



## **New Jersey State Council on the Arts Request for Proposals – New Jersey Poetry Out Loud Proposal Deadline: April 22, 2021**

This document is also [available in Spanish](#).

### **BACKGROUND**

Poetry Out Loud (POL) is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life. The [national Poetry Out Loud program](#) is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, The Poetry Foundation, and the state arts agencies of the United States. Since 2005, Poetry Out Loud has grown to reach more than 3 million students and 50,000 teachers from 10,000 schools in every state, Washington, DC, the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

In [New Jersey](#), POL is a project of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (State Arts Council) in collaboration with regional partners (nonprofit arts education and performing arts organizations), ArtPride NJ Foundation, and CavanKerry Press. Together, they organize New Jersey's 21 counties by geographic region - in response to a growing participation base. POL is open to all public, charter, parochial school and home school students grades 9-12, or the age/grade equivalent. In New Jersey, middle schools are invited to implement the New Jersey Poetry Out Loud (NJPOL) curriculum; however, they are not eligible to participate in the contests.

The Council is entering its 16th year as a leader in the nation, second only to California, in the implementation of the Poetry Out Loud program. In 2018-2019, NJPOL reached 159 public, private, charter, and parochial high schools, engaging 704 teachers and 22,586 students, representing an increase of 2,710 students.

The Council is seeking proposals from an organization to serve as lead partner to work in collaboration with the State Arts Council to manage, strengthen, and grow NJPOL within the framework and mission of the host organization and Council priorities.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

New Jersey arts organizations, units of government, and colleges or universities who meet the eligibility requirements are invited to apply.

#### **To be eligible an applicant must:**

1. be incorporated in the State of New Jersey as a non-profit corporation or a unit of government, college or university. Units of government and colleges or universities must demonstrate that it is both programmatically and administratively distinct from its parent organization and have an arts-based mission and established arts education programming serving the public.
2. be tax-exempt by determination of the Internal Revenue Service in accordance with Sections 501(c)3 or (c)4; and,
3. be in compliance with all pertinent state and federal regulations including but not limited to: Fair Labor Standards, the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988; and Section 1913 of 18 U.S.C. and Section 319 of P.L. 101-121. Apart from all other provisions of law, particularly the requirements of the

Americans with Disabilities Act, which bear upon all Council grantees, those grantees whose Council grant is composed all or in part of funds derived from the National Endowment for the Arts will be required to be in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 at the time of and as a condition of receipt of the grant under penalty of rescission and any others set forth under law.

**Applicants should have:**

1. an arts education mission and a demonstrated track record of arts education programming as indicated by:
  - a. Dedicated staff and volunteers for arts education programs or projects
  - b. Verifiable long-term (more than 2 years) partnerships with schools or youth agencies
2. a board of directors responsible for the governance and administration of the organization, its programs, and finances;
3. been in existence and providing public programs or services for at least two years prior to the application;
4. an organizational expense budget of at least \$100,000;
5. one half-time administrative staff person on payroll, at minimum;
6. current regional or statewide public impact through the organization's programs or projects. Regional impact is defined as serving audiences across a three or more county region of New Jersey. If less than 30% of the audience currently served is from outside the county, the organization is classified as having "local impact."

**In addition, organizations are encouraged to critically examine its capacity in order to successfully manage a Cosponsored Grant. Are you prepared and able to:**

1. develop and manage a board-approved three-year strategic long-range plan;
2. develop and manage a three-year ADA plan for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. First-time applicants must complete the Cultural Access Network's "Self-Assessment Survey and Planning Tool" to establish a baseline by December 31, 2021. For more information regarding this requirement, please contact Mary Eileen Fouratt at [MaryEileen.Fouratt@sos.nj.gov](mailto:MaryEileen.Fouratt@sos.nj.gov) or 609-984-6815;
3. submit an audit/financial review annually within six months of your organization's fiscal year end;
4. register annually with the NJ Charities Registration Bureau and provide documentation of compliance;
5. register annually with the Division of Revenue and provide documentation of compliance; and,
6. work in SAGE to submit a Contract and Final Report by the respective deadlines each year of the grants three-year cycle;
7. jointly supervise a Program Coordinator that works primarily out of the Council's Trenton offices;
8. develop and foster relationships with program partners throughout the state;
9. develop marketing and outreach plans that engage schools and communities with a statewide reach?

**Colleges & Universities**

If the applicant is affiliated with a college, university, or municipal government, it must demonstrate that it is both programmatically and administratively distinct from its parent organization. To qualify for eligibility, the following must also be in place:

1. a community-based independent board or advisory committee that has substantial responsibility for oversight and management;
2. an arts-based mission that is separate and distinct from its parent organization;
3. dedicated staff and volunteers for its programs;
4. a budget separate from the parent organization; and
5. demonstrated community support.

- a. The applicant must receive at least 25% in revenue from sources outside the parent organization. The Council defines community support as corporate/foundation support, ticket/admission sales, and individual contributed revenue. State and/or federal grants do not satisfy the requirement.
- b. If affiliated with a college or university, the applicant must provide programs or services to the general public and must document that its activities serve 75% or more non-student or faculty audiences across a three or more New Jersey county region.

