



# THE BUDGET PROCESS AND HOW TO ENGAGE



City of Boston  
Budget

# What is the budget?

The Budget is a **financial document**, but it is also a **statement of priorities**.

The budget refers to both **day-to-day services** provided and **longer term investments** in capital assets.



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**What do you hope to  
get out of today's  
info session?**

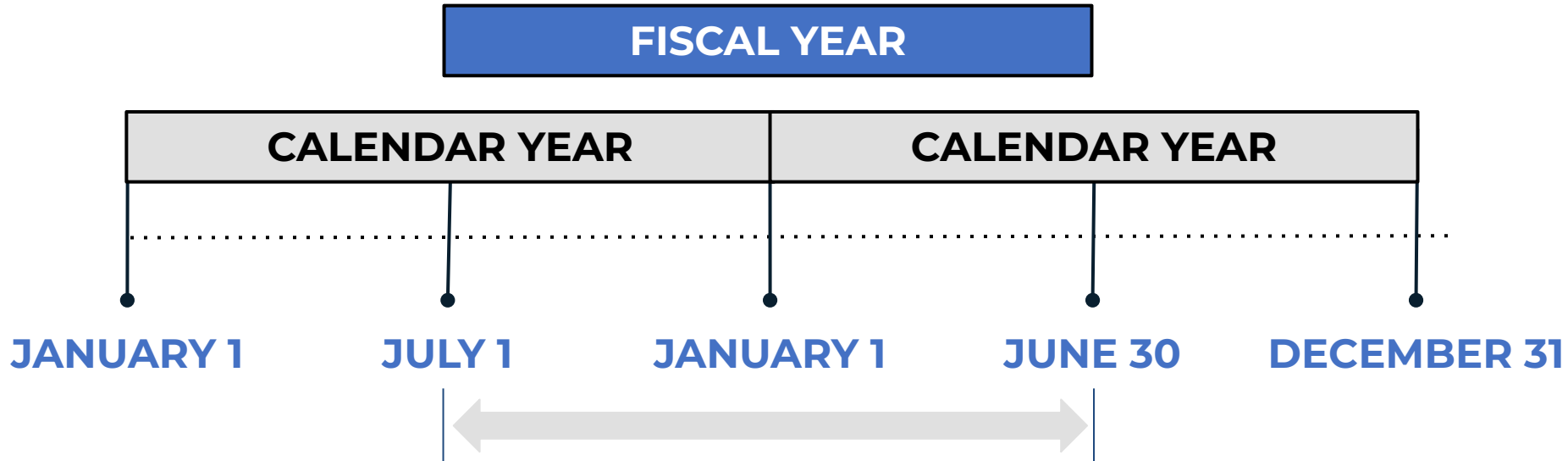
# BUDGET BACKGROUND



# WHAT IS THE “FISCAL YEAR?”

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The twelve-month financial period used by the City begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following calendar year. **The City’s fiscal year is numbered according to the year in which it ends.**



# BOSTON'S TWO PRIMARY BUDGETS

	<b>OPERATING BUDGET</b>	<b>CAPITAL PLAN</b>
<b>Expense</b>	What the City expects to spend on day-to-day services and equipment for the year	A multi-year plan for how to make long term investments (such as new schools, parks, and housing projects)
<b>Revenue</b>	Revenue received by the City to fund the operating budget (from sources such as property taxes, or state aid, fees and permits)	Revenue from the operating budget is used to pay for municipal bonds that fund most capital projects

# POLICY & PROGRAM AREAS OF BOSTON'S BUDGETS

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The City operating budget and capital plan fund...



