



# DC JOBS COUNCIL

**Toward a New Vision of Workforce  
Development in the District of Columbia**

**May 2007**

*The DC Jobs Council is a coalition of job training providers, advocates, employers, labor representatives, research institutes, social service agencies, and funders who advocate for a DC workforce system that meets the needs of all DC residents, and that responds to the DC economy.*

*The DC Jobs Council accomplishes this goal through a multi-faceted strategy including the provision of policy materials, advocacy to policy makers and city agencies, public education, organizing, and coalition building. Together, we believe that city leaders should make an effective and efficient workforce system a city priority and that every DC resident should have the job training and education opportunities necessary to succeed in jobs that pay self-sufficiency wages and that meet the skill needs of employers in the District of Columbia.*

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## **8 KEYS TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

At the same time that the Washington, DC, economy is booming, only 29 percent of those working in the District actually live in the District. Regional unemployment remains below 5 percent, while unemployment in Ward 8 consistently exceeds 15 percent. More than 50,000 DC residents are unemployed or underemployed. Simply put, the District's current workforce system does not effectively connect job seekers with available services and jobs.

The DC Jobs Council challenges the Mayor to develop a strategic vision for the public workforce development system that sets skills development, career ladders, and progress towards self-sufficiency as priorities. We must create an efficient and effective city wide system with a continuum of services that includes basic literacy, GED preparation, secondary and post-secondary education, job training, job placement, and job retention, all coupled with broad-based work supports, case management, and client advocacy. This continuum must serve the needs of all DC residents.

In 2007, the DC Jobs Council proposes that the Mayor focus on these keys to workforce development:

1. Create a coordinated and responsive administrative structure to implement the city's workforce strategy, including the establishment of an interagency workgroup convened by an appointed workforce czar who will report directly to the City Administrator.
2. Restructure the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) to operate independently from the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES), report directly to the City Administrator, and be assured of adequate financial and staff resources.
3. Implement a data-driven oversight system, coordinated with the CAPStat system, using outcome and performance data, coupled with a survey of employers, job training programs and job seekers, to ensure programs and services meet the self-sufficiency needs of DC's diverse communities.
4. Reconfigure the One-Stop system to include accessible satellite offices and central Career Centers offering comprehensive career counseling and assessments, along with referrals to qualified and effective agencies providing customers with services to meet their specific needs.
5. Invest local dollars in specific job readiness programs for youth and adults, particularly those residing in Wards 7 and 8.
6. Provide direct access to support services (e. g, child care, housing, transportation) for those DC residents seeking jobs, as well as those whose wages are too low to pay for these services, in order to enable them to work without interruption.
7. Ensure strong, culturally competent, and accessible case management services reach those DC residents facing multiple barriers to employment, and enforce related federal and local laws.
8. Link workforce and economic development strategies, including Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Community Benefit Agreements (CBA), and a Unified Development Budget (UDB), to ensure District residents benefit directly from jobs created by development projects

## **AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A REVITALIZED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

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In 2007, Mayor Adrian Fenty and the Council of the District of Columbia (DC Council) have a chance to set a new strategic vision of how to make DC's economy thrive for residents and employers alike. The workforce development continuum is a complex system that includes basic literacy, GED preparation, secondary and post-secondary education, work readiness, job training, job placement, job retention support, and client advocacy. The success of this multi-layered system requires the full engagement of many stakeholders, in addition to those who are seeking jobs: employers, unions, educators, service providers, policy makers, government agencies, and funders.

The following report prepared by the DC Jobs Council (DCJC) identifies a set of goals, policies and programs to increase the skills and employability of the District's low-skilled, low-income residents while responding to the demands of DC's business community. Where possible, we have suggested a branch of government, or even a specific agency, to take the lead in implementation. At the same time, a robust workforce system requires cooperation among all levels of government, as well as the public and private sectors. The guiding principles of such a workforce system should be skills development, career ladders, and movement towards economic self-sufficiency.

In preparing this paper, we have drawn on the expertise of a number of stakeholders and earlier research. We had the opportunity to provide input to and review the report developed by the Brookings Greater Washington Research Program on using the workforce development to help build the middle class in the District of Columbia<sup>1</sup>. We have referred frequently to transition documents and the Mayor's priorities for his first 100 days in office. Finally, we have benefited immeasurably from the work and guidance of our members – a broad range of service providers, advocates, researchers, funders, and other interested groups and individuals. We hope this paper provides additional useful information to advance the development of the workforce system in the District of Columbia.

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<sup>1</sup> Ross, Martha and Brooke DeRenzis, **Reducing Poverty in Washington, DC and Rebuilding the Middle Class from Within**, The Brookings Institution, 2007.

## **A VISION FOR AN EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE SYSTEM**

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There are many signs that the District's economy is far stronger today than it was a decade ago: a robust real estate market, recent budget surpluses, and resurgence in DC's population. But too many DC residents have been left out of the city's renaissance. While the number of jobs within the DC boundaries is growing, the number of DC residents who are working is falling. DC's unemployment rate (5.8 percent in February 2007) is higher than that of most large cities, higher than the national rate (4.5 percent), and dramatically higher than the regional unemployment rate (3.2 percent). Moreover, the number of DC residents living in poverty rose by 11,000 in 2005.

Bridging DC's economic divide will require creative and proactive strategies to increase employment among unemployed DC residents and to increase earnings for those underemployed residents who are working. Employment rates for DC's African-American residents and residents without a college degree are at historically low levels, and wages have grown only modestly for DC's lowest-paid residents.

