

Ideas in Action Cycle 2 Evaluation *2025-26*

Office of Participatory
Budgeting

March 2026
Voting Report



Voting Workshop, February 4, 2026
Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center
Photo credit: Data+Soul

The evaluation explores four questions. This report focuses on Participation.

- 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 Voting

Method	Learning goal	Response Rate (RR) or Sample Size (n)
Voting evaluation surveys for participants (optional but embedded in online voting platform)	neighborhood demographics (age, race/ethnicity, income), how you heard	Survey RR = 83% (3718/4480) neighborhood RR = 99% (3767/3775) age RR = 97% (3643/3775) race/ethnicity RR = 94% (3533/3775) income RR = 80% (3030/3775) how you heard RR = 98% (3690/3775)
Observation during Voting	context, process feedback	The evaluation team observed 1 voting event.
OPB staff quarterly retrospective	process feedback	N/A

Voting

4,919* Boston residents voted in Ideas in Action for Cycle 2.

- **4,480 Boston residents voted online (91%)**
- **439 Boston residents voted through paper ballots at City Hall, at BCYF sites, and with Community Partners (9%)**
- **4.5 (out of 5) average number of projects selected per voter** indicates engagement with PB as whole, rather than isolated support driven by individual project campaigns. This high number means that most participants will see at least some of their chosen projects funded and implemented.

* The initial vote count announcement was 4,841. Due to ballots received after voting was tabulated, the updated and final number of ballots is 4,919. This report utilizes the updated number. These late ballots did not ultimately impact which projects were selected.

Key outcomes



4,919

votes



4.5/5 (high)

average number of projects selected per voter



Evaluation Question 1a

**Who participated? To what extent did Ideas in Action
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 every neighborhood voted, with high turnout in Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, Brighton, Allston, East Boston, and Roslindale.

Some neighborhoods voted on ideas at rates higher than Boston's overall rate.

Neighborhood	# Voters	Voters per thousand
Jamaica Plain	734	18.3
Dorchester	463	3.8
Brighton	456	8.8
Allston	302	12.1
East Boston	267	6.2
Roslindale	242	8.2
South End	156	5.1
Roxbury	152	2.8
West Roxbury	134	4.3
Fenway	120	3.2
Back Bay	102	5.6
South Boston	101	2.7

Neighborhoods with the most Voters (top 12)

