



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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Guest Blog: Without DC Trust: What is the Path Forward for Supporting Afterschool and Summer Programs for Youth?

By Joseph Gavrilovich, Senior Policy Analyst with the DC Alliance of Youth Advocates

The DC Council should act this budget season to ensure resources will be available for afterschool and summer programs for low-income students, following the recent news that the [DC Trust will be dissolved](#) due to financial mismanagement and other problems. For over a decade, the Trust has served to distribute funds from DC government for these important programs run by community-based organizations.

The collapse of the Trust raises a question that affects the lives of thousands of DC kids: **Without the DC Trust, what is the path forward for funding youth development in the District?** For the coming year, a short-term solution makes sense. A group of youth-serving organizations recommends allowing a local foundation to allocate the \$4.9 million in the Mayor's fiscal year (FY) 2017 budget for community-based afterschool and summer programming. This will give the Mayor and DC Council a year to work with community stakeholders to develop a permanent solution.

Already Declining Funding for Youth

Resolving the problems that the Trust faced is critical to the well-being of DC's youth. Annual funding to the DC Trust for youth development programming declined by 60 percent from 2010 to 2016, and as a result, there is now only a quarter of the locally-funded slots for community-based afterschool and summer learning that were there for kids just six years ago.¹

¹ DC Alliance of Youth Advocates, April 2016.

Community-Based OST Funding & Capacity Trends



Source: DC Alliance of Youth Advocates

The DC Alliance of Youth Advocates (DCAYA) believes that in the long-term, increasing funding for these programs is critical, along with [greater evaluation of program quality system-wide](#). While reversing these downward trends in funding and access remains DCAYA’s greater advocacy goal, in the nearer term, we and our partners are concerned about protecting the \$4.9 million in FY 2017.

Recommendation for Path Forward

A coalition of youth advocates and community-based providers are now looking at two decision areas before the Council and the Mayor:

In the short-term, our coalition recommends the use of a local foundation to manage the \$4.9 million in FY 2017 funding for community-based afterschool and summer learning. A distinct one-year strategy like this is necessary to ensure that the money gets granted out in a timely way, as government and community stakeholders take an appropriate “pause” to strategically and collaboratively plan out a long-term solution that is sound and secure, is not overly-reactive to the present climate, and will outlive any current political agenda.

In the longer term, an intentional path forward is needed for where the DC Trust's grantmaking and other youth development functions will live. This was highlighted last week by Andria Tobin, Executive Director of [Kid Power Inc.](#) and a member of DCAYA’s Board of Directors, in an [interview](#) last week on the Kojo Nnamdi Show on WAMU: “We want to make sure that there’s a really thought out plan to protect those funds for many nonprofits and youth in the District, one that is collaborative and strategic, and is flexible and innovative in the way that the Trust was designed to be.”

The DC Trust was founded in 1999, and while it was not always insolvent, there is no reason we cannot draw on lessons from what went wrong over its 17-year history to create a more stable entity

that is sustainably funded and operates above board for DC's children and youth year after year. What we don't want is to have an issue like this again in 5, 10, or 17 years.

What we do want is to make certain that our system creates greater opportunities for our kids. As Andria Tobin puts it, by rising to the task of meeting their academic, social-emotional, and health and wellness needs over time, "our young people will gain a sense of agency to help create a stronger District."

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