

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS HENRY SANTANA, JOHN FITZGERALD, BEN WEBER, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE



## CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

### ORDINANCE CODIFYING THE OFFICE OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

**WHEREAS,** The City of Boston is committed to encouraging and upholding a diverse and welcoming community for all its residents, especially youth; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The City of Boston recognizes that empowering the city's youth with opportunities for self-advocacy not only ensures the needs of youth are met, but also encourages youth to see themselves as part of Boston's community; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The City has faced issues with difficulty allowing more youth to get involved or access materials to benefit themselves and allow themselves to grow; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Recognizing the necessity of these resources, Mayor Wu established The Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement in January 2023 to effectively provide and support young residents with opportunities to shape City policy, and to provide services for residents ages 14-25 throughout Boston to gain access to opportunities and resources needed to thrive; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement additionally provides a platform for youth-serving professionals and organizations to receive support and resources to better serve their youth communities across the city; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Enhancing and expanding the reach of the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement will improve the safety and civic empowerment of Boston's youth; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement is dedicated to combating the social and institutional discrimination that youth residents and visitors face, guaranteeing the voices of the Boston youth and experiences within youth communities are heard, supported, and prioritized; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The experiences of the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement are shaped by: prioritizing the active engagement of young people in decision-making processes, providing resource programs and opportunities that implement

personal and professional growth, and acting as a link between youth and available services and opportunities across different City departments and community organizations; *and*

***WHEREAS,*** Given the large impact of the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement, and the growing request for services and community partnerships, it is imperative to institutionalize its purpose, powers, and duties; *and*

***WHEREAS,*** Codifying the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement will ensure long-term access to resources for all Boston youth and the adults that serve them, and will allow more youth residents to participate in civic programs and amplify their voices in City matters. ***NOW, THEREFORE***

***Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:***

That the City of Boston Code, Chapter XV Divisions of the Mayor's office is amended by adding the following new section and subsections:

## **SECTION 1**

### **15-15 CREATION OF THE OFFICE OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT**

#### **15-15.1 *Established***

There shall be established in the City of Boston an office known as the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement (hereafter the "Office"), which shall be under the charge of an Executive Director, appointed by the Mayor and who shall have the powers and duties of a department head with respect to execution of contracts and matters of personnel management within said Office.

#### **15-15.2 *Purpose***

This Ordinance is to establish the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement in the City of Boston to promote and guarantee a consistent and institutionalized role for young people to shape City policy, programs, and resource allocation that directly impacts the youth. By codifying the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement, it ensures clear responsibilities, and oversight mechanisms allowing the office to stay accountable for youth in the Boston community. As Boston is an extremely diverse community, the Office shall ensure youth from all backgrounds have a seat at the table when making decisions regarding City policy. When youth see their City government commit to their futures with long-term policy, it creates trust in local government, and encourages leadership, civic engagement, and innovation.

#### **15-15.3 *Powers and Duties***

The Office shall serve as the principal entity responsible for supporting, engaging, and empowering youth ages 14 to 25 throughout the City of Boston. The Office shall advance youth

development by amplifying youth voices in municipal policy-making processes and facilitating equitable access to opportunities across City departments and partner organizations.

In fulfillment of its duties, the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement shall:

- a. administer and oversee youth leadership and civic engagement initiatives, including but not limited to, the Mayor's Youth Council and Youth Lead Change, a participatory budgeting program through which youth allocate municipal funds to citywide priorities
- b. operate YouthLine, a centralized resource hub connecting young people to local services and opportunities
- c. coordinate professional development and capacity-building programming for youth workers and service providers
- d. convene citywide events such as the Mayor's Youth Summit
- e. manage the Youth Partner Network, a collaborative of professionals representing youth-serving organizations
- f. conduct and maintain Youth Speaks Boston, a citywide youth survey used to assess and respond to the needs and experiences of Boston's youth
- g. manage Boston After Dark, a seasonal initiative that provides evening programming to promote youth safety and prevent violence during the summer months.

Through these initiatives and other activities, the Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement shall promote leadership development, community engagement, safety, and opportunity for Boston's young people, and serve as a liaison between youth, City government, and community stakeholders.

The Office, under the charge of the Executive Director, shall have the powers necessary to carry out the above duties. The Office shall have the necessary staff to accomplish these aims. City departments, agencies, commissions, and offices are encouraged to make their services reasonably available to the Office to support its duties.

## **SECTION 2**

The provisions of this Ordinance are severable, and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity will not affect the remaining provisions, which will remain in full force and effect.

## **SECTION 3**

The provisions of this Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon passage.

**Filed in Council:** August 6, 2025