



**Mayor's Office of
Black Male Advancement**

Quarterly Report

October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

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OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION

The Office of Black Male Advancement strives to improve outcomes and reduce systemic barriers to advancement for Black men and boys living in Boston. Our office works to empower Black men and boys. We want to ensure they have equitable access to opportunities in the City. As part of our work, we focus on policies, programs, resources, and local and national partnerships.

Our goal is to ensure Black men and boys have support to thrive and share in our City's prosperity.

OUR PRIORITIES

Economic
Opportunity &
Workers
Empowerment

Education &
Youth
Advancement

Affordable
Housing &
Pathways to
Homeownership

Public Health
and Wellness &
Fatherhood and
Families

Equity and
Racial Justice

Community
Safety &
Returning
Citizens

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- Boston has approximately 90,000 Black male residents.
- 25% of Black males are children under 18.
- Black male residents are represented in every neighborhood in Boston, with a higher concentration residing in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan and Hyde Park.
- The countries with the largest number of foreign-born Black males are Haiti, Jamaica, & Cabo Verde.



OVERVIEW

OUR FOCUS

- Facilitate Black Men and Boys Commission meetings.
- Publicize report on Status of Black Men and Boys in Boston.
- Assist Black male constituents in accessing programs, services & critical information.
- Connect Black male-serving organizations to resources to better serve their constituents.
- Publicize critical resources to the Black male community.
- Support city, state, and federal governments, community based organizations and private sector to more equitably serve our Black male residents.
- Educate Boston residents on the Black Men and Boys Commission and Black Male Advancement programs.
- Monitor and advise city agencies and departments on issues pertaining to Black men and boys
- Design projects and programs that promote equity for Black men and boys which are not currently being implemented by existing city agencies.
- Perform outreach, communication, and liaison to Black men and boys related to community groups and organizations.
- Coordinate dialogues and action on behalf of city government to issues of concern to Black men and boys and related organizations.



Overview

OUR REPORTS AND RESOURCES

[**BMA Report: Recommendations for Action:**](#) Professor Emeritus James Jennings outlining twenty action steps for the Commission of Black Men & Boys and the Office of Black Male Advancement

[**The State of Black Males in Boston:**](#) This is a comprehensive report created by the Office of Black Male Advancement (BMA) in partnership with Boston Planning and Development Agency's (BPDA) Research Division. Using data gathered from a number of different peer-reviewed sources, the report is meant to help guide the Office's efforts to adequately address the systemic barriers to the advancement of Black males in Boston.

[**BPDA Redlining in Boston:**](#) This report, created by BMA in partnership with BPDA Research Division, outlines redlining in Boston. Using data gathered from a number of different peer-reviewed sources, the report is meant to help guide the Office's efforts to adequately address the systemic barriers to the advancement of Black males in Boston.

[**Violence Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery Funding FY22 Dataset:**](#) This dataset was created by BMA in partnership with the Department of Innovation & Technology. This dataset provides a breakdown of the City of Boston's efforts to fund Community-based Organizations that do violence prevention, intervention, and recovery work within the City. It highlights the different cabinets/bureaus/departments that offer funding related to community violence prevention, the funded organizations and programs, the amount of funding that the city has offered, and the ways to get in contact with each of the funded organizations.

[**Black Male Advancement Resource Guide:**](#) The BMA Resource Guide provides a centralized location for City of Boston services for Black men, boys and families.



OVERVIEW

OUR PROGRAMS

Black Men and Boys Commission: BMBC Subcommittees have each met with Economic Opportunity, Workers Empowerment, Boston Public Schools, Housing, Boston Planning and Development Agency, Office of Returning Citizens, Senior Advisor for Community Safety, Boston Public Health Commission and Human Service Cabinets. BMA will host regular working sessions with each Cabinet and invite Commission members to join on a quarterly basis.

My Brother's Keeper Boston: The MBK Alliance ensures a greater degree of access to resources (material and financial) that become available to communities that have fully completed the process. Additionally, full completion positions MBK Boston to be able to better build our national MBK Network with in-person convening options.

