

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
presents

POETRY OUT LOUD®



Georgia // 2026-2027

The logo for the Georgia Council for the Arts, featuring a stylized leaf icon above the word "Georgia", with "COUNCIL for the Arts" below it.

**Alliance
Theatre**

Welcome // Georgia Council for the Arts

GCA Mission

To cultivate the growth of vibrant, thriving Georgia communities through the arts.

GCA Goals

- Expand economic development opportunities through the arts
- Grow GCA's services to new audiences and communities
- Utilize arts to fortify education in the state
- Strengthen the arts sector

GCA is a strategic arm of the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD), the State of Georgia's marketing and sales arm.



gaarts.org

Welcome // Alliance Theatre

Mission

The Alliance Theatre is Atlanta's national theater, expanding hearts and minds onstage and off.

Program Goals

The Alliance delivers powerful programming that challenges adult and youth audiences to think critically and care deeply.

Institute

A branch of the organization's robust education department, the Alliance Theatre Institute partners with school districts and schools to deliver professional learning for educators and arts integrated or theater-based instruction for students.



What is Poetry Out Loud?

Poetry Out Loud® lifts poetry off the page, creating community and connection. Through this program, high school students across the country participate in a dynamic poetry recitation competition that is designed to improve their public speaking skills, help build confidence, and teach them about literary history and contemporary life.

A program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with participating state and jurisdictional arts agencies and administered by Mid Atlantic Arts, Poetry Out Loud provides free lesson plans and other educational materials to teachers and organizers, including an online anthology of classic and contemporary poems.

Since the program began in 2005, more than 4.6 million students and 89,000 teachers from 22,000 schools across the U.S. have participated in Poetry Out Loud.

National Guidelines & Resources

National program guidelines 2026-2027 are available at: poetryoutloud.org

Please be sure to review this information closely, noting a few updates, including:

- Expanded anthology (featuring 600+ poems)
- Updated evaluation criteria and scoring rubric
- Return to poem selection requirements at the state and national finals:
 - (3) poems prepared
 - (1) must be **25 lines or fewer**
 - (1) must be **published before 1930**
 - (1) poem may be used to meet both criteria (and may be the third poem)



Poetry Out Loud Structure

Local Contests	Regional Contests	State Final	National Finals
School & Community Partners 🌐 View: Georgia POL Map Register by Wednesday, January 27 Hold a Local Contest and Report a Local Champion by Thursday, January 28 Note: these deadlines are <u>firm</u> <i>If possible, plan to Register, hold a Local Contest, and Report a Champion in the <u>Fall</u></i>	Saturday, February 6 Regional 1: West-Central GA @ ThesCon in Columbus, GA RiverCenter – Studio Theater (10:30 AM – Gold 12 PM – Blue) <i>In-Person</i> Regional 2: Southeast GA @ Okefenokee Heritage Center Waycross, GA (11 AM) <i>In-Person</i> Saturday, February 13 Regional 3: Metro ATL North (11 AM) Regional 4: Metro ATL South (3 PM) Alliance Theatre – Rehearsal Hall A <i>In-Person</i> Tuesday, February 23 Regional 5: Virtual (5 PM) – <i>via Zoom</i>	Saturday, March 6 @ 4 PM Woodruff Arts Center Goizueta Stage for Youth & Families <i>In-Person</i> Opened January 2026 <i>a transformative 300-seat theater</i> 	Monday, April 26 - Wednesday, April 28 George Washington University Lisner Auditorium Washington, DC <i>In-Person</i> <i>administered by National Endowment for the Arts and Mid Atlantic Arts</i> 