**ARTS AND CULTURE**



**EQUITY FOR ALL**



**ECONOMY**



**HEALTH**



**EDUCATION**



**HOUSING**



**ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT,  
AND PARKS**



**PUBLIC SAFETY**



**TRANSPORTATION**



**What are some parts of  
city infrastructure or  
services that come to  
mind?**

**Which budget do you  
believe they fall under?**





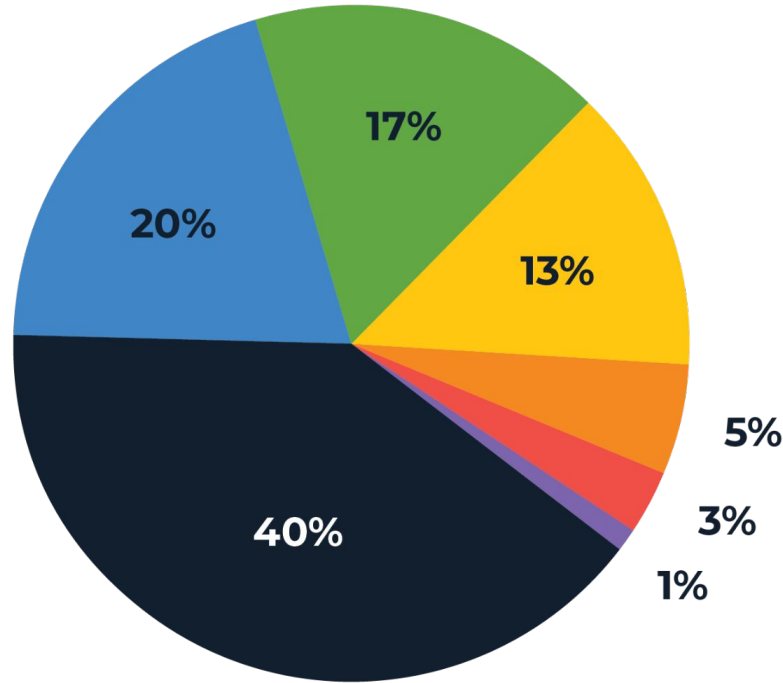
# PIECES OF BOSTON'S OPERATING BUDGET

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See next slides for zoom-in of each chart.

