



MENTOR OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION IS TO ENGAGE YOUTH IN WRITING POETRY
TO INSPIRE HEALING AND GROWTH.

OVERVIEW

Pongo Poetry Mentors volunteer their time to work with youth in writing heartfelt, personal poetry. As a Pongo mentor, you will help youth write about their difficult experiences; and you will experience writing that is sometimes sad, but also a source of excitement, pride, and healing for the youth. Our volunteers find the work touching, enlightening, and enlivening -- and a benefit to their careers in counseling, teaching, and community service. Empowered by their time with us, Pongo volunteers have gone on to start their own poetry projects.

As a Pongo Poetry Mentor, you will be trained in Pongo's techniques for teaching poetry writing to distressed teens in service of inspiring their healing and growth. You will be well supported and work with a close-knit, collaborative team of 3 to 4 others under the direction of an experienced Pongo Project Leader.

COMMITMENT

- Mentor poetry with youth at one of our project sites, once per week, for 3 hours, from mid-September through June.
- Join Pongo programming on time.
- Remain with the program until the close of the program year.
- Homework assignments, including writing your own poetry, and participating in ongoing skills development

SKILLS & QUALITIES

- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) candidates are highly encouraged to apply.
- We are looking for people who are reflective, open, honest, and can bring the love!
- A clear understanding of personal boundaries and an ability to adapt to the guidelines of the institutions and organizations with which Pongo works.
- Ideal candidates write poetry (personally or professionally), have previous experience working with young people, have teaching or counseling experience, and/or have personal or professional experience in supporting individuals affected by trauma.

DIVERSITY

Because a large percentage of youth we write with are BIPOC, Pongo seeks to have a diverse team of Poetry Mentors. We know from experience that BIPOC youth are excited to see Poetry Mentors who look like them. For a powerful example, [listen to Amani Carithers](#) share her experience of volunteering with Pongo at our King County Juvenile Detention project site.

Contact programmanager@pongopoetryproject.org



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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
PROGRAMMANAGER@PONGOPOETRYPROJECT.ORG

TYPICAL PROGRAM DAY

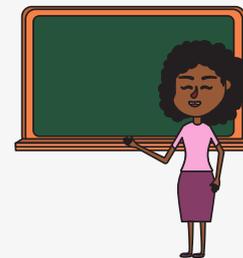
While Pongo poetry sites meet at different times, each weekly session is around 3 hours and consists of the following:



- Ongoing Poetry Mentor Training and Collaboration (45-60 minutes): Mentors check-in, create writing activities, review/hone Pongo techniques, and share personal poems and relevant published pieces.
- Facilitating Poetry with Youth (50-90 minutes): Sessions begin with a warm up writing exercise in the form of a group poem. Then mentors are paired with youth, one-on-one, to create personal poetry. Teens may change from week to week, depending on the poetry site.
- Debrief with Poetry Mentors (15-30 minutes): Mentors check-in, type up and send copies of youth poems, and receive poetry writing prompts or activity creation assignments as "homework".

SELECTION PROCESS

Pongo operates its projects in the Seattle/Tacoma area. Typically, mentor teams are formed in August, orientations occur in September, and projects run from September to June.



To apply:

1. **Review volunteer expectations above.**
2. **Email your resume and a writing sample (preferably poetry) to Pongo's Program Manager, at programmanager@pongoteenwriting.org**
3. **In your email message, please include the following:**
 - a. **Tell us why you're interested in Pongo and our mission.**
 - b. **Share your schedule availability.**
 - c. **Identify how you will contribute to the Racial Justice component of our work.**
 - d. **Ask any questions you might have.**
4. **After we've reviewed your documents, expect two interviews: one with the Program Manager, a second with your site's Project Lead.**

If you are interested in this work, but not available to volunteer with Pongo right now please send us an email explaining your future interest. We will put you on our email list and follow up regarding future involvement.

Contact programmanager@pongopoetryproject.org