



FY26 BUDGET HEARING:

Participatory Budgeting, Collecting, & Treasury

May 27, 2025

CITY OF BOSTON



FINANCE CABINET



Office of Participatory Budgeting

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process where community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.

PB advances the City's goals around **civic engagement** and **community collaboration** by:

- **Addressing barriers** for public participation and decision making in local government
- Elevating **resident informed project ideas** that reflect their priorities and lived experiences
- Bringing **communities and city government** together to foster a collective vision for Boston

OFFICE OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING



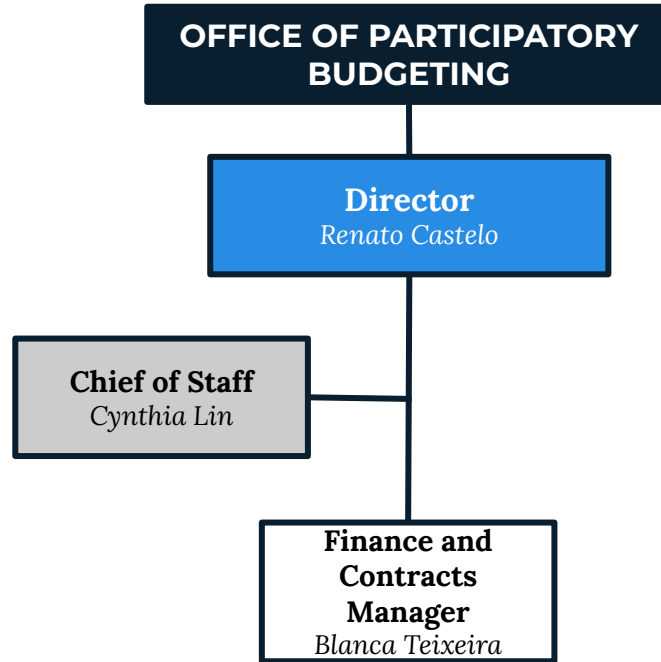
Office of Participatory Budgeting

The mission of the Office of Participatory Budgeting (OPB) is to provide an official point of entry for Boston residents to contribute to the city's budget process.

Through partnerships with community organizations, collaboration with City Departments, and guidance from our External Oversight Board (EOB), the Office hosts yearly participatory budgeting cycles to allow for continuous public engagement.

1. *Offer opportunities for the public to propose community-centered project ideas to address local priorities; and,*
2. *Gauge resident priorities to inform the City's budget process.*

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING ORG CHART



FY26 RECOMMENDED BUDGET OVERVIEW

- OPB FY26 Recommended Operating Budget: \$2,134,250
 - Total increase of \$1,927 over FY25, primarily driven by general wage increases
 - 64% of operating budget supports PB projects through the Special Appropriation line
- PB Special Revenue Fund:
 - As authorized by the PB ordinance, prior year balances in OPB's operating budget have been rolled into a separate, continuing fund
 - Using accumulated balances in the fund, OPB can award \$2 million worth of projects in the FY26 cycle

FUNDING FOR PB PROJECTS

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Projected	FY26 Estimate
Special Revenue Fund Starting Balance	-	\$1,999,942	\$3,333,192	\$2,731,096
Unspent Funds Available for Carryforward	\$1,999,942	\$1,333,250	\$1,397,904	\$1,372,454
PB Cycle Funding Awarded	-	-	-\$2,000,000	-\$2,000,000
Special Revenue Fund Ending Balance	\$1,999,942	\$3,333,192	\$2,731,096	\$2,103,550

IDEAS IN ACTION PILOT YEAR HIGHLIGHTS



Idea Collection (July - August 2024)

1,238 ideas were collected through **multiple channels**.

- 19 co-sponsored Idea Collection Workshops
- Nine (9) Community Partners
- 560 participants throughout workshops



Visioning Forums (October 2024)

Three (3) in-person Visioning Forums hosted in East Boston, Roxbury, and Dorchester with ~100 resident participants in total.

- 15 project proposals were drafted by Boston residents with support from OPB and City Departments



PB Voting (January - February 2025)

- 14 ballot proposals available for voting
- **~4,460 votes** collected online & in-person
- Highest voter turnout in Dorchester, Brighton, Roxbury, East Boston, South Boston, and Hyde Park



Center for Teen Empowerment - Visioning Forum

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

- During Cycle One of Ideas in Action, the Office contracted with **nine (9) nonprofit organizations** to purposefully reach residents who experience higher barriers to **engage in local decision-making** processes.
- OPB's goal of partnering with community organizations is to leverage their **expertise and trust** in the community, so more residents can **participate and engage** throughout the various phases of Ideas in Action.



