

FINAL REPORT

AMENDED REPORT

The Food Policy Committee held a public meeting on Friday, February 7, 1997 in the Ackermann Room at three o'clock and ten minutes p.m. for the purpose of receiving information about federal legislation relating to hunger programs with regard to immigrant benefits.

Present at the meeting were Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Vice Mayor Kathleen L. Born; Donna P. Lopez, Deputy City Clerk; Esther Hanig, Project Bread; Fred Berman, Department of Human Services; Laura Booth, Elaine DeRosa and Tom Kuchenski, CEOC; Doreen Hawkins, Elnora Yard, St. Paul's AME Food Pantry; Joyce Lee Smith, Western Avenue Baptist Church, Free Food Program; Ray Dories, Janet Thuway, Food for Free; Trudy Bauer, Shelter Plus Care; Tracey Berry, Dietetic Intern Cambridge Hospital; Bryna Dudek, FSC Nutrition intern; Representative Alice Wolf; Sarah Nolan, representative from Senator Tolman's office and Gerald Bergman.

Councillor Davis stated that this meeting was to discuss the effect of federal legislation on the hunger programs.

The committee heard from Esther Hanig, Project Bread, who stated that half of the cuts in the welfare bill are cuts to the food stamp program. She stated that most legal immigrants will be ineligible for food stamps, most of whom are the elderly and disabled. These cuts were in three places:

1. legal immigrants who were in the food stamp program will no longer be eligible with a few exceptions. Immigrants who are in the country and had a job when the bill was signed, but were laid off will not be eligible;
2. abled bodied unemployed individuals between ages of 18-50 with no dependent children will be eligible for food stamp for three months every thirty-six months unless doing community service or work twenty hours per week; and
3. cuts across the board.

Ms. Hanig stated most recipients already use their food stamps within the first 2 1/2 weeks of the month. The cuts will be equivalent to a reduction from 80 cents per person to 66 cents per person per meal and will be factored in over the next six years. The Food Stamp Program in Massachusetts is the fifth highest state to be cut with this welfare reform bill, she said. The reasons for this she said is because of the high shelter costs in Massachusetts. There were cuts made to the Child/Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) as well. Ms. Hanig stated

that CACFP will be targeted to low income children or day care providers of low income families. Day care centers which provided four meals per day will be limited to three meals per day she said. There will be cuts to the Summer Food Program. Cambridge, she said has one of the best Summer Food Programs. The reimbursement rates have been cut, she said. Mr. Berman stated that the snack reimbursement will not be economically to provide.

Ms. Hanig outlined the state options. Most legal immigrants will lose benefits August 22, 1997. The 18-50 population will lose benefits, unless working or doing community service for twenty hours per week, in May, 1997. She stated the state could request a waiver from the federal government for cities with an unemployment rate over ten percent (10%), but Cambridge does qualify. Representative Wolf stated that the unemployment rate does not factually show the rate.

Ms. Hanig stated that the Governor would request a waiver for the 18-50 population in cities which are deemed labor surplus areas by the Department of Labor. Cambridge is not a surplus area she said. The administration did not apply for this waiver. Ms. Hanig stated that the administration contends that single mothers with children were required to do community services of 20 hours per week and able body people should be required to do the same.

Ms. Hanig stated that the Presidential Budget addressed the 18-50 age group as follows:

1. Change 3 months of food stamps to 6 months for a 12 month period;
2. individual who attempt to work or do community service and cannot find work will continue to get food stamps. There will be more money for job training and job search; and
3. The shelter cap would be eliminated by the year 2,000.

The committee heard from Trudy Bauer, Shelter Plus Care, who stated that there are high housing costs leaving little money left for food.

Ms. Hanig said that in the Presidential Budget there would be no change to the food stamp program for legal immigrants and money will be provided for health care and social security to provide for disabled immigrants. On the federal level she said that legislators will offer a welfare fix it legislation - the blue dogs in congress would mitigate impacts of welfare legislation. She said legislation will be prepared by national advocates to specifically address hunger in the 105th Congress. She said Project Bread was in favor of pieces of the state legislation sponsored by Representative Wolf which would affect legal immigrants and children and the Summer food Program. She said the Massachusetts has the seventh largest immigrant

population. She stated the WIC was chosen as the best state-wide agency to address the needs of the population because they are respectful of recipients' cultural, ethnic and dietetic needs. She stated that 10,000 to 14,000 immigrants would be losing their food stamps. She stated \$10 million was requested to fund the Food Programs for legal immigrants. The Governor put \$7 million in the budget for food pantries. She stated the food pantries need more food, but we still need legislation to make sure legal immigrants get consistent sources of food. Restoration of funds for summer food programs was included in the bill she stated.

Mr. Berman questioned Ms. Hanig asking if immigrants on the WIC program would get an id card identifying them as an immigrant. Ms. Hanig stated that details have not been worked out. She stated that it was imperative that senators and representative hear about the critical need that more money be included in the Massachusetts House of Representatives Budget.

Councillor Davis stated that personally she had already sent letters to the Cambridge delegation urging support for the bill.

Ms. Hanig stated that this is also a fiscal responsibility because if the population is not fed their health care costs will increase.

At this time Vice Mayor Born submitted the following motion that the City Manager contact the leadership of the Public Health Commission to ask them to send a letter of support for Senate S588 and S1579 to our senators and our representatives.

The motion carried on a voice vote.

Vice Mayor Born asked Mr. Berman if we could cover the Summer Food Program if funds are diminished. Mr. Berman stated that **the reduced reimbursement for snacks would render them uneconomical, and so he would doubt that they would be offered. He stated that no decision had been made on this matter at this time.** The focus will be on breakfast and lunch. Vice Mayor Born asked if Mr. Berman anticipated operation of all sites as last year. Mr. Berman stated that it was anticipated that all sites would be operational. Vice Mayor Born asked about the open sites. Mr. Berman stated that the free and reduced meal program was a serious issue because the documentation was done by the schools. Ms. Hanig responded that one year the Maynard School did not have enough free and reduced meal applications to have a open site. Mr. Berman said **that several schools had yet to pass the 50% threshold for free and reduced meals forms, and so might not be able to qualify this year as an open site. In fact, he stated, that only two schools that had previously hosted open sites, the Morse and the Haggerty, had failed to qualify as yet. The Maynard School, he said is over the 50% threshold.** Mr Berman stated that if the Morse School fails to qualify, they need to document the eligibility of eight to ten more household, the Magazine Beach Pool site will not be able to operate this year. The Haggerty site may have a demographically different student body than when it qualified two years ago, he said. He stated that only thirty-four percent of students have qualified for free and reduced school meals. Mr. Berman further

stated that the plan is to operate the Haggerty site as an enrolled rather than an open site. Ms. Hanig stated that the Department of Education uses census tracking. Mr. Berman stated that the schools need to be encouraged to get the parents to fill and return the free food forms.

Representative Wolf stated that this is a community organization issue in terms of working with the school committee. Some schools get all the forms back, but some do not, she said. The methods at the schools need to be reviewed to insure all forms are returned, she said.

Vice Mayor Born asked if there were open sites at the three swimming pools in the city. Mr. Berman responded in the affirmative.

Councillor Davis submitted the following motion:

The Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools take the necessary steps to ensure that the food program forms are returned so that as many families as possible are included in the free or reduced meal program.

The motion carried on a voice vote.

Representative Wolf stated that one of the issues is there is no clear strategy for the community to make sure that kids are being fed. When children are hungry they are not able to learn, she said. We should be looking at a universal free breakfast in schools she stated. Councillor Davis responded that a universal free breakfast was very difficult to implement in Cambridge. Mr. Bergman stated that there needs to be the will to do it.

