

A close-up photograph of several pink cherry blossoms in full bloom. The flowers are delicate with five petals each and prominent yellow stamens. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white, suggesting a bright, sunny day. The overall mood is fresh and vibrant.

**DC FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**

**APRIL 1, 2026**

# **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.**

# Food Policy Council April 1 Agenda

5 pm - 6 pm on April 1, 2026

899 North Capitol St NE, Ground Floor

- Icebreaker (5 mins)
- Working Group Updates (10 mins)
- Produce Plus 2025 Review & Updates for 2026 (25 mins)
- Budget Process & Upcoming Budget Workshop (5 mins)
- Open Grants for Food Businesses (10 mins)
- Announcements & Closing (5 mins)

This meeting is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Please address any questions or complaints arising under this meeting to the Office of Open Government at [open.govoffice@dc.gov](mailto:open.govoffice@dc.gov)



# ICEBREAKER



- Name & Pronouns
- Organization
- Favorite thing at the first Farmers Market of the year



**WORKING GROUP  
UPDATES**

# SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN

- Thirteen folks testified at the Food Policy Council Procurement Amendment Act hearing
  - Last day to submit written testimony is April 7!
- WG is hosting a public meeting to discuss values-based procurement at DC universities on 4/6.

REGISTER FOR THE  
MEETING HERE:



# REDUCING WASTED FOOD

- The Working Group has moved into three separate subgroups aligned with their priorities
  - **Expanding Share Tables** - Conducted 2 waste audits + Aiming to launch in 2 self-op schools soon!
  - **DC Food Business Donation & Diversion** - Conducting interviews w/ food businesses this spring/summer.
  - **DC Government Food Recovery** - Developing case studies/toolkits this summer/fall.

Interested in joining one?

Email WG co-chairs

Erika.Nunez@dc.gov

Rachel.Manning@dc.gov



# URBAN AGRICULTURE

- At Rooting DC held “Rooted in Resources” workshop on DC Gov urban ag programs
- Got feedback on the urban ag map
- Submit any new sites for the map at [doee.dc.gov/urbanag](https://doee.dc.gov/urbanag) or QR code:
- Upcoming tours and events:
  - 4/20-4/26: DC Climate Week tours of
    - TheARC
    - Up Top Acres
    - Forested LLC Food Forest at Harry Thomas
  - 5/13: Allen Chapel AME Garden of Eden Tour (register via Eventbrite)
- DOEE Hiring Fair April 30<sup>th</sup> for the new Administrator for Office of Urban Agriculture



# FOOD ACCESS & EQUITY

Tracking changes to SNAP and both Federal and local food funding

Trainings coming soon on how organizations can participate in supporting residents impacted by SNAP work requirements

Circulating updated information about LinkUDMV: organizations can easily claim their sites and update information



# HEALTH & NUTRITION EDUCATION



- First dietetics intern completed service to the DC WIC team
- Upcoming presentation on YMCA's research on how to integrate nutrition education reimbursement
- Nutrition Education Landscape Assessment scoping
- Opportunity for public members to apply: [dcfoodpolicy.org/membership](https://dcfoodpolicy.org/membership)

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP & FOOD JOBS



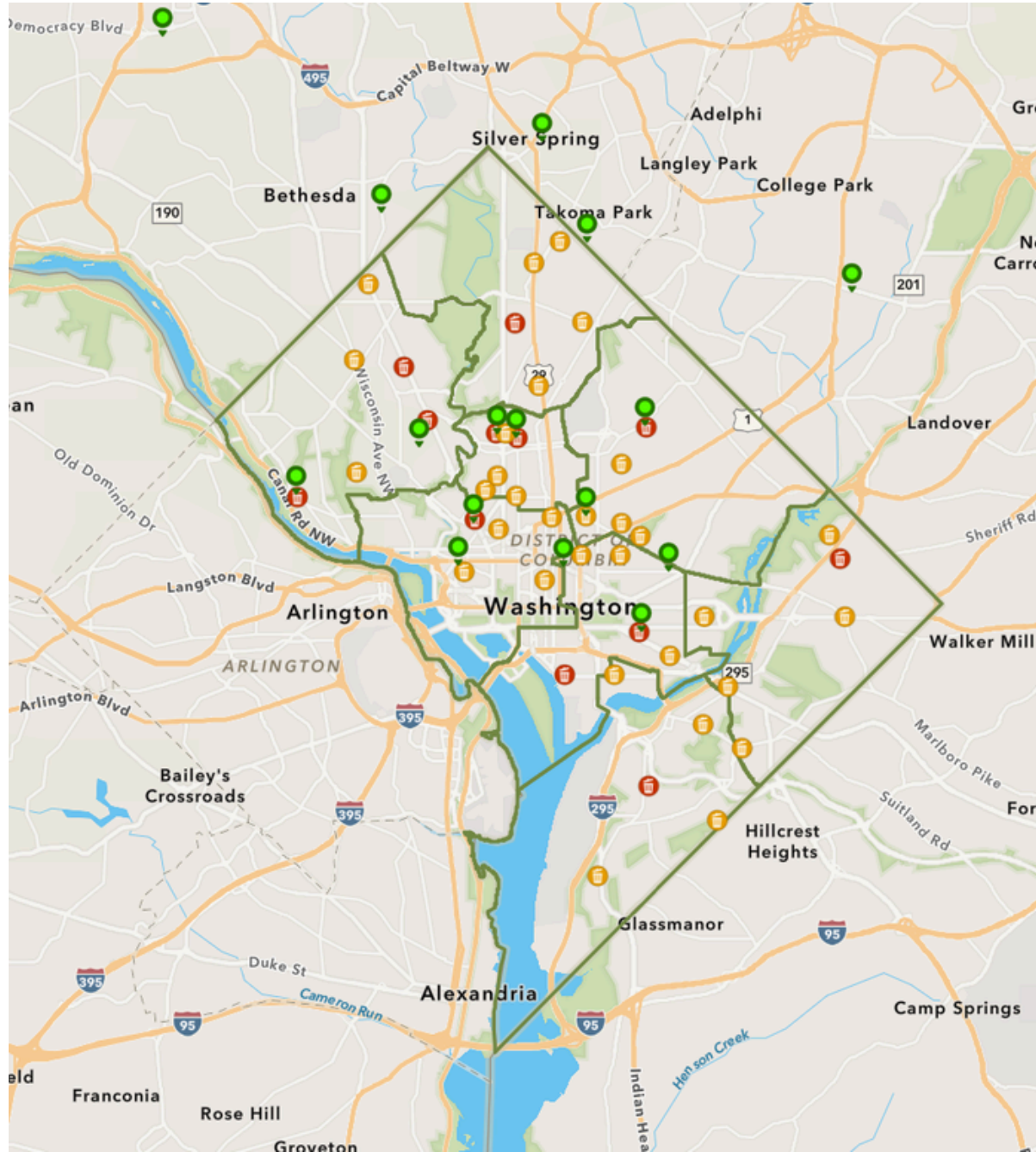
- Updates to Cottage Food now on FPC website
- Workshop on food funding in April – check the website & newsletter!
- Many upcoming grants: make sure you're on the newsletter by emailing [dcfoodpolicy@dc.gov](mailto:dcfoodpolicy@dc.gov)

# FPC MEMBERSHIP

- Applications open for public members to apply for a mayoral appointment:  
[dcfoodpolicy.org/membership](https://dcfoodpolicy.org/membership)
- Especially seeking folks with experience in food access, nutrition & health, and reducing wasted food



# FARMERS MARKET UPDATES



- The DC Health Farmers Market team is staffed and available to provide support!
  - [farmersmarket@dc.gov](mailto:farmersmarket@dc.gov)
- Tune in for an announcement of the Farmers and Retail Market Support (FARMS) Grant Program at the June FPC meeting.

# Produce Plus

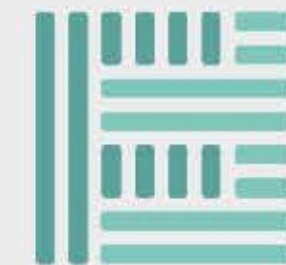
## *2025 Evaluation Report*



April 2026

Presented by:

FRESHFARM Food Access Team



**FRESHFARM**  
nourishing our food future

# About FRESHFARM

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FRESHFARM is a nonprofit based in Washington, DC, that works to create a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient food system in the Mid-Atlantic region.

We develop innovative ways to solve critical problems across our regional food system and connect people to their food through hands-on education, farmers markets, and food distribution programs.



**FRESHFARM**

# What is Produce Plus?

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Produce Plus supports DC residents and local farmers by:

- Providing locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables to DC residents with limited access to fresh, healthy food.
- Increasing income for local farmers, many of whom are first generation and/or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers.

Produce Plus is funded by DC Health and administered by FRESHFARM.



# What is Produce Plus?

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Produce Plus provides eligible District residents with \$40 per month from June through November to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and cut herbs across over 60 farmers markets in DC and Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, MD.