Virtual Student Workshops

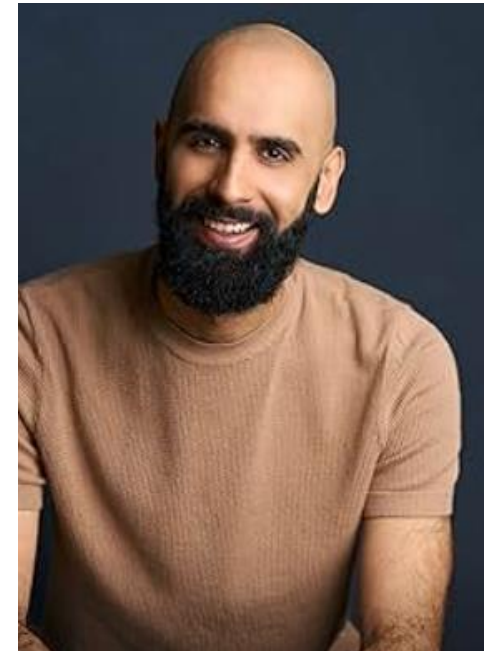
Preparation for Regional Contests: Saturday, January 30 (10 AM – 12 PM)

Preparation for State Final: Saturday, February 27 (10 AM – 12 PM)

Facilitated by: Maya Lawrence & Angel Fabián Rivera *via Zoom*

Workshops will orient students to next steps
& address Evaluation Criteria:

- Physical Presence
- Voice and Articulation
- Interpretation
- Evidence of Understanding
- Overall Performance
- Accuracy



What to Expect: Regional Contests

In-Person: Saturday, February 6

- 📍 **Regional 1 - West-Central GA // ThesCon in Columbus:** RiverCenter – Studio Theater @ 10:30 AM (Gold) & 12 PM (Blue)
- 📍 **Regional 2 - Southeast GA // Okefenokee Heritage Center in Waycross** @ 11 AM

In-Person: Saturday, February 13

- 📍 **Regional 3 - Metro ATL North:** Alliance Theatre – Rehearsal Hall A @ 11 AM
- 📍 **Regional 4 - Metro ATL South:** Alliance Theatre – Rehearsal Hall A @ 3 PM

Virtual: Tuesday, February 23

- 💻 **Regional 3 - Virtual:** Live via Zoom @ 5 PM

🎤 **What to Prepare:** (2) poems

📺 **What to Expect:** Round 1: all students | Round 2: all students

What to Expect: State Final

State Final: Saturday, March 6 @ 4 PM

 In-Person (expected): Woodruff Arts Center – Goizueta Stage for Youth & Families

Format Note:

- To best prepare students for the required in-person format of Poetry Out Loud National Finals, in-person participation at the State Final is highly encouraged and is expected (by default).
- To discuss a virtual option to accommodate exceptional circumstances such as emergency, illness, or other unresolvable barrier to in-person participation, please contact [Liz Davis](#)



What to Prepare: (3) poems



What to Expect: Round 1: all students | Round 2: all students | Round 3: Top 5 students

Prizes // State & National

State Level:

- \$200 for each first-place winner
- \$500 for poetry materials for each first-place winner's school or organization
- \$100 for one runner-up in each state
- \$200 for the purchase of poetry materials for each runner-up's school or organization

Note:

Mid Atlantic Arts provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded and travel arrangements to the Poetry Out Loud National Finals.

National Level:

- \$20,000 for the National Champion
- \$10,000 for 2nd place
- \$5,000 for 3rd place
- \$1,000 for 4th–9th places
- Representing schools/organizations of top nine finalists receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials.
- One honorable mention in each of the three national semifinal competitions – those students will not advance to the finals, but will each receive a \$1,000 cash award and a \$500 stipend for their school/organization.

Judging Procedures

How are Poetry Out Loud recitations evaluated?



National Resources & Guidelines:

[Judging a Competition](#)

[Judges Guide](#)

- Evaluation Criteria (pages 5-9)
- Competition Judge Evaluation Sheet (pages 11-12)
 - Maximum of 33 points
- Accuracy Judge Score Sheet (page 15)
 - Maximum of 8 points
 - Note: added to each Evaluation, totaling 41 points

Support Roles

- Producer(s)
- Tabulator(s)
- Emcee
- [Prompter](#)

Contact

Alliance Theatre

Liz Davis, Producer

Head of Secondary Curriculum and Partnerships

liz.davis@alliancetheatre.org

Katie Wolff, Associate Producer

Institute Program Manager

katie.wolff@alliancetheatre.org

General Inquiries

poetryoutloud@alliancetheatre.org



Emily Yewell Volin

Grants and Arts Education Program Manager

EVolin@Gaarts.org