

FAIR BUDGET
≥ COALITION



AN ACT OF

JUSTICE

BUDGET PLATFORM FY23



FORWARD:

As we continue to seek personal, collective, and global wellness in the midst of the pandemic, Covid 19 has reminded us of the importance of resourcing and uplifting the communities and individuals that have historically bore the brunt of systemic racism, economic exclusion, disenfranchisement, and system-wide oppression. This past year, we have continued to witness the contemporary impact of historical medical racism— Black communities have continued to suffer more deaths from COVID-19 than our white counterparts. We have continued to witness the ills of capitalism and resource hoarding— the wealth divide continued to deepen and homeless encampments grew steadily, while our governing administrations continued to resist economic and administrative models and practices that could provide secure housing for all. We experienced a rise in poverty-driven crime during the pandemic, and yet local and national administrations continued to criminalize poverty instead of investing in communities as the path toward community safety.

We offer this Budget Platform as a beacon of light, illuminating the way toward the future we imagine for DC. In this Platform, you will find budget policies that center communities that have, for too long, been de-entered and destabilized in DC. This Platform features budget policies that work to dissolve inequality and invest in under-invested communities. Our recommendations are based on a whole-person and whole-community approach to resource reallocation.

This Budget Platform is an intentionally curated collection of Budget priorities that will help move DC toward one day leading the nation in securing justice, equity, harm repair, and wellness for constituents. For that is our vision for the District.

We hope you will join us in the fight.

WE HAVE THE MONEY:

We recognize that our budget recommendations have a hefty price tag, but that is because the need in the community is so high. We believe that funding these asks should be the top priority for elected leaders. DC has the resources to ensure DC residents can meet their basic needs, and even thrive—whether those resources sit in reserves, in programs that are low performing or do not meet the needs of low-income residents, or in untapped revenue sources.

Fair Budget Coalition (FBC) encourages the DC Council to hold a hearing early on in the budget process to fully explore and publicly vet proposals to ensure adequate resources for critical programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

OUR HOPES

2

A WORD ON OUR PROCESS

- Creation of platform
- Collaborating Entities

4

HOUSING SECURITY

- Executive Summary
- Content
- Recommendations

9

HEALTHCARE

- Executive Summary
- Content
- Recommendations

13

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Executive Summary
- Content
- Recommendations
- Additional Concerns

18

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

- Executive Summary
- Content
- Recommendations
- Addendum

22

FOOD ACCESS

- Executive Summary
- Content
- Recommendations

26

FAIR TAXES & PUBLIC DEALS

- Executive Summary
- Content
- Recommendations
- A Nod to Last Year's Victories

30

MEMBERS

31

ENDORSEMENTS

33

CITED SOURCES

OUR HOPES

WE HOPE THAT ELECTED LEADERS...

will use this Budget Platform to support a budget that better meets the needs of DC's residents. This platform is a community-led collaboratively curated document that reflects a whole-person and whole-community approach to resource allocation in DC. It is decidedly and actively anti-racist, and views the Budget as a tool to redistribute wealth, provide access, transform systems, and shift power in dynamic and socially just ways through DC.

WE HOPE THAT THE COMMUNITY...

will use this platform as a resource to:

> **Better understand the Budget Process** and how we can get our **seat at the table** in terms of making demands around DC's Budget

> **To mobilize** and **organize** neighbors and friends around **demanding resources and investments into our communities**

> **To understand** how DC can continue to move closer to **racial justice** through intentional distribution of its plentiful resources. What are ways we can continue to push the envelope in how DC uses its resources to address systemic harms?

Hopefully this Platform inspires you to push further with us in the next Budget cycle next year and in years to come.

WE HOPE THAT ADVOCATES...

will be able to use this Platform as a tool for collective bargaining, and as a Platform to rally around together as we make shared asks through our Budget advocacy season. We created this Coalition and its Platform specifically so that progressive advocates invested in systems change could come together to create a unified, whole-community Platform, uplifting one another's advocacy efforts through the city.

FINALLY, WE HOPE THAT ALL OF US...

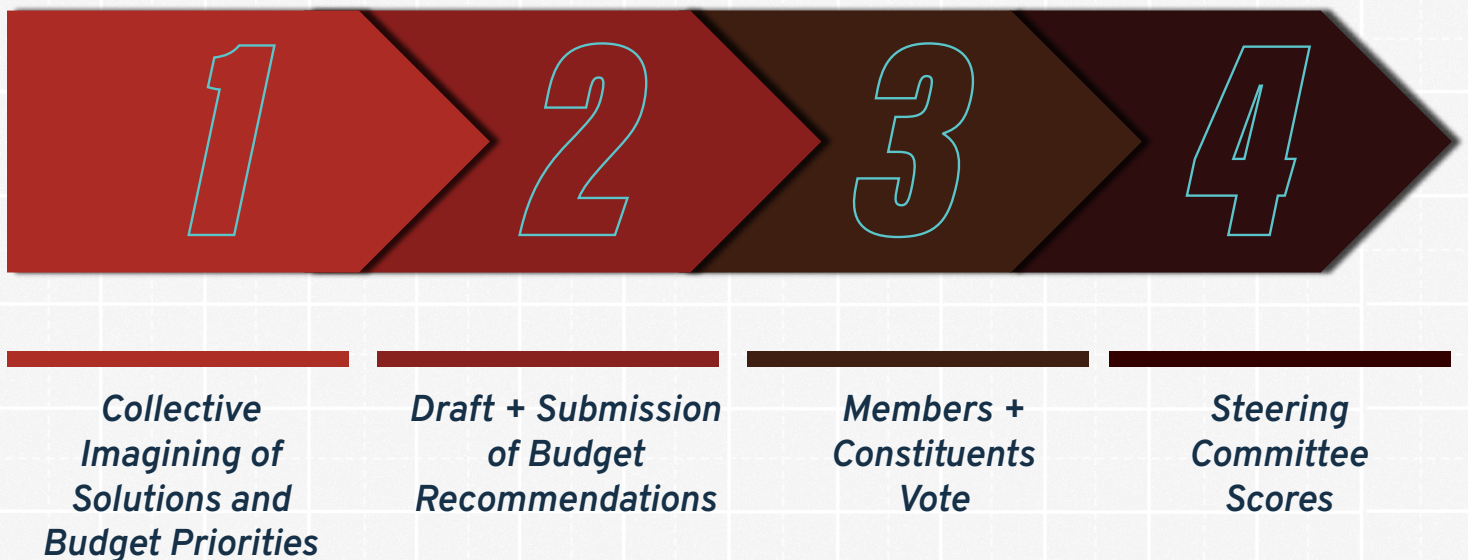
advocates, policy experts, excluded workers, returning citizens, mamas, daddies, aunts and uncles, teachers, public servants, elected officials, Councilmembers, Agency Directors, organizers, activists, youth organizers — will use this Platform as a springboard to imagine what long-term, transformative, liberation-oriented resource reallocation can look like for DC. What are your deepest, most radical, most futuristic, most Black-centering, most inclusive, most socially just hopes for our City? And how can we use our Budget to achieve that vision? We hope this platform inspires you to imagine this with us, and to work toward that future, through Budget advocacy, **together**.

