



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

MATTHEW FRUMIN
Councilmember, Ward 3

COMMITTEE MEMBER
Executive Administration and Labor
Facilities and Family Services
Hospital and Health Equity
Housing
Transportation and the Environment

March 7, 2024

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser,

I write to submit my budget priorities for the coming fiscal year and request that you include these items in your proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

Planning for the next fiscal year will be a difficult exercise as we must grapple with the expiration of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, a public transit system that requires unprecedented investment, inflationary pressures, and modest revenue growth at a time when our city faces serious social and economic challenges. But as we move through the budget process, we must also be mindful to preserve our social safety net and invest in our future. The costs flowing from a failure to do so will far outweigh any presumed savings.

It is often said that budgets are moral documents. This is all the more true when budgets are constrained versus when the coffers are full. We must work toward a safer, stronger District through investments in education, economic opportunity, housing and supportive services, and a more connected city. **As I evaluate the budget the Council will receive later this month, I will be assessing whether it:**

- **Fully funds our schools and invests in the District's youth.** Delivering excellent educational opportunities is a compelling equity, economic development, and public safety imperative. We must ensure our kids can get to and from school safely, that once they are in school, they are fully served, including with access to mental and behavioral health supports, and fundamentally that our educational system provides a safe, nurturing, constructive path to a brighter future. Toward that end, we must fully fund our schools and support our educators with a renewed focus on teacher retention, enrichment, and advancement.



- **Promotes affordable, abundant housing.** We must make existing programs work better and expand housing options. The District needs more affordable, accessible housing, and Ward 3 must be part of achieving our housing goals.
- **Expands economic opportunity.** Our commercial centers, civic cores, and brick-and-mortar small businesses continue to struggle with changing economic conditions and need support to remain vibrant. District residents need additional, diverse pathways to employment and advancement.
- **Invests in safer streets and accessible transit.** We must do more to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. We can make roads safer for children, seniors, and people with disabilities through commonsense traffic calming measures. This includes ensuring safe routes to school for students, expanding multimodal transit options, and promoting sustainable alternatives to driving.
- **Fosters safe, healthy neighborhoods.** The current level of crime is intolerable. People must feel and be safe in their communities. We can make neighborhoods safer by prioritizing accountability, comprehensive services, and responsible policing to keep our families and communities whole.
- **Supports District seniors.** The District is a great place to age-in-place, but we can do better. We must fully support both existing senior services and neighborhood organizations working directly with older adults.
- **Invests in local arts, culture, and recreation.** Local arts, culture, and recreational activities create more connected communities. Our youth and young adults especially need recreational outlets that offer enrichment, provide them safe places to be, and foster intergenerational ties.

As we seek to realize these priorities through the budget process, we must be strategic about how funds are allocated, where efficiencies can be achieved, and where reductions are required. We must also be open to measures that will increase revenue to avoid pitting one priority against another or the needs of one community against another. Even in challenging times, we can expand opportunity for all residents.

I respectfully request that you include the enclosed budget priorities in your proposal. While they are not an exhaustive list of programs I support, they reflect important, realistic, reasonable, and effective investments toward a more vibrant, just, and equitable city.

Sincerely,



Matt Frumin
DC Councilmember for Ward 3



FY25 Budget Priorities

Fully Fund Our Schools and Invest in District Youth	1
Promote Affordable, Abundant Housing Options.....	3
Expand Economic Opportunity	5
Invest in Safer Streets and Accessible Transit.....	7
Foster Safe, Healthy Neighborhoods	8
Support Our Seniors.....	9
Invest in Local Arts, Culture, and Recreation.....	10

Fully Fund Our Schools and Invest in District Youth

Delivering excellent educational opportunities is a compelling equity, economic development, and public safety imperative. We must ensure our kids can get to and from school safely, that once they are in school, they are fully served, including with access to mental and behavioral health supports, and fundamentally that our educational system provides a safe, nurturing, constructive path to a brighter future. Toward that end, we must fully fund our schools and support our educators with a renewed focus on teacher retention, enrichment, and advancement.