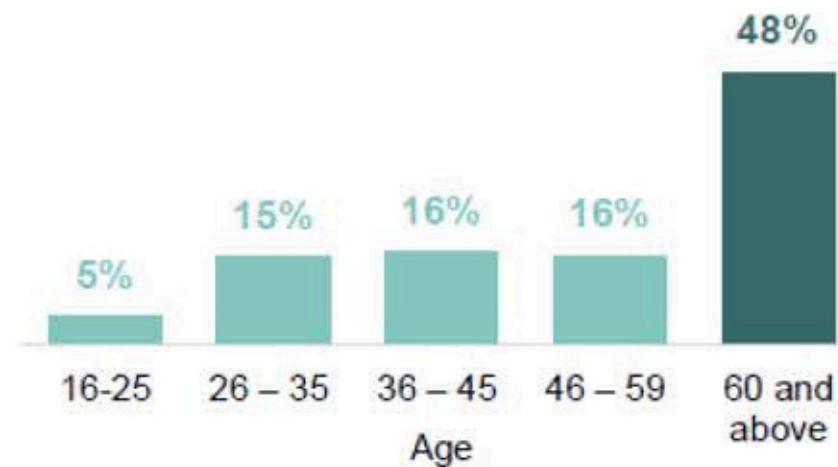
To receive Produce Plus, participants must be a DC resident, 16 years or older, and participate in or be eligible for one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP, locally Grocery Plus)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Medicaid

# 2025 Evaluation Report

# Participant Demographics

Nearly half of participants were at least 60 years old



*In 2023, 55% were 60 or above  
In 2024, 53% were 60 or above*

Nearly two-thirds of participants (62%) lived in target Wards of 5, 7, and 8

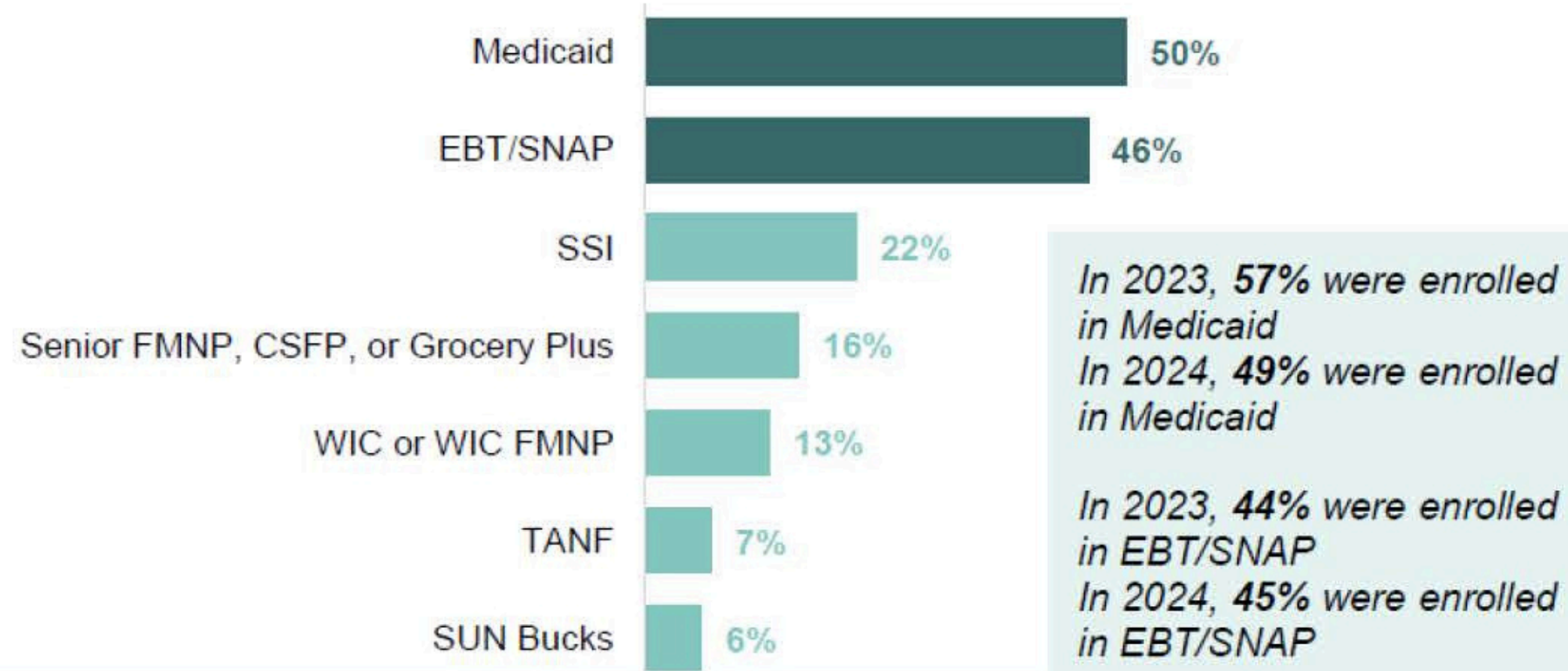


*In 2023, 60% lived in target Wards  
In 2024, 60% lived in target Wards*



# Participant Demographics

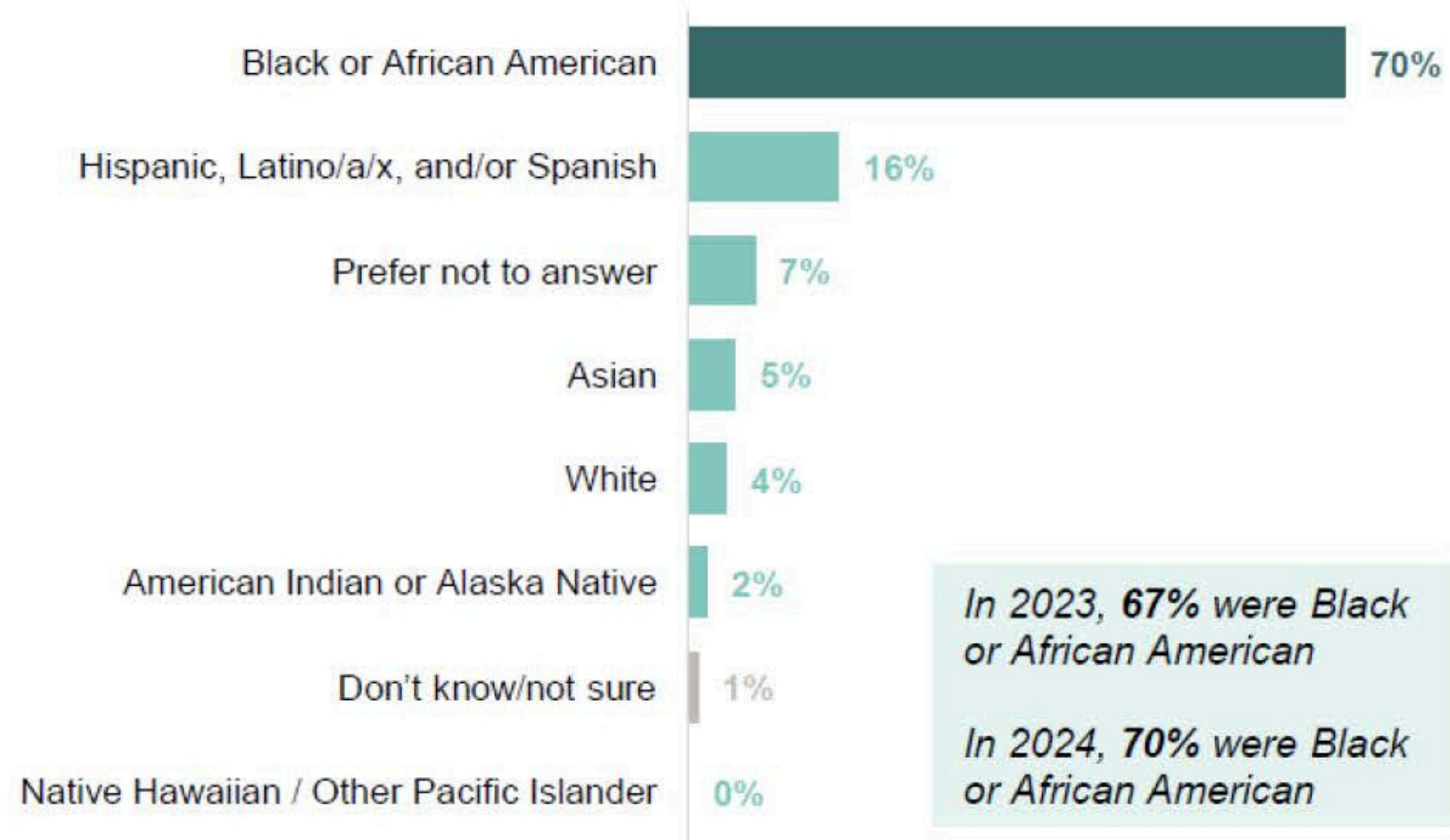
Nearly all Produce Plus participants were enrolled in Medicaid and/or EBT/SNAP



Note: Participants may have selected more than one program.

