LIFE SCIENCE LABS IN BOSTON

Development and Market Trends

September 2026

City of Boston
RESEARCH DIVISION

City of Boston

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 LAB DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

- Permit and approval activity has cooled from levels seen two to four years ago.
- Of the 19 million sq ft of lab space in the pipeline, only ~2 million sq ft have been permitted.

2 LAB MARKET

- Lab vacancy rates have continued to climb since 2021.
- In Boston, lab inventory has remained relatively unchanged in terms of occupied square footage, while life sciences layoffs have slowed.

3 LAB FUNDING

- VC funding increased year over year but has yet to return to its 2021 peak.
- Following separate court rulings, the majority of the NIH funding that had been rescinded has been restored.

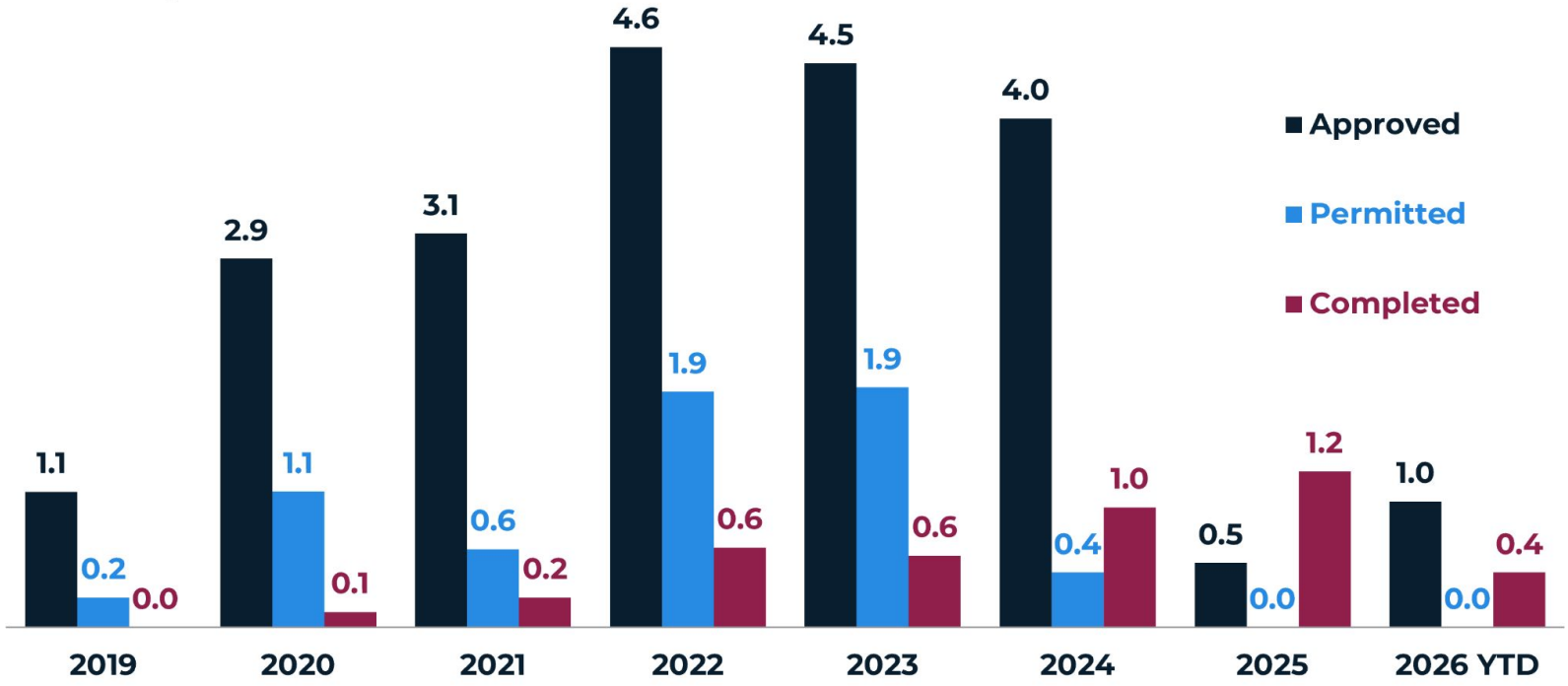
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RESEARCH LAB DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

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Around 1 million square feet of lab space was approved by the BPDA Board in the first half of 2026, double the amount approved in 2025

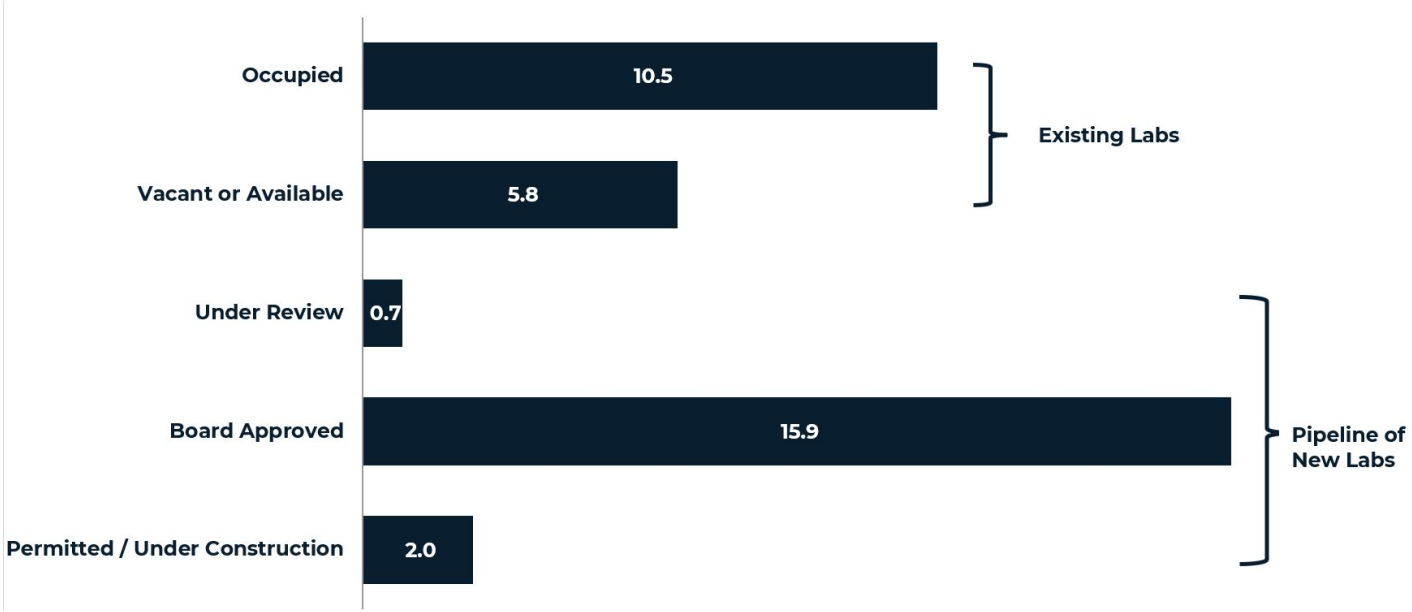
Net Square Feet (millions) Approved, Permitted, & Completed by Year, 2019-July 2026



Source: Jan-July 2026, City of Boston Development Review Planning Department Development Database, City of Boston Research Analysis.

15.9 million square feet of lab space in Boston is Board-approved, but not yet under construction

Life sciences lab space in Boston, in millions of sq. feet, July 2026



Source: CBRE Q2 2026 existing inventory and City of Boston Development Review database as of July 2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

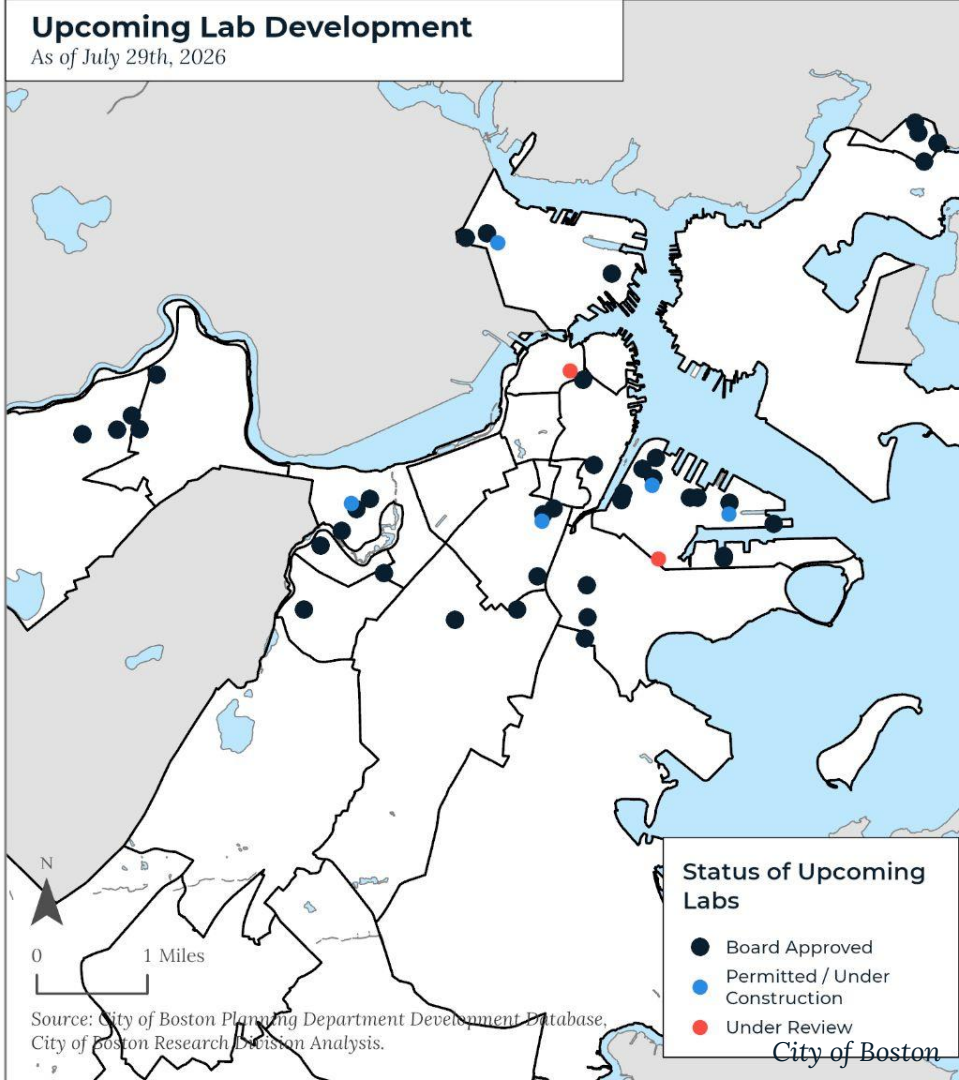
Upcoming lab projects:

2 under review

40 board approved

5 permitted/under construction

Source: City of Boston Planning Department Development Database, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.



