



D.C. COMMISSION ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

29th Annual Larry Neal Writers' Competition
Program Guidelines
Adults, Teens and Youth May Apply
Deadline: February 27th at 11:59 PM

About this program:

The Larry Neal Writers' Competition commemorates the artistic legacy and vision of Larry Neal, the renowned author, academic and former Executive Director of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCAH). Cash awards are given for artistic excellence to adult, teen and youth writers that reside in the District of Columbia. Awards will be presented at the 29th Annual Larry Neal Writers' Awards Ceremony on May 7, 2012, in partnership with the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

On April 16, 2012, the District of Columbia will pay special tribute to the 150th Anniversary of the Compensated Emancipation Act through a city-wide celebration of DC Emancipation Day. In honor of the freedoms gained in 1862, DCCAH is conducting an additional creative writing category for teen and youth writers. This category encourages students to be creative and persuasive while connecting their unique personal experiences with influential historical events in the District of Columbia.

DC Emancipation Day: Celebrating Today's Freedoms

Imagine you are a time traveler. President Abraham Lincoln has invited you back to 1862 to celebrate the emancipation of the District of Columbia's slaves. Prepare a speech to share with the audience about the freedoms you enjoy today and what freedoms we are still working to achieve in our community.

Finalists for the DC Emancipation Day: Celebrating Today's Freedoms will present their speeches during a DC Emancipation Day celebration on April 16th. This program is conducted in partnership with the Ford's Theatre Society's Education Department.

For additional resources on the Compensated Emancipation Act of 1862 and DC Emancipation Day, please visit <http://dcarts.dc.gov/DC/DCARTS/Events/Annual+Programming/Annual+Programming#3> for materials and links.

Eligibility requirements:

The competition is open to any District of Columbia resident, from 4th grade through adult. Individuals attending a DC college or university may also apply, but will be required to submit a copy of current student identification with their application.

Only one entry per individual, with the exception of the DC Emancipation Day: Celebrating Today's Freedoms (see below for additional details).

All entries must adhere to the following guidelines:

- All entries must be previously unpublished (including internet publications);
- The author's name **MAY NOT** appear anywhere on the writing sample;
- The writing sample must include a title, as well as the Division and Category (see below);
- Typed writing sample, in Times New Roman, Arial or similarly readable font;
- One inch margins on all sides of document and 12 point font; and
- **Entries that do not meet the eligibility rules may be automatically disqualified.**

Submission Instructions and Deadlines:

All submissions must be uploaded through the Zoom Grants system accessed through the DCAH website at <http://dcarts.dc.gov/DC/DCARTS/Events/Annual+Programming/Annual+Programming#3>. **No hand-delivered applications will be accepted.** The deadline for all applications is Wednesday, February 27 by 11:59 PM. We expect that there will be a high volume of applications, so please plan to submit before the deadline.

To ease the application process, Zoom Grants provides a step-by-step tutorial on how to submit your application [here](#). You can also download the PDF tutorial [here](#). DCAH staff is also available to provide technical assistance upon request.

All applicants will be notified of their status in mid-April by the email provided on their entry form.

Writing Divisions and Categories:

Adult (aged 18 and up – not enrolled in high school)

Adults may submit one of the following applications per year.

- Poetry: one poetry application may contain no more than three unpublished poems (one poem per page)
- Short Story: One unpublished short story, not to exceed 3,000 words, double-spaced
- Dramatic Writing: One unproduced play or screenplay with a two-page summary – both double-spaced. Full entries will be judged on the summary and the first 3,000 words submitted, so an excerpt is fine to include.

Youth (grades 4 – 8) and Teen (grades 9 – 12) Writing

Teen and Youth may submit one of the following applications per year.

- Poetry: Two unpublished poems (one poem per page)
- Short Story: One unpublished story, not to exceed 500 words, double-spaced
- Essay: One unpublished essay, not to exceed 500 words, double-spaced

DC Emancipation Day: Celebrating Today's Freedoms

Teen and Youth may submit in addition to the other categories, or independently.

- DC Emancipation Day: Celebrating Today's Freedoms: One unpublished speech, not to exceed 500 words, double-spaced

Evaluation:

Distinguished writing professionals will judge each submission according to its artistic excellence in its literary genre and age group. DCAH uses a blind judging format, and each submission is assigned a unique identification number so that judges do not know the identity of the winner prior to the awards ceremony. DCAH staff evaluates applications for eligibility, but do not judge writing samples. The evaluation processes takes into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse

beliefs and values of the American public consistent with the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, as amended in 1990.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Presentation (formatting, spelling, grammar, punctuation, neatness)
- Structure (well-developed, has a logical flow and effective sequencing)
- Technique (linguistic diversity, literary devices, audience engagement)
- Creativity (imaginative writing, drawing from sources and prior knowledge of content)

Awards:

Each winner will receive a certificate and a cash award according to the following format:

Adult Writing (All Categories)

1st Place - \$750

2nd Place - \$500

3rd Place - \$250

Teen Writing

1st Place - \$200

2nd Place - \$150

3rd Place - \$100

Youth Writing

1st Place - \$100

2nd Place - \$50

3rd Place - \$25

DC Emancipation Day: Celebrating Today's Freedoms

Teen and Youth finalists will present their speech at a DC Emancipation Day celebration event, in partnership with Ford's Theatre Society. One teen and one youth winner will earn a \$150 cash prize. More details about the DC Emancipation Day: Celebrating Today's Freedoms program can be found at www.dcartts.dc.gov

Honorable Mention certificates will be awarded in each category as warranted. No cash award is associated with an Honorable Mention.

Please note that for any category, the judges reserve the right to deem that there were no meritorious submissions and can choose not to make an award.

Contact Information:

For more information on the Larry Neal Writers' Competition and awards ceremony, please visit <http://dcarts.dc.gov/DC/DCARTS/Events/Annual+Programming/Annual+Programming#3> or contact Carlyn Madden, Arts Education Manager, at carlyn.madden@dc.gov or 202-724-5613.