



Youth Engagement  
and Advancement

# 2024 OYEA IMPACT REPORT



“Uplifting Boston’s Youth”



# 2024 OYEA IMPACT REPORT

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# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**PEDRO CRUZ**  
Executive Director

Dear Community Members, Partners, and Advocates,

As I reflect on the work we have accomplished together in 2024, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the progress we've made toward empowering Boston's youth. This year has been a testament to the strength, resilience, and brilliance of our young people, as well as the unwavering commitment of our community to support their dreams and aspirations.

At the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement (OYEA), we believe that every young person deserves access to opportunities that inspire growth, foster creativity, and build pathways to success. This belief has guided our work in creating innovative programs, amplifying youth voices, and forging partnerships that drive meaningful change. Whether through expanded internship opportunities, leadership development programs, or direct community engagement, our mission has remained clear: to uplift the next generation of leaders and change-makers.

This year, we saw incredible milestones achieved. Over 1,000 young people participated in our Boston After Dark initiative, building relationships with their peers and gaining experiences that will shape their futures. We launched the YouthLine, a resource hub for young people that addresses critical needs and opens new doors for youth across Boston. Additionally, our collaborative efforts with schools, community organizations, and local businesses have strengthened the network of support available to the city's young residents.

None of this would have been possible without the collective effort of our dedicated team, passionate community partners, and—most importantly—the youth who inspire us daily with their energy and vision. Your support, whether as mentors, volunteers, advocates, or allies, has been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals and lay the foundation for even greater accomplishments in the years to come.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain steadfast in our commitment to breaking down barriers, championing equity, and ensuring that every young person in Boston has the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. Together, we will continue to build a city where youth voices are heard, their potential is realized, and their futures are bright.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey. Let's keep building a better tomorrow, one step at a time.

With Gratitude and Hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pedro Cruz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping 'P' and 'C'.





# ABOUT OYEA

The Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement (OYEA) works to uplift young voices in decision-making processes and help advance the lives of young people across Boston through programming and resources. We feel it is crucial to have young voices actively engaged in the policies and decisions that impact their lives, and our mission is to provide the platform for them to do so. All Boston youth should have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

We aim to serve as a central hub connecting young people to these resources and opportunities across City Hall and in their communities. We also value the youth workers who are on the ground with Boston's young people each day. We aim to provide the necessary support and development opportunities to uplift their work. Our goal is to create and support spaces that empower our next generation to become community leaders and agents of change.



# TEAMOYEA



**PEDRO  
CRUZ**

*Executive Director*



**LINDSEY  
BOOZER**

*Deputy Director*



**MAYA  
BRAVO**

*Communications &  
Outreach Manager*



**DANIEL  
BRYAN**

*Strategic Partnerships  
Manager*



**KARMA  
FREEMAN**

*Community Engagement  
Coordinator*



**LEENA  
GHRICI**

*MYC Program  
Coordinator*



**SHANE  
STANISLAUS**

*Communications  
Fellow*






# OYEA MODEL

This year has been a pivotal one for our work, as we rolled out a comprehensive model centered on supporting the three essential levels of youth engagement: (1) spaces and programs for young people, (2) the adults and professionals who work in those spaces, and (3) young people themselves. Our vision is to create a city where every young person has the resources, relationships, and opportunities they need to thrive. This strategic model is our roadmap to achieving that vision, ensuring our initiatives empower not just youth but the ecosystems that nurture them. Below, we outline the key pillars of support.

## PILLARS OF SUPPORT


### STRATEGIC PILLAR 1:

#### Youth Programs and Spaces

 Ensure that youth-centered spaces and programs are accessible, inclusive, and designed to inspire growth and connection.


### STRATEGIC PILLAR 2:

#### Youth Workers and Adult Allies

 Equip youth-facing individuals with the tools and support needed to build meaningful relationships with young people and foster positive development.

### STRATEGIC PILLAR 3:

#### Young People

 Empower young people to lead, advocate, and shape the future of Boston through their voices and actions. Connecting them to opportunities and resources through programs and services.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2024, we are energized by the progress made and the lives impacted. However, our work is far from finished. In 2025, we aim to deepen our impact by scaling successful initiatives, fostering new partnerships, and listening closely to the voices of Boston's youth. Together, we are building a Boston where every young person has the opportunity to dream, grow, and lead. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our shared mission.