# Participant Demographics

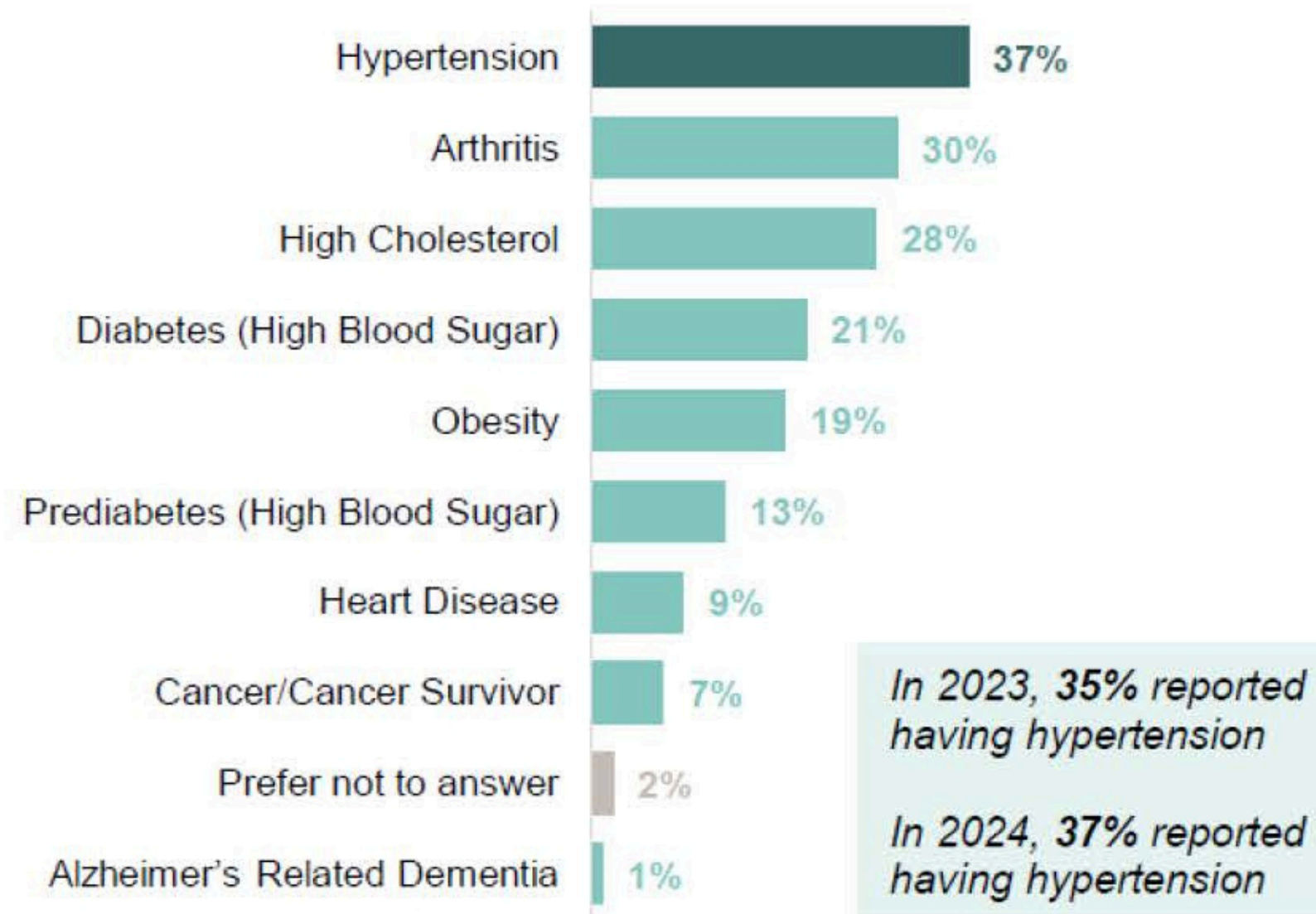
More than two-thirds of participants were Black or African American



Note: Participants may have selected more than one race or ethnicity.

# Participant Demographics

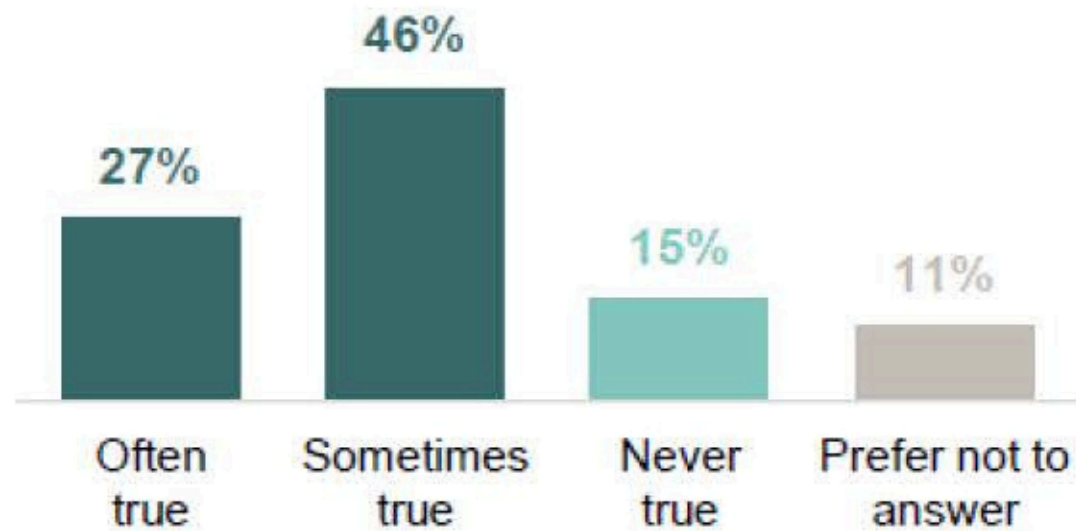
More than one-third of participants reported having hypertension



Note: Participants may have selected more than one condition.

