

New Voices Award Contest – Picture Book Manuscripts

About the Award

Established in 2000, the New Voices Award is given biennially to an unpublished writer of color or Native/Indigenous writer for a picture book manuscript. Past winners include *Sixteen Years in Sixteen Seconds* by Paula Yoo, *The Electric Slide and Kai* by Kelly J. Baptist., *Juna's Jar* by Jane Park, and *It Jes' Happened* by Don Tate.

Manuscripts may be FICTION, NON-FICTION, or POETRY for children ages 5 to 12. Manuscripts should address the needs of children of color or Native/Indigenous children by providing stories with which they can identify and relate, and which promote a greater understanding of one another. Themes relating to different family structures, gender identity, LGBTQ+ communities, or disabilities are also of interest.

CONTEST OFFICIAL RULES

NO PAYMENT, FEE OR PURCHASE IS NECESSARY TO ENTER THE NEW VOICES AWARD CONTEST OR WIN THE AWARD. A payment, fee, or purchase will not improve your chances of winning. The New Voices Award Contest is governed by these Official Rules and is subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws. Void where prohibited.

SPONSOR: Lee & Low Books, Inc. (“Lee & Low Books” or “Sponsor”), 381 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

ELIGIBILITY: To participate in the New Voices Award Contest (the “Contest”), entrants must meet all the following criteria to be eligible:

1. Open to writers of color and Native/Indigenous writers who at the time of entry are 18 years of age or older (or the legal age of majority in his/her state of legal residence, whichever is older) and a legal resident of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia. Writers located outside the 50 United States or the District of Columbia are not eligible. In order to enter the Contest or receive the prize award, you must fully comply with the Official Rules and, by entering, you represent and warrant that you agree to be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of Sponsor, whose decisions shall be binding and final in all respects relating to this Contest.
2. To be eligible for participation in the Contest, writers **cannot** have had a picture book traditionally published.

3. Writers who have published work in other genres (including children's magazines or adult fiction/nonfiction) are eligible to enter. Authors of self-published books may also enter but must submit a new manuscript rather than a project or manuscript that has already been self-published.
4. Only manuscripts from unagented writers will be considered, but if Lee & Low Books (in its sole and absolute discretion) extends an offer for publication to a winner, winner will be given one month from the date of winner notification to consult with an agent if winner so chooses.
5. Manuscripts previously submitted for the New Voices Award or to Lee & Low Books by other means will not be considered for the Contest.

SUBMISSION PERIOD:

The New Voices Award Contest will reopen in **April 2025**.

The submission period for entry will begin on April 1, 2025 at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time ("ET") and will end on June 30, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. ET (the "Submission Period"), when all submissions for entry must be received. Eastern Time shall control for all purposes of this Contest. Sponsor's clock shall be the official timekeeper for the Contest.

HOW TO ENTER: To enter, during the Submission Period, visit the [New Voices Award Submission Form online](#) and follow the instructions to submit your manuscript (hereafter referred to as either "Manuscript" or "Submission"). Manuscripts must comply with the Submission Instructions/Requirements set forth below to be eligible for entry. Although it is free to enter, standard message and data charges may be incurred if you use your mobile device to submit your Manuscript. Limited to **no more than 2 Submissions** per entrant, provided, however, that each Submission must be submitted separately. Entries in excess of these limits or entries that do not comply with the Submission Instructions/Requirements will be disqualified. Entries will be deemed to have been submitted by the authorized account holder of the email address submitted by entrant with its Submission. "Authorized account holder" is defined as the natural person who is assigned to an email address by an Internet access provider, online service provider or organization (e.g., business, educational institution, etc.) that is responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted email address. Entering or attempting to enter the Contest multiple times through the use of multiple email addresses or otherwise is prohibited and any such entries will be deemed void and disqualified.

Submissions will not be acknowledged or returned; however, entrants will retain all intellectual property rights within their Submissions. Proof of submission of a Manuscript will not be deemed to be proof of its receipt by Sponsor.

You acknowledge that other entrants may have used ideas and/or concepts in their Submissions that may be similar in idea or concept to what is included in your Submission. You understand and agree that you shall not have any claim against any other entrant or Lee & Low Books arising out any such similarity or be entitled to any compensation because of any such similarity.

You acknowledge and agree that your Submission is not confidential.

