



Food Policy Council

February 5, 2025

Land Acknowledgment

Washington DC and its surrounding areas sit on the ancestral land of the Nacotchtank and Piscataway peoples. We want to recognize those indigenous peoples and their communities, along with others across the country, and to lend our voice to theirs to uplift their past, present, and future communities.

THANKS FOR BEING HERE





Icebreaker

**A FOOD OR BEVERAGE YOU
LOVE TO SHARE**

February 5 Agenda

- Icebreaker (5 mins)
- Food Policy Council Public Member Vote on Priorities (10 mins)
- Urban Agriculture & Affordable Housing (15 mins)
- LGBTQIA2S+ Food Insecurity (15 mins)
- Procurement Analysis (5 mins)
- Oversight & Budget (3 mins)
- Closing (2 mins)



2025 WORKING GROUP PRIORITIES

Enable District residents to access increased local and Federal food benefits they deserve and are eligible for.



Enable all District residents to access knowledge and resources to grow food for themselves.



Reduce the burden of diet-related chronic disease in Washington, D.C. by improving access to food education, enhancing nutrition workforce capacity, and increasing opportunities for reimbursement of services.



Improve District procurement through the purchase of more nutritious, sustainable, and local & regional food



Reduce barriers to new food businesses successfully launching and growing, especially in Wards 7 and 8.



Improve food waste prevention and diversion among residents, and businesses, and District government.



URBAN AG WORKING GROUP



Goal: All District residents have access to knowledge and resources to grow food for themselves.

Update, release and publicize urban agriculture map, including farms and assets like greenhouses

Update and publicize urban agriculture classes in the District

Complete and share outcomes from the urban agriculture and affordable housing case study

Pursue discussions with DC Water for free and accessible water for all District urban farms and community gardens

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & FOOD JOBS

Reduce barriers to new food businesses successfully launching and growing, especially in Wards 7 and 8.

Understand barriers for cottage food businesses and other food entrepreneurs, while also lifting up stories of success



Release food business registration road map with support of DC Health and DLCPP



Continue to promote funding opportunities for food businesses from all District agencies, nonprofits, and local entities



Identify opportunities for local food businesses of multiple types to access the Certified Business Enterprise designation



SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN

Improve District procurement through the purchase of more nutritious, sustainable, and local & regional food

Ensure that Central Food Processing Facilities in DC are designed to foster values-based procurement

Support Communities of Practice for food-procuring agencies, offices, and institutions

Support the passing of Farmers Market legislation based on 2024 Working Group recommendations

Release procurement study and socialize findings to improve procurement

REDUCING WASTED FOOD

Improve food waste prevention and diversion among residents, and businesses, and District government.

Help DC government agencies lead by example with food waste prevention and diversion practices

Encourage a "make the most of your food" mindset and improve understanding of food waste prevention

Build capacity among DC businesses to prevent and divert food waste



FOOD ACCESS & EQUITY

Enable District residents to access increased local and Federal food benefits they deserve and are eligible for.

Educate the public about legislation aimed at increasing funding for food access programs

Increase enrollment of seniors and people with disabilities in food access programs

Support DC residents in navigating and participating in food access programs, with no wrong door approaches to benefit access and food services



HEALTH & NUTRITION EDUCATION

Reduce the burden of diet-related chronic disease in Washington, D.C. by improving access to food education, enhancing nutrition workforce capacity, and increasing opportunities for reimbursement of services.

Increase access to food education programs for youth and adults in Washington, D.C.



Increase capacity for food and nutrition related community based organizations to work with the healthcare sector.



Reduce barriers to entry for residents in Washington, D.C. to become licensed as a nutritionist or credentialed as a registered dietitian nutritionist.



CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

Climate Change

Increase awareness of and action on the intersections of climate change exacerbating challenges in the food system and ways to mitigate emissions.

ALL WORKING GROUPS

Racial Equity

Expand practice of conducting Racial Equity Impact Analysis for Food Policy recommendations

ALL WORKING GROUPS

Budget Transparency

Highlight District funding across the food system to increase awareness of where and how money is spent.

