



THE CARICON PRIZE

Official Rules & Submission Guidelines

PURPOSE

The CARICON Prize celebrates and encourages excellence in Caribbean literature. This prestigious annual award recognizes authors who produce outstanding literary works reflecting Caribbean culture, history, and heritage.

AWARD CATEGORIES

The CARICON Prize honors excellence across five categories:

- **Prize for Fiction**
- **Prize for Poetry**
- **Prize for Non-Fiction**
- **Prize for Young Adult Literature**
- **Prize for Children's Literature**

Prize Amount: \$2,500 USD per category

Category naming rights available through sponsorship opportunities.

ELIGIBILITY

Author Eligibility

To be eligible for consideration, the author must meet **one** of the following criteria:

- Be of Caribbean birth or descent
- Write on themes relevant to the Caribbean cultural experience
- Reside permanently in the Caribbean

Definition of the Caribbean

For the purposes of the CARICON Prize, the Caribbean is defined as including the following countries and territories:

Anguilla • Antigua and Barbuda • Aruba • The Bahamas • Barbados • Belize • Bermuda • Bonaire • British Virgin Islands • Cayman Islands • Cuba • Curaçao • Dominica • Dominican Republic • French Guiana • Grenada • Guadeloupe • Guyana • Haiti • Jamaica • Martinique • Montserrat • Puerto Rico • Saba • St. Barthélemy • St. Kitts and Nevis • St. Lucia • St. Martin/Saint Maarten • St.

Vincent and the Grenadines • Saint Eustatius • Suriname • Trinidad and Tobago • Turks and Caicos Islands

Work Eligibility

- **Publication Date:** Works must be published between January 1 and December 31 of the award year
- **Original Work:** Submissions must be original works written by the applicant
- **Previous Publications:** Previously published authors may submit works, provided submissions are original and not previously entered in the CARICON Prize
- **Self-Published Works:** Eligible (must include ISBN)
- **Languages Accepted:** English, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Caribbean Creole/Patois languages

Ineligibility

The following individuals are **not eligible** to enter:

- CARICON Board of Trustees members
- Immediate family members of Board Trustees (parents, siblings, children)
- Persons living in the same household as Board Trustees
- Minors without parental or guardian consent

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

How to Submit

Online Submission Portal: <https://cari-con.org/caricon-prize/>

Participants must:

1. Complete the online registration form
2. Upload manuscript or galley in PDF or Word format (.pdf, .doc, .rtf, or .docx)
3. Pay submission fee
4. Submit all required materials by deadline

If you are unable to submit online, please contact the CARICON team at prize@cari-con.org for an alternate form of entry.

Required Materials

All submissions must include:

- **Official Entry Form** (completed online)
- **Parental Permission Form** (if applicant is under 18)
- **Manuscript** meeting formatting requirements below
- **Submission Fee:** \$50.00 USD

Formatting Requirements

Unpublished Manuscripts must:

- Be uploaded as **PDF or Word document** (.pdf, .doc, .rtf, or .docx)
- Be in letter format (8½" by 11")
- Be double-spaced (except poetry, which may be single-spaced)
- Use a legible font and font size (12pt recommended)
- Be submitted to the correct category
- Include a separate title page with: work title, category, word count, and author's contact information

Category-Specific Requirements

Poetry

- Full-length collections (minimum 48 pages)
- Book-length narrative poems or sequences

Fiction

- Novels (minimum 50,000 words)
- Short story collections (minimum 40,000 words)
- Novellas (collections of 2+ novellas totaling 40,000+ words)

Non-Fiction

- Memoirs, autobiography, biography
- Literary essays and criticism
- Cultural studies and history
- Creative non-fiction
- Minimum 40,000 words

Children's Literature

- Picture books
- Early readers
- Middle grade fiction
- Must be age-appropriate and engaging

Young Adult Literature

- Fiction or non-fiction for ages 12-18
- Minimum 40,000 words

Submission Restrictions

- **All submissions are final** – no changes or substitutions allowed after submission
- **No handwritten manuscripts** will be accepted
- **No fax submissions** will be accepted

- **Editorial comments will not be provided** on submitted works
- **Entry fees are non-refundable and non-transferable**

IMPORTANT DATES

Competition Opens: October 15

Submission Deadline: May 15 (11:59 PM PST)

Longlist Announced: June

Shortlist Announced: July

Winners Announced: September 27, 2026 (at annual CARICON Prize Awards Ceremony)

SUBMISSION FEE

Fee: \$50.00 USD per entry

The competition is 100% non-profit, with all fees covering administrative costs, including payment of readers and jurors. The entry fee will not be refunded if your submission is deemed ineligible.

Fee Waivers Available:

- Authors residing in Caribbean nations (not diaspora)
- Financial hardship (application required)
- Previous CARICON program participants (50% discount)

To apply for a fee waiver, contact prize@cari-con.org

RIGHTS & WARRANTIES

By submitting, candidates warrant that:

- The work is an **original work** written by them
- They **own all rights** to the submitted work
- The work does not infringe on any third-party copyrights or intellectual property

Candidates agree to **indemnify and hold CARICON harmless** from any claims, losses, damages, costs, or expenses arising from breach of these warranties.