- **Ensure public school budgets are sufficient, consistent, and equitable.** While many schools may see nominal year-over-year increases in their initial FY25 budgets, the reality is most of our schools are facing an unacceptable, often dramatic, loss of buying power given inflation and the significant increases in the cost of educator and other positions. Consequently, the initial DCPS school budgets would result in draconian staffing cuts, delivering a body blow to our fragile efforts to recover from the learning setbacks of the pandemic and give our children a chance to succeed. The FY25 submitted school budgets should fully fund our schools on which our students and communities rely.
- **Fully fund the renovation of the MacArthur Avenue High School.** This includes renovating sufficient classrooms to fully serve students for the 24-25 School Year, as well as providing an auditorium, adequately-sized cafeteria, and appropriate entrances and associated security in the fully renovated school. The District must deliver a comprehensive high school that can meet the needs of the community and its student body over the long term.
- **Fully fund the Universal Out of School Time Amendment Act of 2023 and expand before- and after-school, school break, and summer programs for students.** Out-of-school time (OST) programming is proven to improve attendance, academic¹, and economic² outcomes for youth and significantly reduce juvenile-involved crime³, but too many students do not have

¹ <https://www.nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Afterschool-and-summer-learning-a-city-strategy-to-supporrt-college-and-career-readiness.pdf>

² <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/relationship-between-afterschool-program/docview/2808421909/se-2?accountid=46320>

³ <https://www.nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Afterschool-and-Summer-Learning-a-city-strategy-for-public-safety-brief.pdf>

access to OST programs. My Universal Out of School Time Amendment Act of 2023⁴, supported by the OST Coalition and 11 of my colleagues, would make available free or affordable OST programming for all public school students by 2035. This bill complements and carries forward the administration's commitment to develop "the most robust, free, before- and after-school programs in the nation". To achieve a 10% increase in programming seats, the FY25 budget should allocate at least \$25 million to OST.

- **Invest an additional \$2.4 million for the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to cover the funding gap for school-based behavioral health services in every school.** This enhancement to the FY24 budget baseline would provide \$98,465 per clinician per school for 254 schools. School-based behavioral health services remove barriers to accessing services, especially for underserved communities, improve classroom environments and reduce absenteeism, reduce response times for mental health crises, and address the experiences of trauma faced by this city's youth.
- **Provide \$8 million to OSSE to fully fund the Universal Free School Meals Amendment Act.** This will make school breakfasts, lunches, and snacks free and accessible for all DCPS and public charter schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. Approximately 21% of Black households and 30% of Latinx households with children in the District report food insufficiency. Funding this bill will eliminate social stigma around and financial barriers to nutrition, creating a more economically and racially equitable food system.
- **Fully fund the Recommendations for Structured Literacy Instruction in the District of Columbia.**⁵ The recommendations, supported by every agency in the District's education cluster, center on implementing empirically validated instructional methods to support early and struggling readers. The 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results showed that only 23% of students in the District performed at or above the proficient level. Other states that have funded structured literacy training for teachers have seen significant improvements in reading outcomes for students. Based on comparable state budgets, an investment of \$6.6 million would support training for up to 1,000 Pre-K educators, 3,500 K-5 educators, and 750 administrators. This investment would ensure the implementation of structured literacy training for teachers and leaders, provide on-the-job structured literacy support for educators, and ensure that high-quality structured literacy instructional materials are used in classrooms across the District.
- **Fully fund and implement the updated DCPS Technology Plan.** In school year 2023-2024, 90% of DCPS schools used outdated student devices that were due to be replaced in the summer of 2023. The FY25 budget should include at least \$18.5 million for new student and staff devices and \$11.2 million for asset administration analysts at the school level to maximize investments in technology and successfully implement a 1:1 student-device ratio.

