



Poetry Out Loud is a national poetry recitation contest for students in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It is a component of the State Arts Agencies (SAA) Partnership Agreement with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). State champions progress to the National Poetry Out Loud Finals in Washington, DC.

For additional information about Poetry Out Loud see the "Poetry Out Loud Organizer's Guide," at the state partners' section of [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org). For a complete version of the guide or password information for the state partners section of the website, please contact the program manager listed on the last page.

### **BASICS:**

Poetry Out Loud starts in the classroom, with participating teachers using the Poetry Out Loud teacher toolkit to teach poetry recitation and run classroom competitions. Classroom winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to a regional and/or state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals.

SAs recruit schools to implement the Poetry Out Loud curriculum in the classroom. Schools hold classroom- level and then school-level poetry recitation contests and identify a school champion. Activities should be supported by a comprehensive program planned by the SAA and any contracted partners.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

***Only schools registered with their state Poetry Out Loud coordinator are eligible for the competition.***

- Grade Level:** Only currently enrolled students in grades 9-12 are eligible, with an exception made for 8th-grade students participating in a 9th- through 12th-grade class.
- Legal Participation Requirements:** No student may be excluded from participating in Poetry Out Loud on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin. Schools may determine eligibility for classroom and school level Poetry Out Loud programming pursuant to local and state law.
- Prize Requirements:** The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded in Poetry Out Loud. State champions and runners up will need a valid tax identification number or social security number at the time that monetary prizes are issued by the Poetry Foundation.
- Travel Requirements:** The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the travel for State champions to the National Poetry Out Loud Finals. State champions (or their legal guardians) and their chaperones must complete the Poetry Foundation's [Poetry Out Loud Attestation Form](#) and submit it to the Poetry Foundation before travel to the National Poetry Out Loud Finals can be arranged by the Poetry Foundation.
- State Finals:** A student may not advance to the state finals without competing in a lower-level competition.
- Homeschooled Students:** Homeschooled students may participate by competing in a contest at a local school (at the school's discretion) or with other local homeschooled students. Contact your state coordinator for specific guidelines.
- School Not Participating?** Students unable to participate at a local school should contact their state Poetry Out Loud coordinator to discuss other opportunities for inclusion in the state's official competition.
- Repeat Champions:** Only National Champions are not eligible to compete in subsequent years.
- Relatives:** Avoiding any potential conflicts of interest (or the appearance of conflicts of interest) helps to preserve the integrity of the contest and make it fair for all students. Relatives\* of national organizers (NEA and the Poetry Foundation) may compete in school, local, regional, and state competitions, but would not be able to advance to National Finals. Relatives\* of State Art Agency Coordinators or affiliated contractors and sponsors may not compete past the school level in that particular state.\*Relatives for this age group are defined as child, sibling, or any member of the employee's household.

**AWARDS:**

Awards are made in the form of lump sum cash payments, reportable to the IRS. Tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of the winners and their families.

**1. State awards:**

Each state champion will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip (with an adult chaperone) to Washington, DC, to compete at the National Finals. The state champion’s school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry materials. One runner-up in each state will receive \$100; his or her school will receive \$200 for the purchase of poetry materials.

**2. National awards:**

A total of \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be given at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals, with a \$20,000 award for the National Champion. The second-place winner will receive a \$10,000 award; the third-place winner will receive \$5,000; and the fourth- to ninth-place finalists will each receive \$1,000. Their schools will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. There will be one honorable mention award in each semifinal competition. That student will not advance to the finals, but will receive a \$1,000 cash award and \$500 school stipend.

All awards are paid directly by the Poetry Foundation. Poetry Out Loud funding as part of the NEA Partnership Agreement grant may not be used to supplement the awards.

**TIMELINE:**

For specific dates contact the Poetry Out Loud Program Manager listed on the last page.

Month	SAA Deadlines	Details
December	First Friday - notify NEA of State's finals date	Send the date of your state finals to <a href="mailto:poetryoutloud@arts.gov">poetryoutloud@arts.gov</a> .
January	Last Friday - school lists due to NEA	Send the list of schools participating in POL in your state to <a href="mailto:poetryoutloud@arts.gov">poetryoutloud@arts.gov</a> . NEA staff will provide an Excel template for completing this task.
March	<b>Third Monday</b> - deadline for <b>State Finals</b> . State contests must take place by this day. <b>Third Thursday</b> - deadline for National Finals student registration, including poem selections and award paperwork. <b>Fourth Thursday</b> - deadline for three photos from state finals, featuring state champion. (Submit as a jpeg file of hi-res images in 16:9 ratio to <a href="mailto:poetryoutloud@arts.gov">poetryoutloud@arts.gov</a> .)	<b>If your state Poetry Out Loud finals take place <u>after</u> the third Monday in March, you risk not having your state's champion listed in the National Finals program or printed on award certificates and plaques</b>
Late April/May	National Finals in Washington, DC.	Lisner Auditorium on the George Washington University Campus
June	Last Friday - Poetry Out Loud Final Descriptive Report due.	The Poetry Out Loud Final Descriptive Report is available at <a href="https://www.poetryoutloud.org/state-partners/program-resources">https://www.poetryoutloud.org/state-partners/program-resources</a> . Send the Report to <a href="mailto:poetryoutloud@arts.gov">poetryoutloud@arts.gov</a> .

