

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
AND POETRY FOUNDATION PRESENT



2020-2021 POETRY OUT LOUD PR Toolkit

The National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation have created this PR toolkit to guide schools, organizations, and state coordinators in creating and implementing your own media plan for Poetry Out Loud. Included are several tools you can customize to raise awareness of Poetry Out Loud among audiences in your community. Feel free to use some or all of these resources to facilitate your efforts and generate media coverage of Poetry Out Loud.

Questions on media outreach? Contact National Endowment for the Arts Public Affairs at publicaffairs@arts.gov.

For more information on the use of the logo or trademark symbol, review the [Poetry Out Loud Branding Guide](#).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Recruitment letter/blog post from National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Mary Anne Carter
2. Frequently Asked Questions
3. Poetry Out Loud talking points
4. Social media tactics for schools and state arts agencies

PR tips/resources for schools:

5. Promotional ideas and PR tips
6. Sample local winners press release

PR tips/resources for state arts agencies:

7. Sample state arts agency launch announcement press release
8. Sample public service announcement script

Note: Template materials for the state-level competitions and accompanying media outreach tips and ideas will be available at a later date.



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POETRY OUT LOUD 2020-2021 RECRUITMENT LETTER/BLOG POST

Feel free to use this recruitment letter from National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Mary Anne Carter in a blog post on your website or in your recruitment efforts.

From the desk of Mary Anne Carter, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts

Every year since 2005, the National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation work with thousands of schools and organizations nationwide to bring students a unique way to learn and love poetry. Through Poetry Out Loud™, students read, memorize, and recite classic and contemporary poems. While Poetry Out Loud competitions have traditionally been held in-person, guidelines are now available to hold virtual competitions at all stages and all of the program materials, including an anthology of more than 1,100 poems, are free and available at poetryoutloud.org. We strongly encourage teachers and organizers at all contest levels to hold virtual competitions for the 2020–2021 Poetry Out Loud season.

Poetry Out Loud not only introduces students to a wide range of poems, but results in poetry becoming a deeply ingrained part of these young people’s lives, helping them understand the true power and weight that words can hold. Poetry Out Loud can also help students improve writing and analytical skills, master public speaking, and build self-confidence—all critical skills for young people to develop.

More than four million students have participated in Poetry Out Loud over the past 15 years, many advancing from classroom competitions to school competitions to state competitions to, finally, the national finals. Non-school organizations, such as after school clubs, libraries, or non-profit organizations, may also choose to run Poetry Out Loud and have students advance to state competitions.

The national finals, which will be held virtually in Spring 2021, is an opportunity for students representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa to compete for the chance to win a grand prize of \$20,000. In total, Poetry Out Loud will award more than \$100,000 to state- and national-level winners and their schools.

Visit poetryoutloud.org to learn more about this program and connect with your [state Poetry Out Loud coordinator](#).

We hope you will take part in our 2020–2021 program and offer this opportunity to your high school students.

Mary Anne Carter
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts



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POETRY OUT LOUD 2020-2021 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Poetry Out Loud?

A partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, Poetry Foundation, and the state and jurisdictional arts agencies, Poetry Out Loud™ is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country.

The program starts in the classroom/school or at the local level with an area organization. Winners then may advance to a regional and/or state competition, and ultimately to the national finals. Awards and placements are determined solely by the judges' scores based on the Poetry Out Loud Evaluation Criteria.

Non-school organizations, such as after school clubs, libraries, or non-profit organizations, may also choose to run Poetry Out Loud. Students may only compete in one stream—either with their school or an organization. Students unable to participate at their school or a local organization should contact their state Poetry Out Loud coordinator to discuss other opportunities for inclusion in the state's official competition.

Since the program began in 2005, more than four million students and 65,000 teachers from 16,000 schools across the country have participated in Poetry Out Loud.

Where and when will Poetry Out Loud take place?

Poetry Out Loud takes place in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. High schools and organizations that choose to participate in the official competition conduct their programs and contests between September and February. State contests will be held by early March. The national finals take place in the Spring.

