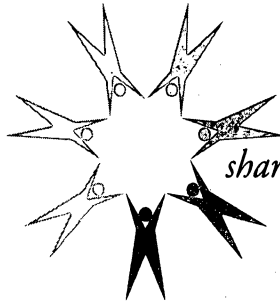


# Department of Human Service Programs



*sharing resources...building community*

Jill Herold  
Assistant City Manager

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager  
From: Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services  
Date: October 13, 1998  
Subject: Update on Youth Assessment and Request for a Meeting

Childcare

I am writing to request a meeting for some time in early November with members of the City Council to discuss the Youth Assessment process that is now underway within the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP).

Commission for  
Persons with Disabilities

Community and Youth

We have issued an RFP, retained a consultant and are now moving forward with an assessment and strategic planning process for the Cambridge Youth Program. The consultant, Technical Development Corporation (TDC), prepared a strong proposal including a detailed work plan – a copy is attached. The proposal recommends forming a Planning Committee to meet periodically with TDC in order to review research findings, timelines, and projected outcomes and to finalize the key policy assumptions that will underlie our goal setting.

Community  
Learning Center

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

We have formed the Planning Committee, which is made up of staff from DHSP and key collaborators – a list of committee members is attached. Last week the Planning Committee met for the first time, and we are now beginning the research phase of our planning process in earnest.

Council on Aging;  
Elderly Services

Low Income  
Fuel Assistance

Our consultant has emphasized the importance of engaging all individuals whose support will be essential to the success of our final plan. To that end, I am requesting that the Planning Committee and our consulting team meet with members of the City Council in order to share the results of our initial research, solicit input, and place this initiative in the context of other city-wide efforts. This meeting will also provide an opportunity to update members of the City Council on the extended day planning initiative.

Multi-Service Center;  
Homeless Services

Office of Workforce  
Development

Planning & Development

Recreation



**PROPOSAL TO CONDUCT STRATEGIC PLANNING ON  
BEHALF OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
DHSP YOUTH PROGRAM**

**Prepared by:  
Technical Development Corporation  
30 Federal Street  
Boston, MA 02110  
(p)617-728-9151  
(f) 617-728-9138**

**July 23, 1998**

## INTRODUCTION

Technical Development Corporation (TDC) is pleased to submit this proposal to assist the City of Cambridge's Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) with mission clarification, program assessment and strategic planning for the Department's Youth Program. As TDC understands it, DHSP's Youth Program is dedicated to providing a range of programs, services and opportunities for the youth of Cambridge. The Youth Program's focus is to promote and facilitate the healthy physical and emotional development of its participants. To achieve these ends, the Youth Program manages a number of youth centers and programs throughout Cambridge, drawing from a diverse population of pre-teens and teens.

During the past eight years, the Youth Program has experienced significant growth with respect to its facilities, programming and the population it serves; with only minimal changes to its staffing structure. It recently opened two new teen centers, has included pre-teens in its programming efforts, and is increasing its emphasis on programs serving adolescent girls. Concurrently, the Youth Program has had to respond to the external pressures of increased demand for youth services and the "evolving needs" of its target population.

As the Youth Program looks to the future, it is TDC's impression that DHSP is concerned with three key, inter-related issues. These are:

What is the Youth Program's mission and purpose? While the Program has a core focus on serving pre-teens and teens within the City of Cambridge, the specifics of how this core focus is currently carried out, particularly in light of the Program's on-going expansion and changing population, need to be clarified and potentially redefined.

Do the Program's current operating systems, activities and organizational structure support its mission? After a number of years of growth, the Program has entered a period of introspection. Given the questions outlined in the RFP, the Program is interested in taking stock of its activities and analyzing its ability to meet the needs of the City's pre-teen and teen population.

How do we ensure that our Program continues to meet the needs of our constituency? The Program has already responded to changes in its operating environment by building new youth centers, renovating existing centers, expanding its population to include pre-teens, and adapting its programs to be more inclusive of young women and girls. Looking ahead, the Program must answer a number of difficult questions, including: what other changes or additions should it consider making to remain responsive and proactive; where do the Program's opportunities and threats lie; and, what short- and long-term objectives and actions will increase the Program's likelihood of capitalizing upon its opportunities, and avoiding its threats?