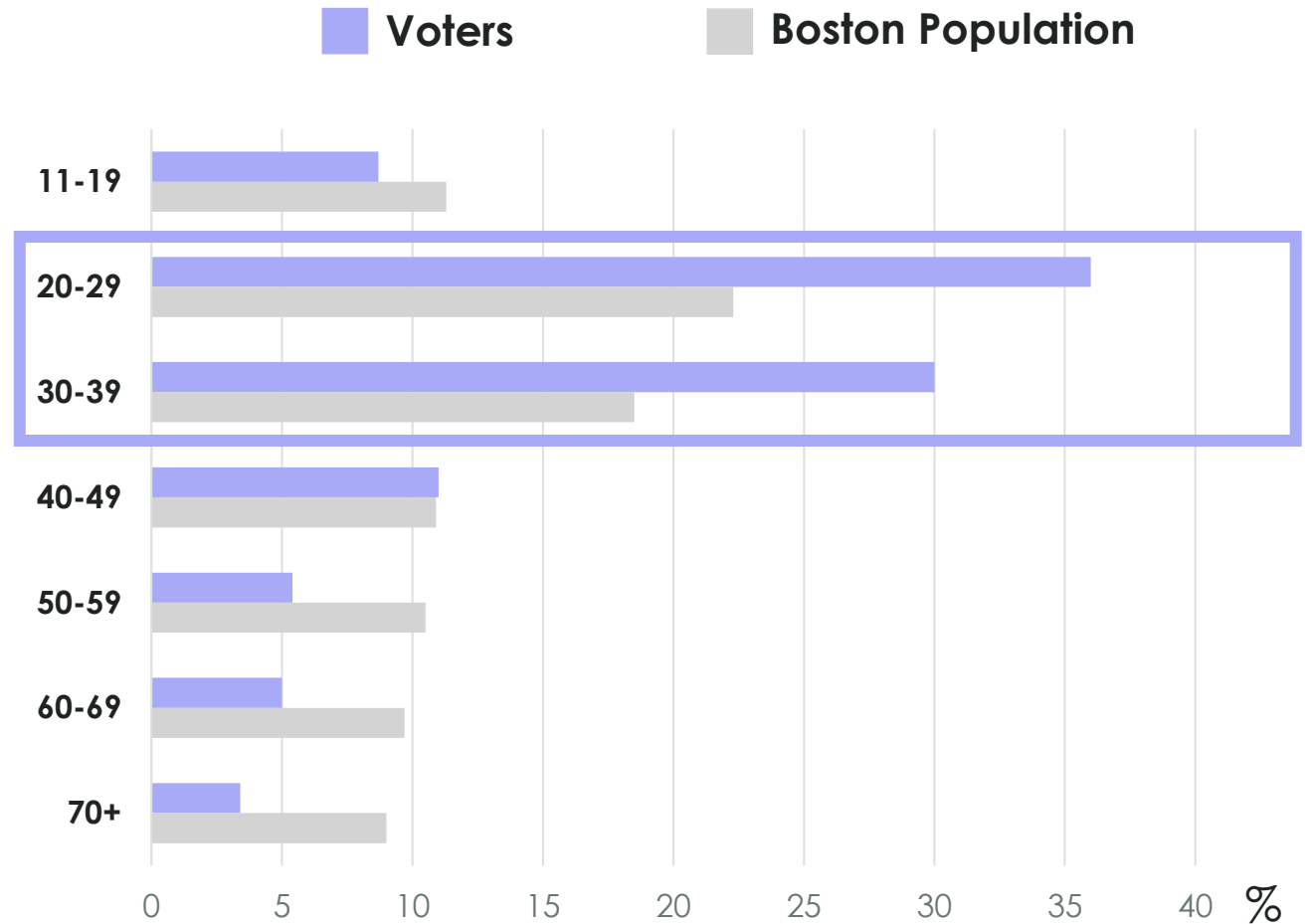
Boston-wide votes per thousand (1,000) = 7.3

Cells shaded in blue exceed the Boston-wide average

Source: Voting surveys (2026) + Boston 2020 census data



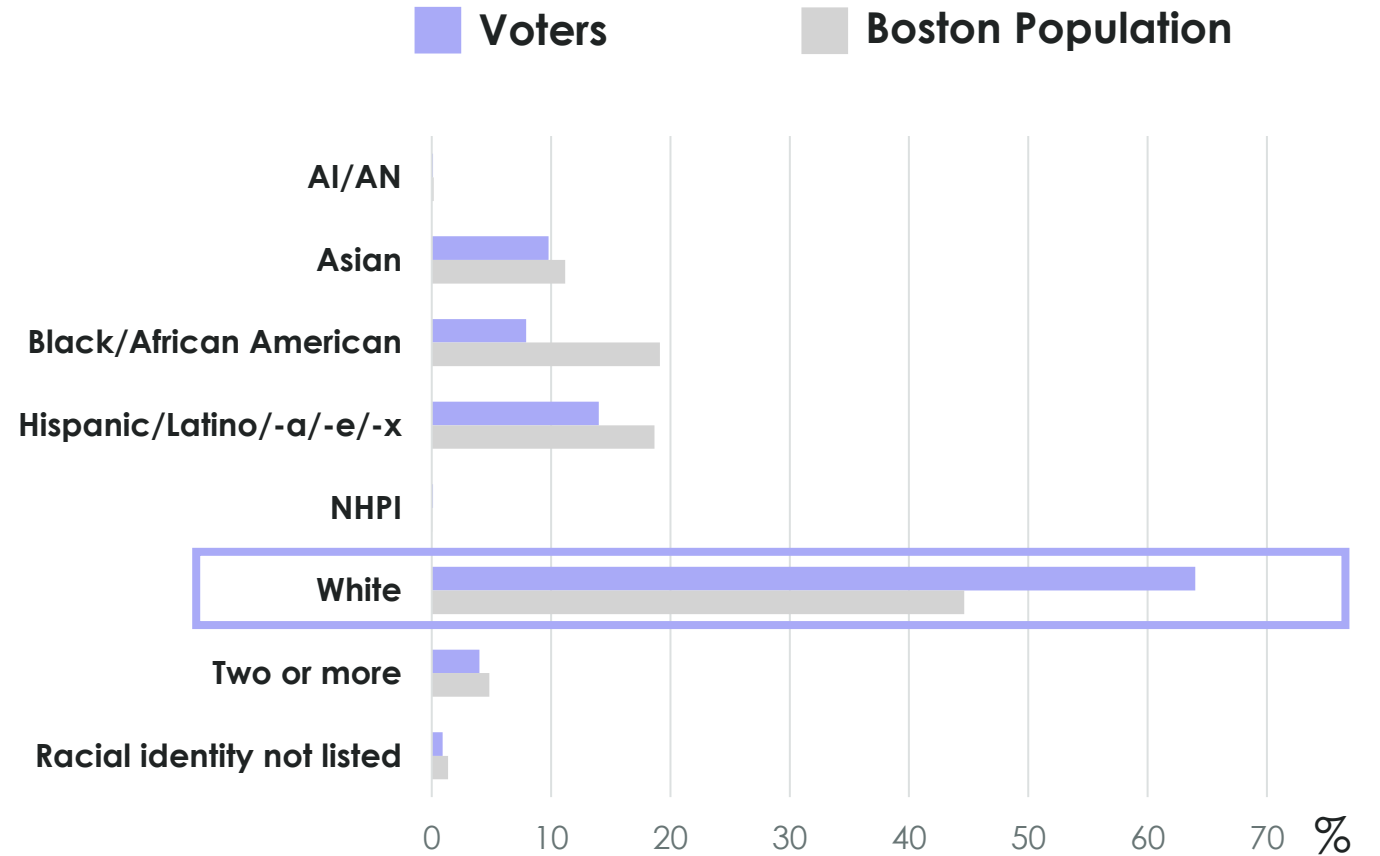
Most voters were in their 20s and 30s and were over-represented relative to their share of the Boston population.



