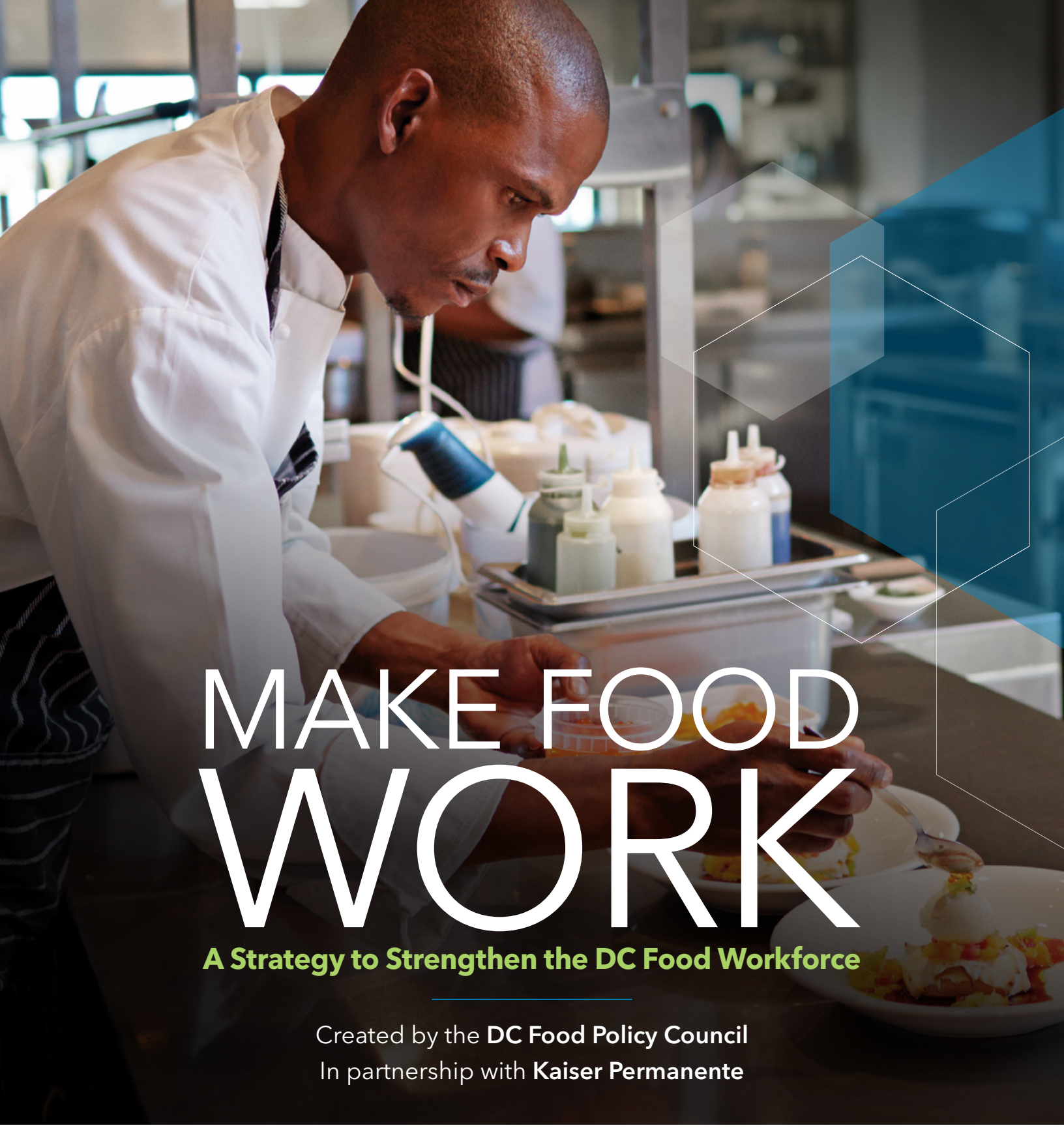

MAKE FOOD WORK

A Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce

Created by the **DC Food Policy Council**
In partnership with **Kaiser Permanente**

District of Columbia Food Policy Council

KAISER PERMANENTE®

District of Columbia Office of Planning

DC WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL

DOES DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

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A Letter from Our Mayor

Dear Washingtonians,

MAYOR
MURIEL BOWSER

Jobs in the food economy help our city thrive. From the line cook to the food truck entrepreneur to the grocery store cashier, these jobs don't just support our thriving food economy—they also create meaningful entry points into economic mobility and business ownership.

That is why I am pleased to share with you *Make Food Work: A Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce*. This Strategy is the first of its kind to consider the District's food workforce as a distinct part of the District's economy that merits its own targeted investment and innovations.

The District's food economy contributes significantly to the economic strength and vibrancy of Washington, DC, as the nation's capital and as a thriving entertainment and cultural destination. Released earlier this year, the DC Food Economy Study revealed that the food workforce makes up about 8% of the District's total workforce, and the food economy contributes $5.47 billion in economic impact annually. The food economy also helps advance the health of residents and address health disparities across the District through increased healthy food access, economic and wealth-building opportunities, and local and sustainable food production.

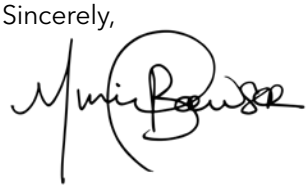
However, we can do more to ensure that all those who contribute to our food economy have the opportunity to benefit from the city's growth. I challenge my agencies and our business owners to be innovative and bold in creating workforce development opportunities and meaningful career pathways within the food economy. We know that this is not just good for employees—it's also good for business. Food businesses that invest in their workers report that their employees stay longer and perform better. That's a win-win.

This Strategy creates a roadmap for improving job quality, expanding opportunities, and increasing equity within the District's food workforce. I want to thank Kaiser Permanente for their generous support, which made this Strategy possible. I would also like to recognize the DC Food Policy Council, the DC Office of Planning, the Workforce Investment Council, and the Department of Employment Services that collaborated on this effort.

Our District government is committed to creating pathways to the middle class through increased economic opportunity for all residents. Together with our investments in affordable housing, quality education, and affordable health care, this Strategy shows how we can build upon our existing efforts to ensure that all workers can live and thrive in the District.

Let's get to work!

Sincerely,



Mayor Muriel Bowser

District Agency Acronyms

This report refers to the many District agencies working on food policies and programs. When an agency is first mentioned, its full name is included. In subsequent mentions, agencies will be referred to with the following acronyms:

DCRA: Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

DCPS: District of Columbia Public Schools

DGS: Department of General Services

DC Health: District of Columbia Department of Health

DHCD: Department of Housing and Community Development

DHS: Department of Human Services

DMPED: Office of the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development

DOEE: Department of Energy and the Environment

DOES: Department of Employment Services

DPR: Department of Parks and Recreation

DPW: Department of Public Works

DSLBD: Department of Small and Local Business Development

ERS: Office for East of the River Services

FPC: DC Food Policy Council

FPD: Office of the Food Policy Director

OP: Office of Planning

OSSE: Office of the State Superintendent for Education

OTR: Office of Tax and Revenue

UDC: University of the District of Columbia

WIC: Workforce Investment Council

Introduction: Why Focus on the Food Workforce?

Make Food Work: A Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce (herein, "the Strategy") provides a roadmap for improving job quality, expanding opportunities, and increasing equity within the food workforce and thereby the food economy in the District. Although the food economy is often considered as part of larger hospitality or tourism sectors, this report highlights the unique challenges faced by workers in the food economy and the unique opportunities to decrease unemployment and create meaningful career pathways within this industry.

The DC food workforce merits its own strategy for improvement because:

The DC food economy is strong and expanding rapidly. In 2016, there were nearly 71,300 workers directly employed by the District's food economy, making up 8.0 percent of the total District employment in all sectors. In total, the District's food economy produced $5.47 billion in economic impact and generated more than $579.3 million in tax revenue for the District.

Employers in the food economy report a lack of skilled candidates for open positions, particularly in management positions, and are hiring outside of the District.

The food economy can uniquely address unemployment by offering opportunities for those just entering or reentering the workforce without a college or advanced degree.

Workers in the food sector need more resources to move up the career ladder. Entry-level jobs in the food sector generally pay wages far below the area median income. Workers in this industry need more support and training to move up the career ladder to better-paying jobs.

The DC food workforce is integral to the overall DC food system. The public increasingly cares about having healthy options and purchasing local, sustainably-grown food. But a system where food is prepared and served by workers whose own health and livelihoods are unstable is inherently not sustainable. We must invest in workers to achieve a truly healthy food system.