A WORD ON OUR PROCESS

Our democratic process is designed to help shift power in the Budget Policy sphere toward the most impacted and historically excluded communities. In the over 25 years since Fair Budget Coalition's founding, we continue to work diligently towards a process that centers and is led by constituent experience and wisdom, and that uplifts solutions from the communities we serve.

We are a collective of over 50+ member organizations that range from grassroots organizers to policy experts; from impacted constituent leaders to lead researchers at policy think tanks. As a Coalition, a key part of our mission lies in using our Budget Recommendation process to create direct pathways for bringing community-led solutions to the front steps of the DC Council and Mayor. We base our praxis on the understanding that the people experiencing the problems are the same people who are closest to the solutions. By centering marginalized voices, our process helps us do the work of getting services to the communities that need it most. The budget is everybody's business. It takes all of us together to dream, work and advocate for a fair and just budget.

THE CREATION OF THE FBC PLATFORM HAPPENS IN 4 PHASES:



THE CREATION OF THE FBC PLATFORM HAPPENS WITH THE COLLABORATION OF 4 ENTITIES:

CONSTITUENT LEADERS AND IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

Constituents and impacted communities are the heart of the Fair Budget Coalition. We work to amplify community voices, identify the need, and produce tangible results. Members of the CLP have matriculated and taken positions of leadership within Fair Budget and other campaigns and coalitions citywide.

ISSUE GROUPS/ ISSUE GROUP CHAIRS

The bulk of the creativity happens here in the issue group meeting space. Representatives from the communities we serve, from member organizations, and our individual members come together to discuss the needs for the upcoming fiscal year. Issue group chairs collect the ideas from these meetings, develop them into budget recommendations, and present them to the whole Coalition for voting.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Fair Budget Coalition Steering Committee is made up of policy experts, seasoned organizers, and advocates. Our Steering Committee use a rubric to score the proposed Budget Recommendations on their impact, their support, how much they build power, how rooted they are in anti-racism principles, and the degree to which impacted community members are involved in forming and advocating for the recommendations.

FBC STAFF

The administrative side of the process happens here. Fair Budget Staff organizes the ideas set forth by the Issue Group Chairs and presents it to the Steering committee for scoring and to Members & Constituents for voting. Staff will weigh input from all stakeholders, calculating both the votes and steering committee scoring to select the final recommendations. The staff is also responsible for the actual publication of the Budget Platform.

THE OUTCOME

Following this process, we are able to collaboratively produce a Budget Platform that uses a whole-person and whole-community approach to equitable resource reallocation in DC. The rubric that we use to screen proposed Budget Recommendations assures that our Platform is effectively and actively anti-racist, impactful, liberatory, transformative, and shifts power.

Our Budget Platform is a tool for elected leaders to prioritize funding and policies that support low-income DC residents as well as an accountability tool for DC residents to measure how elected leaders are or are not meeting their needs. In addition, our Budget Platform serves as a centerpiece for District-wide advocacy focused on making sure our most impacted residents have access to the resources they need to achieve health, experience housing security, attain economic justice, enjoy community safety, access healthy foods, and to overall thrive in DC.



HOUSING SECURITY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our recommendations focus on protecting DC residents by expanding access to housing while minimizing further displacement, homelessness, and trauma. They also focus on increasing oversight on the agencies and departments' tasks with housing DC residents.



CONTEXT

DC has repeatedly failed to prioritize affordable, secure, and safe housing for all who call the District home. This failure has led to widespread displacement (the Black population has decreased by 20,000) and homelessness (chronic homelessness is up 20%*). Elected leaders have offered solutions like requesting that developers include affordable housing units and clearing encampments with unkept promises to house those being removed from their tents. But, these efforts do little to solve DC's affordable housing crisis—in fact, they might just perpetuate it. It is this context in which we present our Budget Recommendations for housing security for FY23.

RECOMMENDATIONS



END HOMELESSNESS

When over 1,000 people experiencing homelessness have contracted COVID-19 and dozens have died, there is no more poignant wake-up call to elected leaders that stable & affordable housing saves lives. National data shows that COVID-19 may increase homelessness by 40%. DC must support permanent housing stability and end homelessness for a significant number of DC residents.

THE ASK:

> **Extend all 351 rapid re-housing families at risk of time limit terminations** in FY22 until the start of FY23 and passing legislation that allows DHS to terminate families for time limits only if they will remain stably housed without further assistance

> **End homelessness for 1300 families** in shelters or rapid re-housing with Permanent Supportive Housing for 260 families and Targeted Affordable Housing for 1040 families

> **Provide Local Rent Supplement Program** tenant vouchers to 800 homeless families on the DC Housing Authority waiting list + 60 returning citizens.

