



the environment science learning and action center

Barack Obama, President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

February 10, 2011

Dear Mr. President:

“e” inc. the environmental learning and action center is a small, Boston based non-profit. We work throughout Boston public schools and community centers teaching science paired with action. We are concerned about plans to eliminate the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding for Community Action Agencies. We have directly benefited from this funding and have seen the benefits such funding provides for vulnerable young people in the city.

“e” inc. is one of over 260 Boston non-profits that rely on ABCD’s SummerWorks teen employment program. Last summer, Action for Boston Community Development provided the funding for us to employ 6 young people to work on a community garden in the city and to work in our offices learning science and teaching younger students. I spend the year working with youth and this past summer’s program convinced me how powerful a tool youth jobs are. Not only do these jobs keep youth busy during the summer and provide them with the motivation to be on time and attend the program, they also instill a sense of responsibility in the youth to the organization and cause them to feel ownership over their work. The young people would refer to “e” inc. as their organization and would explain to others with enthusiasm the importance of the work they were doing for the community and the environment.

I tried to create a similar model for the teen program I direct during the school year but it is nearly impossible to find the funding to pay youth. My students do not feel the same ownership over their work as those I worked with over the summer and I attribute this to the fact that they do not see the program as a job. Paying youth is more than a financial motivator, it makes young people feel important and responsible. The teens are dedicated to the tasks they are assigned and learn to take initiative, to go above and beyond the minimum and to take pride in what they do. My desire is to continue this program next summer but without ABCD’s assistance we most likely will have to terminate the program. I therefore ask, for the benefit of the communities we work in and the young people we serve, to fully fund Community Action Agencies.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Guerra
“e” inc.
Teen Program Coordinator

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