Improving education and training in the District — primary and secondary education, higher education, basic literacy, and workforce training — must be a central part of such efforts. Residents with more education and training have higher employment rates and incomes. In recent years, only college-educated DC residents have fared well, yet the DC economy continues to rely on many workers without a college degree.

With proper training and education, DC residents can find jobs in sectors that offer good wages and benefits, and meaningful career ladders, even without a college degree. This is the challenge to DC's workforce development system, a challenge that it has not been able to meet in recent years.

Comprehensive reform of workforce development will focus on sectors within the metropolitan Washington region projected to grow in the DC metro area within the next ten years and that offer a range of well-paying occupations. A model workforce development system will provide a spectrum of services to meet residents' needs, from basic literacy to advanced skills training, from day care to transportation assistance, and from entry-level to positions that offer self-sufficiency wages for workers and their families. And the workforce will be fully accountable to its customers and the community.

Finally, DC's future workforce development efforts must be coordinated closely with the city's economic development programs. The city must attract businesses that will create family-sustaining jobs, ensure major development projects include a training component for DC residents, and assertively monitor and enforce requirements that businesses receiving financial assistance hire DC residents for their new jobs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT**

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Committed, visionary leadership from the very top has made possible the transformation of workforce development systems in other cities and states, from Racine, WI to Seattle, WA to Utah. Mayor Fenty has a unique opportunity to transform workforce development in DC, create a national model, and support economic development in the city. The most successful cities and states have designed workforce development systems that revolve around the needs of residents and employers.

### **GOALS**

To lead the transformation to a functional and vibrant workforce development system, we believe the Mayor, the DC Council, and agency leaders should focus on several overarching goals:

- Reinvigoration of the public workforce system, including the Department of Employment Services (DOES);
- Appointment of a workforce czar, reporting directly to the City Administrator, who will coordinate an interagency workgroup;
- Development of an empowered Workforce Investment Council that will lead coordination among public and private workforce activities;
- Establishment of a mechanism to distribute accurate labor market data to the general public;
- Development of a comprehensive data collection system that informs comprehensive and accurate performance and outcome measures;
- Development and implementation of a strategic workforce development plan; and
- Coordination and maximization of all public monies.

### **Reinvigoration of the Department of Employment Services**

In recent years, the Department of Employment Services (DOES) has suffered in recent years from a culture that fails to support customer service and a commitment to excellence. New leadership will help, but a change in culture will require focused oversight by DOES leadership, the Mayor and the Workforce Investment Council (WIC). Improved service will require a commitment both to putting customers first, as well as to coordinating with other District agencies.

#### **Recommended Action:**

##### ***DOES Leadership***

1. *Assess the status of DOES operations and develop a strategic plan for service improvement.*
2. *Design and implement new system with clarity of roles, established protocols, and clear oversight.*

3. *Implement a comprehensive staff training program with incentives to support DOES staff and rewards for excellence.*

### **Appointment of a workforce czar, and creation of an interagency workgroup**

The appointment of a workforce czar, appointed by and reporting to Mayor and/or the City Administrator, will facilitate effective coordination among the various agencies engaged in the workforce system. The czar will convene regular meetings of key staff of agencies whose work affects workforce development. These agencies include, but are not limited to, DOES, the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Office of Planning, the Office of Aging, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), and the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). Such a czar will bear responsibility for ensuring the plans of one agency as they relate to workforce development complement those of other agencies.

Leadership by key agency heads and managers will be required to ensure buy-in and to provide any necessary training and guidance all the way down the line so staff can effectively implement new systems and strategies. The result will be a seamless workforce development system, without duplication of services or wasted resources.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

##### ***Mayor***

1. *Appoint a workforce czar to report to the City Administrator as soon as practicable.*
2. *Issue a directive creating an interagency workgroup, chaired by the workforce czar, that includes directors and/or other senior staff of all city agencies whose work has an impact on the workforce.*
3. *Appoint the czar to the Workforce Investment Council*

##### ***DC Council***

1. *Confirm workforce czar.*
2. *Pass legislation and ensure funding for czar and coordination of the interagency workgroup.*

### **Development of an empowered Workforce Investment Council**

To ensure effective and consistent cooperation by public and private entities, the District of Columbia needs an empowered Workforce Investment Council (WIC). In many cities the local workforce investment boards and their staff are the driving force of the overall workforce system. Their mandate extends beyond that authorized under the federal Workforce Investment Act and they have set ambitious goals for the overall workforce system.

The WIC will be most effective as a quasi-governmental entity, supported with local, federal and private funding. The Mayor and the Council must fully support and strengthen the WIC's role in shaping citywide policy and ensuring that the DC workforce system is aligned with the goals outlined by the Mayor and the local workforce investment laws. The WIC Executive Director, who occupies the agency's chief staff position, should be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed

by the DC Council. To play its oversight role, the WIC and its staff should be housed independent of the DOES and outside of its administrative control.