The Strategy begins with an overview of the District's food economy and workforce development landscape. It identifies the challenges and barriers prospective and current workers and employers face in the food sector. Informed by stakeholder input from interviews and a day-long convening held in February 2019 (herein "the February Convening") and research on promising practices, the Strategy then outlines key opportunities for the District and its private and nonprofit partners to enhance equity and increase opportunities for meaningful career pathways within the food workforce.

Landscape Analysis: DC Food Economy and Workforce

The District's food economy is a key driver of economic and employment growth, but geographic and racial disparities in unemployment rates persist. To provide more food workforce opportunities, increased collaboration is needed between District agencies, workforce training providers, and local food employers. The District government should also consider how current District laws and policies are supporting or hindering food workforce growth.

The District's Food Economy is Strong and Expanding Rapidly

The DC Food Economy Study, released in summer 2019, found that nearly 71,300 workers were directly employed by the District's food economy in 2016, making up 8.0 percent of the total District employment in all sectors.[1] In total, the District's food economy produces $5.47 billion in economic impact and generates more than $579.3 million in local tax revenue.

The District's food economy includes restaurants, food retail stores, manufacturing, distribution, and other services along the food supply chain. It also includes businesses with food components, such as hotels and large all-purpose retail stores.

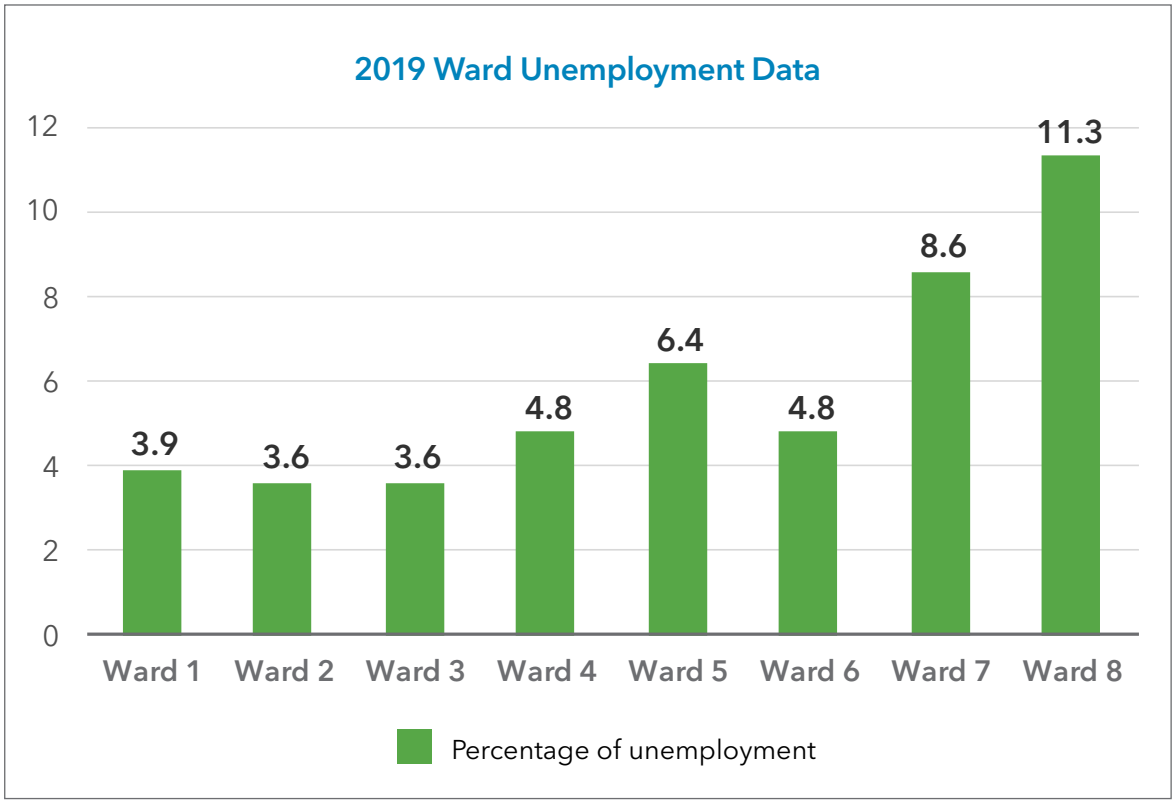
Growth in the DC food economy is largely driven by restaurants and food retail stores, which grew by 81 percent and 49 percent respectively

between 2001 and 2016. Growth is projected to continue in the future, with nearly all food sectors projected to grow from 2016 to 2026.

Yet despite this thriving food economy, many food sector workers struggle to make ends meet. Most occupations in the food economy provide less than half of the District median income. In 2016, while the District's median income was $72,935, cashiers in the retail sector made an average hourly wage of $12.96 (about $27,000 annually), and food preparation and serving workers in restaurants made an average hourly wage of $14.00 an hour (about $29,120 annually). Although higher skilled positions paid more, business owners reported challenges finding District residents to fill those positions.

Geographic and Racial Disparities in Unemployment

The strength of the District's food economy should be leveraged to meaningfully decrease unemployment by providing living wage jobs and career pathways to District residents hit hardest by unemployment. Unemployment rates vary widely across the District. In May 2019, while the city had a seasonally adjusted average unemployment rate of 5.7 percent, unemployment rates ranged from 3.6 percent in Ward 3 to 11.3 percent in Ward 8.[2] [3]



In addition to geographic disparities, racial disparities persist in the District's unemployment rate. In 2018, while the District's unemployment rate of Black residents was 11.8 percent, the unemployment rate among White and Latino residents was 2.1 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively.[4] These racial inequities in employment reflect historical and current disparities in educational attainment, employment discrimination and structural racism in hiring practices, and unequal employment and economic opportunities throughout the District.[5]

Key Players in the District's Food Workforce

A diverse set of players is focused on strengthening the food workforce in the District, including businesses, government agencies, workforce training programs, and organizations supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Food Businesses

The District's food economy includes a variety of businesses that produce, store, distribute, prepare, sell, and serve food to District residents and visitors. These businesses employ significant numbers of people and contribute to the District's rapidly growing economy. Some of the biggest food sectors include restaurants and bars, which employed 53,813 individuals; grocery stores, which employed 5,058 individuals; food and beverage manufacturers, which employed 512 individuals; and wholesalers, which employed 658 individuals, according to 2016 data.[6] As this report goes on to describe, finding ways to support food businesses in investing in their workforce must be central to a food workforce development strategy.

District Agencies

Several District agencies support the District's food workforce and the broader food economy. **Table 1** highlights these agencies and their food-specific initiatives and programs.

Table 1: How District Agencies Support the Food Workforce

Agency	Relevant food workforce activities
Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)	• Administers Business Licenses, including 14 different food-related licenses
The Office for East of the River Services (ERS)	• Increases communication of District agency resources for residents east of the Anacostia River • Identifies challenges in communities East of the River and connects to District services and resources
Department of Employment Services (DOES)	• Runs American Job Centers and provides job-seeking and placement services • Facilitates multi-sector collaboration through the Division of State Initiatives (DSI) to bring specialized services and support to transitional employment program participants • Administers ApprenticeshipDC, On-the-Job Training, Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program, Marion Barry Youth Leadership Institute, Project Empowerment, Senior Community Service Employment Program which link residents with food jobs • Provides resources for employers • Houses Office of Wage Hour Compliance & Office of Paid Family Leave
DC Food Policy Council (FPC)	• Spearheads Make Food Work: A Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce • Convenes District agency and community partners and the Entrepreneurship and Food Jobs Working Group
DC Department of Health (DC Health)	• Conducts Food Safety and Hygiene Inspection Services at food establishments and enforces food safety regulations • Administers Certified Food Protection Manager Cards • Administers permits for Cottage Food Businesses • Partners in administering Produce Rx Produce Prescription Program • Hosts the DC Board of Dietetics and Nutrition Licensing
Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	• Administers Small Business Technical Assistance grants
Department of Human Services (DHS)	• Administers the SNAP Employment and Training Program and TANF Employment and Training Services
Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE)	• Hosts the Office of Urban Agriculture • Leads the Urban Land Lease Program and Urban Agriculture Tax Abatement Program
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)	• Administers the Neighborhood Prosperity Fund and Great Streets grants, which several food businesses have received • Surpluses/disposes of underutilized District properties for redevelopment, creating new spaces for grocers • Leads business development efforts to market available space for grocery tenants • Administers DC's supermarket tax incentive program