Project Opportunity is an initiative that creates equitable opportunities for Boston residents with CORIs. The program connects residents with free legal consultation for sealing or expunging records, has panel discussions to address challenges and solutions for residents with CORIs, connects residents with employment and training resources, connects residents with key resources for well-being, trains City departments to meet the needs of residents with CORIS. Through this initiative the office of Black Male Advancement created an all-inclusive/one-stop resource guide and webpage that includes all City of Boston-led quality-of-life improvement resources. In addition we hosted a CORI friendly job and resource fair in partnership with MassHire which included 35 employers and resources, resume review and support, job application assistance, digital business cards, and free headshots.

Community Empowerment Small Grants: BMA along with Mayor Michelle Wu will be awarding funding to community based organizations totaling \$500,000. These grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000, aim to empower Black male-serving community-based organizations and amplify their impact in alignment with 7 core priorities (mentoring and out of school time, youth pathways, housing mobility, economic mobility & wealth building, workforce, fatherhood engagement, wellness). These grants will empower community organizations that serve Black men across Boston's neighborhoods to deepen their impact and bring successful programming to scale.



OVERVIEW

OUR PROGRAMS CONT.

R.E.A.C.H. 1000: BMA is working in partnership with BPS to connect young people with a network of individuals and organizations that serve as mentors. To support the first iteration of this program, BMA is looking to recruit 1,000 adult mentors over the next two years to connect with participating BPS students. As part of R.E.A.C.H. 1000, schools and mentees will have access to the following programs and learning opportunities: Black studies through dual enrollment; financial literacy; reading literacy, digital literacy; college and career pathways; and Generational Talent Small Grant. Mentees will also have an opportunity to engage with an Opportunity Lab, tailored for BPS Black seniors. The Lab will offer expert level technical support to scholars with their post secondary level plans, including higher education and careers.

Capacity Building & Impact Institute: This initiative will allow CBOs servicing the Black Male Community in Boston, to receive 1 on 1 coaching, nonprofit training courses, expert tools, & resources to help raise funds, maximize impact, and build capacity. The pilot cohort will consist of CBO'S with proven or promising programs that share our core values and are highly aligned with our strategies, goals and approaches to deepen their impact or bring their work to scale.



Commission on Black Men & Boys

The Commission was established through a 2021 ordinance and is made up of 21-Black males with experience, knowledge and expertise on issues pertaining to Black men and boys in the City of Boston. The Commission serves as an advisory board for the Mayor's Office of Black Male Advancement, including determining budget and policy priorities.

The Commission seeks to study the social conditions of the city's Black men and boys, develop strategies to remedy or assist in remedying serious adversities, and make recommendations to create equal opportunity for education, employment, access to public accommodations, and fair housing, significantly improving the life trajectory, physical, mental, economic and emotional wellness of generations of Black men and boys in the City of Boston.

Recent Commission Meetings

- Community Listening Sessions
- Monthly Commission Meetings
- Bi-monthly Subcommittee Meetings
- Affordable Housing and Pathways to Homeownership Subcommittee meeting (MOH & BPDA)
- Economic Opportunity & Worker's Empowerment Subcommittee meeting (OEIO & OWE)
- Education and Youth Advancement Subcommittee meeting (BPS & OYEA)
- Public Health & Wellness and Fatherhood and Families Subcommittee meeting (BPHC)
- Community Safety & Returning Citizens Subcommittee meeting (OHS, OCS, OR)

Commission Members

Tito Jackson, <i>Chair</i>	Louis Elisa	Joseph Feaster Jr.	Kurt Faustin	Darien Johnson
James Mackey, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Jeff Similien	Abdullah Beckett	Tony Richards	Imari Paris Jeffries
Matt Parker, <i>Vice Chair</i>	James Hills	Tony Brewer	Andre Barbour	Charlie Titus
Devin Morris	Kurt Faustin	Piter Brandao	Richard Harris	Brian Worrell, <i>ex-officio</i>



Budget Recommendations



Based on community listening sessions, monthly Commission meetings, previously shared 2023-2024 policy recommendations, working sessions with various city agencies, and meetings with Mayor Michelle Wu, the Black Men and Boys Commission recommends the following FY 25 budget proposals to address systemic barriers and improve outcomes for Black men and boys in Boston.