Independently Developed Submissions

You understand and agree that Lee & Low Books' use of independently developed material similar to a Submission, or containing features or elements similar or substantially similar to those contained in a Submission, will not obligate Lee & Low Books to negotiate with you, nor will it entitle you to any compensation of any kind. Furthermore, you understand, agree, and acknowledge that nothing herein shall preclude Lee & Low Books from using any material similar to a Submission without obligation to you. This includes, but is not limited to, if Lee & Low Books has determined that it has an independent legal right to use such material, that such features or elements are not novel or originated by you, or that the material was, or may hereafter be, independently created by or submitted to Lee & Low Books.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS/REQUIREMENTS:

1. Manuscripts should address the needs of children of color, and Native/Indigenous children by providing stories with which they can identify and relate and which promote a greater understanding of one another. Themes relating to different family structures, gender identity, LGBTQ+ communities, or disabilities may also be included.
1. Manuscripts may be **FICTION, NARRATIVE NONFICTION, or POETRY** for children ages 5 to 12. Only stories with human protagonists will be considered. Novels, short stories, and graphic novels will **not** be accepted.
2. Narrative nonfiction projects should have strong educational appeal, centered around a person or people from marginalized groups. Instructional or reference nonfiction (e.g. cookbooks, encyclopedias, etc.) will not be considered. Please include a preliminary bibliography and an explanation of how you came to write the book with your manuscript.
3. Manuscripts must be written in English and should be typed, double-spaced, composed in a clear 12-point font, and saved as a Word (.docx) document. If Track Changes were used, all changes must be accepted and tracking turned off before submitting.

4. Up to 2 submissions per entrant is allowed. However, each submission should be submitted separately. Each submission should not exceed 4,500 words in length, including backmatter.
5. All submissions **must** be accompanied by a cover letter that includes the author's name, address, phone number, email address, brief biographical note, relevant cultural, ethnic, and any other background information, how the author heard about the Contest, and publication history, if any.
6. Submissions that have been submitted to other publishers or writing contests are not eligible. Submissions may not be sent to other publishers, mentorship contests, or writing contests while under consideration for this Contest.
7. No automatic, programmed, robotic, mechanically altered, or reproduced entries are permitted, and any such entries will be deemed void and disqualified. Manuscripts must be your original written work product; plagiarism of any kind will result in disqualification.
8. Artificial Intelligence: The use of generative artificial intelligence ("AI") of any kind to create a Manuscript or any portion thereof for this Contest, whether in the writing or editing phase, is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification. In this context, AI includes, but is not limited to, ChatGPT, Zoom AI Companion, Bing AI, Google Bard, Microsoft's CoPilot, Jasper, Westlaw Precision, and Lexis+AI. Note that for these purposes, AI does not include basic tools for checking grammar, spelling, references, etc. Sponsor reserves the right to screen Submissions for use of AI through an AI detector. Entrants utilizing AI to generate their work product in whole or in part will be disqualified. If it is determined after the winner is announced and the prize is awarded that the winning entrant utilized AI to generate the written Submission in whole or in part, then the entrant will forfeit the winning designation and shall return any advance or royalty payments that have already been paid at the time of such forfeiture. In Sponsor's sole and unfettered discretion, a new winner may then be selected from all other non-suspect eligible Submissions, using the winner selection process described in these Official Rules.
9. Be sure to leave sufficient time to resubmit your Submission if technical difficulties occur. Lee & Low Books is not responsible for late, lost, or incorrectly submitted Manuscripts.

REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES/INDEMNIFICATION: Each person who enters this Contest represents and warrants as follows: (i) entrant is the sole and exclusive owner of the Submission and the Submission has not been previously published, distributed or otherwise exploited; (ii) the Submission is wholly original with entrant and is entrant's 100% original creation and work product; no generative AI of any kind was used to create the Submission or any portion thereof, whether in the writing

or editing phase; (iii) as of the date of its submission, the Submission is not the subject of any actual or threatened litigation or claim; (iv) the Submission does not and will not violate or infringe upon the intellectual property rights or other rights of any other person or entity, including, but not limited to, rights of privacy and publicity; and (v) the Submission does not and will not violate any applicable laws, and is not and will not be considered defamatory or libelous. Each entrant hereby agrees to indemnify and hold the Sponsor and its subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, partners, representatives, agents, successors, assigns, employees, officers and directors harmless from and against any and all third party claims, actions or proceedings of any kind and from any and all damages, liabilities, costs and expenses relating to or arising out of any breach or alleged breach of any of the warranties, representations or agreements of entrant hereunder or as otherwise set forth in these Official Rules.