FOOD POLICY DIVISION

Housing & Economic Equity

Acknowledge and address economic injustice and housing costs as key drivers in inequities in food access.

ALL WORKING GROUPS

Resource Promotion

Promote existing funding available for food businesses and food education organizations, as well as the ongoing work of partners

FOOD POLICY DIVISION

Rooting For Equity

***Applied Research to Advance Urban
Agriculture in Washington DC***

**DC Food Policy Council
February 5th, 2025**



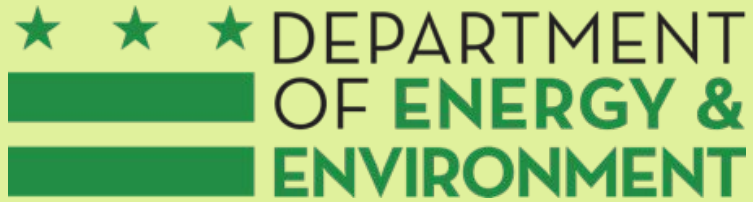
Overview

1. Background and Research Questions
2. Research Process
3. Findings
4. Next Steps
5. Discussion

Background and Research Questions



Our Team



Milken Institute School
of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Priority: Expanding Urban

Ag

Two programs to support the expansion of urban agriculture

- Urban Farm Land Lease
- Urban Farm Tax Abatement Program
 - Up to 90% property tax abatement for private landowners (housing developers)
 - Maximum abatement of \$20,000 for each property
 - Farms must be a minimum of 2,500 square feet

Priority: Expanding Urban

Two programs

Agriculture

Why aren't more housing developers, specifically affordable housing developers, taking advantage of this program?

- Urban

- Urban

- Maximum

- Farms may

as a community

square

Competing Priorities?

- Many stakeholders outside of Food and Urban Ag
 - DC Department of general services
 - DC Housing Authority
 - DC Dept of Housing and Community Development

“We don’t have land for urban agriculture, we need that land for housing”

Research Questions

1. What are the political, social, economic, and structural **barriers** to expanding urban agriculture projects within affordable housing communities in DC?
2. What are the political, social, economic, and structural **facilitators** to expanding urban agriculture projects within affordable housing communities in DC?
3. What **practices, policies and programs** foster the inclusive and equitable expansion of urban agriculture initiatives within affordable housing communities?

Research Process



Research Process



Winter 2024

- Scope of work developed
- Partnership formed
- Literature review to inform study design

Research Process

Spring 2024

- Refined research questions
- Developed data collection tools and protocol



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Summer 2024

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- Nearly 50 in-depth interviews

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Fall 2024

- Cleaning data
- Coding data

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Winter 2025

- Thematic analysis
- Triangulation of results



Research Process

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Fall 2024

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- Coding data

Spring 2025

- Dissemination of findings

Winter 2024

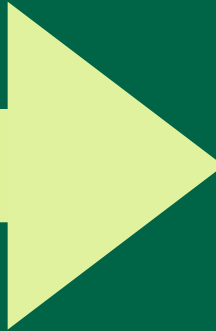
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Findings



Who did we Interview?