We strongly encourage teachers and organizers at all contest levels to hold virtual competitions for the 2020-2021 POL season. This appeal is made to ensure the safety and well-being of students, parents, teachers, and everyone involved with POL. Any organizer who declines to hold a virtual competition, and elects to hold an in-person contest, must follow all federal, state, and local guidelines in regard to slowing the spread of COVID-19. This may include wearing masks, enforcing social distancing measures, hand sanitizing, and ensuring participants and guardians are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19 prior to attending, and while participating in, a POL event. Guidelines are available on poetryoutloud.org to hold virtual competitions at all stages, including the national competition, which in 2021 will be held virtually. Please note, if you plan to share student recitation videos that are not in the public domain, poem permissions as well as student permissions are needed. Guidance is forthcoming from the Poetry Foundation.

Who can participate in the official Poetry Out Loud contest?

The official Poetry Out Loud contest is administered at the state level by state and jurisdictional arts agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. All types of high schools are welcome to participate, including public, private, parochial, independent, charter, etc., as well as homeschool students. Non-school organizations, such as after school clubs, libraries, or non-profit organizations, may choose to run Poetry Out Loud as well. Students may only compete in one stream—either with their school or an organization. Only schools and organizations registered with their state Poetry Out Loud coordinator are eligible for the competition; if you would like to get involved, contact your [state arts agency](#). Students unable to participate at their school or a local organization should contact their state Poetry Out Loud coordinator to discuss other opportunities for inclusion in the state's official competition.



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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. A Poetry Out Loud National Champion is not eligible to compete in future years.

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. More information on Poetry Out Loud rules and eligibility may be found at poetryoutloud.org.

Are schools and organizations that are not part of the official contest welcome to participate in other ways?

All of the Poetry Out Loud program materials are available for free online in the [Teachers & Organizers](#) section of the website. Using these online materials, schools and organizations are welcome to conduct their own “unofficial” poetry recitation competitions and introduce their students to classic and contemporary poetry.

Are program materials available?

Poetry Out Loud offers educators free standards-based curriculum materials, which include an online poetry anthology with more than 1,100 classic and contemporary poems, a teachers’ guide, lesson plans, and video and audio on the art of recitation. These free resources are available at poetryoutloud.org.

What are the prizes?

National Level: A total of \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be given at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals, including a \$20,000 award for the National Champion, \$10,000 for 2nd place, \$5,000 for 3rd place, and \$1,000 for 4th–9th places. The schools of each of the top nine finalists receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. There will be one honorable mention in each of three national semifinals competitions. Those students will not advance to the finals, but will each receive a \$1,000 cash award and a \$500 school stipend.

State Level: Each winner at the state level will receive \$200 and their school will receive \$500 for poetry materials. One runner-up in each state will receive \$100; their school will receive \$200 for the purchase of poetry materials.

The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded. Awards are made in the form of lump sum cash payouts, reportable to the IRS. Tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of the winners and their families. Full details on prize requirements are available in the [rules and eligibility](#) section of the website.

What are the judging criteria?

All contestants are evaluated on these criteria: physical presence, voice and articulation, evidence of understanding, dramatic appropriateness, accuracy, and overall performance. For more information regarding these criteria, please consult the [teacher’s guide](#).

How can I get more information?

Visit poetryoutloud.org for more information on this program. The website features educational resources for teachers and students, including standards-based educational materials, tips on hosting a school contest, and videos of outstanding performances.

The [Poetry Out Loud YouTube channel](#) also includes short videos from students, teachers, and others discussing Poetry Out Loud that you can use to build interest and enthusiasm for the program.

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POETRY OUT LOUD TALKING POINTS

This document is for internal use by SAA spokespeople only. Feel free to use this language in your interviews with the media.

BACKGROUND ON POETRY OUT LOUD

- The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation created Poetry Out Loud™ which is managed in partnership with state and jurisdictional arts agencies and their partners.
- Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country.
- Since the program began in 2005, more than four million students and 65,000 teachers from 16,000 schools across the country have participated in Poetry Out Loud.
- Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to the state competitions in February and March, and then to the national finals in the Spring.
- Non-school organizations, such as after school clubs, libraries, or non-profit organizations, may also choose to run Poetry Out Loud as well. Students may only compete in one stream—either with their school or an organization.
- We strongly encourage teachers and organizers at all contest levels to hold virtual competitions for the 2020–2021 POL season. Guidelines are available on poetryoutloud.org to hold virtual competitions at all stages, including the national competition, which will be held virtually in Spring 2021.
- The state arts agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa have enlisted high schools to participate in the official Poetry Out Loud program. Schools that wish to get involved should contact their [state arts agency](#).
- The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation provide program materials (teacher’s guide, online poetry anthology, and posters) for distribution to participating schools. Materials are available online at poetryoutloud.org.
- Any school nationwide may visit poetryoutloud.org to access free online program materials. Using these materials, they are welcome to conduct their own “unofficial” poetry recitation competitions to introduce their students to classic and contemporary poetry.