⁴ <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B25-0630>

⁵ https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Early%20Literacy%20Task%20Force%20Report.pdf

- **Establish a permanent substitute teacher program.** The District should allocate one full-time substitute teacher per 250 students in schools with a 50% or greater concentration of at-risk students and one per 500 students in the remaining schools. The stability that a permanent substitute teacher provides for teachers, students, and administrators would alleviate teacher burnout and provide consistency unavailable in the current on-call substitute system. A permanent substitute teacher program could be funded in part by reallocating funds that would no longer be spent on part-time substitutes and could offer new educator pipelines and professional development opportunities.
- **Allocate \$300,000 annually for OSSE Educator Wellness Technical Assistance Grants over the four-year financial plan.** Since school year 21-22, 25 schools have benefited from partnering with participating community-based organizations (CBOs) to identify and implement evidence-based measures to improve the educator experience, including preventing stress, improving collaboration, and building workplace relationships and supports. In school year 23-24, demand exceeded available grants, with 24 applicant schools unable to receive assistance. Investments in educator wellness and retention have a direct impact on improving student education and outcomes.
- **Take the Outdoor Learning Labs from design to reality.** OSSE has already paid for and received designs for these experiential education spaces, which allow students to explore real-world outdoor science education and increase student engagement and knowledge. However, 63 school sites remain unbuilt, including Mann, Key, and Stoddert Elementary, Deal Middle, and Jackson Reed High School in Ward 3. We should follow through on our investment by committing \$2 million annually for the next four years to break ground and create engaging outdoor learning spaces.

Promote Affordable, Abundant Housing Options

The District needs more affordable, accessible housing, and Ward 3 must be part of achieving our housing goals.

- **Sustain funding for programs that expand the affordable housing stock and increase access to rental housing and home ownership for those most in need,** including:
 - **\$100 million for the Housing Production Trust Fund** to support the development and preservation of affordable housing at a time when housing costs have increased dramatically, jeopardizing housing stability for thousands in the District;
 - **\$18.43 million for the Home Purchase Assistance Program,** which expands opportunities for District residents to purchase single family homes, condominiums, or cooperative units. Home ownership is key to building generational wealth, and HPAP is one avenue for addressing historic structural barriers to homeownership and wealth building; and

- **\$7.9 million for single and family Permanent Supportive Housing for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.** In tandem with the housing subsidy, the District must strengthen the level and consistency of supportive services and case management promised to those participating in the program. The housing first model necessarily indicates that there is a second step to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness; wrap around services must be sufficient to ensure PSH recipients can thrive in their homes and communities.
- **Establish and invest in other vehicles for creating housing that expand financing models and reduce the cost of land acquisition and gap financing,** including:
 - a property acquisition fund to enable the District to respond nimbly to purchase opportunities, particularly in the current real estate market, and expand the housing stock, including higher percentages of affordable housing, through an RFP process;
 - social housing financing that fills the gap in bank financing and lowers the cost of producing mixed income housing, including higher percentages of affordable housing, through revolving, low-interest funds that are reinvested as they are repaid; and
 - modifications to existing programs, such as the Site Acquisition Funding Initiative (SAFI), to expand financing flexibility and development models that support affordable housing.

The District's ambitious goal of creating 12,000 new units of affordable housing by 2025, including 1990 units in Rock Creek West, underscores the importance of achieving housing equity and economic opportunity. Any new or expanded funds should complement the HPTF and enable qualified mission-driven affordable housing developers to move quickly to gain access to properties and accelerate affordable housing production.

