



# City of Cambridge

## Executive Department

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City Manager

CMA 2025 #102  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
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To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see below an update from the Department of Human Service Programs (pg 1-7), Cambridge Police Department (pg 8-9), the Cambridge Public Health Department, (pg 9-10) the Community Safety Department (pg 10-11) and Gift Cards for Guns (pg 11-12) regarding opportunities for youth engagement throughout the summer.

Summer is fast approaching and the City of Cambridge remains committed to ensuring a wide variety of programming for young people to enhance well-being, create more community connections and reduce incidents of violence. This memo serves as an overall update on the planning by the city to provide supportive, engaging and innovative programming and opportunities for community building for the Summer of 2025.

Building on many years of commitment to providing comprehensive programming for young people, this update will outline how the Department of Human Service Programs, the Cambridge Police Department, the Cambridge Community Safety Department and the Cambridge Public Health Department are working collaboratively to offer opportunities for youth engagement throughout the summer.

This document is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of all the summer programming across the city. Many community-based organizations provide a wealth of support and opportunities for engagement with young people. The following is meant to provide an overview of what the City of Cambridge is doing directly and providing funding to support.

## **Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP)**

### *Teen Summer Programs*

#### **Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP)**

The goal of MSYEP is to serve as a young person's first job experience and exposure to the world of work. The program is open to Cambridge residents ages 14 through the summer after completing high school. MSYEP prioritizes low-income teens in its application and enrollment process and hires a staff of young adults, almost all from Cambridge, to ensure a successful summer for the teens and the worksites. Teens are placed in public sector and in non-profit jobs throughout Cambridge and in surrounding communities for six weeks during the summer. They work 20 hours a week and are paid minimum wage by the City. There are about 25 MSYEP sites across the community with a STEAM focus. During Summer 2025, MSYEP will run from July 7 – August 15 and teens will make \$15 per hour. We expect about 900 teens to participate in this summer's program.



Nearly half of the youth in MSYEP are placed in Summer Work and Learning sites, which offer participants valuable educational and employment experience using the community's resources to expose youth to potential educational or career paths. This summer, about 27 Summer Work and Learning sites will host teens in a variety of learning and work experiences.

### **Summer Teen Internships offered by Cambridge Youth Centers**

Cambridge Youth Programs (CYP) operates five special paid daytime programs, described below, for teens in collaboration with the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program. Additionally, the Youth Centers will be open for both drop-in and enrichment activities nightly from July –August between the hours of 6 - 9 p.m. Young people can participate in fun activities including movie nights, dance and cooking classes, art classes, game tournaments and fitness programs, just to name a few.

### **Moses Youth Center: Social Media Team**

For Summer 2025, teens will have the opportunity to be a part of a social media team to collect and create content and help in the creation and design of CYP stories. The CYP Social Media Team will be instrumental in sharing the experiences young people have in the CYP Pre-teen/Middle and Teen Summer programs. They will collect and post stories and create experiences based on themes and Youth Center experiences. Teens will learn how to create content that attracts "likes" or views and how to think about this work beyond the summer and CYP.

### **Moses Youth Center: Boys II Men**

The CYP Boys II Men Summer Program at the Moses Youth Center is a six-week leadership and empowerment program, which helps self-identified young men grow into positive men and community leaders. We provide and create a space where youth can learn the importance of teamwork, gain valuable leadership skills as well as life-long learning in self-care, social responsibility, and the importance of community. Throughout the 6 weeks, young Kings will be focusing on Physical Fitness/Nutrition, Self-Care, Financial Empowerment, and Weekly Culture Dialogues centered around Sports, Music, Fashion/Sneakers and Social Justice.

### **Moses Youth Center: Blooming into Womanhood**

This empowering program for self-identified young women seeks to help participants embark on a journey of self-discovery, empowerment, leadership, and exploration of interests. Through an intimate, supportive network of other young queens, they can discover their unique strengths, passions, and perspectives and use them to become catalysts of positive change and leaders.

