

What is the project focus/overall goal?

The overall goal of this project is to analyze the budget of the City of Boston. In the analysis, we will try and understand how the budget is spread across various categories like departments and geography and showcase how it has changed over time. This analysis aims to provide valuable insights into the city's financial management and empower stakeholders to make better-informed decisions regarding city services and finances.

Why is this project important?

This project is important because it has the potential to have an impact on the lives of millions of people. This data-driven approach not only ensures efficient use of public funds but also engages citizens in the budgetary process, fostering trust in government and promoting informed governance practices.

This is what motivated our team to opt for this project. It will provide transparency and help demand accountability from the budget planners. By analyzing spending patterns across departments, budget categories, geography, and programs, we can make informed decisions, identify disparities, and evaluate program effectiveness.

What type of data will you collect or be analyzing?

We will be analyzing data about the way the city of Boston spends its annual budget, and how this has changed over time. The focus will be on per capita spending by: department, geography, program, and budget category. That is with the goals of analyzing and finding the impact of revenue shifts, socio-economic indicators, and funding sources.

Specifically, we will be collecting and analyzing two primary sets of data pertaining to the City of Boston's budget. The ****[Operating Budget Data](#)**** offers a comprehensive breakdown of annual expenditures, detailing allocations for various departments such as education, police, and housing, and encompassing costs for services and personnel like teachers and firefighters. Meanwhile, the ****[Capital Budget Data](#)**** sheds light on large-scale investments in the city's physical assets. It elaborates on funding sources, from bonds to grants, and provides explicit project descriptions and allocations.

We'll also be exploring the following data sources :

[Revenue data](#) - To understand how the revenue shifts impacted different departments, programs, geographies

[Economic Data](#) like [housing data](#)

[Socio-economic data](#) like [Social vulnerability index](#)

[Departmental budget data](#) to understand the division among departments better

What are the potential limitations of the project?

- Ethical considerations can limit access to certain data especially if it contains private or sensitive information
- There could be inconsistencies among how the budgets are recorded each year and this would impact the trends over time.

- It might be difficult to compare data during the years because of economic inflation/fluctuations
- Trends across different areas like operating vs city budget and various different departments might not emerge clearly through visualisations if they are haphazardly changing over the years

What are your next steps? Divide tasks amongst the team

The next steps are to explore the various data sources that we have available and identify how we can use them to work towards the project goals stated above. We will also be looking to identify other potential sources of data through help from the PM and other SME's that we can get access to.

The task for all team members is to get familiar with the data for the main problem and also explore the potential of at least one of the extension projects and determine if it is feasible.