- **Add \$7 million to the existing capital budget for the construction of a new Chevy Chase Library and Community Center within the Chevy Chase Civic Site.** Additional funding is needed to ensure that inflation and rising construction costs do not make it more difficult to support multimodal transit access, including underground parking, that preserves green space and to achieve significant new affordable housing. The Civic Site has the potential to achieve a world-class library and community center, provide outdoor recreational space, and advance our housing goals in ways that serve both current and future neighbors.
- **Allocate \$300,000 to the Office of Planning to develop a Small Area Plan for the Nebraska Avenue Complex (NAC), 3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW.** The General Services Administration has announced its intention to dispose of the property, most recently the headquarters for the Department of Homeland Security. While disposition will be a lengthy process, planning for the future of the 38.6-acre property must begin in the near-term to ensure the District is well positioned to shape the future of a potentially transformative development that could advance significant housing, education, and economic development goals for Ward 3 and the city as a whole.

Expand Economic Opportunity

Our commercial centers, civic cores, and brick-and-mortar small businesses continue to struggle with changing economic conditions and need support to remain vibrant. District residents need additional, diverse pathways to employment and advancement.

- **Purchase 3400 International Drive, NW (formerly the Whittle School and Intelsat) and fund a planning process to evaluate future use opportunities.** The parcel sits on 13.7 acres, includes a 660,000 sq. ft. building with 300,000+ sq. ft. below-ground parking and supportive facilities, and developable land suitable for new affordable housing. It offers a rare opportunity for the District to acquire a massive property that can serve all Washingtonians and given current market conditions, could likely be purchased at a competitive value. Located on Metro rail and bus lines and adjacent to the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), the property is ripe for reimagining as an innovative, multi-use public-private partnership. Significant portions of the building are turn-key and ready for myriad complementary uses, including an early childhood education center, technical and arts education programming, space for UDC or another university, a senior wellness center, urban agriculture, and/or a central food processing facility. Securing this property and leveraging it to advance many of the District’s most compelling goals should be a priority.

- **Increase the University of the District of Columbia operating budget by \$12.9 million in FY25.** According to Education Reform Now’s report *D.C.’s Quiet Crisis in College Access & Completion*⁶, “a staggering 75% of young D.C. natives [are] ineligible for 58% of jobs in D.C. that require a degree”, resulting in compensation that falls below a living wage and significantly lower lifetime earning potential. UDC has embarked on an ambitious plan to become an educational institution of choice for District residents and to develop the District’s workforce through high-quality, affordable higher education focused on in-demand fields. Budget enhancements, which are responsive to recommendations made by Education Reform Now, would be used to:
 - establish a Student Success Center with 40 FTEs to improve student academic achievement, student retention, and graduation rates;
 - build a competitive compensation structure to attract faculty from in-demand fields and high-wage disciplines, such as business, cybersecurity, nursing, hospitality and tourism, cybersecurity, engineering, and other STEM fields, with the goal of hiring 26 new faculty members;
 - establish an Office of Faculty Support, to include faculty coaches and curriculum development support, consistent with comparable universities in the area;
 - improve student transitions within and across UDC programs, from workforce development to community college, community college to a four-year program, and graduation to post-secondary employment; and

⁶ https://edreformnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ERN-DC_QuietCrisisPostSecondaryReport_NOV2023.pdf

- provide stipends for student internships, enabling access to work-based learning for students regardless of means.

These targeted investments would support UDC's goal of growing enrollment by 50% over the next five years, including through increased student retention, and to increase the number of graduates who are highly qualified for today's workforce.

