

An Open Letter to DC's Future Mayor

To the future mayor of DC,

When DC is under attack, will you stand up and fight back?
What about those you appoint to executive positions?

How can you be sure?

Having strong local leadership throughout the executive agencies of DC's government strengthens our autonomy and shields us against Congressional interference. However, when we lack transparency and accountability in the appointment process, we bypass the DC residents that these positions are meant to serve.

Many don't even realize that deputy mayors are appointed positions, nor do they understand the power these positions have in implementation of DC policy, including our local budget.

If these roles are not elected, how can we design an appointment process that remains accountable to the people and their needs? How will the public know that appointees will be able to lead DC with integrity and care for the community? And how can you, as our next leader, show us that you are properly vetting and considering who you appoint to these positions for the care and sustainability of our communities, both this generation and the next?

As we stand on the horizon of a completely new political landscape within the District, the Fair Budget Coalition believes that the power of transparency and knowledge sharing can help our incoming Mayor make appointment decisions that are reflective of the needs, wants, and hopes of the Washingtonians they will serve.

That's why we are introducing our Fair Budget Civic Power [Executive Appointee Rubric](#).

At Fair Budget, accountability to the people is what our work always ladders up to. When we are activated during budget season and doing Council-facing advocacy, there is often times an elephant in the corner of the room we must contend with:

Without strong, steady, and trustworthy leadership within our executive agencies, no amount of smart legislation passed by the Council will translate into real investments our communities need to be healthy, thriving, and sustainable. Unless a deputy mayor implements laws passed by our Council, our advocacy will never result in the material change we wish to see. The Executive branch serves as a lynchpin for our ability to govern ourselves.

As the head of the Executive branch, you are responsible for not just executing tasks, but executing the will of the people. In order to do so, you must have a strong sense of which issues our communities face, and a strong plan to address them with integrity and care. If you appoint

Agency heads, Commission Directors, and Deputy Mayors that are not committed to upholding and implementing the policy decisions of the Council, it is a direct threat to our autonomy, and opens up our local government to federal intrusion and, ultimately, takeover under the guise of local mismanagement.

This will also directly impact your trustworthiness and relationship to the people, weakening your ability to lead before your tenure has even really begun. Our rubric aims to avoid these issues by proposing criteria to score potential appointees against before offering the role.

The rubric contains seven criteria areas that our Coalition identified to help identify a qualified *and* community-rooted appointee:

- CRITERIA 1: History of local engagement
- CRITERIA 2: Commitment to meaningful engagement with communities of impact
- CRITERIA 3: Commitment to implementing change-management initiatives
- CRITERIA 4: On-the-ground experience in the specific issue area of appointment
- CRITERIA 5: Vision for modernizing the agency, department, or office
- CRITERIA 6: Lateral and vertical management experience
- CRITERIA 7: Are their values aligned with FBC?

Our hope is that this rubric will help you to evaluate potential appointees against a standardized set of criteria rooted in identifying strong candidates rooted in skill, care for community, and experience.

The rubric has a total of 50 points available, and a “passing” score is a minimum of 40 points. Anything below should be considered a candidate that does not pass the holistic bar of community and competency. At a time where urgency must be met with action, we should not be settling for the same type of status quo candidates we have had over the course of this latest mayoral regime. *It is not just that we deserve better; it is that we **must** do better.*

We are standing on a magnificent threshold, with a world unlimited by what has been and opened up to what can be. You, as our next leader in a complicated lineage of DC leadership over the years, have the opportunity to change the story that we’ve been writing. You hold the power to create a more cohesive, actionable, and accountable government across all three branches, and we urge you to rise up the responsibility of that power when selecting your appointees.

Sincerely,
Niciah Mujahid
Executive Director, Fair Budget Coalition