> **End homelessness for 500 individuals** with Permanent Supportive Housing

> **Continue to fund robust outreach and prevention**

PROGRAM	HOUSEHOLDS	COSTS
<i>Permanent Supportive Housing- Families</i>	260	\$12,050,220
<i>Targeted Affordable Housing-Families</i>	1040	\$27,728,480
<i>Local Rent Supplement Program Tenant Vouchers</i>	800	\$17.33 million
<i>Permanent Supportive Housing- Individuals</i>	500	\$13.88 million
<i>Local Rent Supplement Program Vouchers for Returning Citizens</i>	60	\$1.3 million
<i>Project Reconnect</i>	400	\$700,000
TOTAL	2100 FAMS +960 INDIVIDUALS	\$72,988,700

RECOMMENDATIONS



RENTAL ASSISTANCE RELIEF

Low-income DC renters have not recovered from the COVID-related rent crisis. As of December 2021, 33,516 DC households were behind in rent and 58,475 households had little or no confidence in their ability to pay the next month's rent. DC must provide the actual level of funding necessary to prevent widespread trauma of mass eviction, continued displacement of Black and other marginalized DC residents, and an increase in homelessness.

THE ASK:

A minimum of \$200 million in rent relief for FY23; fund an additional \$187 million during FY22 (the FY22 addition should come from the surplus, reserves, or other unallocated funds, but it must be immediately available to residents)

UTILITY ASSISTANCE RELIEF

In addition to a housing stability threat, many households are/will be at risk of having their heat, electricity, water, phone and internet cut off -- making their housing unsafe and leaving them unable to meet critical needs. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) currently does not serve all of the utility assistance needs of DC residents. Families are in need of greater assistance, including with their phone and internet bills.

THE ASK:

Fund need for FY23 and for existing/immediate need in FY22 (FY22 additional relief should be allocated from the FY21 surplus, reserves, or any other unallocated funds); total fiscal amount – TBD

KEEP PEP-V HOTELS OPEN THROUGHOUT PANDEMIC

Hotels should continue to be used to protect high-risk people experiencing homelessness from COVID-19, other serious illnesses, and death. Currently, the Pandemic Emergency Program for Medically Vulnerable Individuals (PEP-V) hotels are primarily funded by FEMA, but it is uncertain how long the federal government will continue funding hotels. When that money is no longer available, local dollars are needed to keep the hotels running as a critical public health intervention.

THE ASK:

Continue to fund PEP-V hotels; also, improvements to the program are needed, including lowering barriers and increasing legal protections for residents; total fiscal amount – TBD

ENSURE FAMILIES IN RAPID REHOUSING MAINTAIN STABLE HOUSING

Despite historic housing investments, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is planning to exit 913 families in Rapid Re-housing this year because they have reached a time limit. DHS has also stated that 90% of these families will not be able to afford their rent after the subsidy ends.

THE ASK:

Pass and fund legislation that prohibits DHS from terminating families due to an arbitrary time limit if they cannot afford to pay their rent without further help; total fiscal amount – TBD

PUBLIC HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Public housing residents, organizers, and advocates have continued to ask DC to address the substantial preservation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment needs of DC's public housing properties. For too long, public housing residents have had to live in deplorable conditions that threaten their health and safety. The pandemic has only exacerbated these needs.

THE ASK:

\$60 million annually for public housing repairs and maintenance

RECOMMENDATIONS



TENANT AND HUMAN RIGHTS BILLS

Support the passage and funding of 2 bills that strengthen the rights of housing applicants/tenants and people experiencing homelessness in DC:

- > **Eviction Record Sealing Authority and Fairness in Renting Amendment Act of 2022:** protects housing applicants and tenants from denials of housing based on old eviction history and other unjust/discriminatory reasons & strengthens the protections against voucher discrimination
- > **Human Rights Enhancement Amendment Act of 2021:** adds homelessness as a protected class

THE ASK:

\$1 million for Office of Human Rights

RE-ENTRY HOUSING PILOT

Due to the pandemic, lack of affordable housing, and recent laws providing for more opportunities for release, there is an urgent need to fund transitional housing for DC's returning citizens. Fund the Re-Entry Housing Pilot for its third year to continue to provide intensive services and housing so that returning citizens can begin to successfully rebuild their lives in their community.

THE ASK:

\$1.8 million for the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOUSING UNITS

Despite domestic violence being one of the leading causes of homelessness, there is not enough housing in DC dedicated to survivors. Currently, there are only 283 DV-units for survivors in the District while the general homeless system reported over 29,000 beds for individuals and families. The data suggests that over 500 individuals utilized the District's domestic violence emergency shelters, transitional housing, or other housing provided by the six domestic violence housing organizations. More funding is necessary to address this housing need.

THE ASK:

\$12.49 million for 80 units for survivors (65 units of transitional housing, 40 for families and 25 for individuals. 15 units of affordable housing units for survivors)

INCREASE PRODUCTION AND OVERSIGHT OF 0-30% AMI HOUSING

For decades, DC has failed to preserve or build enough affordable housing to meet the needs of its residents. DC's stock of affordable housing for people with extremely low incomes (defined as people making 0-30% of Area Median Income (AMI) continues to be the most neglected in affordable housing creation, despite regulations that set it to receive half of the money in the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF). Consistently, 0-30% AMI housing is under-funded and existing funds aren't used as intended.

THE ASK:

> **Replace the \$82M that was found to have been misspent/misappropriated** from 0-30%AMI portion of the HPTF in FY2020

> **Maintain sufficient project/sponsor based investment** so that the full amount of 0-30% AMI affordable housing creation can be built

> **Create legislative protections and enforcement** so that money meant for 0-30%AMI affordable housing creation is used as intended



HEALTHCARE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Access to quality healthcare is essential for all DC residents, especially as we look to recover from a global pandemic. We recommend increased funding to strengthen and sustain expanded school-based behavioral health services provided by Community Based Organizations, increased funding to adjust payment rates for community-based behavioral health services delivered by DBH-certified provider organizations, and fully funding changes to align DC Healthcare Alliance certification and recertification requirements with DC Medicaid enrollment requirements.



