

Progress

Spring 2023



Aspiring to What Can Be Built, Not Just What Can Be Ended

This year, the DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI) begins its pursuit of bold five-year goals established through an intensive strategic planning process. These goals begin our journey toward a radically different vision for the District—one of shared abundance and collective liberation where everyone has the nurture, sustenance, and safety every person inherently deserves. We strive for a future that roots out anti-Blackness, enables Black and brown residents to live to their fullest, ends displacement, and repairs centuries of racist harm built into our systems.

Our efforts will include research, policy development, and advocacy aimed at:

- Repairing harms that perpetuate inequity. We do this by addressing policies that stifle the economic, social, and political power of Black and brown residents while advocating to redistribute resources toward historically excluded residents.
- Building strong foundations of equity. We work to fortify programs that protect the most vulnerable and establish guarantees for a liberation economy.
- Realizing a future of shared abundance. We champion a racially just tax code both in terms of its design and the investments it affords, and we innovate toward a racially equitable economy from which gains are broadly shared.

DCFPI's work under these thematic areas will include policy and advocacy to reform DC's system of criminal legal fees and fines that disproportionately extract resources from Black and brown residents with low incomes; develop a holistic anti-displacement strategy for the District; investments and program improvements needed to end chronic homelessness; guaranteeing jobs and income for workers and families most sidelined by racism and economic exclusion; educational investments that ensure equity at birth and racially equitable outcomes in our schools; among many other efforts.

Our work seeks to disrupt and address the inequities that systemic racism – historic and ongoing – has created in education, housing, the economy, and our tax structure. We know the policy change needed to repair longstanding harm to Black, brown, and immigrant communities will require long-term, deeply collaborative campaigns. That is why we work closely with community-based partners, organizing groups, and direct service providers to develop policy and budget priorities and engage policymakers around needed change and systemic reforms.

Grounded in our new organizational mission and vision, DCFPI seeks not only to dismantle the racist policies and systems that hold us all back but also build a future in which every person, no matter their race or ethnicity, has access to the resources and opportunities to live to their fullest.

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Reforming DC's System of Fines and Fees

DCFPI is working to reform DC's system of criminal and legal fees and fines. That system contributes to a highly racialized extraction of financial resources, creating burdensome debt and barriers to housing and employment for people unable to pay. Through research and analysis, DCFPI will lay the groundwork for a reform agenda that reduces such unfair revenue generation, shapes public narrative and legislative strategy, and implements necessary policy reforms.

Everyone deserves the economic security of managing unexpected costs without having to sacrifice their basic needs. Monetary sanctions harm those unable to pay certain debts, directly targeting Black and brown communities through a wide variety of fines, fees, and seizing of

assets. Over the last decade, the number of existing monetary sanctions in DC has increased dramatically. While fines and fees make up about three percent of DC's total revenue, the District has seen a significant increase in the amount of revenue generated from these sources in recent years. The imposition of these fines and fees penalizes people with low incomes and those living in historically under-invested communities. These fees and fines should be reformed and largely replaced with progressive revenue streams to fund needed government services.

To support or learn more about this work, reach out to Todd Gray, Director of Institutional Advancement, at tgray@dcfpi.org or 202-910-8852.



A Salute of *Gratitude* to 2022 Funding Partners and Annual Event Sponsors

As we move deeper into 2023, we are operating from a place of immense gratitude for the funders, partners, supporters, and sponsors who team up with us every day of the year.

This past September, we gathered in person with many of these individuals and organizations for our 2022 Annual Reception, an evening of networking, planning, and celebration.

We were thrilled to spotlight and highlight the work of our grassroots partner Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), a broad-based, multi-racial, multi-faith, strictly non-partisan, District-wide citizens' power organization, rooted in local congregations

and associations.

The 2022 Annual Reception also featured an inspiring discussion between Rosa Maria Castañeda, Racial Justice Initiative Director at The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Dr. George L. Askew, President & CEO at the Meyer Foundation; and Jamilia White, Principal & Founder of BlakQuity and Ward 8 ANC Commissioner. We were also grateful to hear brief remarks from DCFPI Board Chair Dr. Jerome Paige and Board Member George A. Jones.

We would be remiss if we didn't also recognize and thank our wonderful event sponsors, who helped make the reception a success:

1199SEIU

Andy Shallal

Anonymous (2)

Bread for the City

City First Bank

Debbie Goldman

Father John Enzler

George and Carol Jones

Iris and Michael Lav

Jerome and Cynthia Paige

Joslyn (Jos) Williams

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Kristin and Mike Foti

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Peter and Marian Edelman

Roz and Don Cohen

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Policy Academies

The Steptoe Foundation



DCFPI Board Chair and Family: Cynthia Paige, Board Chair Dr. Jerome S. Paige, and Gina Paige.



DCFPI Executive Director Erica Williams with event panelists Dr. George Askew, Rosa Maria Castañeda, and Jamila White.



Sidra Siddiqui, Community Organizer at the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN).