# OYEA *Programs and Initiatives*







## ABOUT

The Mayor's Youth Summit is a citywide celebration that aims to engage and inspire Boston's young people. The 2024 Mayor's Youth Summit was held by the City for the first time in 20 years and marked 30 years since its inception. It brought over 200 youth and 100 adult attendees from across all neighborhoods. The revitalization of this iconic event underlines the City of Boston's commitment to uplifting Boston's young people and celebrating their contributions to our city's culture. The Mayor's Youth Summit featured free food, giveaways, awards, performances, activities, and resources for youth. Activities included an interactive art wall, festival games, a self-care station, a 360 photo booth, and more. Providers offered a variety of resources, including mental health resources, job opportunities, LGBTQ+ support, food access, and more.

"The decision to revive the Youth Summit highlights the substantial investment the city has made in our youth. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to bring our young people together to connect, collaborate and celebrate each other"

*Camila Pineiro, Founder of Beat the Odds*

## BY THE NUMBERS

 **300**  
People In Attendance

 **17**  
Resource Partners

 **21**  
Collaborative Events







# YOUTHLINE

## ABOUT

In 2024, OYEA launched a redesign of YouthLine, an initiative connecting community members to youth-centered resources. The YouthLine Resource Hub is a virtual platform showcasing resources for youth and young adults across Boston. This tool aims to organize the variety of supportive resources, programs, and opportunities available to youth and families in Boston through City agencies and community based partner organizations. YouthLine aims to connect Boston's young residents to the services and resources available to them to help them thrive. Through this initiative, residents are able to independently navigate vetted resources through the online directory or contact the OYEA office for more individualized support. Additionally, the OYEA office maintains the OYEA Community Events Calendar, a live and up-to-date calendar of free events citywide open to Boston teens.

## GET CONNECTED

ONLINE RESOURCE  
DIRECTORY

WALK-IN SUPPORT

PHONE, EMAIL, AND  
INTAKE FORM

## BY THE NUMBERS



**411**

Resources in the  
Youthline online  
directory



**1600+**

Events listed on the  
Community Events  
Calendar



**500+**

Constituents served  
on site through  
Tobin Community  
Center walk-in  
desk

# YOUTH LEAD THE CHANGE

## ABOUT

Youth Lead the Change is a groundbreaking participatory budgeting program in the City of Boston, designed to empower young residents ages 14 to 25 to directly determine the allocation of \$1 million in City funds from the City of Boston's capital budget. YLC has been running since 2014 and has allocated over \$10 million in City of Boston capital funding to projects imagined and voted for by Boston youth. As the first youth-focused participatory budgeting initiative in the United States, this program invites young people to identify community needs, propose innovative solutions, and vote on projects that will positively impact their neighborhoods. Through Youth Lead the Change, Boston is setting a new standard for youth engagement and civic participation, ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and valued in shaping the future of the city.

## 2023-2024 WINNING IDEAS

### BOSTON SHELTERS 2.0

FUNDING IMPROVEMENTS  
TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS

### NEXT LEVEL SPORTS

UPGRADING YOUTH  
SPORTS FACILITIES

## BY THE NUMBERS



772

Idea Submissions



4284

Ballots Cast



50

Voting Locations



BOSTON MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL

## ABOUT

The Mayor's Youth Council is a citywide program designed to empower and engage the young people of Boston in civic leadership and community development. The Council provides a platform for youth to voice their opinions, collaborate with city officials, and develop solutions to the challenges facing young people across the City of Boston. Through active participation, members gain valuable leadership skills, experience in public service, and a deeper understanding of local government processes. The Mayor's Youth Council is a vital component of the City's commitment to empowering young people and fostering a vibrant, inclusive community. By engaging Boston's youth in meaningful ways, the Council helps shape a future where young voices are heard, respected, and influential in the civic landscape.

## GOALS

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZING

LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT

## BY THE NUMBERS



230

Applications Received



60

Youth Accepted



18

Neighborhoods



24

Schools Represented



# TESTIMONIALS



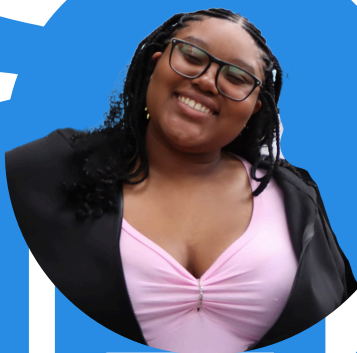
## **ANDREW PIERRE, MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCILOR 2023-24**

"Being able to work with OYEA and Boston Public Schools' T&L office was an honor, and I honestly didn't realize how much I'd get out of being involved with MYC. My experience this past year taught me that you don't have to be a 'model' student to initiate change, but that being willing to reach out and represent others is all you need to make positive change. It also taught me that aiming to be consistent and sincere with your work is the most important part of successful planning".



