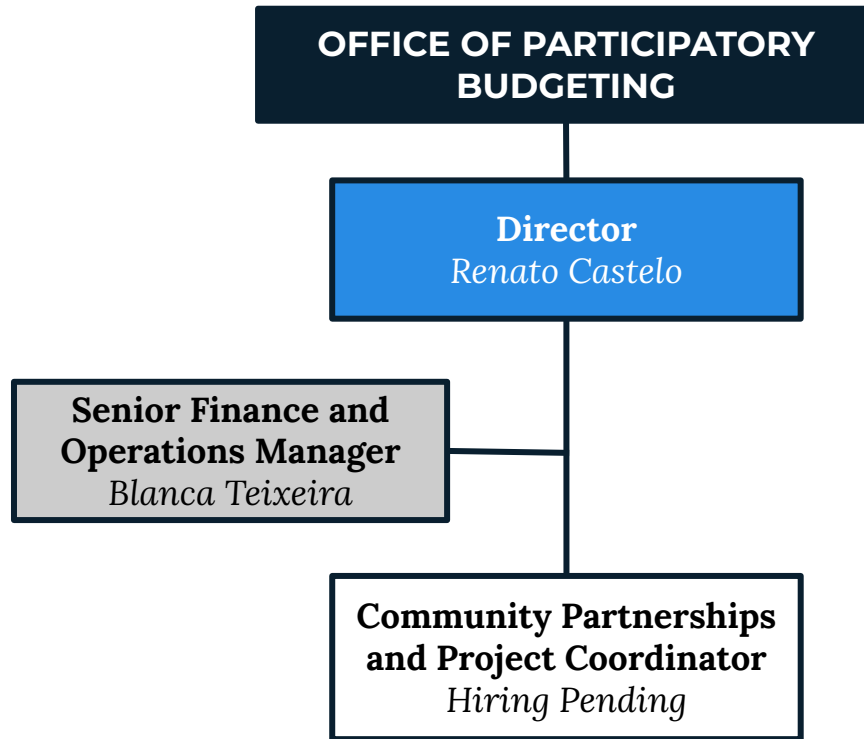




Office of Participatory Budgeting

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING ORG CHART



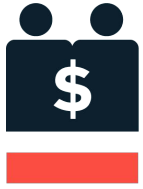
WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

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.

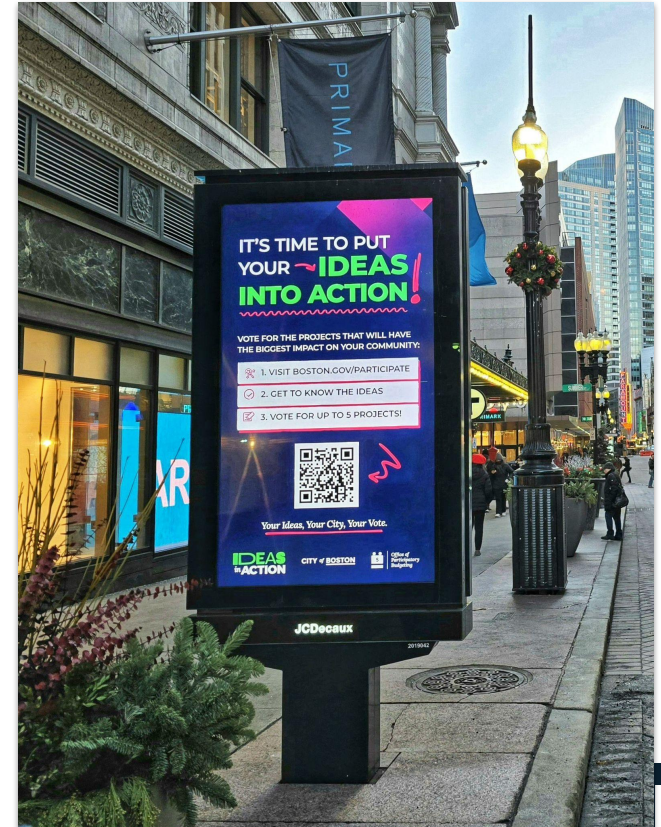
Through partnerships with community organizations, collaboration with City Departments, and guidance from our External Oversight Board (EOB), the Office hosts yearly participatory budgeting cycles to allow for continuous public engagement.

- 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.*

ELIGIBILITY + FEASIBILITY EVALUATION

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

1. Projects are limited to a **one-time expense, and cannot create new permanent positions.**
2. Project ideas must be **feasible to implement, be consistent with existing City policies, laws, regulations, and the Participatory Budgeting Ordinance.**
3. Projects must be implemented or managed by the appropriate City Department or agency receiving direct budget appropriations.
4. **Project ideas may include programs and services, as well as funding for physical improvements,** such as community enhancements on City-owned public property (*bus stop benches, trash containers, green infrastructure, etc.*)
 - a. **Physical improvement projects on private, state, or federal property are not eligible,** such as projects concerning the Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) or the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA).