NUBE/Maverick Landing - Idea Collection Workshop

IDEAS IN ACTION PILOT YEAR WINNING PROJECTS

In January 2025, 4,462 Boston residents participated on how to spend \$2 million of the City's budget on community- driven projects.

Here are the top winning proposals!

- 1 EXPAND ACCESS TO FRESH FOODS IN BOSTON**
Total Votes: 1,834 | Funds Awarded: \$400,000
- 2 RAT PREVENTION INITIATIVES IN DENSE RESIDENTIAL AREAS**
Total Votes: 1,761 | Funds Awarded: \$500,000
- 3 PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT INCARCERATED AND FORMERLY INCARCERATED YOUTH**
Total Votes: 1,707 | Funds Awarded: \$250,000

4 RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR BOSTON YOUTH AGES 16-24

Total Votes: 1,638 | Funds Awarded: \$200,000

5 SUPPORT COMMUNITY GARDENS IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE FOOD

Total Votes: 1,571 | Funds Awarded: \$500,000

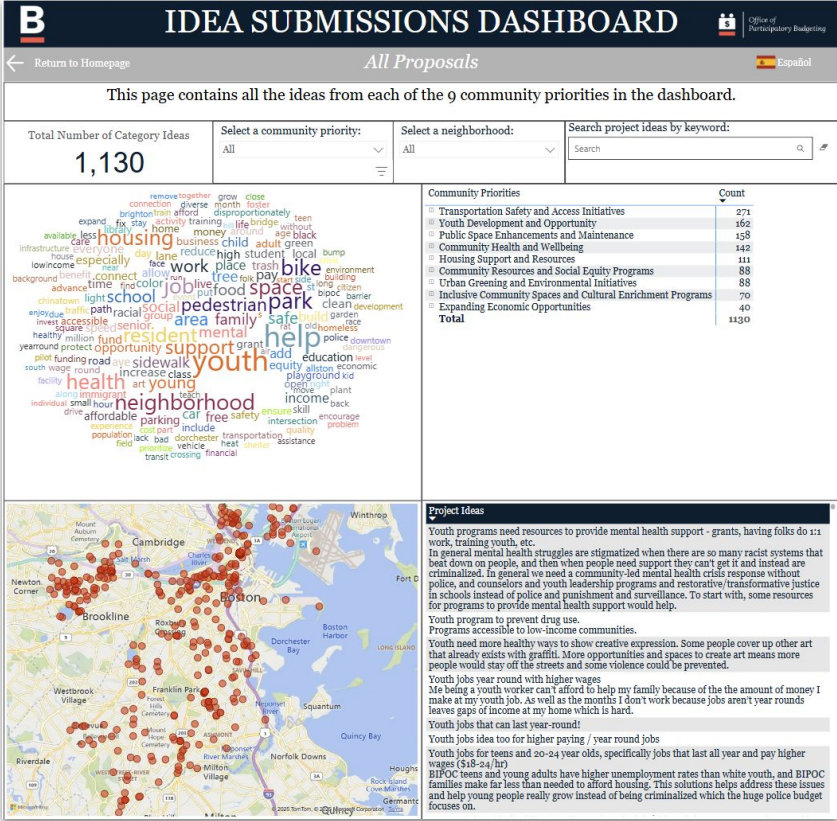
6 INSTALL BENCHES AT HIGH-RIDERSHIP PUBLIC TRANSIT BUS STOPS IN BOSTON

Total Votes: 1,505 | Funds Awarded: \$150,000

IDEAS
in **ACTION**
CITY of **BOSTON**

RESIDENT IDEAS DASHBOARD

Boston.gov/Participate



IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (PILOT YEAR FINDINGS)

Trust in city government

- Across all phases, participants felt that Ideas in Action allowed their voices to be heard by the City of Boston. This is an early indicator for trust in city government.

Interest in future civic engagement

- Across all phases, participants were interested in engaging in Ideas in Action again. Notably, almost all voters who responded to the survey planned to vote again.

Beneficiaries of Selected Projects

- All six selected projects explicitly center the needs of populations that often face barriers to participation in civic processes, especially youth, residents with limited or inconsistent access to nutritious food, and those living in areas with high residential density or transit needs.

