

RESPONSE TO CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

A. OVERVIEW

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides nutritious meals to children during summer vacation periods similar to those offered under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs during the school year. Meals are provided free of charge to children 18 years of age or under, provided that income criteria are met. The criteria are met if (1) documentation of individual family income verifies that at least 50% of the children at an enrolled (day camp) site meet the income guidelines, or (2) a meal site is located in a neighborhood that has been determined by the State to be "area eligible", and the meal site is open to all children in the neighborhood. For the summer of 1992, the State has identified the Fletcher, Morse, Kennedy, Fitzgerald, Harrington, and Maynard as "area eligible neighborhoods". This enables us to offer the open or drop-in sites that are explained further on in this document.

In the past, only cities were eligible to administer the SFSP. However, regulation changes two years ago made it possible for non-profits to also be program sponsors. For example, last summer the Phillips Brooks House, Cambridge Camping, and the Cambridge YMCA were their own sponsors. If non-profits choose to go this route, rather than become a site under the City administered program, city staff provide technical assistance to the non-profit throughout the summer. However the program constraints described below explain why many non-profits are discouraged from administering their own program.

B. PROGRAM CONSTRAINTS

The SFSP is the most heavily regulated public program administered by the Department. While the regulations were born out of an effort to eliminate program waste, they present numerous barriers to maximizing the program's benefits. Some of these program constraints are listed below.

1. An income verification form must be completed by all families with children in "enrolled" meal sites even if the site is located in an "area eligible" neighborhood. We have experienced reluctance on the part of parents to complete the form. Many parents have to complete this same form for meals during the school year, and/or for child care programs, and

do not understand why they have to complete this form yet another time. Most parents do not understand that the meal component of a day camp is a separate program requiring another set of paperwork. Sometimes parents will choose to forego the meal rather than disclose income and other identifying information. In addition, the nature of camp registrations, with multiple sessions, and families who may register at multiple sites to have more options, makes it difficult to manage income verification.

We have requested of the State to allow just one income verification process that would be used for both school year and summer feeding programs. This request, along with many of our other requests for streamlining the program, was denied.

2. The City is reimbursed only for meals that are served. For example, if 50 meals are ordered on a given day for a site, but only 25 children attend, the City must pay for the 25 meals that are unserved. Only 2% of meals can be served as seconds so that it makes no difference if the children eat all the food. Attendance records must be kept and are carefully monitored by the State. This regulation strongly discourages drop-in sites that would have a fluctuating attendance, and therefore a large number of non-reimbursable meals.

3. Meals must be served at a designated time and place that meets the requirements of both state and local health inspectors. For example, children cannot come to a site, pick up a meal, and bring it elsewhere for consumption. The exact room, area of grass, etc. must be designated and on file with the State. This was a major issue with the drop-in pilot site at St. Paul's AME Church two years ago in which many children did not want to consume the food on site.

4. The heavily regulated nature of this program is a discouragement to other non-profits who can operate a meal site. At a certain point, it becomes easier for a program to buy and prepare their own food on site without this program. Some of the requirements for staff at the meal site are:

- Staff of meal sites must call us daily to order meals for the next day.
- Meals served and unserved, and attendance must be documented daily and compiled into a weekly report.

- The City must monitor each meal site 3-4 times during the summer; in addition both State and Federal monitors randomly monitor sites; one of our sites received three total visits from the State and the Feds last summer.
- Site supervisors are required to attend a half-day training provided by the City.
- Sites must provide the City and the State with a field trip schedule prior to the start of the summer so that the State knows exactly when meals will be served somewhere other than the designated site. If any change occurs in the field trip schedule, i.e. if rain prevents a trip to the beach, the site staff must call and inform the State of this change. The State's justification for this requirement is that monitors must always know where meals are being served for when they conduct their random visits. Site supervisors, who are busy managing many children and camp activities, have difficulty understanding why they must take time to report to the State regarding field trip adjustments.
- One final case in point that demonstrates the program's rigidity is the policy regarding an anti-discrimination poster. This poster must always be displayed at a meal site. If a camp goes on a field trip, they must take the poster and display it, for example, on a nearby tree. When someone asked the State what happens if it should start to rain, the response was the poster should then be wrapped in saran wrap!

