

June 2020

A Summer of Discontent? Mayor Budgets for Summer Closures and Program Cancelations

With the coronavirus pandemic still bearing down on the city, the de Blasio Administration’s Executive Budget includes budget reductions resulting from the cancelation of summer programs. Some summer activities are set for cancelation due to coronavirus concerns, while in other cases the cuts primarily aim to provide savings as the city looks to reduce spending as revenues plunge. Budget reductions for summer programming total \$243 million from 2020 through 2024, with the vast majority occurring in 2021 (unless otherwise noted, all years refer to city fiscal years).

Specifically, the Executive Budget and financial plan reduces summer spending by \$13 million in 2020, \$203 million in 2021, and \$9 million a year in 2022 through 2024. The cuts affect programs run by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). The programs affected include summer recreation camps, outdoor pools, the Summer Youth Employment Program, community center programs, and summer school. Conversely, while summer program closures are expected

to save the parks department money, the city also expects to forgo \$19 million this year in parks revenue that it would ordinarily collect from concessions, marinas, recreational centers, and special events.

Youth Department Pares Back Summer Programming. DYCD will realize savings of \$8 million in 2020 and \$175 million in 2021 through suspending the Summer Youth Employment Program, canceling summer COMPASS/SONYC programs for youth, and reducing funding for summer Beacons/Cornerstone community center youth programs. The cuts are only for this spring and summer, indicating that the de Blasio Administration plans to resume these programs in 2022 and beyond. The Summer Youth Employment Program typically provides over 70,000 young people with paid work and career development opportunities and is funded largely by a mix of city funds and federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families dollars. Last year, the youth employment budget was around \$161 million from all sources. The Executive Budget includes savings of \$116 million in city funds in 2021 from

Executive Budget Has Summer Program Savings Across Three City Agencies

Dollars in millions

Program	Agency	Savings, by Fiscal Year				
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Summer Youth Employment Program	Department of Youth & Community Development	\$8.0	\$116.0			
COMPASS/SONYC	Department of Youth & Community Development		\$42.3			
Cornerstone/Beacon	Department of Youth & Community Development		\$17.1			
Summer in the City	Department of Education		\$9.0	\$9.0	\$9.0	\$9.0
Pool Closures	Department of Parks and Recreation		\$12.0			
Parks Summer Camp/Seasonal Plan Delays	Department of Parks and Recreation	\$5.0	\$6.6			
TOTAL		\$13.0	\$203.0	\$9.0	\$9.0	\$9.0

SOURCE: Mayor’s Executive Budget for 2021 and Financial Plan through 2024

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shuttering the program this summer—nearly equal to the city funding in the baseline budget. Although not baselined, additional funds are usually added to the Summer Youth Employment Program in the adopted budget to fund an additional 5,000 slots (last year \$12 million was added, up from \$10 million the year before) bringing the full program budget to roughly \$170 million. Of course, that addition will not occur so long as the program remains suspended, although there is growing support for reinstating at least part of the Summer Youth Employment Program in the Adopted Budget. (See more details here on the Summer Youth Employment Program [here](#).)

Also canceled are the summer components of the COMPASS and SONYC programs, providing savings of \$42 million in 2021, while funding for the after-school portions of the programs remains intact for the upcoming school year. These programs provide a mix of academic, recreational, and cultural programming for school-age youth from elementary to high school. As was the case for the youth employment program, additional funding is often added to the budget at adoption to provide more slots for students. For last summer’s programs, \$15 million was added for SONYC summer slots. Unless the programs are restored, the additional funding will not be needed this year.

Funding was also cut from the Cornerstone and Beacon programs, which provide a wide variety of programs for youth and their families, in housing authority-based and school-based community centers. These programs run year round, although for now, only funding for summer programs has been cut, providing \$17 million in savings. Still, at least partial operations will continue into the summer as some Cornerstone sites have been functioning as food distribution centers, a role that could continue throughout the summer season.