PRIZE:

One winner will receive the New Voices Award, which consists of a standard publication contract, including Lee & Low Books' basic advance and royalties for a first-time author in the amount of \$5,000 (the "Award"). Winner is responsible for all applicable federal, state, or local taxes on the Award. Award is not transferrable or assignable. No more than the stated number of 1 Award will be awarded in this Contest.

WINNER SELECTION PROCESS/ODDS OF WINNING:

1. After the close of the Submission Period, Sponsor will select 1 winner from all eligible entries received. To select the winner, editors of Lee & Low Books will judge all eligible Submissions based on the following equally-weighted judging criteria: (i) originality, (ii) strength of voice, (iii) appeal to readers between the ages of 5 to 12, and (iv) thought-provoking themes.
2. On or about September 29, 2025, up to 5 to 10 semi-finalists will be chosen based on the above-mentioned judging criteria. In or about **mid-October**, an editor will contact each semi-finalist to schedule a one-on-one video conference meeting to discuss their Submission. Up to 3 to 5 finalists will be chosen from the semi-finalists based upon the above-mentioned judging criteria and the one-on-one video conference meeting. **Lee & Low Books reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to select less than 5 to 10 semi-finalists and less than 3 to 5 finalists.**
3. On or about **December 11, 2025**, the Submissions selected to be finalists will go on to a finalist meeting to be discussed by the Sponsor's judging committee. Each finalist Submission will be re-judged to select 1 winner on the following equally-weighted criteria: (i) originality; (ii) strength of voice; (iii) appeal to readers between the ages of 5 to 12; (iv) and thought-provoking themes.
4. **Lee & Low Books reserves the right, in its sole discretion, not to choose an Award winner.**
5. If a winner is chosen, they will be contacted by Lee & Low Books after **January 5, 2026**, with an advance offer and standard contract. If an offer is extended, it

does not need to be immediately accepted by the winner. The winner may evaluate the details of the offer if/when it is made and consult an agent.

6. The potential winner (and/or agent if applicable) will be required to respond by no later than the ordinary close of business on **February 6, 2026** with the intent of moving forward with signing the publication contract or officially declining the offer and publication. If the potential winner declines the offer, Lee & Low Books reserves the right to offer the same publication terms to another finalist, as selected using the same judging criteria set forth above for determination of a winner.
7. In the unlikely event of a tie in the selection of either semi-finalists, finalists or the winner, the tied Submissions will be re-judged using the judging criteria set forth herein.
8. Odds of winning the Award will depend upon the nature, quality, and total number of eligible Submissions received.
9. The decisions of Lee & Low Books are final and binding in all matters relating to this Contest, including, but not limited to, interpretation and application of these Official Rules. By entering the Contest, you fully and unconditionally agree to be bound by these rules and the decisions of the Sponsor and its designated judges, which will be final and binding in all matters relating to the Contest, including but not limited to, the selection of the Award winner, and such decisions cannot be appealed.

PUBLICITY RELEASE; USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION: Except where prohibited or restricted by law, entry into the Contest constitutes the entrant's agreement and consent for Sponsor and any of its designees to use and/or publish winner's name (in whole or in part), city, and state of residence, photographs or other likenesses, pictures, portraits, video, voice, testimonials, biographical information (in whole or in part), and/or statements made by winner regarding the Contest or Sponsor, worldwide and in perpetuity for any and all purposes, including, but not limited to, advertising, trade and/or promotion on behalf of Sponsor, in any and all forms of media, now known or hereafter devised, including, but not limited to, print, TV, radio, electronic, cable, or World Wide Web, without further limitation, restriction, compensation, notice, review, or approval. By entering the Contest, entrants will be sharing their personal information with Sponsor. Personal information collected by Sponsor will be used for administration of the Contest and awarding the prize. In addition, by entering, entrants agree to Sponsor's use of entrant's personal information as described in its privacy policy at <https://www.leeandlow.com/contact/privacy-policy>. Please refer to Sponsor's privacy policy for important information regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by Sponsor. Sponsor is not responsible for disclosures made by any third party.