We believe that TDC is uniquely suited to assisting the City of Cambridge's DHSP in addressing these questions. As one of New England's oldest and largest providers of technical assistance and management consulting services, we have worked exclusively with nonprofit, public sector, and philanthropic organizations, to provide them with the business and management skills critical to carrying out their missions effectively. In recent years, TDC's practice has increasingly focused on helping nonprofit, public sector and philanthropic organizations to reposition themselves in the context of changing times. Such repositioning can take a number of forms: we provide assistance with strategic business planning, reshaping organizational structures and/or programs, developing financial and fundraising strategies, measuring program outcomes, and forging mergers and alliances. TDC has undertaken these efforts with organizations and programs representing a wide range of missions and purposes, including youth service, family service, mental health, human service, and educational initiatives.

Below we detail our approach and methodology to the consultancy, a proposed workplan and qualifications.

## **VII. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

### **A. Approach and Methodology**

TDC's approach to strategic planning is one which is inclusive, pragmatic and translates easily into implementation. From the outset of the process, we actively garner the involvement of the program's staff, advisers, and key constituencies and keep them involved throughout the project's duration. As we work through the process, TDC will review the cumulative results of the project and bring these results to both the DHSP leadership, and a designated planning group for feedback and discussion. Each step of the planning work will be informed by the outcomes of the previous tasks – this iterative process will constantly be honed and redefined as DHSP/Youth Program staff identifies and explores key questions and ideas.

In order for a planning initiative to be successful, it is vital for a program to consider, and sometimes rethink, where it wants to be and how it hopes to achieve its goals. Therefore, a key component of TDC's approach to strategic planning is to review a program's mission with key stakeholders. This process is intended to ensure that: 1) program stakeholders are able to articulate the organization's or program's mission clearly; 2) that there is agreement about the content of the mission statement among key stakeholders; and 3) that the mission is relevant given the organization's or program's current activities, population and services. Discussions about mission generally serve as a "kick-off"

within TDC's approach to planning, but continue throughout the process as new information is learned and new perspectives are introduced.

Although discussions around mission are iterative, information shared during this initial stage of planning drives the second key component of the process—assessment. TDC applies a two-pronged approach to assessment, looking closely at both the internal and external environments of a program or organization. This process is guided by the following principles:

TDC views the assessment process as an organization-wide effort involving all key stakeholders. The feedback and recommendations stemming from this process will ultimately influence the future direction, structure, and climate of the program or organization. Therefore, it is vital that all those affected by the outcome have an opportunity to provide input to the process.

Strategic decisions about structure and management practices must be grounded not only in a firm understanding of where a program would like to go, but also in a clear-eyed view of the environment in which the program must function. As such, an assessment must bring both internal and external perspectives to bear. Thus, during the course of this effort, TDC proposes to speak with a number of key external stakeholders.

Finally, TDC recognizes that organizational transitions, while presenting opportunities for new approaches and directions, can also be difficult. Change in and of itself can be stressful to an organization. We have set aside time in the workplan to work closely with leadership to think carefully about the impact that structural changes may have on staff, and to anticipate what support may be required to implement any changes.

TDC further proposes to devote significant attention to exploring the Youth Program's competitors, collaborators and its position within the Cambridge youth services arena.

Once a sense of the Youth Program's internal and external operating environments is achieved, TDC will work with staff and key advisers to build a strategic plan that will guide the organization for the next three years. The plan will not only reflect where the organization wants to go, but how it will get there. TDC recognizes the time and expense invested in a planning process of this magnitude, and is therefore committed to producing a final document that is as much a work plan and outcomes measurement tool for the program, as it is a strategic plan.

## **B. Workplan**

The following workplan represents what TDC considers to be the best approach to program planning given the information outlined by the Request for Proposals. As requested, TDC proposes to address the question of mission at the outset of the planning process as a means of laying the groundwork for the assessment and planning phases. It is unlikely, however, that all questions surrounding the Program's mission and purpose will be resolved at this stage. It has been TDC's experience that data collected during the assessment and planning phases often inform further discussion about mission and purpose. Therefore, TDC has budgeted time both at the beginning and end of the workplan to work with Program staff and Planning Committee members on mission review and revision. Should this approach not meet the requirements of RFP, TDC is more than happy to discuss alternative approaches.

Beyond the question of mission, TDC has broken the process down into four phases: getting started; assessment; strategic planning facilitation; and planning document preparation. TDC feels that this approach is a close match to the one outlined in the Request for Proposals, and we are confident that the sequence of work outlined below will produce a product that meets DHSP's planning needs in a thorough and comprehensive manner.

### **Phase One: Getting Started**

The goal of Phase One is two-fold: 1) to ensure that all activities, their purpose and expected outcomes are understood by those involved in the planning process; and 2) to begin the process of mission review and revision.