Large Boston life science projects by development status

Large life science projects (based on research lab sq. feet) in Boston, by development status, July 2026

UNDER REVIEW	BOARD APPROVED	COMPLETED IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS
Reserved Channel Development	Fenway Corners (West)	NEXUS at the Allston Innovation Corridor
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	Exchange South End	
Fenway Center - Parcel 7 Air Rights	66 Cambridge St	109 Brookline Avenue
Seaport - Block N	Parcel X - 310 Northern Avenue	
10 Stack Street	Longwood Place Phase One	Harvard Enterprise Research Campus (ERC) Phase A
	776 Summer Street Phase 2	

Source: City of Boston Planning Department Development Database, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

1.8 million sq ft of lab space is currently under construction in East Cambridge - 100% pre-leased

Large life science projects (based on research lab sq. feet) under construction in Cambridge, July 2026

PERMITTED/UNDER CONSTRUCTION			
OWNER	**ADDRESS**	**SIZE**	**EXPECTED DELIVERY**
BioMed Realty	585 Kendall Street	615,000 sq ft	2026 Q3
Boston Properties	Kendall Center (290 Binney)	570,000 sq ft	2026 Q3
MITIMCo/ BioMed Realty	75 Broadway (Kendall Common)	580,000 sq ft	2028

Source: CBRE, City of Boston Research Division Analysis; https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2026/03/23/815-somerville-ave-extension.html

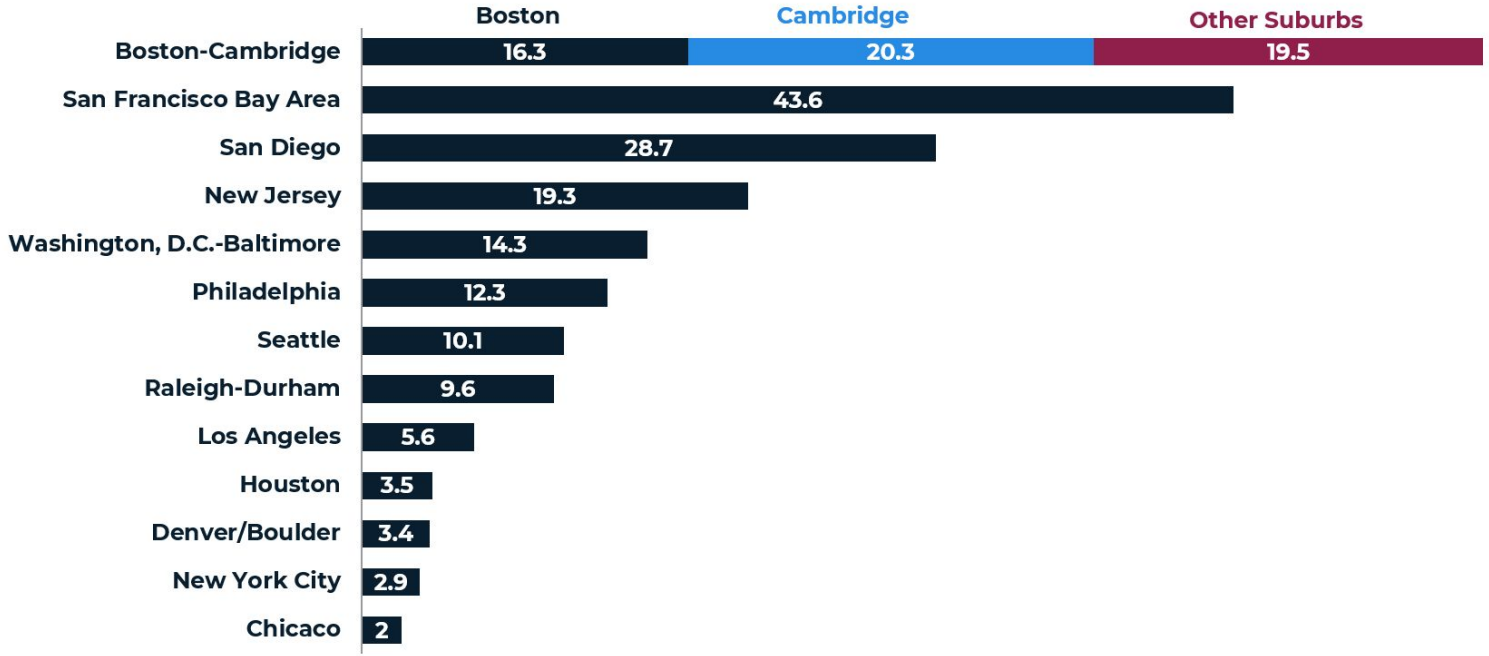
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RESEARCH LAB MARKET

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Greater Boston, including Cambridge and other suburbs, is the metro with the largest square footage of life science labs, followed by the San Francisco Bay Area

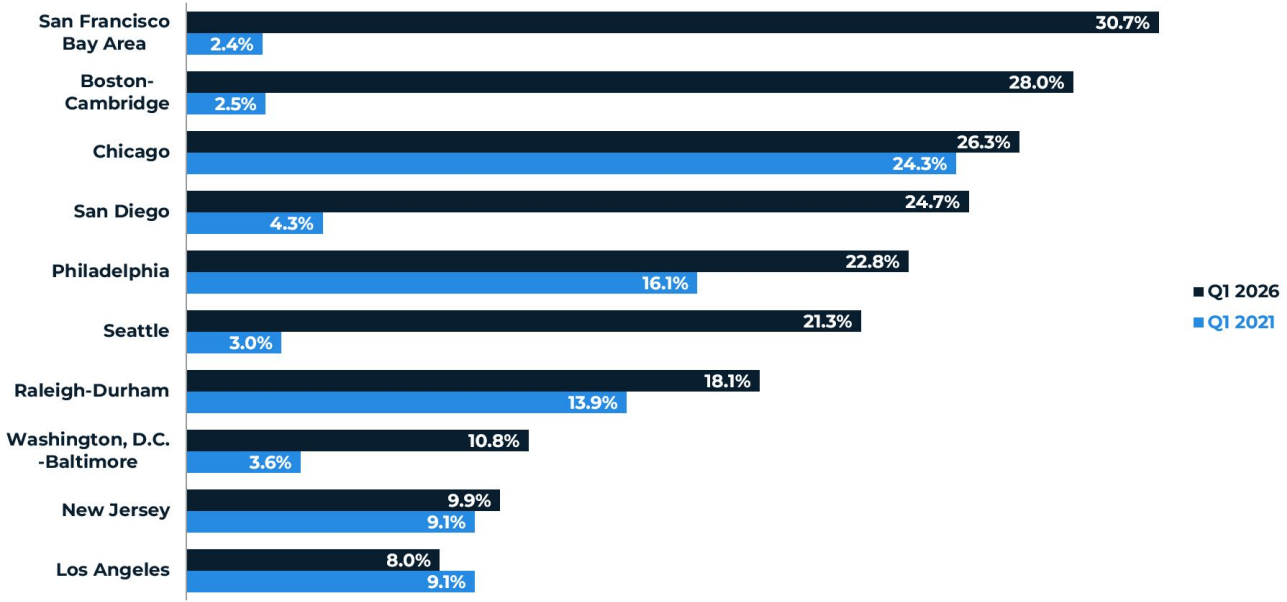
Total square footage of life science lab space, in millions, Q1 2026



Source: CBRE Research, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

Life Science lab vacancy rates increased dramatically in most markets from 2021 to 2026