EXPAND SCHOOL BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

The recommendation supports the fifth year of a process to expand school based behavioral health services. Onsite clinicians in schools increase access to mental health services in the place where most children spend most of their time during the school year. They also support improving the schools' acceptance of mental health as a key component in educational success, improving classroom environments, reducing time needed to respond to mental health crises, and addressing the experiences of trauma that remain far-too-common for District children and adolescents, especially those who come from black or brown communities.

THE ASK:

\$2.7 million for the Department of Behavioral Health. \$300 thousand will support a cost study that will allow better planning for blended grant funding and reimbursements from clinical care. \$2.4 million will support \$80 thousand grants per CBO clinician per school for all District public and public charter schools by replacing one-time funding used in each of the past two budget cycles with permanent, recurring funding. \$80 thousand per CBO clinician per school is estimated from average clinician salaries from a DBH survey of CBOs and payment for a 1:6 clinical supervision ratio to ensure high-quality services

FUND COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

This recommendation seeks to enhance funding for community-based behavioral health services. Rate increases are needed to avoid reducing the amount of time made available for people to receive services like therapy, community support, and Assertive Community Treatment. These rates should be increased to ensure District residents have access to the behavioral health services they need. This funding is expected to support an increase to provider organization rates, which are currently set based on FY16 costs.

The Department of Behavioral Health's community-based provider network annually serves approximately 27,000 District residents with a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or both. All of those individuals may be eligible to receive some additional support.

THE ASK:

\$10.3 million for the Department of Behavioral Health. This includes an increase of \$8.2 million for DBH Medicaid local match payments and an increase of \$2.1 million for DBH local dollar payments

RECOMMENDATIONS



ELIMINATE BARRIERS IN THE HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE'S RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Fund the full and permanent repeal of the Healthcare Alliance's 6-month, in-person recertification requirement and replace it with an annual renewal requirement. The Alliance is a locally-funded health coverage program for low-income District residents ineligible for Medicaid. It is a vital source of coverage for Washingtonians who are immigrants.



However, in FY12, the DC Government began requiring Alliance participants to renew their coverage every 6 months in person with the Department of Human Services (DHS). This singled Alliance participants out for more difficult renewal requirements than Medicaid (Medicaid participants renew once a year and don't have to renew in person or undergo a special interview).

The requirement also created serious barriers to health coverage for Alliance participants, many of whom lost coverage or had to line up for hours outside DHS service centers every 6 months to stay covered. A change would benefit all Alliance participants (just over 21,000 people), by allowing them to more easily stay in the program and receive healthcare. It would also benefit would-be participants who are not a part of the program due to enrollment/renewal barriers, as once they complete enrollment, they would only have to renew their coverage once a year and would not be required to do so in person or to undergo a special interview.



COMMUNITY SAFETY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our recommendations for FY23 seek to increase community control over our own safety. Our asks include increased funding for community-based domestic violence organizations, a push for community oversight of surveillance technology used for policing in DC, funding to expand the non-police crisis response system, and other measures intended to lessen our reliance on Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and other policing agencies.

CONTEXT

Safety is a critical issue in the District right now. Policing and traditional forms of punishment have disproportionately impacted Black people in this city. Statistically speaking, the safest communities are the most well funded. Poverty is a strong predictor of crime in a given area, this means that crime is a symptom of poverty. It is time to decriminalize being poor; to reduce crime we must reduce poverty.

The criminalization of poverty makes community safety initiatives both a race and class issue. Increased funding for domestic violence and expansions of community response and crisis teams are a necessary first step. Currently the non-police crisis system receives less than 2% of eligible calls. Roughly 15% of the FY22 budget went to Public Safety and Justice, the 3rd largest investment of the budget, and yet DC residents are not any safer. There is more than enough money to invest in non-police alternatives to safety. DC has over 3,500 police officers and is looking to increase this number to over 4000, in comparison to the 92,000 children that the public education system serves. There are 25 times more students than police yet students receive only 2 times the budget allocation. This is just one of the many problematic budgetary relationships related to our city's decision to invest in policing over investing in human needs.

If we challenged you to reimagine an ideal world, what would safety look like? Our Budget Recommendations around community safety move us closer to the world our Coalition imagines for DC residents.



FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF DC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PILOT

In the FY23 budget, DC Council and the Mayor should re-allocate funding to the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to ensure that the DDOT can fully take on traffic violations and minor accident duty, shifting this responsibility away from MPD. Black people are disproportionately stopped by police in the District. Between July 22, 2019 and December 31, 2019, 61.8% of ticket stops involved a Black person. This funding is in support of the full implementation of a pilot that transfers those responsibilities from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to and DC Department of Transportation (DDOT).

THE ASK:

\$5 million reallocated from MPD to DDOT

INCREASE FUNDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Domestic Violence service providers continue to receive flat funding or budget cuts despite the increased prevalence of domestic violence since the beginning of the pandemic. Current funding is not meeting the need given the demand for services. The lack of increased funding has impacted the full range of services, including social and legal services, advocacy, crisis response, and housing. Service providers require funding to provide and expand mental health support, support and hire staff, and communication and outreach efforts.

Culturally specific service providers are asking for additional funding to continue to serve their communities. This funding includes responding to intersectional issues, raising awareness about gender-based violence in different communities, funds for language justice, training, covering the transportation needs of survivors, operating costs, and outreach and communication efforts. Domestic violence service providers require funding to support and expand mental health counseling across their programs. Domestic violence providers across service areas also need funding to support the sustainability of existing and new staff. To adequately respond to the demand for services organizations need to be able to retain and hire new staff, providers require additional funding to cover the cost of salaries and to adjust for cost of living. The additional funding will allow providers to continue to serve their populations and expand their reach.