### **Gately Youth Center: Summer Internship**

This creative expression program will give young people the opportunity to reflect upon their lives and build community. For the duration of the program, youth will explore, develop, and generate content focused on youth and community empowerment. During the 6 weeks, interns will have the opportunity to practice and develop 21st century life skills including: leadership, public-speaking, social and cross-cultural awareness, working independently and in teams in an environment that encourages advocacy, gratitude, and unity. Every week, participants will engage with members of their community and practice these skills by sharing personal experiences.

**Russell Youth Center: Rites of Passage Program:** The internship will provide opportunities for interns to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, gain real-world experience, and contribute to the betterment of their community. The overall goal of this internship is to be a forceful catalyst for the beginning of the young person's transition into young adulthood. Our program Elders (Teen Program Staff) serve as stewards to help teens navigate the challenges and activities we will be facilitating. These challenges and activities are

designed to enrich our interns through exposure to a new thought and process but also draw internally from their own lived experience to add introspection and acceptance. In this, we seek to foster growth and transformation. We understand that our young people have genius, and we seek to honor their brilliance by creating an environment where they have the space to share their gifts, knowledge, and interests.

**TEEN NIGHT LIVE:** Hosted by Cambridge Youth Programs at Moses, Frisoli, Gately and Russell Youth Centers during Summer 2025, Teen Night Live invites Cambridge teens, ages 14 – 19, to come together and build community through skill building, STEAM, games, events, music, sports, field trips, workshops, and more! In addition, centers will have 2 “Coin” events, providing a paid incentive for participants and may include activities skill building workshops, a 3 on 3 basketball tournament, dance, self-improvement workshops and cooking from nature competitions. Frisoli will be event-based programming with the schedule coming in June. Beginning in July, teens can join Teen Night Live from Tuesday - Friday from 6 –9 p.m. at Russell Youth Center, Monday – Thursday from 6-9 p.m. at Gately Youth Center and Monday – Thursday from 6 – 9 p.m. at Moses Youth Center.

### ***Middle School / Pre-Teen and Teen Programs***

#### **Cambridge Recreation Summer Basketball Leagues**

Last summer, more than 380 young people participated in Recreation Summer Basketball Leagues. For players, coaches, and staff, the leagues offer more than skill-building and competition; they foster lasting relationships and build community. The following Summer Basketball Leagues will run the first week of July through mid-August:

- Medina Dixon Instructional Basketball (Girls, Ages 8- 11), Ahern Field
- Level Up (Girls, Ages 12-14), Ahern Field
- Davonte Neal Instructional League (Co-ed ages 8-11), Sennott Park
- Sharif Moustafa Instructional League (Co-ed ages 9-13), Glacken Field
- Kito Jackson League (formerly Fast Break League) (Boys ages 12-14 / grades 6-8), Hoyt Field
- Eurie Stamps, Sr. League (Boys 15 – 19 / grades 9-12+), Hoyt Field

Summer Basketball League registration will be announced on [www.cambridgema.gov/Recreation](http://www.cambridgema.gov/Recreation)

#### **Co-ed Youth Street Hockey League**

The Cambridge Street Hockey League (SHL) gives young players a chance to learn hockey, sharpen their skills, and have fun. The outdoor, co-ed league focuses on skills, drills, and game competitions among friends.