Lab Vacancy Rates by Metro, Q1 2021 and Q1 2026



Boston-Cambridge vacancy increased by 25.5 percentage points, from 2.5% to 28%

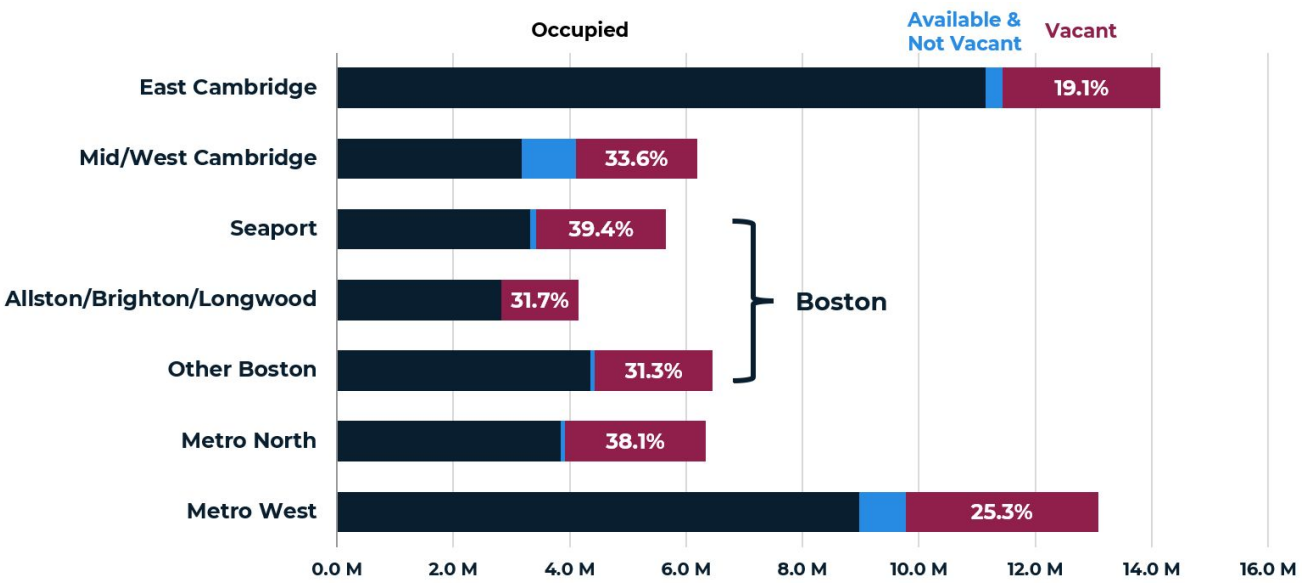
San Francisco Bay area has the highest lab vacancy rates at 30.7%

Only Los Angeles saw a decline in vacancy

Source: CBRE Research Q1 2021 & Q1 2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

In Q2 2026, East Cambridge (which includes Kendall Square) dominated the Greater Boston lab market with over 14 million square feet of inventory, and the lowest submarket vacancy rate

CBRE Total lab inventory in Greater Boston area, in millions of sq. feet, Q2 2026



Available space is space that is being marketed for future occupancy, whether it is currently occupied or vacant.

Vacant space is physically vacant or immediately available.

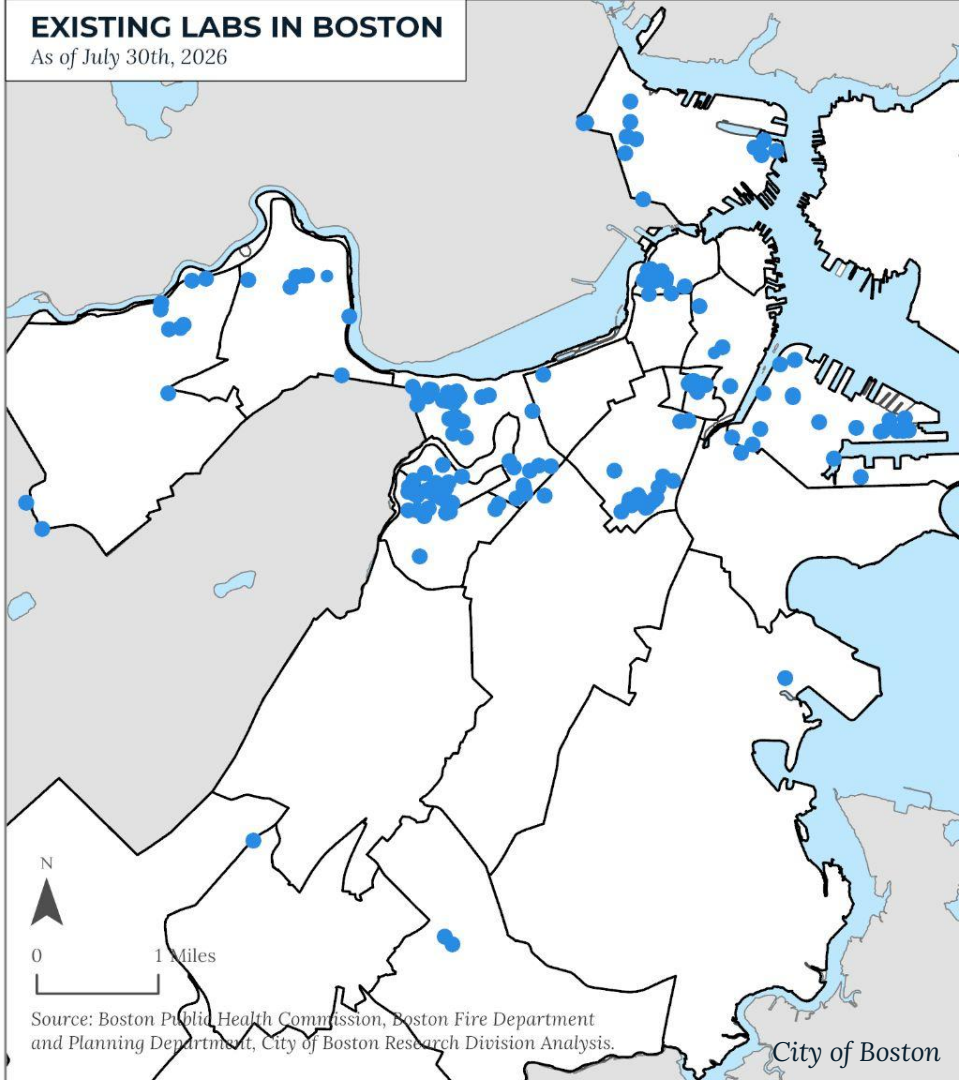
The Seaport has the highest vacancy rate across all submarkets at nearly 40%.

Note: "Other Boston" in this chart includes Fenway/Kenmore Square, Charlestown/East Boston, Dorchester/South Boston, North station/Waterfront and "other" Boston neighborhoods not listed above. Greater Downtown Boston is contained within North Station/Waterfront and Other Boston categories.
Source: CBRE Research Q2 2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

Existing labs in Boston are concentrated in Fenway/Longwood and Greater Downtown

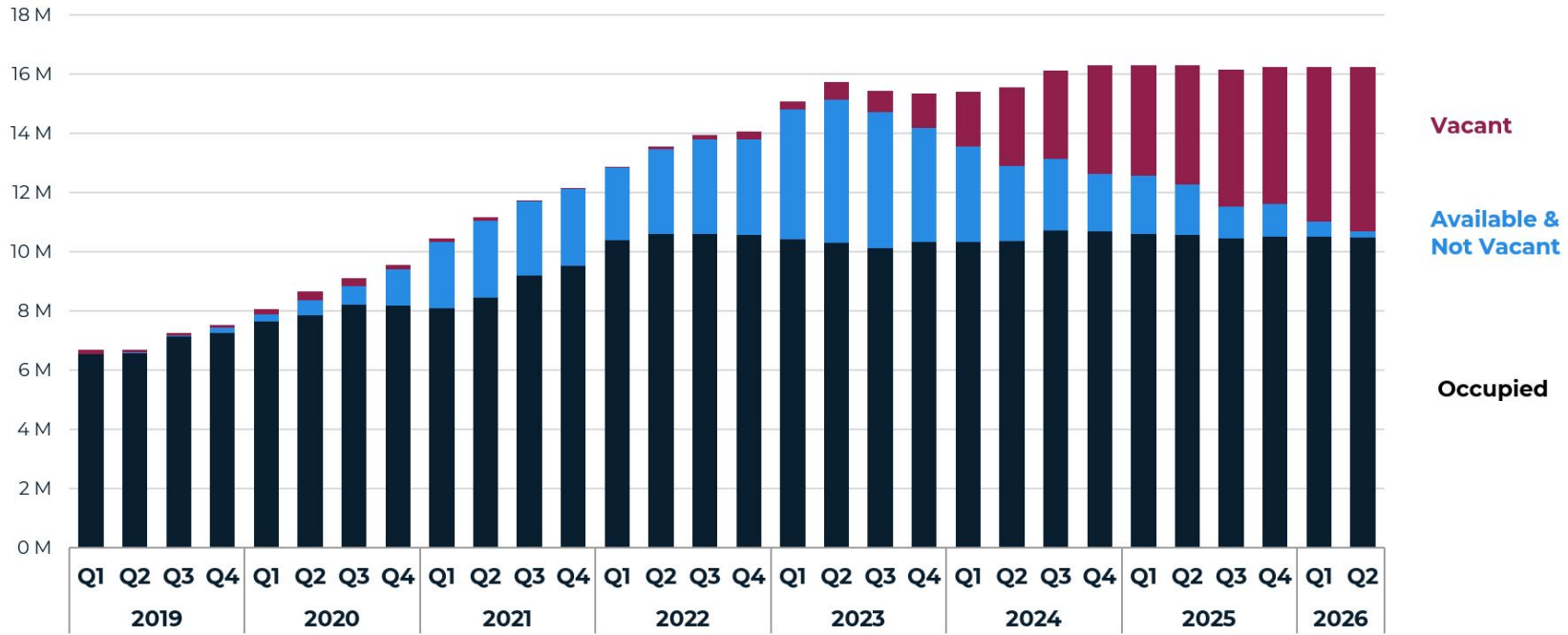
Since July 1, 2025, 4 new lab buildings have been completed

Source: Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Fire Department, and Planning Department, City of Boston Research Division Analysis



Boston's occupied commercial lab inventory has been steady over the past three years while vacant space has increased

