

THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET



#FUNDCOMMUNITIES

Families for Justice as Healing is organizing to claim the money and resources Black and Brown communities need and deserve.

Families for Justice as Healing represents members from the most incarcerated communities in the Commonwealth: Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan. Elected officials approve millions of dollars of funding per square mile for policing and incarceration in Black and Brown neighborhoods yet fail to make investments in our lives and livelihood year after year.

This is the moment to address structural racism, income inequality, and the economic devastation that generations of disproportionate policing and incarceration have caused in Black communities.

LISTEN TO BLACK AND BROWN WOMEN

Over the past year, Families for Justice as Healing led a Listening Tour with 150 women from the most impacted neighborhoods in Boston: Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan. Out of the listening tour, we created a People's Budget Project led by formerly incarcerated women and women with incarcerated loved ones to create a city and state investment plan.

We have been imagining, designing, and planning what thriving communities look like. We have the solutions; we know the way forward: fund Black and Brown communities and defund the systems of harm and punishment which have failed to bring us safety and wellbeing.

WHAT DO THRIVING COMMUNITIES LOOK LIKE?

A thriving community is where everyone has what they need.

A thriving community has abundant educational and financial opportunities.

A thriving community is where everyone feels safe and connected.

A thriving community is one where everyone is treated equitably, respectfully, and without judgment.

A thriving community is owned and led by the people living there.

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MAYOR MARTY WALSH AND THE BOSTON CITY COUNCIL:

Boston is a majority Black and Brown city. Take action and adopt a budget that aligns with the priorities of the people you have been elected to represent.

As a first step, we demand that the City of Boston establish a \$41.4 million dollar Community Fund to be distributed through a community-led participatory budgeting process.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY: HOUSING AND WELL BEING

DIGNIFIED HOUSING

RENTAL RELIEF

FOOD ACCESS

COVID 19 RELIEF FUNDING

On our Listening Tour we asked women, *“What was going on in your life when you got caught up in the system? What did you need that you didn’t get?”* The top response we got from women was that they didn’t have access to basic necessities for themselves and their children like dignified housing and food. Families in our neighborhoods struggle with access to housing, especially when we have criminal records. Our members have been threatened to be evicted by the Boston Housing Authority even when someone is arrested. We need massive investment in dignified housing that is controlled by the community with no restrictions based on criminal records so we can choose where to live and who we live with.

Food access is a major issue for the most impacted women we surveyed. FJAH members and Listening Tour Participants want affordable grocery stores with fresh foods in our neighborhoods, cooperatively owned by Black and Brown residents. Grocery stores can be a sustainable source of income and employment in our neighborhoods.

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HOUSING AND WELL BEING CONTINUED

Black Bostonians have experienced disproportionate rates of COVID19 infections and deaths due to racism in our city. Black and Brown communities are deeply impacted by income loss during the pandemic on top of dealing with the economic devastation caused by the criminal legal system.

As our region continues to recover from COVID, some residents will owe deferred rent and mortgage payments as well as deferred probation fees, parole fees, and court costs. This is an unfair and impossible burden for many Black and Brown families.

We must ensure COVID19 relief money gets into the hands of Black and Brown families, renters, home owners, workers, business owners, and community-led organizations. People with felony convictions were cut out of federal relief through the Payroll Protection Program so we need a Boston fund explicitly for formerly incarcerated people. The City must be accountable and release data on how money from the Rental and Small Business funds have been distributed as well as demographic data about who has received them.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY: TRANSFORM HARM

COMMUNITY-LED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND HEALING

TREATMENT CENTERS

PARTICIPATORY DEFENSE

HEALING CENTERS

HARM REDUCTION

“We are working on getting to the root of violence in our neighborhoods and creating ways to address them without creating further harm by calling the police and locking people up.” - Romilda Pereira, Director of Programs at Families for Justice as Healing

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TRANSFORM HARM CONTINUED

Black-led community organizations are organizing to prevent people from being caught up in the criminal legal system and to protect our people when they are being prosecuted or incarcerated. Families for Justice as Healing organizes weekly **Participatory Defense** meetings for families to receive support and strategize to fight for the best possible outcomes in their loved ones' cases, including alternatives to incarceration. Participatory Defense is one example of a community-led process that can build community power and break cycles of incarceration.