“I applaud the city for doing this, you know, because you all went to the community... You can't do anything for us without our input. So I love that the city came to us... there's only so many things that we could put the money into and do those ton of ideas... this is the first step of many. So we'll be back for more input, and we'll bring more and we'll make sure that y'all listen.”

– Ideas in Action participant (Source: Reflection Conversation)



Union Capital Boston – Idea Collection Workshop

IDEAS IN ACTION CYCLE TWO

- **Expanding Community Partnerships**

- ~18 Community Partners for Cycle Two
 - July 2025 - February 2026
- Idea Collection, Visioning Forums, and PB Voter Engagement

- **Idea Collection Campaign Launching July 1st, 2025**

- Community Partner Events
- PB Corners (City Hall, Public Libraries Branches)
- PB Portal Website
- PB Phone Line



**OFFICE OF PARTICIPATORY
BUDGETING**

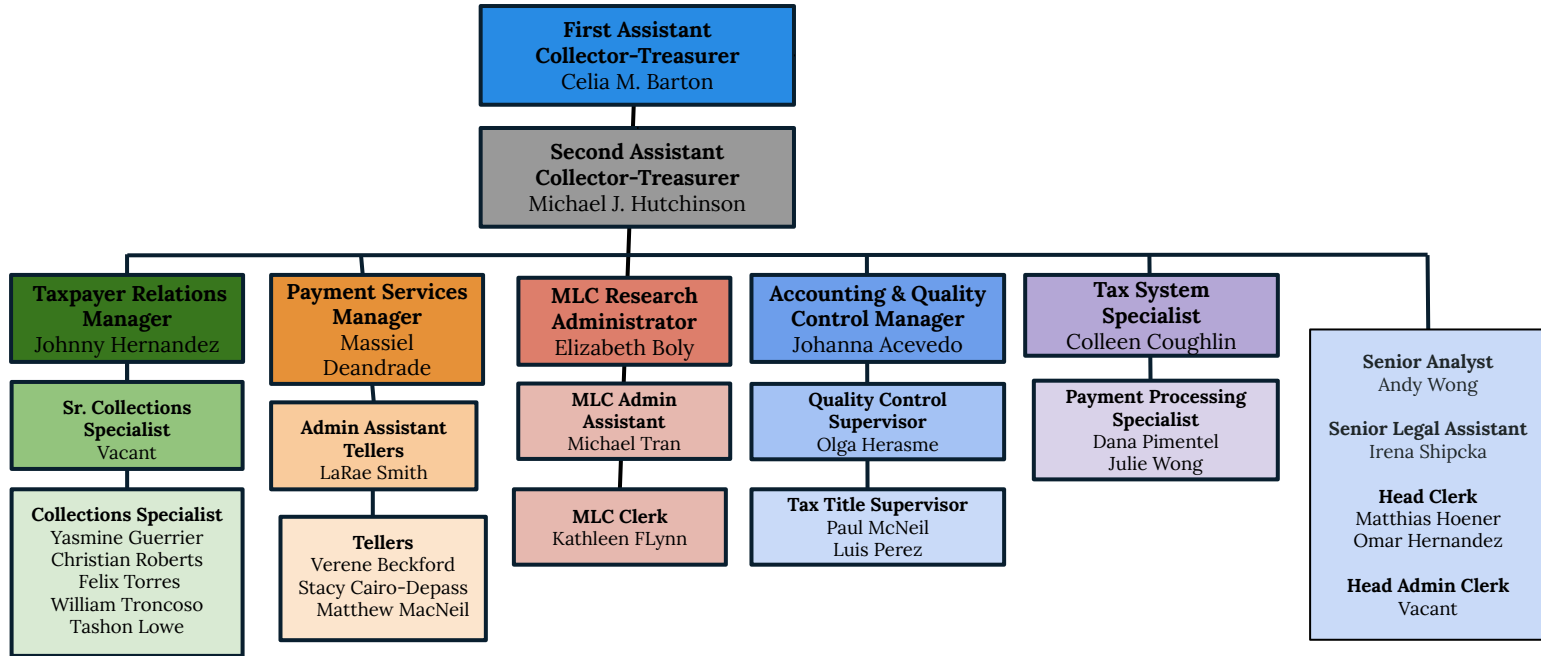
boston.gov/participate



A scenic view of a park. In the foreground, a field of white tulips is in bloom. In the middle ground, a large, leafy tree stands on the left, and a body of water is in the center. Two people are walking on a path on the right side of the water. The background shows more trees and a bridge in the distance.