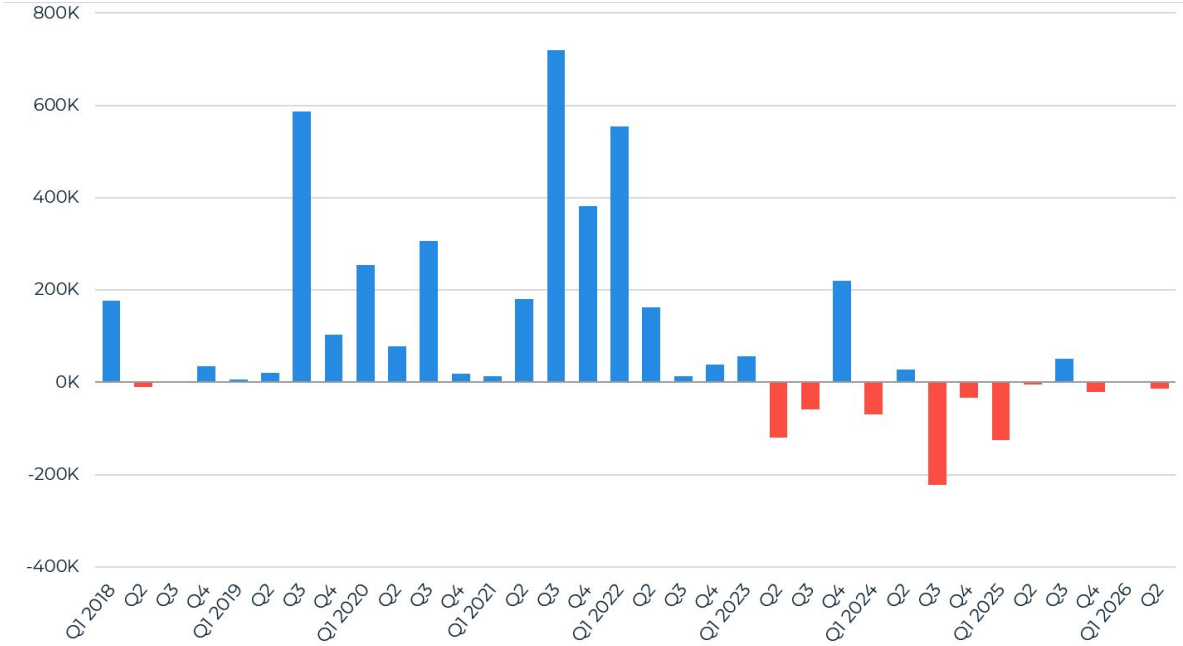
Total commercial lab inventory in Boston, in millions of sq. feet, 2019-2026



Source: CBRE Research, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

Lab space absorption in the City of Boston in Q2 2026 remained slightly negative

Historical quarterly absorption in Boston, in thousands of sq. feet, 2018-2026*



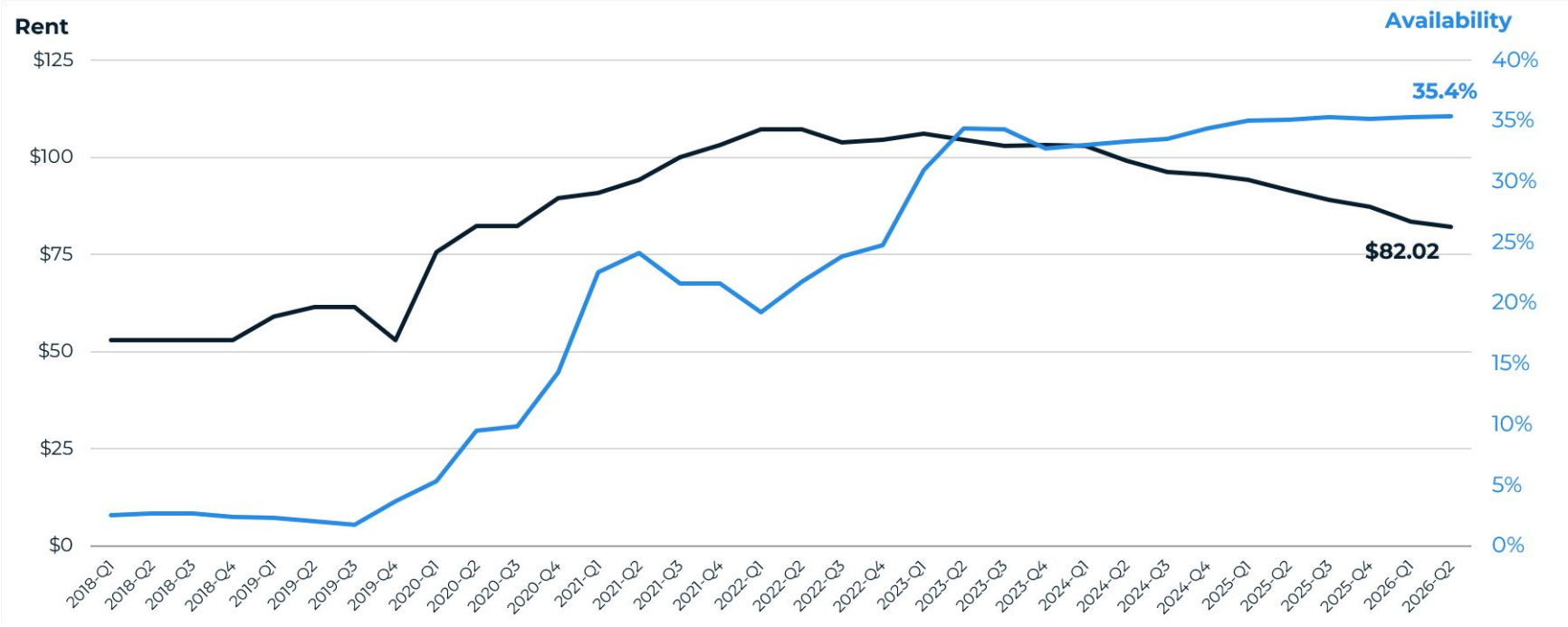
Boston recorded -13.4K sq ft of net absorption in Q2 2026, all within the Seaport submarket, while Cambridge's lab market posted 194K sq ft of positive absorption.

Gains in Cambridge, driven by AbbVie's lease renewal and Inari's sublease, offset losses in Metro West (-133K sq ft) and Metro North (-43K sq ft).

Source: CBRE Research, City of Boston Research Division Analysis
Note: Net Absoprtion is a measure of how much existing lab space is newly occupied in a quarter against how much space is newly vacated.*

Boston labs have experienced consistently high availability rates—over 30%—alongside declining rents over the past two years

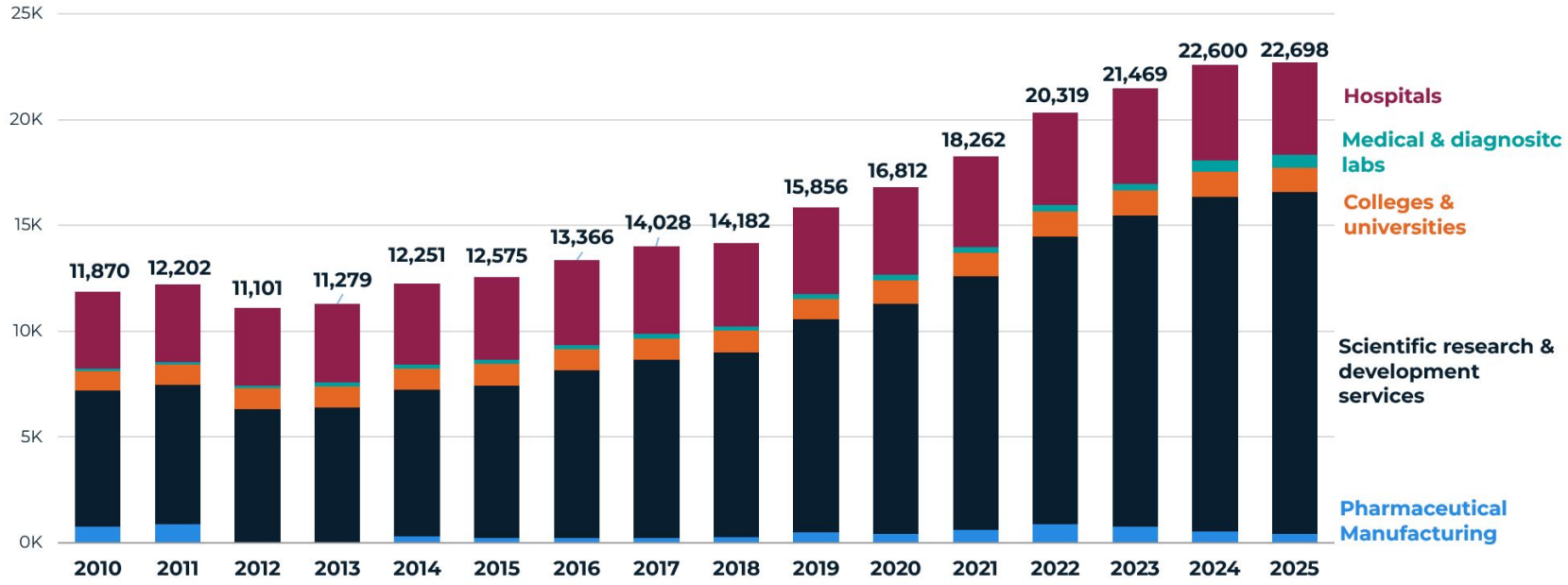
Boston average asking rent per square foot and availability rate, 2018-2026



Source: CBRE Research, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

Boston's life science employment grew at a slower pace compared to past years, showing only a slight increase over 2024