WHY WAS POETRY OUT LOUD CREATED? WHY IS POETRY OUT LOUD IMPORTANT?

- Arts education programs like Poetry Out Loud matter. National Endowment for the Arts research tells us that children who have arts opportunities in and out of school are much more likely to become adults who participate in the arts.
- To encourage the nation’s youth to learn about great poetry, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation jointly support Poetry Out Loud.
- Poetry Out Loud can impact students’ academic performance, such as improved writing and analytical skills.



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- Poetry Out Loud can increase students' appreciation of poetry. Through participation in Poetry Out Loud students can understand how poetry can reveal new ways to see world, foster connection and empathy, and reach a greater understanding of ourselves, our past, and others.
- Students who participate in Poetry Out Loud also showed an increase in self-confidence and found that reading and listening to poetry helped them think about situations from multiple perspectives.
- Poetry Out Loud can have a positive impact on schools, helping to build community, forging stronger connections between teachers and students, and bringing together students who may not have otherwise formed connections.
- Poetry reading is on the rise, particularly among young adults. According to the National Endowment for the Arts' 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, poetry readership is the highest on record since 2002, with the poetry-reading rate among young adults more than doubling in the prior five years.

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SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

Social media channels such as blogs, [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) are useful tools to promote Poetry Out Loud in addition to traditional media (newspapers, radio and TV, magazines, online versions of these outlets). You can find the official Poetry Out Loud social media pages here:

- [Poetry Out Loud Facebook Page](#)
- [Poetry Out Loud Twitter Page](#) (@PoetryOutLoud)
- [Poetry Out Loud YouTube Channel](#)

With social media, you play a different role: in addition to persuading traditional media to cover your story, you take on the role of the journalist—you tell your story about Poetry Out Loud directly to the public. Here are social media tips and tools to enhance your overall Poetry Out Loud communications plan.

KEY SOCIAL MEDIA IDEAS TO CONSIDER

Look at the big picture – Social media is a tool and not a strategy. Integrate social media tactics into your overall media outreach plan for Poetry Out Loud. Make sure your traditional media and social media tactics cross-reference each other (e.g., the blog points readers to the newsroom and vice versa; share your Facebook photos on your Twitter account).

What’s your goal? Clarify why you are using particular social media channels to promote Poetry Out Loud. Are you trying to reach a new audience? Drive more people to your website?

Pick and choose – Every day there are more social media platforms. Pick the ones that will best help you share your Poetry Out Loud stories and news. What type of content do you have? How much time do you have to manage a particular platform? Which platforms are popular with your target audience? Make sure you understand the social media platform, its community, and its rules.

Make a game plan – Social media tactics are as time-intensive as traditional media tactics. Know what you can sustain and create a plan. Who will write, edit, produce, and approve new content, and how frequently? Who will respond to queries; will you respond to negative posts? Will you create content to share with partners, such as tweets or photos? Note that images are key to a successful social media strategy. Social media content with visuals often has a better success rate. If possible, use a cell-phone camera to capture high-quality, digital images of your activities and events. There are multiple sites online that now offer high-quality images under a Creative Commons or Creative Commons Zero license that you can use to augment your own photos.

Find your voice – Social media users join communities that offer interesting, informative, useful, and fun content. This is a great opportunity to make poetry come alive through humor, personality, interesting perspectives, and discussion.

Use the “80/20” rule – Social media is about sharing so a good rule of thumb is to use 80 percent of your social media content to reference content by other organizations and experts. Invite the State Poet Laureate to guest post on your blog. “Retweet” a relevant post or link to an article about poetry. Then use the other 20 percent of your posts to highlight your state or school’s Poetry Out Loud announcements and conversations. Consider following the [Poetry Out Loud](#), [National Endowment for the Arts](#), and [Poetry Foundation](#) Twitter feeds for ideas on content to share.