- Leagues open to 8 – 9 year olds and 10 – 12 year olds of all gender identities
- New and experienced players welcome
- Sneakers, sticks, mouth pieces, and water bottles required

SHL will run Tuesday and Thursday evenings, July through mid-August (no league on July 4)

Street Hockey League registration will be announced on [www.cambridgema.gov/Recreation](http://www.cambridgema.gov/Recreation)

#### **Cambridge Basketball Lab**

The Cambridge Basketball Lab is a co-ed, free-of-charge basketball and mentorship program for Cambridge Public School students in middle and high school. Youth go in the evenings to develop their basketball skills. They also build long-term mentoring relationships with caring adults and be exposed to basketball technology while working on their game. Summer programming dates and [registration details will be announced on their website](#). The Cambridge Basketball Lab is a community program supported by Cambridge Recreation. [Learn More](#)

#### **Jr. Golf Program at Fresh Pond Golf Course**

The Jr. Golf program welcomes Cambridge youth ages 7-16 to learn to play or improve their golf game. The league is held on Tuesday mornings from 9 a.m. - noon at the Fresh Pond Golf Course. Youth will be involved in skill clinics at the start of each session, then participate in match play on the course to learn and refine mechanics, club selection and scoring.

### **Swim Instruction at Gold Star Pool**

Gold Star Pool will be open to Cambridge residents June 21 through Labor Day. Cambridge residents of all ages can enjoy the facility's two ADA-compliant pools for open swim 7 days of the week, free of charge.

Cambridge Recreation's aquatics staff provide swim lessons to local summer camps every weekday at Gold Star Pool. On average, more than 750 Cambridge children receive swim instruction from Recreation staff each summer. This includes instruction to the Department of Human Service Programs' summer programs for Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Gold Star Pool also hosts the following programs:

- **Adaptive Physical Education Program** offers swim instruction and aquatic orientation for more than 50 students with disabilities in Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **Safety Where it Matters (S.W.I.M)**, for youth ages 14-18, is a Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) work and learning site that trains swimmers of all levels and abilities to become lifeguard certified.
- **Swim Recovery Program**, a collaboration with Cambridge Public Schools, targets young people in Cambridge who missed swimming lessons during the pandemic in strengthening their swimming skills. This program prioritizes youth from low-income households.

### **War Memorial Recreation Center Summer Youth Programming**

The War Memorial Recreation Center offers recreational programming for kids, youth, and adults year-round. During the summer, the facility offers a range of swim classes for children of all ages, including Toddler / Preschool classes, Water Exploration, and aquatics programs focused on skill-building. Cambridge youth can also participate in Tennis and wrestling camp. Registration for Summer programming opens in mid-June. For more information, visit [www.cambridgema.gov/WarMemorial](http://www.cambridgema.gov/WarMemorial). In addition to recreational classes, the facility is open for Family Swim every weekday during the summer.

**Rec Ignition**, for youth ages 14-18, is a Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) Summer Work and Learning job program for youth that to explore communications. The focus will be to create content and develop a final product that captures the magic of a busy Recreation Department over the course of the summer.

**The Cambridge Program for Individuals with Special Needs Case Management** for youth and adults that would benefit from supported services and social connection throughout the summer. This program is in a response to a need that emerged during the Covid-19 Pandemic and still exists. Staff check in and help individuals with special needs navigate a variety of program offerings and everyday life.

### **Camp Rainbow**

Camp Rainbow is an annual summer camp offered by the Department of Human Service Programs' Recreation Division that serves Cambridge residents with disabilities, ages 6-22. Participants enjoy a variety of experiences, including outdoor activities, swimming, field trips, arts & crafts, and cooking. Camp Rainbow takes field trips to local attractions every Wednesday of camp sessions. Camp Rainbow's mission is to enhance the lives of its participants by providing a recreational experience that emphasizes their abilities. During Summer 2025, Camp Rainbow will run from July 7 – August 15 at the King Open / Cambridge Street Upper School Complex.

### **CYP Pre-Teen / Middle School Summer Programs**

*Offered Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. during the following sessions: Session 1: June 30 – 3; Session 2: Week 1 and 2 (July 7-18); Session 3: Weeks 3 and 4 (July 21 – August 1); Session 4: Weeks 5 and 6 (August 4 – August 15)*

More than 390 Cambridge youth (rising 4-8<sup>th</sup> graders) will be participating in CYP's 2025 Pre-Teen / Middle School Summer Programs.