# FY23 OPERATING BUDGET

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 PUBLIC EDUCATION

 FIXED COSTS

 PUBLIC SAFETY

 CITY DEPARTMENTS

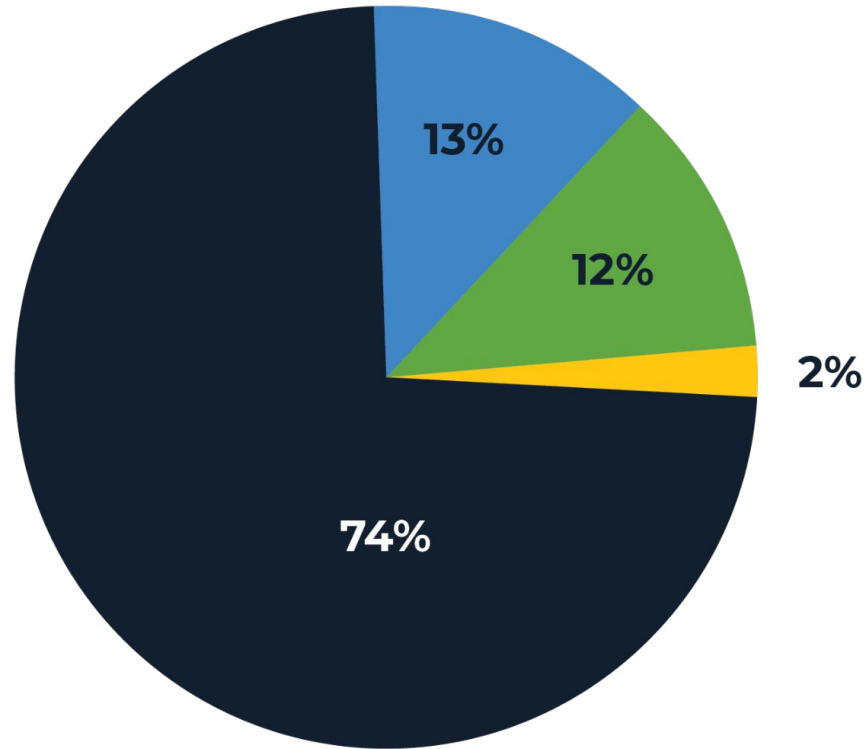
 HEALTH INSURANCE

 PUBLIC HEALTH

 TRANSPORTATION

# FY23 REVENUE

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■ PROPERTY TAX

■ STATE AID

■ LOCAL REVENUE

■ NON-RECURRING

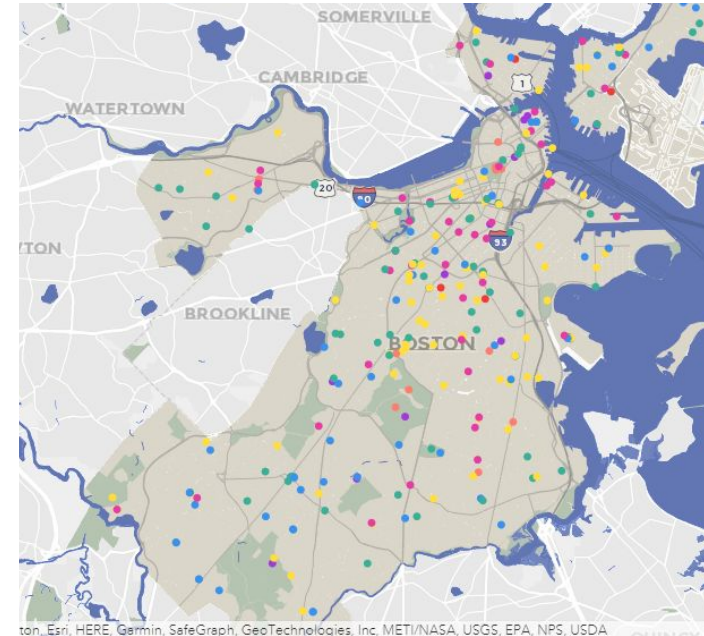
# BOSTON'S CAPITAL BUDGET

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- Most projects start with a design phase and then move into construction
- Large, complex projects take more time to complete and often require a study phase
- Identify a problem or concern
- Is the problem location a city-owned asset?  
(City park v. DCR park)
- Funding for recommended projects depends on City Council support

View projects in the current capital plan online at:

[boston.gov/departments/budget/fy23-capital-budget](https://boston.gov/departments/budget/fy23-capital-budget)





**What surprises you  
about the different  
proportions of the  
budget?**

**What surprises you  
about the city's  
revenue streams?**



# RECENT CHARTER CHANGES

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- As a result of Ballot Measure 1 passing in Nov 2021, city council can now reject, reduce, pass, **or amend** line items (i.e. accounts such as personnel, contracted services, equipment, etc) in the City Budget.



# RECENT CHARTER CHANGES (CONTINUED)

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- *Amending* the budget means that the Council can reduce certain department budgets and increase others, as long as it stays within the total city wide budget submitted by the Mayor.
  - During budget hearings, you can now ask councilors to increase or decrease department budgets for specific purposes.
- Ballot Measure 1 also requires the creation of an **Office of Participatory Budgeting** open to all Boston residents by July 1, 2023.