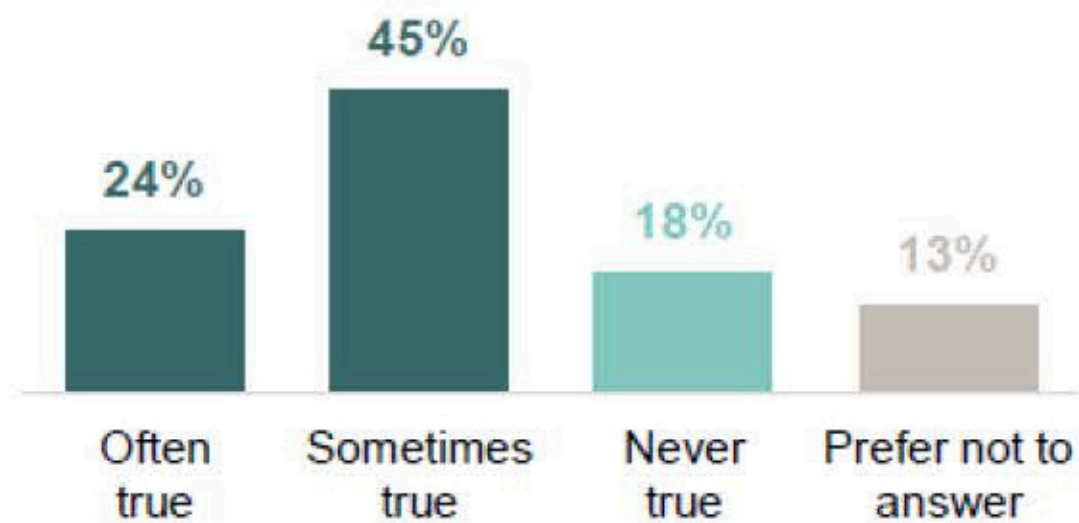
# Participant Demographics

**73% of participants worried about not having enough food “often” or “sometimes”**



*In 2023, 70% had this worry  
In 2024, 74% had this worry*

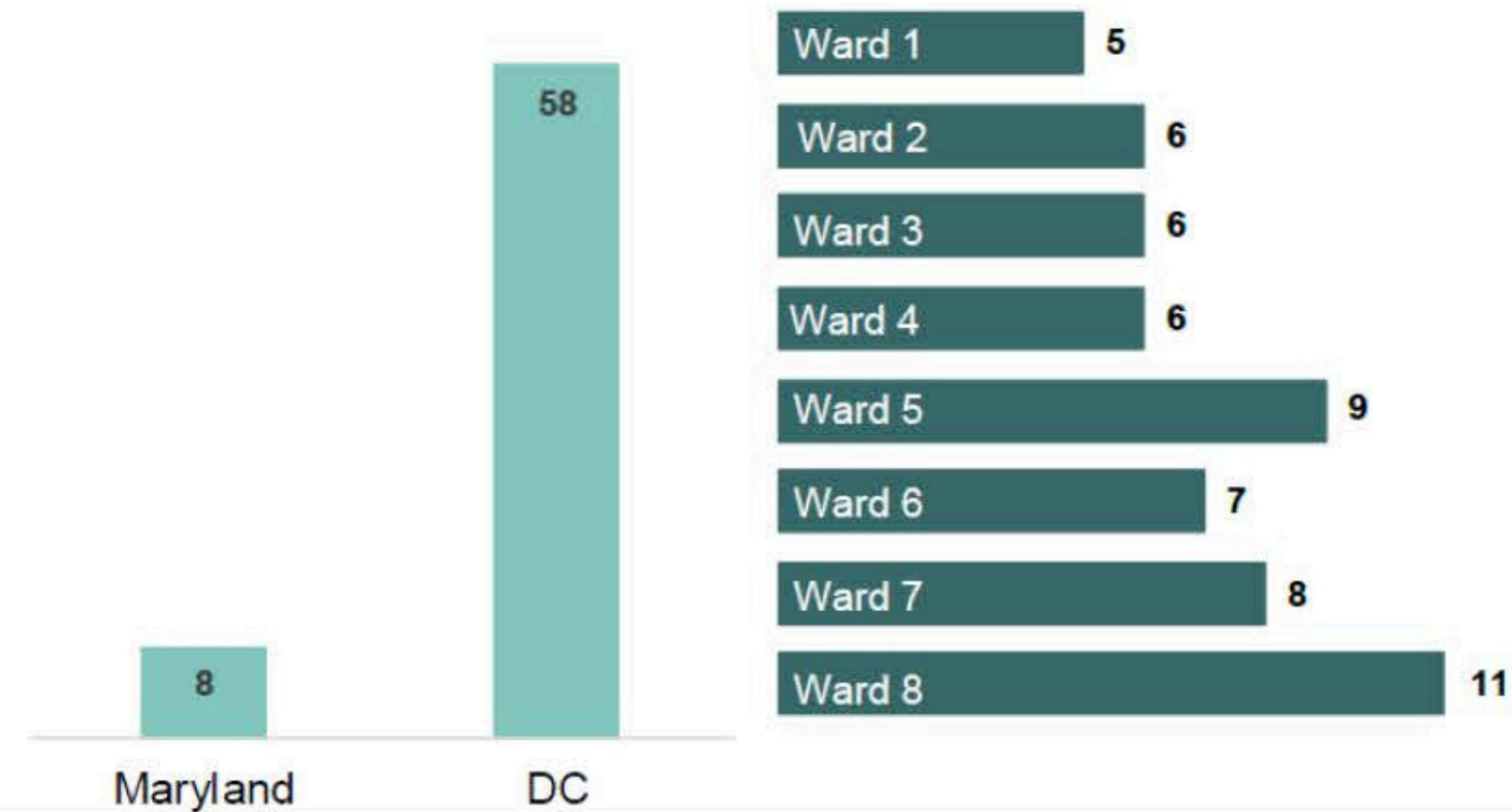
**69% of participants ran out of food “often” or “sometimes”**



*In 2023, 65% had this experience  
In 2024, 69% had this experience*

# Participating Locations

Participating farmers markets (n=66) are distributed across all eight Wards in DC and in Maryland.

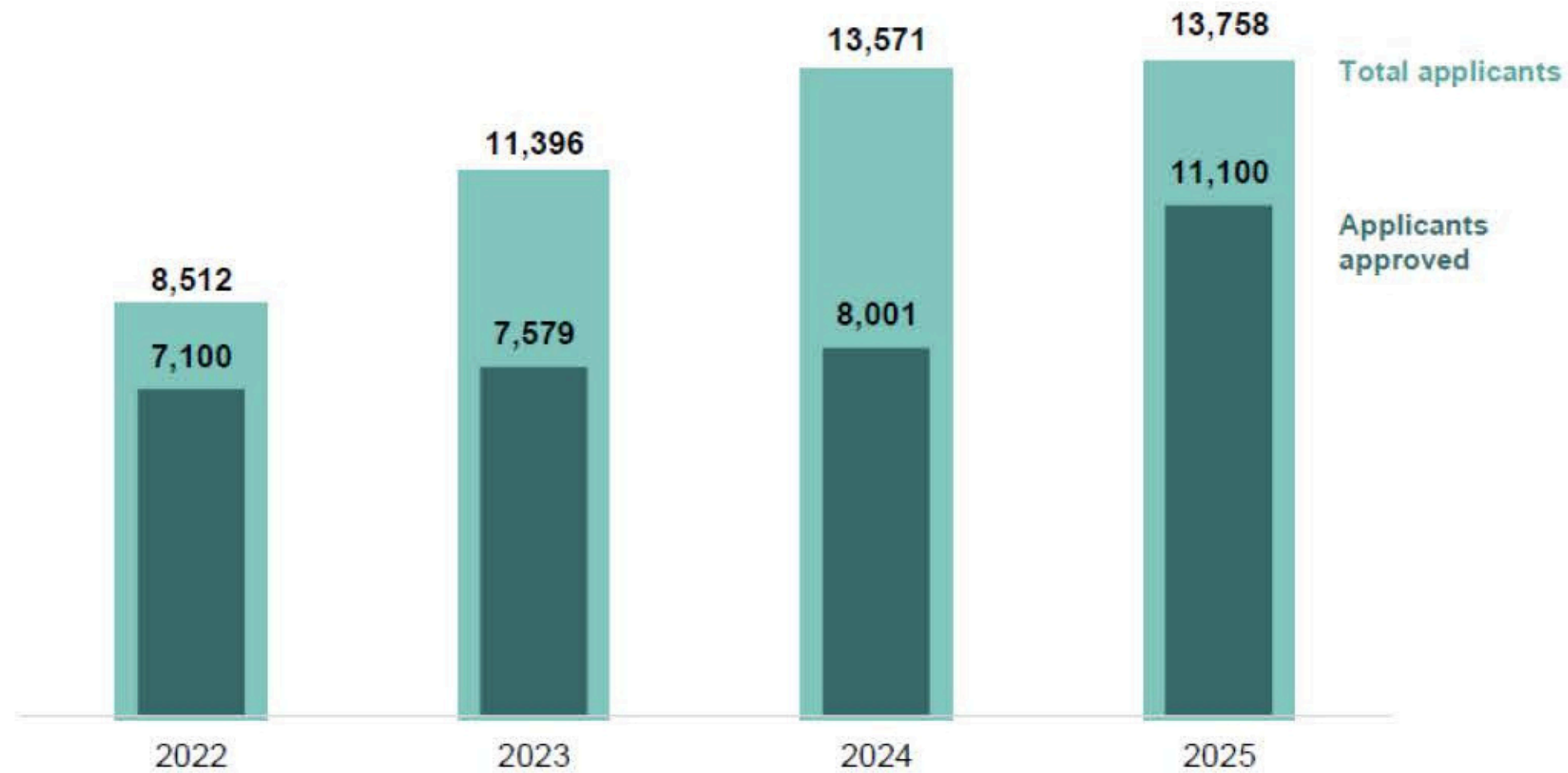


DC Health approves farmers to accept the DC Produce Incentive Programs (Produce Plus, WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and Senior FMNP) annually.

The [2026 farmer application](#) is open through Monday, April 13!

# Program Participation

Compared with the previous three years, in 2025, more people applied and were approved. Overall, a higher percentage of applicants were approved.



# Participant Satisfaction

Nearly all survey respondents reported that enrollment, activation, and use of the Produce Plus card was easy. (n=2,598)



## What I like best about the Produce Plus Program...

*"There was a **variety** of places to go and spend the money on the fruits and vegetables that I desired. As well as to try some produce that I might not typically purchase or try. Also, the **convenience** of text messages which alerted me to how much I spent and what was left for the month."*

~Survey respondent

*"The **customer service**, the **communication**, and the **friendships** made with the staff!"*

~Survey respondent

*"I shop more for fruits and vegetables. They're so nice and fresh. I just love eating them."*

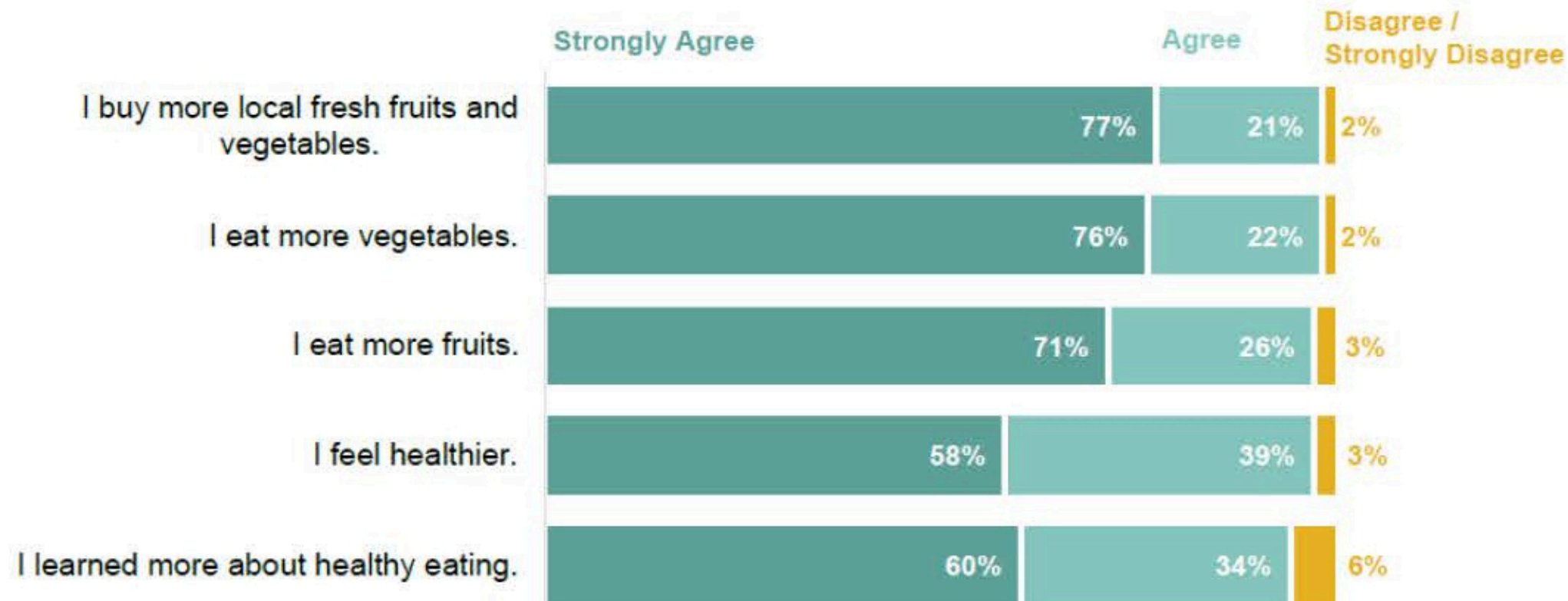
~Survey respondent



FRESHFARM

# Participant Health Outcomes

Nearly all survey respondents reported positive changes in their health and/or lives because of their participation in Produce Plus. (n=2,589)



