

# Beat The Odds (BTO)

**FOUNDED:** 2019

**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$771,200

**CONTACT:** Camila Rojas Pagan, *Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder*

☎ 617.840.7502

✉ camilarp@btoboston.org

🌐 www.btoboston.org



Beat The Odds (BTO) uses the transformative power of music and the creative arts to amplify the voices of Boston’s under-resourced BIPOC youth ages 14–24 in a nurturing, safe space that promotes healing. BTO inspires youth to explore their creativity, tap into joy, and build resilience by teaching artist development, music production, dance, content creation, and life skills, paired with authentic mentorship to empower them to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

BTO works with youth who experience firsthand the effects of intergenerational poverty, racism, violence, and trauma. These young people live in neighborhoods where poverty rates are four times higher than white neighborhoods and homelessness is seven times higher. 40% of BTO youth are faced with housing instability and 100% are impacted by community and/or domestic violence leading to trauma and PTSD. BTO disrupts these cycles that disproportionately affect its youth by offering a paid work experience and the support necessary to overcome these obstacles.

According to nonprofit organization Americans for the Arts, students exposed to the arts have increased feelings of well-being and connectedness and decreased feelings of loneliness, which aids in the healing from trauma. Additionally, students who participate in the arts are 20% more likely to graduate from high school, illustrated by BTO’s 100% high school graduation rate.

BTO prepares youth for successful futures with innovative and authentic wrap-around programming that gives youth participants the stage they need and deserve.

## Two-Year Goals

- Double the number of youth participants from 70 to 140
- Expand programming from 3 to 5 days a week
- Expand BTO’s facility from 1,200 to 5,000 sq. feet
- Increase FTEs from 2.5 to 6 and add 6 additional instructors
- Establish BTO as a Creative Hub and leader in the Boston arts community

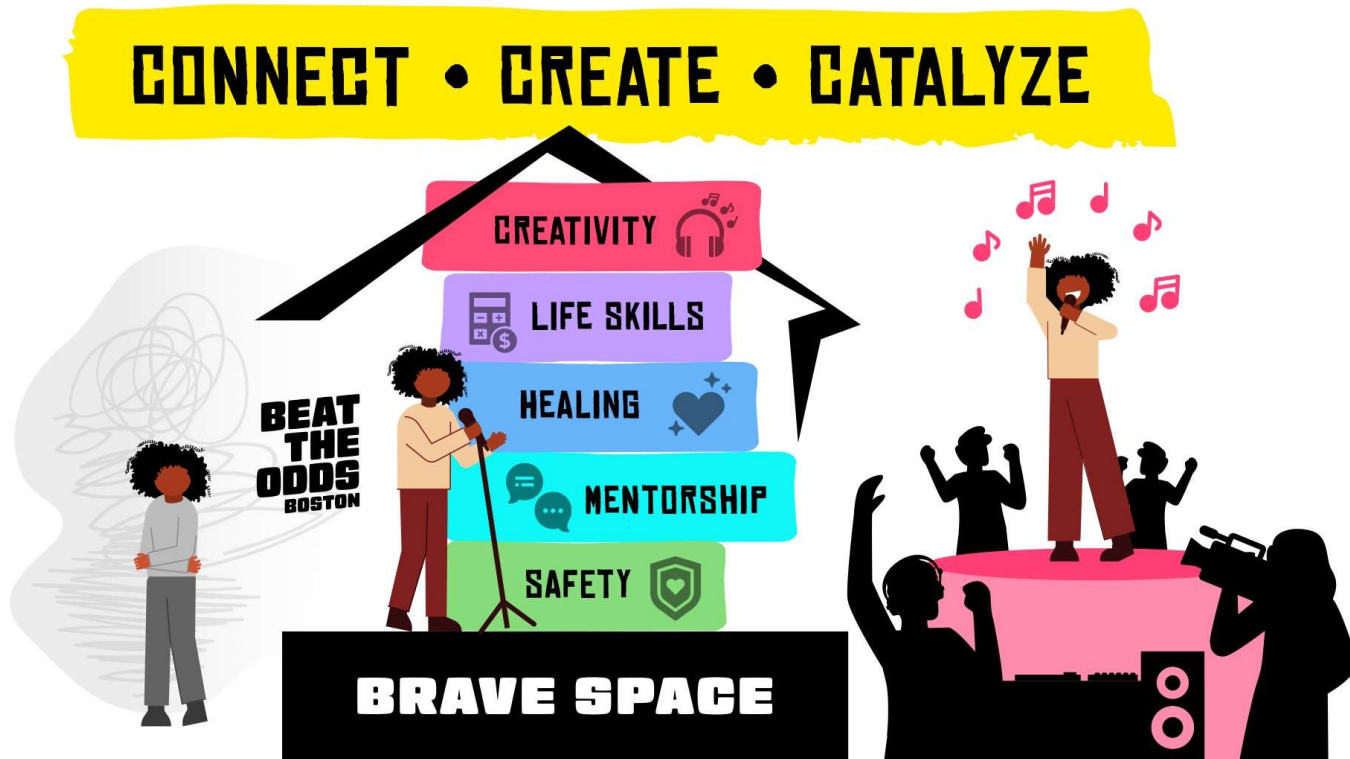
## Investment Opportunity

Beat The Odds (BTO) seeks an investment of \$2 million over the next two years to expand programming and amplify its impact. This will enable BTO to double the number of participants served, increase programming from 3 to 5 days a week, add staff and instructors, and expand technology to keep up with industry standards. Additionally, this investment will allow BTO to support the building of critical infrastructure needed as the organization scales its impact, including development, finance, and operations systems.

