



PUBLIC
RECORDS
2025 Annual Report



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Introduction

From the Director of Public Records

The City of Boston's Public Records Department is deeply committed to providing public access to records and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those represented in the City's records. This annual report highlights the many changes we have made to improve the department and reflects on our 2025 year.

In 2025, the Department implemented a number of new protocols that streamlined processes. This includes the introduction of standardized intake, tracking, and closure processes which resulted in the reduction of duplicate requests and an increase in consistency and transparency.

The Department also improved the process for narrowing and clarifying requests for broad inquiries, allowing for proactive engagement with thousands of requesters to clarify scope of requests, and allowing the City to produce more relevant records, more efficiently.

As a result of these successful changes, Public Records **decreased** average closure times, **reduced** the number of outstanding requests, **increased** the number of appeals **won**, and ensured that team time and resources are more efficiently utilized.

In 2026, more than ever, the City of Boston is committed to being a beacon of transparency. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to lead this Department and shine a light on all of the work done by the City of Boston.

Grace Jung
Director of Public Records



Message From the Commissioner

The City of Boston maintains records dating back to the 1600's. Our records tell the story of the lives of residents, the story of their homes, their education, birth, marriage, and even parking tickets. Memorandums, meeting minutes, and reports also provide insight and transparency into the workings of our government. These records are a rich resource and over this last year we have responded to over 10,000 requests from members of the public and press who want to engage with them.

The City of Boston's Public Records Department works closely with other City Departments to facilitate access to records. Over the past year, we have engaged deeply with staff across the City to locate, produce records and manage transparency as a discipline. I am proud of and grateful for our partners in particular in the Streets Cabinet, the Boston Police Department, Boston Fire Department, and the Department of Innovation and Technology for their collaboration, support and tireless work to make public records an accessible reality.

I also want to recognize the five full time staff and four Northeastern University Co-ops in the Public Records Department whose work ethic and dedication enable the City to review, redact, and release hundreds of thousands of records every quarter.

This report highlights the way that the City of Boston, under Mayor Michelle Wu's leadership, is committed to public records. I am committed to the constant improvement in our operations. Our records are our story and we look forward to reporting regularly to you.

Paul C. Chong
Commissioner of City Records



Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster transparency and public trust by providing timely, accurate, and accessible public records. We are committed to a collaborative approach that values clear communication and efficient processes, ensuring accountability and serving the public with professionalism and respect.

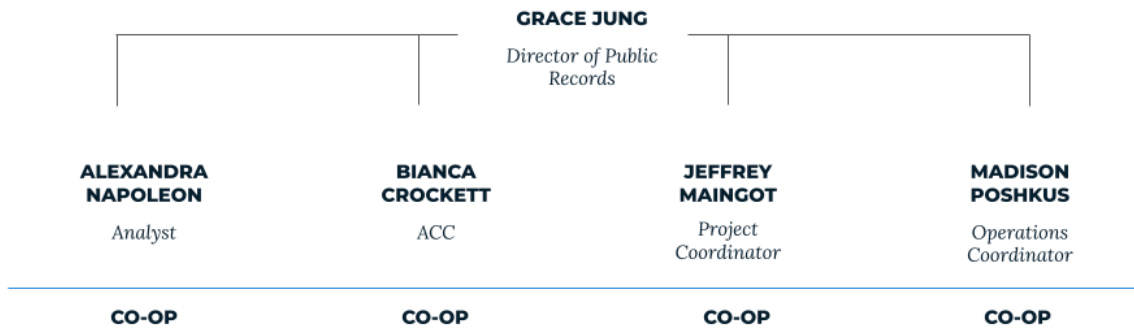
Expanding the Team

The Public Records Department saw a significant staff expansion in 2025. In January, we brought on our first round of Northeastern University undergraduate co-ops.¹ By March, we gained an Analyst and an Operations Coordinator.

As of July 2025, the Public Records team is comprised of **nine active staff members**.