### **Gately Summer Program at the Gately Youth Center**

This summer of 2025 will be the summer of “Music Appreciation”. Youth and staff will implement music appreciation in all their activities including STEAM\*. This will allow youth and staff to connect musically and continue to learn new skills and build relationships. For 7 weeks youth and staff will work together to present what they have been working on weekly to the community. This will be a learning opportunity and experience for young people to build and acknowledge their sense of autonomy as they progress throughout the summer. The culmination of the summer will result in a collective project presented to the community as our celebration. In the process of the summer, youth will also identify a champion (Youth and Staff) that motivated, inspired and challenged them to be brave and curious, showed positive support, and overall create a safe environment while developing favorable collegiality.

### **Sports and Leadership Academy at the Moore Youth Center**

Summer 2025 will be the summer of the “World Cup” at the Sports Leadership Academy. This theme will live in the program in several ways. We will have world cup facts, watch world cup games, teach young people the importance and joy the world cup brings to the world. A strong team needs to understand the strengths and areas of growth of all its members. Over the course of the summer, young people will self-evaluate their skill level in a specific sport each week and compete in different small activities and games. Youth will be partnered according to skill level to promote peer leadership and connection. Sports and Leadership Academy will be integrating STEAM\* into sports.

### **Empowerment Program at the Frisoli Youth Center**

At Frisoli, this summer is all about vibes and thriving together. We're creating spaces where youth can proudly express themselves, explore leadership, build skills in STEAM\* and discover new joys. Empowerment teams will dive deep into bi-weekly themes, and youth can choose passion-focused tracks twice a week. We'll celebrate Black joy, culture, and leadership, emphasizing authentic expression and community connection. We will also be creating an "I/ It Feels Good" video showcasing the moments youth and staff experience joy.

**Discovery Program at Russell Youth Center:** In the Discovery Program young people will explore different theatrical themed activities that will help them to explore the performer side of them. A side that may not have known existed or has been locked away due to fear of not being accepted. They will explore all facets of creative expression through Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEAM), Theater, movie making, & performing arts related activities. Doing so will allow young people to grow into their best selves, learn to overcome obstacles through trial and error while wondering about how they can grow and learn more about their new discovery.

### **Cambridge Summer Food Program**

The Cambridge Summer Food Program provides free breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals to Cambridge youth ages 18 and younger. No identification (ID) is required to get a meal and vegetarian options are available at every location. Last year, the program served more than 61,000 nutritious meals to Cambridge youth.

Beginning June 30, 2025, free breakfast meals will be served from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and free lunch meals will be served from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at parks across the city. Youth can also enjoy sports, games, and activities with Cambridge Recreation staff in the parks from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Free dinner meals are provided at Recreation Summer Basketball and Street Hockey League locations. Youth do not need to participate in the athletic leagues to get a meal.

The Summer Food Program also provides snacks to the Screen on the Green Family Movie Night series and provides lunch to eligible summer camps and community programs.

More information: [www.cambridgema.gov/SummerFood](http://www.cambridgema.gov/SummerFood)

### **Screen on the Green Family Movie Nights and Danehy Park Summer Concert Series**

The Department of Human Service Programs' Recreation Division offers family friendly evening programming every week at local parks during July and August:

**Danehy Park Summer Concert Series** every Tuesday evening at Danehy Park, local musicians perform live music.

**Screen on the Green Family Movie Nights** every Wednesday at a rotating park location. Family friendly entertainment starts at 7:15 p.m. Movies are shown outside on a theater-sized screen. (The event moves indoors during inclement weather). Free snacks are provided through the Cambridge Summer Food Program

### **Programs serving Young Adults**

Next Up is a program of the Office of Workforce Development which supports high school graduates ages 18-24 who are not enrolled in college or a training program and need help planning their next step. The program provides paid internships, workshops, career coaching and opportunities for hands-on exploration through "field visits".