Source: Voting surveys (2026) + Boston 2020 census data
n=3643



Most voters identified as white and were over-represented 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

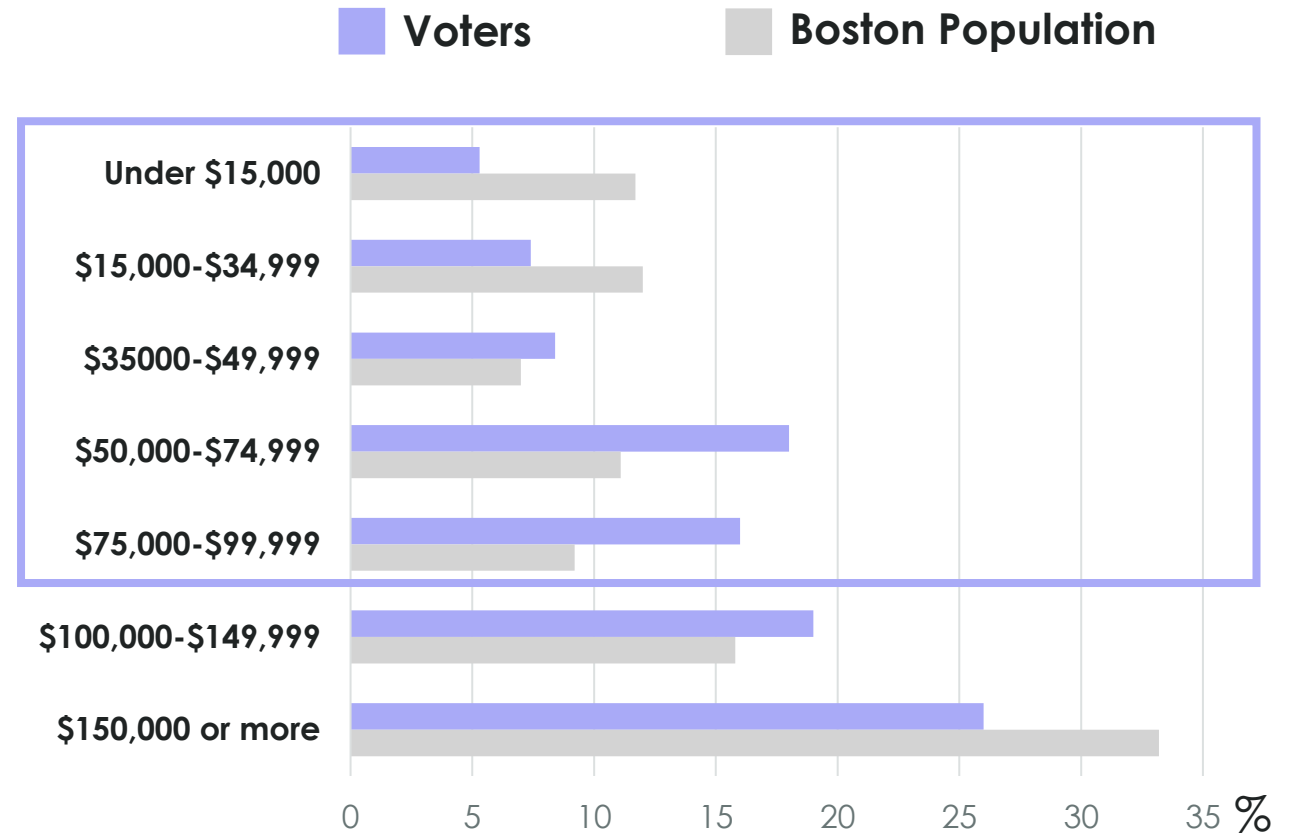
Source: Voting surveys (2026) + Boston 2020 census data

