

2025-2026 Fran Abrams Creative Writing Award Narrative Template

This template is for your reference only. All applications and supplementary materials must be submitted online through SurveyMonkey Apply (SM Apply). AHCMC cannot accept anything sent by mail or email.

Please note that there may be formatting differences on the SM Apply application portal, however the content of the questions will remain as seen on this template.

All required questions are marked with an asterisk (*). All text responses have a character count that includes spaces.

Submit this application no later than **Friday, January 23, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.**

Required Application Materials

All documents except for work samples must be submitted as PDFs. (See the work sample directions below for information about acceptable file formats.) Contact AHCMC grants staff if you need guidance converting your documents to PDFs.

IMPORTANT! Staff will remove materials that exceed the stated limits below.

A completed, online [SM Apply](#) application includes:

1. Completed Narrative

- Fillable form in SM Apply.
- Download a template of the application under the “Application + Templates” tab on [AHCMC’s website](#). **Please note that templates are for the applicant’s reference only and all applications and materials must be submitted through SM Apply.**

2. Signed High School Transcript

- Applicants must upload a PDF copy of their current high school transcript verified by the original signature of their guidance counselor. This signature verifies that the applicant’s grades are up to date and that the applicant is on track to graduate with a high school diploma in the spring of 2027.
 - Homeschooled applicants may have their current high school transcript signed by their primary instructor if a guidance counselor is not available.
- **Transcripts will only be used to verify eligibility; transcripts are not sent to the panel and do not impact the evaluation process.**

3. Homeschool Notification Form (required for homeschooled students only)

- All homeschooled applicants must submit a Homeschool Notification Form signed by a parent or guardian who verifies that the student is homeschooled and that they comply with Maryland State Department of Education home-schooling regulations.

- **The Homeschool Notification Form will only be used to verify eligibility; this form is not sent to the panel and does not impact the evaluation process.**

4. Work Sample Cover Page

- Fillable form in SM Apply with the title of each work, genre, and year completed.

5. Work Sample(s)

- Upload **a maximum of 10 work samples** of original work created within the last three years that demonstrate the applicant's creative writing practice. **Work samples must be no more than 10 files or 10 pages total. (This includes images, written work, and any submitted audio/video).**
- At least one piece must be work that the applicant would feel comfortable sharing and reading publicly.
- Work samples must be of finished work.
- Applicants may submit work samples for a combination of disciplines.
- **Work samples should demonstrate the applicant's own work, not work created by others.**
- Submit work sample(s) in the format specified below:
 - Poetry/Songwriting: Submit no more than 10 poems and/or song lyrics.
 - Fiction/Creative Nonfiction/Scriptwriting:
 - Double-spaced with at least 11-point font and 1-inch margins.
 - If the work submitted is an excerpt of a larger work, include a synopsis and an outline of the larger work. Clearly explain how and where the piece submitted fits into the whole.
- If the written work sample has a performance component, the applicant has the option of uploading a performative sample **in addition** to the written work sample as follows:
 - Audio/Video: Maximum 4, up to 100 MB per file, no more than ten minutes combined. **Please note that any submitted audio/video counts towards the limit of 10 work samples.**
 - The SM Apply link feature only supports links to YouTube and Vimeo.
 - If using the SM Apply link feature for YouTube or Vimeo, use the full hyperlink at the top of your browser instead of shorthand links (i.e., use the full <https://www.youtube.com> link, not <https://youtu.be>).
 - Applicants may choose to use the SM Apply link feature or embed the links in a document and upload it as a PDF.
 - If providing links to websites other than YouTube or Vimeo, links must be embedded in a document and uploaded as a PDF. For each link, the entire link address should be visible.
 - Make sure that links are not broken.
 - Make sure that the content from hyperlinks is viewable and does not require a password.
 - If the submitted video and/or audio is more than ten minutes combined, applicants must include instructions for which segments are relevant. (Ex: Please click on the YouTube hyperlink to watch the video from 0:47 to 4:10.)

6. Completed AHCMC Reporting Data Form

- **This form corresponds with AHCMC's reporting obligations. Responses will not be factored into eligibility or the panel review.** All responses will be kept confidential. Responses will only be shared publicly in the aggregate.

Application Form Template

Eligibility Questions

Applicants must meet all the following eligibility requirements by the application deadline. Applicant eligibility requirements can be found on page 5 of the 2025-2026 Abrams Award guidelines. If you have questions about the eligibility requirements, please reach out to Jesus Guzman, Grants Assistant Manager, at Jesus.Guzman@creativemoco.com or (301) 565-3805 ext. 21.

***Do you reside in Montgomery County, MD?**

- Yes
- No

***Are you able to provide AHCMC with a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) prior to receiving the award disbursement, if awarded?**

- Yes
- No

***Are you currently enrolled full-time as a junior in high school for the 2025-2026 school year?**

- Yes
- No

***Do you attend a public, private, or home school located in Montgomery County, MD?**

- Yes, I attend a public high school located in Montgomery County, MD
- Yes, I attend a private high school located in Montgomery County, MD
- Yes, I am homeschooled in Montgomery County, MD
- No, I do not attend a school located in Montgomery County, MD

***Will you be graduating high school in the spring of 2027?**

- That's the plan
- No

Basic Information

If there are any contact and/or address changes after the application deadline, the applicant must notify AHCMC staff in writing.

