



# MAKE ★ ONE ★ CITY ★ POSSIBLE

create opportunities to **live** and **work** in d.c.

The Fair Budget Coalition fights for a just and inclusive District of Columbia through advocacy and organizing and by advancing budget and public policy initiatives which reflect the interdependency of the District's community and economic development systems.

## ★ INTRODUCTION ★

The District faces both challenges and opportunities as Mayor Gray begins to develop a budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2013. There are signs that the city's economy is starting to rebound from the recession that started in 2008. DC's population grew by 15,000 over the past year, more than almost any city and state, and the city's downtown commercial real estate market is one of the strongest in the world.

However, this economic growth has been uneven — the gap between high and low-income residents is wider in DC than in almost any other city.

Unemployment among DC residents remains at one of its highest levels in nearly 30 years, as more than 30,000 residents are looking for but unable to find work. Meanwhile, DC's population growth is putting pressure on housing prices, adding to the city's already serious affordable housing crisis.

Moreover, reductions in the city's budget due to the recession have greatly affected the District's ability to meet its most serious challenges. Funding has been cut for a wide array of services, including public safety, libraries, health care, and public works. The budget for FY 2012 is \$340 million lower than in FY 2008, after adjusting for inflation, despite rising enrollment in DC schools, increased enrollment in Medicaid, and increased costs of operating the government as a result of inflation.

The cuts have been especially severe in services that help low-income District residents, including affordable housing, homeless services, and disability services. Even though poverty skyrocketed in recent years as a result of the downturn, funding for services that affect low-income families and individuals has been cut disproportionately by nearly 10 percent, even more than cuts to public safety, education, or public works.

- Resources to help residents with disabilities and low-income families meet their basic needs have been reduced.
- Funding to preserve or build decent and affordable housing has been cut.
- Support for adult literacy and job training has not been increased, despite the tremendous number of residents needing more skills to obtain good paying jobs.
- Funding for homeless services was reduced modestly – and a much larger cut was barely averted – even though the number of homeless families has skyrocketed and the ability of the District to shelter them has been inadequate.

The FY 2013 budget is an opportunity to address these challenges and to make progress on Mayor Gray's vision of "One City" for all District residents. With DC's resources still tight, Mayor Gray should use the FY 2013 budget to *Create Opportunities to Live and Work in DC*.

The following recommendations of the Fair Budget Coalition of the District of Columbia lay out a plan for tackling these challenges and for *Making One City Possible*.