11 Urban Farmers

**15 Residents of
Affordable
Housing
Communities in
DC**

**6 Affordable
Housing
Developers**

**15 Government
Officials**

Major Domains of Themes*

1. Role of Urban Agriculture & SC
2. Community Dynamics
3. Resource Gaps
4. Planning and Development
5. Recommendations

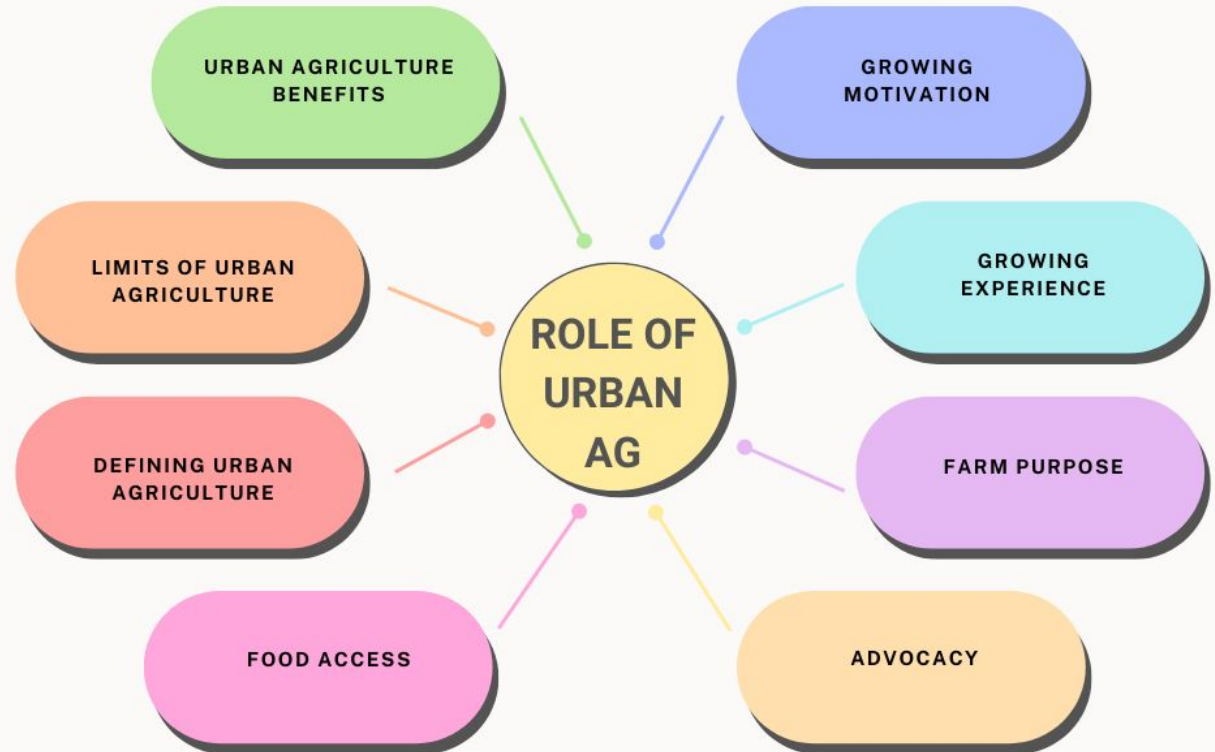
****Note, we are still finalizing findings through upcoming input with stakeholders and interviewees***

Domain 1: Role of Urban

Agriculture

“We need more voices and more advocates to say, hey, this is what we need. Those voices I wouldn't say aren't lacking, but definitely need the platform to be amplified, specifically for the people who make the decisions to hear them.”

- 02_Grower



Domain 2: Community Dynamics

"I believe that it should definitely be someone of color that's on the advertisement, because if most of the people in this area are people of color, and if they see someone that doesn't look like them, they're not going to be interested in what you're talking about."

