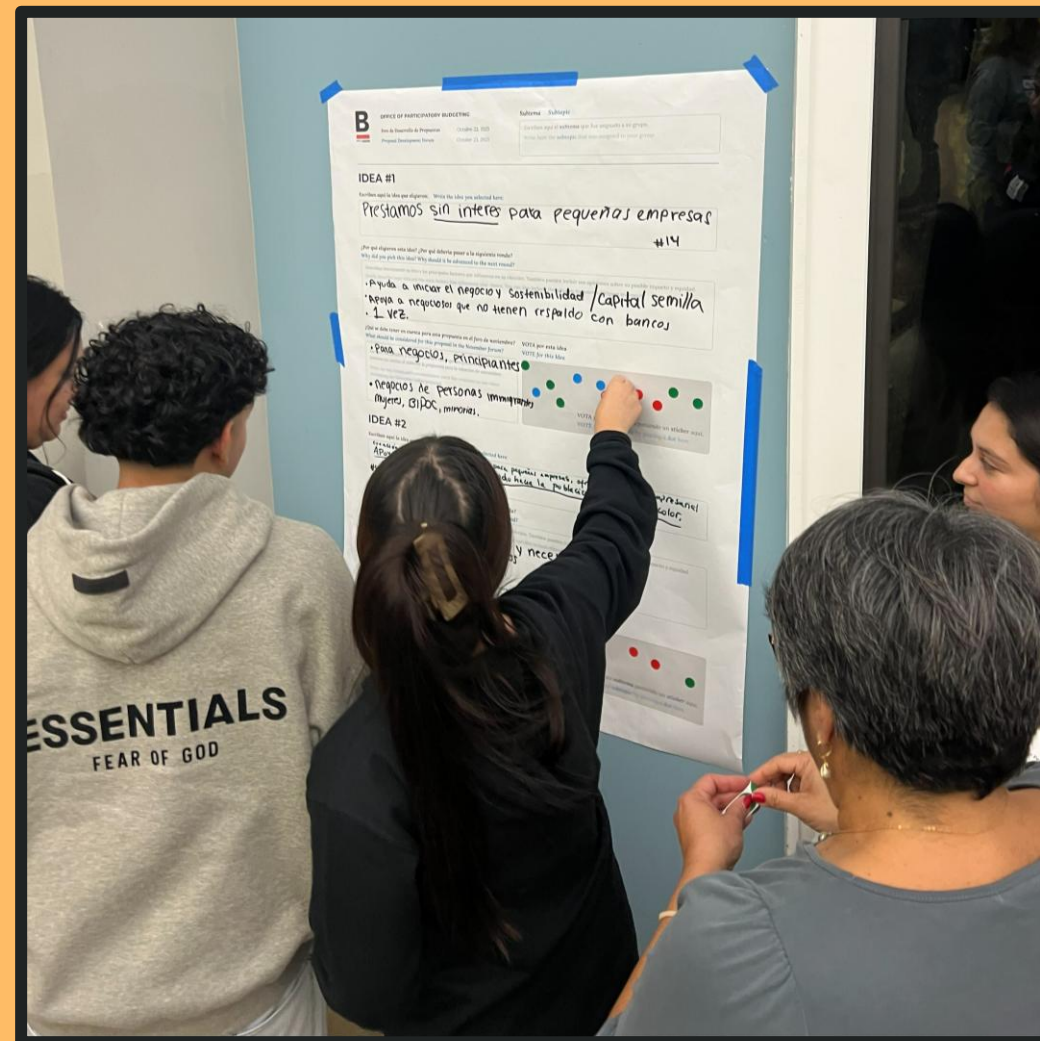


Ideas in Action Cycle 2 Evaluation 2025-26

Office of Participatory
Budgeting

November 2025

Proposal Development Report



Proposal Development Forum at
Maverick Landing Community Services in East Boston
October 23, 2025.
Photo credit: OPB

The evaluation explores 4 questions



1. **Participation.** Who participated, and how?
2. **Impact.** What impact did *Ideas in Action* have on those who participated?
3. **Process.** What was the process used and how can it be improved? (especially operations, resources)
4. **Objectives.** How are the selected projects meeting the objectives of the PB Ordinance in terms of uses of funding and populations served?