- In tandem with operating enhancements, **support UDC's request for capital improvement enhancements**, which are critical to remaking a campus that has long suffered from deferred maintenance and outdated facilities and to meeting the vision and goals of the university.
- **Enhance funding citywide for Commercial Clean Teams.** Commercial Clean Teams, funded through the Department of Small and Local Business Development, provide critical clean and safe services to more than 36 commercial districts across the city, covering nearly 125 miles of sidewalks. At a time when our commercial districts continue to struggle, the daily maintenance, trash collection, and landscaping provided by Clean Teams are essential to creating welcoming corridors for customers and business owners, while crew members provide eyes on the street that contribute to safer communities. These Teams further offer a pathway to economic opportunity for District residents, providing life skills and job training along with a living wage for crew members, many of whom are returning citizens. Funding for Clean Teams has not kept pace with inflation nor the increased service needs of our business districts, and significant funding disparities exist among Clean Teams that are not reflective of the size or needs of their service areas. Funding enhancements should address those disparities such that all service areas are sufficiently resourced based on objective and comparable standards. Within Ward 3, the following funding enhancements are requested:
 - **Increase funding for the Connecticut Avenue Clean Team by \$50,000 annually.** This clean team serves the business districts of Chevy Chase, Cleveland Park, Van Ness, and Woodley Park along Connecticut Avenue from Calvert Street to Western Avenue. Additional funding is required to bring this Clean Team into alignment with other programs serving similar commercial corridors and to respond to the significant clean and safe services required by four business districts.
 - **Allocate \$75,000 for the Friendship Heights Business Improvement District (BID) to establish a Friendship Heights Clean Team, with a recurring annual budget of \$125,000 starting in FY26.** As Friendship Heights undergoes significant redevelopment, maintenance, litter removal, and eyes on the street are key to keeping the area safe and clean for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- **Sustain and make permanent the FY24 budget enhancement for DC Main Street programs, which increased per program funding by \$47,000 (an overall increase of \$1.31 million), with annual inflationary increases.** Main Street programs have utilized the additional funding received this fiscal year to increase job opportunities for District residents, augment technical and financial assistance for small businesses, advance placemaking and planning, and implement customer attraction strategies to increase economic activity in business districts

across the city. These investments are vital to supporting, sustaining, and expanding the District's small business ecosystem, particularly as local businesses continue to recover from the pandemic and grapple with public safety challenges.

Invest in Safer Streets and Accessible Transit

We must do more to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. We can make roads safer for children, seniors, and people with disabilities through commonsense traffic calming measures. This includes ensuring safe routes to school for students, expanding multimodal transit options, and promoting sustainable alternatives to driving.

In addition to the below priorities, I support the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) in sustaining investments already budgeted for necessary capital improvements and advancing those projects to completion, including but not limited to, the Arizona Avenue, NW connection to the Capital Crescent Trail, the Canal Road Slope Stabilization Project, and the installation of suicide prevention infrastructure on the William Howard Taft Memorial Bridge.

- **Fully fund the Connecticut Avenue Multimodal Safety Improvement project.** Since the project was announced in December 2021, more than 300 crashes have been reported on Connecticut Avenue, some with tragic consequences. Connecticut Avenue should not be a six-lane highway running through Ward 3. The current orientation prioritizes high-speed vehicular traffic at the expense of the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and the thousands of residents who live and work along the corridor. The Connecticut Avenue overhaul is necessary to address dangerous driving and speeding, improve the overall traffic flow on this key artery, and support a transition to sustainable, multimodal transportation. This can be done while also addressing the needs of seniors, people with disabilities, and businesses along the avenue. While we must acknowledge the needs of people who will rely on cars, we also can and should meet the needs of those who choose to rely on other modes of transportation.
- **Allocate \$2 million in FY25 for DDOT to complete the design of the Tenleytown Multimodal Access Project and \$13 million, over FY26 and FY27, for project construction.** The project, currently in the concept design phase, is intended to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular safety and improve public spaces surrounding the Tenleytown-AU Metrorail Station at the gateway to the Tenleytown commercial district. The Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework developed by the Office of Planning envisions significant increased zoning and density in this node, which is already highly trafficked by students, commuters, daytime workers, and commercial district customers. The Multimodal Access Project is critical to support the envisioned growth and safe transit to and within the commercial district.
- **Allocate \$6.7 million in FY25 to complete the design, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of the Pedestrian Bridge over Arizona Avenue NW and connecting trail.** Completion of this project, in tandem with the Palisades Trolley Trail, would provide connector routes in Ward 3 for the Capital Crescent Trail and canal towpath.