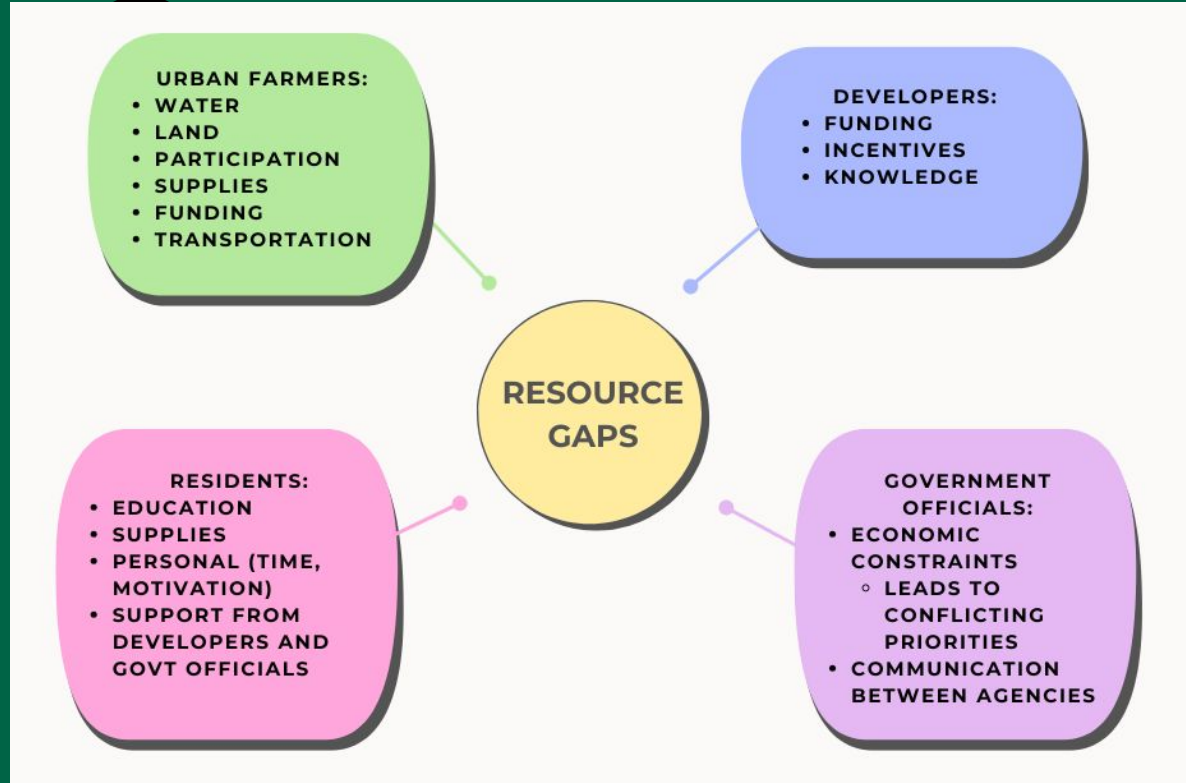
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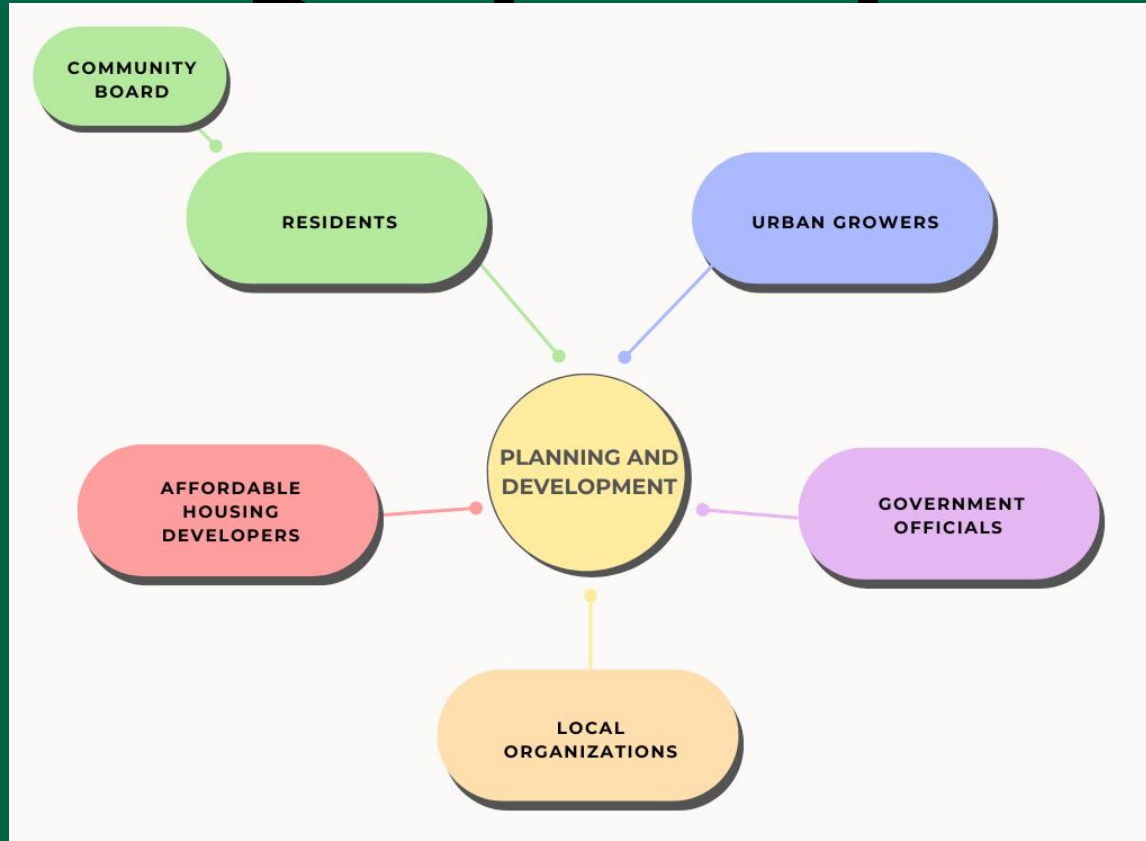
Domain 3: Resource