## Ways to Invest

- Join Board of Directors or Advisory Board
- Organizational strategic planning
- Commercial real estate and HR consulting services
- State of the art recording equipment, laptops, and music production software
- Gift cards for necessities for youth
- Cooked meals twice a week

## Beat The Odds Model



### BTO'S Unique Value Proposition

BTO's theory of change is based on organic experiences, extensive prototyping, and continual feedback from youth participants, partners, staff members, and instructors.

**Safe, Supportive, and Stable Spaces** BTO cultivates a sense of belonging and community by providing inclusive spaces where youth feel empowered to express themselves freely and give voice to their feelings.

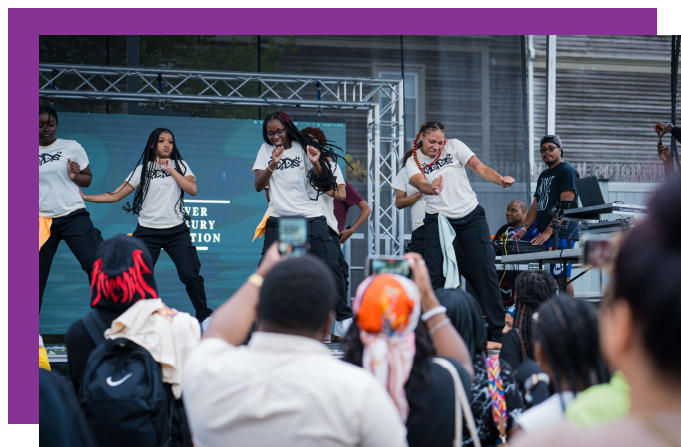
**Authentic Mentorship** BTO's trauma-informed staff inspire youth by building trusting relationships and providing compassionate support and guidance in navigating life, relationships, academics, and the artistic journey.

**Holistic Healing** Marathon Monday empowerment groups led by a licensed clinician foster open discussion to help youth heal from trauma by recognizing their own resilience to improve mental health.

**Crucial Life Skills** BTO prepares young people for their futures by providing workshops with outside experts that

cover topics such as creative entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, job readiness, college preparation, healthy relationships, and financial literacy.

**Courageous Creativity** Choosing dance, music production, artist development, or content creation, youth learn the technical skills necessary to build a career in the creative world while strengthening their confidence and self-identity, ensuring their voices are amplified and heard. BTO has emerged as a leader in the community hosting an annual showcase where youth participants share their artistic work with over 300 community members.



## Opportunity Builds Equity For All

**CONNECT:** Coming together in BTO’s Dorchester studio at least three afternoons a week after school, with a 100% participation rate, youth connect with their mentors, peers, and creative partners, forging meaningful long-lasting relationships grounded in mutual respect and support. This has led to 100% of BTO youth self-reporting a significant improvement in self-esteem, mood, and ability to cope with conflict at home and in school.

**CREATE:** Using various forms of artistic expression including dance, music production, rapping, singing, songwriting, beat making, and videography, youth create pieces to share with their BTO counterparts and the broader community. They develop their voices and sense of belonging, with 100% of BTO youth self-reporting increased self-confidence.

**CATALYZE:** BTO puts the power of storytelling into the hands of its young participants. Through its art, youth explore what it means to be whole, connected, and heard. BTO helps its youth navigate through systems of oppression with a commitment to social justice by using arts as a vehicle to change narratives and uplift each other.

*“BTO creates safe spaces for young people to explore their passions, develop their craft, and find their voices so they can flourish and grow as vital community members in our city.”*

— Pedro Cruz, Executive Director, Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement, City of Boston

## Leadership & Governance

Camila Rojas Pagan, CEO & Co-Founder is a lifelong artist born and raised in the Mission Hill neighborhood of Roxbury. Having completed her Nonprofit Management and Leadership Certificate at Boston University, she was recognized by the Boston Celtics as a Hero Among Us and is an inaugural member of The Boston Foundation’s Women of Color Leadership Circle. With 18 years of experience leading teams and dance workshops in NYC and Boston, Camila and her co-founders launched BTO to create the artistic spaces for youth they wished they had. BTO is governed by a seven-person all-BIPOC Board of Directors with expertise in finance, impact investing, artist development, teen mental health, and youth engagement.