Cambridge Works, the City's transitional jobs program, serves Cambridge residents between the ages of 18-35 who have difficulty finding full-time jobs due to limited work experience, a gap in their work history, legal challenges, or personal issues. The program provides participants with a 3-month, paid temporary job placement, professional development classes, support from a case manager, and job search support for full-time employment. Over the summer, staff from DHSP's Office of Workforce Development will be recruiting eligible residents for the fall cycle of Cambridge Works.

[www.cambridgema.gov/CambridgeWorks](http://www.cambridgema.gov/CambridgeWorks)

The College Success Initiative (CSI) serves Cambridge residents 18 and older who are underrepresented in higher education, including immigrant students, first-generation college students, and students from low-income households. CSI is designed to support students in completing a post-secondary degree within 6 years and to coordinate a community of partners committed to the persistence of Cambridge students. Students are referred to CSI through Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS), the Community Learning Center's Bridge to College Program, and Just-A-Start's YouthBuild program.

[www.cambridgema.gov/CollegeSuccess](http://www.cambridgema.gov/CollegeSuccess)

## **Cambridge Police Department (CPD)**

The Cambridge Police Department has a number of unique volunteer and employment programs this summer designed specifically for young residents interested in a career in public safety. As part of the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program, CPD will once again host a Youth Police Academy,



which is a six-week program that serves up to 20 teens and introduces them to a career in public safety. Youth workers learn about the role and function of Cambridge Police Officers and varying units within the Department, including the Traffic Unit, Explosive Ordnance Unit, and Special Response Team. They are also able to learn about and practice OUI stops, traffic stops, handcuffing, baton techniques and self-defense. Participants gain understanding about juvenile law, rights, and responsibilities with Strategies for Youth and the role of the Cambridge Fire Department, Emergency Communications Department, and Pro EMS in public safety.

In mid-August each summer, the week-long Middlesex Sheriff's Office Youth Public Safety Academy is held for Cambridge residents 8-12 years old. The camp is designed to expose our youngest residents to role models in public safety—including the Cambridge Police and Fire Departments — as well as teach valuable life and safety lessons. Junior Cadets participate in a series of activities throughout the camp, visiting with local police and fire officials, learning how to make evacuation plans for emergency situations, and participating in exercises designed to demonstrate the power and importance of teamwork.

In addition, CPD is excited to be partnering with several local organizations to host opportunities for youth engagement throughout the summer. A few highlights include:

- Weekly game nights throughout the City with the Cambridge Housing Authority and other partners.
- In an effort to support youth sports The Cambridge Police in collaboration with Cambridge Recreation run basketball leagues five nights a week (Monday through Friday) throughout the summer from 6-10 p.m. Other special events that encourage community involvement include Danehy Park Family Day, Ethiopian Pride Day, Schochet Properties, HRI, Just-a-Start and Winn Properties Summer Barbeques, National Night Out, Cambridge Bike Giveback events, Coffee with a Cop and Pizza with the Police outings, Soccer Nights, Screen on the Green, Book Bike Reading, and much more.

To ensure the safety of our youth and the community, CPD has held ongoing regional multi-jurisdictional agency meetings with the Somerville, Malden, Everett and State Police. This has resulted in:

- Enhanced information sharing and regional gun violence prevention strategies
- Overviews of critical incidents and any concerns
- Forward-looking planning

To complement these meetings, CPD has initiated a foot patrol deployment in areas in which there historically has been an increase in violent crime in the summer months. That has included:

- Modifications to Central Square and Harvard Square Patrols leading to more frequent police officer visibility and engagement.
- Enhanced community engagement in The Port neighborhood.
- Outreach by officers and staff in the Family and Social Justice Section. Part of this will include aftercare support for overdose survivors. That support includes providing survivors with valuable items such as backpacks or small duffel bags containing clothing, supplies (including Narcan) and personal hygiene products, transportation to treatment or clinical care services, assistance with vital documents to aid reinstatement of identification documents, and communication services so individuals can communicate with care providers to aid in their recovery and harm reduction.