“People become so attached to community gardens that they become difficult to shut down. And so as a result, the city didn't want to do it at all. Now that that since has evolved, but you know, I think if we really want urban agriculture [projects] to be successful, there has to be land permanently set aside for them.”

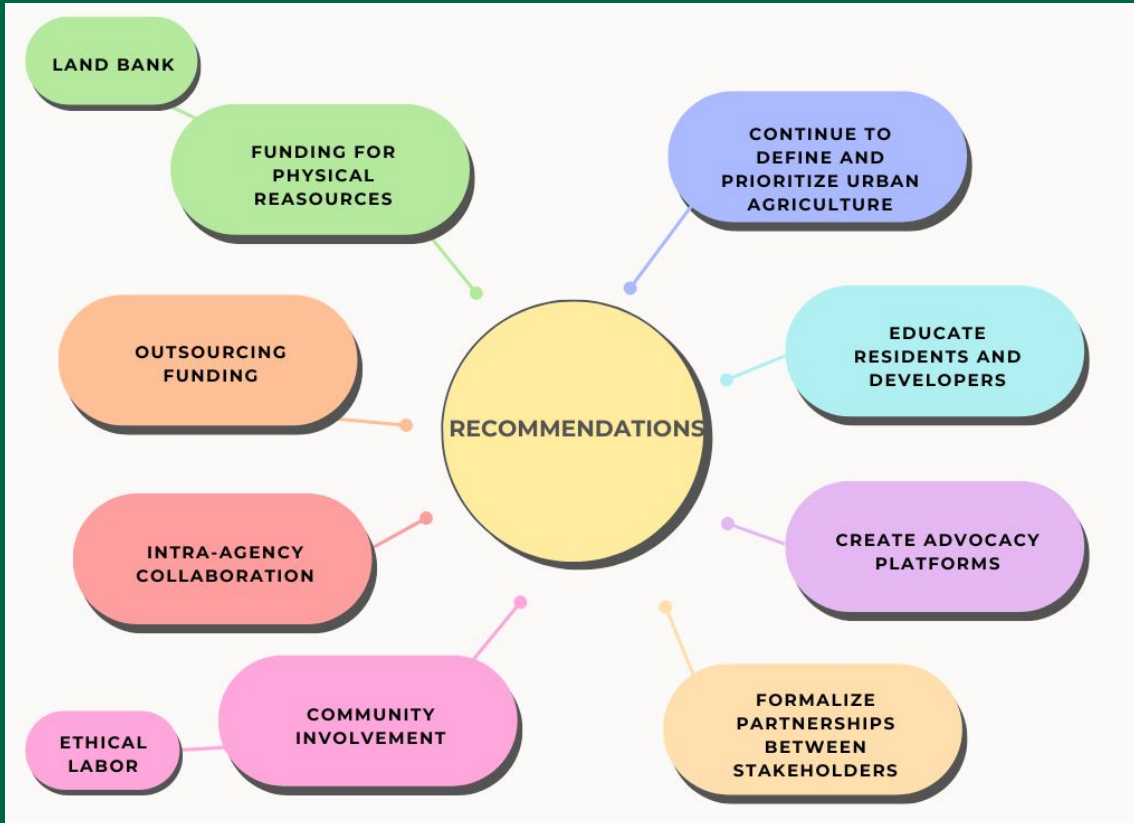
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Domain 4: Planning and