The committee heard from Laura Booth who stated that the Department of Human Services could do outreach for the Summer Food Program.

Ms. Hanig stated that the food service director was also in charge of transportation. There is a plan in Springfield where kids walk to neighborhood schools, they eat breakfast at their neighborhood school and are then bussed to their school she said. Representative Wolf stated that you would have to talk to people in the community to see how they feel about this. Councillor Davis said this was a good idea and we are still talking about it, but there was not a lot of time for developing this approach.

Representative Wolf stated that this was a community organization effort. Councillor Davis stated that interns could be used to further develop this idea. Ms. Hanig responded that the best thing to do was to make breakfast a period of the day. Mr. Berman stated that opening schools earlier would be a nice idea, but that the additional cost would likely be seen as prohibitive, given the difficult budgetary situation already faced by the School Committee. Councillor Davis stated that there was an obstacle for a period of the day approach

because funding could not be found.

Mr. Berman stated that **getting free and reduced price meals forms filled out is not a top priority of principals, who have many other responsibilities. He further stated that since school eligibility to host an open site is based on either the present or previous year's qualifying statistics, a principal whose school has qualified last year need not push hard to get their school qualified this year.** ^The statistics from last year will suffice to allow us to operate an open site, he said. Mr. Berman said that when it is called to the attention of the principals that additional completed forms from eligible households are needed, they rise to the challenge. Councillor Davis stated we are not in learn fare. Ms. Hanig stated that learn-fare information is confidential and non-accessible for any entity. Mr. Berman stated that schools run Summer Camp Program and Human Services cannot use school forms. New forms need to be filled out from Human Services. Mr. Bergman stated that the system wide approach was frustrating.

At this time Councillor Davis made the following motion:

That the City Council go on record transmitting its support to the Massachusetts Legislative delegation in the House and Senate for S#588 and S1579 and request that they be made a high budgetary priority.

Mr. Bergman questioned Ms. Hanig whether the bills sponsored were better than bills for food banks. Ms. Hanig responded that we need both.

Representative Wolf stated that with the Governors' budget and the House and Senate budget we would be better off to say what we are in favor of.

Vice Mayor Born asked how will this affect this Thanksgiving in relation to the distribution of turkeys. Ms. Hanig responded that more people will be waiting for turkeys.

The committee heard from Laura Booth who said that the benefits outreach program between the city and Cambridge food pantries will be reduced. Vice Mayor Born asked if the eligibility would be the same. Ms. Booth said the only change is in federal commodities.

Mr. Berman said that as people lose their SSI and food stamps the food pantries will not have the extra money to get food. This money will be dispersed to all people not just legal immigrants he said. Ms. Hanig stated that food stamps will not keep track with food costs. She said that it is not just legal immigrants, people will lose income because they are cut off from welfare. Ms. Booth said that Cambridge food pantries meet below thirty percent of the increase.

Mr. Berman stated that the food stamp approval process is harder to negotiate.

Ms. Hanig urged letters be sent to Senators Kerry and Kennedy outlining the impact on Cambridge and that it was important that the budget be restored. She stated that voting for the balanced budget amendment would put everything we have in jeopardy and request that our senators vote against the balanced budget amendment. This budget would result in more hungry children.

Councillor Davis stated that data is needed to write to our legislators. Mr. Berman said the data is extremely soft but he would try to supply the committee with the number of immigrants and the number of people on food stamps.

Representative Wolf stated there is less money to buy things and fewer people are employed and all will effect the local economy. Loss of rent control also had an effect, stated Ms. Hanig.

Ms. Hanig questioned Ms. Yard and Ms. Hawkins if there was an increase in St. Paul's Food Pantry. They responded that there was a twenty-seven percent increase in the last three months. "We serve Cambridge people. Is this what other pantries do," they asked? Mr. Berman stated funds are intended to go to residents, but because of the closing of the Haitian Pantry people will be served from Cambridge and Somerville.

Mr. Bergman requested a profile of people affected, who are they, what are the effects on people facing rent increases; could use of outreach worker help to understand what has happened in the City? Mr. Bergman distributed the attached information to the Committee. (Attachment A)

Councillor Davis asked for a food pantry report containing how many people are using the food pantries, the number of families and how often.

The meeting adjourned at four o'clock and fifty minutes p.m.

For the Committee,

Councillor Henrietta Davis
Chair



City of Cambridge

Committee Report #1A

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 24, 1997

VICE MAYOR BORN

WHEREAS: That the City Manager contact the leadership of the Public Health Commission to ask them to send a letter of support for Senate S588 and S1579 to our senators and our representatives.

In City Council February 24, 1997
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy; *D. Margaret Drury*

ATTEST:-
D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



City of Cambridge

Committee Report #1B

IN CITY COUNCIL
February 24, 1997

COUNCILLOR DAVIS

WHEREAS: That the Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools take the necessary steps to ensure that the food program forms are returned so that as many families as possible are included in the free or reduced meal program.

In City Council February 24, 1997
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

City of Cambridge

AMENDED REPORT

The Food Policy Committee held a public meeting on Friday, February 7, 1997 in the Ackermann Room at three o'clock and ten minutes p.m. for the purpose of receiving information about federal legislation relating to hunger programs with regard to immigrant benefits.

Present at the meeting were Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Vice Mayor Kathleen L. Born; Donna P. Lopez, Deputy City Clerk; Esther Hanig, Project Bread; Fred Berman, Department of Human Services; Laura Booth, Elaine DeRosa and Tom Kuchenski, CEOC; Doreen Hawkins, Elnora Yard, St. Paul's AME Food Pantry; Joyce Lee Smith, Western Avenue Baptist Church, Free Food Program; Ray Dorries, Janet Thuway, Food for Free; Trudy Bauer, Shelter Plus Care; Tracey Berry, Dietetic Intern Cambridge Hospital; Bryna Dudek, FSC Nutrition intern; Representative Alice Wolf; Sarah Nolan, representative from Senator Tolman's office and Gerald Bergman.

Councillor Davis stated that this meeting was to discuss the effect of federal legislation on the hunger programs.

The committee heard from Esther Hanig, Project Bread, who stated that half of the cuts in the welfare bill are cuts to the food stamp program. She stated that most legal immigrants will be ineligible for food stamps, most of whom are the elderly and disabled. These cuts were in three places:

1. legal immigrants who were in the food stamp program will no longer be eligible with a few exceptions. Immigrants who are in the country and had a job when the bill was signed, but were laid off will not be eligible;
2. abled bodied unemployed individuals between ages of 18-50 with no dependent children will be eligible for food stamp for three months every thirty-six months unless doing community service or work twenty hours per week; and
3. cuts across the board.

Ms. Hanig stated most recipients already use their food stamps within the first 2 1/2 weeks of the month. The cuts will be equivalent to a reduction from 80 cents per person to 66 cents per person per meal and will be factored in over the next six years. The Food Stamp Program in Massachusetts is the fifth highest state to be cut with this welfare reform bill, she said. The reasons for this she said is because of the high shelter costs in Massachusetts. There were cuts made to the Child/Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) as well. Ms. Hanig stated

that CACFP will be targeted to low income children or day care providers of low income families. Day care centers which provided four meals per day will be limited to three meals per day she said. There will be cuts to the Summer Food Program. Cambridge, she said has one of the best Summer Food Programs. The reimbursement rates have been cut, she said. Mr. Berman stated that the snack reimbursement will not be economically to provide.

Ms. Hanig outlined the state options. Most legal immigrants will lose benefits August 22, 1997. The 18-50 population will lose benefits, unless working or doing community service for twenty hours per week, in May, 1997. She stated the state could request a waiver from the federal government for cities with an unemployment rate over ten percent (10%), but Cambridge does qualify. Representative Wolf stated that the unemployment rate does not factually show the rate.