Evaluation methods for Forums

Method	Learning goal	Response Rate (RR) or Sample Size (n)
Post-event evaluation surveys for participants (optional)	demographics (age, race/ethnicity, income), neighborhood past participation civic engagement	age RR = 84% (86/102) race/ethnicity RR = 82% (84/102) income RR = 60% (61/102) neighborhood RR = 85% (87/102) first time participant RR = 89% (91/102) civic engagement RR = 83% (85/102)
Observation during Forums	context, process feedback	The evaluation team observed 4 out of 5 forums.
Online debrief survey for OPB, facilitators, and eval team	impact on participants, goal alignment, process feedback	RR = 71% (10/14)
OPB staff quarterly retrospective	process feedback	N/A



Evaluation Question

**Who participated and how? To what extent did Forums
engage priority populations? These are:**

- residents living in historically underserved neighborhoods
- residents who identify with historically excluded or underrepresented groups
- residents who cannot or do not participate in civic life

Residents from at least 15 neighborhoods participated in forums.

Some neighborhoods were well represented relative to their population, especially East Boston and Allston.

Source: Forum Evaluation Survey (2025) + Boston 2020 census data

Boston-wide participants per 10,000 = 1.5

Neighborhood RR = 85% (87/102)

★ Physical location of a Forum

Neighborhood	Forum Participants*	Participants per 10,000
East Boston ★	19	4.4
Dorchester	15	1.2
Allston	10	4
Brighton ★	8	1.5
Roxbury	6	1.1
Roslindale	5	1.7
Hyde Park	5	1.5
West Roxbury	4	1.3
Jamaica Plain	4	1
Fenway	3	0.8
Downtown	2	1.5
Back Bay	2	1.1
Mattapan ★	2	0.8
Mission Hill	1	0.6
South Boston	1	0.3



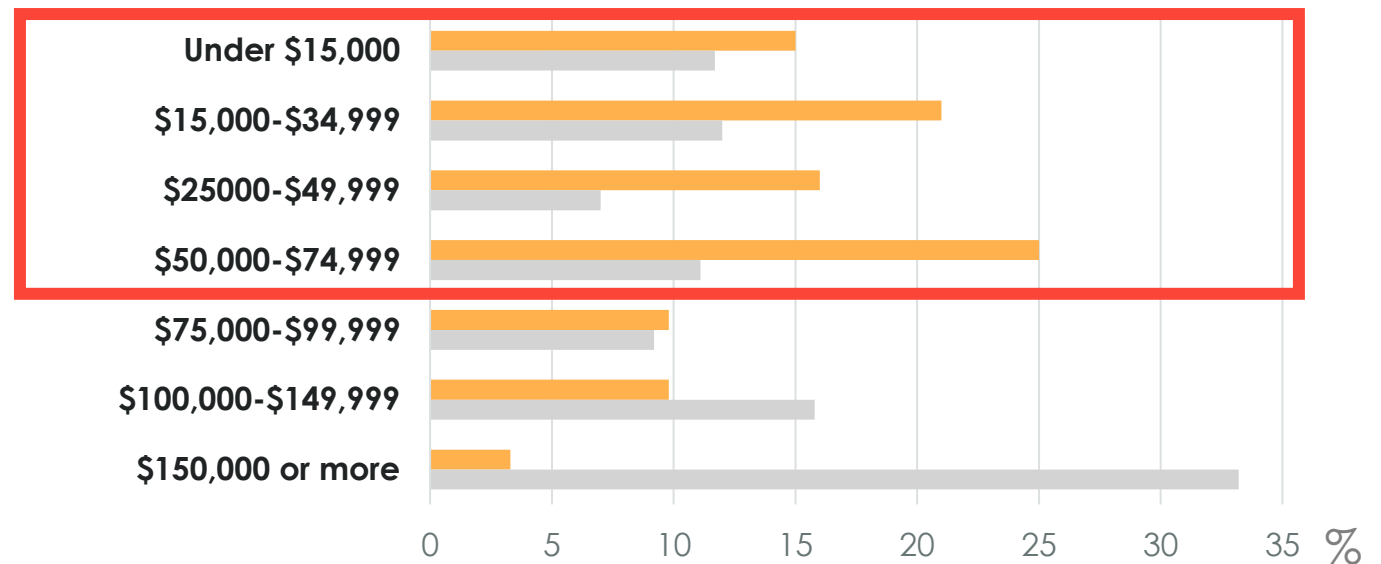
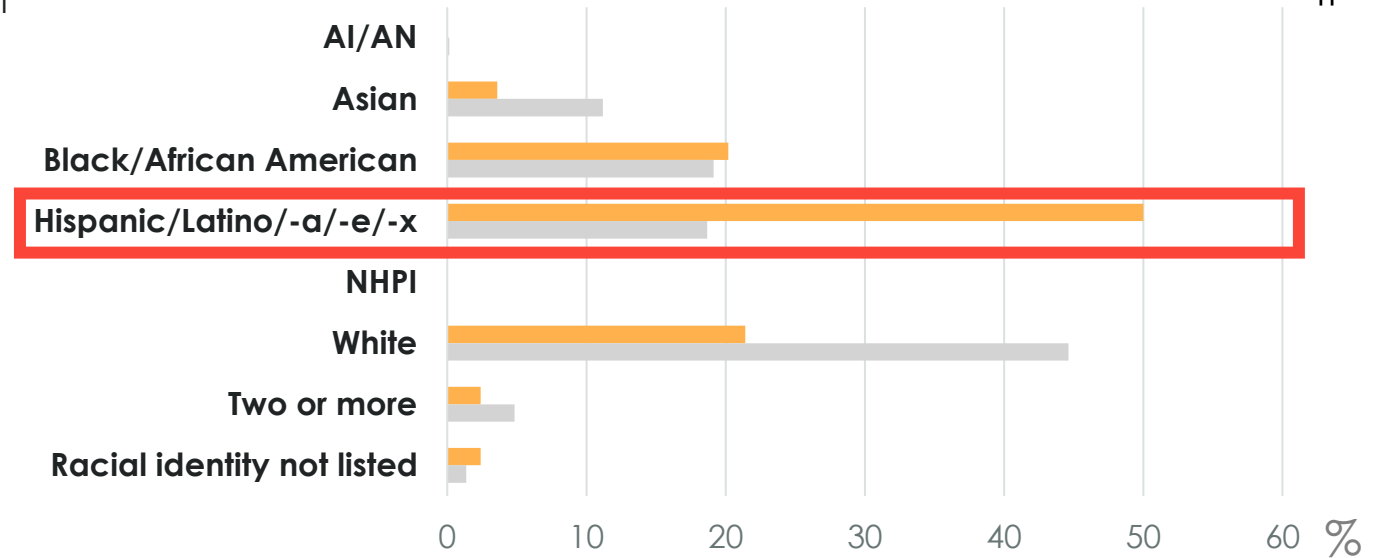
Forums engaged more residents who identify as **Latinx** and reported **lower-incomes** relative to their share of the Boston population.

