

Surveying the Boston Community:

Assessing the Impact of the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians

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Introduction

Since its inception in 1998, the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians (MONB), through neighborhood meetings and forums with community leaders, has worked closely with the diverse communities to identify key issues and develop collaborative strategies to address them.

In 2006, MONB developed and conducted an electronic survey through the widely used, free version Zoomerang.. The Survey served two purposes: (1) to identify current issues facing these communities; and (2) to evaluate MONB's role and its programs' effectiveness.

Questions in the Survey were divided into six sections:

- 1) Organization profile of surveyed participant
- 2) Identifying key issues facing New Bostonians
- 3) MONB's role as a City department
- 4) MONB as a catalyst
- 5) Evaluation of current MONB programs and initiatives
- 6) MONB's proposed new initiatives:
 - a. New Bostonians Orientation program
 - b. Upgrade website
 - c. 2007 New Bostonian Summit

The Survey consisted of 72 questions. However, since not every participant answered all the questions, small discrepancies exist between the total number of people who answered a particular question, and the percentage of people who returned the Survey. The questions in the Survey were formatted in various ways: open-ended, yes/no, ratings, and comments.

800 surveys were sent out electronically to community -based organizations and individuals with MONB and immigrant communities network. 126 were returned (15.75%), which constituted a high response rate for electronic surveys. This report is a summary of the results obtained.

- 126 people took the Zoomerang survey
- About $\frac{3}{4}$ were organizations and $\frac{1}{4}$ were individuals.

Organizational Profile of Surveyed Participants

Over 95% of the respondents stated that they were very familiar or somewhat familiar with MONB. More than half were community-based organizations (CBOs) while others consisted of private businesses, education institutions, government, private philanthropy, and others. All CBOs offered one or a combination of services such as: advocacy, ESOL classes, family services, health care, housing, job training etc. The primary constituents served by the organizations consisted of adults, immigrants, families, children, elderly, youth, and others

The immigrants served by the agencies came from various countries such as China, Haiti, Vietnam, Cape Verde , Dominican Republic , Brazil , Colombia , El Salvador , Somalia , Russia , Jamaica , Ireland , Africa , Ethiopia, Puerto Rico , Morocco , Albania . Other ethnicities/immigrants served were identified as: Arabian, Cambodian, Eritrean, South Asian (Indian and Bangladeshi), Italian, Japanese, Korean, Liberian, Mexican, Nigerian, Peruvian, Filipinos, Sierra Leonian, Latinos, Sudanese, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and Venezuelan.

Number of organizations that serve following ethnicities/immigrants:

Table 4

Chinese	50	Salvadorian	28	Puerto Rican	7
Haitian	44	Somali	27	Maroccan	5
Vietnamese	42	Russian	24	Albanian	5
Cape Verdean	36	Jamaican	20		
Dominican	36	Irish	14		
Brazilian	30	African	12		
Colombian	29	Ethiopian	9		

*Immigrant groups not listed in Table 4 included: Arabian, South Asian (Indian and Bangladeshi), Cambodian, Eritean, Filipinos, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Liberian, Moroccan, Mexican, Nigerian, Peruvian, Sierra Leonian, Spanish, Sudanese, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and Venezuelan.

Identifying key issues facing New Bostonians

In this section, we asked participants to rank issues by their importance. **86.50%** responded that the need for **ESOL classes** as a “very important” issue with **information on immigration laws and relationships with authorities (80.16%)** and **training, retraining and obtaining jobs (80.00%)** ranked next in the “very important” category. This was followed by the **need for information and access to city services (79.36%)**. Table 5 summarizes the results provided by the respondents.

