

CALL FOR POET PERFORMERS 2026 MISSISSAUGA POETRY SLAM

Submission Deadline: April 16, 2026

1. Background

Mississauga's 7th Annual Poetry Slam will take place on April 23, 2026 at the Hazel McCallion Central Library, in the Noel Ryan Auditorium. This opportunity is open to Mississauga-based poets and spoken word artists ages 14 - 24. Artists are invited to complete a submission package to be considered to perform in the Slam. Submissions must include original content ONLY. Applicants can only perform a poem they have written themselves. The Poetry Slam will be scored and prizes will be offered to the top three poets.

Applicants are asked to read this document carefully to ensure a complete submission.

2. Selection Criteria

Applications from applicants wishing to perform at the Slam will be evaluated by a selection committee made up of City staff and Mississauga's Poet Laureates using the following criteria:

- artistic merit and quality
- appropriateness to the venue/program goals
- age-appropriateness*

*Content of the poem must be suitable for a family audience and cannot be offensive or inappropriate.

3. How to Apply

Complete the application and upload submission requirements found here. Applicants will receive confirmation that their submission was received. Submissions will not be returned. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Submissions must include:

- A complete application
- A word document or PDF of your full poem
- A sample of performance: either an audio or video recording of you reciting your poem in one of the following formats: mp3, .wma, .wav, or .mov

4. Selection Process and Conditions of Entry

- Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a Selection Committee consisting of city staff and Mississauga's Poet Laureates.
- Successful applicants will be notified directly with opportunities.
- Inclusion in the Mississauga Poetry Slam may involve being photographed and/or recorded. Images will be used for promotional purposes (may include social media) and will be preserved for administration, program development and archival purposes.
- The City will not be responsible for electronic submissions that are not received due to technology malfunctions (e.g. file sizes, systems crash, incompatible software, etc.).
- Applicants must be available for the date and time of the Mississauga Poetry Slam – Thursday, April 23, 2026 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM.

5. Poetry Slam Rules

- You can only perform a poem that you have written.
- Time limit: 3 minutes. For performances that go over this time, time penalties will be deducted from the performer's final score.
- No props or costumes. Memorization is optional.
- Content of the poem must be suitable for a family audience and cannot be offensive or inappropriate. You must submit your poem at the time of applying to the poetry slam.
- Costs for travel, transportation, accommodation, meals or any other expenses are the responsibility of the artist.
- You must submit a copy of the poem you wish to recite at the slam. Any changes to your submission must be approved prior to your performance.

Mississauga Poetry Slam Points and Penalties: If selected to participate, the criteria below outlines how performances will be assessed on the day of the poetry slam.

Scoring

There will be three judges at the poetry slam. Scoring will be based on content, delivery, and impact for a score of up to (30) points, with (10) points in each category.

SCORING CRITERIA	
Judges will be scoring out of (10) points in each of the following categories, with the following criteria:	
Content	Reflection of the literary elements and central themes/ideas of the poem.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use and applications of literary or stylistic elements (“poetic language” through word choice, figurative language, metaphors, or other elements) ● Theme of the poem – is it apparent? Does the poem reflect an understanding of this topic, and how does the writer decide to embrace it? ● Organization and flow of ideas; use of structure and rhythm.
Delivery	Reflecting on the performance elements of the poet’s recitation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The poet’s style, pace, volume, intonation, and/or other performative elements. ● Relevancy and incorporation of the poet’s choices in delivery of their poem. ● Stage presence, non-verbal delivery, and audience engagement.
Impact	Reflecting of the significance of the poem, impact, and influence.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did the performer’s work impact or influence the audience? ● Did the performance make an impression or evoke any emotions? ● What were the impressions of the work on the judges?

Penalties

Time: The maximum time for each performer is 3 minutes with a 10 second grace period. The timer will begin with the poet’s initial contact with the audience. For poets that exceed this time limit, a (0.5) point penalty will be deducted (from the performer’s average score) for every 10 seconds over 3:10:00, or part thereof. Therefore, for a performer’s final time of 3:15:00, a (0.5) point penalty will apply; a final time of 3:25:00 will have a (1.0) point penalty, and so on.

Inappropriate or offensive content: If the content of the poem is deemed inappropriate or offensive, or if the poem differs from the original work the performer submitted for screening, then the performer risks disqualification or a penalty that is up to the discretion of the judges.

Calculation of Final Scores: The points will be averaged across the three judges. Any penalties will be deducted from the average score to produce the final scores. The top (3) performers with the highest final scores will be recognized as champions of the Poetry Slam.*

***Note:** To respect each individual performer, final scores will not be released or published.

Reserved Rights of the City of Mississauga:

The City of Mississauga, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to request clarification or additional information, as it deems necessary to evaluate submissions; to determine suitability of the submission and capability of the prospective performer; to select the performer(s) that it deems most appropriate for the project; to make no selection or to cancel this process at any time; and to issue public announcements regarding the competition.

This document and any submissions in response to it by prospective performers do not create any binding obligations on the City, the prospective performer or any other party.

For More Information Contact: Eldiana Begovic
Supervisor, Culture Programs
Recreation and Culture Division, City of Mississauga
Phone: 905-615-3200 x8182
Email: Eldiana.Begovic@mississauga.ca

Personal information is collected under the authority of Section 11 of the Municipal Act, 2001 for the purpose of evaluating applicants. It will also be used to contact the individual(s) chosen for the position. Questions about the collection of this personal information should be directed to the Supervisor, Culture Programs, Recreation and Culture, Living Arts Centre, Mississauga and 905-615-3200 x8182.