The City has advocated on several occasions for more flexibility in the regulations. A letter was prepared and sent by ex-Mayor Alice Wolf's office to U.S. Representative Joseph Kennedy asking for assistance in lobbying for changes. Letters have been written both by the Department and non-profits in the community to the head of the State Bureau of Nutrition. We have seen one regulation change that now allows non-profits to administer their own programs. We continue to advocate for changes that will ease the program's regulations.

C. THE 1992 SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

There are presently 14 confirmed meal sites for this summer and the likelihood that at least two more sites will be added. (See attached list of sites.) Five of these sites will be open for meals to any child age 18 or under in the neighborhood.

This is explained in more detail in the next section. One site will be open to any youth who resides in housing at Jefferson Park.

Because of the addition of open sites, it is difficult to project the total number of children who will be served this summer under the City's program. If the open sites did not exist, our projection would be that 1,100 children would be served. There are approximately 6,000 more children who will have access to meals at the open sites. The extensive outreach about the open sites provides optimism that service levels will increase substantially.

There are other agencies in Cambridge providing summer feeding programs in addition to the City's efforts. The Phillips Brooks House will be serving meals at their summer program to approximately 100 children. In addition, year-round center-based and family daycare programs are a significant network for feeding both pre-school and school-age children. According to the Bureau of Nutrition, there are 42 center-based and 92 home-based programs in Cambridge that provide meals to children year-round. Estimating an average of 50 children at center-based and 6 children at home-based programs, 2,652 children are receiving meals through these programs.

All combined, the minimum number of children who will receive meals during the summer is 3,852; this number can increase to 9,852 with the open sites.

D. SPECIAL INITIATIVES

We have received approval from the State to add a drop-in component in five of the six area eligible neighborhoods. This will be a pilot effort to determine if children from the neighborhood will drop in for meals. We chose to link the drop-in component with existing sites so that we can utilize the staff supervision at those sites. To enhance supervision, a request was made for seven youth workers from the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program. Although there is not an open site right in the Maynard neighborhood, children from the Maynard can utilize the Fletcher drop-in. Also the summer camp at the Willis Moore Youth Center is recruiting children from the Maynard and the Phillips Brooks House Summer Enrichment Program is also located in this neighborhood.

In conjunction with the Cambridge Housing Authority, a drop-in meal site will be piloted at Jefferson Park. Workforce Program staff will enhance the meal with

recreational and educational activities. This could serve as a model to extend the program into other housing developments.

A number of outreach strategies have taken place or are planned to inform families of the open sites. Before the end of school, a letter will go out to all parents that identifies the location and meal times of the open meal sites. This letter also has a return section that asks parents for information regarding their child's participation in summer programs. The Community School Coordinators will be distributing flyers throughout their neighborhoods in locations such as churches, community centers and agencies. In addition, we are planning to distribute an informational flyer at all the bulk commodity distribution sites. Last, a notice has appeared in the Cambridge Chronicle and we will be holding an informational meeting this month for people interested in doing more outreach.

With regard to the question of surveying parents, the return portion of our letter to parents described above asks these questions: Is your child enrolled in a summer program? If no, why not? Would you like your child(ren) to take advantage of the meal sites? (asks which sites, number of children and their ages).

It is our intent to coordinate with the School Department during the next school year to collect more extensive data on participation in 1992 summer programs and meal sites among children eligible for free and reduced price meals. This will enable us to evaluate our outreach efforts and help shape efforts to improve both summer programming and nutrition efforts in the future.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS
SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM
1992