Equity & Racial Justice



Brief Description	Department	Budget Proposal	FY25 Budget
My Brothers Keeper (MBK) Boston program funds- transfer from Boston Public Schools budget to BMA	Office of Black Male Advancement	Program Fund	\$358,933.00
BMA equity study to assess, quantify, and evaluate the prevalence, significance (degree and weight) and scope of inequities in the City of Boston, if any, against Black men and boys. The equity study will help lead the effort to better assess and address equitable access and outcomes by optimizing and evaluating programs and initiatives, identifying opportunity gaps and ensuring effective data processes. We will use the information from this study to create a data and evidence dashboard	Office of Black Male Advancement	Contract	\$800,000.00
BMA program methodology and evaluation; and strategic plan	Office of Black Male Advancement	Contract	\$200,000.00
Subtotals:			*\$1,358,933.00

**Please note this subtotal reflects an increase to the Office of Black Male Advancement's FY 24 funding level.*

Affordable Housing & Pathways to Homeownership



Brief Description	Department	Budget Proposal	FY25 Budget
Issue a Request for Proposal for a fund to provide pre-development capital for Black developers	Office of Housing	Program fund	\$500,000.00
Expand down payment assistance for anti-displacement first generation homebuyers	Office of Housing	Program fund	\$400,000.00
We propose a feasibility study to establish anti-displacement first generation homeownership opportunities through access to a voucher program for homebuyers affected by the benefits cliff.	Office of Housing	Program fund	\$100,000.00
Sub-total			\$1,000,000.00

Economic Opportunity & Workers Empowerment



Brief Description	Department	Budget Proposal	FY25 Budget
Additional capacity for a financial empowerment program and outreach for Black families	Center for Working Families	Program fund	\$200,000.00
Additional capacity to recruit Black men for and identify high value career training program opportunities	Office of Workforce Development	Program fund	\$200,000.00
Additional capacity to coordinate trainings and apprenticeships for Black males through BCYF, ABCD, and youth career development centers	Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity	Program fund	\$100,000.00
Enhance support for technical assistance for Black entrepreneurs	Office of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion	Program fund	\$500,000.00
Sub-total			\$1,000,000.00

Education & Youth Advancement



Brief Description	Department	Budget Proposal	FY25 Budget
Support for student and family empowerment and restorative justice task forces	Boston Public Schools Division of Student Support	Program fund	\$100,000.00
Enhancing social emotional supports	Boston Public Schools Division of Student Support	Contract	\$200,000.00
Support for enhancing student literacy	Boston Public Schools Division of Student Support	Contract	\$500,000.00
Expanding program support for diverse teacher recruitment & retention	Boston Public Schools - RCD & OHC	Contract	\$200,000.00
Sub-total			\$1,000,000.00

Public Health & Wellness; Fatherhood & Families



Brief Description	Department	Budget Proposal	FY25 Budget
Additional capacity to support health equity education and outreach for Black men and boys	Boston Public Health Commission	Program fund	\$200,000.00
Additional capacity to support focus on Black fathers in the Father Friendly Initiative	Boston Public Health Commission	Program fund	\$200,000.00
Additional capacity to support substance abuse and recovery for Black men	Boston Public Health Commission	Program fund	\$100,000.00
Mental health and wellness support of Black men and boys	Boston Public Health Commission	Program fund	\$500,000.00
Sub-total			\$1,000,000.00