Ms. Hanig stated that the Governor would request a waiver for the 18-50 population in cities which are deemed labor surplus areas by the Department of Labor. Cambridge is not a surplus area she said. The administration did not apply for this waiver. Ms. Hanig stated that the administration contends that single mothers with children were required to do community services of 20 hours per week and able body people should be required to do the same.

Ms. Hanig stated that the Presidential Budget addressed the 18-50 age group as follows:

1. Change 3 months of food stamps to 6 months for a 12 month period;
2. individual who attempt to work or do community service and cannot find work will continue to get food stamps. There will be more money for job training and job search; and
3. The shelter cap would be eliminated by the year 2,000.

The committee heard from Trudy Bauer, Shelter Plus Care, who stated that there are high housing costs leaving little money left for food.

Ms. Hanig said that in the Presidential Budget there would be no change to the food stamp program for legal immigrants and money will be provided for health care and social security to provide for disabled immigrants. On the federal level she said that legislators will offer a welfare fix it legislation - the blue dogs in congress would mitigate impacts of welfare legislation. She said legislation will be prepared by national advocates to specifically address hunger in the 105th Congress. She said Project Bread was in favor of pieces of the state legislation sponsored by Representative Wolf which would affect legal immigrants and children and the Summer food Program. She said the Massachusetts has the seventh largest immigrant

population. She stated the WIC was chosen as the best state-wide agency to address the needs of the population because they are respectful of recipients' cultural, ethnic and dietetic needs. She stated that 10,000 to 14,000 immigrants would be losing their food stamps. She stated \$10 million was requested to fund the Food Programs for legal immigrants. The Governor put \$7 million in the budget for food pantries. She stated the food pantries need more food, but we still need legislation to make sure legal immigrants get consistent sources of food. Restoration of funds for summer food programs was included in the bill she stated.

Mr. Berman questioned Ms. Hanig asking if immigrants on the WIC program would get an id card identifying them as an immigrant. Ms. Hanig stated that details have not been worked out. She stated that it was imperative that senators and representative hear about the critical need that more money be included in the Massachusetts House of Representatives Budget.

Councillor Davis stated that personally she had already sent letters to the Cambridge delegation urging support for the bill.

Ms. Hanig stated that this is also a fiscal responsibility because if the population is not fed their health care costs will increase.

At this time Vice Mayor Born submitted the following motion that the City Manager contact the leadership of the Public Health Commission to ask them to send a letter of support for Senate S588 and S1579 to our senators and our representatives.

The motion carried on a voice vote.

Vice Mayor Born asked Mr. Berman if we could cover the Summer Food Program if funds are diminished. Mr. Berman stated that snacks will be eliminated. The focus will be on breakfast and lunch. Vice Mayor Born asked if Mr. Berman anticipated operation of all sites as last year. Mr. Berman stated that it was anticipated that all sites would be operational. Vice Mayor Born asked about the open sites. Mr. Berman stated that the free and reduced meal program was a serious issue because the documentation was done by the schools. Ms. Hanig responded that one year the Maynard School did not have enough free and reduced meal applications to have a open site. Mr. Berman said the site had enough last year but will not have the program this year. Ms. Hanig stated that the Department of Education uses census tracking. Mr. Berman stated that the schools need to be encouraged to get the parents to fill and return the free food forms.

Representative Wolf stated that this is a community organization issue in terms of working with the school committee. Some schools get all the forms back, but some do not, she said. The methods at the schools need to be reviewed to insure all forms are returned, she said.

Vice Mayor Born asked if there were open sites at the three swimming pools in the city. Mr. Berman responded in the affirmative.

Councillor Davis submitted the following motion:

The Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools take the necessary steps to ensure that the food program forms are returned so that as many families as possible are included in the free or reduced meal program.

The motion carried on a voice vote.

Representative Wolf stated that one of the issues is there is no clear strategy for the community to make sure that kids are being fed. When children are hungry they are not able to learn, she said. We should be looking at a universal free breakfast in schools she stated. Councillor Davis responded that a universal free breakfast was very difficult to implement in Cambridge. Mr. Bergman stated that there needs to be the will to do it.

The committee heard from Laura Booth who stated that the Department of Human Services could do outreach for the Summer Food Program.

Ms. Hanig stated that the food service director was also in charge of transportation. There is a plan in Springfield where kids walk to neighborhood schools, they eat breakfast at their neighborhood school and are then bussed to their school she said. Representative Wolf stated that you would have to talk to people in the community to see how they feel about this. Councillor Davis said this was a good idea and we are still talking about it, but there was not a lot of time for developing this approach.

Representative Wolf stated that this was a community organization effort. Councillor Davis stated that interns could be used to further develop this idea. Ms. Hanig responded that the best thing to do was to make breakfast a period of the day. Mr. Berman suggested opening schools a little earlier and give kids time to eat. Councillor Davis stated that there was an obstacle for a period of the day approach because funding could not be found.

Mr. Berman stated that the principals are not diligent in getting the schools up to statistics learn fare. Councillor Davis stated we are not in learn fare. Ms. Hanig stated that learn-fare information is confidential and non-accessible for any entity. Mr. Berman stated that schools run Summer Camp Program and Human Services cannot use school forms. New forms need to be filled out from Human Services. Mr. Bergman stated that the system wide approach was frustrating.

At this time Councillor Davis made the following motion:

That the City Council go on record transmitting its support to the Massachusetts Legislative delegation in the House and Senate for S#588 and S1579 and request that they be made a high budgetary priority.

Mr. Bergman questioned Ms. Hanig whether the bills sponsored were better than bills for food banks. Ms. Hanig responded that we need both.

Representative Wolf stated that with the Governors' budget and the House and Senate budget we would be better off to say what we are in favor of.

Vice Mayor Born asked how will this affect this Thanksgiving in relation to the distribution of turkeys. Ms. Hanig responded that more people will be waiting for turkeys.

The committee heard from Laura Booth who said that the benefits outreach program between the city and Cambridge food pantries will be reduced. Vice Mayor Born asked if the eligibility would be the same. Ms. Booth said the only change is in federal commodities.

Mr. Berman said that as people lose their SSI and food stamps the food pantries will not have the extra money to get food. This money will be dispersed to all people not just legal immigrants he said. Ms. Hanig stated that food stamps will not keep track with food costs. She said that it is not just legal immigrants, people will lose income because they are cut off from welfare. Ms. Booth said that Cambridge food pantries meet below thirty percent of the increase.

Mr. Berman stated that the food stamp approval process is harder to negotiate.

Ms. Hanig urged letters be sent to Senators Kerry and Kennedy outlining the impact on Cambridge and that it was important that the budget be restored. She stated that voting for the balanced budget amendment would put everything we have in jeopardy and request that our senators vote against the balanced budget amendment. This budget would result in more hungry children.

Councillor Davis stated that data is needed to write to our legislators. Mr. Berman said the data is extremely soft but he would try to supply the committee with the number of immigrants and the number of people on food stamps.

Representative Wolf stated there is less money to buy things and fewer people are employed and all will effect the local economy. Loss of rent control also had an effect, stated Ms. Hanig.

Ms. Hanig questioned Ms. Yard and Ms. Hawkins if there was an increase in St. Paul's Food Pantry. They responded that there was a twenty-seven percent increase in the last three months. "We serve Cambridge people. Is this what other pantries do," they asked? Mr. Berman stated funds are intended to go to residents, but because of the closing of the Haitian Pantry people will be served from Cambridge and Somerville.