SFSP 1992 SITES	SITE SUPERVISOR & DATES OF PROGRAM	MEAL TIMES	MAXIMUM DAILY ATTENDANCE
1. #SF-9X-004 - OPEN SITE Camp Daybreak & Fletcher School Neighborhood 89 Elm Street Cambridge 02139	Patricia Bradshaw Fran Rosenberg 349-6289 or -6888 7/06 - 8/14	B 9:00-10:00 L 12:00-1:15	70
2. #SF-9X-0 - OPEN SITE Big Adventure Camp Morse School 40 Granite Street Cambridge 02139	Shahn Donahue 349-6291 6/29 - 8/14	L 11:30-12:30 S 2:30-3:00	100
3. #SF-9X-001 Camp Rainbow/Morse School (special needs) 40 Granite St. Cambridge 02139	John Tarmey Susan Chmura-Administra. 349-6576 6/30 - 8/14	B 9:00-9:30 L 12:00-1:00	40
4. #SF-9X-002 Camp Smile/Morse School (special needs-preschool) 40 Granite St. Cambridge 02139	Meredith Thompson Susan Chmura-Administra. 349-6576 6/30 - 8/07	B 9:45-10:15	22
5. #SF-9X-005 - OPEN SITE COMPASS Program @ Kennedy School 158 Spring St. Cambridge 02141	Linda Rings 349-6482 or -6851? 7/06 - 8/13	B 8:30-9:30 L 11:30-12:30	250
6. #SF-9X-003 - OPEN SITE Fitzgerald Summer Camp Fitz. Sch. Gately Shelter 70 Rindge Ave. Cambridge 02140	Pat Daley (in absence will be Susan Zall) 349-6302 or -6277 7/06 - 8/13	B 9:00-10:00 L 12:00-1:00	100
7. #SF-9X-013 Neighborhood Kids' Camp Graham & Parks Comm. School 15 Upton Street Cambridge 02139	Deborah Lerme-Goodman 349-6298 7/06 - 8/14	L 11:30-12:30 S 2:30-3:30	30

CAMBRIDGE DHSP SITES, Cont.

SFSP 1992 SITES	SITE SUPERVISOR & DATES OF PROGRAM	MEAL TIMES	MAXIMUM DAILY ATTENDANCE
8. #SF-9X-007 - OPEN SITE Harrington School Bilingual Summer Camp 850 Cambridge Street Cambridge 02141	Karen MacDonald 349-6305 7/06 - 8/14	B 8:30-9:00 L 11:30-12:30	60
9. #SF-9X-0 King Kids Camp King Community School 100 Putnam Avenue Cambridge 02139	Carol Hill Michelle Borden 349-6269 or -6271 7/06 - 8/14	S 9:15-9:45 L 12:30-1:15	25
10. #SF-9X-009 New Block PreTeen Camp Willis Moore Youth Center Gilmore Street Cambridge 02139	Stephanie Sunderland Diane Scott 349-6273 7/06 - 7/31	B 8:30-9:00 L 12:00-12:30	30
<u>NONPROFITS:</u>			
11. #SF-9X-0 Inner City Day Camp Cambridge Camping Assoc. Harvard University Stadium N. Harvard Street, Allston	Julie Mintz 864-0960 7/06 - 8/21	L 11:30-1:30 S 2:45-3:45	190
12. #SF-9X-0 Jefferson Park Cambridge Housing Authority One Jackson Place /Cambridge, 02140	Jacqueline Cesario Steve Davis-Administra. 864-5115 7/06 - 8/21	L 11:30-12:30 (In Community Room)	30
13. #SF-9X-010 The Salvation Army 402 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge 02139	Sandra Mull Ted Redgate-Administra. 547-3400 6/29 - 8/28	B 9:00-9:45 L 12:30-1:15	60
14. #SF-9X-0 Summerbridge Program Longfellow School 359 Broadway Cambridge 02139	Angela Lee Philip King 349-6875 7/06 - 7/31	B 8:00-8:30 L 12:00-12:35	34



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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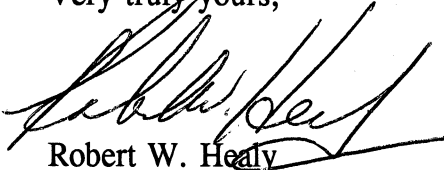
RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

June 15, 1992

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 31, regarding a further update on the development and plan of a Summer 1992 Youth Feeding Program, received from Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, relative to this issue.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachments

Consent Agenda # 9

STB/D

Awaiting Report Item Number 31 regarding
a further report on the development and
plan of a Summer 1992 Youth Feeding
Program.

In City Council,

June 15, 1992

Placed on file