Engage! It’s called social media for a reason. Aim for two-way conversations. If possible, enable comments on your blog, or YouTube. (But don’t forget to include a comment policy.) Consider crowd-sourced content. Think about ways you can encourage the students participating in the program—whether it’s at the classroom or local level or state level—to



share their participation in Poetry Out Loud. See what your school's social media policy will allow and if exceptions can be made to encourage participation at the school level.

Make it easy to share – Make sure your social media channels are easy to find on your website. For example, add the “follow us on Twitter/Facebook/YouTube/other” buttons to your website home page or newsroom page. Include social media channels on your press announcements and in your organizational e-signature. Mention them at your events. Tag your posts with **#POL21**, and/or **#IAmPoetryOutLoud**. Remember that social media is part of your branding effort; if possible, be consistent with the names you use on each of your social media platforms.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Blog

- If your arts agency or participating school has a blog, post updates on Poetry Out Loud at least once a week. If you publish less than 3x/week, choose consistent dates.
- Blog content might include a student interview with a teacher or artist involved in Poetry Out Loud, a student writing about their favorite poem, tips for participating in the competition, or a link to a press release on statewide or school contests.

Twitter

- Use Twitter to share short thoughts about Poetry Out Loud—at 280 characters or fewer per tweet (please note that Twitter no longer includes Twitter handles or images in the character count). Set up a free Twitter account for your school or organization (register for a free Twitter account at www.twitter.com).
- Invite your audience to follow your Twitter feed. Arts agencies can invite other arts organizations. Schools can invite parents to follow their Twitter feed to keep track of the program at the local level. You can ask your followers to retweet your post and help spread the news. You can also use Twitter to have conversations with your followers.
- Your Twitter frequency will vary based on the content you have to publish. Aim for 1–2 pre-written tweets/day. Consider “re-tweeting” (RT, or copying) relevant tweets from others you are following on Twitter. Be selective and develop guidelines for the types of content you are RTing.
- Include an image with your tweet. (Twitter will allow you to attach up to four images with a tweet.) When selecting which images to include with your content, if you are using only one image, try to use one that's oriented horizontally so the platform won't cut the top off your image.
- Use Twitter to provide “play-by-play” commentary during the competitions. You can also send out interesting trivia about the poems, the poets, and the competitors. You can also post videos of up to 140 seconds.
- Use a hashtag to help users follow conversations about your competition. You can use **#POL21** for general tweets about the competition and tag photos of your Poetry Out Loud community—students, parents, teachers, judges, etc.—with **#IAmPoetryOutLoud**.
- Also use the hashtags **#POL21** and **#IAmPoetryOutLoud** to search for other people who are tweeting about Poetry Out Loud—and to help them find you.
- When you register for a free Twitter account, you will have to select several Twitter accounts to follow (get their Twitter messages sent to you) so make sure to do this research beforehand. There are online search engines to help you find Twitter users with similar interests that you can follow.
- Follow and/or tag, or retweet content from @PoetryOutLoud, @NEAarts, and @PoetryFound.

Facebook

- Set up a Facebook page for Poetry Out Loud at your arts agency, organization, or school; post updates on the program.



- Update your Facebook status at least 1x/day. You can even set up your Facebook page to automatically post content from your other social media accounts (blog, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).
- Follow the national [Poetry Out Loud Facebook page](#), and let the [National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Out Loud staff](#) know you have a Facebook page so they can follow you.
- Use the Facebook page to share news about the program, content from your blog, photos from your events.
- Have students create a Facebook page for their favorite character from a poem.

YouTube

- The average viewer spends only 1–2 minutes watching a YouTube video, so plan your videos accordingly.
- Highlight videos that compliment Poetry Out Loud learning objectives. Be aware of copyright issues when featuring poetry online.
- Each year, several state schools for the Deaf participate in Poetry Out Loud. Make your video accessible to Deaf or hard of hearing audiences by using YouTube’s easy captioning options. Alternately, you can post a transcript of the poem with the video. Fill out the “description” section in detail, and include a link to your website. Use YouTube video tags (descriptive words) to help viewers find your video when using the YouTube search engine.