Life sciences payroll employment in Boston by sub-category, 2010-2025

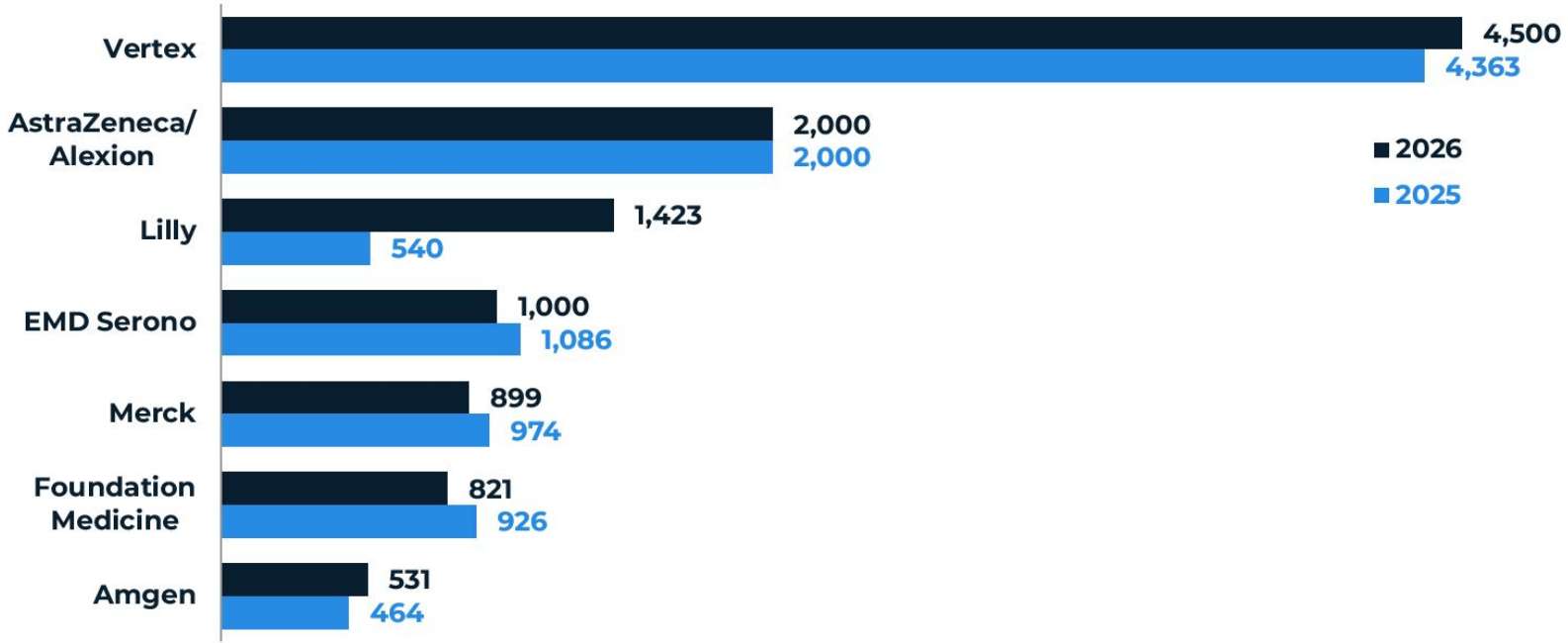


Note: To estimate life sciences employment, the employment for relevant NAICS codes is multiplied by the estimated proportion of workers that specialize in life sciences according to MassBio's definition.

Source: Massachusetts EOLWD, Employment & Wages (ES-202), City of Boston Research Division Analysis

Despite a slowdown of citywide life science employment, some of Boston's largest biopharma employers increased headcount

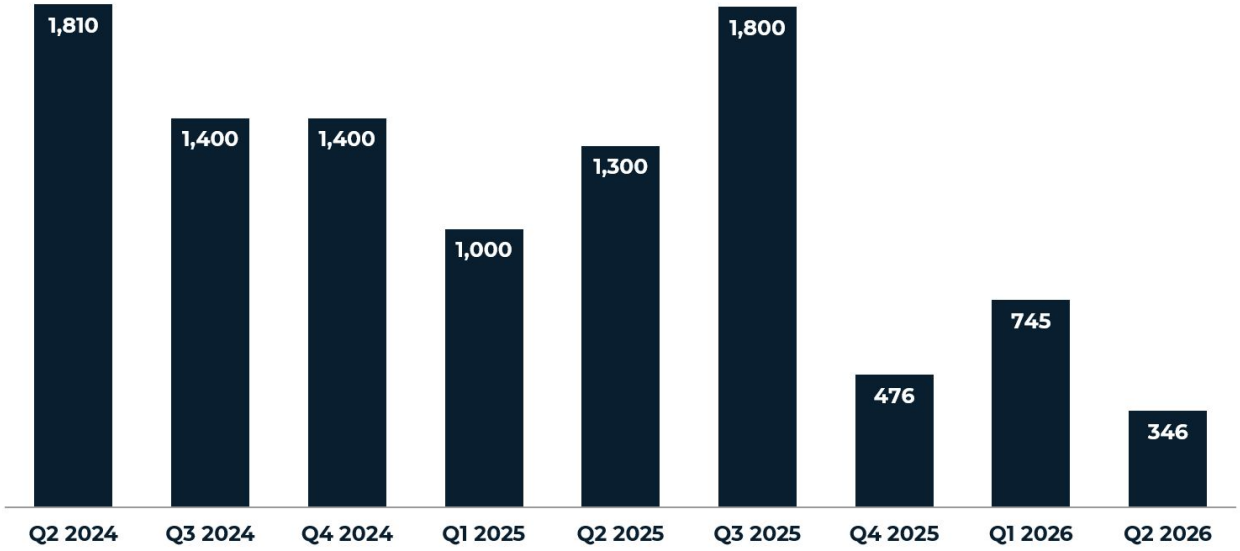
Largest Biopharma Industry Employers in Boston by Number of Employees, 2025 vs 2026



Source: MassBio Member Survey, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

Layoffs among Massachusetts life science companies slowed in 2026

Layoffs announced by Massachusetts life sciences companies, Q2 2024 to Q2 2026



In Q2 2026, 7 life sciences companies announced layoffs impacting at least 346 workers across Massachusetts.

Takeda Pharmaceuticals, the state's largest life sciences employer, announced 247 Cambridge employee layoffs beginning July 1.

Source: Boston Business Journal, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

5 Boston biopharma companies made acquisitions in the first half of 2026 for a disclosed total of $10.5 billion

Top Boston Biopharma Mergers and Acquisitions, Q1 and Q2 2026 (financials reported)

ACQUIRING COMPANY	TARGET COMPANY	AMOUNT ($M)
Eli Lilly*	**Kelonia***	**$7,000**
Eli Lilly*	Orna	**$2,400**
Chiesi	**KalVista***	**$1,600**
Collegium	**Corium***	**$785**
Biocryst*	Astri	**$400**
Foundation Medicine*	Galera	**$595**
Xeno Therapeutics*	Saga Diagnostics	**$79**

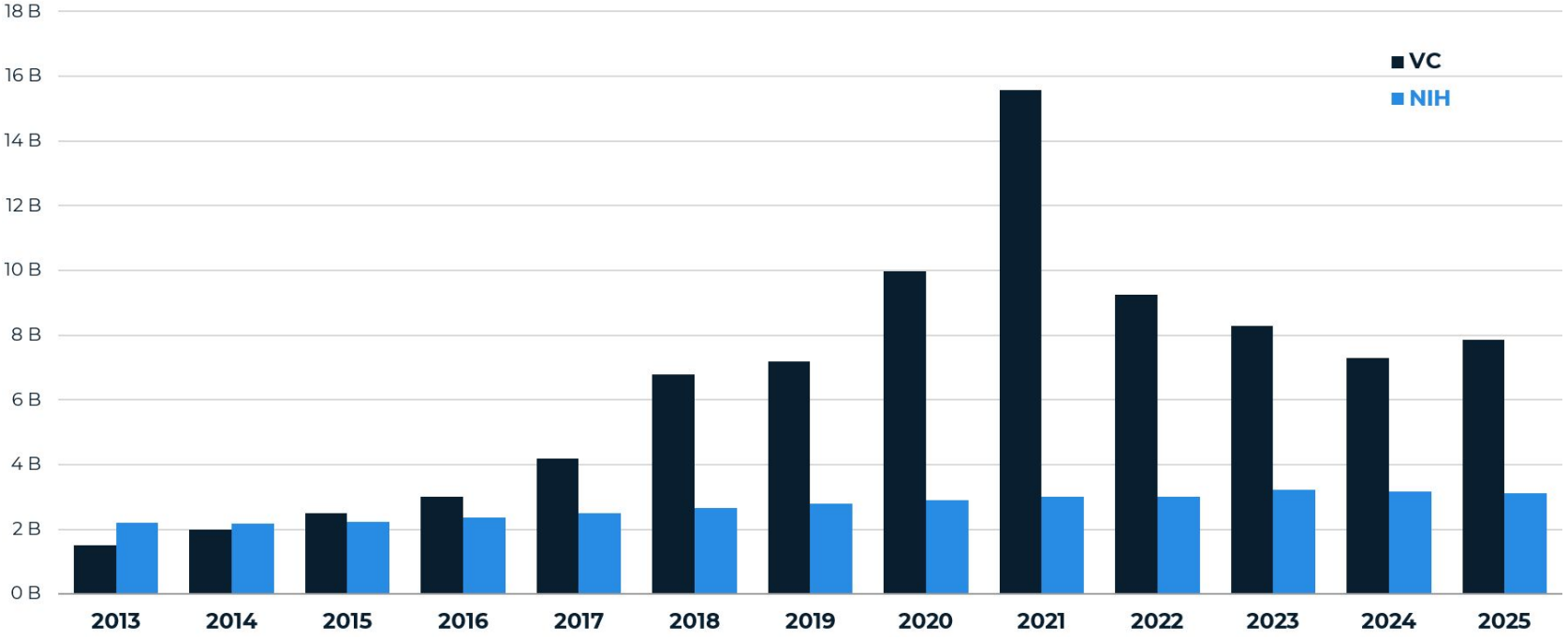
Note: Companies that has a Boston office or Boston Location are bolded.*
Source: Pitchbook, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