**Recommended Actions:**

***Mayor***

- 1. Use his authority to support and empower the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) to design and oversee comprehensive workforce system.*
- 2. Issue a directive mandating that the WIC move out of the DOES offices.*
- 3. Ensure that the WIC has direct access to the Mayor and his relevant Deputies with the goal of the Mayor holding a minimum of semiannual meetings with the WIC Executive Committee.*
- 4. Confer with the WIC in the development of key workforce related strategies or in conjunction with proposed legislation.*

***DC Council***

- 1. Pass legislation and set aside funding to enable to WIC to function as a quasi-independent agency with staffing to meet the goals established through the strategic planning process.*
- 2. Confer with the WIC in developing workforce related legislation and related appropriations.*

***WIC***

- 1. Develop a strategic plan for the WIC in its strengthened role, coordinated with an overall workforce development strategic plan, that includes defined roles and responsibilities for WIC members and staff.*
- 2. Provide oversight to all workforce development activities including their integration with other citywide education and economic development initiatives.*
- 3. Help build capacity of workforce development professionals and employers to meet the mandates of the strategic plan by offering focused technical assistance.*

**Establishment of a mechanism to distribute accurate labor market data to the public**

Those seeking employment need direction to find and keep a position that offers a career ladder to opportunities paying family-sustaining wages. Those looking for jobs must have access to information on what careers offer job growth and what qualifications are necessary to compete successfully for those positions. This information can be made accessible through a web-based database. Specially trained staff can ensure the information remains current and is presented in a format most useful to those who need it.

**Recommended Actions:**

***DOES***

- 1. Perform necessary research to acquire current labor market data.*
- 2. Train staff to ensure that data remain current and accurate.*
- 3. Implement a user-friendly web-based database of labor market data.*

## **Development of a comprehensive data collection system**

It is essential that decisions regarding the effectiveness of workforce development activities be based on verifiable data. Such data must include performance and outcome measures that track the effectiveness of programs funded in part or fully with public dollars. In cooperation with the CAPStat system, programs must be analyzed against standards of effectiveness that include aggregated and disaggregated data along a variety of indices, outcome and performance data, demographic information, and measures of success of various programs tied to self-sufficiency. Anecdotal information regarding the experience of One-Stop customers will provide information essential to ensuring the One-Stop centers provide services job seekers need, in a way that encourages, supports, and empowers those seeking employment or training opportunities.

### **Recommended Actions:**

#### ***Interagency Workgroup/WIC***

- 1. Determine information that will facilitate evaluation of workforce development activities.*
- 2. Develop a series of outcomes which the data collected will measure.*

#### ***DOES***

- 1. Develop data collection and analysis system that is transparent to city government and the general public and does not unnecessarily increase DOES staff workload.*
- 2. Collect and analyze data periodically as necessary to provide current information.*

## **Development and implementation of a strategic workforce development plan**

One of the greatest hindrances to a functioning workforce system in the District has been the lack of a true strategic plan. With funding from a special appropriation to the Workforce Investment Council by the Council of the District of Columbia, the WIC will be conducting a strategic workforce development plan in the second quarter of 2007. We recommend that the workforce czar work collaboratively with the WIC in the development of the strategic plan to ensure coordination with the stated goals of the Mayor, the provisions of the DC Workforce Investment Act, the recommendations of the Brookings report, and this DC Jobs Council paper.

The plan should identify a system of accountability, overseen by the WIC in conjunction with the czar, to meet the stated goals of the plan. The city's workforce development strategy must identify specific employment, education and training goals for DC residents consistent with their proportional representation in the workforce. The strategy must also establish numerical goals to expand education and job training opportunity for unemployed and underemployed DC residents. Consistent with the DC Workforce Investment Act, the strategic plan must ensure that education, training, and job placement programs are effective in preparing DC residents for jobs that pay self-sufficient wages.

## **Recommended Actions**

### ***Mayor***

1. *Require city agencies to be forthcoming with information and data necessary to assess the current status of the workforce system including its oversight role in job training, apprenticeship, welfare-to-work programs, and the One-Stop System.*

### ***WIC***

1. *Develop a planning process that includes representatives of each of the stakeholder groups including employers, educators, training providers, and DC residents.*
2. *Include implementation benchmarks with timelines, accountability, and roles and responsibilities.*

### ***DC Council***

1. *Review strategic plan and incorporate its provisions into planning efforts.*

## **Coordinate and maximize all public monies.**

Currently the majority of funding for job training and education programs in the DC workforce system is based on funds allocated through the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Most other jurisdictions rely on local and state revenue to supplement federal dollars. Many states seek waivers to the requirements of WIA to provide more flexibility in their programs. City leaders must make a commitment to invest significant local resources in the city's workforce systems. Currently a number of DC based foundations are exploring how to support an enhanced workforce system.

## **Recommended Actions:**

### ***Workforce Czar***

1. *Engage all city agencies in participating in the process of developing a resource map of all public funds available for job training, including those through housing, welfare, and other programs.*
2. *Develop process for maximizing these funds in a coordinated workforce system.*

### ***WIC***

1. *Provide report on sources and uses of local and federal workforce development fund.*
2. *Work with a funding collaborative of private and public foundations and employers to support job training, job readiness, and education efforts.*
3. *Pair public and private dollars and to expand in-kind contributions to the workforce system (through on-the-job training programs, loaned staff, and other resources in addition to cash).*

### ***DOES***

1. *Seek waiver of WIA provisions from the US Department of Labor.*
2. *Review all contracts related to workforce development in conjunction with Office of Procurement to ensure effective delivery of service.*
3. *Renegotiate contracts with less-than-satisfactory terms.*

## **PREPARE YOUTH FOR WELL-PAID WORK IN THE DISTRICT**

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According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the youth employment rate in the District of Columbia is the lowest it has been in 50 years. More than half (53 percent) of employers queried as part of the Skills Gap Survey by National Association of Manufactures and the Manufacturing Institute indicated that their current employees have inadequate basic employability skills; 46 percent reported inadequate problem-solving skills, and 36 percent indicated insufficient reading, writing and communication skills

Two types of youth enter the workforce each year: those who have graduated from high school, and those who have not. Those young people who have graduated from high school generally have a better chance of finding employment because they meet the basic requirement for most jobs – a high school diploma. Youth planning to enter the workforce, whether currently in or out of school, require programs that include certain critical characteristics.

