



Association of Writers
& Writing Programs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#AWP26 Welcomes 10,500 Attendees to Baltimore, MD, for Annual Conference & Bookfair

Norfolk, VA — The Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) hosted a vibrant annual conference and bookfair (#AWP26) at the Baltimore Convention Center on March 4–7, welcoming 10,500 writers, educators, students, publishers, and writing organizations to the largest literary gathering in North America. The conference featured 650 exhibiting organizations, 366 on-site events, and 180 off-site literary gatherings across the city, transforming Baltimore into a hub of literary exchange and celebration for four days.

Executive Director Michelle Aielli says, “#AWP26 was one for the books! Literary partners and panelists delivered exceptional events, the bookfair was abuzz with conversation and community, our attendees made the conference come alive, and the small but mighty AWP staff and board brought their knowledge and creativity. #AWP26 underscored the significant and enduring impact of writers and writing programs on the literary landscape.”

The conference highlight came on Thursday, March 5, when a [Baltimore icon](#) delivered a heartfelt and humorous keynote about the writing life to a standing-room-only crowd. The evening opened with an entertaining reading by Dr. Ashley Minner Jones, a local community-based folklorist and visual artist, who celebrated Baltimore’s history of Indigenous peoples, including her community, the Lumbee. AWP Board Chair Travis Kurowski also announced the locations of upcoming conferences: Chicago, Illinois, in 2027—where AWP will celebrate its 60th anniversary—and Portland, Oregon, in 2028.

Another popular #AWP26 highlight was the “Ask an Agent Anything” event, a spin-off of AWP’s Writer to Agent Program. The event featured a candid conversation between literary agents and attendees about the publishing process—from submissions and industry trends to securing representation.

#AWP26 at a Glance



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- 10,500 attendees
- 1,808 student attendees
- 800 participants in the AWP Work-Exchange Program, which grants free registration in exchange for four hours of conference support
- 68 conference scholarships awarded, most to attendees who identify as low-income, LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, or disabled
- In its fourth year, the AWP HBCU Fellowship Program awarded conference registrations to 3 faculty and 6 students.
- The AWP TCU Fellowship Program returned for its second year and awarded conference registrations to 2 faculty and 4 students.

The keynote address, along with all featured events and selected prerecorded events, will be available for registered attendees on the [virtual platform](#) until April 3, 2026. All [featured events](#)* will be posted on [AWP's YouTube channel](#) later this year.

For more information on AWP, please visit awpwriter.org.

*Excluding the keynote

About AWP

AWP is a professional association of creative writers and writing programs. AWP provides support, advocacy, resources, and community to individual writers, academic creative writing programs, and organizations. The AWP Conference & Bookfair is the annual destination for writers, teachers, students, editors, and publishers of contemporary creative writing. It includes thousands of attendees, hundreds of events and bookfair exhibitors, and four days of essential literary conversation and celebration.