Current Public Records Team

Updated Feb 2026



In recognition of the high demand and front line, transactional nature of the Public Records Department, the City of Boston moved the Public Records Department into the Registry Division as part of an expanded City Records Department. This reorganization enables the City to provide increased support and oversight of day-to-day operations through the People Operations Cabinet which oversees a number of transactional, high volume constituent facing organizations including the Registry and Elections Departments.

¹ <https://www.northeastern.edu/co-op/>



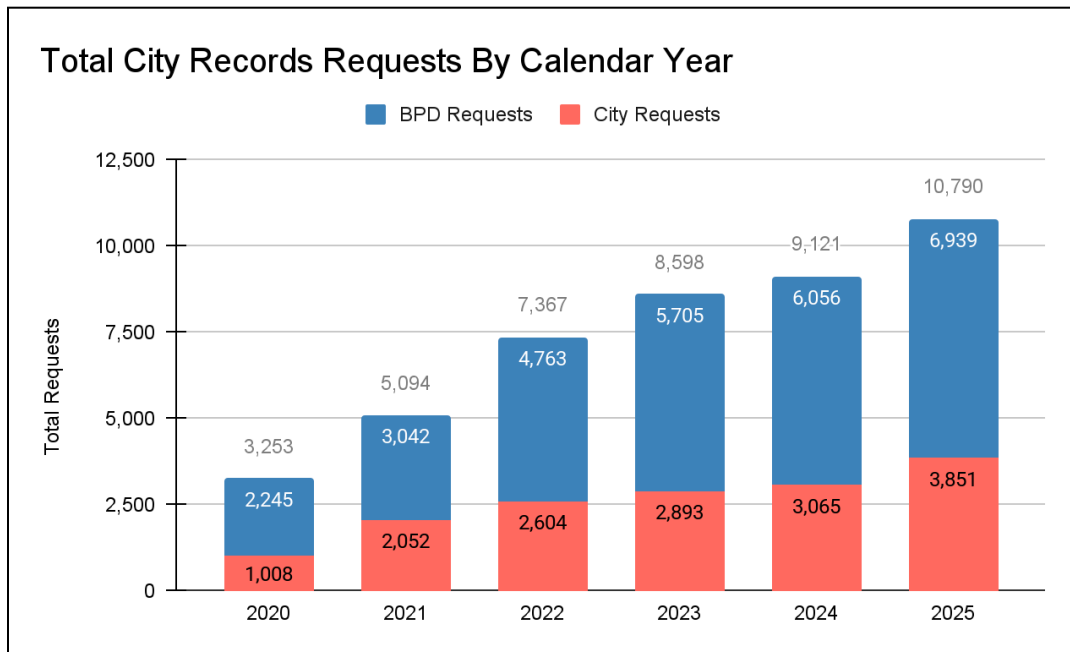
Co-ops conduct the **daily transactional work** of processing public records requests, such as entering and assigning new requests, drafting responses to requesters, and answering phone calls and emails within 24-48 business hours. They also regularly execute critical, high-impact projects that have transformed and improved the Public Records department's internal processes.

Accomplishments by the Numbers

1. Received and tracked nearly 11,000 public records requests.

In 2025, the City of Boston received an unprecedented total of **10,790** public records requests, representing a **232% increase** in the number of submissions since 2020. Trends were similar even when excluding data from the Boston Police Department.

92% of the requests received in 2025 were closed by the end of the calendar year.



Tracking public records requests enables the Public Records Department to effectively monitor the progress of open requests, identify trends and patterns for process improvement, and answer questions from requesters and department stakeholders.



To accurately represent this work, we record every request we receive, including those submitted outside of GovQA², such as emails and in-person inquiries.

