



## Worcester County Poetry Association Strategic Plan Summary and Key Recommendations

Between September 2021 and March 2022, Sarah B. Lange worked with the Worcester County Poetry Association (WCPA) to engage in a strategic planning process. The planning process took place in three phases:

1. Survey: we surveyed all WCPA members and a number of key stakeholders between September 23 – October 28, 2021. Survey results were synthesized and analyzed by consultant Sarah Lange (see Attachment A).
2. Retreat: on October 30, the WCPA board met to review and discuss the survey results, carve a future vision, and craft goals for the next year (see Attachment B).
3. Planning: we formulated and populated two committees – Infrastructure and Programming. Each committee had two meetings, during which it outlined its goals, objectives and outcomes for the coming year (see Attachments C and D).

### Key recommendations:

1. The organization is moving from Start-up to Stabilization. To make this transition successfully – and to ensure the future of the organization – moving forward, there needs to be equal emphasis on infrastructure development and programming. This will require a shift in culture, discipline, structure, and the creation and adoption of metrics, used to make and evaluate decisions. I heartily applaud the decision to hire two part-time people to help the board execute the work of the organization. This will free the board up to focus on the WCPA’s mission and vision, rather than spend time on administrative matters and other minutia.
2. To assist with the streamlined implementation of the strategic plan, I recommend the creation of an Executive (or Steering) Committee, which will meet on a monthly basis, with the full board meeting on a quarterly basis. This will simplify the decision-making process and help move the goals of the organization forward more quickly. I am also recommending that the WCPA have co-chairs for the board moving forward, as people are increasingly busy and are often juggling competing priorities. This may also attract potential leaders who may be hesitant to take on the mantle of leadership alone.

Executing the goals outlined in the strategic plan will help the WCPA achieve stabilization and better fulfill its mission to:

- Celebrate the rich literary history and creative energy of Central Massachusetts through public readings, workshops, festivals, scholarly conferences and other programs.
- Publish the literary journal *The Worcester Review*.
- Collaborate with libraries, bookstores, colleges and universities, museums, churches, schools, community centers, businesses and a variety of cultural organizations to promote poetry events.