Photos by Kanayo Adibe

It was a rejuvenating evening that reminded each of us just how fortunate we are to have such passionate and dedicated partners working together towards the shared goal of an antiracist, equitable Washington, DC.

Speaking of partners, we have some philanthropic partners we would like to acknowledge and thank publicly. We are excited to announce the following support toward reaching our ambitious goals:

- DCFPI is the grateful recipient of a multi-year grant from the EARN Worker-Centered Priorities for an Equitable Recovery Fund, which supports projects that create economic policies that prioritize the needs of working people and shape a new worker-centered economy for the future.
- DCFPI welcomed the Kini Fund as a supporter of our pursuit of policies that are aimed at collective economic liberation and efforts to be more responsive

to the needs of directly impacted residents.

- DCFPI welcomed a new anonymous donor who made a two-year pledge in support of DCFPI's work developing a guaranteed jobs program proposal for young people in the District.
- The Meyer Foundation made a multi-year commitment in support of DCFPI's role in the Just Recovery DC campaign.
- DCFPI was awarded, for a second time, a Waldon Adams Housing Justice Grant from The Partnership to End Homelessness, an impact initiative of the Greater Washington Community Foundation.

With these partners by our side and this funding in place, we are excited to execute our strategic plan and achieve our one-year goals and set us on our way toward our five-year goals!



Denying DC Statehood Is A Racial Justice Issue

New DCFPI analysis finds that the District loses out on \$3.2 billion in revenue each year because it is denied the full taxing authority of a state. DCFPI's report "The High Cost of Denying Statehood to the District of Columbia" details the revenue implications of DC statehood and how recognizing DC residents' rights to self-governance and federal voting representation would create a stronger, more equitable economy.

Statehood and the potential new revenue that would result would help the District take further action to address the extreme level of inequity that continues to hold it back. The \$3.2 billion in revenue losses equates to nearly one-fifth of DC's Gross Fund spending for fiscal year 2021, is more than three-fifths of what the District spent on Human Support Services, and it is slightly more than the District's investment in schools that year. Statehood would bring a full array of benefits to the District, most importantly the voting rights, civic responsibilities, and political representation promised to citizens of the United States.

If made a state, DC would have the highest proportion of Black residents of any state. Putting a stop to Black communities' increasing political engagement was the driving intention behind voter suppression in the period following Reconstruction, and that legacy continues today. While DC has no votes in Congress, elected officials from the 50 states have the power to interfere in local laws, with significant consequences on the health, safety, and well-being of District residents.

For more than 200 years, DC residents have been calling for full democratic rights, and momentum for statehood is only growing. DC residents made clear their desire for statehood, with 86 percent voting in favor of a 2016 referendum. By recognizing DC residents' rights to self-governance and federal voting representation, Congress would be correcting a historic harm that is rooted in anti-Blackness and perpetuates racial inequality. With more local political autonomy, fewer restrictions, and the potential revenue that statehood offers, the District could take greater steps to minimize economic struggle, end displacement, house residents, guarantee jobs and income, and advance reparative policy in our most neglected communities. In doing so, we would create a stronger, equitable economy for the future.

Scan this code to read the report.



Scan this code or visit
<http://bit.ly/3JStfRn>

Deepen your relationship with DCFPI

Thank you for supporting the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. We know you care about our work, and because of your personal investment in our mission, I invite you to consider joining a very special group by becoming one of our monthly donors.

DCFPI's monthly donors are deeply cherished; each member of this group has committed to helping us execute our plans and achieve our goals all year.

Will you join our monthly donors and commit to making a monthly gift to DCFPI? You will walk hand-in-hand with us through our work all year long. And this is going to be an important year for all of us.

As you have read elsewhere in this newsletter, we have re-examined our guiding principles, resulting in a new organizational vision and mission, as well as an innovative five-year strategic plan.

We have also mapped out some very exciting goals that we are eager to work towards over the next several years:

- Piloting a guaranteed jobs program,
- Building a strong and equitable childcare industry,
- Supporting excluded workers,
- Creating a local child tax credit,
- Building a reparative cannabis industry,
- And developing an anti-displacement agenda.

These goals are ambitious and worthy, and we can't accomplish them without your support.

Please consider becoming a monthly donor today. Stand with us over the next 12 months and beyond as we work to build a just future for the District.

We've got the vision of where we are going, the drive to get there, and the goals to keep us on track.

Your steady support each month will allow us to make steady progress toward our ultimate endgame – ending the extreme racial, gender, and economic disparities facing DC's Black, brown, and immigrant communities.

You can sign-up today by returning the enclosed donation form, contacting Todd at 202-910-8852 or tgray@dcfpi.org, or scanning here.



Scan this code or visit
<http://bit.ly/3YZhPko>

INTRODUCING DCFPI'S NEW CONVERSATION SERIES

DCFPI is excited to announce the launch of our powerful conversation series, **Policy is Personal**. This innovative series brings together local leaders, subject matter experts, and grassroots activists to discuss today's most pressing policy, tax, and budget issues, focusing the dialogue on how these issues affect the daily lives of DC residents. Stay tuned for more information.