### **PERIOD OF SUPPORT**

The grant period in this cycle is July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Cosponsor multi-year grants are typically awarded with a three-year commitment, subject to contract stipulations, panel review, and available funding.

### **STAFF SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT**

**Arts Council Liaison and Advisor:** Porché Hardy, Program Officer

**NJPOL Project Staff:** Erik Stratton, NJ Poetry Out Loud Coordinator

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

Within the scope of work, the selected organization will be given, and encouraged to, fully leverage latitude for originality in its implementation and execution of the program. NJPOL requires broad outreach and promotion of the program to high schools in all 21 counties of New Jersey, distribution of educational materials to teachers and facilitators registered in the program, facilitation of NJPOL regional and state contests in partnership with regional partners, and coordination of winning student's preparation and travel for the national contest. NJPOL builds the education community by providing supplemental programming of the poetry contest for example, income producing poetry residency and professional development opportunities for middle and high schools centered on the Poetry Out Loud curriculum.

The cosponsor partner organization will be responsible for the overall management of NJPOL which includes responsibility for all communication and reporting requirements to the National Endowment for the Arts and fundraising for NJPOL programming. In addition, the organization will collaborate closely with Council staff on the development, assessment, and revisions (as needed) of program goals, benchmarks and budget. A portion of the NJPOL budget is allocated for the salary and fringe benefits to employ a full-time Program Coordinator to administer the program, jointly supervised with Council staff. The NJPOL Coordinator will be based out of the Council offices in Trenton.

Detailed information regarding Poetry Out Loud including program timeline can be found in the provided [NJPOL Partner Guide](#) and using the following links:

[New Jersey Poetry Out Loud](#)

[NJPOL State Finalists 2014 - 2018](#)

[National Poetry Out Loud](#)

[Poetry Out Loud Teacher's Guide](#)

[Poetry Out Loud Judge's Guide](#)

[Poetry Out Loud Poem Anthology](#)

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Review and reference the Evaluation Criteria in preparation of the narrative. Successful narratives are clear and convincing and are supported by budgets and links to support materials. Panelists look for evidence of solid program planning and implementation in accordance with the following criteria:

- Appropriateness of the NJPOL program to the organization’s mission, audience, and community.
- Evidence of a comprehensive statewide plan for the NJPOL program, inclusive of a plan to allocate 25% of the program budget to southern New Jersey artists, vendors, services, etc. (Ocean, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Atlantic, Cumberland, and Cape May counties) that is measurable and achievable.
- Soundness of the organization’s infrastructure to efficiently carry out the responsibilities of the cosponsored project including engaging appropriate and qualified artists and personnel assigned to the project, appropriateness of the budget and the ability to engage other resources to support and increase the capacity of the cosponsored project.
- Capacity and willingness to collaborate with arts organizations, schools, educators, communities, and artists in the state as evidenced by a demonstrated history of successful collaborations and statewide partnerships.
- Evidence of appropriate evaluation and assessment strategies to guide and develop current and future programming.
- Potential to reach high school student populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited; and engage diverse support personnel for the NJPOL program, i.e., judges, teaching artists, vendors, etc.

## **RFP TIMELINE**

**RFP Released:** March 17, 2021

**Technical Assistance Workshops:** April 1, 8, and 15, 2021 (Information follows below.)

The FY22 RFP application must be emailed to [Porche.Hardy@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Porche.Hardy@sos.nj.gov) and cc: [stephanie.nerbak@sos.nj.gov](mailto:stephanie.nerbak@sos.nj.gov) by **Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.** *Requests for extensions to the deadline will not be permitted.*

**Peer Panel Deliberation and Review:** May 2021

**Council Grants Committee Review:** June 2021

**Council vote on Award Recommendations:** Annual Meeting July 2021

## **RFP APPLICATION MATERIALS**

**Cover email:** Please enter in the subject line – FY22 NJ Poetry Out Loud RFP

**Please include a cover page with:** The name of the applicant organization, the name, phone, and email of the person to contact about the application, and signed with name, title, and signature of the executive director and board president.

## **Proposal Narrative**

The Narrative Topics are the framework for writing the narrative. Compose a narrative that will provide a panelist, who does not know your organization or your community, the ability to understand them in relation to the Council’s criteria. If you have unusual or unique circumstances that are not specifically queried, present them in the appropriate section(s). Use the required and optional support materials to reinforce specific narrative topics. Please respond to the following narrative sections in no more than eight (8) pages or approximately 32,800 characters (minimum font size 11).

## SECTION 1: PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY & PUBLIC BENEFIT

### Mission/History

State the organization's mission and briefly articulate its goals as adopted by the board and detailed in the long-range strategic plan.

### Cosponsored Project Planning

Fully describe the organization's vision for New Jersey Poetry Out Loud and how the program will be administered under the organization's leadership.

