

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ERIN J. MURPHY



# CITY OF BOSTON

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IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

## ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING THROUGH THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

**WHEREAS:** The Boston Public Library system serves as a critical public resource for residents of all ages, providing access to information, education, technology, and community-based services across neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS:** Branch libraries often function as frontline access points for City services, particularly for youth, families, immigrants, residents with disabilities, and individuals navigating digital or language barriers; and

**WHEREAS:** The services and programming offered through branch libraries extend beyond traditional library functions and may include digital literacy support, technology access, benefits navigation, educational programming, workforce resources, and community space for City and partner programs; and

**WHEREAS:** Access to library services, staffing capacity, programming availability, hours of operation, and physical accessibility may vary across neighborhoods, raising questions about equity and consistency within the City's library system; and

**WHEREAS:** Residents with disabilities and families navigating complex needs may depend on libraries as accessible, trusted spaces, making accessibility, staff training, and service coordination especially important; and

**WHEREAS:** A citywide assessment of library-based services and programming can help identify gaps, best practices, and opportunities for improved coordination across City departments;

### NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council shall hold a hearing to examine the role of the Boston Public Library system in delivering equitable access to services and programming across neighborhoods, including but not limited to:

1. The range of services and programming currently offered at branch libraries across the City
2. Variations in staffing, hours, programming, and service capacity among neighborhood branches
3. Accessibility of library services for residents with disabilities and families navigating complex needs
4. Coordination between the Boston Public Library and other City departments
5. Opportunities to strengthen equity, consistency, and citywide access to library-based services

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED:** That representatives from the Boston Public Library and other relevant City officials shall be invited to testify.