### **GOALS**

The following goals will help the District of Columbia ensure that young people are prepared for work in jobs which are plentiful and which offer career paths and family-supporting wages:

- Year-round employment program/expanded summer youth jobs program;
- Career literacy program beginning in middle school;
- Vocational programs; and
- Bridge programs with contextualized basic education for dropout youth.

### **Year-round employment program/expanded summer youth jobs program**

The purpose of both year-round and summer youth employment programs is to expose young people to the culture of work and to realistic and productive potential job opportunities. Through visits to various workplaces, informal discussions with adults about their jobs, and short- and long-term internships, youth will be able to sample career options in fields that offer growing opportunities. Career counseling will help young people make the connection between school and work and help them plan for further training and education. Mentors can assist students on the job, providing guidance based on experience. Part and parcel of any such program will be instruction in “soft” skills to ensure workforce readiness.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

##### ***DOES***

1. *Coordinate with District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) to develop a plan for both a year-round employment program and an expanded summer youth jobs program tied to orienting students to job opportunities in sectors which hold the promise of quality jobs or offer the development of job readiness skills.*

## **WIC**

1. *Collaborate with DOES, DCPS, UDC, the DC Chamber of Commerce, and others to find employers willing to hire youth and offer a meaningful work experience*
2. *Set minimum guidelines for certificate of eligibility.*
3. *Fully operationalize the DC Youth Council and integrate its goals into those of the DC WIC.*

## **Career literacy program beginning in middle school**

Youth need to be apprised of sectors that will be growing in the region in the next ten years. As youth start thinking about their career choices, they need to understand what jobs will be available, what are the real costs of living in the DC area, and which jobs offer career ladders to self-sufficiency. An innovative career literacy program, beginning in middle school, will help students understand the connection between school and work and make decisions that will enhance their future opportunities. Counseling by informed, up-to-date counselors will provide each student with information on what careers offer opportunities for growth students and the range of opportunities available in a particular career field. For instance, students interested in health care will learn about positions as diverse as doctors and nurses to phlebotomists, mammography technicians, and medical administrative assistants.

Year-round internships for older students will provide valuable on-the-job experience. And successful completion of a career literacy program, along with achievement of a high school diploma or GED, will result in a certificate of employability for the student, further increasing their attractiveness to potential employers.

### **Recommended Actions:**

#### ***DCPS***

1. *Develop career literacy curriculum for middle school students to help inform them of the impact of different academic choices on long term career goals.*
2. *Hire and train instructor/counselors to provide up-to-date labor market information.*
3. *Ensure opportunities for hard-to-serve youth to participate by mandating that career guidance transcend gender, race, and other stereotypes.*
4. *Develop and publish standards for certificate of employability that is followed by pilots in selected areas of the city.*

#### ***DOES***

1. *Provide instructor/counselors with up-to-date information on career opportunities.*
2. *Work with DCPS staff, community-based organizations, businesses, and members of the WIC to offer internships with measurable goals.*

## **Career and Technical Education Programs**

Career and Technical Education (historically referred to as vocational education) programs take several forms and are available in several venues. Such programs can range from classes within

the general DCPS system to technical schools to Career Academies<sup>2</sup>. Each method benefits a different kind of student. In all cases, CTE should focus on high-demand, high-wage jobs with strong career ladders. At the same time, entry level jobs for youth can offer valuable stepping stones to job readiness. Many counselors, educators, and other adults discount entry-level jobs (such as fast food jobs, warehouse, maintenance, etc.) as dead-end, low-wage jobs. While initially lower-paying, these positions offer youth the opportunity to learn valuable skills such as time management, work ethics and customer services. These skills increase a young person's employability exponentially, particularly when students have the opportunity to consider these skills and experiences as a first step in building a longer range career plan.

**Recommended Actions:**

***DC Council***

- 1. Determine feasibility of establishing a community college system in the District of Columbia.*
- 2. Pass legislation to provide incentives to employers who participate in internships and transitional employment programs for youth.*

***DCPS***

- 1. Support the development and, where possible, expansion of the Career Academy system.*
- 2. Develop curricula for career and technical education as part of traditional DCPS programs that help prepare students for jobs that offer career paths to self-sustaining wages or for successful matriculation into post secondary degree programs.*

***State Education Agency/UDC***

- 1. Develop variety of vocational classes and programs to meet demands of growing industries with a need to fill high-wage jobs that do not require a four-year degree.*
- 2. Create a community college system within UDC to offer a wide range of education opportunities to the broadest range of potential students throughout the District.*
- 3. Develop reciprocal agreements with area community colleges until such time as we have our own fully-functioning community college system.*
- 4. Engage employers and job training providers in the development of a career-based curriculum.*