The work will begin with an initial meeting between Youth Program representatives and TDC consultants to lay the groundwork for the project. At this meeting we will review and discuss the overall planning process and decide on the composition of the Planning Committee that will guide the consultancy. The Planning Committee should be comprised of no more than 10 members, and should include individuals whose knowledge and perspectives will be critical to the process. Individuals whose ultimate support will be essential to the success of the final plan should also be included on the Committee. This body will meet with the consultants periodically throughout the process to review research findings, projected outcomes, timelines, and to finalize the key policy assumptions that will underlie those projections.

Once members of the Planning Committee are selected and invited to participate, and TDC has had the opportunity to review relevant background materials on the Program,

TDC will convene a meeting of the full Committee to: discuss the Youth Program's mission; identify the Program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis); articulate the key strategic questions that the Program wants this process to address; and identify those people/sources best suited to answer these important questions. Questions that might be generated during this exercise include: are there target population groups that the Program wants to locate and serve; are there specific programs or activities that the Program wants to establish/expand/discontinue; are there other organizations with whom the Youth Program should partner or collaborate?

Using the input from these initial meetings, TDC will prepare a memorandum that summarizes the Planning Committee's feedback about the Program's mission and SWOT analysis; and, outlines the key questions facing the Program, as well as the implications of these questions on the structure and content of the assessment phase of work. TDC will then meet with Youth Program project liaisons to review the memo and organize the approach to the next set of tasks.

### **Phase Two: Assessment**

The purpose of the assessment phase is to develop the baseline of information necessary to undertake effective strategic planning. It combines various research strategies—document review, interviews, and qualitative and quantitative analyses—to formulate a full understanding of where the Program currently “is”, and where it “might be” in the future. The assessment process that we propose is made up of three component parts, briefly described below.

***Stakeholder Interviews:*** To gain an understanding of the Program's operational and programmatic strengths and weaknesses, TDC envisions conducting a series of interviews with key internal and external stakeholders. Interviewees will be asked to describe the organization's operating environment— staffing structure, systems, culture and challenges—to the extent that they are able), and to share their perspectives on the vision they have for the Youth Program in the coming years. More specifically, interviewees will be asked to provide their perspective on:

- the services and activities of the Youth Program;
- the Program's role within the larger DHSP context;
- the Program's role within the larger Cambridge youth services context;
- the Program's role as a municipal entity charged with addressing the needs of the City's youth, and how this role relates to those played by nonprofit providers and the schools;
- prospective initiatives and programmatic areas that would enhance the Program's impact and reputation;

- issues of competitive positioning; and,
- the possibilities for strategic alliances and collaborations.

TDC views these interviews as a crucial component of planning, therefore, we have budgeted a considerable number of hours to this end. Ultimately, however, the number of interviews conducted and content of the questions to be asked will be determined among TDC staff, Program liaisons and the Planning Committee.

*Constituency Feedback:* In conjunction with the individual interviews mentioned above, TDC proposes that the assessment phase include a significant focus on gathering feedback from two of the Program's key constituencies—Program participants and their parents. Possible methods for securing this feedback include focus group discussions, surveys, and/or targeted interviews. It is premature at this time to decide which method is most appropriate. TDC will work with the Planning Committee to discuss the key issues to be addressed in gathering constituent feedback and the best data collection method given these considerations.

*Environmental Scan:* Once TDC has developed a clear picture of the Youth Program's internal operations and activities, and vision for its future, we will then take this picture and place it within the context of the broader environment. In researching the envisioned structure of the Youth Program's activities and services, TDC will also review and investigate:

- relevant demographic trends;
- constituency needs;
- trends in youth programming
- activities of other youth service providers in the area; and,
- the structure and functioning of comparable program models.

As with the first phase of work, Phase II of the workplan will be concluded with a summary memo which will be presented to the planning committee for review and identification of any additional research that may need to be completed. We envision this discussion will lead to the identification of the key strategic decisions the Program may elect to pursue, including both current and new programs or services. At the completion of Phases I and II, the Youth Program will have identified its core activities and articulated the role and priority of any new, expanded or reduced activities. This framework can then be implemented in the creation of a complete, detailed strategic plan.

### **Phase Three: Facilitate Strategic Planning Committee Meetings**

Using the baseline of information acquired during Phases One and Two, TDC will facilitate a series of meetings with the Planning Committee to discuss findings of the assessment phase and identify the direction in which the Youth Program wishes to proceed.