***Applicant Legal First Name:**

***Applicant Legal Last Name:**

***Preferred Pronouns:**

- he/him/his
- she/her/hers
- they/them/theirs
- self-describe: _____
- prefer not to answer

***Address (P.O. Boxes not accepted):**

***City:**

***State:**

***ZIP Code:**

***Phone Number:**

***Email:**

***Select your creative writing discipline(s).** Please check all that apply. If you have any questions about how your work fits within one of the disciplines listed, please reach out to Jesus Guzman, Grants Assistant Manager, at Jesus.Guzman@creativemoco.com or (301) 565-3805 ext. 21.

- Poetry
- Fiction
- Songwriting
- Scriptwriting
- Spoken Word
- Creative Nonfiction (Defined as the retelling of factual events and/or people in a dramatic, creative way. **For the purposes of this award, research/history papers will not be accepted.**)
- Other (please specify):

School Information

***High School Name:**

***High School Address:**

***City:**

***State:**

***ZIP Code:**

***Are you enrolled in any creative writing classes/programs at school currently?**

(Please note that the answers to this question and the above questions will not impact the evaluation or scoring of your application.)

- Yes
- No

***If yes, name of class/program:**

Narratives Questions

Supporting Activities (20 points)

- ✓ Describes how the applicant engages in creative writing activities, which can include in-school and out-of-school activities.
 - **Applicants are encouraged to share if they find it challenging to engage with creative writing outside of school hours due to other responsibilities or commitments.** (i.e. family responsibilities such as sibling or elder care, or employment.)

***How do you currently engage with creative writing?** Activities can include but are not limited to in-school and out-of-school activities, including using free time to create your own work, collaborating with peers, and/or exploring the work of other writers. Please share if you find it challenging to engage with

creative writing outside of school hours due to other responsibilities or commitments (i.e. family commitments such as sibling or elder care or employment...etc.) (2,000 characters maximum with spaces)

Aspirations (40 points)

- ✓ Clear commitment to creative writing;
- ✓ Describes creative writing goals; and
- ✓ Demonstrates interest in developing skills that apply to creative writing.

***What led you to creative writing?** Describe your connection to creative writing and how you got started. (2,000 characters maximum with spaces)

***How do you see yourself engaging with creative writing after high school?** Describe your creative writing goals. (2,000 characters maximum with spaces)

***What skills have you learned, and what skills would you like to learn, to support your creative writing practice?** (2,000 characters maximum with spaces)

Originality & Creativity (40 points)

- ✓ Demonstrates creativity, originality, and strong conceptualization;
- ✓ Identifies and explains key concepts and emotions explored through the work; and
- ✓ Articulates how the writing style and techniques are used to communicate the intended theme(s).

***Describe your creative process.** What inspires you to write? (2,000 characters maximum with spaces)

***What are the key concepts and emotions that you explore through your work, and how are they expressed?** How does your writing style and technique(s) inform the themes explored in your work samples? (2,000 characters maximum with spaces)

***If selected, what pieces or passages from your work samples would you choose to read, and why?**
(2,000 characters maximum with spaces)

Work Sample Cover Sheet

Fran Abrams Creative Writing Award

Fillable form in SM Apply

Titles should be in the same order as the work sample uploads

| | Title of Work | Genre | Year Completed |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |

AHCMC Reporting Data

The questions below correspond with AHCMC's reporting obligations. **Responses will not be seen by panelists or factored into the application eligibility, evaluation, or scoring.**

Demographic Information

Definitions

- **Publicly self-identify:** The information you are providing is how you would identify in each category to the public.
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term people may use to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression as different from the sex they were assigned at birth. People who identify as transgender might describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms including genderqueer, non-binary, and transgender. Transgender people may claim/affirm their gender identity through hormones and/or surgery. Transgender identity is not dependent on surgery. Transgender identity is not a sexual orientation.
- **Cisgender:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **Nonbinary (also non-binary):** Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g., Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary.
- **Disability:** A disability can be physical, learning, cognitive, sensory, mental, or chronic health or other disability that is a barrier to everyday living.

***Are you over 18 years of age?**

- Yes
- No

Race & Ethnicity

***How do you publicly self-identify?**

- Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Arab/Middle Eastern
- Black/African American/African
- Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx/Chicanx
- Native American/American Indian/Indigenous
- White/Caucasian/European
- Multi-racial or Multi-ethnic (2 or more races or ethnicities)
- Different identity (please specify)
- Decline to state

Gender Identity

*How do you publicly self-identify?

- Female
- Male
- Gender nonbinary/Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Different identity (please specify)
- Decline to state

*How do you publicly self-identify?

- Transgender
- Non-transgender (cisgender)
- Different identity (please specify)
- Decline to state

Sexual Orientation

*How do you publicly self-identify?

- Gay, lesbian, bisexual (or other sexual orientations within the LGBTQIA2S+ community)
- Heterosexual or straight
- Different identity (please specify)
- Decline to state

Disability

*How do you publicly self-identify?

- A person with a disability
- A person without a disability
- Decline to state

Optional Survey – Not Required

Responses will not be seen by panelists or factored into the application eligibility, evaluation, or scoring.

Application Source and Time

How did you hear about this grant opportunity?

- AHCMC Website
- AHCMC Newsletter/Email
- AHCMC Facebook
- AHCMC LinkedIn
- Word of Mouth
- Other source: _____

How much time did you spend on this application? (300 characters maximum with spaces)