The Cambridge Police Youth Boxing & Fitness Program is a collaborative initiative between the Cambridge Police Family Social Justice Section and the Cambridge YMCA. Established in 2011, it has garnered national recognition and has become a cornerstone of the Cambridge community, as well as a flagship program of the Cambridge Police Department. The program is administered by a Cambridge Police Officer, a Social Worker from the Cambridge Police Department, and partners from the YMCA.

This inclusive, non-contact, fitness-based boxing program is designed for Cambridge youth of all genders. It emphasizes self-defense, physical and mental health, peer mentorship, relationship building, family support, social-emotional learning, inclusion, and individual growth within a group setting. The program is committed to accessibility, equity, and, above all, ensuring that participants have fun.

This summer, our boxing program will team-up with the Frisolli Youth Center and will be running a program twice a week for the summer.

For more information about CPD, go to <https://www.cambridgema.gov/departments/cambridgepolice>

## **Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD)**

For summer 2025, the Cambridge Public Health Department's youth initiatives are focused on providing employment and learning opportunities as well as offering community events.

CPHD is welcoming youth from the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program to work in our Population Health Initiatives Division.

CPHD is pleased to bring back Hoops N Health on June 14 at Hoyt Field with a rain/ heat date of June 21. This community event includes a basketball tournament; a Family Health Fair (including blood pressure screening); a youth mental health workshop for 13-18 year olds focusing on mental health/social-emotional wellness; games and activities; live music; a Juneteenth Celebration; and community resources. The rain date is Saturday, June 21, 2025

The Cambridge Community Corps (C3) has again hired several young people to serve as part of its network of paid ambassadors. Corps members participate in trainings designed to make them effective communicators of public health information. Corps members address such public health topics as safety during periods of extreme heat; tick- and mosquito-borne diseases; and emergency preparedness. They visit parks throughout the city, conduct door-to-door outreach, staff tables at community events, and provide wellness education. C3 will continue to offer paid shifts over the summer to youth who are interested in participating. We welcome all over 16 years old to come work with us. If interested, please contact us at [nrihanporter@cambridgepublichealth.org](mailto:nrihanporter@cambridgepublichealth.org).

CPHD sponsored 3 students to attend the HBCU tours hosted by Citizens of the World Inc. This follows last year's successful Legacy Project where we took students from the High School Extension Program to Montgomery, AL

The health department's substance use prevention outreach and training activities will continue throughout the summer.

CPHD is also one of the departments behind the Block Party Initiative in Cambridge (with CDD, Arts Council) . We have increased the stipends for parties to \$300.00 to reduce barriers to hosting.

A CPHD mini-grant is supporting SHADE, an organization of youth "creating a community for teens by teens". This summer, they will be hosting a weekly series of movie nights where teenagers can socialize and de-stress in a fun environment.



CPHD's literacy program staff will be offering 10 Book Bike events and two summer parties across the city and has also installed 8 StoryWalks in various parks.

For more information about the Cambridge Public Health Department, go to [www.cambridgepublichealth.org](http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org).

## **Community Safety Department**

In Summer 2024, the Cambridge Community Safety Department (CSD) awarded \$600,000 total in violence prevention grant funds to four local organizations, directing \$150,000 to each organization. These four organizations delivered violence prevention programs and services to ensure the well-being and community safety of Cambridge residents and neighborhoods. The CSD is proud to report the following efforts made by these community partners over the past year, supplementing the many approaches the City is already taking to create sustained change for a safer, stronger Cambridge.