Table 1: How District Agencies Support the Food Workforce

Agency	Relevant food workforce activities
DC Public Schools (DCPS)	• Runs Career and Technical Education programs in schools • Runs Career Academies at high schools including culinary arts • Partners with ProStart culinary and management program in three high schools: Ballou, Theodore Roosevelt, and Roosevelt STAY
Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD)	• Administers grants for small food businesses (Main Streets, Grown in DC, DREAM, Robust Retail) • Offers programs to support food entrepreneurs (Aspire to Entrepreneurship, Build a Dream workshops) • Runs the Made in DC program to support local makers
Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)	• Administers Adult and Family Education programs and provides funding for adult basic and secondary education and English as a Second Language education • Administers Career and Technical Education programs and provides funding for job-oriented skills and training
University of the District of Columbia (UDC)	• Provides Certified Professional Food Server and Manager Course, Urban Food Systems and Agriculture Pathway, Nutrition and Dietetics degrees • Operates as the District's Land Grant Institution
Workforce Investment Council (WIC)	• Business-led board responsible for advising the Mayor on workforce investments • Maintains the Eligible Training Provider List which indicates training providers eligible to receive federal funds • Convenes the Hospitality and Food Service Career Pathways working group • Administers the Workforce Intermediary Grant Program

Supporting the food economy

Notably, the District government supports the food economy through the procurement of food in large institutional food contracts. While we do not focus on the District's procurement practices in this Strategy, there are opportunities for the District to more effectively use its purchasing power to better support the food economy and food workforce.

Food Workforce Training Providers

Food workforce training providers equip residents with the skills and support they need to enter and be successful in the food workforce. While some training providers solely focus on food-related skills, others focus on a range of industries. **Table 2** highlights the District's workforce training organizations with food-related tracks. We attempted to create a comprehensive list of the District's food workforce training providers and compiled this list from a variety of sources including the WIC's Eligible Training Provider List,[7] Bainum Family Foundation Food Learning Locator,[8] and research on promising programs around the country.

Table 2: District Food Workforce Training Providers[9]

Organization	Food Workforce Programs	Length of program	Special populations served	Participants served annually
Amala Lives Institute[10]	Culinary Arts	6 months	Hard to employ populations including returning citizens, low-income individuals, single parents, and individuals with trauma	40–50
Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture[11]	Veteran Farmer Fellowship Program	12 months	Veterans	30
Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School[12]	Culinary Arts, including Culinary Arts Fundamentals; International Cuisines; Baking and Pastry	Fundamentals Course: 10 months Additional courses: 5 months each	English-language learners; low-income individuals	170
Community Connections[13]	Ward 8 Speedy Greens	16 weeks	Young adults (18–24 years old) with behavioral health issues	10
DC Central Kitchen[14]	Culinary Job Training; Culinary Job Training at DC Central Kitchen Cafe	12 weeks for adults; approximately 16 weeks for Opportunity Youth	Hard-to-employ populations; returning citizens; young adults (18–24 years old)	140
Dreaming Out Loud[15]	AyaUplift Program	26 weeks	Individuals living in public housing and/or receiving public assistance	6
Goodwill Industries[16]	Hospitality Job Training Program	6 weeks	Hard-to-employ populations	40
Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington[17]	ProStart Programs, including Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management	2 years	High school youth	300
Thrive DC[18]	Real Opportunity Training Program	18 weeks (6 weeks of training and 12-week externship)	Hard-to-employ populations; individuals experiencing homelessness	20
United Planning Organization[19]	Culinary Arts Professional	3 months	Low-income individuals	45

Organizations Supporting Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Several organizations support small food businesses and entrepreneurs in developing and growing their businesses. This support can include micro-loan lending, technical assistance, or commercial kitchen space for food entrepreneurs to cook, prepare, and manufacture their goods. Supporting the small business environment is key to strengthening the overall food workforce. TasteLab, one of the most affordable incubator kitchens in the District, closed in October 2019.[20] More analysis of the reasons and impact of this closure is warranted. **Table 3** highlights the other District organizations currently supporting food entrepreneurs and small businesses.[21]

Table 3: District Organizations Supporting Food Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses[22]

Organization	Services or programs
DC Small Biz Help[23]	• Technical assistance to plan, start, or grow a small business
Dreaming Out Loud (DOL)[24]	• DREAM (DOL's Ready for Entrepreneurship Accelerator Modules): accelerator program for food business entrepreneurs
Eatsplace[25]	• Shared commercial kitchen and event rental space • Chef-in-residence program • Consulting services for food entrepreneurs
Institute for Justice[26]	• Workshops on how to start a home baking business
Latino Economic Development Center[27]	• Workshops on starting a small food business in DC • Business loans • Business advice • Credit building
MessHall[28]	• Shared commercial kitchen and event rental space • Individual consulting and business development support • DC's Food Accelerator Competition
TasteMakers[29]	• Shared commercial kitchen and event/retail space
SB Works[30]	• Technical assistance for food business growth • Shared office space • Adviser in residence programs
Union Kitchen[31]	• Launch program: food business accelerator • Commercial kitchen and event rental space • Distribution assistance and Union Kitchen Groceries
Washington Area Community Investment Fund (WACIF)[32]	• Advisory and Consulting Services • Small and micro business loans • DC Employee Ownership Initiative

What is Needed to Thrive in the DC Food Workforce?

To develop an effective food workforce development strategy, this section explores several key questions: What kind of worker thrives in the DC food economy? What skills or resources are necessary or helpful? Does the District currently provide the necessary skills and resources?

As we consider these questions, it is essential to acknowledge the role of racial and class bias in the challenges faced by food sector workers. In the stakeholder interviews conducted for this project, many employers and workforce training providers were quick to point out that employer expectations, particularly related to "soft skills" and work readiness, often masked cultural and class dynamics and conflicts. Any efforts to strengthen the food workforce should address systemic racism and classism head-on.

Technical Skills

Entry-level and mid-level positions in the food workforce require a range of technical skills, including culinary skills like cooking and baking, food preparation skills like knife skills and food handling safety, and service skills like point-of-sale management.[33]

While job opportunities continue to grow in the food workforce, employers report not being able to find enough candidates with the appropriate technical skills. In the DC Food Economy Study, 25 percent of employers reported that it took them at least two months to hire a qualified worker for an entry-level position. More than two-thirds reported that it took three months to hire a qualified worker for a mid-level position, and 86 percent reported that it took them at least three months to hire a qualified worker for a management position.[34] While it is clear that it is harder and more time consuming for employers to find candidates with advanced managerial skills, many employers still have difficulty finding candidates who qualify for open entry-level positions.

Currently, there are not enough resources and programs available in the District to meet the demand for trained food workers. The District's 2016–2020 WIOA State Plan identified that the existing capacity of adult educational programs fails to meet the existing demand, and many food workforce and culinary arts programs in the District have long waiting lists.[35] All of the training providers

interviewed for this report highlighted that they have more demand from potential participants than they can meet and that they are interested in expanding programs but need greater financial support. Existing programs are limited by existing capacity and funding and are working at full capacity to build workforce readiness skills, address the systemic barriers to employment that participants may face, and seek more support to expand their programs.[36]

Workforce Readiness Skills

Workers must also exhibit workplace readiness skills to succeed in food workplaces. Also known as "soft skills" or "executive skills," workplace readiness skills are competencies that are highly adaptable to different positions and are fundamental in how a worker successfully navigates and responds to challenges within the workplace. Key workforce readiness skills needed in the food workforce include effective communication, customer service, problem solving and adaptability, timeliness and reliability, organization and multi-tasking, and teamwork.[37]

Some workforce training programs in the District already provide workforce readiness skills. In a 2015 survey of workforce training providers conducted by the WIC and the DC Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 61 percent of providers offered workforce readiness skills.[38] All of the food workforce training providers interviewed for this Strategy highlighted the importance of workforce readiness skills and their inclusion of those skills in their curriculums.

Resources and Support

As mentioned above, a key work readiness skill is being punctual and reliable. Several environmental barriers get in the way of meeting those expectations and particularly affect low-wage workers. These include lack of affordable and consistent access to transportation, child care and elder care, healthy food, and safe and affordable housing.[39] As symptoms of poverty and economic insecurity, these barriers manifest throughout the process of an individual applying for, interviewing, and working in a position.