## **KARLA RIVAS BREA, MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCILOR, 2022-24**

"Being a member of MYC under OYEA was an incredible experience that completely changed my life during high school. The council did not just give me an amazing network of likeminded peers from across Boston, but it gave me purpose to foster change in my community. Being able to drive initiatives and hold seats of leadership during my three years in the council propelled me forward during college, internships and other ventures. MYC gave me the confidence, tools and connections to break ceilings and demand reform."



## **DELEYAH CREESE, MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCILOR 2023-24**

"Being a part of MYC has been one of the most meaningful and fun experiences I've had by a long shot. Serving as a Press Specialist, I not only honed in valuable skills but also formed connections with incredible people who taught me the power of communication and the importance of using my voice to make a difference; all while making pretty amazing designs (if I do say so myself...) for each committee and their events. I learned so much about how to inform and inspire others, and those lessons have stayed with me long after my time in the program. If I had the chance to do it all over again, I wouldn't hesitate for a second—MYC is truly an experience everyone should have the chance to be a part of."

# BOSTON

## AFTER DARK

### ABOUT

In Summer 2024, the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement (OYEA) partnered with Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF), YMCA, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston (BGCN) to host free teen nights from 6 - 9PM every Friday, all summer long. Boston After Dark ran from June 21st through August 30th to activate safe and fun nighttime spaces for teens in the summer evenings. Events featured basketball tournaments, barbecues, ice cream socials, movie nights, paint classes, roller skating, pool parties, a flag party, and more. All events showcased the talents of youth DJs from our partners at Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) Boston.

“

"Partnering with Boston After Dark was an amazing way to keep the youth in our community unexposed to potentially dangerous situations during late night hours. This opportunity has allowed us to provide our youth with a safe, fun and supportive environment where they can connect and have positive youth interactions."

- **Raymond Heath**  
Site Director,  
BCYF Mattahunt



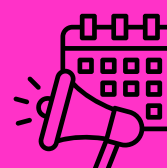
### BY THE NUMBERS



**10000+**  
Youth Engaged



**9**  
Neighborhoods



**18**  
Events Hosted









# OYEA PARTNER NETWORK

## ABOUT

The OYEA Partner Network is a group of community partners and city agencies focused on advancing the lives of youth in Boston. This group meets bi-monthly to connect, network, share resources, uplift opportunities, meet with City leaders, and discuss topics and issues facing the city's young population. One of OYEA's main priorities is to break down the silos that exist in Boston's youth work ecosystem. The Partner Network addresses this issue by creating a consistent space to build connections and share information both in-person and virtually, creating ongoing opportunities for collaboration. As a result, OYEA serves as a central hub to organize and coordinate youth-related work across the city, amplifying the impact of programs and initiatives through stronger partnerships and shared knowledge.

## GOALS

REDUCING SILOS

NETWORKING & CONNECTION

HIGHLIGHT AND UPLIFT ORGANIZATIONS

RESOURCE SHARING

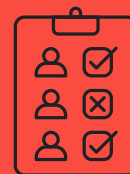
## BY THE NUMBERS



**450**  
Partner Organizations



**5**  
InPerson Meetings



**65**  
Average Meeting Attendance



**5**  
Locations Visited



**1167**  
Individuals



# OYEA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## ABOUT

The OYEA Professional Development Series plays a crucial role in advancing the mission of OYEA by supporting the adult professionals and providers who work directly with Boston's young people. This is a series of high-quality drop-in style workshops and trainings offered at no-cost to adult professionals working in youth-centered spaces. By engaging in this series, youth workers gain valuable insights, expand their expertise, and build meaningful relationships that contribute to both their personal growth and the success of the young people they serve.

## GOALS

SKILL BUILDING

NEW PERSPECTIVES & KNOWLEDGE

NETWORKING & COLLABORATION

CAREER GROWTH

## BY THE NUMBERS



32

Training Sessions



294

Individuals Attended a Workshop



14

Organizations Hosted Trainings



20

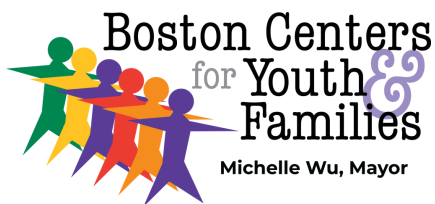
Topics Covered





## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:

We are deeply grateful to the hundreds of community organizations, city agencies, and individual partners who helped make 2024 a success. Partnerships drive our work forward and are at the heart of everything we do, and we couldn't be more thankful for each and every one of our incredible collaborators. It is through the collective energy, support, and dedication of our community that OYEA is able to positively impact the lives of Boston's young people. Thank you for being an essential part of our mission!



City of Boston  
LGBTQIA2S+ Advancement



# CITY of BOSTON



## Youth Engagement and Advancement

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