Mr. Bergman requested a profile of people affected, who are they, what are the effects on people facing rent increases; could use of outreach worker help to understand what has happened in the City? Mr. Bergman distributed the attached information to the Committee. **(Attachment A)**

Councillor Davis asked for a food pantry report containing how many people are using the food pantries, the number of families and how often.

The meeting adjourned at four o'clock and fifty minutes p.m.

For the Committee,

Henrietta Davis

Councillor Henrietta Davis *lyd*
Chair

cc. City Clerk - include with the hearing minutes

TO: Cambridge City Council Food Policy Committee
RE: Implementation of the Cambridge Infant and Children Food and Policy Project
FROM: Health of the City Hunger and Nutrition Action Group (2/7/97)

The Hunger and Nutrition Action Group of Health of the City is requesting an annual grant of \$96,000 (estimated) from the City of Cambridge to coordinate, develop and carryout the Cambridge Infant and Children Food and Policy Project. This Project would need the coordinated efforts of community agencies which serve children, the Cambridge Health Network staff (especially nutritionists), the Cambridge School Department, selected Food Pantries and others (individuals, organizations and businesses) who could aid and advocate for children.

The Hunger and Nutrition Action Group of Health of the City continues to support **the Infant and Children Food and Policy Project** - a project which would coordinate work with health providers, schools, businesses, select emergency feeding programs and the public to provide a safety net of nutritional food for infants and children in Cambridge, while at the same time advocating for lasting change and an end to childhood hunger in Cambridge.

The Infant and Children Food and Policy Project seeks to:

- work with the Cambridge Health Network, schools and emergency feeding programs etc. to train volunteers and community staff about the nutrient requirements of infancy and childhood as well as the public and private sources of assistance which may be available to families with infants and children; (a full range of education and assistance for children including nutrition, obesity, empowerment and self-identity, exercise, school breakfasts and lunch, etc. would be explored).
- purchase and distribute appropriate food for infants and children as well as put in place an ongoing plan to meet food and related needs from emergency and non-emergency sources;
- educate the public about the causes of childhood hunger and related nutritional needs, involve the public in strategies leading to lasting change through public policy, and empower those in need.

Emergency food programs, while requesting information on family size and ages, do not have the training and resources necessary for the complicated task of positive tracking and identifying ongoing childhood nutritional need. This results in children being counted but not "served", remaining at risk nutritionally or deteriorating in health. The children continue to be unable to satisfy their bodies' need for nutrients appropriate to their age and stage of physical development.

If the most vulnerable population in poverty is not being adequately assisted, then we are truly missing the mark!

There is no doubt that instituting a children's supplemental food and public policy program will require extra effort and money. It takes more time to perform intake and followup, and it takes more time to train volunteers and coordinate and develop needed community services. It takes more money to purchase special foods and more time to solicit them.

Despite this nearly overwhelming challenge, the Hunger and Nutrition Action Group has decided that providing food, training and public policy change for infants and children at all levels of development must be prioritized as the most critical part of the solution to ending hunger in Cambridge.

We need to:

- bring to light the actual number of infants and children in need of these foods and educational and support opportunities;
- stress the importance of a high level of calories, protein and necessary nutrients for infants and young children;
- use this particular need and crisis as the central element of a special fund and donation drive as well as education and advocacy efforts around the causes of hunger.

Children are the segment of the population most at risk from hunger. For example, by age three a child's brain is 90% of its adult weight while the rest of her/his body has reached only 20% of its eventual size. Such rapid growth makes the brain particularly vulnerable to poor diet during pregnancy and the first years of life. "The brain of a young child has developmental or biosynthetic abilities it will never have again," says Dr. Larry Brown, Chairman of the Physicians Task Force on Hunger. "If adequate nutrition is unavailable during this time, the likelihood of long-term impairment is significantly increased." A child's brain cannot wait for economic upswings!

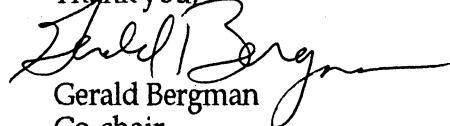
Dr. Brown has also reported on Massachusetts studies. He writes, "... the Massachusetts Nutrition Survey (mandated by the state legislature to assess the health of low-income children) found that 18.1% of the children evaluated showed some indicator of chronic nutritional deficiency. The phenomenon was inversely related to income level".

In addition to the many potential physical problems of hungry people, there are immeasurable real risks to emotional well-being. Going hungry in an affluent city such as Cambridge can be emotionally devastating. Seeing other children enjoy delicious-looking lunches or observing the disappointment in a child's eyes when there are only potatoes for dinner can produce lasting psychological scars for the entire family. **It does hurt to go to bed hungry, even once in a while. For some age groups and populations, it hurts a lot.**

The Infant and Children Food and Policy Project will be more than a "band aid" solution which provides no more than emergency relief. It will address the development of long-term opportunities for people to provide ample nutritious food for themselves.

This Project is only in the developmental stage, and we invite all interested individuals and organizations to continue the development of this coordinated and focused effort. For more information about the meeting schedule of the Health of the City Hunger and Nutrition Action Group please contact Ms. Sarah Hemphill, Health of the City Coordinator at 498-1480 x207.

Thank you,



Gerald Bergman
Co-chair

Hunger and Nutrition Action Group

Gerald Bergman
82 Elm Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 354-2648
fax (617) 354-2648 (call first)

TO: Cambridge Food Policy Committee
Public Hearing 2/7/97

FROM: Gerald Bergman
82 Elm Street (02139)

One of the most important aspects of the work of the City Council Food Policy Committee is to continue the implementation and evaluation of the goals of the 1991 Cambridge Food Policy Referendum.

Implementation and evaluation, at regular intervals, using the skills and experiences of community members, is often a difficult and tedious process, often lacking the glamour of other high profile activities. However, if Cambridge is to be a hunger free zone (issues of under and over nutrition should be included in this broad goal), we must take on the task of evaluation and implementation in a consistent and public manner.

Important tasks include:

- a) Evaluation and update of the Community Development Supermarket Access study of 1994; pertaining to Riverside/Cambridgeport; Area Four and Wellington-Harrington; and North Cambridge (as well as the stabilization of an affordable supermarket in Central Square, Mid-Cambridge etc.)
- b) Evaluation of the annual Cambridge Food Fund allocation and the work of Food Fund related Outreach Workers (who is served, how they are served, need versus resources, follow-up on cases, critical and new problems resulting from changes in resource availability and Federal and State legislative changes, accomplishments in relation to goals of the 1991 Referendum etc.
- c) Constant coordination of hunger and nutrition services and education in Cambridge across all Cambridge funded activities.
- d) Evaluation and planning in relation to School Food services, Summer Food services and all other Federally and State funded food programs such as WIC, Food Stamps, Farmers Market Coupons, Elder Meal and food programs etc.

e) Implementation and expansion of non-government programs such as SHARE, Dollar-A Bag, Food Cooperatives, Home Delivery Services for those with disabilities, Consumer Education related to food buying etc.

f) Taxpayer funded institutional responses to hunger and nutrition issues such as the response of the Cambridge Health Network, Cambridge Schools, Youth and Recreation Programs, Human Services etc.

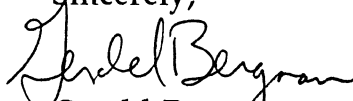
g) Evaluation of education related to food policy (over nutrition and under nutrition) as well as broad community education efforts and campaigns.

h) Evaluation of public fundraising campaigns, food drives, city-sponsored and/or supported efforts to heighten the understanding of the resource needs of Cambridge residents

etc. etc.....

I suggest that the next meeting of the City Council Food Policy Committee be established as soon as possible to continue a cohesive, regular and efficient review of these and other food policy related issues as suggested in the 1991 Referendum.