*"I can now afford more vegetables and fruit. I am able to [eat] healthy.*

*~Survey respondent*

*"Que me alimento más saludable, y que, para mí en lo personal económicamente, me es de gran ayuda y estoy muy agradecida a todos los que nos ayudan con estos alimentos, realmente es una gran ayuda."*

*[I eat healthier, and for me personally, financially, it is a great help, and I am very grateful to everyone who helps us with these foods; it really is a great help.]*

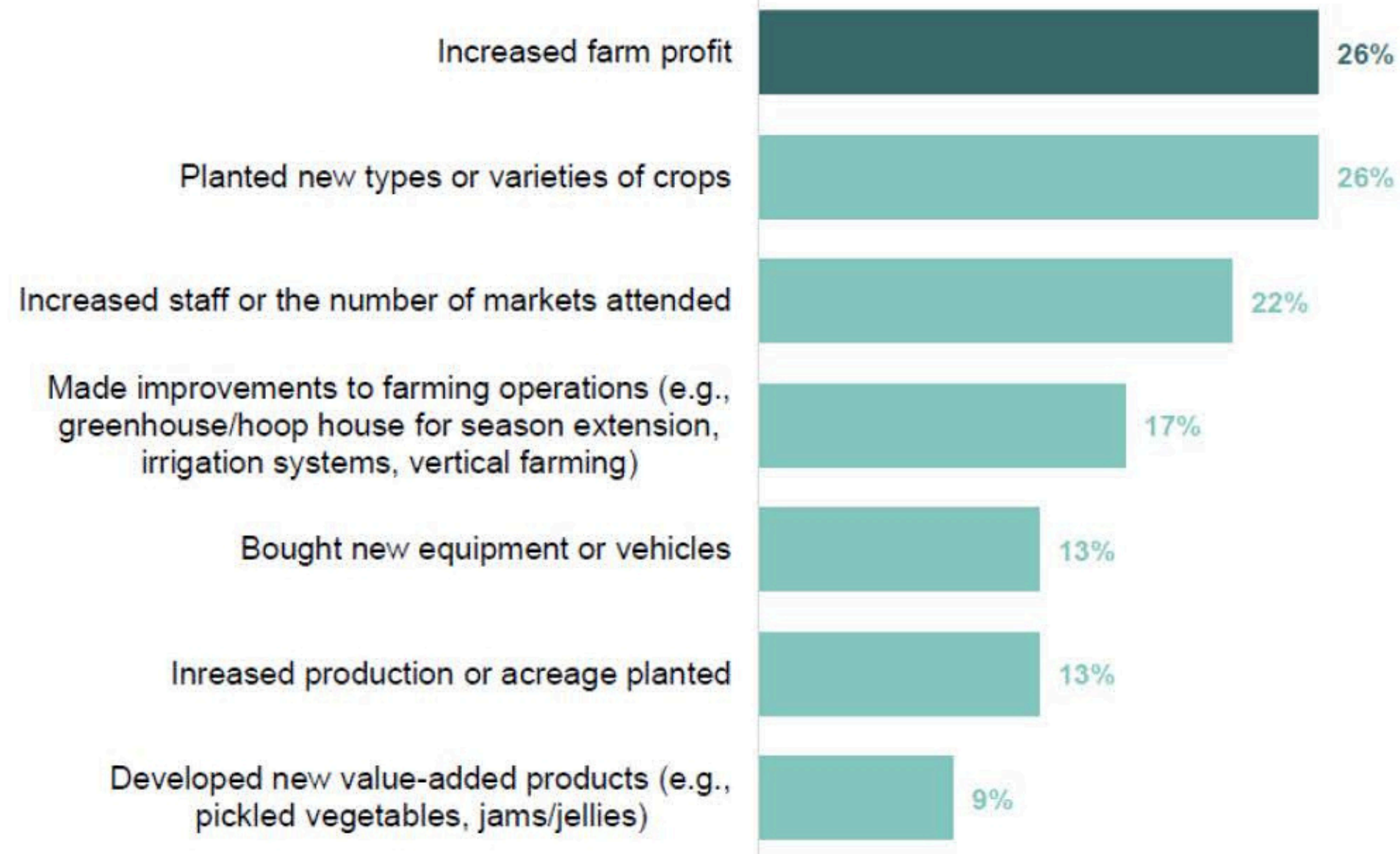
*~Survey respondent*



**FRESHFARM**

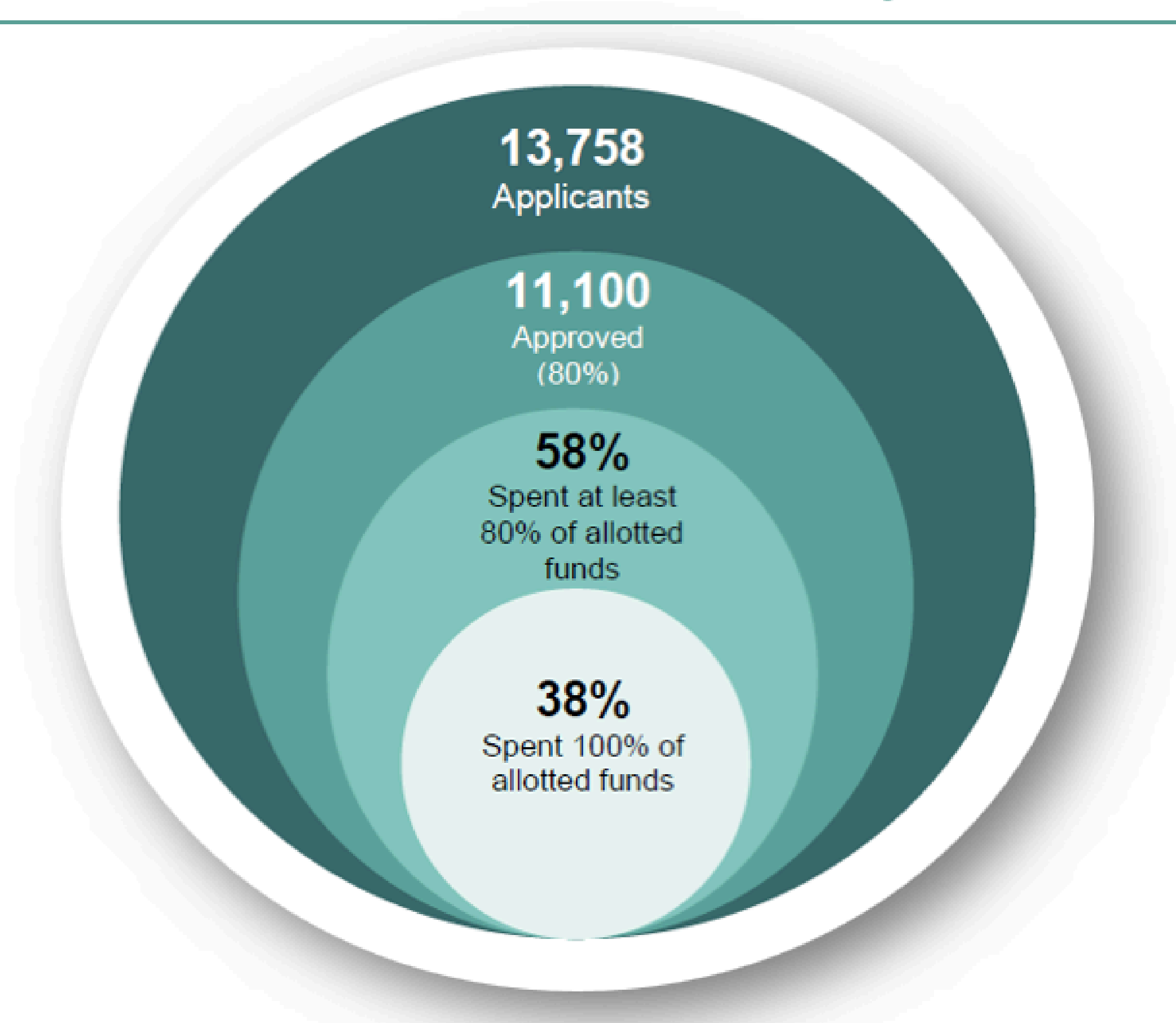
# Farmer Impacts

More than one-quarter of farmer survey respondents reported increased profit as a result of their participation in DC's Produce Incentive Programs. (n=23)



# 2025 Produce Plus by the Numbers

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**58**  
Farmers markets across  
the District accepted  
Produce Plus

# Market Champions Build Trust



## Ms. Juanita Blassingame

Market Champion at FRESHFARM since 2022



Produce Plus Market Champions are members of the community—many share similar experiences as program participants—committed to providing a dignified service to their community.