n=3533



Voters tended to report higher incomes relative to their share of the Boston population.

However, more than half of Voters (55%) reported annual household incomes less than \$100,000.



Source: Voting surveys (2026) + Boston 2020 census data
n=3030



One out of eleven (9%) Voters used paper ballots.

While we don't have demographic information about most* of these voters, we know they include:

- ❖ Residents of Mattapan and Chinatown
- ❖ Residents who identify as Haitian, Chinese, and Brazilian
- ❖ Lower-income residents
- ❖ Youth and older adults

Paper Ballot Sources	# Voters
BCYF Community Centers (n=4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hennigan - Leahy - Quincy - Vine St 	132
City Led Efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Hall boxes - Immigrants Lead Boston 	45
Community Partners (n=5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACEDONE - AGENCIA ALPHA - Brazilian Women's Group - Greater Boston Golden Age Center - True Alliance Center 	262
Total	439

Source: OPB documentation

*Paper evaluation surveys were collected for two BCYF sites



Preliminary Findings

Voters represented Boston residents.

Most voters (91%) participated **online**. These voters were majority white, in their 20s and 30s, and reported a range of incomes. High turn-out neighborhoods included Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, Brighton, Allston, East Boston, and Roslindale.

A portion of voters (9%) cast **paper** ballots. These voters were engaged by organizations serving youth and older adults, lower-income residents, and neighborhoods such as Chinatown and Mattapan.