**Bridge programs with contextualized basic education for dropout youth**

Bridge programs offer the opportunity to learn important basic skills – including math, reading and writing – in such a way that their connection to the world of work is clear. Many young high school dropouts have learning disabilities, which often go undiagnosed. Others leave school prematurely because of personal or family challenges. As a result, they lack the basic skills of problem solving, reading and comprehension needed for employment. Programs with small

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<sup>2</sup> Currently, DCPS offers or is planning Career Academy programs in the arts (Ellington); biotechnology, IT, and broadcasting (McKinley); construction, transportation, and aeronautics (Cardozo); engineering, electronics, and robotics (Dunbar); media, communications, and automotive technology (Ballou); and health care sciences (Anacostia). These Career Academies combine traditional academic coursework with technical courses designed to prepare students for work in fields where strong job growth is anticipated.

student-instructor ratios can teach skills to people who learn differently so they can qualify for a high school diploma or GED. In addition, all youth need to learn so-called “soft” skills. These include appropriate dress to obtain and keep a job, the right attitude for employment, time management, conflict resolution, and understanding and meeting employer expectations.

**Recommended Actions:**

***DOES***

- 1. Use One-Stops to identify out-of-school youth in need of bridge programs.*
- 2. Identify and train staff at One-Stops with a special interest/affinity for working with young people.*

***State Education Agency/UDC/DCPS/Service Providers***

- 1. Provide varied bridge programs designed to meet diverse needs of dropout youth and make them available in a range of locations.*
- 2. Partner with the WIC Youth Council and Executive Committee to ensure that DC youth have access to all workforce system related activities.*
- 3. Develop and outline a broad outreach plan to identify and engage out of school youth in career planning and goal setting.*

## **ENSURE ADULTS HAVE ACCESS TO JOB TRAINING AND EDUCATION NECESSARY TO COMPETE FOR AND SUCCEED IN SELF-SUSTAINING JOBS**

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No single road leads to job placement. Adults seeking employment have diverse educational and training needs. On one hand, DC has higher-skilled adults who may need minimal assistance to achieve employment goals. But DC also has many low-skilled adults who require significant educational and job training intervention to secure job placement.

The workforce development system must recognize that the definition of success varies depending on the adults being served. Success may range from learning how to use a computer mouse to learning how to write incident reports, passing the GED, gaining professional certification, or earning a degree.

### **GOALS**

To meet the diverse needs of DC adults, the workforce development system must provide a continuum of programs and services that include education, job readiness, training, retention and advancement services (see page 29). The system must be flexible to allow adults to enter and move along the continuum as necessary. In addition, depending on educational and skill level, job seekers require access to training programs and time – from a few months to several years – to prepare for jobs that enable them to earn, or move on a path to, self-sufficiency wages. It is unlikely that any one agency or provider will be able to provide all of the programs and services along the continuum. In order to function effectively, the workforce system must:

- Develop a comprehensive database of all job training and related programs for adults;
- Reconfigure One-Stop Career Centers;
- Identify and classify contractors; and
- Revise contractor procurement process.

### **Develop a comprehensive database of all job training and related programs for adults;**

At present, there is no single source of information on all of the job training and related programs available to adults in the District of Columbia. Determining what programs currently exist is vital to determining what needs are still unmet. Therefore, we recommend the creation of an accessible, multilingual, web-based database of job training and job readiness programs. Such a database will facilitate referrals, streamline comparisons of effectiveness, and reveal areas of insufficiency and/or duplication. The directory will include information on both those programs that are privately operated and funded as well as those that are certified by DOES.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

##### ***DOES***

1. *Conduct audit of all publicly-funded and private job training programs available to adults in DC.*

2. *Develop accessible, multilingual, web-based database of job readiness and job training providers.*
3. *In cooperation with CAPStat system, develop standards of effectiveness based on aggregated and disaggregated data along a variety of indices, outcome and performance data, demographic information, and measures of success tied to self-sufficiency.*
4. *Provide effectiveness ratings on a publicly accessible web-based database.*

### **Reconfigure One-Stop Career Centers**

Currently, DOES One-Stop Career Centers are not meeting the needs of District residents. To provide the most comprehensive career support services to those who need them, we propose reconfiguring the One-Stop system. The system would be designed in such a way that the offices could be housed in locations where DC residents tend to congregate and integrated into centers or agencies that offer other community or public services. Under this proposal, all other services will be outsourced to qualified training providers. At an initial interview, a highly-trained One-Stop counselor would meet with a client individual to determine the client's income needs relative to costs of living in the District, current competencies, and the need for work supports. Further discussion and screening tools would reveal aptitudes and interests. Based on all information, the counselor would then work with the client to develop a long and short term career training and development plan. By using the database (see above), the counselor will provide the client with a list of training providers most likely to meet his/her needs, rather than asking the client to navigate through a long list without sufficient information to make an informed choice.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

##### ***Workforce Czar/Interagency Workgroup***

1. *Develop design for new One-Stop Career Center system which will include neighborhood-based career assessment centers.*

##### ***DOES***

1. *Implement assessment and career counseling system.*
2. *Offer each job seeker current and accurate information about the local labor market, costs of living in DC, jobs that offer career paths to self-sufficient wages, and the training necessary to prepare workers for those jobs.*
3. *Provide training to One-Stop personnel to enable them to meet their new responsibilities.*
4. *Develop and implement a system to monitor the effectiveness of One-Stops as they assist clients in finding new jobs.*

##### ***Service Providers***

1. *Provide ongoing assistance to job seekers seeking job training, job readiness and/or related services.*

## **Identify and classify contractors**

Contractors provide various kinds and levels of service to clients. Individual Training Account contractors, for example, provide service to clients who receive ITA vouchers through DOES. The contractor is reimbursed for each ITA client served. Other vendors – generally more appropriate for hard-to-serve clients – provide service on a contractual basis to DOES; the vendor develops a basic set of services and a curriculum that is available, with a clearly identified goal and a definite starting and ending time. These contractors typically offer case management services. Finally, other entities offer career counseling, job development, resume assistance, and work readiness services, generally to clients needing fewer or less complex services. In order to best serve those seeking jobs, it is necessary to identify and classify contractors according to the audiences they are best equipped to assist.

