

City of Cambridge

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICERS FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1996

1. A communication was received from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk, transmitting a communication from Mayor Sheila Russell regarding the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program Review of 1996 together with the plan for the program for 1997.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Sheila Doyle Russell
Mayor

October 31, 1996

TO: Cambridge City Council

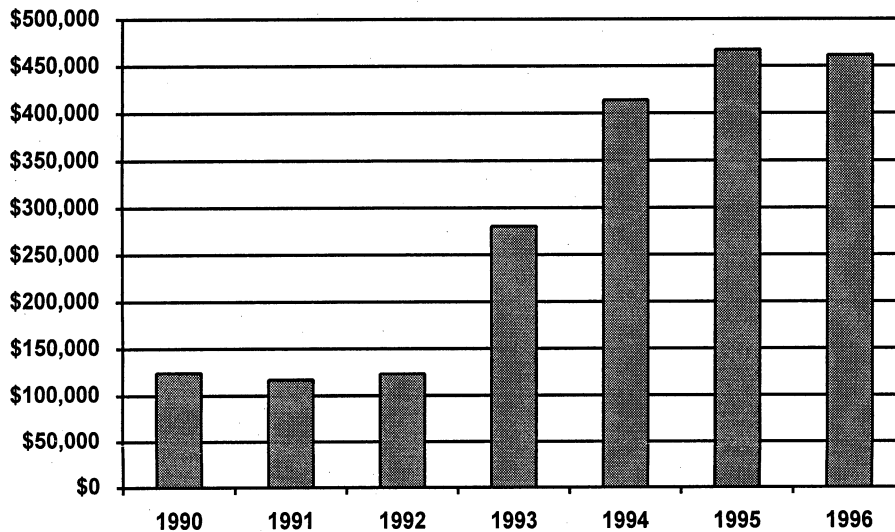
FROM: Sheila Doyle Russell, Mayor

RE: ***Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program
Review of 1996 - Plan for 1997***

The attached Report of the Mayor's 1996 Summer Youth Employment Program outlines the results of the Mayor's Office partnership with the Office of Workforce Development to operate the 1996 summer jobs program. I am pleased to report that our collaboration was a great success and I have approved additional changes to the program for 1997. Most significant is the creation of a management structure which provides year-round influence of the MSYEP in the city's youth employment efforts. I fully support this new approach to the MSYEP.

As you know, the purpose of the MSYEP has changed dramatically in its 25 year history. At its inception the program operated successfully as a simple seasonal employment program for Cambridge youth. In recent years, the program has grown in response to changes in our economy and changes in the employment skill development needs of our youth. During the summer of 1990, the program served approximately 190 Cambridge youth. In 1996 the MSYEP provided summer jobs to approximately 500 Cambridge youth. In addition, the mission of the MSYEP has grown beyond simply providing summer employment. The mission now includes skill development programs to ensure that our young people can compete in a more volatile and demanding economy. Accordingly, the MSYEP budget reflects these important changes. The following graph highlights the growth of the MSYEP budget in recent years:

Mayor Summer Youth Employment Program Budget History



Clearly, the MSYEP has grown beyond a simple seasonal employment program. The goals of the MSYEP require a more consistent and continuous approach to affecting youth employment in Cambridge. The traditional process of re-inventing the MSYEP each spring, with new staff and often a new Mayor's administration, is inefficient and detrimental to providing the best employment experience possible for Cambridge youth. We cannot afford to continue re-inventing the wheel every twelve months.

The attached report outlines the creation of a full-time year round MSYEP director to work under the Office of Workforce Development. I fully support this action as an essential improvement to the MSYEP. The MSYEP director will work in partnership with the Mayor's office to plan and operate the summer jobs program, but will also work with the MSYEP participants after the formal summer program is ended to continue job development training and to assist youth in obtaining private sector employment. In addition, the MSYEP director will continuously work to improve MSYEP worksites, outreach efforts and placement procedures during the "off-season".

I have made it a priority for the MSYEP to control program cost without damaging the services the program provides to Cambridge youth. The new management program will allow the Office of Workforce Development to help MSYEP program participants "graduate" to private sector employment. In doing so, we will reduce demand on the MSYEP and ensure that youth unable to obtain private sector employment will have the opportunity to participate in the MSYEP.

