



## **Introduction to Youth Speaks Boston:**

Youth Speaks Boston (YSB) is Boston's first-ever citywide youth needs assessment to focus on residents ages 14 to 25 during afterschool and after-work hours. This survey collected information directly from Boston's young people about what they are experiencing and what the City of Boston can do to better support them. The goal is to have a clearer understanding around the factors that influence the lives of young people, and how we as a city can help Boston's youth thrive.

## **Data Collection Process:**

The survey was designed and developed by the City of Boston Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement (OYEA), in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Children's Hospital, and Northeastern University's CHANGE Lab.

1,650 survey responses were collected during a nine-month period between November 2024 and August 2025. During this time, OYEA utilized various outreach methods, including:

- Sharing a digital link across hundreds of youth-serving community organizations
- Posting promotional content across OYEA's social media accounts
- Promoting the survey to 14-25 year olds in Boston through targeted social media ads
- Displaying branding and QR codes on large ads in bus shelters across the City
- In-person engagement at schools, community centers, and events

The survey was available for all Boston residents ages 14-25. It is available in 11 languages: English, Spanish, French, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Brazilian Portuguese, Somali, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese.

The Youth Speaks Boston survey is 30 questions long. It includes primarily multiple choice questions with some open ended write-in questions. All questions outside of identifying the respondents neighborhood and age were optional and participation



could be discontinued at any time by closing the survey. If a respondent indicated they were outside of the age range (14-25) or target area (Boston), the survey would not allow them to submit a response. All responses are entirely anonymous, no name or contact information was collected from respondents. The survey questions covered the following themes:

- Community and Belonging
- Mental Health and Support
- Community Events, Programs, and Resources
- Transportation

In addition to the survey responses collected, OYEA hosted six focus groups engaging more than 100 youth and young adults across Boston. These focus groups were youth-led, where members of the Mayor's Youth Council (MYC) developed the questions and conducted the focus groups, allowing for an open peer-to-peer discussion. These focus groups were held at different partner locations across the City. The names of these locations are not disclosed as a measure to protect the privacy of participants, but they intentionally engaged young people from a range of different communities. These focus groups allowed youth to further share their perspectives on the range of topics covered in the survey. The voices of these young people are included throughout the Youth Speaks Boston story map through many quotes - strengthening our understanding of the feelings of Boston's youth.

The data displayed throughout the story map and in the data dashboard was analyzed and visualized in partnership with the City of Boston Data Analytics team and the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics.

### **Questions?**

For more information about the Youth Speaks Boston survey, please contact the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement at [oyea@boston.gov](mailto:oyea@boston.gov).