## Financial Sustainability

Beat The Odds has grown from a volunteer organization to 2 FTEs, 1 PTE, and 4 instructors in the past year. BTO has demonstrated the ability to manage limited funds efficiently and effectively since its inception. With the primary source of funding coming from foundations and government, BTO’s executive leadership and Board of Directors are well-poised to develop and deepen their individual and corporate fundraising.

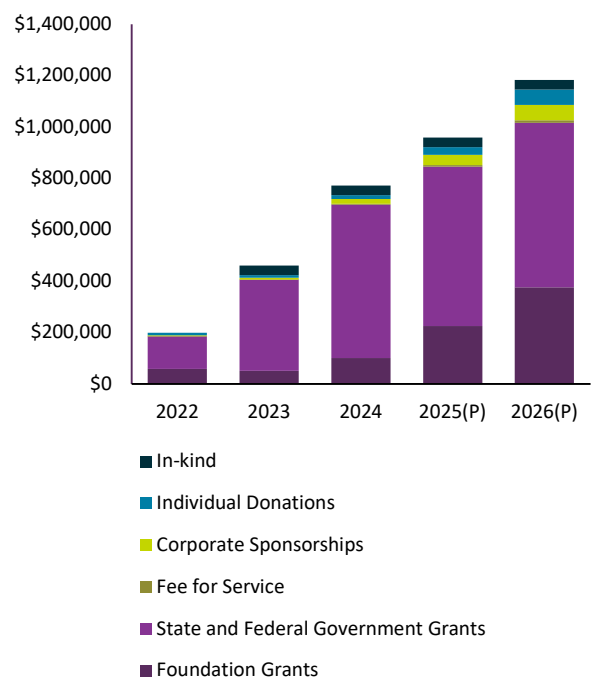
### KEY INVESTORS

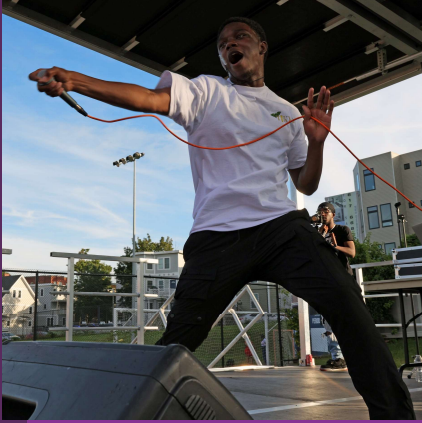
- Boston After School & Beyond
- Boston Cultural Council
- The Boston Foundation
- City of Boston
  - Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity
  - Office of Black Male Advancement
- Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture
- New Commonwealth Fund
- Red Sox Foundation

### KEY PARTNERS

- Casa Myrna Inc.
- City of Boston, Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement
- The Hustlers Guild
- The Record Co.
- Moms Demand Action - MA

## Revenue by Source





## Success Story

### JAH'EELIN "SANYE" BERES GONZALEZ

Growing up in Hyde Park, Sanye faced significant societal pressures that took a toll on his mental health. Surrounded by individuals selling drugs, Sanye battled this influence all alone, often feeling overwhelmed and discouraged. Grappling with feelings of isolation and displacement, he had no plans for college and doubts about graduating from high school. In BTO, he found a safe space where he could unleash his creativity without inhibition or judgment. He completed high school successfully and earned an Associate's Degree in Recording Arts and Show Production. He is now a BTO youth leader and an audio engineer for local artists. In 2023, he won the Master of the Chamber title in a prestigious Boston music competition. BTO also secured placements for his singles on Spotify playlists with over 1 million followers, elevating his monthly listeners to 30,000 and accumulating 1 million streams. In his own words, "BTO provided me with a sense of home along with the support and confidence to break free from societal pressures so I could become a force in the music industry, and a courageous adult."

## Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below are some of the key measures BTO tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary to maximize success.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
<b>Program Performance</b>			
Youth Participants	70	105	140
Community Programs/# of attendees	5/300	10/500	15/700
% of BTO high school seniors who return as youth mentors	65%	70%	75%
% of youth who can recognize and ask for help around mental health challenges	93%	95%	97%
% of youth who have increased confidence sharing their creative expressions publicly at end of program	100%	100%	100%
<b>Organizational Health/Capacity-Building</b>			
Number of full-time staff members	2.5	4	6
Number of community and coalition partners	5	10	15
Total Revenue	\$771,200	\$958,200	\$1,182,200

## Social Impact

Beat The Odds employs 70 youth annually—mainly from Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park—in their school year and summer youth programming. In the past three years, BTO has provided over \$300,000 in youth salaries, adding to Boston's economy and ensuring financial stability for youth.

Below are the indicators BTO will track to ensure progress and continued impact.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
% of high school seniors who apply to post secondary education	100%	100%
% of youth who can identify at least one adult mentor in their life and have an increased sense of belonging	96%	99%
% of youth who self-report increase in confidence	100%	100%
% of youth who feel better prepared to navigate adulthood	78%	90%
% of youth who experience a decrease in feelings of loneliness	84%	91%
% of youth who can identify the signs of unhealthy relationships	85%	95%