

## 2025 BMRB/Dorchester Reporter CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section 1: BACKGROUND/PERSONAL

**1. What is your name, age, and neighborhood where you live?**

Alexandra Valdez 33 Hyde Park

**2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.**

- *Aside from being a full time mom, I'm the current Director of the Office of cultural affairs for the city of Boston, former Executive director of the Mayors office of Women's Advancement, former Director of Engagement for the City's Economic Mobility Lab, Former Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Coordinator and Citywide Latina Liaison, former Latina Liaison for Former City councilor Matt O'Malley*

**3. Please detail your educational background and achievements.**

*I am a proud alumni of Suffolk University where I earned a Masters in Public Administration. Prior to that, I attended Fitchburg State University and Massachusetts Bay Community College.*

*Associates in Communications from Massachusetts Bay Community College*

*BA in Communications/Political Science minor in International Studies Fitchburg State University*

**4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations, and political groups.**

*In addition to my work, I enjoy working in civic associations and organizations, I have served as the President of FUNDOARCU (Dominican Foundation of Arts and Culture) for the last 5 years. I am also currently a member of the Ward 18 Democratic Committee and the Advisory Council to the Boston Women's Foundation. Formerly, I served on the Ward 11 Democratic Committee, the Hyde Jackson Main Street Board, and the Board of Trustees of City on a Hill Charter School.*

**5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader?**

*From a very young age, I learned the value of community and the importance of service. At just 16, I began my engagement in government by volunteering with community organizations, participating in political forums, and leading youth groups. These experiences have taught me that effective leadership is rooted in passion and in listening with an open mind. Leading with both heart and humility ensures that the voices of those you serve are heard and that your actions truly reflect the needs of the community.*

**6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?**

The first accomplishment I'm most proud of is being Adonis's mother. Motherhood has taught me more than any professional role ever could - about patience, resilience, and the depth of love. It's given me a stronger sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of the importance of family.

Second, at a young age, I was honored to be appointed Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Women's Advancement in December 2020, becoming one of the youngest department heads under the Walsh Administration. In that role, I was able to lead meaningful initiatives that uplifted women and families throughout Boston.

Finally, I'm deeply proud of launching programs that create lasting impact. I led Boston's first-ever postpartum education and support group, and I also supported the development of the City of Boston Child Care Entrepreneur Fund, a program that began as a small pilot but grew to deliver child care providers across the city with both technical assistance and pandemic relief funding. These efforts not only strengthened our child care network but also helped sustain small businesses during an incredibly challenging time.

**7. When not on the campaign trail, how do you relax?**

When I'm not on the campaign trail, I love doing the little things that fill my cup, such as a bit of self-care, lots of family time, and embracing my inner foodie. I'm always up for trying a new restaurant, but I also find a special kind of calm in my own kitchen. Cooking is my happy place; it's where I can unwind, get creative, and serve up a little joy (with a side of good seasoning).

**1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?**

*I am a Democrat and would describe my political ideology as community centered and equity driven. I believe the government works best when it is inclusive, transparent, and focused on uplifting those whose voices are often unheard. My approach is rooted in service, collaboration, and creating policies that promote fairness, opportunity, and dignity for all.*

**2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.**

*One of my greatest political role models is Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress. Her courage to break barriers, speak truth to power, and stand unapologetically for her beliefs has always inspired me to lead with authenticity and conviction. I've lived by her slogan, "if they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."*

*I also deeply admire Michelle Obama, not only for her grace and intelligence, but for the way she used her platform to champion education, health, and the empowerment of women and girls. She embodies the idea that leadership is about service and creating opportunities for others.*

*Lastly, Ayanna Pressley has been a source of inspiration since my earliest days in public service. When I worked at the Boston City Council, I saw firsthand what policy rooted in the community looked like through her leadership. At such a young age, seeing another woman of color in a position of power and representation not only inspired me, it deepened my love for serving and reaffirmed my belief in the impact of inclusive leadership.*

**3. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston, especially for local races?**

To increase voter turnout in Boston, especially for local races, I would focus on both engagement and education. That means getting directly into communities, from hosting events in cultural centers to meeting with youth groups and senior organizations, to listening, connecting, and spark excitement about civic participation. Equally important is educating voters about the issues and the real impact local elections have on their daily lives. For example, when I've worked with youth groups in the past, we combined interactive workshops with mentorship programs to help young people see how their voices matter. By pairing passionate outreach with practical information and meeting people where they are at, we can ensure more Bostonians feel empowered, informed, and motivated to vote.

### Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

**1. What is your top priority if elected? How would you use your role as a city councillor to help address or accomplish it?**

My top priority if elected would be education, with a special focus on early education and bilingual programs. As a mother and a former English learner myself, I understand firsthand how critical these programs are for giving children a strong foundation and equal opportunity to succeed.

As a city councillor, I would use my role to advocate for increased resources, accessible programs, and community partnerships that support early learners and bilingual students. I would work to ensure that families have the tools, support, and opportunities they need, and that every child regardless of their background or zip code can thrive academically and socially. Education shapes our future, and I want to make sure every Boston child has the foundation they need to succeed.

**2. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.**

One city agency I see as in need of urgent reform is the Boston Public Schools system, particularly in how it serves early learners and English language learners. While there are many dedicated educators and staff doing incredible work, the system still faces challenges in accessibility, equity, and the resources available to students who need extra support.

If elected, I would work to streamline services, increase funding for bilingual and early education programs, and ensure accountability measures that prioritize student outcomes. My goal would be to create a system where every child, regardless of background or neighborhood, has access to high-quality education and the support they need to thrive.

**3. What is your position on residency requirements, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?**

As someone who has dedicated my career to public service, I believe that those who work for our city should also have the opportunity to live in our city. However, in order to make this expectation realistic, we must address the ongoing housing crisis and the affordability challenges that many Bostonians face. If we are asking municipal employees to reside in Boston, we must also create pathways to affordable housing, support first-time homebuyers, and ensure that city employees can find safe, accessible, and reasonably priced housing within the communities they serve. Residency requirements should go hand in hand with policies that make living in Boston achievable for those who dedicate their careers to serving it.

**4. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain.**

*I support a hybrid approach to the Boston School Committee, where a portion of members are elected and another portion are appointed. This structure allows for community representation through elections while ensuring that there is also a clear pathway for qualified individuals to be appointed based on expertise. That said, I believe the ultimate decision should reflect the voice of the community. As your next city councillor I will work to ensure that our school system is accountable, effective, and representative of the families it serves.*

**5. Boston is facing a housing shortage that is impacting the affordability of living in the city. Separately, the Wu administration is pursuing zoning reform to spur development in certain areas and wants to see a return of the city's population to 800,000. What is your assessment of this target and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods?**

*The city of Boston urgently needs more housing in order to make discussions about population growth and affordability meaningful. Currently, housing prices are skyrocketing because supply cannot keep up with demand. To address this, we must invest in all types of mixed-income housing from affordable and middle-income units to market-rate developments to ensure that new growth benefits everyone.*

*At the same time, we must be intentional about protecting neighborhoods from displacement. That means implementing strong tenant protections, supporting community land trusts, and prioritizing housing developments that include deeply affordable units. My office would focus on balancing growth with equity, ensuring that Boston can expand its population while keeping long-time residents and*

*families in the communities they call home.*

**6. Do you support the City's current Inclusionary Zoning policy, which was [revised](#) in 2023? If not, what changes would you make?**

*I support the spirit of Boston's Inclusionary Zoning policy, which aims to create more affordable housing as the city grows. However, I believe we must strengthen its impact to ensure it truly serves families and residents in need. This could include increasing the percentage of affordable units required in new developments, expanding the range of income levels served, and implementing stronger oversight to make sure commitments are met. My goal is to keep housing policy family and people centered, creating diverse, inclusive neighborhoods where residents of all backgrounds can thrive and long-term families can stay in the communities they call home.*