My thanks to the Food Policy Committee.

Sincerely,

Gerald Bergman

BALLOT QUESTION #1

PUBLIC POLICY QUESTION - NOVEMBER 5, 1991

Shall the City of Cambridge, in response to the growing hunger crisis which affects primarily elders and one in four children, develop and implement a **Cambridge Food Policy** which would recognize the right of every resident to accessible, safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable and affordable food, without barriers and without stigma, and shall such a policy include as some of its goals:

- 1) at least 50% participation of all eligible children in the Summer Food Service Program for Children during the summer of 1992, and 100% return of eligibility applications during this 1991-1992 school year in the subsidized School Breakfast and Lunch program;
- 2) 100% accessibility to all Federally financed food programs, through development of an aggressive outreach campaign regarding the Federal Food Stamp Program, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and nutrition programs for elders, emphasizing the need for translated materials, multi-lingual human service workers and the elimination of the stigma of participation;
- 3) integration of nutrition education into elementary and secondary school curricula and ongoing monitoring and staffing of school food programs;
- 4) financial assistance for food purchases so that emergency food pantries, meal programs and shelters can provide adequate and nutritious food during the period in which other goals of the Cambridge Food Policy are being developed and implemented;
- 5) examination of overall city development and city policy for its impact on the availability of food to neighborhoods and individuals through **non-emergency** food sources, and recognition that people's access to safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable and affordable food must be a priority in overall city development and policy;
- 6) recruitment of a fully representative citywide committee of residents and providers with maximum possible representation by those in need, which would develop further goals and strategies regarding the Cambridge Food Policy and hold hearings every six months so that Cambridge residents can assess the progress being made by city councilors, school committee members, city employees and city agencies on the development and implementation of the Cambridge Food Policy.

SUMMARY

The proposed question involves the city's stance on the hunger crisis affecting primarily elders and children in Cambridge.

A "yes" vote advises the City Council that Cambridge voters wish to have the City develop and implement a Cambridge Food Policy;

A "no" vote advises the City Council that no change is wished.

According to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 630 of the Acts of 1989, the Election Commission is required to print arguments of proponents and opponents of a question submitted solely to the voters of Cambridge. Below are such arguments:

ARGUMENT FOR QUESTION #1

One in four children in Cambridge is hungry or at risk of being hungry. Alarming numbers of elders and families struggle to meet minimal nutritional needs. Many of us are a paycheck, rent increase or health care crisis away from being unable to feed our families.

Your vote for a Cambridge Food Policy is a call to action. Hunger and malnutrition are symptoms of the larger problem of inadequate and unequal distribution of food and other resources.

The goals of the Cambridge Food Policy acknowledges that access to acceptable and affordable food without barriers and without stigma is a basic human right and part of a dignified human existence.

The Cambridge Food Policy will direct the city to make federal food programs more accessible. Hundreds of thousands of federal dollars go unspent because people are not signed up for programs which provide summer food for children, school breakfasts and lunches, and Food Stamps.

The Cambridge Food Policy goes beyond the work of meals programs and food pantries which serve more than 5000 Cambridge residents each month, by addressing not only the symptoms but the causes for hunger and malnutrition.

Access to safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable, and affordable food is a right, regardless of economic or social class. The Cambridge Food Policy will provide the framework within which the city, its residents and all groups in the city can take action.

PASSED ON NOVEMBER 5, 1991

17,384 voters in favor (80% majority vote)

**CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE ADOPTION OF A CAMBRIDGE FOOD
POLICY**

For more information:

Health of the City
Hunger and Nutrition Action Group
Gerald Bergman, Co-Chair
354-2648

Sarah Hemphill
Health of the City
Coordinator
498-1480 x207

HEALTH^{OF}_{THE}CITY



A Partnership for a Healthy Cambridge

HUNGER AND NUTRITION ACTION GROUP

Co-Chairs

Dr. William Dietz, M.D., Ph.D.

Gerald Bergman

A Hungry Child Cannot Learn

Any child who starts his or her school day hungry is not getting an equal opportunity at education. There is a demonstrated relationship between food, good nutrition, and the capacity of children to develop and learn. A hungry child cannot learn; a child who cannot learn becomes an adult who cannot compete successfully. An essential step toward attaining equal education is ensuring that every child—rich or poor or in between—goes through each school day on an equal nutritional footing with his or her classmates.

You Can't Teach a Hungry Child

Mild undernutrition can have serious effects. Undernutrition increases the risk of illness and its severity, certainly a negative effect on a child's ability to learn. The learning-related effects of undernutrition begin before any visible signs of growth retardation occur.

According to studies released by Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, recent research provides compelling evidence that undernutrition during any period of childhood can have detrimental effects on the cognitive development of children and their later productivity as adults. In ways not previously known, undernutrition impacts the behavior of children, their school performance, and their overall cognitive development.

Undernourished children are less physically active, less responsive socially, and less attentive, independent, or curious. They are more anxious and cannot concentrate as well. As a result, their reading ability, verbal skills, and motor skills suffer. These effects do not have to be permanent if better nutrition is provided and the environment is improved.

Iron deficiency anemia, a specific kind of undernutrition, is one of the most prevalent nutritional problems among children. Even mild cases lead to shortened attention span, irritability, fatigue and decreased ability to concentrate. Anemic children do poorly on vocabulary, reading, mathematical problem solving, and psychological tests.

Hunger leads to nervousness, irritability, disinterest in the learning situation and the inability to concentrate. The hungry child is passive, apathetic, timid, and demands little from her/his environment. Hunger disrupts the learning process—one developmental step is lost and it is difficult to move on to the next one.

Studies have documented the significant relationship between eating a nutritious breakfast at school and the ability to perform in school. A study conducted in Lawrence, Massachusetts demonstrated that participation in a school breakfast program by low-income students is associated with significant improvement in standardized achievement test scores and tardiness rates, and a trend toward improvement in absenteeism.

Dr. William Dietz, M.D., Ph.D. • Director of Clinical Nutrition, New England Medical Center; Professor of Pediatrics, Tufts University School of Medicine

Gerald Bergman • Former Chair, Mass. Anti-Hunger Coalition; Former Coordinator, Cambridge Food Pantry Network; Advisory Committee, Mass. Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project; Founding Board Member, Cambridge Food Coop; Chair, Cambridge Food Policy/Anti-Hunger Referendum Campaign

P.O. Box 390768 Cambridge, MA 02139

Tel: (617) 354-2648 • Fax: (617) 354-2648 (call first)

Skipping breakfast directly impairs a child's performance in the morning. Frequent skipping of breakfast is linked to mild undernutrition which can lead to increased risk of infections, causing more frequent and more severe illnesses.

We know that in Cambridge hundreds of kids are hungry, and we know that hungry kids can't learn. Recognizing the link between nutrition and learning, and understanding that hundreds of children arrive at school in Cambridge hungry and ill-prepared to learn, parents, children, and advocates have agreed that no child should go hungry in school in Cambridge.

In Cambridge our children are not invisible. We know that for many children, eating breakfast and/or lunch is not a regular occurrence. Since many children do not eat a nutritious breakfast at home, they are hungry when they reach school and either remain hungry until lunch time (or later) or eat less-nutritious food to stave off hunger pains. Issues surrounding school food programs, good nutrition and nutrition education must be cooperatively examined and solutions must be created and implemented.

In June 1993, teachers from all of our city's third, fifth and seventh grade homeroom classes were asked to administer a one-page survey to their students. Surveys were available in Spanish, Haitian Kreyol, and Portuguese. 1,053 surveys were returned.