- **Allocate \$7 million across FY25 and FY26 for DDOT to complete the design of the Broad Branch Road Rehabilitation and \$24 million across FY27 and FY28 for construction.** The rehabilitation of 1.5 miles of Broad Branch Road, from Linnean Street to Beach Drive, is intended to: improve roadway and drainage infrastructure conditions; enhance safety operations for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians; improve intersections; and provide ADA-compliant sidewalks for the entire length of the corridor. Poor drainage and stormwater infrastructure has caused repeated flooding along Broad Branch Road, while road conditions and missing infrastructure create hazards for all roadway users. Project delays since it was first announced in 2021 have led to critical safety concerns that must be addressed.
- **Allocate \$100,000 for DDOT to conduct a study focused on multi-modal transit to and within Friendship Heights, as a supplement to the Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework developed by the Office of Planning.** Given the breadth of development contemplated for Friendship Heights, including significant new housing, it is important to assess and plan for how people will travel to and within the commercial and residential neighborhood. The most recent study is now a decade out of date and does not align with the current Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework.

Foster Safe, Healthy Neighborhoods

The current level of crime is intolerable. People must feel and be safe in their communities. We can make neighborhoods safer by prioritizing accountability, comprehensive services, and responsible policing to keep our families and communities whole.

- **Allocate sufficient resources to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) budget to enable the department to recruit and retain more sworn officers, as well as expand community policing.** We need officers on the streets creating a visible presence and forging relationships with residents and businesses. Investments should also be made in officer wellness, professional development and advancement, and improving management practices that impact morale and job performance, as outlined in Chief Smith’s 2023 strategic plan update and the Police Executive Research Forum’s 2023 Cultural Assessment.
- **Expand programs like the Co-Response Team and Safe Commercial Corridor Hubs that create synergies and partnerships between law enforcement, behavioral health, and other services.** Through these partnerships the District can improve responses to those experiencing mental or behavioral health crises, diverting people to care and supportive services rather than the criminal justice system.
- **Fund the renovation of the MPD 2nd District station on Idaho Avenue, NW.** The Police Executive Research Forum’s 2023 Cultural Assessment highlighted the poor condition of police stations and their impact on officers’ ability to execute their jobs effectively and overall

morale. One study participant commented, “The Second District looks abandoned ... There is no hot water in [the] building, so members can’t use the showers that are provided for them. There are leaks all over the building ... These working conditions are deplorable.”⁷ I have observed these conditions firsthand during my visits to the station, including rain pouring in through windows and the ceiling. Our officers deserve better. The city has modernized or renovated schools, fire stations, and recreation centers; it’s time to invest in our police stations. A modern police force requires modern facilities.

Support Our Seniors

The District is a great place to age-in-place, but we can do better. We must fully support both existing senior services and neighborhood organizations working directly with older adults.

- **Fully fund the development of a brick-and-mortar senior wellness center in Ward 3.** Despite having one of the largest populations of seniors in the city, Ward 3 is one of only two wards that does not have a senior wellness center. The Senior Wellness Task Force, funded through the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL), will complete a feasibility study and planning process for new senior centers in Wards 2 and 3 by the end of December 2024, and the design process should commence early in calendar year 2025 to ensure no momentum is lost in meeting the needs of our seniors.
- **Allocate \$450,000 to Iona Senior Services’ Dementia Navigator and Money Management programs on a recurring basis for three years with annual inflationary increases.** Iona’s Dementia Navigator and Money Management programs provide communities citywide, primarily communities of color and the underserved, with intensive care coordination, critical resources, information, and direct interventions needed by individuals and family caregivers. An estimated 14,000 individuals are living with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) in the District, representing more than 17% of the older adult population. ADRD consists of a group of debilitating conditions that progressively impair memory, cognitive functions, and leads to the decline in a person’s ability to conduct everyday activities.
- **Allocate \$255,000 to Iona Senior Services for social work, Medicaid, and mental health support services.** Regency House meets a critical affordable housing need for low-income older adults and older adults with disabilities. Comprehensive on-site social work services are key to supporting these older residents aging in place safely. Additionally, Iona provides specialized support to vulnerable seniors in processing Medicaid applications and renewals, including working with government partners to ensure the applications are processed promptly. Their psychotherapists, who are experts in mental health and aging, provide support to older adults who are experiencing depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions related to the challenges of growing older, including health and financial concerns.