**7. What is your position on rent control?**

*I support pursuing state legislation that would allow Boston to adopt a rent stabilization policy. This policy would include mandatory limits on rent increases and require just cause for evictions, with exemptions for owner-occupied landlords. Rent stabilization is a critical tool to protect working families, seniors, and communities of color from displacement while maintaining a fair rental market.*

*I would advocate for this legislation by building coalitions with tenant organizations, housing advocates, and community leaders, presenting data on rising rents and displacement, and working with state legislators to craft a balanced and equitable policy. My goal is to ensure that housing remains accessible, stable, and family-centered, so all Bostonians have the opportunity to thrive in their communities.*

**8. What is your assessment of the Wu administration's overall performance? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.**

*I would give the Wu administration a B-. There have been important accomplishments, including efforts to modernize city services and invest in economic development, but there remain significant challenges in areas like housing affordability, community engagement, and equity in city programs. My assessment reflects both the progress made and the opportunities for growth,*

which I hope to address as a city councillor by ensuring policies are inclusive, responsive, and centered on the needs of residents.

**9. The August 2024 closure of Carney Hospital left a huge hole in the city's public health sector. What would you do as a city councillor to address this problem and what is your position on how the Dorchester campus of Carney Hospital should be re-purposed or re-developed?**

As a city councillor, I would advocate for immediate solutions to ensure residents continue to have access to essential medical services, including partnerships with nearby hospitals, urgent care centers, and community health clinics.

Regarding the Dorchester campus, I believe any re-purposing or redevelopment must prioritize the health and well-being of the community. Ideally, the site should continue to serve as a hub for healthcare services, with a focus on maternal health, early education, and preventive care, while also exploring opportunities for job training programs in the health sciences. This approach would ensure the campus remains a vital, accessible resource for residents while supporting workforce development and long-term community well-being.

**10. What are your plans to address traffic congestion, commuter safety and transportation needs? Please discuss bike lanes as part of your answer.**

*We must create transportation plans that work for everyone, not just a select few, and the foundation of that work is listening to the community. Every neighborhood in Boston has unique needs, and one-size-fits-all solutions are no longer acceptable. That's why I would advocate for neighborhood-specific transportation plans that address traffic congestion, commuter safety, and overall accessibility.*

*When creating bike lanes, it's essential to assess each neighborhood's unique cultural landscape and infrastructure to determine whether and how bike lanes make sense. Streets should be designed to enhance mobility and safety for cyclists, pedestrians, drivers, and local businesses alike.*

*Additionally, I would work with state legislation to expand more free buses in our neighborhoods and address transit dead zones, ensuring that all residents have reliable, affordable, and safe transportation options. By combining community input, thoughtful planning, and strategic partnerships, we can build a transportation system that is efficient, equitable, and safe for all Bostonians.*

**11.How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?**

I approach gun violence as both a public safety and community issue. Addressing it requires prevention, intervention, and collaboration. I would work to invest in youth programs, mentorship, and job training opportunities, particularly in neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence, to provide alternatives and pathways to success.

At the same time, I would support law enforcement strategies that are targeted, equitable, and community-informed, ensuring that safety measures do not disproportionately impact residents while still reducing crime. Collaboration with local organizations, schools, and health providers is essential to address the root causes of violence, including trauma, poverty, and lack of opportunity.

My goal as a city councillor would be to create safer neighborhoods while investing in community-based solutions, ensuring that residents feel both protected and empowered in their communities.

**12.How would you confront the drug epidemic, safety, and sanitation issues affecting residents near Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard?**

We must approach the crisis at Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard with a people-first mindset, recognizing that at its core, this is a public health and mental health issue. That means prioritizing access to treatment, recovery services, housing, and wraparound support for individuals struggling with addiction, rather than relying solely on punitive measures.

This cannot be viewed as just Boston's problem. The challenges we see at Mass and Cass reflect a regional crisis that requires regional solutions. I would work to hold other cities accountable and ensure that all municipalities contribute resources, services, and support just as Boston has been doing.

Addressing safety and sanitation must happen in tandem with expanding outreach, improving coordination between service providers, and ensuring that our approach is rooted in dignity, compassion, and long-term recovery.