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RESEARCH FUNDING

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the primary funder of university and hospital labs, while venture capital funding goes primarily to non-institutional private sector labs

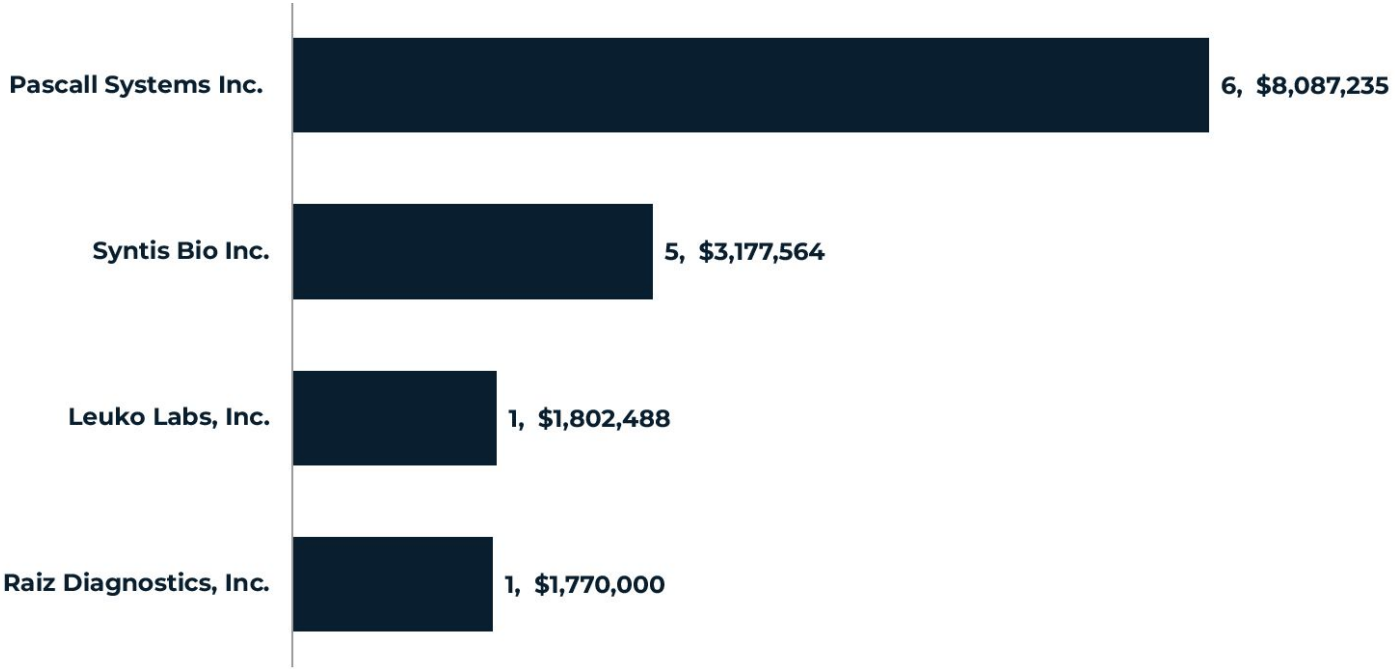
Venture Capital and NIH funding received by the Boston metro, in billions of dollars, 2013-2025



Source: CBRE Research, National Institutes of Health, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

In 2025, Boston entities received 15.4% of all NIH awarded SBIR/STTR grants* and 19.6% of all SBIR/STTR grant dollars in Massachusetts

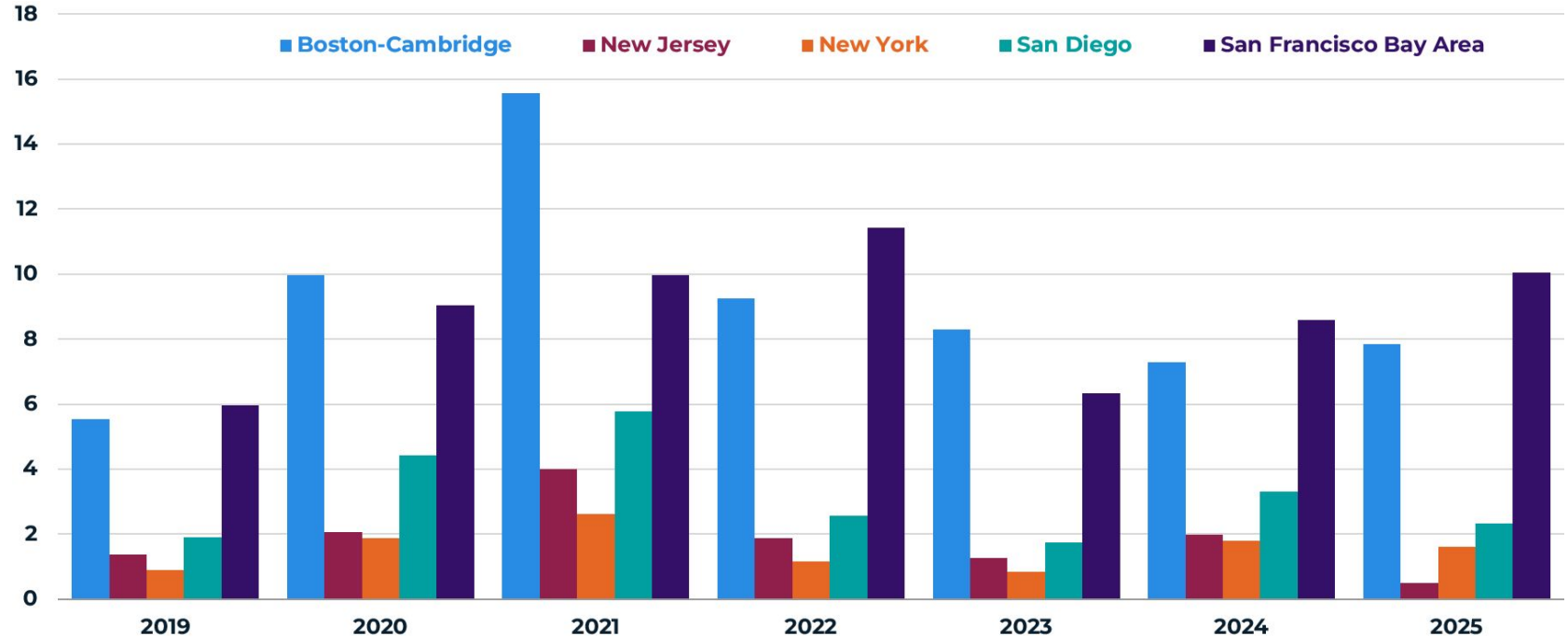
Top Entities in Boston that Received NIH SBIR/STTR Awards by Number and Amount in 2025*



**Early-stage technology funding for small businesses: Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)*
Source: National Institutes of Health, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

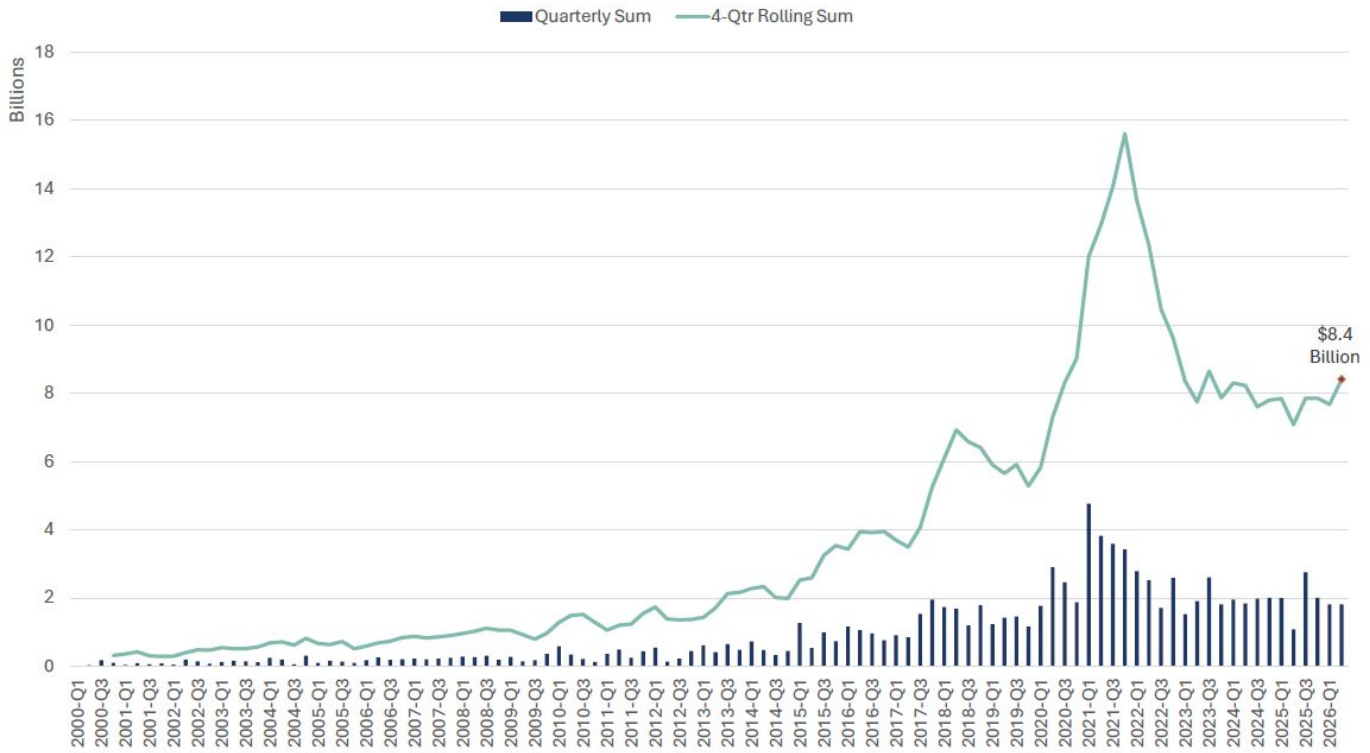
Boston-based Insilico Medicine raised $293 million in its 2025 IPO, ranking among the year's five largest IPOs