PR TIPS FOR SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS—Promotional Ideas & PR Tips

Poetry Out Loud is a great way to generate positive visibility for your school or organization and raise school spirit. Here are some simple ways to increase awareness of Poetry Out Loud and share your students' achievements with the community at large.

In your school/organization

- Post notices announcing the competition and champions at your school/organization and/or on your website, newsletter, student newspaper, or social media pages. Use the Poetry Out Loud logo to celebrate your involvement.
- Write an article about the school-wide contest for your PTA newsletter.
- Announce classroom winners and the school-wide competition in the daily PA broadcast, at assemblies, or on the school's YouTube channel.
- Include a "poem-a-day" poetry recitation in the daily PA broadcast.
- "Live Tweet" a Poetry Out Loud contest or share photos on Instagram. Remember to use the **#POL21** or **#IAmPoetryOutLoud** hashtags.
- Organize a viewing party of the Poetry Out Loud national finals. Visit arts.gov/partnerships/poetry-out-loud in spring 2021 for more details.
- Arrange for your class to watch online or attend your region or state Poetry Out Loud competition.

In your community

- If your competition is open to the public, call your community newspaper (we suggest the metro section editor), and invite them to attend the competition or watch the webcast.
- Invite a prominent member of the local media to serve as a judge or master of ceremonies for the competition.
- After the event, send the local newspaper a follow-up press release highlighting the contest, your involvement in Poetry Out Loud, and photos from your event or photos of your local champions.
- Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Use the letter to showcase your school or organization's participation in Poetry Out Loud, and to discuss the benefits of taking part in a national program like this.
- Follow other local community or educational organizations on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to build a social media network for your school (including Poetry Out Loud) and start sharing your #POL21 news.



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PR TIPS FOR SCHOOLS—Sample Local Winners Press Release

For schools and organizations participating in the official Poetry Out Loud contest, simply fill in the blanks of this template press release and send it to your local media outlets (newspaper, newsletters, websites, radio, TV, social media channels) after your contest.

Contact: [NAME, TITLE]

[HIGH SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION NAME/ LOGO]

[ADDRESS] [PHONE | EMAIL]

[WEB ADDRESS | BLOG ADDRESS | FACEBOOK | TWITTER – EMBED HYPERLINKS TO ADDRESSES]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

[HIGH SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION] ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF POETRY OUT LOUD CONTEST

[CITY, STATE] — [HIGH SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION] announces the winners of the [school or local] contest of Poetry Out Loud™. The student winners are [NAME OF CHAMPION AND OTHER TOP WINNERS].

Poetry Out Loud, presented in partnership with the [STATE ARTS AGENCY], the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Poetry Foundation, is a national program that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry—both classic and contemporary—through memorization, performance, and competition. Since the program began in 2005, more than four million students across the country have participated in Poetry Out Loud. On [DATE], more than [NUMBER] high school students participated in the Poetry Out Loud school contest [ONLINE OR AT LOCATION].

At [HIGH SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION], students recited works [OR SUBMITTED VIDEO RECITATIONS OF WORKS] they selected from an anthology of more than 1,100 poems. Judges evaluated student performances on criteria including voice and articulation, evidence of understanding, and accuracy. The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation have created free, standards-based curriculum materials to support Poetry Out Loud including a teacher’s guide, lesson plans, an online anthology, posters, and video and audio on the art of recitation. These resources are available for free at poetryoutloud.org.

[NAME OF CHAMPION] will advance to the [REGIONAL OR STATE] Poetry Out Loud contest on [DATE]. The [STATE] champion will receive \$200 and will advance to the national finals—held virtually in Spring 2021—where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be distributed. The school of the state champion will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. The first runner-up in each state will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded.

To learn more about the [STATE] Poetry Out Loud contest, contact [STATE ARTS AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE] or visit poetryoutloud.org.

[BOILERPLATE INFORMATION ON YOUR HIGH SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION]

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PR TIPS FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES—Sample Poetry Out Loud Launch Announcement Press Release

This is a sample template press release that you can customize and send to local education and consumer media to announce Poetry Out Loud. With your help, we can encourage more teachers, organizations, and students to participate in this program. To use this release, simply fill in the blanks (the date, your state arts agency’s name, your contact information, etc.) and distribute it to media outlets in your area (state arts agency newsletter, PTA newsletters, school district websites, and local consumer newspapers, TV and radio stations). Distribute this announcement at your earliest convenience.