- How would NJPOL exist within the context of the organization's overall strategic plan and advance the mission and goals of the organization?
- What unique, substantial benefits does NJPOL provide to high school students and teachers that are not available from similar projects or other organizations?
- By what measurable outcomes will the organization determine the success of NJPOL?
- Discuss how NJPOL will grow or change over the next three years. Clearly identify and explain the strategies expected to achieve those goals. What resources are/will be needed? How will they be obtained?

### Participation and Engagement

Describe in geographic and demographic detail the audiences currently served by the organization.

- If applicable, state the organization's established goals for broadening, deepening and/or diversifying the participation and reach of the organization.
- Describe how the diversity of the organization's leadership, staff, and volunteers supports its participation and engagement efforts of NJPOL.
- Detail how NJPOL will be marketed within the framework of the organization's current infrastructure.

### Access

Describe barriers individuals (students, teachers, community members, etc.) looking to engage with your organization may have encountered that prevented or limited their access to participation in arts education. Describe strategies and/or efforts your organization has implemented to eliminate barriers and increase access to arts education programming.

## SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, PLANNING, AND FINANCES

### Governance/Management

How will organizational leadership handle management, fundraising, development, and advocacy in relation to NJPOL?

- Are there advisory boards or other types of volunteer groups to help leadership carry out the work of NJPOL? If so, describe that work in detail.

### Operations

Provide a solid understanding of the organization's staff structure both organizationally and for NJPOL.

- How will NJPOL be managed on a daily basis within the current workflow of the organization?
- In addition to the full-time NJPOL Coordinator, what staff roles will be assigned to support the execution of NJPOL programming?
- What percentage of individual staff time will be dedicated to the management of NJPOL?
- Describe any developed or planned process for staff training to ensure continuity in NJPOL implementation and management.
- If key staff positions are currently vacant, explain the organization's process and timeline for filling those positions.

- NJPOL requires significant technical tools and software to support its implementation. Discuss the organization's current tools used to implement email marketing, database management, website maintenance, survey tools, and online form development; and the organization's ability to integrate NJPOL into the workflow.

### **Fiscal Soundness/Financial Resources**

Provide support information that gives the panel an honest assessment of the organization's current financial picture.

- Describe how the organization will monitor its NJPOL budget.
- What are the organization's policies and procedure for ensuring sound fiscal controls?
- Discuss how the organization will secure additional sources of income and strategies to accomplish NJPOL goals and develop its potential.
- Be specific about how income projections will be realized, and the fundraising strategies used to accomplish it.
- Explain how in-kind goods and services will impact the organization and NJPOL, if applicable.
- Describe how the organization will ensure that 25% of the program budget be allocated to southern New Jersey artists, vendors, services, schools, etc.

### **SECTION 3: ADVOCACY**

#### **Public Understanding/Advocacy**

How does the organization advocate for support of the arts in New Jersey?

- Describe the specific ways that the organization will assist educational institutions serving high school students to standardize Poetry Out Loud into its curriculum.

### **SUPPORT MATERIALS**

#### **Required:**

1. Resumes of key staff: Executive/Artistic Director, Development Director, Marketing Director, Education Director
2. Board-approved three-year long-range strategic plan

#### **Optional:**

1. Link(s) to documentation of programming for high school students. This could include brief videos and photos. Please include a brief description for each link. Please include focus of program, number of attendees, name of presenter(s). Limit (5).
2. Letters of support from current collaborators/partner organizations. Limit (3)

**If providing large files, please attach one link within a ZIP file.**

### **BUDGET**

Please complete the required budget template. There is **no** Match requirement. However, if the cosponsored project budget projection is more than the NJPOL grant provided, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the organization's explanation for additional expenses and fundraising plan. A template of the current NJPOL budget [has been provided](#).

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Four opportunities will be provided to receive live grant assistance with a Council program officer. All workshops are free of charge and hosted via ZOOM: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83255073763>.

**April 1, 2021 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
& 2:00 – 3:00 pm**

[Register here.](#)

**April 8, 2021 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

[Register here.](#)

**April 15, 2021 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

[Register here.](#)



All workshop sites are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you require accessibility services, please contact the Council's Accessibility Coordinator, Mary Eileen Fouratt two weeks prior to the workshop at (609) 984-6815 (NJ Relay 711) or [maryeileen.fouratt@sos.nj.gov](mailto:maryeileen.fouratt@sos.nj.gov).

### **For more information regarding this Request for Proposal please contact:**

Porché Hardy  
Program Officer, Arts Education & Performing Arts Presenters  
New Jersey State Council on the Arts  
[Porche.hardy@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Porche.hardy@sos.nj.gov)  
609-633-1049

**All applications should be submitted as attachments via e-mail by April 22, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. to:**  
[porche.hardy@sos.nj.gov](mailto:porche.hardy@sos.nj.gov) and cc: [stephanie.nerbak@sos.nj.gov](mailto:stephanie.nerbak@sos.nj.gov).

The application process of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts can be modified or terminated at any time without prior notice unless otherwise required by applicable law. Submission of an application to the State Arts Council does not guarantee application acceptance, panel review, or a grant award.

An appeal process for this grant program is not available.