The new organization will be accommodated within the existing MSYEP budget. The MSYEP budget will be level funded for FY 1998 despite an increase in the minimum wage. All improvements to the MSYEP are made through additional efficiency, not additional expenditure. No cuts in youth job placements or services will be made to accommodate the new management structure.

If you have any questions or comments about this attached report, please feel free to contact me or my Chief of Staff, David R. Goode. I appreciate your support of our ongoing efforts to improve youth employment opportunities in Cambridge.

ATTACHMENT

REPORT OF MAYOR'S 1996 SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

I. THE NEW PARTNERSHIP

This year marked the beginning of new era in the City's youth employment programs with the transfer of overall management responsibility for the Mayor's summer jobs program to the Office of Workforce Development. The successful partnership between the Mayor's office and the Office of Workforce Development will help promote the expansion of year round employment and career exploration opportunities for Cambridge youth.

For over twenty five years, the Mayor's Office has operated a summer jobs program providing work experiences to Cambridge youth. During most of those years, there was no City run office whose focus was the coordination of service delivery of employment and training for Cambridge youth. With the creation of the Office of Workforce Development two years ago and its management of the Citywide Youth Employment Office, the City took on a major role in promoting collaboration of the private, nonprofit and public sectors to provide summer and year round employment services for youth. The Mayor's decision to transfer the management responsibility for the Mayor's summer program to the Office of Workforce Development will permit the integration of the City's largest youth employment program with the other youth employment programs.

The new collaboration between the Mayor's Office and the Office of Workforce Development calls upon the resources and expertise of both partners. Working with the Cambridge employer community and in partnership with youth-serving agencies, the Office of Workforce Development has coordinated the City's private sector summer jobs campaign, annually linking 200-250 Cambridge youth to jobs with local employers. The Mayor's office will begin this year to play a role in that private sector jobs campaign, encouraging participation by new employers and expansion by previously engaged employers. The Office of Workforce Development has also played a leading role in developing the award winning Career Pathways Initiative, the City's School-to-Career System. As Chair of the School Committee, the Mayor will be working on expanding School-to-Career activities within the Schools.

The goal of this year's collaboration was to begin strengthening the City's offerings and begin integrating students' school-year and summer experiences to create a seamless system of educational and work-based learning opportunities. Specifically, we sought to:

- Use the Youth Employment Center, the high school's one-stop information and referral center, managed by the Office of Workforce Development and staffed jointly by it and local youth employment program staff, as a means to recruit students and streamline the City's summer youth employment program application process for all programs for students and agencies;
- Create links between the Mayor's Program and other summer and year-round youth employment and Career Pathways programs;
- Increase the Mayor's Program capacity by creating a private sector component linked to the City's private sector Summer Jobs Campaign; and

- Enhance students' summer work experience by creating Summer Work and Learning projects connecting work and learning by introducing young people to potential career and educational pathways.

II. THE PLANNING PHASE

The program planning began in March. Staff from the Mayor's office and the Office of Workforce Development met over several weeks to make decisions about application distribution and intake, program time frame, defining the counselor role and responsibilities, introducing job-readiness curriculum, and other aspects of program development. Some of the key program decisions made by the group were to:

- Focus the program on serving 14 and 15 year olds as well as those 16 and older for whom private sector job placement was not likely because of barriers to employment. It was agreed to pay all participants, regardless of age, \$4.75/hr, thereby encouraging most students 16 years and older to seek jobs in the private sector.
- Determine youth acceptance into the program by a lottery system to avoid a one-day, one-chance system. Applications were accepted between April 29 and May 10. All 14 and 15 year olds were accepted as well as those 16 and older with identified barriers to employment. The other applicants 16 and older were assigned random application numbers for selection by lottery.
- Conduct a comprehensive outreach effort throughout the City. Over **1,500** applications were distributed through all Cambridge Public elementary schools, Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, Matignon and North Cambridge Catholic High Schools, the Mayor's Office, Department of Human Services, the Youth Employment Center and Student Service Center.
- Obtain feedback from established Mayor's Program worksites to inform program planning decisions. To this end, the Mayor's Office hosted a breakfast reception in April for Mayor's Program employers. At that time, employers made suggestions about program design and operation, including ideas about strengthening the Counselor-Site relationship, providing participants with job-readiness training and site orientation and program scheduling.
- Create Summer Work and Learning Projects, in addition to traditional job sites, to provide youth with an introduction to the work environment, prepare them for the workplace and inform them of potential career and educational pathways. The goal was to improve youths' knowledge, decision-making and employability skills, while linking summer programming to school-year efforts. Selected proposals included: Multi Cultural Arts Center for their inter-generational theater project; Area IV Youth Center for newsletter writing, research on post-secondary opportunities, video production, drama and Counselor in Training projects; CityLinks public service Apprenticeship; CCTV's youth Summer Video Institute, and SummerBridge Cambridge for their teaching program.

