

The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word - Rules & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



The 7th endowment of The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word will be awarded to one high school senior for their creation of a poem with themes pertaining to social justice. The scholarship amount will be \$1,000. Free scholarship. No cost to apply.

Eligibility

Eligibility is open to all residents of the United States and its territories, regardless of legal status. Entrants must be high school seniors, currently attending a high school in the USA, or its territories, graduating in spring 2024.

Deadline

Applications, poems, and letters of recommendation must be sent to davidaromero@gmail.com by Tuesday, January 30th, 2024. Announcement of scholarship winner on Monday, March 4th, 2024. Check will be mailed to winner by Monday, March 4th, 2024.

How to Enter

Print out the application, fill it out legibly in black ink, scan, and email to: davidaromero@gmail.com along with one original poem with themes pertaining to social justice, in a Word document (.doc or .docx), single spaced, in size 12, Times New Roman font.

Entries with alternative formatting, or including more than one poem, will be disqualified. Length of poem must not exceed three pages. Poems exceeding three pages in length will be disqualified. Poems exceeding a page in length preferred, but not required. Please refrain from submitting prose. Stanza breaks accepted, but not required.

Document must not include the name of the author for purposes of judging. Please do not submit any additional information other than your poem, including, but not limited to: student bio, artist statement, intent to win the scholarship, etc. Any documents containing the author's name or including any additional material will be disqualified.

Including words, phrases, and lines in another language, or languages, other than English, is encouraged. However, most judges will be primary-English speakers and while it may be possible for them to translate parts of a poem to understand its intended meaning, the full literary talent and meaning(s) of a poem submitted in another language may be lost on them.

The originality of all poems will be verified. Any poems with an excess of four consecutive lines from a pre-existing poem, speech, or song lyrics will be disqualified.

Please send in your application and poem to davidaromero@gmail.com with the subject line: The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word.

Recommendation Letter/Email

Entry must also be followed by a letter of recommendation from a teacher or administrator at the student's high school (recommendation letter can be in the text of the email and/or attached in a separate Word document or PDF), sent to davidaromero@gmail.com, with the subject line: The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word. Each recommendation letter must be sent from a high school email account. Any recommendation letters sent by personal email will be disqualified.

Do Not Send

Please do not send any photos, YouTube links, or multimedia of any kind along with your application. Applications including any of these will be disqualified. Only send your application and poem, please.

Winner and Second-Place

Winner and winner's poem (or snippets) will be featured on David A. Romero's website and social media. Winner will retain all rights to their original poem. Along with the check for \$1000, winner will receive a certificate for "Winner, The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word - 2024."

The announcement of a "second place" for this scholarship will occur if and only if the total number of valid scholarship applications exceeds twenty. If over twenty valid applications are received, a second-place winner will be selected and will receive a check for \$300 and a certificate for "Second Place Winner, The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word - 2024."

There will be no additional award levels for 2023-2024.

If over fifty valid applications are received, Romero will extend the offer to entrants to have their work published in a pocketbook collection. This pocketbook collection will be offered for sale by print on demand on Lulu.com at print and shipping cost only (Romero will add no additional fees to profit for himself).

Judging

Poems and applications will be judged by a panel of five judges. Panel will consist of judges of different races, classes, genders, sexual preferences, faiths, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds. This will help to ensure that judging is as inclusive as possible and not limited to any single definition of what poetry, or social justice, is.

Judging will be conducted in a multi-step process:

1. Judgement of poems alone. Each judge will be given a selection of poems without applications. This will help to ensure the impartiality of the judges. Judges will select poems they feel combine literary talent with a deep passion for social justice.
2. Judgement of poems with applications and emails of recommendation. In the second round, poems selected from the first round will be considered in conjunction with the information provided in the applications and with the persuasiveness of the letters of recommendation.
3. In the event of a tie between applications in the eyes of the judges, David A. Romero will cast the winning vote.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How is it a scholarship for “Excellence in Spoken Word” if entries can’t include audio or video?

Spoken word poems are given life by their performers and their performances, but almost all spoken word poems begin on the page (literal, or digital), before they are ever read or memorized. It all starts with the writing. We want to be able to read what you’ve got on the page.

More importantly, reading your work, as opposed to listening to it or watching a video, keeps you and all other applicants anonymous throughout the first round of judging; thereby allowing for us to judge your poems as impartially as possible.

What are you looking for in a poem about social justice?

This will depend on the consensus of the judges, but a good place to start would be a poem that deals with, either directly, or through metaphor, themes of racism, hunger and homelessness, women’s rights, LGBT+ rights, higher education and school affordability, labor exploitation, peace and justice, immigrant rights, human trafficking, ableism and disability rights, etc. Your poem can tackle one of these themes, two or more of them, as well as any others that you feel pertain to social justice.

What if I realize that I made a mistake on my application form or email?

You are welcome to re-submit your application as many times prior to January 30th, 2024 as you feel necessary to ensure that you have included all materials and followed all instructions laid out in How to Enter.

Do I need to send a transcript?

No. Sending transcripts often costs money and we don’t want you to have to spend any more money than you need to.

Can my recommendation letter be sent via traditional mail instead of email?

No. Please send via email to davidaromero@gmail.com. Applicants and teachers are encouraged to ask for confirmation of materials received with David A. Romero if they are not confirmed as received by him within a week.

Is The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word awarded by a nonprofit or corporation?

No. David A. Romero is an independent contractor and spoken word artist who performs at colleges and universities. All scholarship funds will be donated from his personal account and will be distributed via cashier’s check.

Will there be a board I can talk to in case of complaint?

Judges will only be involved in the selection process and will not be contributing funds to the scholarship or involved in the process of sending the funds or certificates to the winner or winners. Judges will remain anonymous. David A. Romero is solely responsible for all final decisions.

All questions, comments, and concerns can be directed towards davidaromero@gmail.com.

Can I donate money to The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word?

David A. Romero is not accepting donations for The Romero Scholarship for Excellence in Spoken Word at this time.

If you would like to support Romero, you can book him for an event, or purchase some of his products in person or through his website. You are also encouraged to donate to other scholarships that currently take donations.

Where do I find the application?

You can download the application where it says, “Download application” on the page www.davidaromero.com/scholarship.