



**City of Long Beach**

*Working Together to Serve*

**Memorandum**

Date: August 14, 2019

To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.M.W.*

From: Glenda Williams, Director of Library Services *G.Williams*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Youth Poet Laureate Program**

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At its April 16, 2019 meeting, the City Council requested the City Manager to work with the Department of Library Services and the Arts Council of Long Beach to establish a Youth Poet Laureate Program in Long Beach. The purpose of this memorandum is to identify the goals and potential partners for a Youth Poet Laureate Program, highlight potential program elements, and estimate the fiscal impact of such a program.

### **National Youth Poet Laureate Program**

The national Youth Poet Laureate Program (Program) celebrates and uplifts the artistic achievements of our youth by providing year-round literary arts, civic engagement, and performance opportunities. The Program is an initiative of Urban Word, a national nonprofit based in New York City, in collaboration with local youth literary arts organizations. It was launched in New York City in 2008, and has since spread to more than 41 cities across the country, including Oakland, Seattle, Houston, and Baltimore. In the Southern California region, Los Angeles has one of the longest-standing programs in the country, and Santa Monica is currently establishing a local program.

### **Youth Poet Laureate Program in Long Beach**

In Long Beach, the purpose of the Program will be to not only develop and cultivate the unique voices of Long Beach youth, but to also develop platforms for them to be heard. The Program's free writing and performance programs for teens will help manifest our commitment to critical literacy: literacy that extends beyond "reading and writing" and engages knowledge of self, community, and society at large. This program will supplement our youth with resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV) building methods, as well as learning the professional ethic that comes with creating an award-winning portfolio. One of the most important outcomes will include the greater goal of nurturing creative, professional, and civically engaged young leaders.

Staff from the City Manager's Office and Library Services Department have met with Urban Word, and have reached out to neighboring cities that have experience hosting this program. In summary, Urban Word can provide support for developing promotional materials, augmenting programming, and assist with event and workshop planning and judging panel programs. Library Services staff will be responsible for providing program coordination, including developing and delivering programming, provide staff support, venues for meetings

and events, and resources for related workshops. The Arts Council of Long Beach will be responsible for providing support in convening workshops, events, and panels, and assist with identifying poet mentors.

**Program Description**

Please see the table below for a variety of program elements recommended as part of the overall Youth Poet Laureate Program in Long Beach.

<b>Workshops</b>	
Description	Led by esteemed local poets, these workshops provide a space for youth applicants to not only receive feedback on their poems, but also guidelines for putting together their poetry portfolio, CV and supplemental application materials. These sessions will be held at Long Beach Public Library locations.
<b>Judging Panel</b>	
Description	Library Services staff will work with program partners to promote the call for submissions. Staff and the Arts Council will then convene a judging panel of local poetry leaders, leadership from partner organizations, and city officials to review all applications. The panel will select up to 15 finalists, including 5 Poet Ambassadors, and the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate.
<b>Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate Commencement Performance</b>	
Description	This event will celebrate up to 15 finalists. Each poet will perform their original work, and at the culmination of the event, five Long Beach Youth Poet Ambassadors and the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate will be celebrated.
<b>Library Tour</b>	
Description	The Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Ambassadors will host readings at select Long Beach Public Library locations, that includes a teen open mic and themed performances focusing on civic engagement and social impact.
<b>Laureates' Reading at Beyond Baroque</b>	
Description	All regional Youth Poet Laureate Programs and Beyond Baroque will host a public reading of the Youth Poet Laureates, paired with past and present adult laureates from across Los Angeles County.
<b>Mentorship</b>	
Description	Local poets will work with the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate on workshopping, shaping, and developing the laureate's first collection of poems.

**Fiscal Impact**

A breakdown of estimated costs associated with the Youth Poet Laureate Program is provided below.

Description	Estimated Cost
Urban Word Youth Poet Laureate Membership Fee	\$500
Prizes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Poet Laureate award \$1,500</li> <li>• 5 Poet Ambassador awards \$500/per</li> </ul>	\$4,000
Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend a total of 4 workshops at \$250/per</li> </ul>	\$1,000
Judging Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend stipend for 5 judges at \$250/per</li> </ul>	\$1,000
Commencement Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catering and misc. supplies</li> </ul>	\$1,000
Beyond Baroque <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misc. costs for participation</li> </ul>	\$1,000
Mentorship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend stipend for 20 hours of mentorship at \$75/per</li> </ul>	\$1,500
Library Program Coordination Staff Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 180 hours</li> </ul>	\$9,900
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS</b>	<b>\$19,900</b>

The Department of Library Services doesn't have the funds to support the proposed Youth Poet Laureate Program as described. Options could include reducing another service to free up resources, partner with interested groups to raise donations or outside funding for this program, or provide a new source of City General Fund dollars. Funding will need to be identified and approved by the City Council to implement this new program.

For additional information, please contact Glenda Williams, Director of Library Services, at (562) 570-6016 or [Glenda.Williams@lbpl.org](mailto:Glenda.Williams@lbpl.org).

CC: CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY  
 LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR  
 TOM MODICA, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER  
 KEVIN JACKSON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER  
 REBECCA GARNER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY TO THE CITY MANAGER  
 MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (REF. FILE #19-0354)  
 DEPARTMENT HEADS