events throughout the year and beyond.

What if I know one of the judges?

- To be fair, we cannot consider applications from family members of current judges, funders and program sponsors who have significant influence over the contest criteria or outcome.
- If someone in your family is actively working on this year's contest, you are not eligible. This "conflict of interest" policy applies only to those partners who are "coordinating, influencing or judging" during the 2022 competition.

Judges will use the following criteria to evaluate applicants:

CONTENT - The poet's ability to examine their personal truths and make connections to a larger community.

Content Qualities:

- The poems engage in the process of sharing the poet's personal truths and resonate a sincere expression of their ambitions and beliefs.
- The poet critically investigates the status quo, societal norms, assumptions, and/or dominant beliefs.
- The poet is able to recognize themselves as a valuable member of their community and brings up issues or questions that concern that community, particularly other young people.
- The poet reflects an awareness of their ongoing responsibilities as a citizen of the world.
- The poet's work serves as a call to action for any issue(s) impacting Alameda County and/or Alameda County youth today.

CRAFT - The poet's command of poetic craft and purposeful breaks with convention.

Craft Qualities:

- The poet shows a command of language, rhythm, symbolism, metaphor, form, and other poetic devices as creative tools.
- The poet intentionally plays with or manipulates traditional literary convention (i.e. spelling, grammar, verb tense) to highlight lines or ideas.
- The poet's voice is consistent throughout each individual poem.

VOICE - The poet's ability to write both honestly and authentically.

Voice Qualities:

- The poet's work evokes emotion.
- The poet conveys a strong viewpoint or a deep consideration of the subject matter.
- The poems could inspire young people across boundaries of race, class, gender, religion, geography, etc.

- The poet risks something; tackles personally difficult or controversial subjects with boldness and insight.
- The poet conveys their experience in an honest, original way.
- The poet gives proper credit to the source if another artist's work is sampled in a poem and/or uses quotation marks to indicate borrowed text.

LEADERSHIP (final round only) - The poet's potential for leading, inspiring, mentoring and representing the county of Alameda and its youth.

Leadership Qualities:

- The poet has experience or potential to inspire others to write, read, and listen to poetry.
- The poet uses their art to foster a culture that celebrates voice and empowers creative expression.
- The poet has the ability or the potential to speak for and about the County of Alameda and its youth in front of a variety of audiences.
- The poet has an interest in community service, education and improvement, and an ability to represent a collective and speak beyond their own self-interest to include the interests, struggles, and concerns of their community and the world.

PERFORMANCE (final round only) - How the poet breathes life into a poem.

Performance Qualities:

- The performance of the poem elicits an emotional response.
- The poet's presence is made strong by their use of eye contact, confidence, and ability to engage with the audience.
- The poet's voice is clear and easy to understand. The poet utilizes the microphone adequately to project their voice.
- The poet uses their body and movement to fortify the poem.
- The poet's language is fluid and fluent.