Starting with the mission and vision of the Program, the Committee will then articulate the specific path that the Program will follow over the next three to five years. Once goals and objectives have been articulated, TDC anticipates having to conduct additional research to: 1) test the feasibility of the articulated goals and objectives given the Program's current staffing levels, systems and resources; and 2) research "best practices" with respect to service paradigms and operating systems.

TDC anticipates facilitating 3-4 planning meetings and will prepare written summaries of each meeting for dissemination to the Planning Committee in advance of future meetings.

### **Phase Four: Prepare Planning Document**

The last step will be to create the planning document. It will embody all the information collected throughout the planning process and will include the following:

- the mission and guiding principles of the Youth Program;
- a profile of the client population the Youth Program wishes to serve and why the Program is well suited to meet the needs of these groups;
- a description of the programming that best serves this population's needs;
- the program, systems, and organizational structure the Youth Program will need to serve this population, and a timeline for implementing this structure; and,
- detailed benchmarks against which the Youth Program's progress and performance can be evaluated and, through which, the strategic plan can be adapted on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the Program's operating environment.
- TDC will work in conjunction with DHSP and Youth Program leadership to develop and finalize the plan and will then be available to present the finished product, as needed.

### **C. Sequence**

The following workplan outlines the sequencing of the proposed scope of services. Within the Phase Two, tasks will likely overlap, however it has been TDC's experience

that it is imperative to gain as full an understanding of an organization's internal environment before exploring its external operating environment.

TDC is confident that the proposed scope of work can be completed within the 17-week time frame outlined in the RFP, with one exception. As articulated in the Workplan section of this proposal, TDC anticipates completing a significant portion of the work related to the Program's mission in a timely manner, with the remainder of the work to be completed during Phase Three of the work plan—Facilitation of Strategic Planning Meetings.

#### **D. Staff Commitment**

The attached workplan outlines the various meetings that will require the presence of key DHSP and Youth Program staff. TDC anticipates working with two project liaisons, to be determined jointly at the project's outset, throughout the strategic planning process. Estimated time commitments of key DHSP/Youth Program staff is included on the proposed workplan and budget.

Furthermore, as a process that intends to be as inclusive of the Youth Program's staff as possible, TDC anticipates conducting a series of 1-2 hour interviews with agreed upon members of the Program's staff.

Additional staff time may be required to assist consultants with scheduling, stakeholder correspondence and constituent focus group/survey administration. TDC welcomes any administrative support the Program is able to provide, but appreciates that most public sector employees already carry full workloads. Tasks that will likely require Program staff support will be identified and agreed upon by TDC and project liaisons at the outset of consultancy.

# City of Cambridge Proposed Planning Process

Tasks	Consultants		Bilingual/Diverse Facilitators (anticipated)
	Rublin	Cardella	
<b>I. Phase One: Getting Started</b>			
A. Prepare for and meet with program liaisons to finalize workplan and identify potential planning committee members	3	3	
B. Review internal documentation	4	6	
D. Prepare for planning retreat	4	4	
E. Facilitate planning retreat(s) to achieve the following: - review planning process with Planning Committee - review and revise mission - conduct SWOT analysis  - identify key strategic questions for internal and external stakeholders	8	8	
F. Prepare for and facilitate meeting with Cambridge City Council members	3	3	
G. Prepare memorandum summarizing mission clarification and SWOT analysis	4	24	
H. Meet with program liaisons to achieve the following: review memo and organize assessment phase - review memorandum -organize assessment phase of work - discuss project timeline and establish project benchmarks	3	3	
<b>II. Phase Two: Assessment</b>			
A. Gather program and operations information from key internal and external stakeholders and observe program operations - Program staff - City administrators - Collaborating partners - School representatives	20	32	
B. Conduct environmental scan to further assess competitive environment and market - Demographic trends - Competitor and comparative analyses of other youth programs - Shifts in youth service paradigms - Constituency needs	8	32	
C. Prepare for and conduct 10 program constituency focus groups  <b>SEE ATTACHED SUBCONTRACT WORKPLAN AND BUDGET</b>	2	14	121
D. Prepare written synthesis of findings from assessment phase	8	32	
E. Prepare for and meet with program liaisons to discuss findings and next steps	3	3	