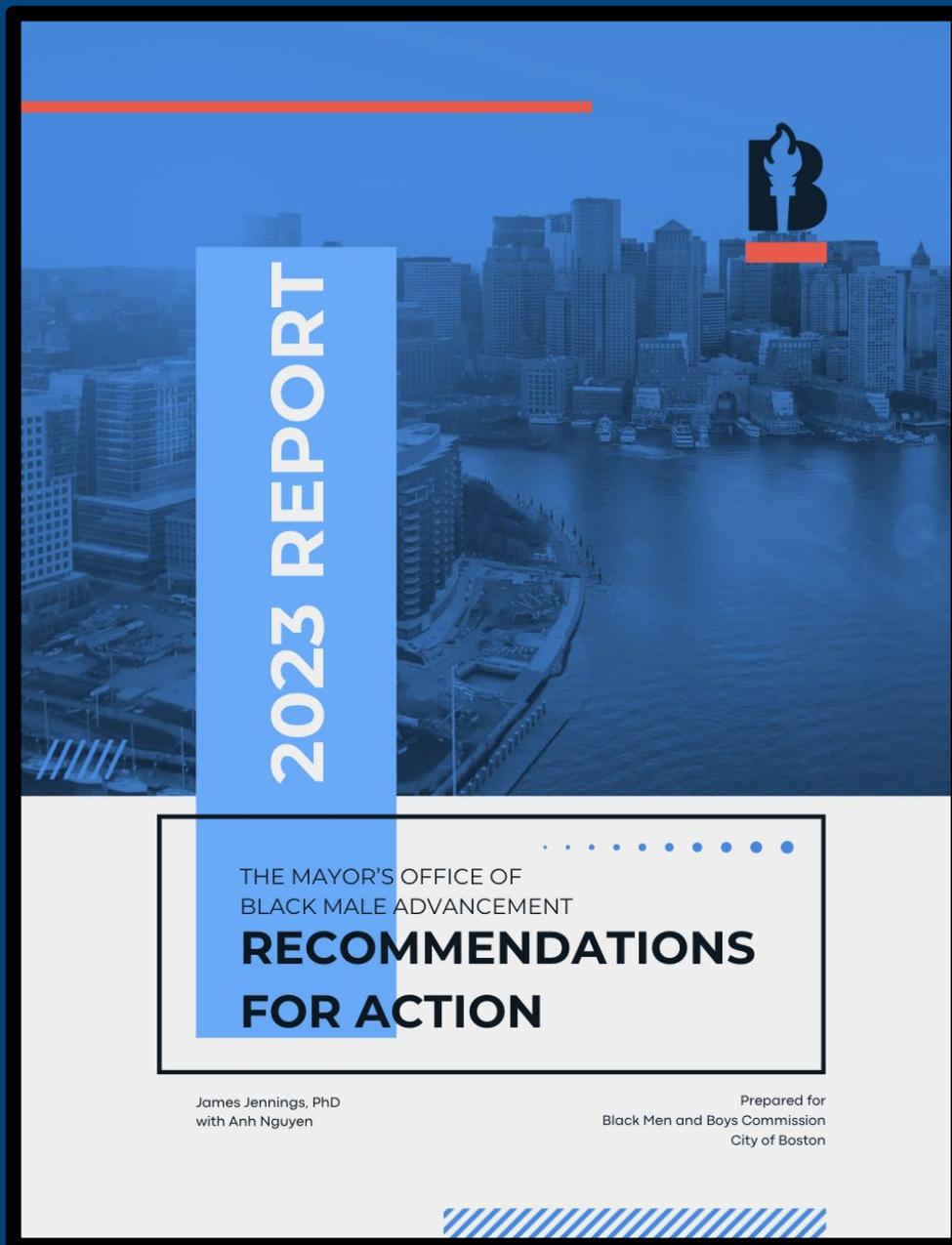
Community Safety & Returning Citizens



Brief Description	Department	Budget Proposal	FY25 Budget
Additional support for transitional housing for Black men	Boston Public Health Commission	Program fund	\$200,000.00
Community based violence prevention program	Boston Public Health Commission	Program fund	\$800,000.00
Restore Community Ambassador or similar outreach model	Boston Public Health Commission	Program fund	\$1,000,000.00
Sub-total			\$2,000,000.00

BMA Report:

Recommendations for Action



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

On June 16, 2021, Mayor Michelle Wu issued An Ordinance Creating a Commission on Black Men and Boys. As noted on the city’s website, “The OBMA works to empower Black men and boys. We want to ensure they have equitable access to opportunities in the city. As part of our work, we focus on policies, programs, resources, and local and national partnerships.”² The Commission was established based on a 2021 Ordinance sponsored by At-Large City Councilor Julia Mejia and signed by former Mayor Kim Janey. Former City Councilor and current Chair of the Commission Tito Jackson was the original sponsor of this legislation. On February 2, 2022, Mayor Wu appointed Mr. Frank Farrow as Executive Director of Mayor’s Office of Black Male Advancement (OBMA).³

Based on earlier reports and best practices identified in the field this review proposes twenty action steps that could serve as initiatives to improve the quality of life for Black men and boys. This review is framed by the Mayor’s Executive Order cited above.⁴ The methodology for this Report included a review of select national and local literature focusing on the status of Black men and boys. Public documents pertaining to the status of Black males in Boston were reviewed. Meetings with staff and the Commission also informed the Report, as did a review of social, demographic, economic, and education data.

Five components or guideposts form a framework for considering action steps leading to effective strategies to improve the lives of Black men and boys. They must be based on

- culturally empowering and assets-based approaches;
- directly or indirectly linked to economic empowerment;
- designed to take advantage of collaborative partnerships;
- reflect a realistic balance between such and the need for resources to build organizational capacities related to the implementation and assessment of impacts;
- collection of data and information and its analysis must reflect significant and sustained participation of Black men and boys served by initiatives.

These five components are discussed in greater detail in the Report.

¹ This Report was prepared by James Jennings, PhD., Professor Emeritus of Urban and Environmental Policy & Planning at Tufts University. He was assisted by Anh Nguyen, a highly respected community and civic activist in Boston with extensive entrepreneurial and small business experiences. She is the former Executive Director of Bowdoin-Geneva Main Streets. The author also wishes to acknowledge Dr. Carline Pignato, a long-time Boston educator for sharing insights about the topic.

² <https://www.boston.gov/departments/black-male-advancement#black-men-and-boys-commission>.

³ Former Mayor Martin Walsh established My Brother’s Keeper Boston in collaboration with the national My Brother’s Keeper founded by President Barack Obama in 2014.

⁴ Two sections of the Executive Order are particularly germane to this Report: Section “D. Designing projects and programs that promote equity for Black men and boys which are not currently being implemented by existing city agencies;” and Section “J. Producing reports 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.”

Based on the guideposts above, **six areas for attention and actions** are identified, including:



- 01 Training and Opportunities to Increase Entrepreneurship, Financial Acumen, and Homeownership

- 02 Workforce and Local Economic Development

- 03 Stronger Connections with Public Health and Public Safety

- 04 Greater Involvement with Civic Engagement and Community Organizing

- 05 Targeted Connections with Boston Public Schools

- 06 Identifying and Eliminating CORI Obstacles to Economic Mobility.

Twenty next action steps are organized by the above categories. And for each category potential sectors for initiating partnerships and related activities are listed. A broad strategy for moving forward would include OBMA reviewing and vetting the proposed next action steps in terms of short or long-term priorities; necessary refinement; resources needed; key actors to be involved; how to measure if adopted; and time for implementation. Its findings would be presented to the Commission for further discussion and decisions. The OBMA and the Commission would then sponsor meetings to collaborate with key actors involved with specific next action steps.

The twenty next action steps should be planned collaboratively. OBMA should not be unrealistically expected to play a sole role in adopting and implementing the proposed action steps. But it can play a critical and facilitative role, what some refer to as a “backbone organization” or “anchor organization” in corraling resources and helping the city and agencies to implement some of the proposed next action steps. It is proposed that a 2-year period for prioritizing and implementing and assessing adopted action steps would be appropriate.

→ To read **full report**, visit boston.gov/departments/black-male-advancement (under “Resources” click on “BMA Report: Recommendations for Action”)

NEXT QUARTER PREVIEW

- **BMA Hiring Fair**
- **Community Empowerment Grant Announcement**
- **Black Men & Boys Commission Community Updates**
- **Black History Month Events**
- **Office of BMA Empowerment Summit**



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City of Boston
Black Male
Advancement