



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
MICHELLE WU

August 5, 2024

TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I hereby transmit for your approval an Order amending City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter XV, Section 15-11.1, regarding Black Male Advancement for Equity and Welfare. Since its establishment in 2021, the Black Men and Boys Commission has worked to assess the social conditions of the city's Black men and boys, develop strategies to remedy or assist in remedying serious adversities, and recommend courses of action to create equal opportunity for generations of Black men and boys in the City of Boston.

On a day-to-day basis, the Commission's work is supported by the Office of Black Male Advancement. However, the Office of Black Male Advancement has also expanded its scope to include policies, programs, resources, and local and national partnerships beyond the Commission. The Office oversees a chapter of My Brother's Keeper Boston, small grants programming, mentorship opportunities, Project Opportunity for Boston residents with CORIs, and technical assistance support for community-based organizations—all in an effort to improve outcomes, representation of and access to services for Black men and boys at all levels of city government, and ensure that our City's Black men and boys have the support they need to thrive and share in Boston's prosperity. In acknowledgement of the reality, extent, and importance of the work the Office does, these amendments propose to codify the Office of Black Male Advancement permanently within the Boston Municipal Code.

I urge your Honorable Body to act favorably on the proposed amendments without delay.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston

CITY OF BOSTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

An Ordinance Amending City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter XV, Section 15-11, Black Male Advancement for Equity and Welfare

WHEREAS: Black males represent 12% of Boston's population, with roughly 22% of Boston's male population identifying as "Black or African-American only;" and

WHEREAS: A majority of Boston Public School (BPS) students identify as people of color, with 30% of the student population identifying as "Black," and 38% of the male student population identifying as "Black," according to BPS data; and

WHEREAS: Black male students are identified at high rates for special education, disproportionately placed in separate classrooms and face the worse suspension rates, annual dropout rates, and MCAS math proficiency at the elementary and middle grade levels, according to BPS data; and

WHEREAS: Black males in Boston enter college less than others, as only 24% of Black/African-American males age 25 years or older have a Bachelor's Degree; and

WHEREAS: Sixty-two percent (62%) of Black/African American male full-time workers (33,607 workers) earn below \$50,000.00 in Boston according the City of Boston Planning Department Research Division, and Black males experience the largest wage gap among males at forty nine cents (\$0.49) per every white male's dollar according to the Boston Women's Workforce Council; and

WHEREAS: Fifty-five percent (55%) of Black/African American male renters pay more than 30% of their income in rent, and only 11% of Black males are homeowners, according to the City of Boston Planning Department Research Division; and

WHEREAS: The City partners with My Brother's Keeper, launched by former President Barack Obama in February 2014 to address persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color; and

WHEREAS: The City is committed to the work of uplifting the lived experiences of Black men and boys to ensure that we are designing all spaces from a framework of equity and justice; and

WHEREAS: The City of Boston established the Commission on Black Men and Boys in 2021 as a forum for Black men and boys to express their opinions and ideas and as a place to rely on for information, advocacy, and action; and

WHEREAS: The mission of the Office of Black Male Advancement is to improve outcomes and reduce systemic barriers to advancement for Black men and boys living in Boston;

WHEREAS: The Office of Black Male Advancement works with other City departments, including but not limited to the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, the Office of Worker Empowerment, the Office of Housing, the Boston Planning Department, the Boston Public Health Commission, Procurement, the Human Services Cabinet, the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet, and Boston Public Schools to improve representation of and access to services for Black men and boys at all levels of city government;

WHEREAS: The Office of Black Male Advancement will establish outreach programs in conjunction with other City agencies and the Commission on Black Men and Boys to enhance the accessibility of City programs, benefits, and services to Black men and boys;

WHEREAS: The City of Boston intends to conduct research and data collection on the issues affecting Black men and boys, including, but not limited to, obstacles accessing City programs, benefits, and services, and on demographic and socioeconomic trends related to such persons, in order to be effectively responsive; and

WHEREAS: The Mayor created an Office of Black Male Advancement, and hereby reaffirms the City's commitment to equity and racial justice by officially codifying the Office of Black Male Advancement into the City Code;

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

SECTION 1. City of Boston Code, Ordinances, is hereby amended in **Chapter XV** by replacing the existing Section 15-11 with the following new section and subsections:

15-11 COMMISSION ON BLACK MEN AND BOYS.