		Consultants		Bilingual/Diverse Facilitators (anticipated)
Tasks		Rublin	Cardelia	
<b>III. Phase Three: Facilitate Strategic Planning Committee Meetings</b>				
A.	Prepare for and meet with City Council members to present findings of Phases One and Two	3	3	
B.	Prepare for and conduct a series of meetings with the Planning Committee to: - Discuss implications of Phase One and Two findings - Revise and finalize program mission statement - Develop short- and long-term strategic goals and objectives - Determine additional research needs	16	16	
C.	Conduct research on "best practices" and comparative analyses in light of desired goals and objectives	4	28	
D.	Preparation and write-ups for each meeting	4	24	
<b>IV. Phase Four: Prepare Planning Document</b>				
A.	Prepare for and facilitate working meetings with program liaison and key staff to discuss implementation of Program goals and objectives	12	12	
B.	Prepare final document	16	40	
C.	Present final report to Planning Committee	3	3	
D.	Liaison with key staff	4	8	
	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>121</b>
	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$40</b>
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$13,200</b>	<b>\$11,920</b>	<b>\$4,840</b>
	<b>Average Cost per Hour</b>	<b>\$54</b>		
	<b>Plus Expenses (billed at cost)</b>	<b>\$500 (estimated)</b>		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29,960</b>		

revised budget

**Phase Two Addendum**

**Consultants**

**Focus Group Planning, Preparation and Facilitation Tasks**

**Bilingual/Diverse Facilitators**

**(anticipates 4 co-consultants)**

**City of Cambridge Staff**

**Rublin**

**Cardelia**

		Rublin	Cardelia	Bilingual/Diverse Facilitators (anticipates 4 co-consultants)	City of Cambridge Staff
C.	Focus Group Logistics and Support				
	- Identify/finalize focus group participants	1	4		8
	- Draft/Finalize letter of invitation		2		
	- Translate letter where necessary			6	
	- Dissemination of invitations and follow up phone calls				20
D.	Prepare for and Conduct Focus Groups				
	-Draft and finalize focus group protocols (3 versions)	1	8		
	-Translate protocols (allows 1 hr/version)			6	
	-Reminder phone calls (1.5 hrs/2 grps/facilitator)			9	
	-Facilitate focus groups			20	
	-Prepare written summaries of focus groups (8 hrs/grp)			80	
	<b>Total Task Hours</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>n/a</b>
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$560</b>	<b>\$4,840</b>	<b>n/a</b>
	<b>Total Task Expense</b>	<b>\$5,600</b>			

# Planning Group

<b>Name</b>	Robert	Goodwin
<b>Affiliation</b>	Youth Program Director	DHSP
<b>Name</b>	Andrew	Spooner
<b>Affiliation</b>	Youth Program Developer	DHSP
<b>Name</b>	Kristen	Mehr
<b>Affiliation</b>	Youth Center Director	Area 4 Youth Center
<b>Name</b>	Steve	Christo
<b>Affiliation</b>	Youth Center Director	Frisoli Youth Center
<b>Name</b>	Hawley	Truax
<b>Affiliation</b>	Grants Manager	DHSP
<b>Name</b>	Pat	Bradshaw
<b>Affiliation</b>	Collaborator/Internal/Parent	Fletcher Community School
<b>Name</b>	Mario	Morency
<b>Affiliation</b>	Collaborator/Internal	Cambridge Prevention Coalition
<b>Name</b>	Michelle	Farnum
<b>Affiliation</b>	Collaborator/Internal	Office of Workforce Development
<b>Name</b>	Alexandra	Lozada
<b>Affiliation</b>	Collaborator/External	Concilio Hispano - Ahora Program
<b>Name</b>	Janet	Moses
<b>Affiliation</b>	Collaborator/External	The Algebra Project
<b>Name</b>	Rose	McMahan
<b>Affiliation</b>	Collaborator/External	CASPAR -Alcohol Education
<b>Name</b>	Joe	Petner
<b>Affiliation</b>	Collaborator/External	The Haggerty School



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300  
FAX. 349-4307



16.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ROBERT W. HEALY  
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI  
Deputy City Manager

October 19, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached for your consideration an update on youth assessment and a request for a meeting with the City Council to discuss the youth assessment process that is now underway within the Department of Human Service Programs, received from Assistant City Manager for Human Services Jill Herold.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec  
Attachment

Consent Agenda #16

*Wds S*

Relative to an update on youth assessment and a request for a meeting with the City Council to discuss the youth assessment process that is now under way within the Dept. of Human Service Program.

In City Council October 19, 1998

Referred to

*Human Service + Youth*  
*Committee*

*10/23 sent to Councilor Rees*