



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

The DC Fiscal Policy Institute blog
www.dcfpi.org

March 11, 2013

DC Will Be A Stronger City If Everyone Succeeds: DCFPI's Goals for the Upcoming 2014 Budget

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Last week, we let you know that even though DC is recovering from the recession, many of our residents haven't been able to [climb out](#). The fiscal year 2014 budget season and DC's improving finances offer an excellent chance for DC to invest resources to make sure that all residents can experience a recovery as well.

Here are some principles that should guide the budget for Fiscal Year 2014

Help DC Residents Cope with the Rising Costs of Housing

Everyone knows that the cost of living in DC – especially housing – has risen to levels that are out of reach for many residents. To help families cope with rising costs, the budget should devote significant resources to programs that build new housing or make existing housing affordable, such as the Housing Production Trust Fund and the Local Rent Supplement Program. DC's underfunded Emergency Rental Assistance Program is a cost-effective way to help families avoid housing crises, and the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Program can help residents buy their apartment building and avoid displacement while their neighborhood develops. The FY 2014 budget also should be used to develop a new approach to rising homelessness among families with children.

Give Parents the Tools to Succeed in the Job Market

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program helps vulnerable families to pull themselves up to a place of self sufficiency. The program offers training to those parents who need certain skills before they can compete in the labor market. Unfortunately, the program's capacity is insufficient for DC needs. The budget should include funding for an increase in job training slots so that all work ready parents can get the skills they need to succeed.

The FY 2014 budget also should address a growing problem that is making it hard for working parents to get child care. Right now, many child care centers cannot afford to take in low-income children because reimbursement rates in DC's child care subsidy program are [insufficient](#). When parents do not have stable and safe childcare, they cannot maintain stable employment.

Make Sure People Have Access to Care

The DC Healthcare Alliance offers health care services for thousands of low-income residents, but new administrative burdens, such as twice a year re-certification for current participants, has made it harder for eligible residents to get health care. Beyond addressing that, the FY 2014 budget should increase low Medicaid reimbursement rates for mental health services, to ensure that there will be enough providers to meet the needs of residents needing care.

Give Children a Safe Place to Learn and Grow

Outside of the traditional school day, many students need a safe place to go where they can continue to learn and be nurtured. Out of school time programs, which have been cut in recent years, and summer programs, should be adequately funded in 2014.

Help DC Residents in Crisis

DC's most vulnerable residents need a significant amount of help in this budget. Many families in the TANF program are unable to work because they are in crisis or dealing with serious chronic problems. The DC budget should include funding for time limit exemptions for families who are facing issues like domestic violence or serious illness.

The FY2014 budget should also increase funding for Interim Disability Assistance (IDA). This program provides benefits for individuals with disabilities while they await approval of Supplemental Security Income from the federal government. Unfortunately, the program is underfunded, leaving many DC residents who are unable to work, without any income whatsoever.

The dynamic DC economy offers tremendous opportunities, but without providing the tools to succeed, economic recovery will leave many residents behind. Like any community, the District will be a stronger place if everyone succeeds. Stay tuned to the blog for more details on each of our FY2014 budget goals and how they can make DC stronger for everyone.