Domain 5: Recommendations



Next steps



Next Steps

- Convening with interviewees and stakeholders on Feb 26th (please join if interested!)
- Finalizing recommendations with stakeholder input
- Action briefs for stakeholder groups
- Manuscript to advance evidence-based recommendations

Discussion



Discussion

- Questions about the findings?
- What stands out to you?
- What experience, if any, do you have with urban agriculture in affordable housing communities? Do these findings resonate with those experiences?

Thank you!

Join Us on Feb 26th for More
Discussion!





LGBTQIA+ RESIDENTS FOOD SECURITY



LGBTQIA+ FOOD INSECURITY IN DC

Ranen Miao
Emerson Hunger Fellow
DC Food Policy Office





National Context

- Trans folks 3x more likely than cisgender counterparts to experience food insecurity
- LGBT people of color were 6x more likely than white non-LGBT adults to face food insufficiency
- Conflicting data on access to SNAP: only 23% of income-eligible LGBT households are enrolled
- Lack of comprehensive data regarding LGBTQIA+ food insecurity



Drivers

Discrimination

- Includes upstream (e.g. employment discrimination, housing discrimination)
- Onsite at food distribution sites, especially faith-based sites
- Analysis of key groups: students, BIPOC, immigrants, PwD, PLW HIV/AIDS

Barriers to access

- Barriers to accessing benefits: gender binary
- Barriers to food pantries: religious affiliation

Finding 1: Food insecurity disproportionately impacts LGBTQIA+ people, especially residents with intersectional identities.

- Interviewees report high levels of hunger in LGBTQIA+ community based on clients
- This is highest for POC, matching data from Capital Area Food Bank's 2024 Hunger Report
- There is a lack of targeted services for LGBTQIA+ community
 - Only 1 grantee from MOLGBTQA does food distribution
- Economic divide within community



Finding 2: Housing is a primary need for food insecure LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians.

- Interview info about housing insecurity in LGBTQIA+ community
- 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQIA+
- Casa Ruby closure creates gap in services
 - Only one LGBTQIA+ serving shelter in the city (LGBTQ Shelter “Living Life” Alternative)



Finding 3: Discrimination remains a salient problem that drives people away from food services.

- Upstream discrimination
- Discrimination at food distribution sites
- Lack of data on this; primarily relies on anecdotal quotes from service providers



“The most common thing I’ve heard is that [...] a lot of specifically trans people have had to tone themselves down in terms of what they wear, or adopt a gender expression that is not theirs, to be able to access food. I know someone that mentioned that they really liked the fact that even though the pandemic brought so much challenges (sic) for them, one thing that was easier was that because they had a mask on, they could go and access food much easier at religious institutions because their face was covered. You can only see their eyes. You can only see their eyes. They have long hair. No one’s going to assume anything, right? [...] Because their face is covered, you couldn’t see that they have a beard.” – Mutual aid organizer



Finding 4: Perceptions of discrimination at religious food distribution sites is a concern.

- There is religious trauma in our community that dissuades certain people from using religious food distribution sites
- > 50% of DC food providers are Christian
- Quotes substantiate this finding



“It’s something I experienced in college. The only option was a faith-based pantry, and **I really switched it up and hid my identity just to go there.**” - Experience trying to access food resource

“For many who come to our congregation, it’s new to them to hear an explicit welcome, an explicit message that includes them, without any caveats that they can at some point in time change [...] with respect to programs at other churches who are not inclusive, it makes sense that we would avoid them: because I think the experience that people have had in the past is **if you come to the church for any kind of assistance you are going to be preached to or preached at, and there aren’t necessarily any restrictions on proselytizing to folks.**” - Church leader



Finding 5: Enhancing public transportation can improve food access.