### **Recommended Actions:**

#### ***DOES***

- 1. Beginning with the provider database, classify service providers according to services provided, location, clients served, etc.*
- 2. Make results of classification available on web-based database.*

## **Revise contractor procurement process**

The current process for certifying and accepting contractors to provide job training and related services is burdensome and often ineffective. While the WIC is charged with developing credentials for potential contractors, the implementation is undertaken by the DC Office of Procurement with minimal involvement by the DOES. In some instances, inappropriate contractors are certified, while otherwise competent providers are excluded because of their inability to meet the kinds of credentials usually required of educational institutions. We recommend that any organization wishing to provide services to DC residents must not only be approved by the Office of Procurement, but also assessed by DOES as to its qualifications to provide effective assistance. Further, we recommend periodic reviews of contractors, during which they will be required to provide data-supported evidence of success.

### **Recommended Actions:**

#### ***Workforce Czar/Interagency Workgroup***

- 1. Review process for certifying and accepting contractors to provide job training and related services that is both more streamlined and consistent with the goals of the workforce system.*
- 2. In cooperation with the WIC and DOES, develop standards for providers offering job training and related services.*
- 3. Explore alternative to current system that gives the primary responsibility to evaluation and authorization of contract providers to the DC Office of Contract Procurement.*

#### ***WIC***

- 1. Establish criteria for job training contractors eligible to receive public funds directly or indirectly through the ITA voucher system. Criteria must include, but not be*

- limited to that related to the demands of the local economy, coupled with those jobs that hold the promise of stepping stones or access to self-sustaining wages.*
2. *Ensure that there are a diverse range of training programs responding to the different job readiness levels of DC residents and that offer training in a range of sectors.*
  3. *Confer with the Workforce Czar and DOES on a frequent basis to ensure that goals of contracting process is being met.*

***DOES***

1. *Following certification by Office of Procurement, monitor provision of services to ensure that contractors provide services that meet established standards.*
2. *Serve as intermediary between Procurement and WIC by monitoring effectiveness of service providers.*

## **REDUCE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM AND JOBS FOR DC RESIDENTS**

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Many barriers, independent of inadequate basic and hard skill training, can impede full participation in the DC workforce system, not only at the point of job placement but at the levels of job retention and career advancement as well. These barriers include a lack of access to reliable childcare, unreliable, unavailable or expensive transportation, unaffordable housing, poor literacy, mental health and substance abuse issues, health restrictions, legal issues, and work-life balance challenges.

District residents facing these barriers include homeless youth and adults, youth and adults with disabilities, limited English speakers, single mothers, individuals with substance abuse and ex-offenders. Low wages compound these problems, increasing the need for services and resources to manage barriers preventing successful and ongoing job training, placement, and retention. Effective reduction of barriers to participation in the workforce development system must occur throughout the workforce development continuum, before and after job placement. Accessible and affordable supportive services -- particularly strong case management -- are critical to unemployed and underemployed DC residents' ability to overcome barriers to job retention and career advancement.

The city can identify vendors to provide ready access to necessary goods and services, including transportation and childcare assistance, work uniforms, tools, health exams, eyeglasses, and furniture. Contracts to provide such goods and services should be provided to vendors who have demonstrated ability to provide them.

To address the needs of hard-to-serve populations, the Universal Access Committee of the DC WIC has outlined a series of approaches from training of One Stop Counselors and providers, establishment and oversight of new polices, and specialized assessments to the use of varied support programs. These recommendations can greatly inform the actions taken by DOES and other agencies engaged in workforce development..

### **GOALS**

To effectively assist individuals overcome barriers to participation in the workforce, it will be necessary to enforce existing policies and to implement new policies and programs to support DC residents as they navigate the workforce development continuum. In order to develop an inclusive workforce system, it is necessary to:

- Assess and address barriers associated with job qualifications;
- Provide appropriate and flexible work supports;
- Address real and/or perceived cultural barriers; and
- Provide intensive support to job seekers facing multiple barriers simultaneously.

## **Assess and address barriers associated with job qualifications**

Perhaps the primary barrier faced by those seeking good jobs in the District of Columbia is a lack of qualifications. These include low literacy levels, a lack of soft skills, and insufficient training for high-demand, high-wage jobs. The solution involves a cooperative effort among all relevant District agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations providing workforce development, literacy, work supports, and case management.