JUDGING PROCESS

Overview

Works are judged **anonymously** based on:

- Author's use of language
- Originality of subject matter
- Writing style and craft
- Cultural authenticity and significance

Submissions are evaluated through a **two-tiered system**:

Round 1: Initial Screening

- **Screeners:** Qualified editors and writers selected for each category
- **Process:** Each text read by two independent readers
- **Outcome:** Top submissions advance to jury evaluation

Round 2: Jury Deliberation

- **Jurors:** Distinguished panel of published authors, literary critics, and editors
- **Process:** Blind evaluation of advanced submissions
- **Outcome:** Selection of longlist, shortlist, and winners

All decisions by readers and jurors are final, subject to meeting eligibility criteria as determined by CARICON.

Reader names remain confidential until the end of the competition to ensure blind judging process.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Poetry

Judges evaluate poetry based on:

- **Title:** Relevance and appropriateness
- **Form/Style:** Character and structure of the poem
- **Rhyme/Rhythm:** Natural use and consistency
- **Poetic Devices:** Effective use of literary techniques
- **Comprehension/Coherence:** Clarity and unity of ideas
- **Mood/Imagery:** Visualization and emotional impact
- **Word Selection:** Precision and effectiveness of language
- **Scope/Significance:** Contribution to understanding human experience
- **Line Endings/Breaks:** Visual aids and emphasis
- **Punctuation/Spelling/Grammar:** Respect for language conventions
- **Content Realized:** Achievement of poem's purpose
- **Universality:** Broader applicability beyond personal experience

Fiction

Judges consider:

- **Setting:** Clarity and believability of time and place
- **Point of View:** Effective narrative perspective
- **Characters:** Believability, consistency, and development
- **Plot:** Logical sequence, conflict, and resolution
- **Theme:** Main ideas and developmental values
- **Symbolism:** Effective use of tangible objects and imagery
- **Style:** Word choice, sentence patterns, and imagery
- **Overall Impact:** Significance to Caribbean literature

Non-Fiction

Judges assess:

- **Audience Appropriateness:** Clear targeting and suitability
- **Layout:** Logical organization and visual flow
- **Writing Style/Tone:** Engaging and conversational approach
- **Appealing Story:** Reader engagement beyond encyclopedic facts
- **Visual Elements:** Effective use of illustrations, photographs, maps, etc.
- **References:** Adequate documentation and resources for further exploration

Children's Literature

Evaluation varies by format (ABC books, counting books, picture books, etc.) with focus on:

- Age-appropriateness
- Clarity of illustrations
- Text quality and language
- Educational value
- Entertainment and engagement
- Thematic consistency

Young Adult Literature

Judges consider:

- Authentic voice and perspective
- Relevance to young adult experiences
- Literary merit and craft
- Cultural authenticity
- Character development
- Thematic depth

GENERAL RULES & CONDUCT

Disqualification

Participants will be **automatically disqualified** if they:

- Make any false statements
- Commit plagiarism (as determined by jury inquiry)
- Violate eligibility requirements

Plagiarism Determination: If plagiarism is alleged, the jury shall conduct a reasonable inquiry. If plagiarism is determined to have occurred, the participant will be disqualified and must return the award. **The jury's decision is final and cannot be appealed.**

Liability

CARICON directors, officers, and employees assume **no liability** for:

- Lost, stolen, delayed, damaged, misdirected, late, destroyed, incorrect, illegible, or incomplete entries
- Loss, theft, or damage to software or computer data, including privacy breaches
- Technical malfunctions (computer, telephone, internet, servers, access providers, etc.)
- Inability to participate due to technical issues or errors
- Damage to computers from downloading materials related to the competition
- Delays resulting from events beyond CARICON's control (strikes, lockouts, labor disputes, etc.)
- Prizes lost, damaged, or misdirected during shipping

Force Majeure

CARICON assumes no liability for inability to act resulting from events beyond its control, including strikes, lockouts, or labor disputes.

Privacy & Data Use

Personal information (name, address, telephone, email) is collected solely for:

- Competition administration
- Winner notification and publicity
- Future CARICON communications (with consent)

By providing this information, you **consent to its use** for these stated purposes. Your information will not be used for other purposes without your explicit consent.

Agreement to Rules

By entering, participants agree to **abide by all competition rules** as interpreted and applied by CARICON.

PRIZES & RECOGNITION

Winners (5 total - one per category)

Each category winner receives:

- **\$2,500 USD** cash prize
- **Bronze statuette** commissioned by Caribbean artist
- **Featured keynote** speaking slot at CARICON Conference (travel and accommodations included)
- **Media publicity package** (press releases, interviews, promotional materials)
- **Publication** in CARICON Literary Magazine
- **Lifetime membership** in CARICON Prize alumni network
- **Professional development opportunities** (agent introductions, editor meetings)

Shortlisted Authors

- **Digital finalist badge** for promotional use (website, social media, book covers)
- Publicity in shortlist announcements
- Invitation to awards ceremony
- 50% discount on CARICON Conference registration

Longlisted Authors

- Digital recognition badge for promotional use
- Listing on CARICON website
- Social media recognition

QUESTIONS?

Email: prize@cari-con.org

Phone: (310) 853-3009

Website: www.cari-con.org

Submission Portal: <https://cari-con.org/caricon-prize/>

ABOUT CARICON

CARICON (Caribbean Literary, Culture and Heritage Organization) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting Caribbean literature, culture, and heritage worldwide. Through conferences, literary awards, workshops, and community programs, we elevate Caribbean voices and connect authors with global audiences.

CARICON Inc.

Tax ID: 99-4258230

Los Angeles, California

The CARICON Prize celebrates the richness, diversity, and excellence of Caribbean literature. We look forward to reading your work.

© 2026 CARICON Inc. All rights reserved.

Last Updated: February 2026 Version 2.0