# INFLUENCING THE BUDGET





## Check in:

*Are you engaging about the budget or the services it provides for?*

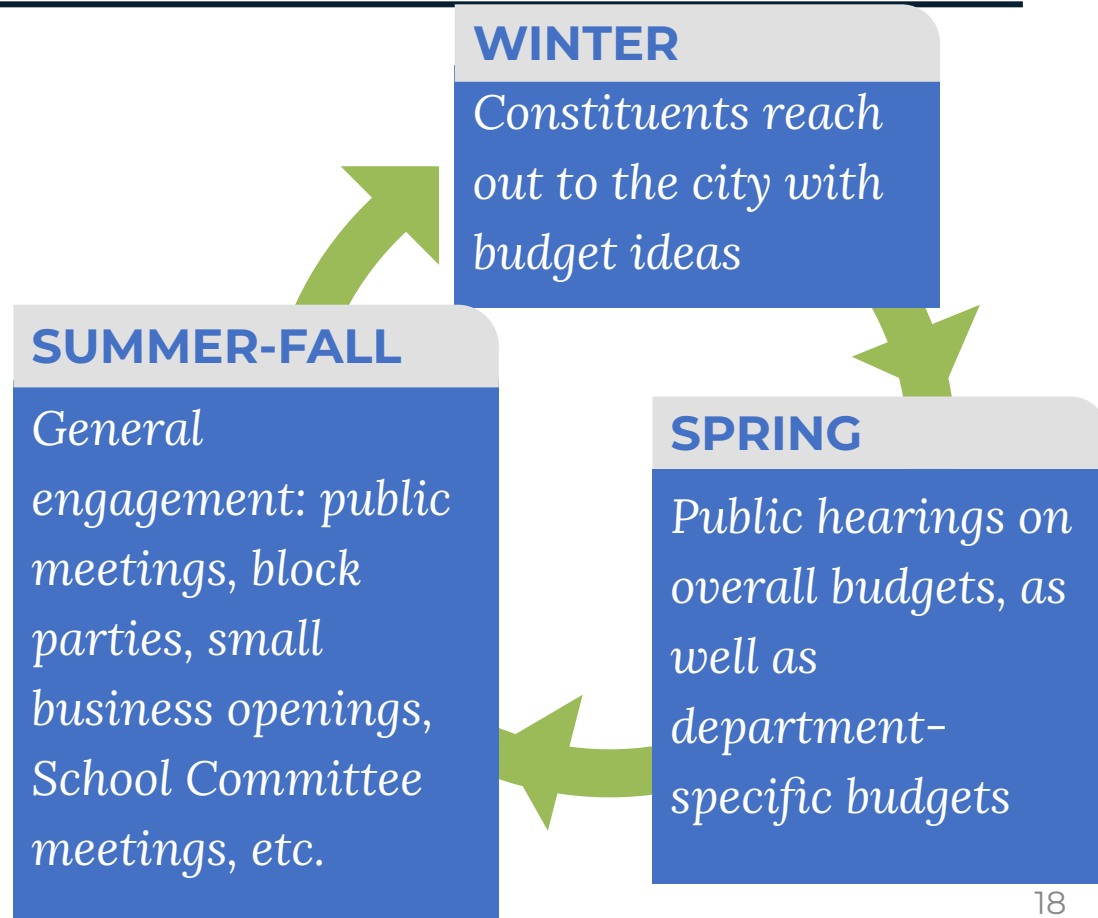
At any point in the year, the city is open to feedback about services, which may be less tied to the budget cycle.



# PUBLIC INPUT ON THE BUDGET

Public input on the budget happens year round, as the City engages with constituents.

However, it intensifies **in the Winter**, while the Mayor is creating the budget, and **in the Spring**, while the Council is reviewing it.



# BUDGET DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

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**JULY 1**

*First day of  
Fiscal Year*

**MID-APRIL**

*Mayor submits  
Recommended  
Budget*

**EARLY JUNE**

*City Council acts  
on Recommended  
Budget*

**JULY 1**

*First day of  
New Fiscal Year*

**WINTER**

*Budget process  
begins*

**MAY-JUNE**

*City Council  
reviews budget and  
holds hearings*

**MID-JUNE**

*Mayor approves or  
returns budget to the  
City Council*

# How to Get in Touch with the City at Any Time

## Connect with Your Representatives

### *City Council*

- The 13 councilors create, pass, and amend local laws, as well as approve the City's budget every year. The City Council is the legislative body and councilors are elected every two years.
- Find out who your City Councilor is at [Boston.gov/City-Council](https://www.boston.gov/city-council)

### *Neighborhood or Community Liaison*

- Neighborhoods and many racial and ethnic communities have a liaison to connect you to the city and vice versa. They exist to help make your voice heard!
- Contact your liaison in the Office of Neighborhood Services by calling 617-635-3485 or visit [Boston.gov/ONS](https://www.boston.gov/ONS)

# How to Get in Touch with the City at Any Time (Cont'd)

## Connect with 311

3-1-1 is a simple phone number connecting you to City of Boston staff ready to assist with non-emergency City services & information requests.