Treasury - Collecting Division

COLLECTING DIVISION ORG CHART



FY26 RECOMMENDED BUDGET OVERVIEW

- Collecting Division FY26 Recommended Operating Budget: \$3,497,254
- Total increase of \$128,205 over FY25 Approp, primarily driven by general wage increases, salary benchmarking, and an increase in postage costs
- 65% of operating budget is personnel

MISSION STATEMENT

- Collect property taxes and all other revenues owed to the City while providing professional, courteous, and responsive service to taxpayers.
- Maintain the highest collection rate possible and actively pursue all collection remedies allowed under statute.
 - FY24 collection rate: 99.2%
 - FY23 collection rate: 99.2%
 - FY22 collection rate: 99.1%



GENERAL MANAGEMENT

What we do:

- Responsible for hiring, training, and supervising Collecting Division staff and maintenance of collection systems.
- Continue to enhance collection features, such as Pay-By-Phone and online payment portal, to ensure the most efficient taxpayer experience.





What we do:

- Responsible for collecting past due real estate, personal property, and motor vehicle excise taxes.
- Work alongside with the Law Department on special projects, account research, and petitions.
- Collaborate with City departments—including the Mayor's Office of Housing, Home Center, and Age Strong—to ensure taxpayers are informed about all available City resources.
- Assist in drafting courtesy letters and emails and making phone calls to taxpayers, utilizing research tools and resources to provide accurate information and support regarding property tax bills.
- Prepare and file tax takings as necessary.



What we do:

- Issue all current tax notices to taxpayers and financial institutions.
- Process all payments received from taxpayers, ensuring accurate recording and proper allocation of funds.
- Receive and process all City department deposits such as parking, permits, public works, and licensing fees.
- Process special assessments.
- Reconcile daily collections for deposit by the Treasurer.



What we do:

- Maintain the financial records of the Collecting Division and manage the database used to monitor and control division activities.
- Collect and disburse assessments on behalf of the Business Improvement Districts.
- Identify, investigate, and process overpayments and misapplied payments.
- Reconcile all collections in coordination with the City Auditor to ensure financial accuracy and compliance.

What we do:



- Ensure the accurate recording of all City revenue, including the verification, reconciliation, and timely posting of transactions to permanent records and the City's primary financial database.
- Maintain, monitor, and update electronic data systems, including but not limited to web-based services, online payment processing platforms, leasing documentation, bank lockbox transactions, and other electronic and manual payment methods.
- Coordinate with internal departments and external financial institutions to resolve discrepancies, ensure data accuracy, and maintain audit-ready financial documentation.

UPDATES & FUTURE PROJECTS

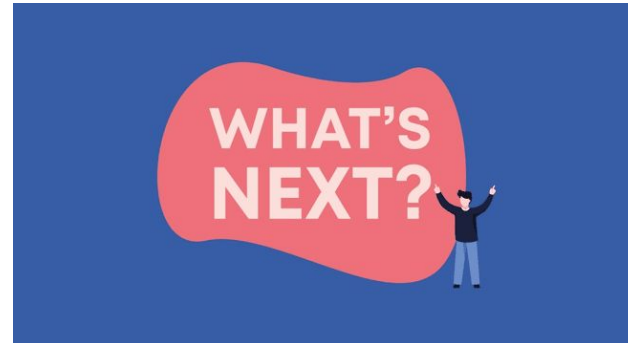
Update:

- Implemented a new data software to improve service outreach on delinquent accounts.
- Amount recovered:
 - FY25 YTD: \$23.1 Million
 - FY24: \$25.5 Million
 - FY23: \$19.6 Million

Using this software, we achieved a 23.6% reduction in Tax Title Takings from FY23 to FY24.

Future Projects:

- Integrate QR codes on all collection bills to streamline payment access and improve user convenience.
- Improve and modernize web service payment systems and digital forms to align with current technological trends, ensure security, and enhance the overall user experience.





