



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.

★ CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK IN DC ★

DC residents are eager to work, as evidenced by incredibly long lines at job fairs and business openings, a tremendous response of TANF families in 2011 to new training opportunities, and the responsiveness of homeless residents to an effort by DC to enable them to repair homes and then move into them. Yet DC's unemployment remains at a record high level as its economy is still reeling from the recession. The District has a highly competitive job market, where positions advertised for high school graduates will get applications from residents with a college degree.

It is clear that the District must tackle its high unemployment rate with strategic investments in education and training.

Investments to Create Opportunities to Work in DC

- 1. Adult Education and Literacy:** Restore \$1.2 million that has been cut in recent years from adult education and literacy programs. This would allow 400 more residents to get the skills they need to gain meaningful employment.
- 2. Child Care:** Restore \$5 million to the child care subsidy program so that more parents can work and to create jobs for child care providers.²
- 3. Use Stable Housing to Help Families Move to Work:** Invest \$2.25 million to provide support and housing to help 150 homeless families move to work. Housing subsidies and intensive support services will give families a stable foundation to participate in training and to move toward employment and independence.

Policy Changes to Create Opportunities to Work in DC

- 1. Improve Enforcement of DC's Worker Protection Laws:** The District can dramatically improve the lives of low-wage workers by improving the enforcement of workplace protections laws, like the minimum and living wage laws, the Accrued Paid Sick and Safe Leave Act, and the Wage Payment Act, which helps workers when employers try to steal their wages. Currently, these laws are frequently broken because violators often face low or no penalties and it is difficult for workers to enforce their rights. The Mayor's budget should focus on stronger enforcement of these workplace protections and should raise the penalties that Office of Wage-Hour collects from low road businesses when they violate workers' rights. Similar efforts in other states have proven effective at deterring violations while also raising additional revenue.
- 2. Access Federal Funds for Training Using the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program:** The federal SNAP program, formerly known as food stamps, gives DC and the states matching funds to support education and training for SNAP recipients. With more than 140,000 residents receiving SNAP, the District has a great opportunity to use federal dollars to boost local funding for job training. However, the District pulls down less than \$1 million of federal funds for this program, which is a terrible missed opportunity.
- 3. Target Job Training Funds on Higher-Wage Industries that Are Growing:** Focus training dollars on higher-wage and high-growth occupations. DC officials responsible for workforce development should invest in employment training programs that have good outcomes and train students in industries that are likely to be adding employees and have solid career ladders.

2. Childcare programs have been cut continuously since 2007, totaling more than \$20 million in cuts