- Download the Boston 311 app
- Call 311 within the Boston limits
- Visit [Boston.gov/311](https://www.boston.gov/311)
- Tag us on Twitter: @BOS311

# City Engagement in November/December

- Departments draft and submit their budgets in early January, with the exception of BPS.
- Reach out to city departments in November and December to communicate what you'd like to see requested. For BPS, early fall is best.
- Get connected to departments through ONS/311, or find department contact information on the website.
- Attend events held by departments in policy areas you care about, and speak with city officials before, during or after the event as appropriate.



# Budget Engagement Success Story:

Entrepreneurs in the cannabis industry shared the extent to which upfront capital creates disparities in the industry.

The city has heard these complaints, and the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion continues to seek ways to increase the grant amounts for these entrepreneurs.



**Mid-April Marks a Shift in Budget Development** from the Administration (Mayor, Budget Office) toward City Council. The Mayor delivers the budget and then City Council reviews and crafts changes.

Pictured Right: The Annual Budget Breakfast where Cabinet Chiefs, City Councilors, the Mayor, and the Budget Office all convene to discuss the Recommended Budget





# City Engagement in April/May

- During this period, City council is reviewing the Mayor's Recommended budget and calling city staff to testify and provide additional information.
- Reach out to the city in April and May to tell City Council what you'd like to see in the budget.
- Submit or sign up to give testimony at public budget hearings.



The Committee on Ways and Means holds budget hearings. The Chair (pictured) leads the meeting. The above picture is from a hearing on 4.25.22

# How to Participate in Budget Hearings

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/city-council/how-testify-city-council-budget-hearing>

- **Email** the committee directly at [ccc.wm@boston.gov](mailto:ccc.wm@boston.gov)
- **Submit a video** recording at least two business days in advance of the hearing
  - Submit via the link on the web page linked above
- **Participate in Person** at a Hearing
  - Find the Iannella Chamber, Fifth Floor, Boston City Hall. Sign up on the sheet near the chamber entrance 15m before the meeting begins.
- **Participate Virtually** at a Hearing: Sign up via the link online at the link above.

# How to Participate in Budget Hearings (Cont'd)

The public testimony podium is located behind a row of chairs at the back corner of the room. Pictured is Henry Santana, Director of Civic Organizing, testifying at a budget hearing on 5.6.22. The podium stand and mic are directly behind him.



# Budget Engagement Success Story:

Restaurant owners came together and voiced a need for support during the pandemic. They joined the Restaurant Roundtable in 2021.

As a result, the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion created the [Restaurant Relief Fund](#).



# Update on Participatory Budgeting (PB)

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- New charter amendments require the creation of an **Office of Participatory Budgeting** open to all Boston residents by 2024.
- The city is working toward implementing a PB structure an equitable and binding process open to all Boston residents by FY24 (July 1, 2023).
- Stay tuned for more updates, and feel free to reach out to the budget office for status updates.



# Activity



# Engagement Scenarios



A constituent has ideas about how the city could re-design a traffic intersection to improve safety.

Does this sound more like a capital project or an operating investment? Which department would they reach out to, and how?

## Scenario 1



A constituent wants a program focused on immigrant professionals from one part of the world to expand to support immigrants from another part.

It's February, after the department has submitted their budget request.

How should this constituent engage?

## Scenario 2

A constituent wants to give the city feedback on how to improve language accessibility.

Does this person need to be mindful of the budget development cycle and how to engage?

## Scenario 3

**Thank you.**