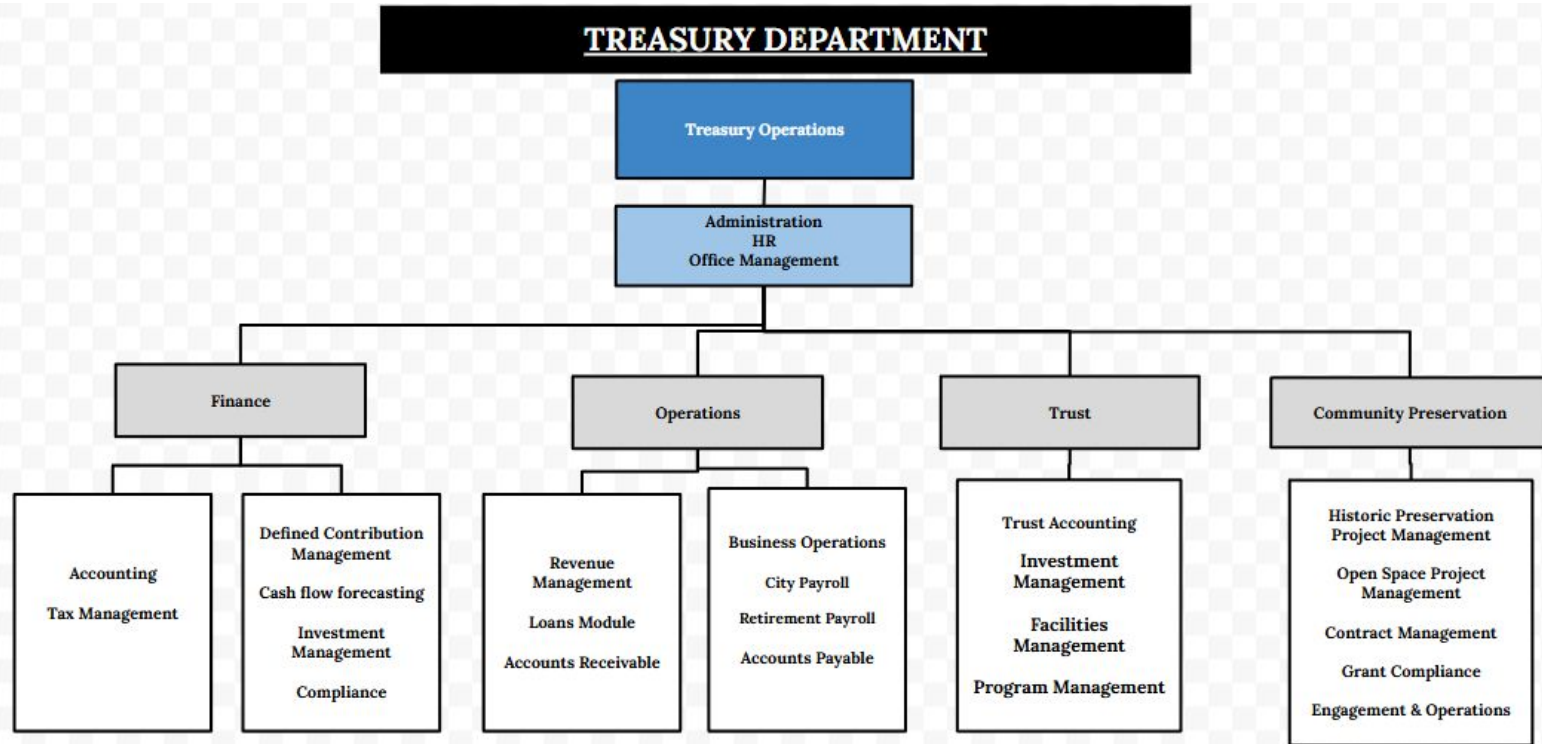
Treasury - Treasury Division

WHAT WE DO

The mission of the Treasury Department is to collect and transfer all funds due to the City. The Department also deposits and invests City funds, manages the City's borrowings, and makes all disbursements.

- Stewards of the City of Boston cash and investments
- Oversee the collection and disbursement of City funds
- Manage the City's financial operations and debt obligations
- Cash Flow forecasting
- Defined contribution plans
- Maintain banking, investing and other financial relationships
- Oversees the Trust Office
- Oversee the Community Preservation Office

TREASURY DIVISION ORG CHART



FY26 RECOMMENDED BUDGET OVERVIEW

- Treasury Division FY26 Recommended Operating Budget: \$2,636,469
- Total increase of \$137,854 over FY25 Approp, primarily driven by general wage increases, salary benchmarking, and increase in postage costs
- 78% of operating budget is personnel
- The operating budget does not include Treasury personnel costs funded through Trust and Community Preservation Offices

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

- Process over \$110M per month in City of Boston payroll
- Process over \$65M per month for retirees
- Print 55k checks and advices per month for employees, vendors and retirees
- Pay over \$200M per month in vendor payments
- Pay over \$32M per month in state and federal taxes
- Process and submit over 21k W2s per year
- Process and submit 1099 for vendors and retirees
- Process and collect receivables and grants
- Maintain fraud controls and prevention processes

THANK YOU!