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

### **1. When will we get the funds?**

Poetry Out Loud funds are part of your NEA Partnership Agreement grant and may be requested as soon as you start incurring cost for the program during the approved period of performance for your award. See the [How to Manage your NEA Award and eGMS REACH Handbook](#) for instructions on requesting payment.

### **2. Must the grant funds be matched?**

Unless otherwise stated in your award letter, the Partnership Agreement grant must be matched one-to-one with state funds. As noted in the [General Terms and Conditions for Partnership Agreements](#), while the overall Partnership Agreement is match one-to-one, each individual component, such as Poetry Out Loud does not necessarily need to be if the match is met under another component. However, all funds allocated for Poetry Out Loud activities must be spent on this program; POL funds may not be allocated to other grant components. If it appears you are not going to use all the NEA POL funds, contact us as soon as possible.

### **3. Can we use third-party in-kind contributions as match?**

No, per the NEA's legislation, in-kind match cannot be used to meet the minimum matching requirement for your award.

### **4. How may the funds be spent?**

NEA funds may be used for administrative expenses of the state Poetry Out Loud program, including staffing, in compliance with the [General Terms and Conditions for Partnership Agreements](#). Funds may be used to send writers or teaching artists to give workshops in schools. Funds can also be sub-granted or subcontracted to a local partner—as long as the program is implemented and the state finals are held in cooperation with the state arts agency. NEA funds can be used for travel expenses to bring school-level champions to the state finals. Grant funds may also be used to pay travel costs for a SAA representative to attend the National Finals. Typically, costs include guest artists, transportation, and the state finals event.

NEA grant funds and state matching funds **may not** be used for receptions, parties, additional monetary or merchandise prizes, or any other items of cost that are noted as unallowable in 2 CFR Part 200 - Subpart E.

### **5. If we cannot pay for receptions, how do we feed students who participate in our state final event or teachers during workshops?**

Students traveling to a state final competition may be offered a per diem. Alternately, grant funds may support working lunches (excluding costs for employees of the grantee organization). If you have day-long events for students or teachers you may serve lunch or support their meals during these Poetry Out Loud related activities.

### **6. May we use funds for judge stipends at the state finals?**

Yes, SAAs may use NEA funds for stipends and/or travel expenses for judges undertaken during the period of performance of the Partnership Agreement.

### **7. Must my program be statewide?**

No, a statewide program is not a requirement.

### **8. Can state arts agencies use a partner to administer the program?**

Yes. SAAs may run Poetry Out Loud in-house, or they may contract or sub-grant out some or all of the program. Many states plan to work with partners in administering Poetry Out Loud. We do ask, however, that the SAAs stay closely involved in the program. SAAs should retain ultimate oversight and ownership of

the project, as partners with the Arts Endowment. The NEA believes that the SAAs will continue to benefit from high visibility in this program and have many resources that are necessary for the program to succeed.

**9. Is there room for other elements in Poetry Out Loud?**

Poetry Out Loud should align with your SAA’s educational priorities. To serve that need, we encourage SAAs to think creatively about artist residencies, teacher in-services, creative writing workshops, and other educational opportunities that will enhance a student’s appreciation for poetry. Of course, there is no requirement that SAAs incorporate these additional components into their programs.

**POETRY OUT LOUD CONTACTS:**

<b>Poetry Out Loud Program Manager</b>	<b>State Partnership Agreements</b>
<p>For general information about Poetry Out Loud, including how to run a state program:</p> <p><b>Lauren Miller</b>            Program Manager  <a href="mailto:millerl@arts.gov">millerl@arts.gov</a>            Phone: (202) 682-5490            Fax: (202) 682-5002</p>	<p>For information on Poetry Out Loud funding for your State or Jurisdictional Arts Agency and ways in which Poetry Out Loud is incorporated into your partnership agreement:</p> <p><b>Andi Mathis</b>            Specialist, State and Regional Partnerships  <a href="mailto:mathisa@arts.gov">mathisa@arts.gov</a>            Phone: (202) 682-5430            Fax: (202) 682-5613</p>