THE ASK:

\$8 million

RECOMMENDATIONS



DC OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN

Funding to support the establishment of an independent Ombudsperson for Children. The purpose of this Office is to provide information to the public regarding the policies and practices of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA); to investigate both individual complaints and systemic issues regarding CFSA's policies and practices; and to provide children, youth, and families involved with the child welfare system a place to seek assistance in working through case-level conflicts and problems, and to improve engagement with CFSA. Most importantly, the independent Office of Ombudsperson would hold CFSA accountable to the children, youth, and families it is tasked to serve. Children and families involved with DC's child welfare system face many obstacles to their long-term success. In addition, long-term systemic issues prevent abused or neglected children and children in foster care from achieving the critical milestones they need to build stable, independent lives and develop healthy relationships as adults. An independent, external Ombudsperson for Children can both help CFSA-involved children and families resolve day-to-day problems and tackle systemic issues affecting outcomes for foster children, as well as children who are abused or neglect or at risk of abuse or neglect.

THE ASK:

\$950 thousand

COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT OF SURVEILLANCE

The recommendation is in support of legislation and funding that would bring public oversight and accountability over the use of surveillance technology by DC agencies, including the police department. All DC residents will benefit, but particularly residents who are already the target of overpolicing and police surveillance would benefit.

THE ASK:

This is a policy recommendation, there is no money ask at this time

NON-POLICE CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM

While DC has piloted a non-police crisis response system, it is only receiving 2% of eligible calls right now and is projected to only receive 1/3 of calls by Phase 3. Our requests are for:

- > **the program to be fully funded** so every eligible call can be handled by a mental health professional and
- > **clear metrics** regarding how to measure the program's success

THE ASK:

TBD

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS



In the FY23 budget, DC should allocate at least \$1 million seed grant funding to the DC Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG) or DC Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) to build or renovate a restorative justice community center. Community members will benefit from this restorative justice community center. Additionally, it will provide additional resources and space for community-based organizations already doing important work in/for the community. Black DC residents impacted by crime, violence, incarceration, and poverty will all also benefit.



We also ask that DC give serious consideration and commit adequate resources to creating space for community-led reimagining of the DC Jail. As part of this, there should be time, space, and funds set aside to fully explore new ways to design facilities and reimagine our justice system. This reimagining should center the voices of people directly impacted by incarceration, and include community organizers and other invested community members and organizations in a creative approach. There are many creative approaches that can, and should, be used, but the focus should be on examining the current systems, naming why they're designed that way, and brainstorming new approaches that can set the nation's capital apart as a model for criminal justice reform.



ECONOMIC JUSTICE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Economic Justice in DC means, in large part, redistributing wealth toward our most impacted residents– the same residents who have, over generations, built DC. Our recommendations seek to do this by increasing TANF benefits to reflect the level of child poverty in DC, in order to put more money in families’ pockets. We are also urging that the DC Council funds an office of Ombudsperson for DHS, to make sure that families in our most impacted communities are treated justly and are receiving the benefits DC promises them. We also recommend a significant increase in the funding for Interim Disability Assistance.

Additionally, we urge the DC Council and Mayor to give some serious thought, energy, and resources to defining and implementing a living wage in DC- a project that must be led by the most impacted communities.

CONTEXT

Economic justice requires secure jobs, wage protection, and access to education and technology. Our recommendations help tip the scales for DC employees and residents who’ve been marginalized in both the formal and informal economy. This budget season we are laying the groundwork and political will for radical change that the current public health emergency has shown is needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS



DOUBLE THE INTERIM DISABILITY ASSISTANCE CASELOAD TO HELP RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Interim Disability Assistance (IDA) provides cash benefits to residents with disabilities who have applied for federal disability benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and are waiting to hear if they are approved. IDA is a vital lifeline run by the Department of Human Services (DHS) for DC residents who cannot work and have no other income or other means to support themselves. The wait for federal benefit determination has skyrocketed in recent years to nearly 600 days in 2017. And it appears that wait times have increased by up to an additional 60 days due to the pandemic. Without IDA, residents can go without any income for almost two years. The caseload for FY22 is just 667. Our proposal is to double the caseload this year with the goal of reaching everyone in need within 5 years.

THE ASK:

\$3.3 million

DC DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES OMBUDSPERSON

Black families in DC have had little opportunity to build wealth because of historic discrimination and systemic racism. As a result, some Black families need public benefits and services to survive and lay the groundwork to obtain education, quality jobs, and the opportunity to build wealth and power. Unfortunately, the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Economic Security Administration (ESA) and Family Services Administration (FSA), have instituted unnecessary and unreasonable barriers to access public benefits and services with no meaningful or timely method to raise or obtain resolution of complaints. There are extremely long lines, burdensome and unnecessary documentation requirements, untrained staff who require documentation that is not required by law or policy, lost paperwork, incorrect denials of benefits and services, and erroneous termination of benefits and services. This recommendation would establish an independent Office of Ombudsperson for constituents to raise issues and obtain timely resolution. Ensuring underserved Black families can access these benefits and have someone to go to when they are improperly cut off or denied is critical, as it can mean the difference between having food on the table, a home to live in, and the ability to pay for heat and electricity.

THE ASK:

\$1-2 million

INCREASE TANF BENEFITS FOR MORE MONEY IN FAMILIES' POCKET

DC government should increase the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) income benefit to match the level of New Hampshire, the highest level in the nation, in the next two years. Low TANF benefits are one of the main causes of child poverty in DC. The high level of child poverty in DC, especially in Wards 7 and 8, has a lasting negative impact on children and their families, indeed the whole DC community. DC's child poverty rate of 23.1% in 2018 was the seventh highest rate in the entire country. Child poverty and homelessness are major factors in undermining school performance. Most DC TANF recipients are Black; and the consequences of our failure to address inherited child poverty in DC has intergenerational implications, and so successful implementation of this intervention has the potential to move us closer to achieving racial justice in DC.

