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Contact: Susan Dickson

Phone: 312-814-6740

Email: [susan.dickson@illinois.gov](mailto:susan.dickson@illinois.gov)

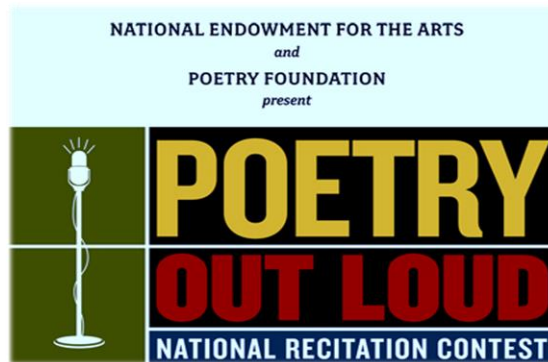


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**Illinois Arts Council Agency Announces  
POETRY OUT LOUD STATE FINALS**

*16 regional high school winners representing 46 Illinois high schools  
to compete in state finals contest*

ILLINOIS – Illinois Arts Council Agency announces the state finals for Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest. The competition, presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, is part of a national program that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. On March 11, 2016, beginning at 2:00 pm, sixteen high school students from thirteen high schools will participate in the Poetry Out Loud state finals at the Hoogland Center for the Arts, 420 South Sixth Street in downtown Springfield, Illinois.

Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure. Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to a school-wide competition, next to one of eight regional competitions, then to the state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals in Washington, DC. During the 2015/2016 academic year, over 8,000 students and their teachers, from more than 45 schools, participated in Poetry Out Loud in Illinois.

At the Poetry Out Loud Illinois State Finals contestants will recite works they selected from an anthology of more than 900 classic and contemporary poems. Students participating in the Poetry Out Loud program have benefited from educational materials created by the Arts Endowment and the Poetry Foundation. These standards-based curriculum materials include an online anthology, a teacher's guide, lesson plans, and video and audio on the art of recitation. Schools are welcome to download these resources at [poetryoutloud.org](http://poetryoutloud.org).

The Illinois Poetry Out Loud State Champion will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to compete for the national championship to be held May 3 – 4, 2016. The state

champion's school will also receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The state's Poetry Out Loud runner-up will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. At the National Poetry Out Loud Finals in Washington, DC, fifty-three Poetry Out Loud champions from every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands will compete for a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends.

The sixteen regional finalists competing in the Illinois *Poetry Out Loud* State Final on March 11, 2016 in Springfield are:

REGION	STUDENT	SCHOOL
Central Illinois	Mariah L. Brooks	Southeast High School (Springfield)
Central Illinois	Aleeya Naomi Reed	Eisenhower High School (Decatur)
Chicagoland - City	Grace Anderson	University of Chicago Lab School (Chicago)
Chicagoland - City	Ivan Torres	Metropolitan Schoolhouse (Chicago)
Chicagoland - Suburbs	Morgan Harvey	Homewood-Flossmoor High School (Homewood)
Chicagoland - Suburbs	Amber Price	Maine East High School (Park Ridge)
Eastern Illinois	Joshua Harris	Champaign Central High School (Champaign)
Eastern Illinois	Shireen Hassan	Champaign Central High School (Champaign)
Northern Illinois	Demetrius Markham	Jefferson High School (Rockford)
Northern Illinois	Ana Plankenhorn	Auburn High School (Rockford)
South Central Illinois	Therése Beabout	Gibault Catholic High School (Waterloo)
South Central Illinois	Madelyn Foster	Edwardsville High School (Edwardsville)
Southern Illinois	Caroline Shaffer	Trinity Christian School (Carbondale)
Southern Illinois	Katelyn Wittenborn	Trinity Christian School (Carbondale)
Western Illinois	Michaela Goodley	Annawan High School (Annawan)
Western Illinois	Claudia Vanopdorp	Annawan High School (Annawan)

For an in-depth look at the national Poetry Out Loud program, visit [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).

**Interested in bringing Poetry Out Loud to your high school?**

Provide your contact information [here](#). The Illinois Arts Council Agency will be in touch later in the year to provide more detail about the Illinois Poetry Out Loud program and schedule.

About the National Endowment for the Arts: Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. For more information, visit <http://www.arts.gov>.

About the Poetry Foundation: The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>.

About the Illinois Arts Council Agency: Created as a state agency by the Illinois General Assembly in 1965 through legislation sponsored by Senators Paul Simon, Thomas McGlooin, and Alan Dixon, the Illinois Arts Council Agency is governed by up to twenty-one private citizens chosen for their demonstrated commitment to the arts and appointed by the Governor. Council members serve in a voluntary, non-paid capacity and are charged with developing the state’s public arts policy, fostering quality culturally diverse programs, and approving grant expenditures. A small professional staff with in-depth knowledge of the arts develops and administers the agency’s programs, provides technical assistance, and ensures the responsible and impactful distribution of all funds. Resources to support the Illinois Arts Council Agency are provided by the Governor and General Assembly of Illinois and by the National Endowment for the Arts. Visit [www.arts.illinois.gov](http://www.arts.illinois.gov) for more information.