Work Readiness Skills

The National Restaurant Association's Educational Foundation highlights the following work readiness skills in the food sector:

1. Come to work on time and be prepared to work as scheduled.
2. Demonstrate a positive attitude towards work.
3. Maintain open lines of communication with others.
4. Respond appropriately to positive and negative feedback.
5. Be pleasant, courteous, and professional when dealing with internal or external customers.
6. Work as part of a team, contributing to the group's effort to achieve goals.
7. Interact respectfully and cooperatively with others who are a different race, religion, national origin, disability, color, age, medical condition, marital, veteran, citizenship status, sexual orientation, etc.
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.
9. Desire and show willingness to learn new assignments, procedures, and technologies.
10. Treat unexpected circumstances as opportunities to learn.
11. Display responsibility in fulfilling obligations.
12. Comply with organizational rules, policies, and procedures.
13. Maintain appropriate personal hygiene and grooming.

In addition, many low-income workers lack adequate savings to successfully mitigate an unexpected financial emergency, like a car accident or a hospital visit. Indeed, according to the Federal Reserve, less than a third of low-income households in the bottom 20th income percentile saved any part of their income in 2016.[40] One national survey conducted in 2018 found that only 45 percent of Americans have enough savings to cover at least three months of living expenses, and the most financially vulnerable households have only $300 in liquid savings.[41] Such financial instability coupled with high costs of living means that an unexpected financial burden could be an emergency, causing a worker to miss work and even have their employment terminated.

Several characteristics of food workplaces make these barriers particularly challenging. Public transportation is less frequent and reliable on nights and weekends, when many restaurant and bar workers have shifts. In addition, common scheduling practices used by food businesses, like just-in-time scheduling where the worker learns of their schedule just a few days before their shift, make it difficult for workers to arrange child and elder care, work another job, continue their education, or pursue professional development. Recent research finds that inconsistent scheduling practices disproportionately impact workers of color, especially women of color, and are associated with exacerbated food insecurity, housing instability, childhood behavioral problems, and increased turnover.[42] The combination of non-traditional hours and low wages also make it more difficult for workers to purchase and prepare healthy food for themselves and their families, which can lead to illness, fatigue, and other physical conditions that compromise performance.

Nearly all food workforce training providers interviewed for this project reported that they help participants secure transportation and child care among other services. Some programs provide participants with direct stipends for those services or help connect them to government assistance and other resources. One workforce training provider who works with residents experiencing homelessness explained the simplicity of this idea: "when you work to get people what they need, they do well."[43]

However, these supportive services tend to stop when a participant gains employment. Providers have limited capacity and resources to continue supporting participants beyond the program while bringing in new participants. Long-term support and systems-level change aimed at reducing these barriers are critical to ensuring that these barriers do not stand in the way of job attainment and advancement for residents.

Support to Address Trauma or Mental Health Issues

Stressful or challenging scenarios in the workplace can trigger or exacerbate unaddressed trauma or mental health issues. Existing trauma or mental health issues are often by-products of poverty, exposure to

violence and adversity throughout one's life, or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.[44] Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) put individuals at higher risk for poor work performance, financial stress, lower academic achievement, and poor health outcomes, among other risks.[45]

Some sectors of the food workforce, like restaurants and bars, are well-known to have unhealthy amounts of stress and intensity, and workers are often left without adequate mental health support. In a 2018 Washington City Paper article on mental health in the food industry, workers report that mental health issues like anxiety and depression exacerbate and propel the stress, violence, sexual harassment, and isolation they can face on the job.[46]

Low or uncertain wages also contribute to mental health challenges. In the District, individuals making less than $35,000 were nearly 2.5 times more likely than those making more than $75,000 to experience extended periods of poor mental health.[47] In addition, service workers who depend on tips as part of their wage, like waiters or bartenders, are more likely to develop mental illness than non-tipped workers.[48]

Many workforce training providers provide trauma-centered support to their participants. One culinary training provider interviewed for this project offers time with one-on-one and group-based counselors and therapists,[49] while another requires the entire training staff to become certified in trauma-informed care practices before working with participants.[50]

Yet once the participant enters the workplace, employers are ill-equipped to address many of their mental health needs. Employers who do not understand the impact of trauma might construe behavior as dismissive or disrespectful and may not have the proper tools to deescalate a situation. One workforce training provider mentioned that improper behavior stemming from unaddressed trauma, such as a verbal altercation with fellow staff or customers, was the number one reason of termination among their graduates.[51]

Recognizing these needs, some food businesses have sought out external partners to meet some of their workers' needs, often through wrap-around services.[52] Other employers have been trained in trauma-informed care to understand the challenges their workers face in high-stress situations and become equipped with the right approaches to deescalate or prevent such situations from occurring.[53]

Education and Digital Literacy Levels

Across the District, more than 54,000 residents over 18 years old do not have a high school degree or equivalent degree, and 86 percent of that population is over 25 years old.[54] Although many entry-level jobs within the food economy do not require formal educational credentials, advanced positions like managers

typically need at least a high school diploma or equivalent.[55] Especially given the high rates of advanced degrees in the District, applicants are often up against other candidates with degrees even for entry-level positions. One culinary training provider shared that the Great Recession was a particularly difficult time for participants without high school degrees because they had to compete with people who had graduate degrees for entry-level food preparation positions.[56]

In addition, the demand for increased digital literacy in the workplace continues to grow, with the District's food workplace as no exception. As technology and automation become further integrated into the workplace, the ability to use digital devices has become increasingly important. Yet significant disparities in digital literacy currently exist in the United States. Latino adults are over three times more likely to be digitally illiterate than White adults, and Black adults are more than twice as likely to be digitally illiterate compared to White adults. Digital illiteracy is also more likely to impact older adults: compared to youth under 24 years old, 34 to 44 year-olds are almost twice as likely, 45 to 54 year-olds three times more likely, and 55 to 65 year-olds 3.5 times more likely to be digitally illiterate. In addition, adults currently out of the labor force are twice as likely to be digitally illiterate as those employed.[57]

Access to technology can hinder digital literacy, and disparities in access exist across the District. A 2015 DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) report found that fewer than one-half of residents in Wards 5, 7, and 8 had high-speed Internet in their homes.[58] A 2019 national survey from the Pew Research Center found that low-income adults are less likely to have multiple devices where they can go online, like smartphones, computers, and tablets. They found that approximately 26 percent of adults living in households earning less than $30,000 are smartphone dependent, meaning they have a smartphone but do not have broadband internet at home.[59] Without access to other devices, low-income adults often rely on smartphones when searching and applying for jobs, which can hinder their success in complicated or multi-step application processes. In another Pew Research Center survey in 2015, low-income adults were more than 4.5 times more likely to apply for a job using a smartphone as compared to middle or high-income adults.[60]

English Proficiency

The food sector has historically been a welcoming place for foreign-born populations and non-native English-speaking immigrants to enter the formal workforce. However, limited English proficiency can prevent an individual from gaining initial employment and then advancing in the workplace. Stakeholders at the February Convening shared that employers can also miss out on quality workers because of their limited-English proficiency.

While not all positions in the food economy require proficient English skills, many do. Customer-facing positions like cashiers and waiters require an intermediate

level of English proficiency. These positions are often eligible for additional tips and have higher wages than other positions that are not customer-facing like stock clerks and dishwashers. Stakeholders at the February Convening shared that limited English proficiency can impact an individual's ability to grasp and retain important information from trainings, and the lack of accommodating materials to train those workers can impact workplace safety. Studies show that when employers invest in helping their workers improve their English skills, there is improvement in customer assistance, lower risks of accidents in food handling, and improved implementation of customized training and site-specific training.[61]

Several workforce training programs in the District offer English as a second language (ESL), conduct food preparation classes in both English and Spanish, and provide technical assistance in several languages.[62] In addition, several area restaurants offer both English classes and Spanish classes for their workers, finding that increased language skills for all workers improve staff cohesion and workplace environment.[63] Many other language acquisition resources are offered in the District too, outside the employment context. Despite these promising examples of workforce language training programs, interviews for this report indicated that there is still a large unmet need for increased language resources for job seekers and employers in the District.

Outside Professional Development

Once an individual attains employment, continued training and education are often necessary to acquire more advanced skills necessary to get a promotion to a higher-paying position. The characteristics of many food sector jobs make this type of continued professional development particularly challenging.