- Mobility complicates access to food
 - People can be unsafe on public transport (e.g. harassment)
 - Lack of public transport + cars makes it hard to access food
- Familial rejection is difficult; makes mobility harder (e.g. no family to drive you to places)
- Poverty + unemployment makes public transit harder to access
- Food deserts in Wards 7 & 8



Key Finding 6: Pride and stigma are barriers for accessing food.

- People may feel ashamed about using food distribution services or may face social stigma and ridicule
- Respondents often self-report pride as a reason for why they did not use food distribution services
- Pride is more important for LGBTQIA+ people, who may want to show they are independent and may turn away offers of money or food from family
 - LGBTQIA+ people who experience food insecurity and familial rejection also often lose out on receiving food and money from family



Key Finding 7: Hunger and housing insecurity are worst in Wards 7 and 8.

- No service providers except Whitman-Walker specifically serving this part of the city
- Historic underinvestment and disenfranchisement for Wards 7 + 8 residents exacerbates issues with hunger and housing insecurity



Key Finding 7: There is a lack of data collection on LGBTQIA+ utilization of existing food distribution sites and anti-hunger services.

- Inadequate data collection makes it difficult to serve LGBTQIA+ community
- Positive case study: Miriam's Kitchen collects information about LGBTQIA+ identity



FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Revoke religious exemptions for anti-discrimination: this could include passing the Equality Act
- Eliminate gender binary for food programs
- Increase SNAP benefits to match real increased costs of living
- Increase funding for housing programs, especially homeless shelters



DC COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase funds for MOLGBTQA for organizations focused on tackling hunger in LGBTQIA+ community
- Invest to open up more LGBTQIA+ shelters and continue to reduce barriers for affordable housing
- Increase food benefits for residents
- Expand eligibility for Metro Lift Income-Qualified Program, extend reduced fares to buses



DC AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

- All agencies: Expand LGBTQIA+ competency training for staff and require for all grantees
- DHS: Fund LGBTQIA+ SNAP workshops
- DMV: Make all Non-Driver ID cards free
- DC Health: Remove binary gender question from any nutrition programs or programs funded by DC Health
- DACL: Remove binary gender question from any nutrition programs for Seniors



STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Disaggregate data for LGBTQIA+ clients
- Implement cultural competency trainings specifically about LGBTQIA+ communities
- Use inclusive language



THANK YOU

We appreciate your time and look forward to sharing the final report with you!

Your feedback during agency oversight & budget hearings can be valuable to shape investment.

Connect with Ranen:
rmiao@hungercenter.org
848-200-8036

Connect with the FPC team:
dcfoodpolicy@dc.gov



Food Procurement in the District of Columbia:

A Weak Link in the Value Chain

Milken Institute School
of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Sumner M. Redstone
Global Center for
Prevention & Wellness

Background.

The District has made several commitments that implicate food procurement including:

- »Signing the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration (2022)
- »Signing The Cool Food Pledge (2022)
- »Passing the Green Food Purchasing Amendment Act (2021)
- »Adopting the Good Food Purchasing Program for DC Public Schools (2018)
- »Passing the Healthy Students Amendment Act (2018)
- »Passing the Healthy Schools Act (2010)

Although the District has committed to these efforts to help reshape the food system, it has not been able to meaningfully leverage its \$62M+ in annual food procurements to advance equity, health, and sustainability.

CFP x Procurement Reform.

Together, the combination of the CFP and procurement reform stand to help achieve both Sustainable DC 2.0 goals and advance food system transformation.

- » Improved nutritional quality of institutional food
- » Reduced reliance on major food service contracts
- » Stronger values-based supply chains
- » Enhanced support for the District's food economy
- » Reductions to the carbon footprint of the District's food system
- » Improved regional food system resilience and emergency preparedness

51 Challenges Identified.

Solicitations.

The District is not set up to receive strong proposals due to poor prospective vendor engagement and unreasonable expectations.

Selection.

The District's vendor selection processes lack subject matter expertise and effective evaluation tools.

Payment.

