

We Need a Budget that Invests in the Building Blocks for a Thriving DC

By DCFPI Staff

The DC budget allows us to invest in the foundations for thriving communities—things like affordable homes, strong schools, good roads, and quality jobs. The budget also is our key tool for addressing the racial and economic inequities our city faces, so that more residents can benefit from our city's growing prosperity. The choices that shape the DC budget reflect our city's values and our vision for what kind of city we want to be. With the right investments in fiscal year (FY) 2020 and beyond, DC can be a place where all residents benefit from the District's strong economy, and where everyone has the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.



Here in DC, the recent government shutdown reminded us that we can't always count on the federal government. Instead, we need to use our own local budget choices to strengthen the economy and ensure that DC residents not only make ends meet, but thrive, regardless of what's happening at the federal level. Indeed, choices DC's leaders have made in the past helped some families during the shutdown, such as free breakfast in all schools so that families could get help without applying, and rules that allow families to access some public benefits even if they have savings.

DC's budget and policy decisions impact all of us every day. The following recommendations for the FY 2020 budget reflect effective ways to use DC's resources to address our city's challenges and create a promising future for all DC residents. Longer recommendations are linked in each section. [You can read a detailed summary of DCFPI's budget priorities here.](#)

Education

To support the education and healthy development of DC's children, the FY 2020 budget should invest in early childhood learning, equitably funded PreK-12 classrooms, and evidence-based student discipline that keeps students in the classroom. [Read more.](#)

Affordable Housing

The Mayor and Council should use the FY 2020 budget to put DC on a path toward completely meeting the affordable housing needs of families with extremely low incomes, through increased investments in the Housing Production Trust Fund and Local Rent Supplement Program, and additional funds for tenant vouchers and preserving DC's public housing stock. [Read more.](#)

Homelessness

The District's FY 2020 budget should make big strides towards reaching DC's goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. This includes housing for individuals, youth, and families experiencing homelessness, resources to help survivors of domestic violence stay safe and avoid homelessness, and improved street outreach and homelessness prevention. The budget should also create more public restrooms so that all residents, including those experiencing homelessness, have access to restrooms when they need them. [Read more.](#)

Health Care

The District should use the FY 2020 budget to address racial and economic inequities in health care. This includes removing barriers to health coverage faced by immigrant families, strengthening mental health services—especially for youth—and strengthening home visiting programs that support the healthy development of young children. [Read more.](#)