First, the combination of low wages and limited hours require many workers to take on several jobs to make ends meet. A 2018 national survey of hourly food and hospitality workers found that 80 percent work multiple jobs in order to cover expenses like rent, child care, and food.[64]

The food service sector's unpredictable shifts, where a worker might work 10 hours one week and 40 hours the next, present further challenges. Unpredictable schedules are widespread across the food economy; one study estimated that approximately two-thirds of workers in food service and retail environments have unpredictable schedules.[65] Participants at the February Convening highlighted that these variable work schedules make it difficult for workers to take advantage of professional development opportunities. Nearly one-third of service-sector workers surveyed in a national survey said they would have liked to participate in more professional development opportunities, but did not because of logistical barriers.[66]

The widespread digital literacy challenges among low-wage workers also limits access to affordable, flexible professional development. Although

online certificate programs are often less expensive and fit around an unpredictable schedule, they require the ability to successfully navigate the internet, obtain online material, and have reliable internet access.

On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training, where training and professional development is integrated into the workplace, helps workers overcome the logistical challenges described above. With on-the-job training, workers do not need to sign up for an additional program or coordinate time off work to pursue professional development. Workers are also able to directly apply the new skills they acquire to their workplace. A 2014 US Department of Labor synthesis of best practices for job training found that when training closely mirrors the real job, workers have better productivity outcomes.[67]

Recognizing the effectiveness of on-the-job training, several District employers have implemented thorough onboarding for new workers to support them as they transition to the company. One employer created a detailed two-week hands-on curriculum where the new worker is paired with a seasoned worker as a mentor and learns the duties of the job side-by-side the mentor. The format allows the new worker to ask the mentor questions and solicit advice for adapting to the workplace, while learning the skills they need to be successful in the position.[68] Another employer that uses a similar onboarding process for new workers highlighted that upfront training for workers on how to do their job better helps get more value out of every labor dollar they spend.[69]

Other employers in the District have focused on creating greater on-the-job opportunities for their current workers to gain new skills. One employer cross-trains workers for duties in other positions so they can better understand those roles, gain additional skills, and cover for another position if necessary. The employer noted that workers are better able to maintain full-time work and the managers are better able to staff to meet demand, because even if one department or position is slow in a given week, they can assist in busier departments.[70] Another employer trains all workers to get additional certifications such as food handler and Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA), and another employer trains workers in culinary and wine knowledge beyond what is needed for their immediate jobs.[71] These employers emphasized that additional on-the-job trainings allow workers to gain additional skills and certificates required for advancing to management or other positions.

However, most the District's workforce training targets job seekers rather than current workers. The disproportionate amount of workforce development aimed at the start of employment compared to on-the-job training stems partially from the way local and federal funding is allocated for workforce development. Workforce development providers are often evaluated on outcomes related to their participants' job placement and short-term retention

in a position, not advancement to another one.[72] While some workforce development providers in the District and across the country have committed to longer term retention and data capture for their program participants, there is not the same level of support built out for individuals post-program. *The Employer Guide to Promoting Workforce Development in the Food Industry* (the Employer Guide), created by DC Central Kitchen as an addendum to this Strategy, highlights several ways that employers can partner with workforce development providers to track outcomes and better support workers.

Unfortunately, many food business employers also underestimate the value to their business of investing in on-the-job training and professional development. Employers may perceive on-the-job training or professional development to be an inefficient use of workers' time and the employer's resources, especially if they believe that workers will leave for another workplace after receiving the training. The opportunity cost of providing advanced workplace training to low-wage workers is high because tasks such as preparing food or staffing the cash register cannot be postponed or rescheduled without significantly impacting the workflow.[73] The stakeholder interviews echoed those concerns and highlighted that many food businesses operate with razor-thin margins and may not have the financial means to hire an outside training provider to train their workers on discrete skills.[74]

A Note on Entrepreneurship

A growing number of District residents are interested in starting their own food businesses. In 2018, approximately 38,000 workers were employed by DC small businesses in the accommodation and food service industries, making up more than half of small business workers.[75] Food entrepreneurship adds to the cultural diversity of foods in the District, creates jobs, and helps individuals build wealth and ownership, catalyzing economic advancement.

The high interest in food entrepreneurship in the District is in part due to low wages and a lack of clear advancement opportunities for food workers in existing food businesses. Several workforce training providers interviewed for this report described participants who find work in local food businesses in order to gain experience to run their own food business.[76]

That said, significant challenges come with starting new food businesses and sustaining existing ones. In the competitive and thin-margin food industry, small businesses are especially vulnerable to changing consumer

preferences and market dynamics like an economic downturn. In addition, certain District policies and dynamics make it more difficult to start a food business. These include, but are not limited to, a lack of technical assistance, complex permitting and licensing processes, a lack of non-English language resources for food entrepreneurs, and high start-up costs. Rising rents make it difficult for longtime food businesses to maintain their operation in areas experiencing rapid economic development, and existing small businesses can find it difficult to scale and grow their business model to meet existing demand because of these high costs.

Although this Strategy focuses on workers in existing District food businesses, further research and resources are merited to address the challenges for food entrepreneurship in the District.

Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce

Increasing opportunity in the food workforce demands action and coordination across a range of District stakeholders—including government agencies, workforce training providers, food businesses, philanthropic organizations, and workers. The District has already implemented a number of laws and policies that support a strong food workforce. Please see Appendices A and C for more information on these existing policies. Identified through the research conducted for this report, the following actions would create more career pathways within the food workforce, thereby supporting the health, well-being, and economic attainment of food sector workers in the District.

Action 1: Create a toolkit and training for employers to improve the work environment, connect workers to existing District resources, and decrease turnover.

Improving the work environment for food sector jobs is key to strengthening the workforce. Employers who offer more benefits and professional development opportunities for their workers see lower turnover rates and increased job performance.[77,78] And workers in these workplaces are better able to maintain employment and move up the career ladder, generating higher incomes and increased job satisfaction.

Employers specifically need resources to address the key indicators of success in the food workforce described above. First, employers need guidance on how to better understand and support workers struggling with mental health issues and trauma, as well as environmental barriers such as affordable and consistent access to transportation, child care and elder care, healthy food, and safe and affordable housing. Employers should be aware of the many existing District resources for individuals facing a variety of challenges, such as the Department of Behavioral Health's Access Help Line and related behavioral health resources,[79] the Metropolitan Police Department's sexual assault resources, and the Department of Human Services' emergency housing resources. In addition, employers should be connected to resources to help them provide professional development to workers.

Although several District agencies and community organizations in the city provide these types of resources, many employers are either unaware of them or do not understand the value. The Employer Guide that accompanies this Strategy provides an initial list of recommendations for District food employers as well as case studies of employers already providing these types of supports to their workers.

Increased connection and collaboration among food businesses interested in providing these types of services would also motivate businesses to expand their offerings and connect them with experienced employers who can talk about how they have incorporated the services into their business model and the benefits they have seen within their workforce.

To encourage more businesses to offer these supports, the District could consider requiring or incentivizing businesses to implement these programs. For example, employers who participate in trauma-informed care programs could receive technical assistance from District agencies to implement these practices or receive a certification showing their commitment to their workers' well-being.

Action 2: Strengthen worker supports to address environmental barriers, such as access to reliable transportation and child care, as well as supports to address mental health or trauma-related challenges.

As described above, environmental barriers like the lack of access to reliable transportation and child care, as well as mental health challenges and trauma, can prevent a worker from maintaining and thriving in a new job. While the District has made impressive strides to support workers—including through implementing progressive early learning and child care opportunities, advocating for expanded public transportation hours, and facilitating low-cost transportation options like the Circulator and Capital Bikeshare—there are opportunities to expand and strategically coordinate those efforts to support more workers.

The District, in partnership with philanthropic and non-profit partners, should form a comprehensive and integrated network of social support designed for workers facing common environmental barriers. In particular, District agencies that provide convening spaces and community hubs, such as DC Public Library and the Department of Parks and Recreation, should be key partners in this network. This network should be easy to access for employers and workers and provide customized support to meet a range of needs, including services that employers could provide on-site to their workers. For example, SeedCo, a community organization in New York City, has developed such programming for food businesses. SeedCo provides financial literacy workshops, works with individuals one-on-one to understand their personal finances, develops health benefit enrollment workshops, and offers a mental health certificate program for employers.[80]

Action 3: Strengthen communication and collaboration between food businesses and workforce training providers.

Workforce training programs only successfully prepare participants for employment if they match the hiring and skills needs of employers. Consistent communication and collaboration between food businesses and food workforce development providers can ensure that programs successfully prepare participants for the workplace and identify opportunities for additional training to advance workers.