The survey asked:

- whether and where students had eaten breakfast that day;
- whether students ate breakfast regularly at home or school, and if not, why not;
- whether the students were involved in helping siblings with breakfast.

According to the results of this survey: **20-25% of Cambridge 5th and 7th graders go hungry each school day because they do not eat a breakfast or morning snack. According to Cambridge School Department data, only 13% of elementary school students eat a school breakfast on any given day.**

Stand with Us as We Take a Stand Against Hunger

In 1991, the residents of Cambridge passed the first Food Policy Referendum in the country by a 4-1 margin. The referendum mandated that the City of Cambridge respond to the growing hunger crisis, which affects one in seven children, by developing and implementing a Cambridge Food Policy. This policy would also recognize the right of every resident to accessible, safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable and affordable food, without barriers and without stigma. As one of the primary goals of that historic referendum, the City of Cambridge was called upon to take all necessary steps to insure that children do NOT go hungry during the school day.

The results of school surveys and other state and national studies indicate that a primary factor in the failure to equalize educational opportunity is the crisis of childhood hunger. The Hunger and Nutrition Action Group has as its primary goal the full implementation of the referendum. We are working to develop a school-based food program which would allow all of our children to get an equal education.

Parents, students, teachers, administrators, and advocates for children and quality equal education can work together to fully implement the Cambridge Food Policy Referendum. We can work together to ensure that every child will have an equal opportunity for success in school!

For more information, contact:
Gerald Bergman, Co-chair
Hunger and Nutrition Action Group
P.O. Box 390768
Cambridge, MA 02139

11. HUNGER, NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Based on health and socioeconomic indicators, Cambridge ranked 25 among 351 Massachusetts cities and towns in an assessment of need for nutritional services performed by the Massachusetts WIC Program (serves mothers, infants, and children <5 years of age).¹
- Over the past several years, the percentage of Cambridge elementary school children qualifying for free or reduced priced meals has been approximately 45% to 50%. At the end of the 1995-96 school year, 46% of the total elementary school population had qualified for discounted school meals, with a range of 21% to 71% for individual schools.²
- Obesity is associated with increases risk for heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, and other negative health outcomes; adolescent obesity is a predictor of obesity in adulthood.³ Nationally, adolescent obesity is estimated to be at 21%. A combination of high caloric intake and lack of physical activity is thought to account for increasing obesity among adolescents.⁴
- Societal overemphasis on being too thin can contribute to poor body perception, eating disorders and unsound weight-loss practices, especially among female teenagers. Among Massachusetts female teenagers, 62% are trying to lose weight. According to the Cambridge Teen Health Survey, 30% of adolescent girls worry about their weight.

INDICATORS:

- Eligibility and utilization of food subsidy and meal delivery programs
- Heart disease, cancer, and stroke mortality⁵
- Diabetes prevalence
- High blood cholesterol prevalence
- Overweight prevalence
- Physical activity behaviors
- Body weight self-perceptions and related dietary behaviors and physical activity among H. S. students

YEAR 2000 OBJECTIVES, MASS. AND CAMBRIDGE RATES: (* = data not available)

	HP 2000 Goal	Mass. Rate	Cambridge Rate
Cambridge Food Pantry Network, # families served/mo.	*	*	3,000 ⁶
Percent of elementary school children receiving free or discounted school lunches	*	*	46%

chart continues

YEAR 2000 OBJECTIVES CONTINUED

	HP 2000 Goal	Mass. Rate	Cambridge Rate
Diabetes in total population prevalence	2.5%	4.0%	*
High blood cholesterol prevalence			
males 20-74 years	20%	22%	*
females 20-74 years	20%	20%	
Overweight prevalence			
adults 20-74 years	20%	23%	*
adolescents 12-19 years	15%	*	*
Percent who meet average daily goal			
vegetables/fruits (5 servings)	50%	*	*
grain products (6 servings)	50%	*	*
Vigorous physical activity at least 3+ days/week			
people 6+ years of age	75%	*	*
adolescents (grades 9-12)	*	62.7% ⁷	45 ⁸
Sedentary lifestyle			
people 6+ years of age	15%	*	*
Worry about weight (too heavy or too thin)			
adolescent girls (grades 9-12)	*	*	30% ⁹
adolescent boys (grades 9-12)	*	*	12% ⁹
Currently trying to lose weight			
adolescent girls (grades 9-12)	*	62% ⁶	*
adolescent boys (grades 9-12)	*	23% ⁶	*

1 Massachusetts WIC Program Needs Assessment Data for Local WIC Program Service Areas, August 1996

2 City of Cambridge Department of Human Services, percentages underestimate eligibility and need as parents must submit an income declaration to qualify

3 1988 Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health

4 *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 43 (44).

5 See Chapter 12, Mortality

6 Additional smaller food banks also provide for Cambridge residents.

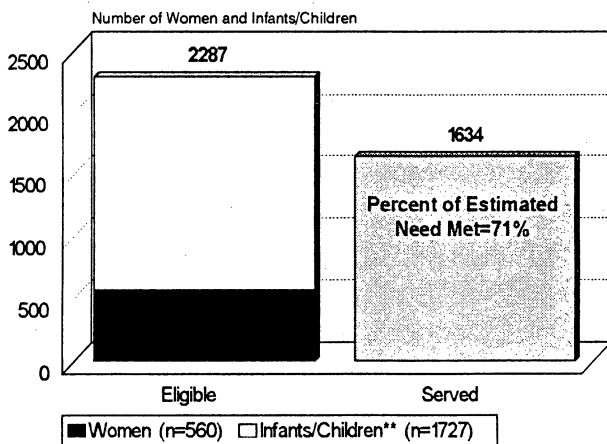
7 1995 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey

8 1995 Food and Activity Survey

9 1996 Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Teen Health Survey

WIC Program Recipients

Estimated Number Eligible and Number Served
Cambridge Residents, June 1996*

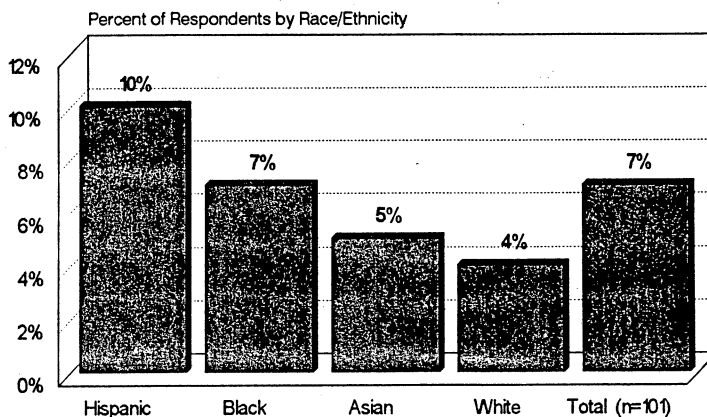


*Number actively served at end of fiscal year
** Children <5 years of age

Source: Massachusetts WIC Pro

**H. S. Students Who Went Hungry
in Past Year for Lack of Money**

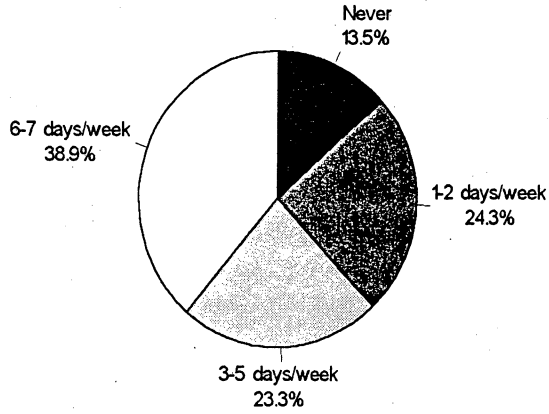
Cambridge Rindge and Latin H. S. Teen Health Survey, 1996