2. Reduced average request closure time by 60%.

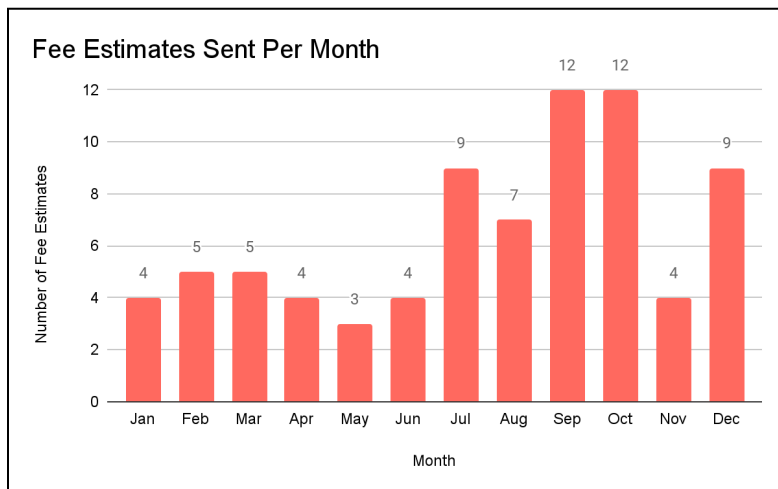
The Public Records Department improved the average time to close a request from **35 days in 2024 to approximately 14 days in 2025**, excluding BPD. This **60% decrease** means that, on average, requests are being fulfilled within the statutory timeline.

3. Reduced outstanding requests by nearly 80%.

In 2025, we closed 675 outstanding requests, reducing our queue of open requests by **nearly 80%**. To address these outstanding requests, we developed tools and dashboards to track and manage these requests, analyzed the history of the requests to identify clear action items, and partnered with departments to identify and locate responsive records.

4. Issued approximately 80 fee estimates.

According to state policy, the City may charge a “reasonable fee” to recover the costs of



complying with a public records request. Fees may be charged for the time taken to “compile, segregate, redact, or reproduce a record requested.” The City may only charge a fee if it responds to a requester within 10 business days.

Charging fees for particularly time-consuming requests have allowed the City to best meet its goals of transparency and

timeliness in the public records process.

² The City of Boston’s public records request portal.



In 2025, Public Records (excluding BPD) issued **78 fee estimates or petitions**. This accounts for only **2%** of the requests that the Public Records Department responded to this year.

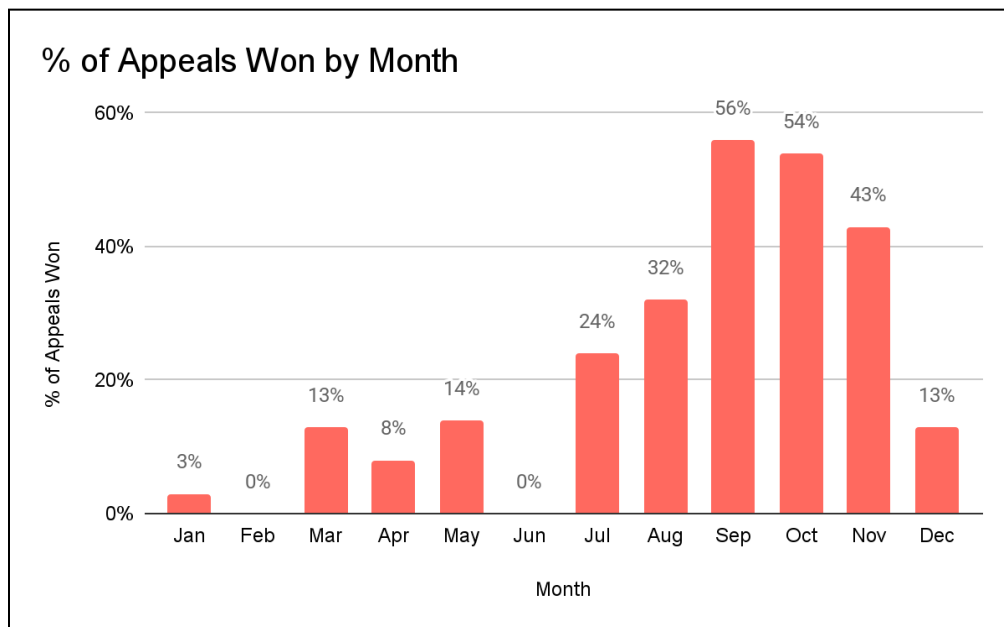
This effort saved city employees, including Public Records employees, from reviewing more than **five million records**. This translates to over **83,000 hours**, or nearly **ten years**, of work time saved.