15-11.1 Established.

There shall be within the Mayor's office a division to be known as the Commission on Black Men and Boys (hereinafter the "Commission").

15-11.2 Organization.

- a. *Membership.* The membership shall consist of twenty-one (21) members, all of whom shall be appointed by the Mayor. One two-year term member shall be a youth member. One three-year member shall be a youth member.
- b. *Terms.* The members shall be appointed to serve for the following initial terms:
 1. Seven (7) members shall serve for two (2)-year terms;
 2. Seven (7) members shall serve for three (3)-year terms;
 3. Seven (7) members shall serve for four (4)-year terms;

Thereafter, as the term of a member expires, the member's successor shall be appointed by the Mayor for a term of three (3) years from such expiration.

Any members absent for more than one-third of the Commission meetings within a twelve (12)-month period may be removed from the Commission by the Mayor at the Mayor's discretion by filing a written statement of reasons for removal with the City Clerk, provided, however, that there were at least three meetings of the Commission during the twelve (12)-month period.

Vacancies, other than by reason of expiration of terms, shall be filled for the balance of unexpired terms, appointed in the same manner and by the same body.

- c. *Chair.* The Mayor shall appoint a member as the chairperson of the Commission.
- d. *Executive Director.* The Mayor shall appoint an Executive Director of the Commission on Black Men and Boys that shall be an existing, paid employee of the City of Boston, to oversee and run the daily operations and administration of the Commission. The Executive Director shall serve as the advisor of the Commission and shall have the powers of a department head with respect to the execution of contracts and matters of personnel management within said office. The Executive Director shall serve as a member of the Commission, ex officio and without additional compensation, and shall have an official vote on matters before the Commission.
- e. *Compensation.* The members shall serve without compensation.

15-11.3 Duties.

The Duties of the Commission shall include but not be limited to:

- a. Advising the Mayor on issues pertaining to Black men and boys;
- b. Assisting the Office of the Mayor in determining budget and policy priorities;

- c. Monitoring and advising city agencies and departments on issues pertaining to Black men and boys;
- d. Designing projects and programs that promote equity for Black men and boys which are not currently being implemented by existing city agencies;
- e. Performing outreach, communication, and liaison to Black men and boys related to community groups and organizations;
- f. Working with the Department of Intergovernmental Relations concerning state and federal legislation and programs that are of concern to Black men and boys;
- g. Working with all city departments, agencies, commissions and offices to assure that Black men and boys are represented at all levels of city government;
- h. Coordinating dialogues and actions in collaboration with other city agencies on behalf of city government to issues of concern to all Black men and boys and related organizations, including but not limited to: equity and racial justice, economic opportunity and workers empowerment, education and youth advancement, affordable housing and pathways to homeownership, public health and wellness, fatherhood and families, community safety and returning citizens, financial empowerment, and more.
- i. During the first year of its existence, the Commission shall hold monthly meetings and give updates to the City Council on a quarterly basis and shall hold regular meetings thereafter;
- j. Producing a yearly report pertaining to the work of the Commission and the progress of the City and the community to advance the status of Black men and boys. The Commission shall submit the report to the City Clerk of the City of Boston who shall forward the report to the Mayor of the City of Boston and shall file the report and include the docket on the agenda of the next-occurring meeting of the Boston City Council.

15-11.4 Office of Black Male Advancement.

- a. *Established.* There shall be established in the City of Boston an office known as the Office of Black Male Advancement (hereafter the "Office") which shall be under the charge of the Executive Director.
- b. *Purpose.* This Ordinance is to establish an Office of Black Male Advancement in the City of Boston to improve outcomes and reduce systemic barriers to advancement for Black men and boys living in Boston. The services of all City departments, agencies, commissions and offices shall be made reasonably available to the Office for effectuating the purpose of this section.
- c. *Powers and Duties.* The Office, under the charge of the Executive Director, shall have the powers and duties necessary to carry out the purpose of this section and the mission of the Commission.
- d. *Reporting.* The Office shall file with the City Clerk and post on the Office's website data, outcome metrics, and an annual report on the work of the Office and the progress of the City and the community to advance the purpose of this section.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY
THE FORGOING, IF PASSED IN
THE ABOVE FORM, WILL BE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH LAW.**

BY _____
ADAM CEDERBAUM *KMW*
CORPORATION COUNSEL