Market Champions build trust with the community through familiarity, consistency, and integrity.

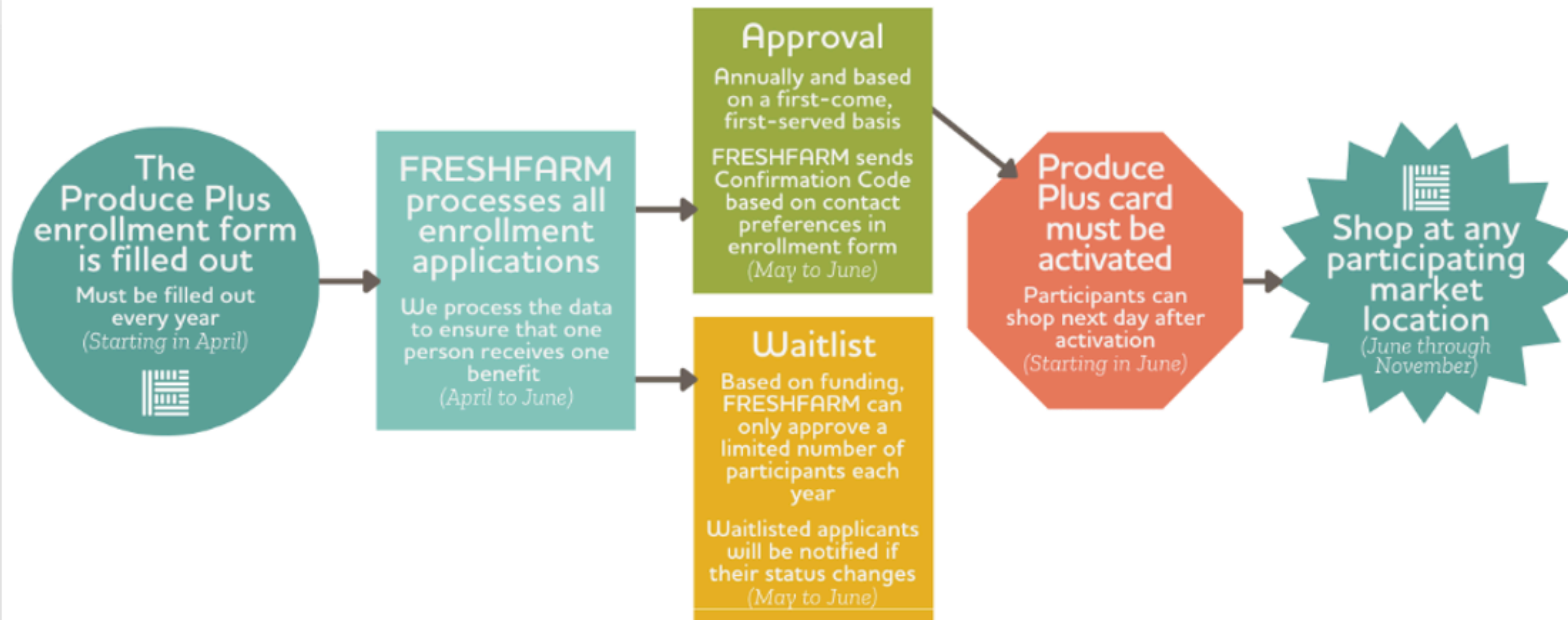


2026 Produce Plus

# Produce Plus Enrollment



The 2026 Produce Plus application will open on **Monday, April 6 at 9AM**. The application can be completed on the [FRESHFARM Produce Plus website](#) or by calling the Produce Plus Hotline: (202) 888-4834.



# BUDGET PROCESS

# Budget Process



# FY 2026 BUDGET FOR DISTRICT FOOD PROGRAMS

Despite overall cuts, the FY26 budget introduced new investments to strengthen access, resilience, and innovation across the food system

NEW INVESTMENT

## The Farmers Market Support Amendment Act of 2025 Fully Funded



\$494,000 for DC Health for farmers markets, farm stands & mobile markets to:

- provide technical assistance around permits, licensing, and nutrition benefits;
- create a grant program for Farm Retail Outlets (FROs) in low food access areas; &
- conduct marketing and promotion activities for DC FROs.

\$220,000 for Dept. of Licensing and Consumer Protection to create a centralized application system for licensing and permitting of farmers markets.

## Ward 7 Shared Commercial Kitchen Grant



\$100,000 grant to strengthen local food systems and promote entrepreneurship through a new shared commercial kitchen in Ward 7.

# FY 2026 BUDGET FOR DISTRICT FOOD PROGRAMS

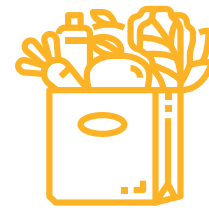
## EXPANDED PROGRAMS

### Senior Nutrition Programs



An increase of \$452,000 to add 2 new **Community Dining Sites** in Ward 7 and pilot a program for seniors to enjoy restaurant dining once a month. An increase of \$930,000 to expand **Home Delivered Meals** to reduce the current waitlist.

### Grocery Access Pilot Program for free online grocery deliveries



\$120,000 in one-time funding to extend the Dept. of Health's program into a 2-year pilot, which provides 1,000 SNAP participants with access to buying groceries online without delivery fees.

### Lederer Communal Farm greenhouse



\$1.5 million to rebuild a greenhouse at the **Lederer Garden** in Ward 7. It will serve as a seedling production facility serving 3 Communal Farms and their weekly produce giveaway events.

### Residential Composting



Increase of \$2,270,000 to expand the **Compost DC Food Waste Collection Program** from 9,000 households to 12,000 households and install additional 20 **Food Waste Smart Bins**, expanding the program to a total of 51 locations across the District.

### Food Retail Investment Opportunities



\$20 million for Hill East and \$15 million for Saint Elizabeths site infrastructure, which can include food retail

# FY 2026 BUDGET FOR DISTRICT FOOD PROGRAMS

Many core programs were maintained or restored after cuts in FY25.

## CONTINUED FUNDING

<b>Produce Plus</b> .....	\$2.05 million (\$50,000 reduction)
<b>Joyful Food Market</b> .....	\$1.77 million (\$50,000 reduction)
<b>Medically-tailored Home Delivered Meals</b> .....	\$1.33 million (maintained)
<b>Healthy Corner Stores</b> .....	\$750,000 (maintained)
<b>Produce Rx</b> .....	\$500,000 (maintained)
<b>Healthy Schools Fund</b> .....	\$5.69 million (maintained)
<b>Urban Agriculture Infrastructure &amp; Operations Grant</b> .....	\$75,000 (restored)
<b>Donation &amp; Reuse Grant</b> .....	\$75,000 (restored)
<b>Locally Made Manufacturing Grant</b> .....	\$1.5 million (restored)

# BUDGET PRIORITIES



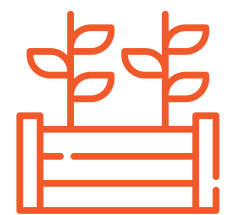
Increase local funding for existing nutrition programs that have additional demand, either those with waitlists or more requests than capacity to provide.



Provide interim funding for residents and organizations whose SNAP and associated programs were or will be cut.



Fund Nourish DC and ensure a long-term agreement to support local food businesses in priority food access neighborhoods.



Increase the funding for the urban agriculture infrastructure grant program to meet current demand for support.



Maintain capacity and invest in resources to support values-aligned food procurement across agencies.



Fund the Dept. of General Services' Agency Food Scrap Collection as well as Food Waste Innovation Grants at DOEE or DPW.



Fund programs to expand healthy food offerings at existing corner stores and to build buying clubs and cooperatives.

**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

- Individuals have **3 minutes**, or if officially representing an organization, **5 minutes**
- 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

## 2027 WORKSHOP

Food Policy Council:  
Food System Funding in  
the 2027 Budget

April 15, 2026  
10 am  
Virtual

[bit.ly/2027foodbudget](https://bit.ly/2027foodbudget)

## OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays in April and  
May  
10 – 11am  
on Teams

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

## BUDGET GUIDE & VIDEOS



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

# FOOD FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



# DC BIZCAP

DC BizCAP – Collateral Support Program: Provides cash collateral to small businesses who are credit worthy but don't meet the lenders collateral requirements.

DC BizCAP – Loan Participation Program: Participates with lenders to fund up to 50 percent of the loan amount at subsidized interest rates.

DC BizCAP – Innovation Finance Program: Provides limited investments into small businesses through a co-investment with eligible investors.