5. Reviewed over 57,000 records.

Further, we provided guidance to departments and conducted comprehensive reviews and redactions on large record review projects that amounted to **57,000 records**, or approximately **720,000 pages**.

6. Tripled the number of appeals won by the City.

Any requester may appeal to the state Supervisor of Public Records (SPR) if they are unsatisfied with the outcome of their request. In 2025, the rate of SPR appeals **declined by 41%**, compared to 2024. Most notably, appeals due to nonresponse from the City, which is the most common reason for appeals, **decreased** by 35%.





Additionally, in the second half of 2025, the Public Records Department worked on strengthening our responses to the Supervisor of Public Records. As a result, the rate of appeals won by the City **increased by 72%** in 2025 in comparison to the previous year.

Process Improvements

A. Department Workflows

The Public Records Department assigned staff liaisons to 75 city departments and cabinets to ensure they have a dedicated contact and more direct, specialized support.

Department Workflow Assignments for Public Records			
Madison Poshkus + Mina Akyildiz (Co-op)	Alex Napoleon + Marli Mason (Co-op)	Jeff Maingot 1 + Anamika Pusalkar (Co-op)	Jeff Maingot 2 + Ruby Theriot (Co-op)
Animal Care & Control BAT/Hackney Boston 311 Boston Public Schools (BPS) City Council Clerk's Office Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Labor Relations (OLR) Mayor's Office Admin (Shared) Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS) OPAT Parks People Operations Property Management (PMD) Registry	Boston Cannabis Board BTD Chief of Streets COB Special Events DoIT Economic Opportunity and Inclusion Licensing Board Mayor's Office Admin (Shared) Mayor's Office of Tourism Sports and Entertainment Mayor's Press Office Office of Workforce Development Procurement Public Facilities (PFD) Public Library (BPL) Public Works (PWD) Small Business Development	Assessing Auditing BRIP Collecting Elections Fair Housing and Equity Finance (A&F) Inspectional Services (ISD) Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) Office of Equity and Inclusion Planning Treasury Women's Advancement	Archives BCYF Early Childhood Emergency Management (OEM) Environment, Energy, and Open Space Fire Department (BFD) Landmarks Law Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH/DND) Office of Housing Stability Public Records Returning Citizens
Currently Unassigned	Emerging Industries Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics (MONUM)	Civil Rights Unit COB Budget* COB Operations Collecting* Inspectional Services-Press* LGBTQ+ Advancement Mayor's Office Disability Commission*	Age Strong* Archives* Early Childhood* Human Services* Mayor's Office of Food Justice* Office of Historic Preservation Veteran Services Youth Engagement & Advancement
COB Health Insurance			

Workflow Updated on January 16, 2026

B. Coordination Meetings

In 2025, we closed 675 outstanding requests, reducing our queue of open requests by **nearly 80%**. To address these outstanding requests, we developed tools and dashboards to track and manage these requests, analyzed the history of the requests to identify clear action items, and partnered with departments to identify and locate responsive records.



C. Communication Protocols

We developed and implemented several new protocols to improve our service quality and speed. First, we **standardized** our internal processes for intakes, tracking, and closures to reduce duplication of work and increase consistency and transparency with requesters.

In addition, we **centralized communication** by making the Public Records Department the single point of contact for all request updates and questions. This means that requesters now have one place to go for more information on their request, and departments can focus on fulfilling requests rather than fielding questions about our process.

Finally, we improved our **proactive communication** with requesters about the nature of their request. If we identify that a request as written is overly broad, requires an unreasonable search, or would result in a voluminous number of records, we reach out to requesters and ask that they **narrow or clarify the scope of their request** in a timely manner.