III. THE SUMMER PROGRAM

■ Applications were received from a total of 615 youth. All 14 and 15 year old applicants were placed. Youth 16 and older were selected through a lottery. After some youth declined job offers, 477 students were placed in summer positions. No youth were put on a waiting list. Because of extensive publication of the single rate of pay for all youth, regardless of age, and because of the emphasis this year on 14-15 year olds, many older youth did not apply. Many applied to private sector employment programs and were placed; there were no waiting lists this year for the community's summer youth employment programs.

■ After outreach was done to potential City and nonprofit work sites, 92 work site applications were received. 86 work sites were selected, including 6 special projects that were funded through the Summer Work and Learning initiative. The types of positions available were:

91	Office work	203	Working w/ children
57	Maintenance	95	Special Projects
28	Arts	3	Working w/ elderly

■ The City Links program illustrates a successful adaptation to the criteria set for Summer Work and Learning sites. As a school year school-to-work resource for Cambridge young people, City Links operates an after-school apprenticeship program that exposes linguistic minority students to government and public sector careers, while training them for leadership positions in their communities. By extending the program through the summer, students were able to maintain the integration of school- and work-based learning. Additionally, the program offers an academic seminar (in concert with the Mayor's Program enrichment component) which provides participants with training in workplace and leadership skills, and supports job placements.

■ The Mayor's Program staff consisted of a Director, two Assistant Directors, a Job Developer, and 27 Counselors. The Job Developer was a newly created position for 1996, replacing a third Assistant Director position. The job developer worked with the Office of Workforce Development Business Liaison to link with the City's established private sector summer jobs campaign.

■ Capitalizing on the school-to-work curriculum resources of the Office of Workforce Development, the Mayor's Program developed orientations and trainings for all participating partners, youth, supervisors and program staff. Throughout the summer, program activities and support to work sites focused on the overall program goals of building transferable skills and helping young people transition into employment in the private sector.

■ Mayor's Program Counselors received a day-long orientation and training that included modules on program expectations, youth counseling skills, identifying youths' learning styles, communication skills, and developing goals for youth participants of the Mayor's Program. Each Counselor completed an evaluation of the orientation. Feedback included a high level of

satisfaction with the training received and the opportunity to do team-building exercises and role-plays with other Counselors, as well as an expressed desire to receive more training in teaching skills.

- Many work site supervisors attended an orientation meeting two weeks prior to the youths' start date. Orientation topics, taken from the Citywide Youth Employment Office's *Work Routes* guide for employers, included how to acclimate youth to the workplace, creating a learning plan for young employees, and teaching transferable skills to improve young workers' employability. Employers also reviewed the Mayor's Program rules and regulations for youth participants, received a summary of the Counselor role at their site, and arranged time to meet their assigned youth before the start of the program.

- All youth completed an orientation before the start of the program that included meeting their Counselor, completion of necessary personnel and payroll forms, a review and discussion of the Mayor's Program rules and regulations, and notification of job placement, supervisor and schedule. Feedback from both youth and parents was that the orientation was very helpful and organized.

- Overall, job matching was based on youths' first three choices of work-related interests. The Mayor's Program divided the City into 10 zones, and using this system, youth were generally placed within one mile of their homes.

- Each Counselor conducted weekly workshops for their assigned youth based on job-readiness curriculum which included modules on Job Application and Job Search Skills, Interviewing Techniques, Resume Writing, and College Preparation. The curriculum was designed to increase the future employability of each participant and expose them to themes of work maturity. The curriculum covered competencies which have been mutually accepted by the City's private sector youth employment programs, and developed by the Office of Workforce Development. Progress notes were completed weekly by Counselors for each youth, for the purpose of tracking performance improvements and developing counseling strategies. Each Counselor met with each work site supervisor to discuss youths' job performance, punctuality and any issues that may have arisen. Additionally, 104 youth attended a tour of Worcester State College and Bridgewater State College, which was made possible through a collaboration with MIT Educational Talent Search.