THE ASK:

\$34 million in FY23, and \$67.9 million in FY24



WE URGE DC TO MOVE TO A UNIVERSAL INCOME/LIVING WAGE INSTEAD OF MINIMUM WAGE.

Many of DC's residents operate far below the standard of living, despite working full-time. Our current system defines family, poverty, health, and a living wage in a way that doesn't give people what they truly need to thrive. In the Living Wage Act of 2006, DC Code posits that a living wage is currently \$15.50/hour and will increase to \$16.10/hour in July 2022.

THIS IS NOT A SUFFICIENT LIVING WAGE.

While an increase in minimum wage is a step in the right direction, the minimum is not enough. It is clear that we need to shift our collective understanding of what we mean by a "living wage." Therefore, we ask that DC Council put dedicate time, resources, and ample energy toward listening to our most impacted communities as we lead the conversation around defining what a living wage truly means– both now and taking into account how it might shift in the future. They should consider what this term might mean for people in various stages of life, family configurations, states of health, and proximity to resources outside of income, among other things. The Council and Mayor should also be open to following the leadership and demands of our most impacted residents in terms of taking concrete steps toward not just defining, but implementing, a living wage in DC.

The Living Wage Act of 2006 should be updated with the final definition agreed upon by all stakeholders, and reviewed so that all the requirements match the new definition. This new mutual understanding of a living wage will become crucial in supporting the residents of DC and working towards economic justice.



FOOD ACCESS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our focus is on demanding that the District increase access to healthy, nutritious foods for low-income residents. The City Council can take concrete steps toward food access for all residents by passing the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act, passing the Give SNAP a Raise Amendment Act, and funding healthy school meals for all DC public school students.



CONTEXT

A critical determinant of health is access to healthy foods. There are 79 partial and full service grocery stores in Washington DC, and only 4 of them are in Wards 7 and 8. 51% of total food deserts in DC are located in Ward 8 alone. Food access is an equity issue along the lines of race and class. Food is the entry point for many other issues impoverished people face in the city. Without proper access to food individuals and families can not access physical wellness and emotional stability.

The most vulnerable in DC are also the most food insecure, children and the elderly. One in five children have been deemed food insecure with free and reduced school meals being the only source of nutrition for some. Food insecurity among seniors is the highest in the nation at a rate of 14.3%. There are 12,000 seniors who lack adequate access to food. The Fair Budget Coalition has outlined budget recommendations that help to alleviate and address chronic issues of food access in the District.



PASS GIVE SNAP A RAISE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2022

The current average SNAP benefit in DC is \$142 per person, per month, roughly \$4.50 a day.

SNAP is supposed to be supplemental to a household's food budget, but for many people it makes up most of their food budget. The Give SNAP a Raise Amendment Act of 2022 would raise local SNAP benefits about 9% and change the minimum benefit to 15% of the maximum SNAP benefit instead of the current flat rate of \$30.

	HOUSEHOLD SIZE					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Current Minimum Benefit</i>	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30
<i>Current Avg Benefit</i>	\$149	\$298	\$447	\$596	\$745	\$894
<i>Minimum benefit under the Act</i>	\$37.50	\$68.85	\$98.70	\$125.25	\$148.80	\$178.75
<i>Avg Benefit under the Act</i>	\$162	\$325	\$487	\$650	\$812	\$974

THE ASK:

TBD, awaiting estimate from Chief Financial Officer (CFO)