Notes:

- Hispanic or Latino/-a/-e/-x... of any race
- AI/AN = American Indian or Alaska Native
- NHPI = Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

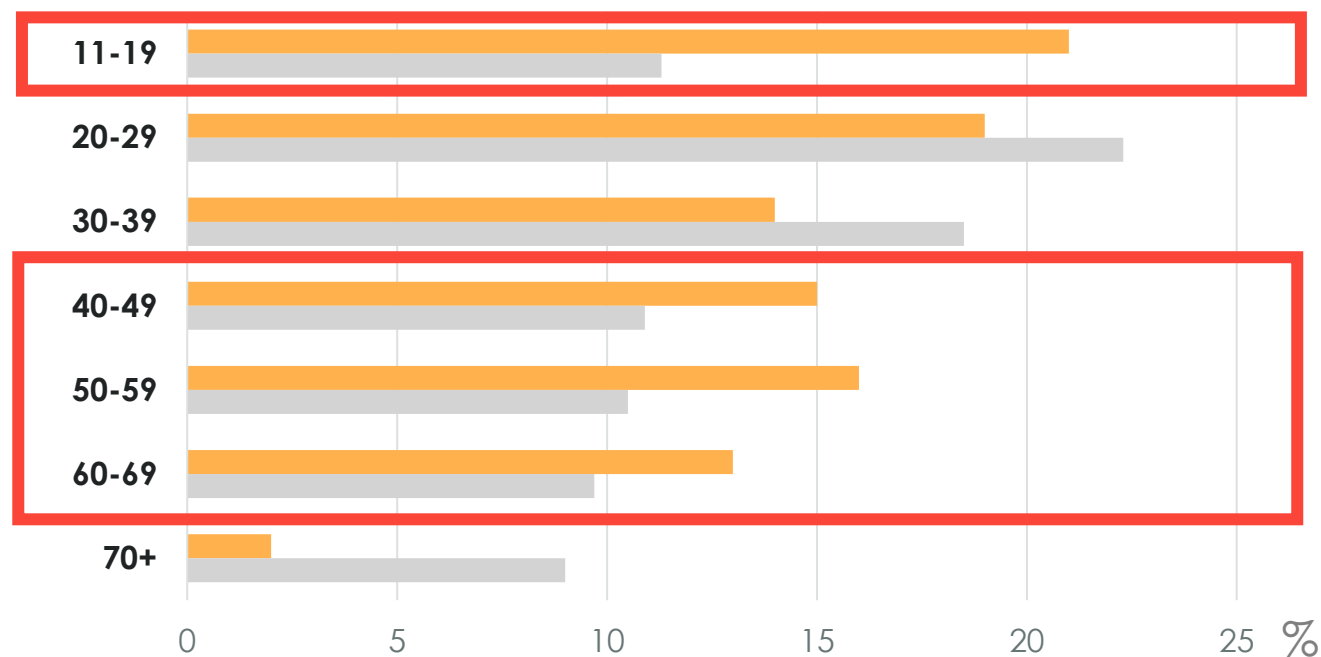
Source: Forum Evaluation Survey (2025) +
Boston 2020 census data

