

Department of Human Service Programs



sharing resources...building community

TO: Robert W. Healy
City Manager

FROM: Jill Herold
Assistant City Manager for Human Services

RE: Response to Council Order #005, dated 3/3/97

DATE: March 23, 1997

Jill Herold
Assistant City Manager

Childcare

Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Community and Youth

Community
Learning Center

Coordinating Council for
Children, Youth and Families
(Kids' Council)

Council on Aging;
Elderly Services

Low Income
Fuel Assistance

Multi-Service Center;
Homeless Services

Office of Workforce
Development

Planning & Development

Recreation

The City Council has inquired as to the approximate number of legal immigrants in Cambridge who would benefit from citizenship training. Mina Reddy, Director of the Community Learning Center and Cheryl Wold of the Health Information Unit of the Cambridge Public Health Commission have been working together in an attempt to determine this number. While there is not a single source from which this data can be obtained, it is possible to look at a variety of sources which they are currently doing. Such sources include Concilio Hispano, Centro Presente, Mass. Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, Haitian Services Collaborative, Haitian American Cultural Center, and the Ethiopian Mutual Assistance Association as well as the School Department, the International Institute of Boston and the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants.

Once their analysis is complete, I will forward the results to you. In the meantime, we do know that according to the 1990 census, the foreign-born population in Cambridge was 21,350, of whom 11,863 entered the U.S. in or after 1980. Also, 8,916 people reported that they do not speak English "very well."

Additionally, the City Council has requested information on English-as-a Second-Language (ESL) services currently available and what gaps in service currently exist. As of January, 1997, the Community Learning Center is offering a total of 29 ESL classes, 19 at 19 Brookline Street and 10 off-site and one Haitian Creole literacy class. The average class size is approximately 12-15.) Through the ESL Network, 15 classes are being offered at various locations (churches, community schools, housing developments). A new class will be starting in 2 weeks through the Center for Families in North Cambridge. Concilio Hispano has expanded to three classes at the



Longfellow School; approximately half their students are Cambridge residents. Centro Presente offers a total of 9 tuition-based classes. Students are not required to live in Cambridge. Both Harvard Extension School and the Cambridge Center for Adult Education have large fee-based ESL programs which tend to serve more highly educated students.

Citizenship programs are offered in Cambridge through Centro Presente, Concilio Hispano, the Haitian Multi-Service Center, and the Ethiopian Mutual Assistance Association. There are also several programs in Boston that Cambridge residents can attend, e.g. at the International Institute. When contacted recently, representatives of all citizenship programs in the area indicated that the need was greater than their ability to provide services, particularly for students whose spoken or written English language skills are very limited. It should be noted, though that not everyone in need of citizenship services also needs ESL. The CLC serves students who are English-speaking from the West Indies and others who have acquired a command of English over the years but who need help passing the citizenship test and filling out the forms.

In response to the inquiry regarding gaps in services, there are generally 200-300 people each month on waiting lists for classes at the Community Learning Center. Demand is greatest for evening classes.



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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

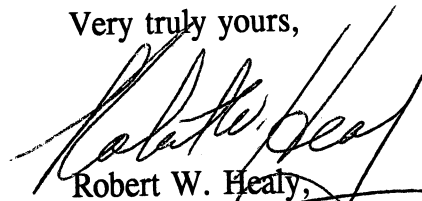
RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

March 31, 1997

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 19, regarding citizenship training and English as a Second Language classes, please find attached a report submitted by Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy,
City Manager

RWH/dls
attachment

Consent Agenda #6

S-192

Relative to Awaiting Report Item Number
Nineteen, regarding citizenship training and
English as a Second Language Classes.

In City Council March 31, 1997

Placed on file