PASS NO SENIOR HUNGRY OMNIBUS AMENDMENT ACT

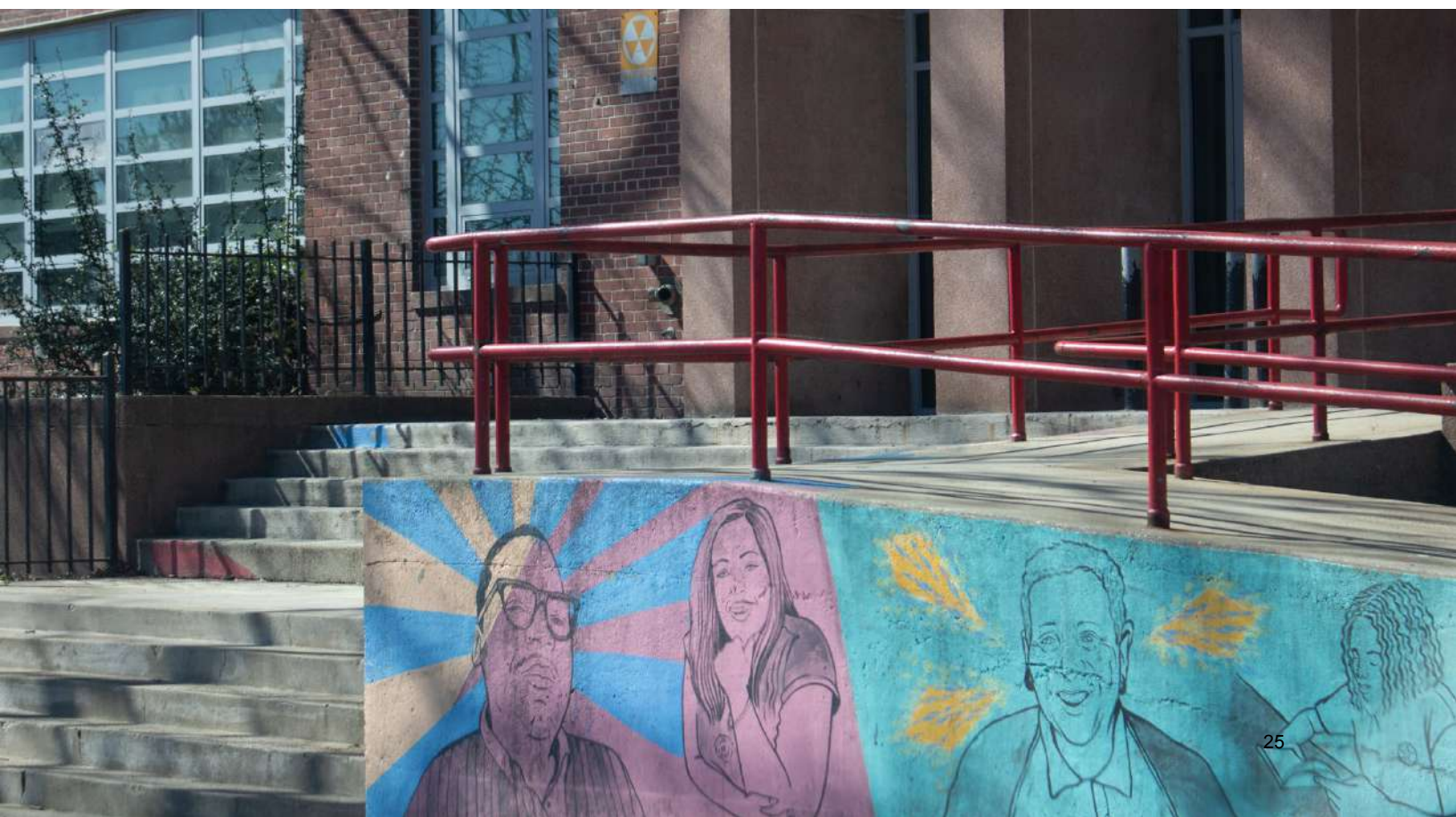
DC has the highest rate of food insecurity among seniors (60+) in the country, at 14.3% (about 12,000 older adults). The No Senior Hungry Act creates concrete plans and steps that the DC government must take to end senior hunger in the District. It includes creating an Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Task Force led by the Department of Aging and Community Living; developing a communications plan for senior nutrition services to ensure that they are using all available resources to connect with seniors, particularly isolated seniors; increasing SNAP participation and participation in other nutrition programs among seniors; and adding home delivered meals and medical nutrition therapy to the Medicaid waiver.

THE ASK:
TBD

HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL

Healthy School Meals for All will secure funding for free healthy school meals (breakfast and lunch) on a permanent basis for DC Public School and DC Public Charter School students in the event National School Lunch Program waivers are not extended for SY22-23 and beyond. It will eliminate the current reduced tiered rate used to determine how much a student pays per meal, reaching more than 93,000 students, eliminating stigma, and increasing participation. This will also lead to a reduction in paperwork, relieving the administrative burden experienced by schools administering the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, as well as other federal child nutrition programs.

THE ASK:
\$19.8 million





FAIR TAXES & PUBLIC DEALS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our recommendations focus on ensuring that DC's tax system is ever-shifting towards racial equity. We are in support of expanding tax relief benefits to DC's undocumented community and eliminating tax breaks for wealthy investors and developers.

CONTEXT

The economic fallout of the pandemic has not been equally shared: lower-income residents, particularly Black and brown people, have suffered economically while high-income earners have largely been unscathed, or have even seen their wealth grow. That's on top of pre-existing disparities in income, where white households are overrepresented among the top 40 percent of households and Black households are overrepresented in the bottom 40 percent. The district must think and strategize about what it takes to create a just and equitable tax structure with the goal of redistributing resources that are concentrated at the top. Our asks from the Fair Taxes and Public Deals group will continue to focus on increasing revenue for DC's Budget to serve those most impacted by wealth inequity, as opposed to cutting programs and resources from communities that historically and contemporarily carry the brunt of the racial inequity burden in DC. In other words, let's find the money and get the resources to our communities. When our communities have money, that is an investment in our economy.



RECOMMENDATIONS



EXPAND DC'S EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC) TO PEOPLE WITHOUT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS (SSNs)

We are calling on city leaders to expand DC's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to residents without Social Security Numbers (SSNs), which would greatly benefit undocumented workers. The EITC is a hefty tax credit which is given to decrease the tax burden of low-income households and free up money for priorities like food, clothing, and housing. Currently, undocumented workers do not qualify for the EITC, despite their tax contributions. Expanding the EITC to residents without SSNs would cost between \$3-5 million annually, and give undocumented residents access to the strongest EITC program in the country.

THE ASK:

\$3-5 million annually

CITY-WIDE BENEFIT:

More than 5,000 undocumented residents would be granted access to the strongest EITC program in the country

FULLY ELIMINATE "OPPORTUNITY ZONES" TAX BREAKS FOR WEALTHY DEVELOPERS

Currently DC participates in a national program that gives tax breaks to wealthy investors and individuals who develop in so-called "Opportunity Zones" (OZs) which are most often in predominantly Black and brown, low-income neighborhoods. We are calling on the Council to fully decouple the District's corporate and personal income tax code from the federal law. This change would recoup millions of dollars in annual revenue currently lost to these tax breaks, by taxing any capital gains associated with OZs as ordinary income. There is already considerable national evidence that the program has become a windfall for rich investors and can fuel further displacement and gentrification, rather than benefiting to the residents who live in these zones.

Total City-Wide Benefit: The District would recoup approximately \$1.5 - \$2 million dollars annually.

In the longer term, we must consider further revenue enhancements from wealthy individuals and corporations to continue addressing longstanding needs of District's low-income communities, who are overwhelmingly Black and brown. These inequities--in income, wealth, jobs, education, and health--result from centuries of discriminatory and oppressive systems that the District has yet to dismantle. They will not be eliminated with rhetoric or with small scale pilot programs, but by large scale public investments maintained over the long term. As economic forces increasingly concentrate income and wealth at the very top, at a considerable cost to our social fabric, we will continue to advocate for a tax structure that acts as a counterweight for fairness and justice.