Life sciences venture capital funding over time in key metro areas, in billions of dollars, 2019-2025



Source: CBRE Research 2019-2024, https://cushwake.cld.bz/Life-Sciences-Funding-in-View-2026/8/, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

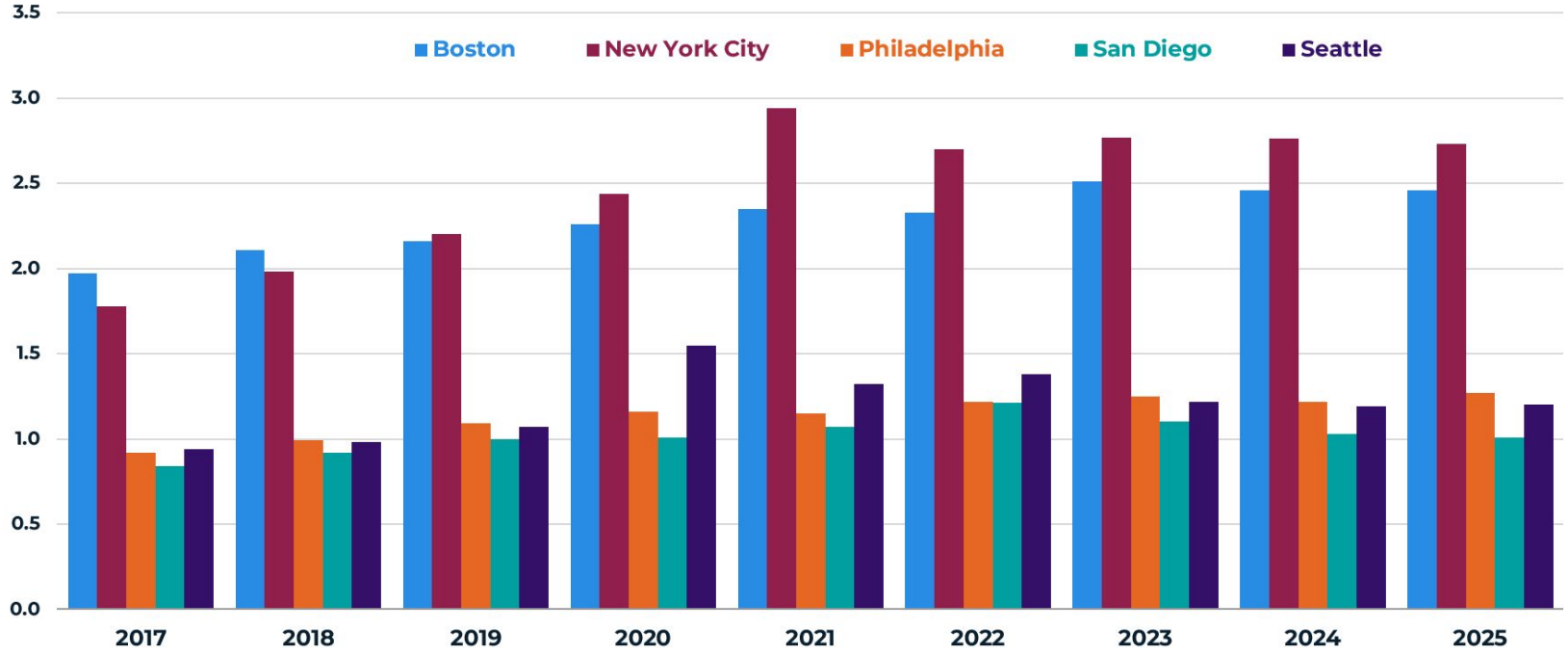
Boston metro life science VC funding (4-quarter rolling sum) stands at $8.4B, modestly higher than the same period last year



Source: CBRE Research Boston-Cambridge LifeSci VC Funding Q2 26, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

Boston continues to rank among the top two recipients of NIH funding, receiving over $2 billion annually – remaining largely unchanged from last year

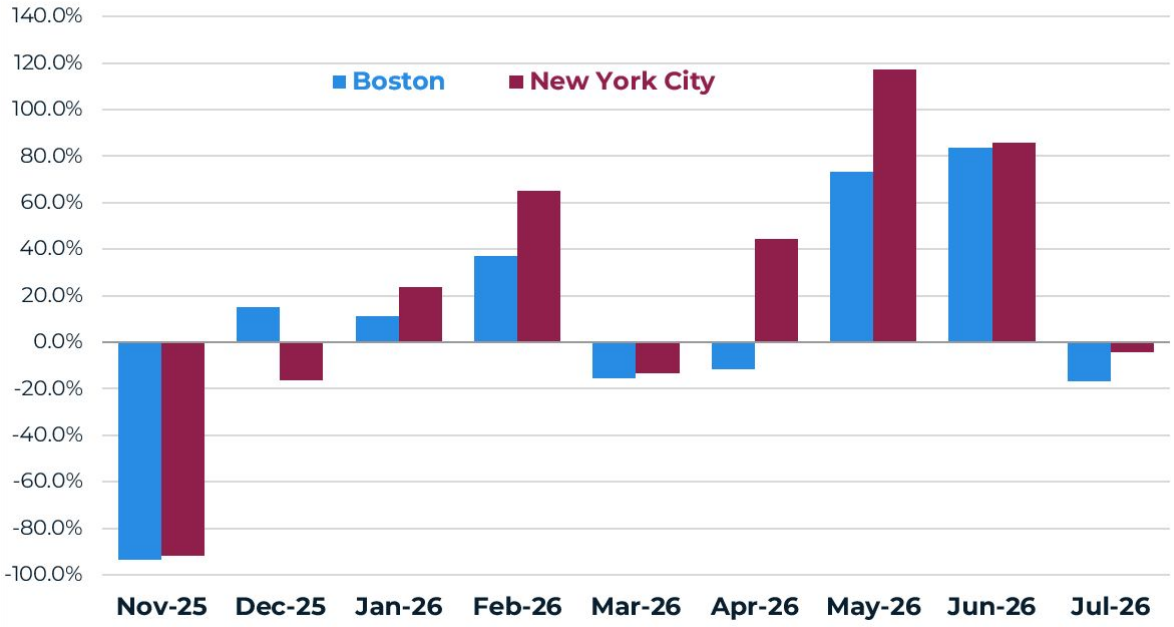
National Institutes of Health funding to leading cities, in billions of dollars, FY 2017 - FY 2025



Source: NIH Funding by Location and Organization 2025, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

Following disruptions caused by the October–November 2025 federal government shutdown, monthly NIH funding in FY 2026 has generally surpassed FY 2025 levels in both Boston and New York City

FY 2026 monthly NIH funding percent change from same month in FY 2025

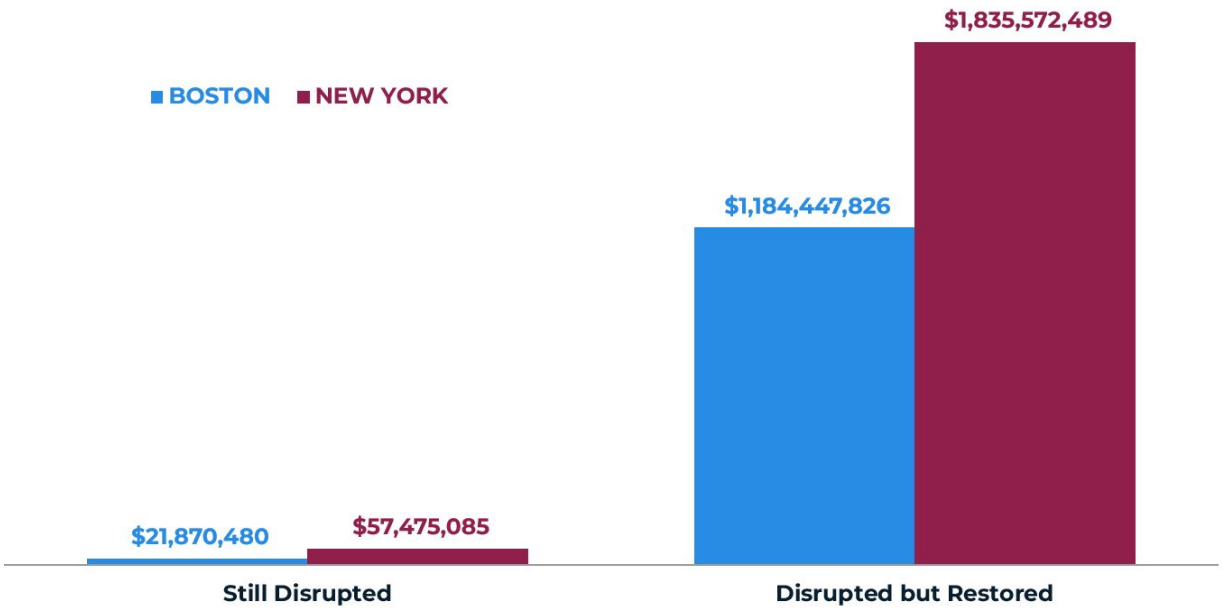


Although funding has generally increased compared with the previous fiscal year, the Trump administration has proposed policies that could reduce federal support for certain disfavored research topics and academic institutions, creating greater uncertainty for future grant funding.