NO TAMPERING; RIGHT TO CANCEL; MODIFY: Sponsor and its subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, partners, representatives, agents, successors, assigns, employees, officers and directors shall not have any obligation or responsibility, including any responsibility to award any prize to entrants, with regard to: (a) entries that contain

inaccurate information or do not comply with or violate the Official Rules; (b) entries, prize claims or notifications that are lost, late, incomplete, illegible, unintelligible, damaged or otherwise not received by the intended recipient, in whole or in part, due to computer, human or technical error of any kind, including but not limited to, inactive email accounts, spam filters or an entrant's failure to monitor its email account or spam filters; (c) entrants who have committed fraud, deception, cheating, hacking or other unfair playing practices in entering or participating in the Contest or claiming the prize; (d) telephone, electronic, hardware, software, network, Internet or computer malfunctions, failures or difficulties; (e) any inability of the winner to accept the prize for any reason; (f) if a prize cannot be awarded due to delays or interruptions due to Acts of God, natural disasters, terrorism, epidemic, pandemic or outbreak of communicable disease, quarantine, national, regional or state of emergency or emergency disaster, weather or any other event beyond Sponsor's reasonable control; or (g) any damages, injuries or losses of any kind caused by any prize or resulting from awarding, acceptance, possession, use, misuse, loss or misdirection of any prize or resulting from participating in this Contest or any Contest or prize related activities.

Sponsor reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to disqualify any individual it finds to be (a) tampering with the entry process or the operation of the Contest, or with any website promoting the Contest; (b) cheating, hacking or using any unfair playing practices, or engaging in a non-sportsmanlike or disruptive manner, or with the intent to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any other entrant, Sponsor, or its representatives; (c) acting in violation of the Official Rules; or (d) entering or attempting to enter the Contest more than the permitted limits through the use of multiple email addresses or otherwise. If Sponsor determines, in its sole discretion, that technical difficulties or unforeseen events compromise the integrity or viability of the Contest, Sponsor reserves the right to void the entries at issue, and/or terminate the relevant portion of the Contest promotion, including the entire Contest promotion, and/or modify the Contest and/or, in the event of termination, award the prize based upon the judging criteria set forth in these Official Rules from all eligible entries received as of the termination date.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY; DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY; FORUM SELECTION

CLAUSE: By participating in the Contest, entrants and winner agree to release and hold harmless Sponsor and its subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, partners, representatives, agents, successors, assigns, employees, officers, and directors (the "Released Parties"), from any and all liability, for loss, harm, damage, injury, cost or expense whatsoever, including without limitation, property damage, personal injury (including emotional distress), and/or death, which may occur in connection with preparation for, or participation in, the Contest, or possession, acceptance and/or use or misuse of the prize or participation in any Contest-related or prize-related activity and for any claims or causes of action based on publicity rights, defamation or invasion of privacy. The Released Parties assume no responsibility for any injury or damage to entrants or to any other person's computer or mobile device, regardless of how caused, relating to or resulting from entering or downloading or uploading materials or software in connection with this Contest. Entrants and winner acknowledge that Sponsor has neither made nor

is in any manner responsible or liable for any warranty, representations or guarantees, express or implied, in fact or in law, relative to any prize or any component thereof. Except where prohibited, all issues and questions concerning the construction, validity, interpretation and enforceability of these Official Rules, or the rights and obligations of entrant or Sponsor in connection with the Contest, shall be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action, and shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of New York, without giving effect to any choice of law or conflict of law rules (whether of the State of New York, or any other jurisdiction), which would cause the application of the laws of any jurisdiction other than the State of New York. In addition, any dispute relating to the Contest (including these Official Rules) shall be brought in the appropriate state or federal court having jurisdiction over the subject matter located in New York, New York. Entrants hereby irrevocably consent to the personal jurisdiction of said courts and waive any claim of forum non conveniens or lack of personal jurisdiction that they may have. Any and all claims, judgment and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, but in no event attorneys' fees and under no circumstances will entrant be permitted to obtain awards for, and entrant hereby waives all rights to claim, indirect, punitive, incidental and consequential damages and any other damages, other than for actual out-of-pocket expenses, and further waives any and all rights to have damages multiplied or otherwise increased.

CAUTION: ANY ATTEMPT BY AN ENTRANT TO DELIBERATELY DAMAGE ANY WEBSITE OR UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF THE CONTEST MAY BE A VIOLATION OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAWS AND SHOULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE MADE, LEE & LOW BOOKS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SEEK DAMAGES FROM ANY SUCH PERSON TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.

IN THE EVENT THERE IS A DISCREPANCY OR INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE TERMS OF THESE OFFICIAL RULES AND DISCLOSURES OR OTHER STATEMENTS CONTAINED IN ANY CONTEST MATERIALS, THE OFFICIAL RULES SHALL CONTROL.