A NOD TO LAST YEAR'S FAIR TAXES AND PUBLIC DEALS VICTORY



Among our most significant wins in the last Budget Season was successfully advocating for the tax amendment that the DC Council passed last summer. The amendment raises taxes on income over \$250k, and changes the income brackets to \$250k-\$500k, and \$500k - \$1m. The amendment is expected to increase taxes on just 4% of DC's taxpayers, and raise \$161m in the first full fiscal year of implementation.

THE REVENUE RAISED WILL GO TO:

HOUSING
HOUSING
HOUSING
HOUSING
HOUSING
HOUSING

**2,400 NEW HOUSING
VOUCHERS/
SUBSIDIES**

TEACHERS
TEACHERS
TEACHERS
TEACHERS
TEACHERS
TEACHERS

**INCREASED
WAGES FOR EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATORS SO THAT
PAY IS ON PAR WITH
DCPS TEACHERS**

CREDIT
CREDIT
CREDIT
CREDIT
CREDIT
CREDIT

**EXPANDING
THE DISTRICT'S
EARNED
INCOME TAX
CREDIT**

Our victory achieving a tax increase on DC's wealthiest residents was the result of a widely shared, collective effort, including individuals and groups that have been working for years for greater tax justice in the District. It was a result of long-standing groundwork, pivotal research, smart messaging, strategic organizing, and the tireless efforts of every single person who organized behind the scenes, tweeted, made graphics, participated in events and actions, called their councilmembers, shared their story, recruited supporters, and more.

We envision a DC where the wealthiest pay their fair share. We look forward to continuing this important work into the future so that all of DC's residents can thrive and share in the city's abundant resources and prosperity. It was a result of long-standing groundwork, pivotal research, smart messaging, strategic organizing, and the tireless efforts of every single person who organized behind the scenes, tweeted, made graphics, participated in events and actions, called their councilmembers, shared their story, recruited supporters, and more.

MEMBERS

We would like to thank each of our coalition members:

- > Empower DC
- > Bread for the City
- > Miriam's Kitchen
- > Jews United for Justice
- > DC Jobs With Justice
- > Black Swan Academy
- > Everyone Home DC
 - > ACLU-DC
- > Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
 - > Legal Aid Society of DC
 - > Children's Law Center
- > DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
 - > DC Behavioral Health Association
 - > DC for Democracy
 - > DC Hunger Solutions
- > DC Statehood Green Party
 - > DCKinCare
 - > ROC DC
- > So Other Might Eat (SOME)
- > DC Fiscal Policy Institute
 - > DC Greens
- > SPACES In Action
- > Amara Legal

- > Sierra Club
 - > HIPS
 - > GLAA
- > Coalition for DC Public Schools
 - > Platform of Hope
 - > Just Homes
 - > Martha's Table
- > Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)
 - > TZEDEK
 - > RDB Strategies
- > Washington Lawyers Committee
- > National Domestic Workers' Alliance
 - NDWA - DC Chapter
 - > Voices Unbarred
 - > DC Justice Lab

Individual members

- > Lisa Demands
- > Martin Kleinbard
- > David Schwartzman
- > Katharine Landfield
- > Mary McCall



ENDORSEMENTS

Fair Budget Coalition strongly supports the following initiatives:

MY DC, MY FUTURE

The youngest DC residents share what they want to see funded in the DC budget via video and drawings.

#DONTXCLUDEME

COVID-19 relief has not reached everyone in need. Excluded workers are undocumented residents, day laborers, sex workers, street vendors, returning citizens and other workers in the informal economy who all have been locked out of unemployment benefits and other cash assistance. This campaign demands action from the DC government.

DEFUND MPD

This campaign petitioned DC Council to vote NO on the proposed budget on July 7, 2020 because it does nothing to hold MPD accountable or move toward a safer DC.

TAX DAY

This is a digital campaign that targets DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson to get his attention about the tax dollar priorities that are important to DC constituents for racial equity.

THE WAY HOME

The Way Home is a campaign to end chronic homelessness in DC. These are some of our most vulnerable residents. No one should be homeless. No one should be homeless for years.

RECLAIM RENT CONTROL

This is a campaign to condemn the antidemocratic inclusion of the Rent Control Provision in the Budget Support Act in a hearing on November 9, 2020, with residents delivering testimony.

#POLICEFREESCHOOLS

This campaign petitions for a removal of police from DC public and charter schools. an investment in city budget for the expansion of school-based mental health programs, community violence interrupters, educator training in social-emotional learning and transformative justice approaches; and more.

CANCEL RENT DC

This coalition is about resisting these policies together to demand real relief and demanding that rent and mortgage payments for renters and homeowner be cancelled for the period of the pandemic, with NO NEW DEBT.

UNDER 3 DC

Under 3 DC harnesses the voices and power of parents with young children, caregivers, and others to create transformative social change.

CITED SOURCES

GREATER GREATER WASHINGTON:
In DC, access to medical care really depends
on where you live

MAYOR'S FY22 BUDGET

SPRINGER OPEN:
Dynamic linkages between poverty,
inequality, crime, and social expenditures
in a panel of 16 countries: two-step GMM
estimates

GW ROOSEVELT INSTITUTE:
DC's Untapped Solutions for Recidivism

OPEN DATA DC

**GROCERY STORE ACCESS IN
WASHINGTON D.C.:**
The Effects of Race and Poverty

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA, DEPUTY MAYOR FOR
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
DC DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**
Inclusionary Zoning Program, 2021 Maximum
Income, Rent and Purchase Price Schedule

THE WASHINGTON POST:
D.C. has the highest 'intensity' of
gentrification of any U.S. city, study says





FAIR BUDGET ≥ COALITION

P.O Box 54185
Washington, DC 20032

Fairbudget.org | info@fairbudget.org



@fairbudgetdc