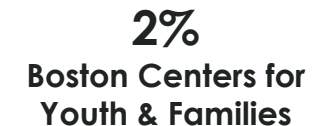
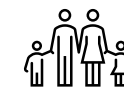
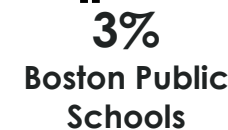
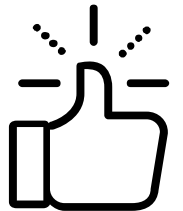
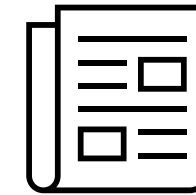
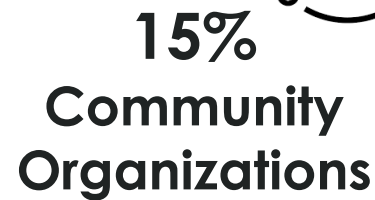
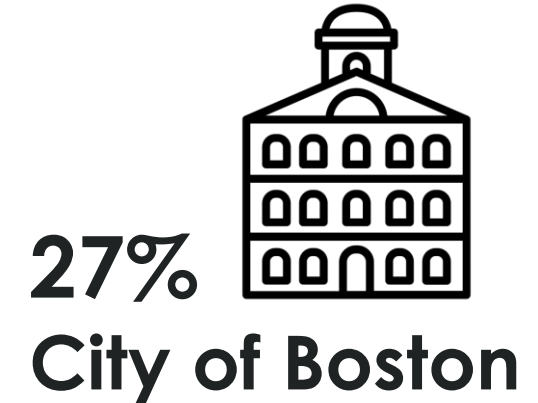
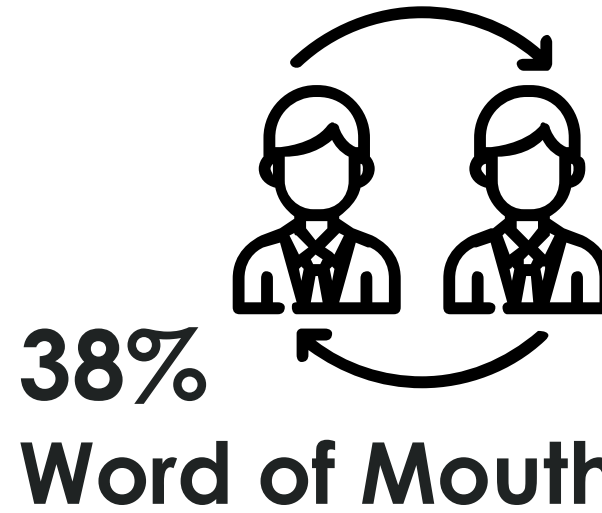
Evaluation Question 1b

How did residents participate?

- How did people hear about Ideas in Action?



Voters heard about Ideas in Action by word of mouth, City of Boston channels and ads, community organizations and their social networks.



Source: Voting surveys (2026); n=3690

Note: Social Media was not included as one of the check-box options and instead was created as a category based on write-in responses (see next slide)



Write-in responses for “How did you hear about Ideas in Action?”



Word of Mouth

- Family / friends
- Through work
- Neighbors



Community orgs

- Better Budget Alliance
- Mujeres Unidas Avanzando (MUA)
- Allston-Brighton Health Collaborative



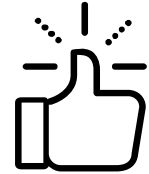
City of Boston

- Councilors: Ben Weber, Julia Mejia, Coletta Zapata
- I work for the City of Boston
- City Social Media



Advertisements

- B-Side Newsletter
- Boston Globe
- NPR/WBUR (Radio)
- Daily news publication



Social Media

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Community leader or organizer (on social media)
- LinkedIn



Community orgs, BYCF, and BPS engaged **Asian, Black, and Latinx residents** more effectively.

Word of mouth and advertisements engaged **White residents** more effectively.

Source: Voting surveys (2026); n= 3936

Method: For each source, compare each the % for between race/ethnicity categories.

Higher percentages suggest the source may have reached that demographic group more effectively.

How Heard by Race/Ethnicity

What % of each racial/ethnic group selected each source

Source	Asian N (%)	Black N (%)	Latinx N (%)	White N (%)
City	79 (22.8%)	80 (28.8%)	137 (28.3%)	592 (26.3%)
Community Org	57 (16.4%)	61 (21.9%)	103 (21.3%)	277 (12.3%)
Library	7 (2%)	6 (2.2%)	9 (1.9%)	61 (2.7%)
BCYF	21 (6.1%)	9 (3.2%)	7 (1.4%)	21 (0.9%)
BPS	29 (8.4%)	6 (2.2%)	24 (5%)	51 (2.3%)
Word of Mouth	123 (35.4%)	91 (32.7%)	163 (33.7%)	903 (40.2%)
Advertisement	23 (6.6%)	14 (5%)	38 (7.9%)	224 (10%)
Social Media	26 (7.5%)	26 (9.4%)	32 (6.6%)	220 (9.8%)



Two BCYF Community Centers (Leahy and Quincy) collected paper evaluation surveys. Almost all respondents were youth, (98%, age 11-19). Most (77%) did not identify as civically engaged.

Leahy youth had been involved in Idea Collection and many who voted (60%) said they'd participated in the past.

