

April 7, 2004

Jeanne B. Mullgrav
Commissioner
Department of Youth and Community Development
156 William Street
New York, NY 10038

Re: Out-of-School Time concept paper

Dear Commissioner Mullgrav:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 (CB4) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) on the Out-of-School Time concept paper, which serves as the precursor for the department's Request for Proposals. We are encouraged by the agency's goal to provide improved coordination, creativity and cost-effectiveness for its youth programming.

The Board's Housing, Health and Human Services Committee has developed the following statement to guide our appraisal of youth-related matters:

The combined neighborhood of Chelsea/Clinton is home to more than 7,500 children under 18 years of age, more than 17 percent of whom receive public assistance. In our district, which ranked third in terms of reported abuse and neglect, only one quarter of the children eligible for public day care receive it and 1,200 children are uninsured, according to the Citizens Committee for Children of New York. There are extremely limited resources for safe recreation, cultural, and educational activities for youth of all ages.

In that light, CB4 urges the city to undertake any DYCD consolidations or reorganizations with extreme caution, preserving core youth services infrastructure before increasing its focus on more specialized programs and initiatives. We also believe priority needs to be placed on maintaining the summer youth employment program at least at last year's level.

After reviewing the Out-of-School Time (OST) Concept Paper, we have the following comments. Comments are organized by Concept Paper topic headings.

Service Options and Funding Allocation Formulas

It is the understanding of CB4 that priority may be given to programs located in communities housing a particularly high percentage of the city's youth. While the number of youth residing in the CB4 district may be lower than in other communities, a high number of youth from throughout the city are served by our district's schools and OST programs. We are concerned that this information is not being captured.

Service Option I: OST Regional Programs

The price per participant rate is extremely low, given the high quality programming DYCD naturally expects from grantees. Because DYCD wants to encourage a maximum level of goal attainment (i.e. Goals, 6, 7 and 8) a significantly increased per participant rate is imperative.

Service Option II: Public/Private Match Programs

As presently described, this program rewards organizations that are able to offer a private match greater than 50 percent. CB4 strongly believes this is detrimental to organizations that offer essential custodial and recreational programs. Traditionally, private funders have not been interested in supporting these core initiatives. The concomitant effect of Service Option II would be the neglect of essential safe environments for working families.

Service Option III: Technical Assistance Support Services/ Service Option IV: Evaluation Services

We remain unclear as to how DYCD will select organizations to provide or receive technical assistance; once selected, we are unsure how DYCD will ensure that grantees and technical assistance partners continue to work together.

General Questions and Concerns

- We are concerned about the well-being of our district's youth with disabilities, youth whose first language is not English and new immigrant youth. Will the OST RFP make specific recommendations for these youth?
- One of the stated goals of the OST initiative is to support the needs of working families. Will this include funding extended program hours (before 8AM and after 6PM), in recognition that parents of our youth are not always working 9AM-5PM?
- Will the OST initiative be the only DYCD RFP issued for youth services?
- It is the opinion of many youth serving agencies that youth ages 11 to 14 (Middle School students) represent an age group most in need of, and responsive to, OST services. However, services catering to this segment of youth are sorely lacking. How will the OST RFP address this incongruity?

Per DYCD's request, CB4 offers the following recommendations to enhance community board involvement in the agency's operations. If the recommendations are accepted, we believe Community Boards will become more informed, cooperative partners with DYCD.

- Organizations submitting proposals to DYCD are rewarded for receiving Letters of Support from their respective Community Board.
- Grantees are required to attend quarterly Community Board meetings, preferably committee-level meetings.
- OST evaluation results are shared with all Community Boards.
- Community Boards may seek Technical Assistance from Service Option III grantees on behalf youth-serving CBO's in their catchment area.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Walter Mankoff
Chair, Community Board 4

cc: Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City
C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan, Borough President
Local Elected Officials
Christopher Cesarani, External Affairs, Department of Youth and Community
Development
Manhattan Community Boards