The District pays premium prices for its food programs and frequently compensates vendors for services and outcomes that are not delivered in full.

Requirements.

Food service contracts are plagued by vague and unenforceable requirements, unreasonable service standards, and a CBE program that is a poor fit for food businesses.

Accountability.

The procurement process lacks the transparency, feedback loops, and ownership needed to expose challenges and inconsistencies and empower District leaders to take action.

44 Potential Solutions.

Several of the recommendations described in the report can be implemented at minimal cost, requiring only the approval and support necessary for agency staff to initiate and implement. The solutions are organized into six categories:

Improve Solicitations and Evaluation

Promote Opportunities for Local and Regional Food

Businesses in District Food Procurement

Engage in New Contracting and Incentive Models

Foster Interagency Collaboration

» **Leverage Expertise at the Office of Food Policy**

Prioritize Transparency and Accountability

Leverage Expertise at the Office of Food Policy.

Four opportunities to improve food procurement by integrating OFP into the process:

- » Partner with the Office of Food Policy throughout the procurement lifecycle on all food contracts.**
- » Centralize tracking and oversight of food contract performance and outcomes at the Office of Food Policy.**
- » Incorporate the Office of Food Policy into CBE/regional food business subcontracting and procurement planning.**
- » Develop and maintain food procurement standards and practices.**

Learn More.

If you're interested in learning more, join the Sustainable Supply Chain Working Group meeting on

February 27 at 4pm

Register in advance:

<https://tinyurl.com/dc-procurement>

BUGET & PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT

Budget Process



Upcoming Performance Oversight Hearings

Department	Date	Committee	Food-related Programs
Health Care Finance	2/12	Health	Produce Rx, Medicaid nutrition service coverage
Department of Public Works	2/11	Public Works & Operations	Curbside composting, food waste dropoffs
Office of Planning	2/10	Committee of the Whole	Food Policy Division, Comp Plan
Parks and Recreation	2/14	Rec. Libraries & Youth Affairs	Community Gardens, DPR Farms, Summer Meals
DC Public Schools	2/27	Committee of the Whole	School Meals, Good Food Purchasing Program
Energy and Environment	2/21	Transportation & Environment	Urban Ag, Green Food Purchasing, Donation & Reuse
DC Health	2/25	Health	Produce Plus, Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, Healthy Corner Stores, Home Delivered Meals, Joyful Food Markets, SNAP Ed, WIC

**What should I
share?**



Once you identify a program or an issue you want to give feedback on, think about:

- What is working well?
- How is the program benefiting your community?
- What is not serving your/community's needs?
- What challenges are you facing in accessing the services/program?
- What concerns do you have?
- How can the program be improved?

Your voice matters! Here are 3 ways to share your thoughts:



Testify at a Hearing

- Register on Council's website at least **2 business days** before the hearing.
- If you need language & ASL interpretation, inform the committee **5 business days** before the hearing.



Submit a written or voicemail testimony

- Typically, you have **10 days** after the hearing to submit.



Contact Committee or your Councilmember

Throughout the budget process, residents can call, email, or meet with Council offices about their concerns.

1. Find contact info for your Councilmember or the relevant Committee.
2. When contacting a Committee, email the Committee Chairperson and Committee Director.
3. When contacting an individual Councilmember, include their Legislative Director.

Learn more about how to engage with the Budget Process

VIDEO TRAININGS

Food Policy Council



OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays in February
and March
10 – 11am
on Teams

Register on our website
at [DCfoodpolicy.org](https://DCfoodpolicy.org/meetings)
/meetings

BUDGET GUIDE

Visit the Food Policy
Council website for:

Hearing Schedules
Chart of Agencies &
Council Committees
Testimony Tips
How to navigate the DC
Council Hearing Page
Printable Guide

Upcoming Meetings

- Food Access Providers: Adjusting to Change & Protecting the Vulnerable
 - February 21 at 10 am
- Rooting for Equity: Affordable Housing & Urban Agriculture
 - February 26 at 10 am
- DC Procurement Report Deep Dive
 - February 27 at 4 pm