Source: Voting surveys (2026); n= 57



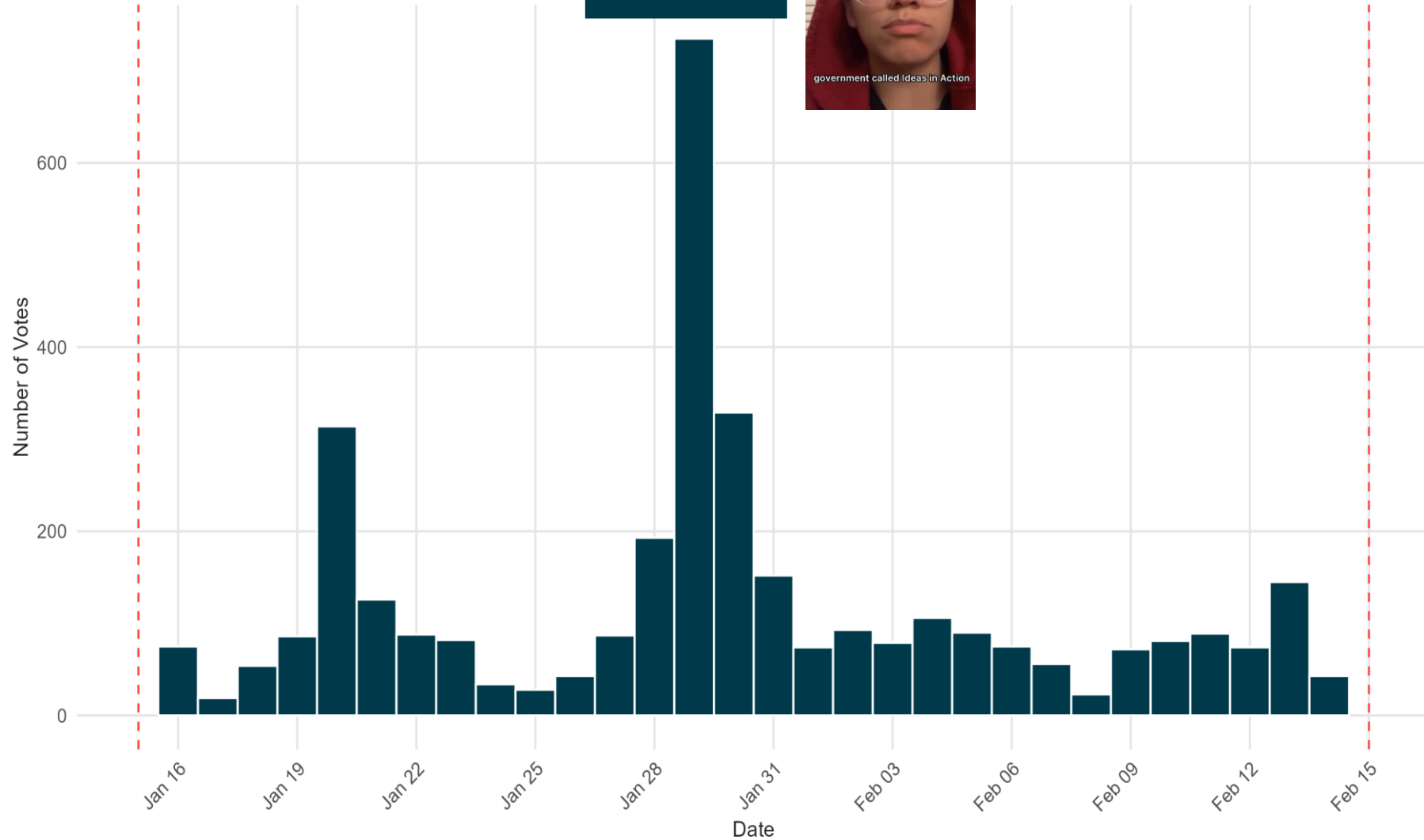
Youth at BCYF Quincy Community Center
Photo credit: City of Boston



Ideas in Action received ~100 votes per day with a few exceptions.

For example, a social media post from the Better Budget Alliance received over 130K views and led to ~400 additional votes.