**13.According to DESE's most recent data, 40.4% of Boston's public schools were classified as 'requiring assistance or intervention. In June 2022, Boston Public Schools entered into an agreement with the state**



**to make improvements to the state of the Boston Public Schools. As the agreement expired in June, how would you work to ensure continued accountability for the City's schools, close achievement gaps and ensure that all BPS students receive a quality education?**

*Our kids are the future, and as a mom, this issue is deeply personal to me. From early education through high school, every student in Boston deserves the opportunity to learn, thrive, and succeed. I would work to ensure continued accountability for Boston Public Schools by pushing for transparent progress reporting and clear, measurable benchmarks, such as:*

- *Reducing the percentage of schools requiring intervention by at least 10% within three years*
- *Increasing bilingual program enrollment and success rates for English language learners*
- *Expanding early education seats to ensure every Boston child has access to high-quality pre-K*

*Closing achievement gaps also means investing in early education, expanding bilingual and culturally responsive programs, and ensuring equitable access to resources across all schools. A key part of this is strengthening and expanding the Family Liaison Program so every school has multilingual, culturally competent liaisons who can connect parents to resources, translate important information, and help families advocate for their children's education.*

*I would also propose annual public reports on student outcomes, teacher retention, and resource equity, so families can track progress and hold the district accountable.*

*Finally, we must strengthen family engagement by creating school-based Family Advisory Councils in every neighborhood, because parents and caregivers are essential partners in a child's education.*

*I would collaborate with educators, students, and families to make sure that every BPS student regardless of their neighborhood, background, or learning needs receives a high-quality, supportive, and equitable education.*

**14.81.6% of BPS students are classified as high needs, compared to 55.8% at the state level. Do you believe that BPS is adequately serving high needs students, including English language learners and special education students, and if not, what can be done to improve their approach?**

As a former English learner, I know first hand that we need more targeted support

for our high-needs students. While BPS has made important strides in expanding bilingual programming, too many English language learners and students with special needs are still not receiving the resources, staffing, and tailored instruction they deserve. We must expand bilingual and dual language programs, increase the number of specialized support staff such as ESL teachers, special education aides, and speech/language therapists, and fully implement and expand the Family Liaison Program so that every high needs student's family has a dedicated contact in multiple languages. Strengthening teacher training in culturally responsive and differentiated instruction is essential to better meet diverse student needs, alongside clear benchmarks such as ensuring every school has at least one full-time bilingual family liaison within 18 months, increasing graduation rates for English learners and special education students by 10% within four years, and reducing IEP compliance violations by 25% in three years. All of our students, especially those with the highest needs deserve an equitable, high-quality education, and we cannot close the achievement gap without closing the support gap.

**15. Most of Boston's revenues come from property taxes, and robust new growth in recent years has enabled substantial budgetary increases, an average of 5.4% over the last decade. However, new growth in FY25 was \$90.5M, 25.7% less than FY24, and a slowdown in new construction in the city may impact future proceeds from the new growth that drives the City's budget.**

How will you approach these budget challenges and balance the needs of residents and commercial property owners?

*Boston's slowing revenue growth is a clear signal that we need to approach our budget with both creativity and discipline. My priority would be to ensure that essential services, particularly those impacting our most vulnerable residents remain fully funded, while also looking for ways to make city government more efficient. For example, the city could audit and streamline underutilized contracts and city-owned properties to reduce costs and generate additional revenue without raising taxes. We should also pursue new revenue streams such as strategic public-private partnerships and advocate for state and federal funding for critical infrastructure and housing projects. At the same time, we must support a balanced approach to development that encourages responsible growth, keeps commercial property owners engaged in our city's economic future, and avoids placing additional burdens on working families. By centering the budget on people-first priorities and investing in areas that drive long term growth like housing, workforce development, and neighborhood revitalization we can weather slower revenue growth without sacrificing Boston's progress.*

Thank you for participating in the Boston Municipal Research Bureau/Dorchester Reporter questionnaire. Please send the completed document as a PDF or WordDoc to [dhalky@bmr.org](mailto:dhalky@bmr.org) by Friday, Aug. 15, 2025