Poet-in-Residence Program

What is the Poet-in-Residence program?

Mass Poetry-certified Poets, or those with comparable education and work experience, can work in Massachusetts public schools for as few as three sessions, and up to a full-year. Poets can co-teach in a classroom setting or co-coach in a student club setting. All poets are thoroughly vetted and CORI-checked.

Residencies include:

- writing workshops
- performance/recitation coaching
- one-on-one mentorship or office hours
- in-school performances or open mics
- participation in school programs, such as judging poetry contests or working on a literary magazine

Residencies are customizable based on your school’s schedule, size, curriculum, and demographics. Poet-educators can work in-depth with a single teacher/class or can work more generally with a group of teachers/classes, depending on the scope of the residency. All residencies end with a capstone project.

What is the impact?

Students who work with Mass Poetry’s poet-educators over the course of one or more semesters:

- Develop their writing skills
- Develop their critical reading skills
- Develop their public speaking and in-class discussion skills
- Build their self-confidence and their empathy for others
Mass Poetry piloted one in-class residency at New Mission High School in the 2018-2019 school year, starting their first ever full-semester creative writing course. In 2019, we expanded at New Mission, adding an after school poetry club and three additional school partners. Here’s what some of our partner teachers had to say:

“[My students] are more confident with their work. There is more willingness to present work out loud. [The poet] was able to connect with students, demonstrate what he was moving them towards, and break down the steps of writing and performing a poem. It was incredible.”

“[The poet] made every student feel connected and able to contribute, even if it was a word. Every student participated at some level. I also was impressed by his care and concern for students on an individual level, reaching out to students who were reticent to participate...Honestly, I wish he were full-time part of our team.”

“[My students] are more confident. They speak up more in class. They share their own writing more. Our students gained knowledge, perspective, and empowerment through their work with [the poet]. We are so grateful that he was able to spend time with our students. We miss him already.”

What does the process look like?

We typically start with an informational meeting with the teacher(s) to discuss what residency model might work best at their school. We discuss:

- funding options, including the school’s eligibility for grant funding;
- particular poets, skill sets, or demographics that might be a good match for the school;
- a culminating project(s) or event(s) that would represent the residency’s work in a school-wide or public way;
- a timeline that works with the school calendar and any funding constraints.

We provide administrative support to both parties to keep the program running as smoothly as possible from start to finish. We also supply evaluations at the beginning and end of the residency based on the learning objectives established by the grant, the teacher(s), and the poet-educator. The evaluation data we collect will be shared with the granting agency, the teachers and administrators, and the poet-educator after the residency has been completed.
What does it cost?

Poet residencies cost between $1,000 - $10,000 depending on the length and scope of the poet's involvement at the school. Mass Poetry's administrative fees are 10% of the total residency cost. Schools can also expect materials fees, such as the cost of printing a literary magazine, depending on the cumulative project/event of the residency. All of these costs can often be built into a grant application.

How do we get started?

For more information or to start planning your residency, please email our Program Director, Danielle Jones: danielle@masspoetry.org