Contact: [NAME, TITLE]
[ORGANIZATION/LOGO]
[ADDRESS] [PHONE | EMAIL]
[WEB ADDRESS | BLOG ADDRESS | FACEBOOK | TWITTER – *EMBED HYPERLINKS TO ADDRESSES*]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – [DATE]

[NAME OF STATE ARTS AGENCY] ANNOUNCES 2020-21 POETRY OUT LOUD

High school students in [STATE] invited to compete in national poetry recitation contest

[CITY, STATE] — The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation present Poetry Out Loud™ in partnership with [STATE ARTS AGENCY] and [OTHER LOCAL PARTNERS]. This national arts education program encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country. This program helps students master public speaking skills and build self-confidence, while also learning more about both classic and contemporary poetry.

During [CLARIFY TIME FRAME], schools are invited to participate in classroom and school wide contests, advancing to a state competition on [DATE]. We strongly encourage teachers and organizers at all contest levels to hold virtual competitions for the 2020-2021 POL season. More information is available at poetryoutloud.org, including guidelines to conduct the competition through video submissions. Non-school organizations, such as after school clubs, libraries, or non-profit organizations, may also choose to run Poetry Out Loud as well. Students may only compete in one stream—either with their school or an organization. State champions will advance to the national finals, to take place virtually in Spring 2021, where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be distributed.

[INFORMATION ON YOUR 2020 STATE CHAMPION AND/OR THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS/SCHOOLS WHO PARTICIPATED IN 2020.] Since the program began in 2005, more than four million students across the country have participated in Poetry Out Loud.

“Poetry Out Loud is a fun and fulfilling way to develop both an understanding of and an appreciation for poetry while also building self-confidence,” said Mary Anne Carter, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “We hope students across the nation enjoy participating this year and look forward to next Spring’s national competition, which will be held virtually for the first time.”

“Poetry Out Loud is a unique opportunity for young people to engage with poetry as a living art, for educators to share their love for the written and spoken word with students, and for communities to recognize the talent and passion



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present around them,” said Justine Haka, program manager of the Poetry Foundation. “It is an honor to present this program, and we can’t wait to cheer on this year’s participants.”

[QUOTE FROM STATE ARTS AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE, GOVERNOR, OR STATE POET LAUREATE]

As part of Poetry Out Loud, the National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation provide free, standards-based curriculum materials—all available online—which teachers may choose to use in their classrooms. These include a poetry anthology containing more than 1,100 classic and contemporary poems, a teacher’s guide, lesson plans, posters, and video and audio on the art of recitation. Schools are welcome to download these resources at poetryoutloud.org.

How to get involved in Poetry Out Loud

High schools and organizations that wish to be part of the official Poetry Out Loud program must contact [STATE ARTS AGENCY] by [DATE] to participate. [STATE ARTS AGENCY] will work with interested schools and organizations to include them in the official Poetry Out Loud program. Schools and organizations that are not in the official program may conduct their own contests using the online resources. Contact [LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION] or visit poetryoutloud.org for more information.

Poetry Out Loud awards

Each state champion will receive \$200 and will advance to the national championship, which will be held virtually in Spring 2021, where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be distributed, including a \$20,000 award for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion. The state champion’s school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry materials. The first runner-up in each state will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded.

For further information on Poetry Out Loud, visit poetryoutloud.org.

[BOILERPLATE ON YOUR ORGANIZATION]

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PR TIPS FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES—Sample Poetry Out Loud Script for a Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Promote participation among schools and organizations in Poetry Out Loud by tailoring this sample script for public service announcements on your local radio or television stations.

Public Service Announcement
30-second live read script

start date: [DATE]
end date: [DATE]

:30 – Who will be the next [STATE] Poetry Out Loud Champion? Registration is now open for schools and organizations to sign up to participate in Poetry Out Loud. This national arts education program includes free online educational materials for high school students to learn about poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. For more information, contact [PHONE/WEBSITE/EMAIL] or visit poetryoutloud.org.