The District's Career Pathways Task Force, hosted by the WIC, is one example of how convening business leaders and workforce training providers across different sectors can help pinpoint needs and opportunities. For this Strategy, the Office of Planning convened employers, government agencies, and workforce training providers to develop the framework. Consistently, these stakeholders asked for more opportunities to convene and collaborate. Tools like the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program's "Question Bank for Workforce Service Providers" can help guide the conversation.[81]

Collaboration between the training providers and businesses can also help the employer with workers who need extra support. Several workforce training providers connect new workers with more experienced alumni who end up working at the same workplace, establishing an internal mentor or career coach. These providers shared that these internal coaches or mentors are crucial to identifying problems, like difficulty securing child care or showing up on time due to inconsistent transportation, that the training provider or employer could then try to help the employee address.[82]

Action 4: Create and regularly update career-mapping resources specific to food sector jobs.

As the District's food economy evolves with new technology and business models, food businesses are looking for workers with a new range of skills to fill many positions. A regularly updated resource for career mapping in the food sector could better align training providers and businesses. The maps, driven by labor market data and validated by businesses, would inform the types of jobs available and the type of training needed to get them. Training providers can then create and adjust training curriculums based on that information to more effectively prepare participants to succeed in the workforce. Unsurprisingly, research shows that job training is most effective when it provides credentials that employers value and when the training provides skills that reflect private-sector demands in the local labor market.[83]

The career mapping resources could include a list of in-demand and common occupations in the District's food workforce, the technical and workforce readiness skills needed for those positions, a roadmap of how workers could move from one position to another or one sector to another, and the types of training (existing or to be created) or credentials needed. Many skills are highly transferrable across different sectors, and these resources could help identify those in-demand skills across positions and align programs and training. Food business employers and managers can provide insight to ensure the career mapping resources are relevant to their needs, and food training providers can help adapt their curriculums to prepare their participants for employment. Existing national resources like the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's Workforce Readiness Skills and the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook should be leveraged and combined with local employer insight to produce resources relevant to the DC food sector.

Action 5: Recognize employers that pay a living wage in the District's food workforce.

The majority of workers in the District's food economy currently earn less than half of the area median income.[84] The District must strive to be a place where all residents, including those in all positions within the food workforce, can afford to live and thrive. To ensure this, stakeholders must work to ensure that all workers in the food economy and beyond receive a living wage.

The District has already taken important steps in increasing the minimum wage. The District's Fair Shot Minimum Wage Act of 2016 increased the minimum wage to $15.00 an hour by 2020 and set future minimum wage increases to the Consumer Price Index after 2021. The legislation also progressively increased the minimum wage for tipped workers to $5 by 2020 and set future minimum wage increases for tipped workers to the Consumer Price Index after 2021.[85] In addition, the District passed The Living Wage Act of 2006, requiring recipients of government contracts or grants to pay workers and subcontractors no less than the current living wage.[86]

However, even with the recent minimum increase in July 2019 to $14.00 per hour, minimum wage workers are earning less than a living wage in the District. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Living Wage Calculator finds that a District worker would need to make $17.76 per hour to support themselves or $33.60 per hour to support themselves and two children at a livable wage model.[87]

One promising opportunity from Mayor Bowser's administration to recognize employers who pay livable wages is the anticipated creation of the District's Living Wage Certification Program. Proposed to be administered through a DSLBD grantee, the program is intended to certify employers that pay their workers a living wage for the duration of the certificate.[88] The certificate is expected to be valid for three years, and employers will be recognized for their commitment to fair wages with a distinct logo and inclusion on a certified list. Once implemented, the District and its community partners should support the Living Wage Certification Program within the food economy, hosting food-specific employer workshops and creating tailored materials. In addition, a separate food-specific list of certified livable wage employers could be helpful for food workforce training providers and consumers.

Action 6: Support the implementation of the Universal Paid Family Leave Program in the District's food businesses.

Once implemented in July 2020, the District's Paid Family Leave Program will cover most workers in the food workforce and provide important time to care for new children, sick family members, or one's own illness. Minimum wage workers in the food workforce will be able to make 90 percent of their wages during leave, a significant win for those that currently receive no paid family leave.[89]

Outreach to employers to implement the Program has already begun. In Fiscal Year 2019, the Office of Paid Family Leave within DOES hosted employer webinars, created a dedicated website and newsletter for the Program, and conducted town hall forums and business walks to ensure employers are aware of the Program.[90]

However, more can be done to ensure that workers are aware of the Program and understand their rights when it is fully implemented in 2020. A 2019 best practices report from the Center for Economic and Policy Research found that with paid family leave policies implemented in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, many workers were not aware of the

policy and did not participate.[91] Populations with the lowest use rates of these policies included low-income workers, workers without a college degree, Black and Hispanic workers, and workers with low English proficiencies. The report recommends that government agencies inform and partner with advocacy organizations embedded in different communities, hospitals, child care centers, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinics. A worker outreach plan and partnerships between District agencies and community organizations connected to the food workforce would help increase awareness before the program is fully implemented in July 2020.

Action 7: Develop workplace-based loan programs to help low-income workers overcome financial emergencies.

As mentioned above, relatively small unexpected financial burdens can lead to missed work or termination of employment. Food businesses can retain workers and help address these financial emergencies through small emergency loan programs. Often managed through a Community Development Financial Institution (CFDI), these programs provide emergency loans that are then repaid through small increments (between $50 and $75) from automatic payroll deductions. Workers can build good credit through the program, and once the loan is repaid, they can decide to continue the small automatic payroll deductions to build a savings account. The District could help connect interested employers with local CDFIs or credit unions to create these programs and help standardize the program and expectations across employers and workers.

While further research is needed to determine how such programs could operate in the District, there are several examples highlighting the impact of workplace loan programs on increased worker retention. Rhino Foods in Vermont implemented the Income Advance program in partnership with the North Country Federal Credit Union in 2008 for emergency loans up to $1,000. Over the past ten years, more than a third of the company's workers have taken advantage of the advance. The loans have less than a 4 percent default rate, and worker retention has increased by 36 percent since the inception of the program. Rhino Foods reports that nearly 99 percent of their workers decide to keep the automatic deductions from payroll and build savings with the credit union.[92] A large rollout of the model across 48 employers by the Filene Research Institute and the Ford Foundation found similar results of success. The programs were successful in repayment and building savings for workers; over 1,000 loans totaling $1.2 million were generated and workers continued savings.[93]

Action 8: Create and incentivize opportunities for on-the-job skills training and professional development.

On-the-job training is the most effective way to make professional development accessible for food sector workers. As described in this report, many workers face challenges with transportation, child care, internet access, and other issues that make it difficult to seek outside professional development. Stakeholders interviewed for this project consistently reported that professional development should be as accessible as possible, either by including it on-the-job or offering paid leave for all or a portion of time spent on outside training.

Public-private partnerships could create cost-sharing programs with employers to help alleviate some of the expense associated with offering on-site professional development. These offerings could include training in management skills, advanced customer service, and other job-specific skills.

The New York City Department of Small Business Services' Customized Training program provides financial support for businesses that invest in worker training programs—including training on new equipment or software, launching a new product or service, preparing workers to advance in a position, and updating obsolete skills.[94] Participating employers select a training program, and the program covers up to 70 percent of the cost through quarterly reimbursements. In return, employers provide training to their workers and, after their workers complete the training, provide a wage increase for those workers. In one example, a food manufacturer trained 15 workers with advanced food preparation techniques, including flash freezing and sanitation. After the training, the employer expanded its sales to different retailers, sales improved by 20 percent, and trained workers received an average wage increase of 42 percent.

A similar model in California incentivizes on-the-job training through funding from a special Employment Training Tax. In California's Employment Training Panel (ETP) program, participating employers can select training to help upskill workers or train new workers and receive reimbursement for the training provided. Training can be classroom-based, workplace-based, or through online or distance learning.[95] Once trained, employers must increase wages to a standard wage by the program; in some counties, new workers would receive up to $16.09/hour and retrained workers would receive up to $19.31/hour.[96]

Action 9: Leverage existing federal funding for worker advancement.

At both the federal and District levels, several funding opportunities could be better leveraged to provide more training and advancement opportunities in the food workforce.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program is available for private businesses hiring hard-to-employ populations, including unemployed veterans, returning citizens, residents in designated empowerment zones, summer youth workers, qualified long-term unemployed residents, and residents participating in government assistance programs (including TANF, SNAP, and Supplemental Security Income). The WOTC is calculated as a percentage of qualified wages paid to the worker in the first year of employment based on the number of hours worked.[97]

Despite evidence showing that the WOTC has positive effects on job placement, retention, and wages, the tax credit remains underutilized across the country, including in the District.[98] In 2018, the District only had 2,269 WOTC certificates, with more than half of those certificates for workers participating in SNAP, and was among the states with the lowest participation in the country.[99] The District's food employers could better leverage the WOTC to expand job opportunities for hard-to-employ residents. The District and its community partners should work to expand awareness and use of the WOTC among food employers through outreach to industry groups, partnerships with workforce training providers, technical assistance for employers from community organizations, and other means.

Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeships provide training and skill development to workers through a combination of on-the-job and classroom-based learning. Apprenticeships can range from one to five years and provide an alternative career path to higher education. Apprentices are paid hourly, and graduates from apprenticeship programs receive nationally-recognized certificates of completion.[100] A 2016 Department of Commerce study found that apprenticeships are widely supported by participating businesses; they

increase the value of output and reduce errors in the workplace, reduce turnover and improve recruitment, and facilitate workers with improved problem-solving and leadership skills.[101]

The federal government is investing in apprenticeships in all industries, including the food workforce. In 2017, the Trump Administration released Executive Order 13801 "Expanding Apprenticeships in America" to expand and coordinate apprenticeship programs across the country.[102] In June 2019, the Department of Labor awarded $183.8 million in grants for development of these programs in partnership with private companies. Seventeen states with 23 different projects were awarded grants to develop apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing, health care, and information technology.

The District could greatly benefit from the development and expansion of apprenticeships in the food workforce. Currently, the only apprenticeships sponsored through DOES are related to the construction industry.[103] Other food-industry apprenticeship programs could be models for the District. FareStart in Seattle, Washington provides a food service apprenticeship for individuals to become line cooks, caterers, or restaurant servers.[104] And the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation has developed a national Hospitality Sector Registered Apprenticeship project to help train managers in the restaurant, foodservice, and hospitality industries.[105] With leadership from the District's existing DC Apprenticeship Council, the District could explore how to capture federal apprenticeship funds and target the many food businesses looking for qualified candidates.

Conclusion

This Strategy is the first of its kind to consider the District's food workforce as its own sector, independent from related industries, that merits its own targeted investment and innovations. By better leveraging existing resources, connecting key stakeholders, and making targeted investments in needed services, the District and its partners could significantly strengthen the food workforce, providing more employment and advancement opportunities, increasing wages in the food industry, and opening the path to economic mobility for more District residents.

Methodology

This Strategy leverages the insights and knowledge of stakeholders within the District's food workforce and food economy, including District agencies, food workforce training providers, food businesses, and emerging food entrepreneurs and organizations that support food entrepreneurship. The findings of this Strategy come from stakeholder interviews, a one-day convening on the District's food workforce, collaboration with and feedback from partner District agencies, and research into promising programs across the country.

This Strategy was developed with guidance and financial support from Kaiser Permanente. Research and development of the Strategy took place from October 2018 to June 2019. Initial stakeholder interviews with food workforce training providers, food employers, and supportive organizations were conducted from November 2018 to February 2019. The one-day convening was held in early February and attended by over 65 representatives of local nonprofits, businesses, and District agencies.[106]

Collaboration and drafting of the Strategy began in February 2019 and continued throughout the development of the report, and national research into promising practices began in October 2018 and continued through May 2019 during the writing of the Strategy.

We appreciate the participation of interview stakeholders from the following organizations:

- Amala Lives Institute, Brandi Forte
- Arabella Advisors, Eric Kessler
- Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, Mariano Ramos

- DC Central Kitchen, Alex Moore
- DC Department for Housing and Community Development, Anamita Gall
- Dreaming Out Loud, Chris Bradshaw
- Goodwill Industries, Colleen Paletta and Janece Kleban
- Good Food Markets, Casey Dunajick-DeKnight and Philip Sambol
- Latino Economic Development Center, Karina Mendoza
- Mess Hall, Al Greenberg
- National Restaurant Association, ProStart high school program, Molly Barker and Caroline Potolicchio
- The City University of New York (CUNY) Urban Food Policy Institute, Nicholas Freudenberg and Craig Willingham
- SCORE, Washington, DC Chapter, Suzanne McGrath
- SeedCo, Alex Breen and Ronin Davis
- Speedy Greens, Community Connections, Matteo Lieb
- SB Works, John Mains
- Thrive DC, Alicia Horton
- Union Kitchen, Cullen Gilchrist
- United Planning Organization, Reginald Glenn and Sheri Jones
- Vermont Farm to Plate (Workforce Strategic Plan), John Mandeville

Appendices

Appendix A: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan Summary

Appendix B: DC Food Workforce Development February Convening Summary and Findings

Appendix C: Relevant District Laws and Policies

Appendix A: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan Summary

The District's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan is a four-year strategy that guides the District's investment in workforce development and highlights priorities to ensure that all residents can attain

their highest potential through lifelong learning, sustained employment, and economic security. The District's WIOA State Plan (2016-2020) has five major goals with several sub-goals. The summary of those goals is provided below.

Goal 1: System Alignment

District agencies form an integrated workforce system that delivers coordinated, accessible, and effective workforce services through clearly defined roles and transitional supports throughout the provision of a continuum of services.

1.1 - Create a uniform intake, assessment, and referral system.

1.2 - Fully integrate all American Job Center partners to allow for cohesive delivery of services.

1.3 - Align policies, procedures, and performance measures and share data across programs to eliminate barriers to integration.

1.4 - Blend funding and utilize shared contracts to avoid duplication of resources.

1.5 - Foster environment of collaboration through cross-training staff and shared case management.

Goal 2: Access to Workforce and Education Services

All residents, including people with disabilities and those with multiple barriers to employment, regardless of education or skill level, can access the education, training, career, and supportive services necessary to move forward in their career pathway.

2.1 - Expand Earn and Learn opportunities to allow residents to increase education and skills levels while helping support themselves and their families.

2.2 - Ensure each sector pathway is developed with business input and includes well-connected and transparent education, training, and credential offerings that are delivered through multiple linked and aligned programs.

2.3 - Education and training programs in the sector career pathway will incorporate, as appropriate, contextualized curriculum appropriate to the educational functioning level of the participant and to the sector/occupation of study.

2.4 - Ensure residents receive appropriate case management, career navigation, and support services to remediate barriers and ensure their movement along the pathway.

2.5 - Residents are able to access programs and services through multiple and convenient means including at the American Job Centers,

virtual platforms, and in their own communities through the Mobile One-Stop and other community outreach efforts in all eight wards.

Goal 3: Sector Strategies/Alignment with Business Needs

The District's business community gains access to a broader pool of District residents with the skills necessary to meet their needs and advance within their organizations; and informs workforce investments and incentives that effectively match jobseekers with their needs.

3.1 - Coordinate and expand business advisory committees under the WIC in each high-demand sector, and leverage their expertise to inform workforce system activities and career pathways development, including thorough feedback to external education and training providers.

3.2 - Create a unified business services strategy to better align outreach efforts to employers and offer more comprehensive services to meet their needs.

3.3 - Expand business-driven training options, including apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and customized training for businesses with significant hiring needs that responds quickly to demand.

3.4 - Utilize labor market intelligence to identify key businesses for outreach and occupations with emerging demand and ensure training resources are aligned accordingly.

3.5 - Leverage the WIC's Workforce Intermediary program funding to support new sector strategy activities and supplement existing efforts.

3.6 - Expand and re-evaluate available incentives for businesses to hire District residents.

Goal 4: Performance and Accountability

Funded workforce services are evidence-based, high quality, and flexible in meeting individuals' needs, and District agencies evaluate outcomes through standardized methodologies that ensure accountability and transparency.

4.1 - Use performance data to drive decision-making on workforce investments.

4.2 - Develop a customer feedback process for both job seekers and businesses that interact with the workforce system.

4.3 - Move forward with data systems integration across agencies and funding streams, including the expansion of the Data Vault partnership and inter-agency data sharing agreements.

4.4 - Conduct comprehensive workforce system and provider evaluations using standardized and accurate data, and consistent processes.

4.5 - Expand the use of performance-based contracting and grant making, and make processes more consistent across agencies and programs.

4.6 - Create standardized report cards on service providers across the workforce system to facilitate informed customer choices.

Goal 5: Serving Our Youth

Youth have access to a coordinated, accessible education and workforce system that provides the supports needed to prepare them for postsecondary success, including education, training, and competitive employment.

5.1 - Ensure developmentally appropriate access and services for youth to DC's one-stop system.

5.2 - Provide youth access to supportive services like transportation, child care, housing, behavioral health services, and income supports so they can take full advantage of education and training programs.

5.3 - Leverage technology to engage youth and youth-serving partners to provide information and access to education, training, credentialing, and employment opportunities.

