

**Fair Budget Coalition**  
**Food Issue Group**  
**Talking Points, FY20 Recommendations**

**Better Food in Shelters**

- All District residents residing in shelters deserve access to nutritious food and healthy environments. According to DHS' Point-in-Time count, 6,296 children and adults reside in shelters as of January 2018.
- This recommendation proposes improve meal quality at homeless shelters by increasing nutritional and food safety standards, offering higher meal reimbursements rates for vendors, and encouraging participation in CACFP and federal nutrition programs.
- We also also asking to increase transparency and accountability by requiring that the Department of Human Services be directly responsible for all food-related contracts and compliance at shelters and requiring vendors to provide advance notice of menus to shelter residents.

**Advisory Group for Grocery Stores in Wards 7 & 8**

- There are just three full service grocery stores in Wards 7 & 8 servicing more than 150,000 D.C. residents.
- We are asking the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development to look at what it would take to create smaller footprint (fewer square footage) stores in underserved neighborhoods (and preferably community owned) through an advisory group.
- An advisory group would bring together representatives from multiple agencies along with community members to devise an investment strategy to support local community owned stores.

**SNAP Application Simplification**

- Seniors (aged 60 and up) make up one-third of current SNAP recipients in D.C. Seniors who are often on a fixed income are especially vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger.
- An Elderly Simplified SNAP Application (ESAP) would make applying and staying on SNAP easier for this vulnerable population.
- ESAP would decrease the SNAP application to just 2-3 pages and eliminate the current requirement for an in-person interview for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

- Making arrangements and traveling to an ESA office is a lot to ask D.C. seniors and individuals with disabilities. ESAP would give them the opportunity to avoid this burden by having a phone interview and reducing confusing paperwork.

### **Online SNAP Application**

- More than 40,000 D.C. households receive SNAP. While most eligible residents are on the program, we do not make it easy for them.
- D.C. does not have any form of an online SNAP application. The current application requires most people to go to a DHS service center multiple times in a month, often spending hours there.
- This is especially hard for workers, families with children, people with disabilities, and seniors.
- An easier application process has been requested for years. This recommendation would drastically decrease the time it takes to apply for SNAP benefits and reduce the time people must wait in line at a DHS service centers or on the phone.
- We are asking for DHS to create an online SNAP application and give them the funding to do so.
- An online SNAP application would have the functionality for people to apply for SNAP, upload verifications and other documents, see their benefits amounts, receive notifications for recertification, and check their EBT balance.

### **WIC Expansion Act**

- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides access to nutritious foods, nutrition education and counseling, healthcare referrals, and breastfeeding support to low-income women across the District.
- Unfortunately, women struggle to access the program for a multitude of reasons, but one of these is the lack of grocery stores that accept WIC benefits due to overly burdensome regulations put on vendors by the DC state agency (including minimum square footage and number of cash registers).
- This recently passed but not yet funding legislation would expand access to grocery stores that accept WIC by creating a 10 store pilot for stores that don't currently meet the tough DC regulations. However, the stores will have to meet the minimum stocking requirements so that WIC families can access their groceries more easily.
- WIC participation has been decreasing for several years. This Act will create an advisory board to explore ways to improve the program and increase participation.

### **Law to Prevent New Grocery Stores from Pushing Neighbors Out of Their Homes**

- This recommendation asks that DC Council clearly states in legislation (especially in any legislation involving grocery access) their plan to develop a way to support residents' ability to stay in place when their neighborhood finally gets grocery access.
- The goal is to make it possible for low-income DC residents to have grocery access, instead of being pushed out by new amenities and economic development.
- Previous legislation, like FEED-DC, offered tax subsidies for grocery store development in low-income areas. However, many grocery stores that received tax subsidies were developed in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods with ongoing displacement of low-income residents, as seen in the H Street corridor, NoMa and the neighborhood around Nationals Park.
- This legislation would pave the way to sustainably address the grocery gap issue over the longer term, and make grocery access more equitable in this city.

### **Maintain Produce Rx**

- Produce Rx will allow food insecure patients with chronic illnesses to receive prescriptions for fruits and vegetables.
- Through a partnership with the only supermarket serving Ward 8, Produce Rx patients receive weekly allotments of fruits and vegetables and meet with Giant nutritionists to improve their health outcomes.
- This creative program design measures critical health outcomes and changes in total health care expenditures.

### **Produce Plus Checks for Farmers' Markets**

- Produce Plus provides healthy food access at farmers' markets for residents receiving SNAP, WIC, TANF, SSI Disability, Medicare QMB, and Medicaid.
- This program operates at 37 markets and reaches almost 28,000 residents in the District.
- Produce Plus helps to bolster and increase the number of farmers' markets in underserved neighborhoods. In 2018, Produce Plus operated at 13 weekly farmers' markets located in Wards 7 and 8, helping to make fresh produce accessible in an area with only 3 full-service grocery stores serving 150,000 residents.