# SUPPORTED LOAN TYPES

Loans or investments facilitated by the DC BizCAP shall be used for a business purpose, including:

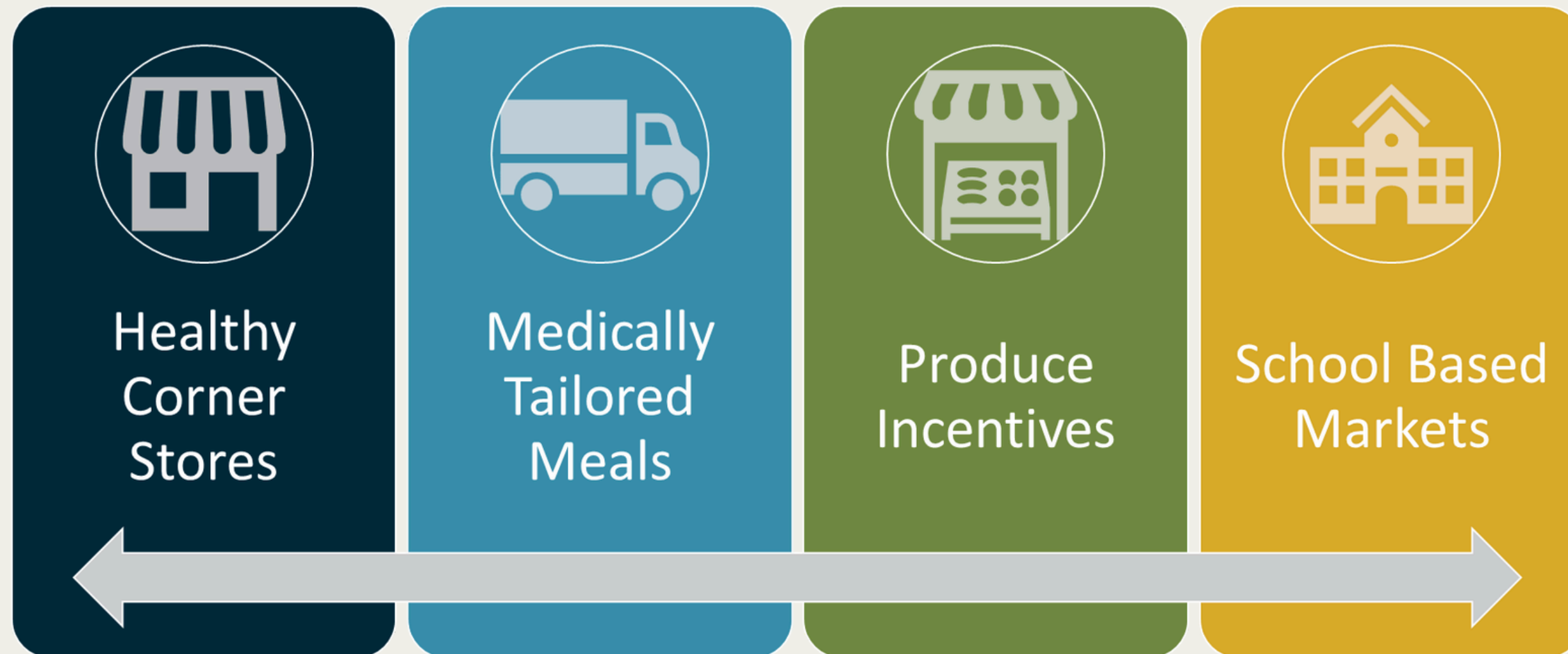
- Owner Occupied Commercial Real Estate
- Equipment
- Working Capital
- Inventory
- Expansion
- Renovations
- Start-up costs
- Refinancing (under certain conditions)

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Principle offices within District (demonstrated by lease or deed) and at least 75% of employees, including subsidiaries and affiliates, must work in and provide services in the District;
- Fewer than 750 existing employees, including subsidiaries and affiliates; and
- At least 25% of its W-2 employees are District residents.
- No principal of the entity has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor.

# DC Health's Equitable Food Access Initiatives

DC Health is recompeting local funding for the following programs:



The RFAs are due at the end of April.

Grants will be awarded for a start date of October 1, 2026.

The District's funding opportunities can be found on the [Mayor's Office of Community Affairs webpage](#).

# SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT



Specialty Crop Block Grant Coming Soon:

- Supports programs that increase production, consumption, and distribution of fruits & vegetables
- Aligns with many DC Food Policy priorities
  - Integrating production & distribution channels where residents already are
  - Expanding market sites for local growers in ways that are affordable for residents
  - Education of children & adults to grow, prepare, and consume fruits & vegetables
  - Improving water access for growers, including through rainwater capture
  - Supporting production and distribution of produce in ways that increase local access

# SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT

Specialty Crop Block Grant now run by Department of Energy & Environment

- 2025 SCBG went to:
  - EightFold Farms to teach 120 DCPS elementary school students about growing, preparing, and eating mushrooms
  - Dreaming Out Loud to train new growers, community outreach, and increasing production
  - City Blossoms to teach bilingual workshops for children and adults about growing & eating fruits and vegetables
- Prior grantees include Edgewood Community Farm Washington Youth Garden, Building Bridges Farms



# SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT

Keep a look out on DOE's Grant page,

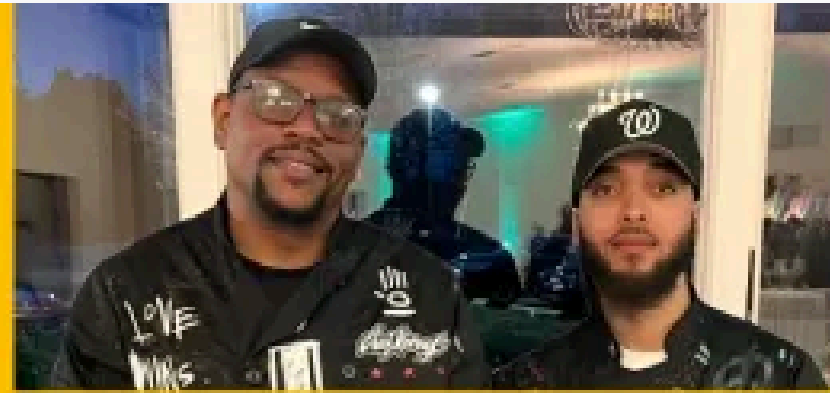
<https://doee.dc.gov/page/grants-and-other-funding>

DOEE will host an information session answering technical questions shortly after it is released.

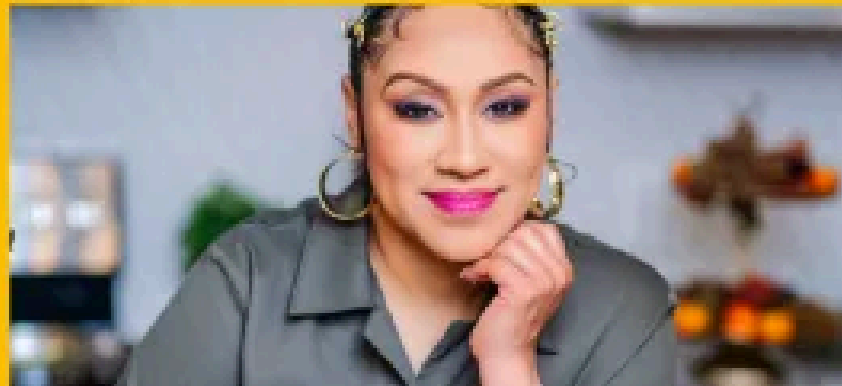
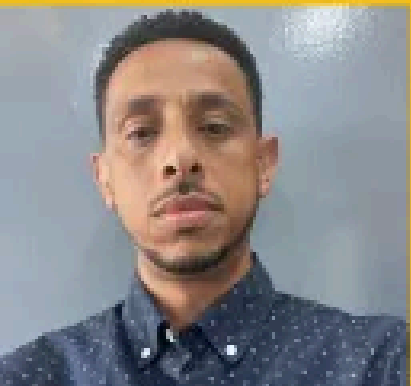
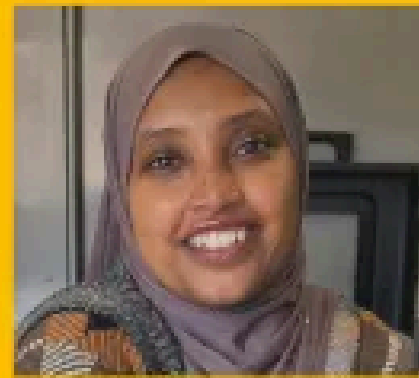
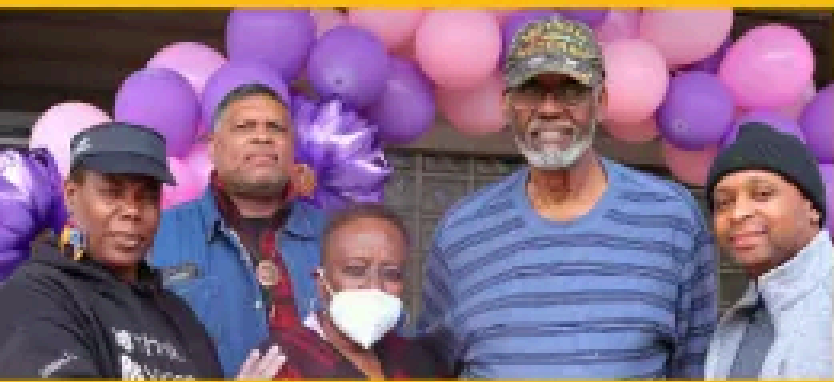
Food Policy Workshop on *Navigating USDA's Grant Language, Including Specialty Crop Block Grants*

<https://bit.ly/DCFPC-SCBG>

April 20 at 3 pm online



WE ARE WASHINGTON DC GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR



momentus capital.

capital impact partners.