Source: National Institutes of Health, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

Almost all rescinded or frozen NIH grants to Boston and New York were restored by 2026

Total Remaining NIH Funds by Grant Status in Boston and New York, July 10, 2026



Separate court rulings:

1. AAUP-*Harvard Faculty Chapter* v. Department of Justice
2. APHA v. NIH
3. Massachusetts v. Kennedy Jr.

helped reinstate the majority of grants awarded to Boston institutions, restoring nearly all previously disrupted funding.

Source: NIH Rescinded Grants Database, Grant Witness, Data Accessed 7/10/2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

CONCLUSION

2026 LIFE SCIENCES LAB MARKET DEVELOPMENT & TRENDS



LAB DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

Permit & approval activity slowed down in 2026, and only ~2M sq ft of lab space in the pipeline has been permitted.



LAB MARKET

Despite an uptick in laboratory vacancy rates, **layoffs have slowed** and Boston saw a slight increase in employment.



LAB FUNDING

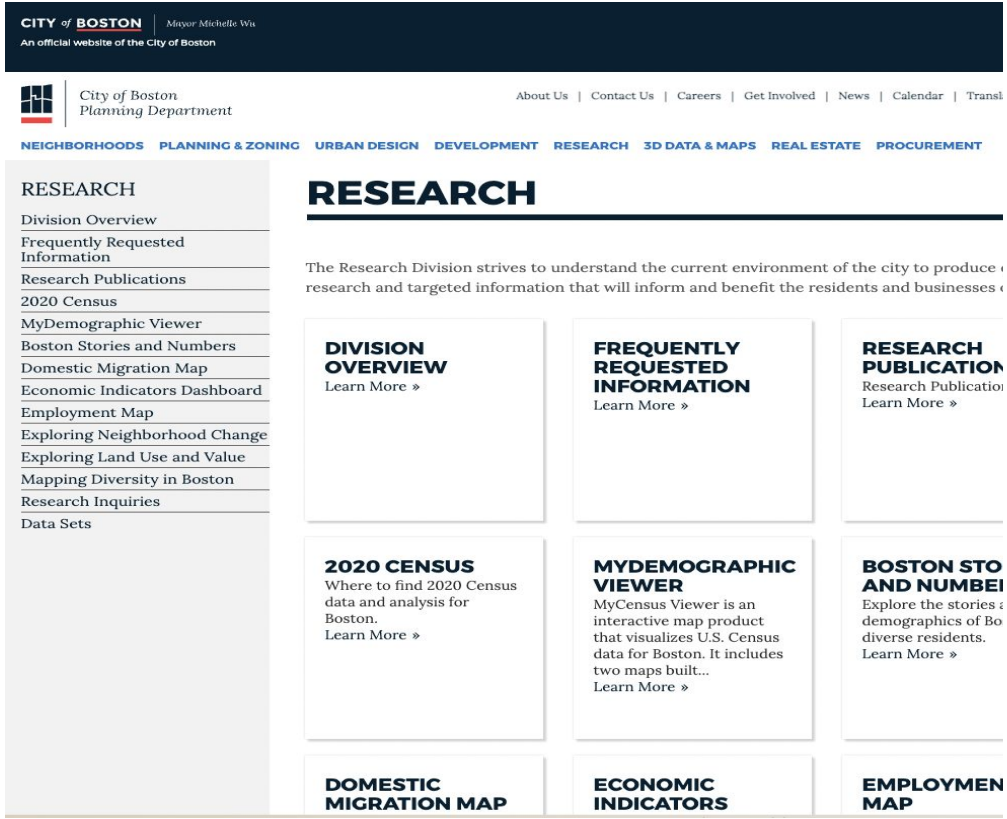
Venture capital funding to Boston metro area **increased** and the majority of NIH grants were **reinstated** in 2025.

SEE MORE OF OUR WORK ON OUR WEBSITE

TOOLS

READ, VISUALIZE, & DOWNLOAD DATA

bostonplans.org/research



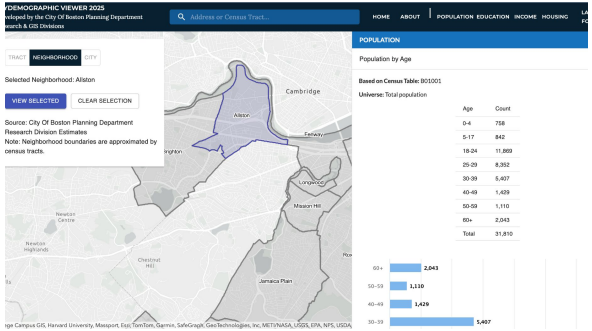
City of Boston Research Division's

PUBLIC RESEARCH TOOLS

TOOLS

To make data easy to access and understand, the Division has created interactive tools:

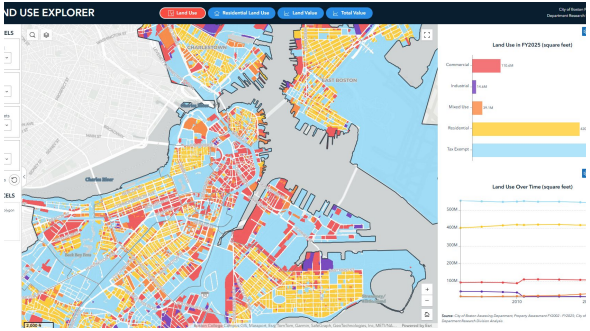
MYDEMOGRAPHIC VIEWER



Tool to interactively view & download the Research Division's 2025 population estimates, with data topics including:

- Population,
- Education,
- Income,
- Housing,
- Labor force

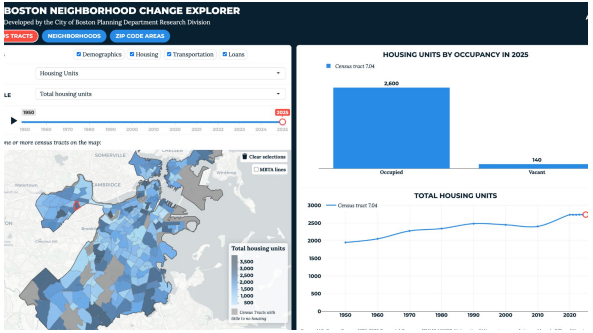
LAND USE & LAND VALUE EXPLORER



Interactive dashboard to view historical and current dynamics of parcel land use and assessed property values in Boston.

- Filter by neighborhood, main street district, or custom area
- View key Land Use, Residential Land Use, Land Value, and Total Land Value variables

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE EXPLORER



Tool to interactively view, map, & download demographic, housing, transportation, and loan data from 1950 to 2035.

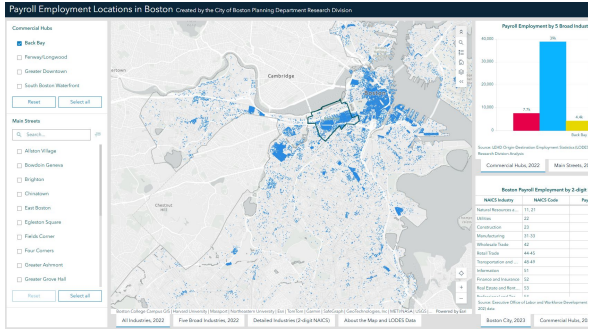
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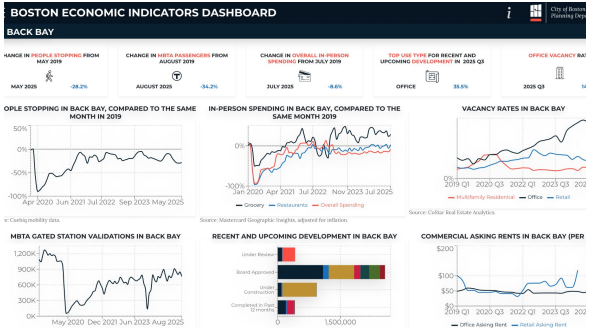
EMPLOYMENT MAPPING TOOL



Tool to interactively view employment in Boston by location and industry

- Filter further by commercial hubor main street district
- View broad and detailed industry breakdown

ECONOMIC INDICATORS DASHBOARD

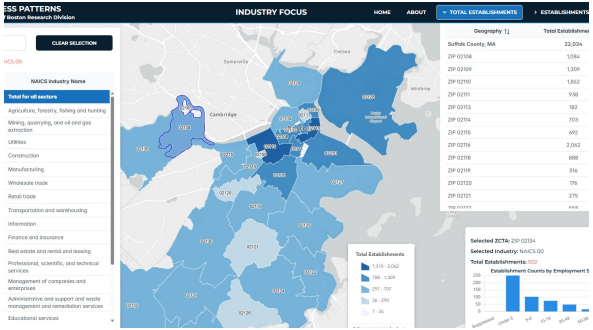


A monthly-updated dashboard visualizing longitudinal data on:

- Employment,
- Real Estate Market,
- Real Estate Development,
- Inflation,
- Mobility,
- Economic Activity

For Boston citywide and 4 Boston commercial hubs.

BUSINESS PATTERNS TOOL



Tool to interactively visualize Boston business establishment data:

- Explore by location or by industry
- View total establishments estimates
- View employment estimates

See more of our work on our website: bostonplans.org/research

All listed tools above are active links, click to view