Total students in survey=1,556
Source: Cambridge Public Schools Teen Health Survey

H. S. Students Who Report Eating Breakfast

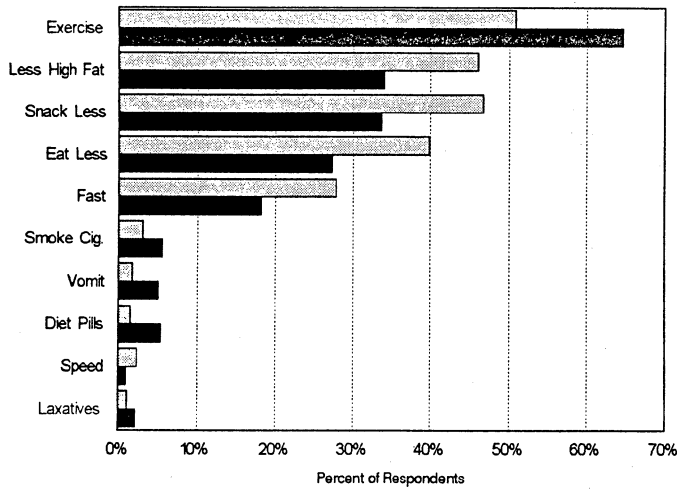
Cambridge Rindge and Latin H. S. Teen Health Survey, 1996



Total students in survey=1,556
Source: Cambridge Public Schools Teen Health Survey

Weight Control Practices of H. S. Students

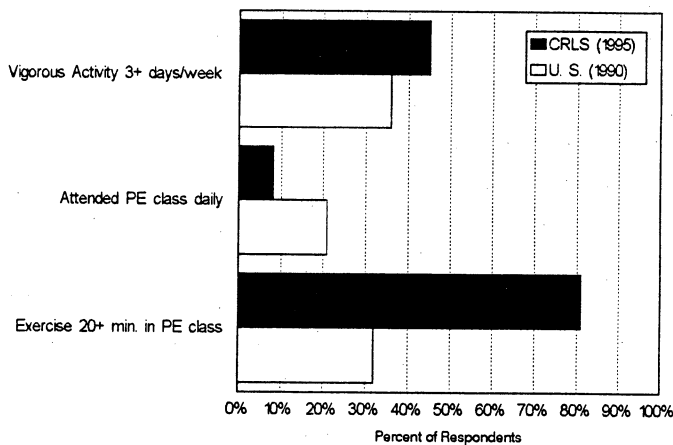
Cambridge Rindge and Latin H. S. Teen Health Survey, 1996



Total students in survey=1,556
Source: Cambridge Public Schools Teen Health Survey

Physical Activity of H. S. Students

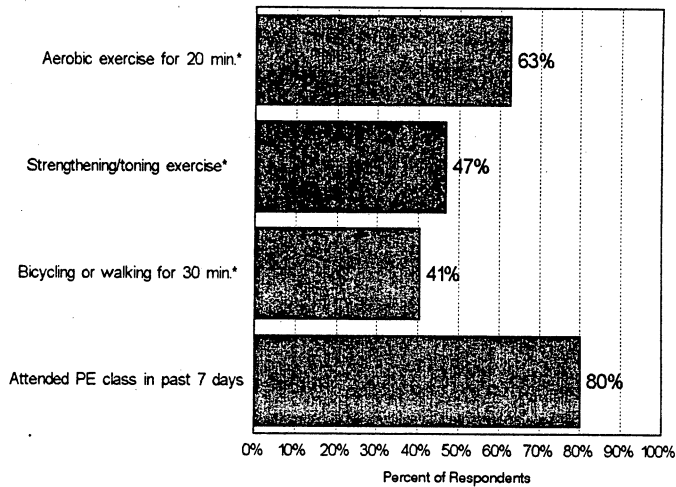
Cambridge Rindge and Latin H. S. vs. U. S.



Source: 1995 Food and Activity Survey of Cambridge H. S. Students/Cambridge Public Schools

Physical Activity of Massachusetts H. S. Students

Grades 9-12, 1995



* on 3 or more days one week prior to survey administration
 Source: 1995 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey

ORIGINAL REPORT

City of Cambridge

The Food Policy Committee held a public meeting on Friday, February 7, 1997 in the Ackermann Room at three o'clock and ten minutes p.m. for the purpose of receiving information about federal legislation relating to hunger programs with regard to immigrant benefits.

Present at the meeting were Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Vice Mayor Kathleen L. Born; Donna P. Lopez, Deputy City Clerk; Esther Hanig, Project Bread; Fred Berman, Department of Human Services; Laura Booth, Elaine DeRosa and Tom Kuchenski, CEOC; Doreen Hawkins, Elnora Yard, St. Paul's AME Food Pantry; Joyce Lee Smith, Western Avenue Baptist Church, Free Food Program; Ray Dories, Janet Thuway, Food for Free; Trudy Bauer, Shelter Plus Care; Tracey Berry, Dietetic Intern Cambridge Hospital; Bryna Dudek, FSC Nutrition intern; Representative Alice Wolf; Sarah Nolan, representative from Senator Tolman's office and Gerald Bergman.

Councillor Davis stated that this meeting was to discuss the effect of federal legislation on the hunger programs.

The committee heard from Esther Hanig, Project Bread, who stated that half of the cuts in the welfare bill are cuts to the food stamp program. She stated that most legal immigrants will be ineligible for food stamps, most of whom are the elderly and disabled. These cuts were in three places:

1. legal immigrants who were in the food stamp program will no longer be eligible with a few exceptions. Immigrants who are in the country and had a job when the bill was signed, but were laid off will not be eligible;
2. abled bodied unemployed individuals between ages of 18-50 with no dependent children will be eligible for food stamp for three months every thirty-six months unless doing community service or work twenty hours per week; and
3. cuts across the board.

Ms. Hanig stated most recipients already use their food stamps within the first 2 1/2 weeks of the month. The cuts will be equivalent to a reduction from 80 cents per person to 66 cents per person per meal and will be factored in over the next six years. The Food Stamp Program in Massachusetts is the fifth highest state to be cut with this welfare reform bill, she said. The reasons for this she said is because of the high shelter costs in Massachusetts. There were cuts made to the Child/Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) as well. Ms. Hanig stated that CACFP will be targeted to low income children or day care providers of low income families. Day care centers which provided four meals per day will be limited to three meals per day she said. There will be cuts to the Summer Food Program. Cambridge, she said has one of the best Summer Food Programs. The reimbursement rates have been cut, she said. Mr. Berman stated that the snack reimbursement will not be economically to provide.

City of Cambridge

- 2 -

Ms. Hanig outlined the state options. Most legal immigrants will lose benefits August 22, 1997. The 18-50 population will lose benefits, unless working or doing community service for twenty hours per week, in May, 1997. She stated the state could request a waiver from the federal government for cities with an unemployment rate over ten percent (10%), but Cambridge does qualify. Representative Wolf stated that the unemployment rate does not factually show the rate.

Ms. Hanig stated that the Governor would request a waiver for the 18-50 population in cities which are deemed labor surplus areas by the Department of Labor. Cambridge is not a surplus area she said. The administration did not apply for this waiver. Ms. Hanig stated that the administration contends that single mothers with children were required to do community services of 20 hours per week and able body people should be required to do the same.

Ms. Hanig stated that the Presidential Budget addressed the 18-50 age group as follows:

1. Change 3 months of food stamps to 6 months for a 12 month period;
2. individual who attempt to work or do community service and cannot find work will continue to get food stamps. There will be more money for job training and job search; and
3. The shelter cap would be eliminated by the year 2,000.