Black and Brown community members want quality, culturally responsive treatment and mental health care in our own neighborhoods with providers who look like us and who have been through what we've been through. We deserve more than waiting for a detox bed with nowhere to go afterward. We want residential programs that offer actual support and healing like **Kimya's House on Gaston Street**, not just sober homes. We want safe use sites to reduce the risk of overdose deaths.

Black Community-led organizations are engaged in the work of developing what different looks like: ways to prevent, intervene and heal from interpersonal violence without police, courts, or prisons which have never worked for us.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY: REIMAGINING COMMUNITIES

**PUBLIC EDUCATION
PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMUNITY CENTERS**

**YOUTH JOBS
JOB TRAINING
EMPLOYMENT**

**CO-OP BUSINESSES
RE-ENTRY SUPPORT**

**SPIRITUAL PLACES
BLACK + BROWN HERITAGE CENTERS & SITES
ART PROGRAMS AND SPACES**

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REIMAGINING COMMUNITIES CONTINUED

We have a vision for beautiful neighborhoods where we can be outside in parks and green space with our families surrounded by art that reflects us; where we can buy fresh food and flowers and coffee and ice cream and clothing from shops owned by our neighbors; where we can farm and garden; where we can eat and drink at restaurants and bars owned by Black people; where there are community centers on every corner with enough space and resources for all the activities and programs our people want to run. **To realize this vision, we need a significant investment from the City of Boston in Black and Brown communities.**

Black and Brown young people ages 14-22 must have a **fully-funded youth jobs program with an investment of at least \$15 million from the City Budget.**

Black and Brown residents have plans for small businesses that will employ our neighbors and keep money in our neighborhoods. Community groups can train and nurture Black and Brown entrepreneurs to grow and sustain those businesses, and hire more people. We must prioritize investment in businesses owned by and employing formerly incarcerated people. **In addition to establishing the Community Fund, the City of Boston must make a commitment to award at least 20% of contracts to Black-owned businesses.**

Formerly incarcerated people are a beautiful and powerful part of our community. Formerly incarcerated people are already running projects and programs that deserve more funding. We need even more resources for our people coming home to Boston so they can provide for their families and define for themselves what success looks like.

WE CANNOT REIMAGINE POLICING OR PRISONS.

We have an opportunity to do something different in Boston. In this moment of crisis, we can recreate our city. We can make Boston a place where all people have what they need to thrive.

“A thriving community is one where there are resources to fix the oppression that has been done in communities like mine – the communities in poverty, all of the Black communities where they have made a system to keep us in place. It looks like resources to fix these injustices, to fix these traumas on every level. In order to stabilize us as a community economically. That’s what it looks like to me.”

- E. LaPenn, Listening Tour Participant

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INVESTMENT PRIORITY: CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

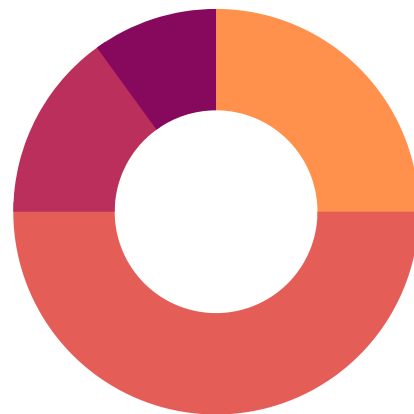


The costs in this category represent what it takes to keep the city running. We demand equitable transportation, snow removal, internet access, and drivable streets in every neighborhood.