### **Recommended Actions:**

#### ***WIC***

- 1. Determine baseline qualifications that jobseekers must possess to meet the needs of employers, and what support systems job seekers must have in place to be successful in the workforce.*
- 2. Employ the WIC Universal Access Committee to put in place relevant policies and measures of accountability.*
- 3. Design structure to help employers participate in strengthening qualifications, particularly in soft skills (e.g., compensating employers for giving employees more latitude during a defined training period).*
- 4. Support programs to build the capacity of DC job training providers so that they can be effective in delivering services and programs to hard-to-serve clients.*

#### ***DC Council***

- 1. Examine current capacity of existing programs to meet the needs of hard-to-serve populations.*
- 2. Support legislation and funding to establish or strengthen programs that can provide job skills or job readiness programs to enable these DC residents to successfully compete for well-paying jobs in the District.*

#### ***DOES***

- 1. Identify appropriate mechanisms for assessing varying level of qualifications of job seekers and that identifies areas for support.*
- 2. Administer needs/career assessments of One-Stop clients as recommended by the WIC and make referrals as necessary.*

#### ***Service Providers***

- 1. Offer programs consistent with the needs and standards identified through the WIC and DOES process and comply with data collection and completion requirements.*

## **Provide appropriate and flexible work supports**

Many DC residents face great difficulty finding and/or keeping jobs because of the unavailability of core complementary services including child care, transportation, affordable housing, and health care. These services are essential to meet the goal of full participation in the workforce. The city must foster strong cooperation among a number of city agencies, providers, and the private sector to make work supports more readily available. Training programs, nonprofit organizations, and DOES staff must identify barriers before job placement and assist clients in acquiring basic housing, transportation, childcare, uniforms, and work-related supplies before job

placement. Further, case managers must act proactively to ensure clients not only have access to services, but, in fact, use them.

Comprehensive case management and work support systems should be available during training and post employment placement to help those employees who are not earning self-sufficient wages upon job placement. The city can identify vendors to provide ready access to necessary goods and services, including transportation and childcare assistance, work uniforms, tools, health exams, eyeglasses, and furniture. Contracts to provide such goods and services should be provided to vendors who have demonstrated ability to provide them.

**Recommended Actions:**

***Workforce Czar/Interagency Workgroup***

- 1. Assess core services that must be in place to support workers in addition to those related to skills and do an inventory of the nature, availability and locale of services.*
- 2. Develop and conduct staff training in key agencies about available work supports and how to help clients navigate these services.*
- 3. Explore and recommend at least one pilot project each year that will develop and test a career pathways program for hard-to-serve job seekers with a specific barrier, such as mental health, disability or ex-offender status, through a coordinated project with service providers.*
- 4. Establish a timeline by which designated hard-to-serve populations will receive the necessary support to increase their successful participation in the workforce with a goal of putting to work the majority of these adult residents.*
- 5. Explore innovative partnerships in the private sector to meet some of these needs whether through special internships, shared transportation or expanded public transportation.*

***DC Council***

- 1. Appropriate funds for two pilot 24-hour child care centers.*
- 2. Allocate special funds to support job training programs that meet the needs of special populations (e.g., ex offenders, women, etc).as described above.*

***DOES***

- 1. Through One-Stops, provide clients with needs assessments.*
- 2. Determine extent of need for particular kinds of work supports (e.g., child care, transportation, housing, health care, etc.).*
- 3. Identify District agencies and/or service providers able to meet needs for work supports.*
- 4. Assist employers in facilitating access to necessary work supports.*

***Service Providers***

- 1. Work with all related agencies to ensure clients receive supports*

**Address real and/or perceived cultural barriers**

In many cases, the barriers to successful participation in the workforce are because of a cultural bias. Gender stereotypes, for example, may cause job developers to neglect to suggest construction trades to female clients, despite the high wages and strong career paths construction

offers. Similarly, racial and ethnic stereotypes may affect minority participation in certain industries or in particular union shops. Immigration status, particularly in the post-9/11 era, may make employers overly cautious about hiring non-citizens. And a lack of English language proficiency may make communication between supervisors and workers so difficult as to discourage the hiring of non-English speakers.

**Recommended Actions:**

***DC Council***

1. *Pass legislation and, if necessary, reallocate funding to ensure laws and regulations addressing arbitrary discrimination in the workplace are enforced.*

***Workforce czar/Interagency Workgroup***

1. *Develop methodology and conduct research to determine what barriers exist and to what degree.*
2. *Determine which District agencies and/or service providers are most appropriate to help address barriers.*

***DOES***

1. *During One-Stop assessment process, determine which clients face potential barriers.*
2. *Refer clients to appropriate District agencies and/or service providers.*

***Service Providers***

1. *Provide assistance to clients in overcoming real and/or perceived barriers.*

## **BUILD A PIPELINE TO EMPLOYERS: LINKING WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

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To equip the District's workforce, a comprehensive approach must address labor market realities in the city and region as well as the needs of employers, workers and job seekers. Even the very best workforce development program will not be successful unless job seekers ultimately are linked to jobs. Workers must be prepared with skill sets that meet the specific needs of the industries in which there are work opportunities. In order to successfully match skill-building to industry needs, employers must be key partners in establishing a strategy or plan for the workforce development system.

We encourage the District to invest significant energy in engaging employers' and employer associations' genuine involvement in developing mechanisms that will facilitate the hiring of DC residents and ensuring that they can afford to both live and work in the District. The street between job seekers and employers goes both ways. Each can benefit from a better understanding of the needs, requirements, and special circumstances of the other. Workforce development organizations (WDOs) must increase their capacity to work effectively with employers, and employers must become more familiar with the strengths and constraints of the WDOs and invest in the workforce development system. Business organizations such as the DC Chamber of Commerce, Federal City Council, and the Board of Trade, as well as trade associations and individual employers, must be actively involved in this process.

