City of Worcester Poet Laureate & Youth Poet Laureate Programs

Worcester City Manager Eric Batista, in collaboration with the Worcester City Council and Cultural Development Division, is pleased to announce the nomination process for the City's next Youth Poet Laureate. The Youth Poet Laureate will serve a two-year term, from January 2024 through December 2025.

Along with the City of Worcester's Poet Laureate, the City of Worcester Youth Poet Laureate serves as an official ambassador to Worcester's historic and vibrant cultures of poetry and literary arts. Both Poets Laureate use their positions to share the transformative qualities of poetry and the written word with the community, to celebrate and amplify the City's great writers, and to help shape the next generation of literary enthusiasts.

The objectives of the City of Worcester's Poet Laureate Program are to:

- Enhance the presence and appreciation of poetry and literary arts in Greater Worcester;
- Celebrate the spirit of the people and special qualities of Worcester, the Creative City;
- Raise awareness of the power of literature, poetry, and the spoken word;
- Provide a forum for collaborative art forms;
- Engage and support an emerging generation of poets and spoken word artists;
- Provide access to poetry and literary arts to all sectors of the community; and
- Encourage the reading and writing of both poetry and the written word.

The Worcester Poet Laureate Program is designed to promote appreciation of the diverse spirits, backgrounds, and voices of Worcester's multicultural communities. The Youth Poet Laureate will have significant connection to the Worcester community, and will foster deeper roots throughout their term. The Youth Poet Laureate must be between 13 and 19 years of age on January 1, 2024 and be able to demonstrate an interest in the creative arts.

Nomination Process

The City of Worcester's Cultural Development Division will administer the nomination process for the Youth Poet Laureate Programs through a Poet Laureate Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will establish a fair and inclusive selection process to ensure the most qualified candidate is appointed. To be considered, candidates must either apply on their own or be nominated. The Selection Committee will seek nominations from an array of literary sources and individuals including, but not limited to: college and university literature and poetry departments; libraries, literary organizations, societies, and centers; poetry book organizations, publishers, and editors; primary, intermediate, and high school faculty and staff; directors of literary and poetry reading series; and non-literary members of the community.

The Cultural Development Division will convene a Selection Committee, with personnel subject to change at the discretion of the City Manager. The Selection Committee will review nominations and make recommendations to the Cultural Development Division, who will forward to the City Manager's Office for consideration.

All interested in applying or nominating a qualified candidate are encouraged to join the Youth Poet Laureate Application Workshop on Wednesday, October 18th at 5:00pm on Zoom. In addition to a walkthrough of the application process, attendees will be able to ask questions of Cultural Development staff and the current Youth Poet Laureate, Adael (Ace) Mejia.

Selection Criteria

Youth poets, age 13 to 19 as of January 1, 2024, will be considered for the Youth Poet Laureate role. Additional selection criteria include:

- The literary merit of the youth candidate's work;
- The impact of the youth candidate on other writers and the community, for example through writing clubs, social media, school programs, or community organizations;
- Contributions to the literature of Worcester and its diverse voices, for example through local events, community initiatives, or creative projects; and
- The ability and willingness to conduct required public engagement duties.

Scoring

- 80 percent of the total score will be based on quality of artistic work samples, candidate narrative, curriculum vitae or resume, as well as other related accomplishments (press coverage, exhibitions, programs, academic honors, club participation, awards, etc.).
- 20 percent of the total score will be based on quality of the proposed project, such as new work ideas, community presentation, and collaborative ideas.

Term and Responsibilities – Scope of Work

Each year, the Youth Poet Laureate appointee will be expected to communicate their experience widely to peers and City communities. Over the course of the two-year appointment, renewable after the first year, the City of Worcester Youth Poet Laureate will:

- Embark on opportunities as an ambassador to literacy, arts, and youth expression;
- Represent the City of Worcester in the public realm as deemed appropriate;
- Activate the City of Worcester Youth Poet Laureate social media channels and
- Create at least one commemorative poem annually about Worcester.

Honorarium

The Worcester Youth Poet Laureate receives a $2,500 scholarship, as well as a $500 annual stipend honorarium, to be contributed from private sources. This award will be based on benchmarks established in a legal contract.

Deadline for Nominations

All nominations and applications must be received by 5 p.m. on December 10, 2023 or postmarked by **December 10, 2023**.

Instruction for Submitting Applications

The Application and Guidelines can be found at http://www.worcesterma.gov/cultural-development/poet. For consideration, a completed application and all required materials can be submitted online at https://forms.worcesterma.gov/f/YouthPoetLaureateApplication. These items can also be emailed to Culture@WorcesterMA.gov, or mailed to:

Cultural Development
Attn: City of Worcester Poet Laureate Program
455 Main Street, Room 409
Worcester, MA 01608