- Counselors, youth participants and worksites were all asked to evaluate the program components. Overall, feedback was positive and provided valuable suggestions for program design and implementation for future summers. The Counselors were asked to evaluate both the general program operations and each of their assigned sites. In general, Counselors found their sites to be valuable learning experiences for youth and would recommend they become summer job sites again. Youth and work site supervisors were asked to evaluate the program itself, their Counselor and their overall summer experience with the program. Common feedback received from work sites included a general satisfaction with the program operations, a desire to meet their youth before the summer begins, and a desire to limit the number of times youth are pulled

out for training. Most youth expressed satisfaction with their position, Counselor and workshops. Many youth asked the program to raise the hourly wage for next year.

IV. SCHOOL-YEAR INTEGRATION

School-year integration of the Mayor's Program into year round program offerings is taking place right now through the high school's Youth Employment Center, including outreach to Mayor's Program "graduates," skill-building workshops, job matching and program referrals, resume writing services and supported job searches. In order to offer Mayor's program participants a smooth transition into the school year and the opportunity to link with the City's overall youth employment program services, the position of Mayor's Program Director has been expanded to a full-year position as a part of the City's overall youth employment program. The Mayor's Program/Youth Services Coordinator will work to expand youth employment and work-based learning experience in concert with the Career Pathways Initiative.

Many of the new program initiatives were begun this September:

- All Mayor's Program participants received information packets on fall school-to-work opportunities, a directory of all school-year youth employment programs, information on job-readiness workshops, and other career exploration activities. Additionally, all youth received a letter inviting them to visit the Youth Employment Center to work one-on-one with a staff person.
- This summer's Mayor's Program Director has been staffing the Youth Employment Center at the high school helping Mayor's program participants to create their own resumes, providing job-readiness workshops, job-matching services, referrals to other programs, and supporting placements. The goal is to spend the school year preparing Mayor's program "graduates" for entrance into the private sector, thereby opening up the opportunity to work with new participants each year. (It is anticipated that some of the 14 year olds will participate again in the program as 15 year olds, given the difficulty of 15 year olds getting placed in the private sector.)
- All Mayor's Program participants were contacted to encourage them to sign up for the City's snow shoveling program, connecting them with yet another employment opportunity.

V. 1997 GOALS

The 1996 Mayor's Program was a success. We were able to effectively infuse the shared goals of the Office of The Mayor and the Office of Workforce Development to increase the capacity of the program. We plan to continue to increase the coordination between the Mayor's Program and other work-based learning initiatives. Some of the plans for next year include:

- Begin program planning, recruitment of job sites, and recruitment of summer staff earlier than in the past.
- Increase the number and scope of Summer Work & Learning Sites and develop competencies to be included in next year's projects.
- In coordination with Employment Resources Inc., market the Mayor's Program public sector opportunities to elementary and first-year high school students; Establish outreach forums on private sector summer youth employment programs for older students; Market Mayor's Program private sector opportunities to students ineligible for other programs.
- Develop a streamlined "feeder system" for all private-sector ready Mayor's Program graduates, including issuing Certificates of Completions which provide an entree into local youth employment programs.
- Provide post-summer job-readiness review sessions as needed and advanced curricula in job-readiness and computer literacy skills; provide private sector job matching and case management, including ongoing support for students and participating businesses.
- Increase hourly salary to \$5.15 for all summer youth.

VI. CONCLUSION

The successful collaboration of the Office of the Mayor and the Office of Workforce Development this year in expanding the employment and career development opportunities available to youth is just the beginning. The Mayor's leadership role with the School Committee and ambassadorial role to the business community combined with the program development expertise of the Office of Workforce Development offer many possibilities for enhancing the City's youth employment programs and services.

Communications and Reports from City Officers #1

A communication was received from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk, transmitting a communication from Mayor Sheila Russell regarding the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program Review of 1996 together with the plan for the program for 1997.

S-535

In City Council November 4, 1996

Placed on File.