

POETRY &



**60th
ANNUAL**

CONTEST

Celebrating

**NATIONAL CAREER
DEVELOPMENT MONTH**

NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT WEEK

November 17-21

NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT DAY

November 19

THIS YEAR'S THEME

*The Evolution of Work:
Careers in the Past, Present,
and Future*

From milkmen and lamplighters to YouTubers and app developers, the world of work has transformed over the years. Show us how you imagine jobs from long ago, the careers we see today, or the exciting possibilities that might exist tomorrow. Through your poem or artwork, help us celebrate 60 years of the National Career Development's Poetry and Art Contest by exploring how the world of work has evolved and how it continues to change our lives.

**THE EVOLUTION OF WORK:
CAREERS IN THE PAST, PRESENT
AND FUTURE**



PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

NCDA

National Career
Development
Association

www.ncda.org

305 N. Beech Circle, Broken Arrow, OK 74012

Eligibility

Adults and students enrolled in public, private, and parochial schools in states with participating NCDA state divisions are eligible. A list of participating state divisions is available on the NCDA website at www.ncda.org.

Contest division areas include:

- Primary Grades K – 2
- Intermediate Grades 3 – 5
- Middle Grades 6 – 8
- Senior Grades 9 – 12
- Adult Student 18 and older enrolled in school
- Open Adult 18 & older (Teachers, parents, professionals, etc)

Each entry should celebrate and inspire career development with a positive tone while emphasizing the national theme.

Requirements for Poems

- **Poetic Form:** Acceptable poetic forms, e.g. cinquain, free verse, diamante, haiku, limerick, metered, rhyming, blank verse
- **Size:** Submit each poem on a single sheet of paper 8.5" x 11", 12 point font.
- **AI:** AI-assisted poems are permitted but must include a disclosure of tool(s) and prompt(s) used. **See additional AI submission guidelines below.**

Requirements for Art

- **Lettering:** Simple bold lettering is preferred. Captions are to be used to convey the theme, attract attention, and to achieve goals of clarity, vigor, and originality. All lettering will be considered part of the design.
- **Art Categories**
 - **Art 1 (A1):** Standard use of ink, pencil, poster paints, magic marker, acrylics, and oils.
 - **Art 2 (A2):** Use of photos, clipart, graphic art software, collage, cut and pasted paper, and mixed media.
 - **Size:** Each poster must be created in 8.5" x 11" format, including matte, to be eligible.
- **AI:** Digital artwork created with the help of AI tools is permitted — **Applicable to Art 2 submissions only.** Full disclosure is required. **See additional AI submission guidelines below.**

NEW!

AI-Generated Submission Guidelines

(Applicable to Poetry and Art 2 submissions only)

We welcome the thoughtful use of AI tools in creative expression. Submissions assisted by AI must include:

- The name of the AI platform used (e.g., ChatGPT, CoPilot, Midjourney, etc.), and
- A short sample of the prompt(s) used.

Example disclosure: "This poem was edited for structure and flow after generation to better align with the author's intended message and emotion using ChatGPT."

Submissions that do not include this information may be disqualified.

Contest Deadlines

- Building/School Contest Submitted to State Contest by **December 20, 2025**
- State Contest submitted online to National Contest by **February 20, 2026**
- State Coordinators will submit top 3 winners in each category online here
 - **Poetry**
<https://forms.gle/FfLJv7jPZgg53pq5>
 - **Art 1**
<https://forms.gle/KbFpeQNK8Uc54iA9>
 - **Art 2**
<https://forms.gle/UcLi2jXnPapcus2SA>
- Individuals who do not have a State Contest must self-submit entries online by **February 20, 2026**
<https://forms.gle/ajJGMTbv7fT8eqyJ8>

To obtain participating state coordinator contact information, please visit www.ncda.org or contact NCDA Headquarters at (918) 663-7060.

Judging Process

Criteria

- Judging will be based on originality, creativity, and development of the national theme
- Poems will be evaluated on appropriate form, execution, spelling, and grammar
- Art evaluation will focus on the appropriate use of media, lettering, and basic principles of art.

Please adhere to the size requirements for each entry as many entries are received.

National Awards

National awards will be given to the first, second, and third place winners in the six divisions in both the Poetry and Art Contests. National winners will be recognized on the NCDA website, www.ncda.org, in May of 2026.

The winning entries will also be on display at the Annual Global Conference to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 30 - July 2, 2026.

National winners will receive from the National Career Development Association, a certificate, and a special congratulations gift.