The committee heard from Trudy Bauer, Shelter Plus Care, who stated that there are high housing costs leaving little money left for food.

Ms. Hanig said that in the Presidential Budget there would be no change to the food stamp program for legal immigrants and money will be provided for health care and social security to provide for disabled immigrants. On the federal level she said that legislators will offer a welfare fix it legislation - the blue dogs in congress would mitigate impacts of welfare legislation. She said legislation will be prepared by national advocates to specifically address hunger in the 105th Congress. She said Project Bread was in favor of pieces of the state legislation sponsored by Representative Wolf which would affect legal immigrants and children and the Summer food Program. She said the Massachusetts has the seventh largest immigrant population. She stated the WIC was chosen as the best state-wide agency to address the needs of the population because they are respectful of recipients' cultural, ethnic and dietetic needs. She stated that 10,000 to 14,000 immigrants would be losing their food stamps. She stated \$10 million was requested to fund the Food Programs for legal immigrants. The Governor put \$7

City of Cambridge

- 3 -

million in the budget for food pantries. She stated the food pantries need more food, but we still need legislation to make sure legal immigrants get consistent sources of food. Restoration of funds for summer food programs was included in the bill she stated.

Mr. Berman questioned Ms. Hanig asking if immigrants on the WIC program would get an id card identifying them as an immigrant. Ms. Hanig stated that details have not been worked out. She stated that it was imperative that senators and representative hear about the critical need that more money be included in the Massachusetts House of Representatives Budget.

Councillor Davis stated that personally she had already sent letters to the Cambridge delegation urging support for the bill.

Ms. Hanig stated that this is also a fiscal responsibility because if the population is not fed their health care costs will increase.

At this time Vice Mayor Born submitted the following motion that the City Manager contact the leadership of the Public Health Commission to ask them to send a letter of support for Senate S588 and S1579 to our senators and our representatives.

The motion carried on a voice vote.

Vice Mayor Born asked Mr. Berman if we could cover the Summer Food Program if funds are diminished. Mr. Berman stated that snacks will be eliminated. The focus will be on breakfast and lunch. Vice Mayor Born asked if Mr. Berman anticipated operation of all sites as last year. Mr. Berman stated that it was anticipated that all sites would be operational. Vice Mayor Born asked about the open sites. Mr. Berman stated that the free and reduced meal program was a serious issue because the documentation was done by the schools. Ms. Hanig responded that one year the Maynard School did not have enough free and reduced meal applications to have a open site. Mr. Berman said the site had enough last year but will not have the program this year. Ms. Hanig stated that the Department of Education uses census tracking. Mr. Berman stated that the schools need to be encouraged to get the parents to fill and return the free food forms.

Representative Wolf stated that this is a community organization issue in terms of working with the school committee. Some schools get all the forms back, but some do not, she said. The methods at the schools need to be reviewed to insure all forms are returned, she said.

Vice Mayor Born asked if there were open sites at the three swimming pools in the city. Mr. Berman responded in the affirmative.

City of Cambridge

- 4 -

Councillor Davis submitted the following motion:

The Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools take the necessary steps to ensure that the food program forms are returned so that as many families as possible are included in the free or reduced meal program.

The motion carried on a voice vote.

Representative Wolf stated that one of the issues is there is no clear strategy for the community to make sure that kids are being fed. When children are hungry they are not able to learn, she said. We should be looking at a universal free breakfast in schools she stated. Councillor Davis responded that a universal free breakfast was very difficult to implement in Cambridge. Mr. Bergman stated that there needs to be the will to do it.

The committee heard from Laura Booth who stated that the Department of Human Services could do outreach for the Summer Food Program.

Ms. Hanig stated that the food service director was also in charge of transportation. There is a plan in Springfield where kids walk to neighborhood schools, they eat breakfast at their neighborhood school and are then bussed to their school she said. Representative Wolf stated that you would have to talk to people in the community to see how they feel about this. Councillor Davis said this was a good idea and we are still talking about it, but there was not a lot of time for developing this approach.

Representative Wolf stated that this was a community organization effort. Councillor Davis stated that interns could be used to further develop this idea. Ms. Hanig responded that the best thing to do was to make breakfast a period of the day. Mr. Berman suggested opening schools a little earlier and give kids time to eat. Councillor Davis stated that there was an obstacle for a period of the day approach because funding could not be found.

Mr. Berman stated that the principals are not diligent in getting the schools up to statistics learn fare. Councillor Davis stated we are not in learn fare. Ms. Hanig stated that learn-fare information is confidential and non-accessible for any entity. Mr. Berman stated that schools run Summer Camp Program and Human Services cannot use school forms. New forms need to be filled out from Human Services. Mr. Bergman stated that the system wide approach was frustrating.

At this time Councillor Davis made the following motion:

City of Cambridge

- 5 -

That the City Council go on record transmitting its support to the Massachusetts Legislative delegation in the House and Senate for S#588 and S1579 and request that they be made a high budgetary priority.

Mr. Bergman questioned Ms. Hanig whether the bills sponsored were better than bills for food banks. Ms. Hanig responded that we need both.

Representative Wolf stated that with the Governors' budget and the House and Senate budget we would be better off to say what we are in favor of.

Vice Mayor Born asked how will this affect this Thanksgiving in relation to the distribution of turkeys. Ms. Hanig responded that more people will be waiting for turkeys.

The committee heard from Laura Booth who said that the benefits outreach program between the city and Cambridge food pantries will be reduced. Vice Mayor Born asked if the eligibility would be the same. Ms. Booth said the only change is in federal commodities.

Mr. Berman said that as people lose their SSI and food stamps the food pantries will not have the extra money to get food. This money will be dispersed to all people not just legal immigrants he said. Ms. Hanig stated that food stamps will not keep track with food costs. She said that it is not just legal immigrants, people will lose income because they are cut off from welfare. Ms. Booth said that Cambridge food pantries meet below thirty percent of the increase.

Mr. Berman stated that the food stamp approval process is harder to negotiate.

Ms. Hanig urged letters be sent to Senators Kerry and Kennedy outlining the impact on Cambridge and that it was important that the budget be restored. She stated that voting for the balanced budget amendment would put everything we have in jeopardy and request that our senators vote against the balanced budget amendment. This budget would result in more hungry children.

Councillor Davis stated that data is needed to write to our legislators. Mr. Berman said the data is extremely soft but he would try to supply the committee with the number of immigrants and the number of people on food stamps.

Representative Wolf stated there is less money to buy things and fewer people are employed and all will effect the local economy. Loss of rent control also had an effect, stated Ms. Hanig.

City of Cambridge

- 6 -

Ms. Hanig questioned Ms. Yard and Ms. Hawkins if there was an increase in St. Paul's Food Pantry. They responded that there was a twenty-seven percent increase in the last three months. "We serve Cambridge people. Is this what other pantries do," they asked? Mr. Berman stated funds are intended to go to residents, but because of the closing of the Haitian Pantry people will be served from Cambridge and Somerville.

Mr. Bergman requested a profile of people affected, who are they, what are the effects on people facing rent increases; could use of outreach worker help to understand what has happened in the City?

Councillor Davis asked for a food pantry report containing how many people are using the food pantries, the number of families and how often.

The meeting adjourned at four o'clock and fifty minutes p.m.

For the Committee,

Henrietta Davis
Councillor Henrietta Davis *by ds*
Chair

Committee Report #1

S-116

A report was received for a meeting held on February 7, 1997 for the purpose of receiving information about federal Legislation relating to hunger programs with regard to immigrant benefits.

In City Council February 24, 1997

Report Accepted

PLACED ON FILE

Two **ORDER ADOPTED**