**Cambridge HEART** centers marginalized people to build local capacity to disrupt cycles of harm by responding to crises, conducting research, and facilitating community cohesion. With support from the violence prevention grant, HEART is proud to have a welcoming warm line open to support the community. As of early 2025, the HEART team is in the final preparation stage to launch their mobile crisis response. They look forward to being a choice for people who are going through a crisis who prefer not to call 9-1-1.

**InnerCity Weightlifting (ICW)** began as a weight training program, focused on serving individuals post-incarceration, and evolved into a social justice organization aiming to create economic mobility through careers in fitness and beyond. The violence prevention grant was instrumental in helping advance ICW's mission to reduce youth violence and provide equitable opportunities for individuals with the most extreme barriers to safety. The funding supported their capacity to carry out their Personal Training Apprenticeship Program, using personal training as a tool for violence prevention by creating a pathway for the highest risk, gang-involved youth and young adults to build trust, hope, social capital, and sustainable economic mobility.

**My Brother's Keeper (MBK)** exists to build a safe and supportive community that creates positive change by empowering each individual to dream and succeed without limits. Through the violence prevention grant, MBK ran a 6-week teen empowerment program in the summer of 2024. By providing comprehensive workshops on financial education, entrepreneurship, healthy relationships, and life planning, MBK empowers young adults to make informed choices, set realistic goals, and develop practical strategies for achieving them.

**Transition House** was established in 1976 as the first emergency shelter on the East Coast for survivors escaping domestic violence. The violence prevention funding directly supported their children's services team and counseling program. The Transition House Community Team facilitated a 90-minute training session for 90 student-athletes during a Players for Prevention Night event. Between July and December 2024, their therapeutic team provided direct counseling to 15 children and 25 adults. One participating adult shared, "I've done counseling before but it's the first time I feel hopeful during my sessions."

Additionally, shortly after the new year, Niko Emack of *Emack Ideas and Strategy*, was hired as a consultant by the Community Safety Department (CSD) to work on civic engagement and violence prevention.

Working in tandem with CSD Director Liz Speakman, and with support from the City Manager, Niko's work is primarily focused on understanding the violence prevention ecosystem and making

recommendations about what role the city should play as a leader in this space. This work will build on previous studies commissioned by the city and driven by community recommendations to address gun violence and support for emerging adults.

Taking an ethnographic approach, Niko has been conducting interviews with those closest to the work. From Inner City Weightlifting to the Job Connector at MIT — to name a few — the goal is to learn where these organizations are finding success, where they're overwhelmed, and what they need from the city to do this work efficiently. Furthermore, Niko has been working closely with Issac Yablo, Senior Advisor to Community Safety for Mayor Wu, to understand the regionality of these issues and how Cambridge fits into the larger picture.

In June, Niko will share his findings with the City Manager and recommend next steps for the city.

### **Safer Homes, Safer Community: Cambridge Gift Cards for Guns**

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 Cambridge's city departments, interfaith-based organizations, non-profit community and regional partners will come together to host the 10th annual citywide "Safer Homes, Safer Community: Cambridge Gift Cards for Guns" initiative. This public health and public safety event provides residents with an opportunity to anonymously and safely dispose of their unwanted firearms and, in turn, reduce the risk of suicide, potential for wrongdoing in a home or on our city streets. In the first eight years of this event, public safety officials and community volunteers have collected hundreds of guns, handed out firearm safety locks, and shared extensive information about suicide prevention and gun safety. On June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 the organizers collected a total of 65 total guns (54 were BB guns – many that could easily be mistaken for real guns). Overall, more than 500 guns have been collected in Cambridge over the past 9 years.

Together with 60+ community and faith-based organizations, the City helps people to turn in unwanted and unsecured guns in homes, especially where they pose a serious risk of harm to children, anyone with serious mental illness or at risk of suicide, and anyone at risk of domestic violence.

For more information on Cambridge's *Gift Cards for Guns*, please visit [camb.ma/GiftCardsforGuns](https://camb.ma/GiftCardsforGuns).



Yi-An Huang  
City Manager