

WOMEN[®]



Writing the West

Guidelines for the 2026 WILLA Literary Award

Capturing the Diversity of the Women's West

Entries Accepted ONLINE ONLY – \$65 per entry

Entry Period November 1, 2025 - February 1, 2026

The WILLA Literary Award honors the best in literature *featuring women's or girls' stories set in all North America west of the Mississippi River and includes Alaska, Hawaii, Canada west of Ontario, and Mexico*. The award is named in honor of Pulitzer Prize winner Willa Cather, one of America's foremost novelists. Women Writing the West (WWW), a nonprofit association, underwrites and presents this nationally recognized award at the WWW Annual Fall Conference.

- Entries for The WILLA Literary Awards are open to all persons worldwide and are not limited to WWW members or women specifically.
- All authors or publishers of books that feature women's or girls' stories set in the North American West may enter.
- A complete WILLA entry consists of one (1) PDF link of the author's book sent to The WILLA Chair at www.willachair26@gmail.com, and a completed online application with payment.
- Works submitted for this competition must have been **FIRST** published during the 2025 calendar year with the **FIRST** copyright date in 2025.
- No title may be entered in more than one category.
- WWW reserves the right to add or delete categories according to the entries received and to move entries to another category as appropriate.
- Entries with incomplete submission packages or after the February 1 deadline will not be

acknowledged, nor will any part of the package, including the entry fee, be returned.

- Final Judges are professional librarians not affiliated with WWW. They will select the Winners and Finalists.
- WWW reserves the right to not name a Winner or Finalist in any category, should the Final Judges determine that no entry merits an award.

The WILLA Literary Award Categories Are:

Children's Picture Books

Contemporary Fiction

Creative Nonfiction

Historical Fiction

Middle Grade Fiction and Nonfiction

Mystery / Thriller

Poetry

Romance (incl. Historical & Contemporary)

Scholarly Nonfiction

Young Adult Fiction and Nonfiction

More information about these categories can be found on the [WWW website](http://www.willachair26@gmail.com).

Refer any questions to Deborah Swenson, the 2026 WILLA Chair at www.willachair26@gmail.com