When Did People Vote?
January 15 - February 15, 2026

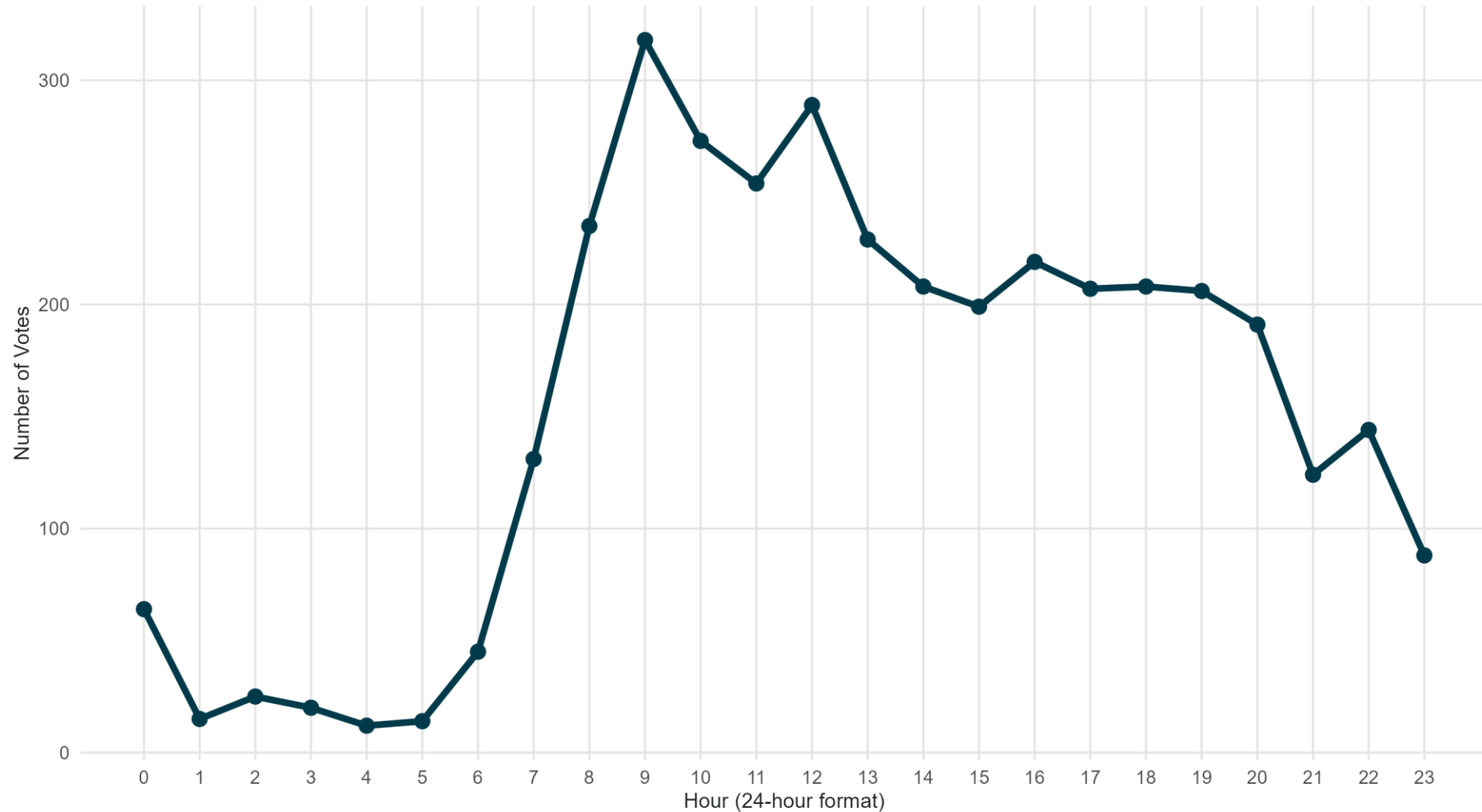




Voters were most active at the start of the typical workday (9am) and lunch break (12pm).

Voting by Hour of Day

24-hour breakdown of voting activity





Preliminary Findings

Voters heard about Ideas in Action through many sources, especially word of mouth and City of Boston channels.

Partnerships with community organizations, BCYF, and BPS have potential for engaging residents of color.

Social media holds power to bring in voters, especially if a post becomes viral.

Thank you

Acknowledgements: Residents who participated in Ideas in Action, Community Partners, EOB members, and OPB staff.

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