Table 5

	Number of respondents (#) and percentage (%)					
	Very important		Important		Not important	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. Need more <u>ESOL</u> classes:	109	(86.50)	13	(10.40)	2	(1.60)
2. Need information and access to city services:	100	(79.36)	26	(20.63)	0	(0)
3. Information on <u>immigration</u> laws and relationships with authorities:	100	(80.16)	23	(19.05)	1	(0.79)
4. Training, retraining and obtaining <u>jobs</u> :	100	(80.00)	30	(19.20)	1	(0.80)
5. Access, understanding and navigating <u>health care</u> :	95	(75.39)	31	(24.61)	0	(0)
6. Involve parents in <u>children’s education</u> and culturally competent school environment:	91	(73.39)	30	(24.19)	1	(0.81)
7. <u>Violence</u> - gun and domestic violence:	82	(68.85)	34	(27.86)	4	(3.27)
8. <u>Housing</u> :	76	(63.93)	44	(36.09)	0	(0)
9. Lack of <u>youth programs</u> :	69	(58.19)	47	(38.52)	4	(3.27)
10. Need assistance to become <u>citizens</u> :	65	(53.65)	52	(42.27)	4	(3.25)
11. Rise in <u>backlash</u> and increasing discrimination:	64	(51.02)	52	(41.60)	9	(7.20)
12. <u>Civic participation</u> and voting:	52	(62.40)	27	(36.00)	1	(1.60)

When participants were asked to prioritize the issues, the issues that garnered the most votes are: **ESOL (58%)**, **jobs (42%)**, **housing (29%)**, **immigration laws (29%)**, **healthcare (28%)**, and **education (20%)**.

Table 6

Issue	Primary Importance	Secondary Importance	Tertiary Importance	Total # %
City Service Info.	10	7	7	24 (19)
ESOL	46	17	10	73 (58)
Immigration Laws	14	11	11	36 (29)
Discrimination	2	6	3	11 (9)
Jobs	13	26	14	53 (42)
Education	6	11	8	25 (20)
Healthcare	5	13	17	35 (28)
Youth Programming	5	6	8	19 (15)
Naturalization	2	5	5	12 (10)
Civic Participation	2	4	5	11 (9)
Housing	5	11	21	37 (29)
Violence	5	2	7	14 (11)
Other	7	2	3	12 (10)

When the issues were scored by the Cardinal Method as shown in Table 3 (each issue is weighed 3 points if its of primary importance, 2 points if secondary and 1 point if tertiary), **ESOL** and **jobs** emerged as the two most important followed by **immigration laws**, **housing**, and **healthcare**.

Table 7

Issue	Primary Importance	Secondary Importance	Tertiary Importance	Total
City Service Info.	10x3=30	7x2=14	7x1= 7	51
ESOL	46x3=138	17x2=34	10x1=10	182
Immigration Laws	14x3=42	11x2=22	11x1=11	75
Discrimination	2x3=6	6x2=12	3x1=3	21
Jobs	13x3=39	26x2=52	14x1=14	105
Education	6x3=18	11x2=22	8x1=8	48
Healthcare	5x3=15	13x2=26	17x1=17	58
Youth Programming	5x3=15	6x2=12	8x1=8	35
Naturalization	2x3=6	5x2=10	5x1=5	21
Civic Participation	2x3=6	4x2=8	5x1=5	19
Housing	5x3=15	11x2=22	21x1=21	58
Violence	5x3=15	2x2=4	7x1=7	26
Other	7x3=21	2x2=4	3x1=3	28

MONB's Role as a City Department

In the evaluation of MONB's role, the areas identified as very useful to New Bostonians are: "bringing attention to key issues" (85%), "facilitate access to community services" (70%), and "update in immigration laws" (69%).

Table 8

	Number of respondents (#) and percentage (%)					
	Very useful		Somewhat useful		Not Useful	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
• Facilitate <u>access to city services</u> , cultural Competency and respectful services	81	(68.06)	37	(31.09)	1	(0.84)
• Facilitate <u>access to community services</u>	83	(69.74)	35	(29.41)	0	(0)
• Bring <u>attention to key issues</u> (ESOL, immigration, housing, civic participation)	102	(85)	11	(13.33)	0	(0)
• Ensure a <u>flow of pertinent information</u>	79	(65.83)	39	(32.5)	0	(0)
• Update in <u>immigration laws</u> , relationships, And forums	83	(68.59)	35	(28.92)	0	(0)
• Increase <u>civic/voter</u> participation	80	(67.22)	37	(31.09)	0	(0)
• Facilitate access and relationships With <u>city departments</u>	71	(59.66)	46	(38.65)	0	(0)

MONB as a Catalyst

Most respondents (90.%) affirms MONB's role as a catalyst versus service provider, As a catalyst, 82.92% respondents would like MONB to support organizations by facilitating technical assistance and collaborations. The most important type of technical assistance identified were: **organizational capacity building (58%), fundraising (56%), and program development (51%)**. In building collaborative partnerships, the most important were: **collaborations with providers working on the same issues (60%), network with business partners (54%) and with funders (51%)**. Respondents also indicated that they would like to partner with MONB on **issue working groups (51%), collaborate on projects (62%), and to be informed on MONB activities (63%)**.