5.4 - Increase opportunities for work-based learning and career exploration, including through the Mayor Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), and leveraging it as an entry point for year-round services and supports.

5.5 - Focus on facilitating seamless transitions between and within secondary and postsecondary education, training, and employment.

5.6 – Maintain the focused attention and resources on engaging disconnected youth (youth 16 to 24 who are neither in school nor employed).

Appendix B: February 2019 Convening

Prepared by Symphonic Strategies, LLC, Facilitator for the Convening[107]

Summary of the February Convening

In January 2019, the Office of Planning and Food Policy Director hired Symphonic Strategies to facilitate a convening around food workforce development in the District of Columbia. The goal of this engagement was to 1) facilitate a one-day convening around food workforce development and 2) generate a written report of the findings from the one-day convening that will help inform the overall Strategy for food workforce

development that the Food Policy team is working on. What follows is a brief summary of the event and overall findings from the event.

The DC Food Workforce Development Convening was an invitation-only event hosted by the Office of Planning and the Food Policy Director that was held on Tuesday, February 5, 2019. The event was held at historic Eastern Market's North Hall from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The convening brought together about 60 attendees representing various industries and organizations. Among these included representatives from DCPS, DOES, DMPED, DSLBD, WIC, DC Central Kitchen, Good Food Markets, Amala Lives, University of the District of Columbia, Dreaming Out Loud, Bainum Family Foundation, and many others. The morning portion included a panel with representatives from four government agencies (DOES, DMPED, DSLBD, and WIC), and the afternoon portion included a panel with representatives from Good Food Markets, Amala Lives, and DC Central Kitchen. Interspersed between these panel discussions were two breakout small group discussions, where attendees were able to discuss with their peers the ideas, strategies, and pain points that came up in their work as it related to food workforce development in DC.

Overall Findings

Several themes and observations emerged over the course of the day's discussion. While the next section of this report will break down participants' responses by theme, we wanted to highlight a few of the recurring themes we heard throughout the small group discussions, panels, and Q&A sessions. Three of the major themes were: 1) **centralizing access to available resources**, 2) **better collaboration** between District and federal agencies, particularly when it comes to resources, and 3) policies and incentives that would **encourage employers to hire** low-skill, low-wage workers and provide the necessary supports and training for their staff. Developing a District-wide strategy will require DC Food Policy Council to keep in mind these themes of better collaboration, centralizing information and resources, and thinking holistically about the needs of staff and employers within the food workforce.

While many themes emerged over the course of the day, these three stood out to the facilitator. Based on our experiences and insights, particularly with DC government, centralizing resources and better collaboration have been longstanding themes within the District. Emphasizing better collaboration among agencies has the potential to demonstrate long-term change. Lastly, developing policies and incentives to encourage employers to make hiring decisions to include low-skill workers requires taking a long-term view of the District's food workforce system. Centralizing resources and ensuring that hiring and training happens within the District's existing workforce will, we hope, continue to benefit DC's food workforce by encouraging future long-term investments over time.

DC Food Workforce Development Convening Agenda

Tuesday, February 5, 2019; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Eastern Market, North Hall

8:30 a.m.	Registration & Coffee
9:00 a.m.	Welcome & Overview of the Convening Ona Balkus | Acting DC Food Policy Director A.J. Robinson | Founder & CEO, Symphonic Strategies
9:15 a.m.	Remarks from Brian Kenner, Deputy Mayor of Planning & Economic Development
9:20 a.m.	Understanding the District's Food Workforce Initiatives: A Panel of District Agencies Sybongile Cook | Associate Director of Business Engagement, DOES Joe Jaroscak | Program Manager: Adult Career Pathways Task Force Initiative, WIC KellyAnn Kirkpatrick | Program Manager: Great Streets, DMPED Kate Mereand | Program Manager: Innovation & Equitable Development Office, DSLBD
10:15 a.m.	Identifying Key Challenges in the DC Food Workforce: A Small Group Discussion
11:15 a.m.	Lunch by B.Lin Catering
11:30 a.m.	Building a Strong DC Food Workforce: A Panel of Local Training Providers & Food Businesses Kimberly Brown | Chief Program Officer, DC Central Kitchen Casey Dunajick-DeKnight | Chief Operating Officer, Good Food Markets Brandi Forte | Founder & President, Amala Lives Institute *Moderator*: Ona Balkus | DC Food Policy Director
12:20 p.m.	Remarks from Acting Director, Office of Planning, Andrew Trueblood
12:25 p.m.	Brainstorming Key Solutions in DC Food Workforce Development: A Small Group Discussion
1:45 p.m.	Wrap-up & Next Steps
2:00 p.m.	Convening Ends

Appendix C: Relevant District Laws and Policies

Several existing District laws and policies pertain to the food workforce. Efforts are merited to ensure that these laws and policies are fully implemented and benefit all workers in the food workforce and other industries.

Universal Paid Leave Act of 2016

The Universal Paid Leave Act of 2016 provides workers employed by District employers with up to eight weeks of parental leave to bond with a new child, six weeks to care for a sick family member, and two weeks of personal medical leave to care for a medical condition.[108] All private sector employers in the District must comply with the legislation, and self-employed individuals can participate in the program as well. The legislation covers both part-time and full-time workers and is paid for through an employer payroll deduction of .62 percent and administered through the Office of Paid Family Leave in the DOES. The maximum weekly benefit amount is $1,000 per week, and the program will begin providing benefits in July 2020.[109]

Fair Shot Minimum Wage Act of 2016

The Fair Shot Minimum Wage Act of 2016 increases the minimum wage for District workers to $15.00 an hour by 2020 and sets future minimum wage increases to the Consumer Price Index after 2021.[110] The legislation also progressively increases the minimum wage for tipped workers, including many workers at restaurants and bars, to $5.00 an hour by 2020 and sets future minimum wage increases for tipped workers to the Consumer Price Index after 2021.

Tipped Wage Workers Act of 2018

The Tipped Wage Workers Act of 2018 creates new standards for businesses that employ tipped workers, including workers in restaurants and bars. The legislation repealed the Ballot Initiative 77 – Minimum Wage Amendment Act of 2018, which could have increased the tipped minimum wage to match the general minimum wage in the District. Instead, it set several requirements for businesses that employ tipped workers, including attending a sexual harassment training course, amending how tips and payroll are administered, and having managers attend annual wage-theft training.[111]

Sustainable DC 2.0

Sustainable DC 2.0 Plan (SDC 2.0) outlines the District's bold goals to become the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the United States. An update to the original Sustainable DC Plan, SDC 2.0 was released in April 2019 and includes several goals and actions relevant to the food workforce and food economy, including to develop and support the food industry as a vibrant and equitable sector of the local economy.[112]

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

Mayor Bowser signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) on behalf of the District in January 2018. The MUFPP is an international pact that highlights the role of cities in ensuring the future of food is sustainable, equitable, and healthy.[113] The MUFPP promotes both fair and improved labor practices across the food system.

Cottage Food Act of 2013

The Cottage Food Act of 2013 allows any District resident to register as a cottage food business and sell certain foods made in a residential kitchen.[114] Cottage food businesses can only earn up to $25,000 annually and only sell their goods at farmers markets and public events. In 2018, DC Health published regulations for registering as a cottage food business, which require applicants to obtain a Home Occupancy Permit, complete a Certified Food Protection Manager's Certification, pass a home inspection, and submit an application and fee. The Cottage Food Expansion Amendment Act of 2019, which would remove certain restrictions on cottage food businesses, is currently before the DC Council.[115]

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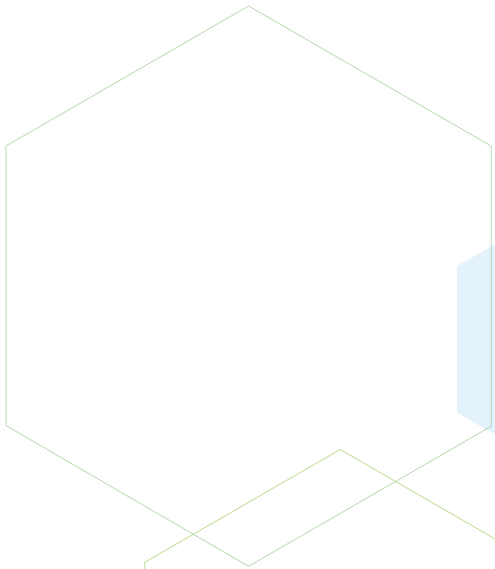

Learn more about the
DC Food Policy Council
and access the full report at
dcfoodpolicy.org/makefoodwork.

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