Race/ethnicity RR = 82% (84/102); income RR = 60% (61/102)





Forums engaged
younger and older
residents effectively,
relative to their share of
the Boston population.



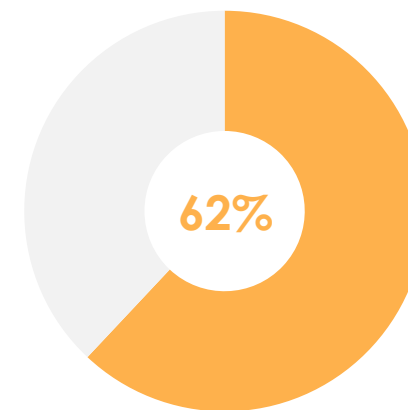
Source: Forum Evaluation Survey (2025) +
Boston 2020 census data
Age RR = 84% (86/102)



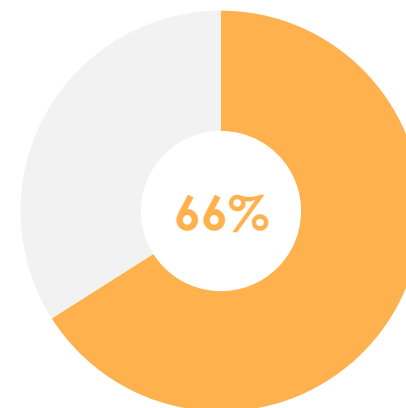
Forums were the first time that a majority of participants engaged in Ideas in Action.

Most participants identified as civically engaged.

Source: Forum Evaluation Survey (2025)
first time participant RR = 89% (91/102);
civic engagement RR = 83% (85/102)



First time participating in Ideas in Action



Identify as civically engaged*

*In the past 12 months, did:

- ❖ attend public meetings
- ❖ advocate for a local issue or candidate
- ❖ work with others to improve your neighborhood or city



Preliminary Findings

October Forums engaged a diverse group of Boston residents.

The neighborhoods of East Boston and Allston were particularly well-represented, as were Latinx, lower-income, and younger and older residents.

Most participants were first timers and over half identified as civically engaged.



Evaluation Question 3

How can the process used during Forums be improved?

- What can we learn from “returners” aka residents who participated in Ideas in Action in the past?



Returners noticed process improvements

- Appreciated the diversity of participant neighborhood, age, ethnicity, and opinions; expressed hope that future forums are even more diverse (n=13)
- Noted improvements from Cycle 1, including how subtopic division and idea cards streamlined the activities (n=9)
- Appreciated forum in general, specifically logistics like location, interpreters, and group size (n=8)

Source: Forum Evaluation Survey (2025)

What worked well? What could be improved? RR = 42% (43/102);

“Excelente la logistica, muy buena orientacion cu el taller, que buena practica de participacion ciudadona de la comunidad inmigrante dandonos voz y botto Gracias!”

“The logistics were excellent, the workshop was very well organized, and what a great practice of citizen participation for the immigrant community, giving us a voice and a vote. Thank you!”

- *Survey respondent*



Returners shared ideas for improving the process

- Consider ways to give participants more agency, i.e., allow them to choose their own subtopic tables (n=5)
- Further streamline process to reduce time spent reviewing similar ideas (n=4)
- Increase facilitator familiarity with materials and provide clearer instruction (n=4)
- Increase engagement with special audiences, like youth and multilingual people (n=4)

Source: Forum Evaluation Survey (2025)

What worked well? What could be improved? RR = 42% (43/102);

“I liked having the ideas on cards! It was a much smoother process compared to last year. We had a LOT of similar ideas, maybe adding some labels to the subtopic ideas can help make sure a wider range of ideas moves on further in the process.”

- Survey respondent



Preliminary Findings

Returning participants noticed improvements from Cycle 1, especially logistics and diverse participation.

Ideas for improvement centered on agency, efficiency, clarity.



Next steps for Evaluation

- Engage with your questions and feedback
- Report on additional findings from Proposal Development in January
- Prepare for voting phase!

Thank you

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