TIMELINE & PHASES: FY27 CYCLE



FY27 RECOMMENDED BUDGET OVERVIEW

- **OPB FY27 Recommended Operating Budget: \$1,891,561**
 - Total decrease of \$242,690 compared to FY26: Reclassification of Chief of Staff role to a Coordinator position and reduction of the Special Appropriation line.
 - 62% 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, continuous fund to support multi-year projects.
 - Using accumulated balances in th fund, OPB can award \$2 million worth of projects in the FY27 cycle.

IDEAS IN ACTION FY26 HIGHLIGHTS



Idea Collection (July 2025)

1,203 ideas were collected.

- 31 co-sponsored *Idea Collection* workshops and tabling events across the City
- PB Corners at BCYF Community Centers, Boston Public Library Branches, and City Hall
- A multilingual phone line and Online PB Portal



Proposal Development (Oct. - Nov. 2025)

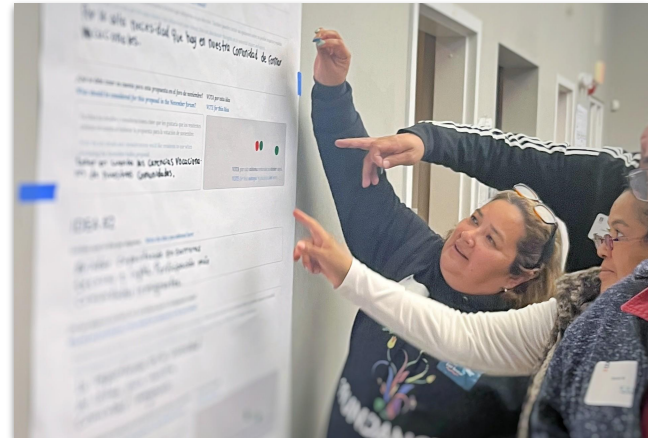
Five (5) in-person forums hosted in East Boston, Mattapan, Brighton and City Hall with a combined ~200 participants

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



PB Voting (Jan. - Feb. 2026)

- 13 ballot proposals available for voting
- **~4,841 votes** collected online & in-person
- Highest voter turnout in Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, Brighton, Allston, East Boston, and Roslindale.



IDEAS IN ACTION FY26 HIGHLIGHTS

Forum #1: Mattapan Public Library

Tuesday, October 14th, 2025



Forum #2: Maverick Landing

Thursday, October 23rd, 2025



Forum #3: Charlesview Community Center

Monday, October 27th, 2025



Residents drafting proposals with City staff at City Hall

(Nov. 13 & Nov. 18)



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

- During the FY26 Cycle of Ideas in Action, the Office contracted with **nineteen (19) nonprofit organizations** to purposefully reach residents who experience higher barriers to **engage in local decision-making** processes.
- OPB's goal of partnering with community groups 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.



WINNING IDEAS FROM FY26 PB CYCLE

IDEAS IN ACTION 2026

VOTING RESULTS!

Eight Winning Ideas! Votes Collected: 4,841

- 1 IMMIGRANT LEGAL DEFENSE FUND**
Votes: 3,733 | Funds Awarded: \$400,000
- 2 NEIGHBORHOOD FRESH FOOD ACCESS INITIATIVE**
Votes: 3,035 | Funds Awarded: \$500,000
- 3 BRIDGING THE GAP: ASSISTANCE FOR HOUSING STABILITY**
Votes: 2,805 | Funds Awarded: \$200,000
- 4 IMMIGRANT CAREER PATHWAYS: BRIDGING LANGUAGE & EMPLOYMENT**
Votes: 2,091 | Funds Awarded: \$300,000