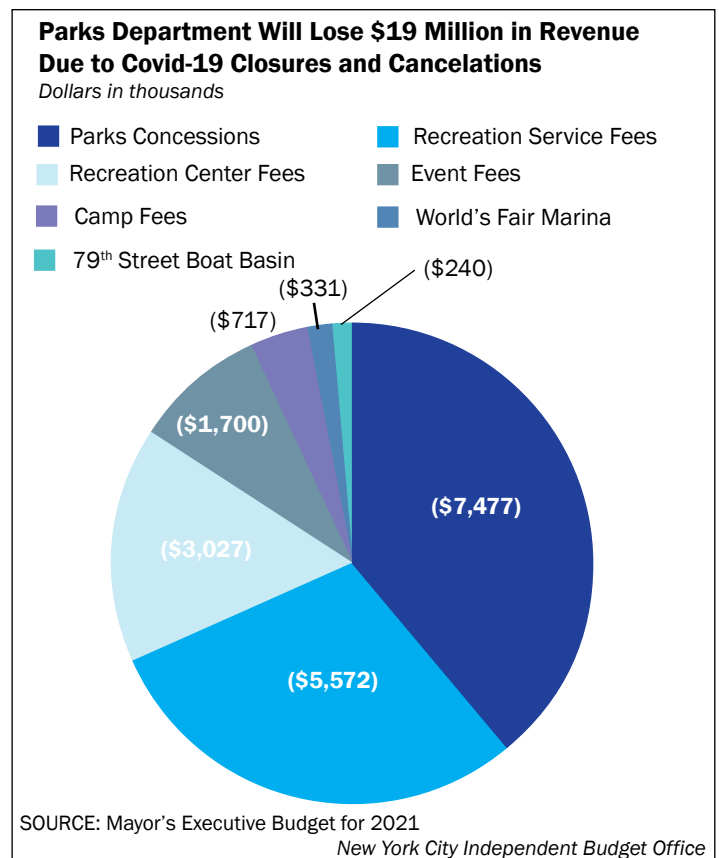
Education Department Reverses Summer Program Expansion. DOE will realize \$9 million in annual recurring savings after reversing a 2018 expansion of the Summer in the City program. Summer in the City offers youth activities through the Summer Academy and Summer School programs such as museum or park visits paired with lessons and hands-on projects. Unlike some of the DYCD programs cut for a single fiscal year, the Executive Budget baselined the Summer in the City cuts through 2024, meaning a previously planned expansion has been dropped, at least for the next few years.

Parks Department Closes Pools and Halts Summer Plans. The parks department will save \$5 million in 2020 and

\$19 million in 2021 by closing pools, delaying the seasonal expansion of staff and programming as well as suspending the Parks Summer Recreation Camp. While not operating these recreational activities yields budget savings, the impetus for the closures is largely due to coronavirus concerns and the financial plan provides for resumed funding of these programs next spring and summer.

Parks summer camp is open to children ages 6 to 13 to participate in fitness and outdoor adventures in New York City. The program includes 1,000 slots with participants chosen by lottery and costs participants’ families \$500 to \$575 for seven weeks of programming depending on whether families opt for 8 or 10 hours per day. Since there is a cost to participate in the camp, budgetary savings from the suspension are modest at \$634,000. In addition, pools will be closed for the summer and the parks department has delayed summer seasonal staffing and programming expansions, resulting in savings from deferred hiring and purchases of supplies and maintenance in 2020 and 2021. Parks department beaches remain open although for now swimming is prohibited.

Parks Anticipates Revenue Losses. The parks department also has other summer funding adjustments beyond those included in the savings plan. Revenue DPR regularly collects from a variety of activities are budgeted to decline



in 2020. Recreation center fees will decline by \$3 million, park concessions by \$7 million, recreation service fees by \$6 million, event fees by \$2 million, marina revenue by \$600,000, and camp fees by \$700,000, for a total revenue loss of \$19 million due to Covid-related closures. These revenue adjustments may not fully reflect the ultimate decline in parks-generated revenue attributable to Covid-19, however, since the entirety of the revenue

reductions were taken in fiscal year 2020, which ends in June; if facility and program closures continue through the peak summer months of July and August, further reductions to DPR revenue in 2021 seem likely.

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