### **GOALS**

The primary objective of these efforts is to engage employers in the operation of a workforce system that meets the needs of employers and DC residents. To meet this objective, we propose the following goals:

- Legislative and regulatory proposals that concurrently support economic and workforce development policy;
- Pilot job development programs that are sector-based and located in wards with the greatest need.

### **Legislative and regulatory proposals**

We propose four specific legislative and/or regulatory changes to help develop the employer pipeline so essential to workforce development.

- A. Pass Tax Increment Financing (TIF) legislation. Such legislation will require TIF applicants to identify specific jobs to be created, along with wages and benefits. It also will allow TIFs to be used only in disadvantaged areas. Finally, legislation must ensure the adoption of clawbacks to recapture subsidies when job creation goals are not met.

- B. Establish a Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) structure. CBAs are negotiated between community groups and developers to ensure city residents benefit from development. CBAs include provisions for first source hiring, living wages, job quality standards, affordable housing assistance, environmental standards, and open space allowances, among other details. In many cases, they also address community priorities, such as building child care centers, library branches, and/or health clinics. CBAs are attached to developers' agreements with the District, giving a CBA the force of law.
- C. Strengthen the District's workforce regulation enforcement function based on data. It is well known that no business has ever been sanctioned for violating a First Source agreement. Other laws, regulations and contractual clauses that require equity in employing fairly according to gender, race, ethnicity, or other status are similarly ignored. This is largely a function of enforcement failure. It is essential to strengthen the enforcement of workforce regulations to ensure they have "teeth" if they are to achieve their goals.
- D. Create a Unified Development Budget (UDB). In many jurisdictions, a UDB reveals not only appropriations to support development projects but also foregone tax revenues from developers resulting from various tax breaks. By adopting a UDB, the District can ensure a more transparent picture of the impact of development projects on the city.

**Recommended Actions:**

***DC Council***

- 1. *Pass legislation to change the District's TIF mechanisms.*
- 2. *Pass legislation to create a Unified Development Budget.*

***DOES***

- 1. *Develop and implement an appropriate enforcement mechanism to ensure concessions to developers that do not result in increased levels of employment of District residents are returned to the city's coffers.*
- 2. *Develop a Community Benefit Agreement structure to ensure economic development projects result in a true net benefit for the neighborhoods in which they take place.*

**Pilot job development programs**

The DC Jobs Council proposes the establishment of pilot job development programs. These programs will be sector-based, focusing on industries with strong prospects for job growth over the next decade. Potential sectors include health care, construction (with a focus on women in the trades), administration/information technology, and hospitality. In each case, a wide range of specific jobs within each industry will be explored. The pilot projects should be located in wards with the greatest need, such as Wards 5, 6, 7 or 8. In each case, the pilot will involve employers, educators, nonprofit organizations, citizens, and city leaders in assessing job seeker skills, evaluating job requirements, and closing the gap between the two.

**Recommended Actions:**

***WIC***

- 1. Obtain buy-in from employers for creation of pilot job development programs throughout the District, particularly in historically underserved areas.*

***Workforce Czar/Interagency Workgroup***

- 1. Develop structure for pilot job development programs, initially in four industries (hospitality, administration/information technology, construction, and health care).*

***DOES***

- 1. Implement pilot job development programs, initially in hospitality, administration /information technology, construction, and health care.*

***Service Providers***

- 1. Assist in implementation of job development programs by providing CTE and related services to clients.*

## CONCLUSION

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To live up to the principles of skills development, career ladders and movement toward economic self-sufficiency, the city must connect and integrate programs offering a continuum of services. The Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia have the authority to establish a workforce development system that brings all stakeholders to the table.

This is an exciting time for the District. Employment opportunities abound and there is an untapped resource of prospective employees among District residents eager to take advantage of those opportunities when given appropriate access to them. The DC Jobs Council is ready and willing to support the city leaders in this mandate.

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**DC Jobs Council  
Workforce Development Continuum\***

**Advocacy and Policy:**  
Engage employers and workers, general workforce development education, action research and dissemination, WIC, WIA

**Job Readiness**  
 Career Counseling  
 Financial Literacy (personal budgets, credit repair, etc)  
 Resume preparation, interview techniques, and job search.  
 Ensure supportive services are in place such as childcare, health care, transportation, housing Assistance, etc.  
 Workplace Etiquette Skills to include anger management, conflict resolution, appropriate dress, etc.

**Education & Training**  
 Career Counseling  
 Adult Basic Education, GED, English as a Second Language.  
 Bridge programs to prepare people for post-secondary education  
 Programs that blend basic skills with occupational skills training  
 Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs  
 Community college certificate and degree programs  
 Career and technical education programs in high school  
 Short-term vocational training  
 Vocational, Small Business Entrepreneurial Training, or Skills training.

**Retention & Advancement**  
 Career Counseling  
 Training, or Skills training.  
 Ensure supportive services in place especially health care and childcare.  
 Required Credentials obtained such as certificates and licensing  
 Incumbent worker skills training  
 Workplace literacy  
 Once job secured, if needed:  
     Stipends to cover incidental expenses until first paycheck  
     Three to six months of on-the-job support and coaching.  
 Ensure workers apply for earned income tax credit.

**Goal:  
Job Placement**

**Program Funding Sources Include:**  
Local government, federal government (WIA Title I, WIA Title II, TANF, etc), foundations, corporate.

*\*Potential workers can enter the continuum at any box.*