# OTHER RESOURCES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

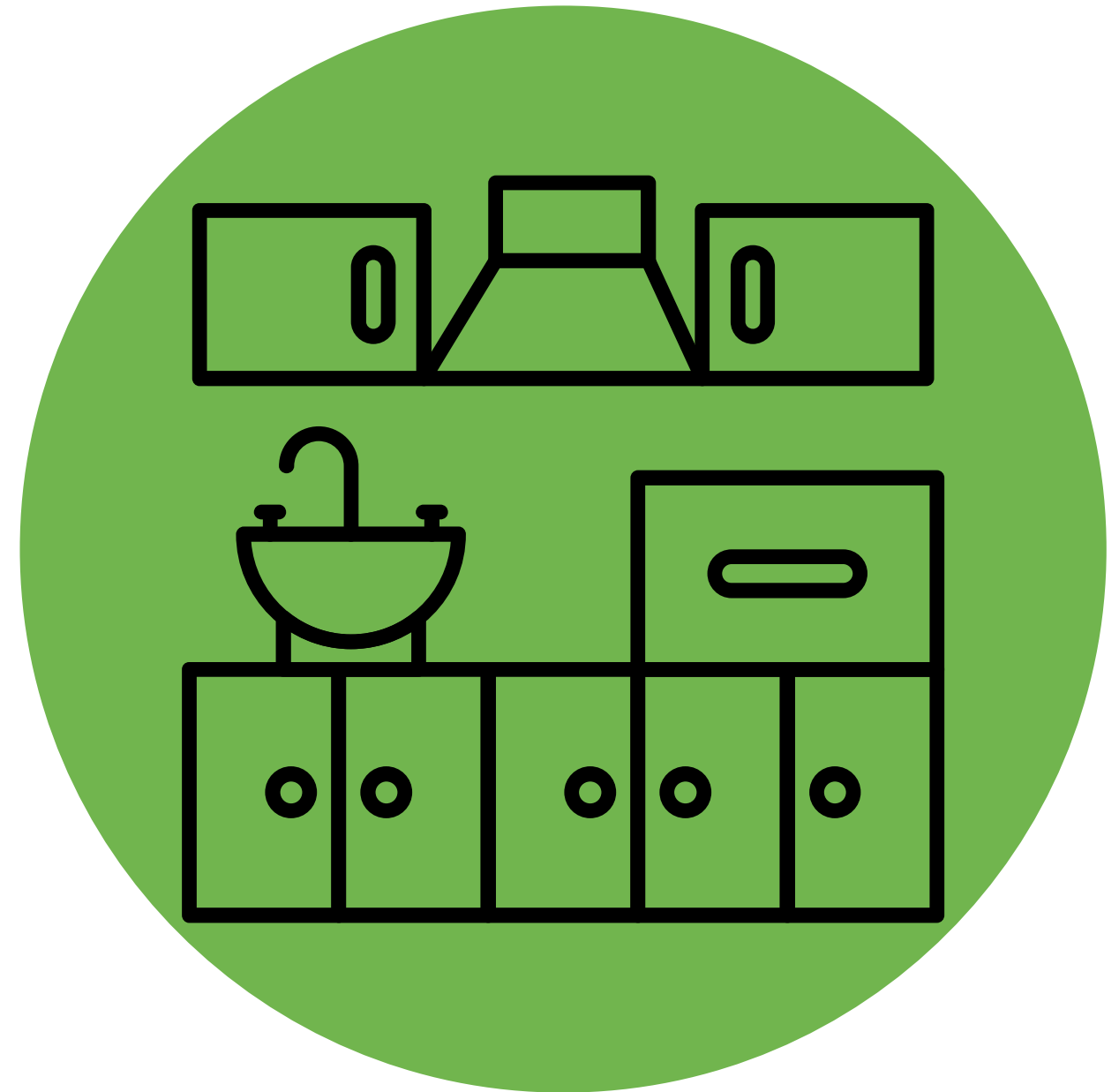


# SHARED KITCHEN NEEDS SURVEY

FPC is gathering input from food entrepreneurs across the District to better understand interest and needs related to shared commercial kitchen space, with a focus on expanding options in Wards 7 and 8.

If you operate a food business and currently use—or would like to access—commercial kitchen space, we invite you to complete the survey via the QR code. The survey will close on April 14th.

Do you work with food businesses that may be interested in participating in the survey? E-mail us at [dcfoodpolicy@dc.gov](mailto:dcfoodpolicy@dc.gov).



# SNAP CHANGES

**[dhs.dc.gov/page/snap-work-requirements](https://dhs.dc.gov/page/snap-work-requirements)**

- This page's content has gone out to many SNAP customers this year

**[dchunger.org/training-and-outreach/](https://dchunger.org/training-and-outreach/)**

Coming changes to Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents – on-demand videos about these changes

# SNAP CHANGES

## How do I meet ABAWD work requirements?

To meet ABAWD work requirements, you must do one of these things:

- Work an average of at least 20 hours each week (or 80 hours a month). The work can be paid, unpaid, volunteer work, or work done in exchange for goods or services.
- Be in an approved work or training program for at least an average of 20 hours each week (or 80 hours a month). This could be through SNAP E&T or another approved work program.
- Do a mix of work and work or training programs for an average of at least 20 hours each week (or 80 hours a month).
- Participate in SNAP Volunteer Program (also known as Workfare). This program, run by SNAP E&T, matches customers to approved volunteer opportunities at non-profits, faith-based organizations or government agencies. The number of hours you must complete depends on your household SNAP benefit amount, but for most households it is less than 30 hours per month.

# SNAP CHANGES

## Can I get help finding a job or training program?

There are several programs available to SNAP recipients through the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program to help you find a job, get training, or attend school. For example, SNAP E&T can connect you to paid apprenticeships, internships, and job placement services. Most activities you do through SNAP E&T can count toward meeting your work requirements.

Customers who work with SNAP E&T can also receive reimbursements for eligible transportation, childcare, and other expenses related to participation. Please call SNAP E&T at (202) 535-1178, e-mail [dhs.snapet@dc.gov](mailto:dhs.snapet@dc.gov), or visit us at our Anacostia Service Center at 2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. SE, Monday through Friday from 8:15 AM to 4:45 PM.

# SNAP CHANGES

## How can I help in my community or organization?

Thousands of residents will be looking for work in order to maintain benefits, including many returning to the workforce (parents of children 14-18 and those 60 - 64). What are ways you can help neighbors with your own skillsets? Is it resume coaching? Interview prep?

Can your organization take on volunteers in a “Workfare to work” – where volunteers are learning essential job skills *and* helping your organization? Think through what it would take for you to scale up your volunteer program (in terms of hours or people). How many volunteers your organization could take on consistently? Are there other resources you’d be prepared to offer?

We’ll be doing a call and trainings in April and throughout the summer to share more.

# DC CLIMATE WEEK

Wednesday, April 22 | 5:30 - 7:30 pm  
Up Top Acres Farm Tour & Happy Hour

Friday, April 24 | 4 - 5 pm  
Forested LLC Food Forest at Harry Thomas Rec Center  
1743 Lincoln Rd NE

Friday, April 24 | 4:30 - 5:30 pm  
TheARC Farm Tour

Saturday, April 25 | 3 - 5 pm  
Common Good City Farm Seedling Celebration

And more to come!



# DPR FREE SEEDS & SEEDLINGS



**SEED SUBSCRIPTION  
BOX**

Register Now



**COMMUNAL FARM  
OPEN HOURS**

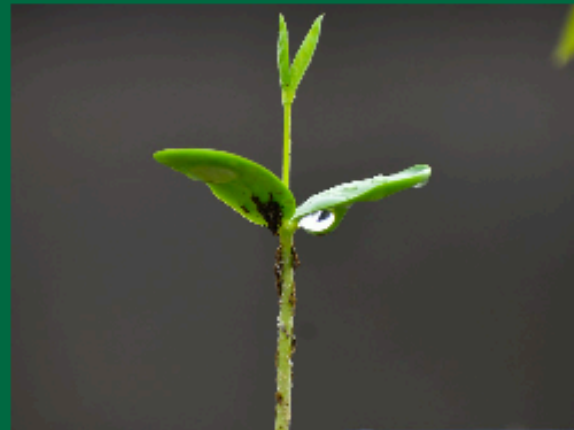
Register Now



**COMMUNAL FARM  
WEEKLY VEGGIE  
GIVEAWAY**

May - Nov, 2026

Register Now



**SEEDLING GIVEAWAY**

Register Now



**FARM-TO-FORK  
COOKING SERIES**

Register Now

**DPR PROGRAMS**

**AT**

**DPRPROGRAMS.**

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# DOEE OFFICE OF URBAN AG UPDATES

- DOEE will be hiring a new Administrator for the office of Urban Agriculture as part of DCHR's hiring fair, currently scheduled for April 30th. Interested candidates will likely need to register in advance. Keep an eye on the DCHR website for details and we will also post this position on the UAWG list as soon as it is live.
- The deadline for the next round of Urban Farm Tax Abatement applications and attestations is May 1st and can be submitted any time. Check out the Urban Agriculture website and reach out to Alyssa Wooden at [alyssa.wooden@dc.gov](mailto:alyssa.wooden@dc.gov) with questions.
- Public witnesses are invited to submit written or live testimony for DOEE's budget oversight hearing. Date TBD.