



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

To Ellen Beatrice
Community Development Department

Date Jan. 19, 1979

From David Aronson *DA/m*

Reference Council on Aging

Subject Food Stamp Program and the Elderly

I talked with Leo Friel of the Department of Elder Affairs (727-8931) and Mary Alice Burke of the Department of Public Welfare (727-7858) about the elderly getting food stamps. Of course, if they are on Welfare, they can get stamps; the problem is people on Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Massachusetts is one of the few states with a "cash-out" policy on SSI, that is, the Commonwealth gives each SSI recipient an extra \$10 a month. However, by taking that option, the state disqualifies those people on SSI from being able to get food stamps. Federal regulations state that a state can choose either option, but not both. According to Ms. Burke, when the food stamp program was set up, the Commonwealth determined after a study, that the extra \$10 would benefit more people and be more helpful than would giving some people the option of buying food stamps.

Since then, there have been numerous attempts to change the state's ruling, most often by State Senator Jack Backman of Brookline, but they have met with no success. According to Ms. Burke, the federal government has now made significant changes in its regulations which will be issued in March. These changes, she thinks, will make it even harder for people who get SSI or even welfare to get food stamps. So she says that the state may be better off in continuing to pay all SSI recipients the extra \$10 rather than have only a few SSI recipients be eligible for food stamps. She will know after she sees the regulations which will come down in March.

If you have any questions, you should call her (727-7858) this week. You can tell her that you talked to me and that you have some other questions to take up with her.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

TO: Ellen Beatrice, Program Coordinator,
Community Development Dept., City of Cambridge

DATE 12-28-78

FROM: Lynne Lees, Director, Cambridge, CSA

RE: Food Stamp Program

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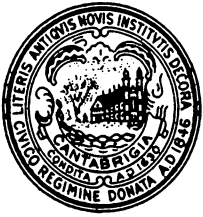


CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPT.

My response to your inquiry of December 21, received today, about the effect of the Federal Food Stamp Act on the elderly population of Cambridge, I have to report to you that the immediate effect is nil.

In order for any change to be made in the present program, under which persons on SSI are not eligible for Food Stamps because of an extra \$10 in their cash allotments, the matter has to be approved by our Mass. legislature. At that time, after suitable public hearings, the new guidelines and procedures would be put into effect and we would be able to serve this population now receiving Supplemental Security Income. Elderly persons not receiving SSI, whether or not they receive Social Security benefits, may now apply for Food Stamps.

Please do not hesitate to call me (661-9390) if you have any further questions with which I may assist you.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 498-9011

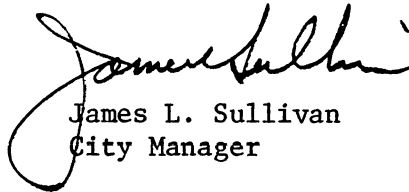
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JAMES L. SULLIVAN
City Manager

February 5, 1979

To the Honorable, the City Council:

With respect to Awaiting Report Item No. 1 regarding the effect of the Federal Food Stamp Act on senior citizens, enclosed please find copies of communications from the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare and from the Council on Aging.

Very truly yours,



James L. Sullivan
City Manager

JLS/mbf
Encs. 2

Agenda #11

S-68

Response to Awaiting Report no. 1 re: effect
of the Federal Food Stamp Act on senior citizens

In City Council,

February 5, 1979

2/5/1979

- Placed on File.