MONB should primarily be:

	Number of respondents (#) and percentage (%)	
	#	%
• Provider of services	12	(9.76)
• Catalyst/Facilitator	79	(90.24%)

As a catalyst, MONB should support organizations with facilitating technical assistance:

	Number of respondents(#) and percentage (%)	
	#	%
• Yes	103	(82.92)
• No	23	(18.69)

Technical assistance provided:

Table 9

	Number of respondents (#) and percentage (%)	
	#	%
▪ Organizational <u>capacity building</u>	73	58%
▪ Leadership Development	63	50%
▪ Fundraising	71	56%
▪ Staff development and retention	30	24%
▪ <u>Program development</u>	64	51%
▪ Other	15	12%

As a catalyst, MONB should facilitate:

Table 10

	Number of respondents (#) and percentage (%)	
	#	%
▪ Facilitate <u>collaborations</u> on same issues	75	60%
▪ Collaboration with non-immigrant organizations	47	37%
▪ <u>With Business</u>	68	54%
▪ <u>Funders</u>	64	51%
▪ City department and other government agencies	56	44%
▪ Highlight immigrant contributions	36	29%
▪ Other	4	3%

Contact/Working with MONB:

• <u>Issue working groups</u>	64	51%
• Surveys	51	40%
• <u>Collaborate on projects</u>	78	62%
• Sponsoring events	40	32%
• <u>E-mail list and newsletter</u>	79	63%
• Other	7	6%

Evaluating MONB Programs

In this section, the respondents were asked to assess the usefulness of current MONB programs to them individually as well as to the immigrant communities that they served. The four most useful ones identified are: **Cultural Awareness Series (88%)**, **English for New Bostonians (ENB) ESOL classes (83%)**, **Demographic Report (79%)**, and the **Guide to City Services (78%)**. The Cultural Awareness Series features various cultures to City Hall employees to increase cultural competency; the 2005 Demographic Report contains figures on the City of Boston's demographics, economic and labor contributions, English proficiency and educational attainment of immigrant population; ENB program offers immigrants with English classes; and the Guide to City Services, published in seven languages, provides information about City services.

Table 11

	Didn't use it, good idea		Used it, works		Used it, doesn't work		Un-necessary	
	Number of respondents (#) and percentage(%)		Number of respondents (#) and percentage(%)		Number of respondents (#) and percentage(%)		Number of respondents (#) and percentage(%)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
• Interpreter Pool	84	(69.42)	17	(14.05)	4	(3.03)	17	(14.05)
▪ Interpreter Equip.	87	(72.50)	26	(21.66)	5	(4.16)	2	(1.66)
▪ ESOL Directory	76	(63.86)	34	(28.57)	5	(4.2)	4	(3.36)
			Good Idea				Not useful	
			#	%			#	%
Cultural Awareness			111	(91.73)			10	(8.26)
			Very Useful		Somewhat Useful		Not Useful	
			#	%	#	%	#	%
▪ NBCD (New Bostonians Community Day)			63	(51.63)	47	(38.52)	12	(9.83)
▪ Constituents services			81	(65.85)	36	(29.27)	6	(4.87)
▪ <u>ENB</u>			104	(85.95)	14	(11.57)	3	(2.48)

▪ <u>Immigration Clinics</u>	90 (74.93)	25 (20.66)	6 (4.96)
▪ New Citizens reception	50 (43.10)	56 (48.27)	10 (8.62)
▪ <u>Demographic report</u>	99 (81.14)	20 (16.39)	3 (2.46)
▪ <u>Voter registration</u>	88 (75.86)	27(23.27)	1 (0.86)

Usefulness of the ListServ categories:

• List Serv in general	52 (41.01)	58 (51.33)	3 (2.65)
• <u>Job openings</u>	70 (61.40)	35 (30.70)	9 (7.89)
• Events	61 (53.04)	49 (42.6)	5 (4.34)
• Articles	51 (44.34)	58 (50.43)	6 (5.21)
• <u>City programs</u> announcement	68 (60.17)	38 (33.63)	7 (6/19)
• <u>Community events</u> And announcements	69 (60.52)	40 (35.08)	5 (4.38)
• Press releases	31 (27.19)	65 (51.01)	8 (7.01)
• Legislative information	61 (53.98)	46 (40.70)	6 (5.31)

MONB Publications:

• Newsletter	47	40.52)	59 (50.86)	10 (8.62)
• <u>Community Resource Directory</u>	89	(77.39)	25 (21.74)	1 (0.87)
• <u>Guide to City Services</u>	98	(82.35)	19 (15.96)	2 (1.68)
• MONB staff presence (meetings/events)	76	(65.51)	39 (33.62)	1 (0.86)

Community meetings:

	Very useful		Somewhat useful		Not useful	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
• <u>Meetings with Mayor</u>	75	(64.65)	38	(32.76)	3	(2.59)
• Posters/banners	57	(49.56)	51	(44.35)	7	(6.09)
• <u>Immigration forums</u>	72	(62.07)	41	(35.34)	3	(2.58)

New Initiatives

In the last section, the Survey also solicited feedback on new initiatives that MONB proposed. 66% of respondents saw the proposed New Bostonian Orientation Program that consists of neighborhood orientations to familiarize our constituents with community and City services as very useful. 71% saw the development of an informative and user-friendly MONB website very useful and are likely to use it. In addition, a high number of respondents, 74.36% (47% very likely and 34.19% likely) indicated that constituents would likely use the website.

	Very useful		Somewhat useful		Not useful	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
• NB Orientation	79	(66.39)	38	(31.93)	2	(1.68)
	Will use		Will not		Maybe	
• Updated website	86	(71.66)	10	(8.33)	24	(20)
	Very likely		Likely		Unlikely	
• Website constituent use	47	(40.17)	40	(34.19)	30	(25.64)

In addition, when survey respondents were asked to identify key issues within the New Bostonians communities that they would like to see addressed at the proposed New Bostonians Summit in November, the leading issue is **ESOL (26.9%)**, followed by **jobs (13.4%)**, **housing (10.3%)**, and **education (8.7%)**.

Table 12 below shows the proposed Summit issues by the number of votes.

Table 12

	Issues 1	Issues 2	Issue 3	Total
ESOL	23	9	2	34 (26.9%)
Jobs	9	6	2	17 (13.4%)
Housing	5	5	3	13 (10.3%)
Education	6	3	2	11 (8.7%)
Immigration	6	0	2	8 (6.3%)
Violence	0	2	6	8 (6.3%)
Youth	2	0	4	6 (4.7%)
Collaboration	5	0	1	6 (4.7%)
Health	2	4	2	8 (6.3%)
Mental Health	3	1	0	4 (3.1%)
Citizenship	1	3	0	4 (3.1%)
Voting/civic participation	0	0	4	4 (3.1%)

When the total number of votes were tabulated using the Cardinal Method, the results are as follows: **ESOL (70.6%), jobs (32.5%), housing (22%), and education (20.6%).**

Table 13 highlights the proposed issues by the Cardinal Method:

Table 13

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Total
ESOL	69	18	2	89 (70.6%)
Jobs	27	12	2	41 (32.5%)
Housing	15	10	3	28 (22.2%)
Education	18	6	2	26 (20.6%)
Immigration	18	0	2	20 (15.8%)
Violence	0	4	6	10 (7.9%)
Youth	6	0	4	10 (7.9%)
Collaboration	15	0	1	16 (12.6%)
Health	6	8	2	16 (12.6%)
Mental Health	9	2	0	11 (8.7%)
Citizenship	3	6	0	9 (7.1%)
Voting/civic participation	0	0	4	4 (3.1%)

As housing and education received very close number of votes, a group of diverse community leaders were asked to choose between the two as the third key issue to be addressed at the Summit. Education was chosen above housing for the following reasons: (1) The City is already focusing much attention and resources on housing; (2) the Mayor has set education and closing the achievement gap as one of the top priorities, and (3) not much attention has been focused on the education of young New Bostonians.