5 GREEN MY BLOCK
Votes: 1,930 | Funds Awarded: \$100,000

6 WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON TRADES
Votes: 1,661 | Funds Awarded: \$300,000

7 YOUTH FINANCIAL LITERACY AND EMPOWERMENT WORKSHOPS
Votes: 1,556 | Funds Awarded: \$250,000

8 SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE PROGRAM
Votes: 1,202 | Funds Awarded: \$150,000

IDEAS
in ACTION
CITY of BOSTON

IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES: FY25 PB CYCLE

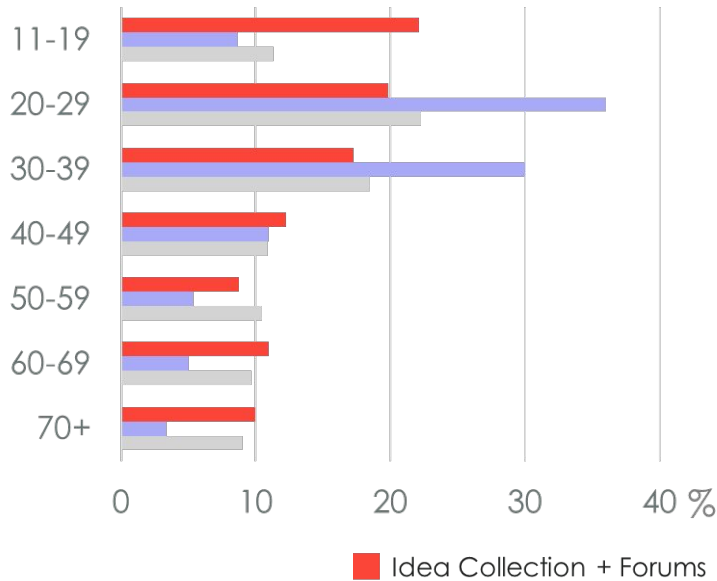
OPB continues to work with City staff to drive the implementation of FY25 cycle projects:

1. **[COMPLETED]** *Expand Access to Fresh Foods: Successfully leveraged as part of a \$3M coordinated response to the Nov 2025 SNAP funding delay.*
2. **[COMPLETED]** *Youth Rental Assistance: The "Youth Tenant Stabilization Fund" supported 54 households with an average of \$3,694 for housing costs.*
3. **[IN PROGRESS]** *Incarcerated Youth Support: Grants awarded to 12 non-profits in May 2025; program implementation is currently underway.*
4. **[IN PROGRESS]** *Bus Stop Benches: Procurement finalized for 120 benches. Installation rescheduled for Fall 2026 following winter weather delays.*
5. **[IN PROGRESS]** *Rat Prevention (BHA): Upgraded containers secured for 4 BHA Brighton sites. A test unit will be installed this summer, with full roll-out in Fall 2026.*
6. **[IN PROGRESS]** *Community Gardens: GrowBoston is currently reviewing grant applications; projects are slated to break ground this Summer 2026.*

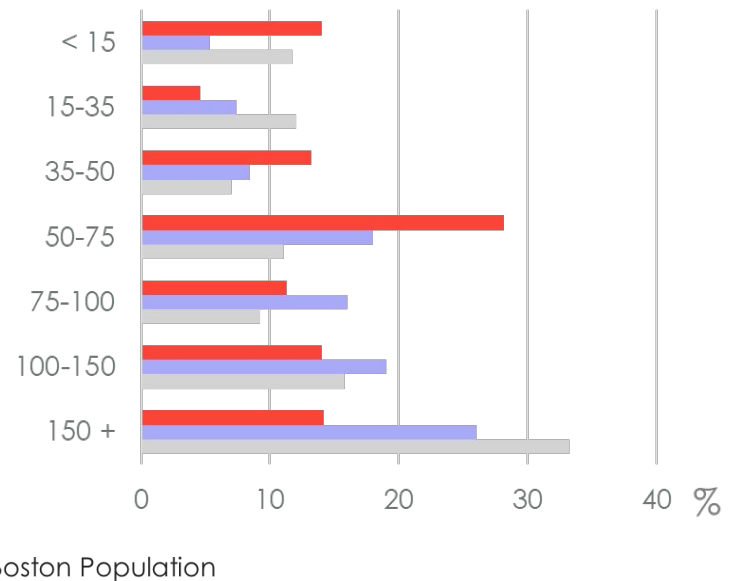
FY26 PARTICIPATION BREAKDOWN

Ideas in Action engaged Boston's diverse communities, reaching every neighborhood, a range of demographic groups, and residents who are not otherwise civically engaged. The early phases, in which residents submit ideas and shape proposals, most effectively engaged residents who have been historically excluded or underrepresented.

Age (in years): Earlier phases engaged **youth** and **older adults** at or beyond their share of the Boston population.



Household income (in thousands of \$): Earlier phases engaged more **lower** and **middle income residents** relative to the Boston population.



IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (FY26 PB CYCLE)

Trust in city government

- As with the FY25 Cycle, 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.

Hands-on Budget Engagement

- Residents and city staff worked together productively to develop proposals. Almost all forum participants (91%) said it helped them understand how the budget process works.

*Full report available June 2026

“Creo que es un lugar en el que uno es libre y le dan el poder e importancia a tu voz, y te dan la oportunidad de hacer una diferencia.”

“I think this is a setting where you are free and your voice is given power and importance, and you have the opportunity to make a difference.”

– Forum Participant