COMPARISON WITH THE MAYOR'S VISION



- Public Education
- Public Safety
- City Departments
- Transportation
- Health Insurance
- Public Health
- Fixed Costs



- Reimagining Communities
- Housing and Wellbeing
- City Infrastructure
- Transform Harm

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INVESTMENT AREAS

- Currently the City of Boston allocates only \$8.3 million for Recovery Services. We support a substantial increase in spending on public health initiatives based in our neighborhoods - especially trauma and addiction treatment - with a focus on the unique needs of Black Bostonians.
- The Boston Police Department budget is 182 times larger than the Office of Arts and Culture budget. Residents want significant investment in arts and culture as a way for us to heal from trauma, express ourselves, and celebrate Blackness.
- The FY21 Budget includes \$500,000 for the Office of Food Access. Boston must do much more to increase access to fresh and healthy food in Black and Brown communities, including making pathways for Black and Brown residents to cooperatively own grocery stores in our own neighborhoods.
- The FY21 Operating Budget lists a "*targeted violence prevention strategy with investments totaling \$1 million across various city departments.*" Violence Intervention/Trauma Prevention receives \$3.8 million in funding. The City's investment in violence prevention is shamefully low. Through the People's Budget process, we will make a significant investment in Black-led, community-led violence prevention, intervention, and healing run by people who have direct experience and organizations the community trusts who do not collaborate with the police.

DIVESTMENT AREAS

- The total Boston Police Department budget is \$414,182,025, of which 90.6% is personnel costs. In FY21, the BPD plans to hire even more officers. We need to cut money annually from the BPD budget and shrink the role police play in our communities.
- The Boston Police Department FY21 overtime budget is \$60.8 million, and the department exceeds this allocation every year. The BPD must be held accountable for excessive spending at the expense of our community. The City of Boston must cap overtime spending, and renegotiate police contracts to limit overtime for details and court appearances.
- The FY21 budget allocates \$3.8 million to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department on top of \$115 million from the state budget. The City of Boston should divest from incarceration entirely and fund alternatives.

HIGHLIGHTING BLACK LED ORGANIZATIONS



“We need programs that are run by people from the same community as the youth they serve. No one can understand them like we do.” - Tracy Mack, Project B.E.A.T.

- **Families for Justice as Healing (founder Andrea James):** organization led by most impacted women working to end the incarceration of women and girls through developing alternatives and transformative justice processes outside the system.
- **Sisters Unchained (Co-founder Ayana Aubourg):** a prison abolitionist organization dedicated to building community and power with young women affected by parental incarceration through radical education, healing, art, sisterhood and activism.
- **New Beginnings Re-Entry Services (Founder Stacey Borden):** delivers evidence-based treatment for women involved in the criminal legal system and formerly incarcerated women and girls. New Beginnings operates “Kimya’s House,” a 15-bed re-entry program where women receive treatment, healing programming, job training, and deep connections to local community to heal and advance their lives.
- **Brookview House (President and CEO Deborah Hughes):** multi-service nonprofit organization for women, children and youth experiencing homelessness that develops safe, affordable housing with support services and programs on site, confronts the root causes of family homelessness.
- **We are Better Together (Founder Ruth Rollins):** A non-profit to connect and heal women and girls affected by homicide and incarceration to prevent the cycles of violence and victimization.

HIGHLIGHTING BLACK LED ORGANIZATIONS



- [Project B.E.A.T -Black Excellence After Trauma \(Founder Tracy Mack\)](#): a nonprofit organization that uses music technology to develop the life and skills of inner city and at-risk youth.
- [New Impressions \(Founder Latanya Jones\)](#): program to develop alternatives to destructive behavior in our youth as they explore their talents and safely confront their anxieties and fears via counseling and advocacy.
- [Sisters @ Work \(Founded by Mikey Miles\)](#): a non-profit organization creating a lifelong foundation for inner city youth through the trades, life skills, and job readiness.
- [My Brother's Keeper 617 \(Founded by Mario Rodrigues, Jose Rodrigues, Piter Brandao, Satero Daviega, Tony Galvao, Johnny Gomes\)](#): non-profit based out of Dorchester, created to provide mentoring to young men and boys in the Boston community aged 8 and up. The goal is to show the youth that they can make choices that will lead them to increased academic growth and professional opportunities.
- [Yardtime Entertainment \(founded by Joseph Bennett and Aaron Wade\)](#): nonprofit organization that offers a reach back program designed to partner at-risk youth with positive role models from the same neighborhood plus groups and counseling in life skills, parenting and job readiness as well as classes in social skills building, entrepreneurship, and college prep.