⁷ Comment by focus group participant as quoted in the March 2023 “A Cultural Assessment of the MPD Workplace” report by the Police Executive Research Forum, p. 86

- **Fully fund the Direct Care Workers Act of 2023.** Long term care for seniors and those with disabilities has faced a staff shortage crisis, due in large part to poverty-level wages for direct care workers, who are predominately women of color. Fully funding the mandatory wage increase would meet the care needs of thousands of residents and provide economic opportunity to essential workers. As we increase funding for these professionals, we should also explore how to attract and train professionals with language skills to serve our non-English speaking residents including our Spanish and Amharic speaking residents.
- **Fully fund the implementation of the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act, with an allocation of \$8.2 million in FY25 and \$8.3 million in FY26, for a total of \$26 million over the Financial Plan.** Passed in 2022, this act supports programs to end senior hunger in DC by creating an Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Taskforce, developing a communications plan to connect senior nutrition services with the community, adding home delivered meals and medical nutritional therapy to the Medicaid waiver, and increasing SNAP and other nutrition program participation among seniors. At 12.8% DC has one of the highest rates of food insecurity among seniors in the nation.
- **Sustain funding for the District’s 13 Senior Villages at \$847,830.** Villages, through networks of volunteers, make it easier for older adults to age-in-place in their homes and communities through direct support services, access to community and government resources, support groups, and social and recreational activities. They fill an important gap in assistance for seniors not provided by the District’s Lead Agencies and help defer or remove the need for older adults to move to retirement or assisted living facilities.

Invest in Local Arts, Culture, and Recreation

Local arts, culture, and recreational activities create more connected communities. Our youth and young adults especially need recreational outlets that offer enrichment, provide them safe places to be, and foster intergenerational ties. We should expand facilities and support athletic and arts activities for all ages.

- **Allocate \$300,000 to the Department of Parks and Recreation for a feasibility and site selection study for a teen or youth center in Tenleytown.** Nearly 4,000 teenagers from across the District attend DC Public Schools in the neighborhood; however, there are insufficient facilities for these students to engage in low-cost or free productive, enriching activities once school lets out. District youth are facing unprecedented challenges, and studies have shown that the most vulnerable time for them is between 3pm and 8pm. The afterschool and evening hours in this neighborhood are a consistent pain point for students, who have no other options, as well as their parents, local businesses, and neighbors. The study should evaluate: 1) opportunities to establish a dedicated youth center focused on middle and high school aged children, 2) programming aimed toward the current needs and interests of youth

with a focus on afterschool, evenings, and weekends, and 3) the potential impact on student opportunity and safety, as well as public safety broadly.

- **Allocate \$250,000 to the Department of Parks and Recreation to resod the fields at Hearst Park and support regular maintenance to preserve the condition of the fields.** As part of a larger capital project, the fields underwent renovation in FY21 and FY22 and immediately were in high demand for community members and recreational sports teams. However, field maintenance has been an issue since it reopened and deteriorating conditions have meant that, depending on the season, the field is either a dust bowl or flooded, limiting field use.
- **Add \$1.5 million to the Capital Improvement Plan for the installation of permanent lights on the Alice Deal Middle School field.** The most limiting factor for youth nonprofit sports organizations is field space for practices and games. Demand for field space remains high, but opportunities for adding new fields are constrained by available land and associated costs. The most efficient and economical way to increase access to fields is to maximize the use of existing fields, including through the addition of lighting, which can expand field use by several hours each day. The Deal Middle School field is ideally situated to minimize impact on the surrounding neighborhood, while expanding opportunities for safe community recreation on a Metro accessible site.
- **Fully support the Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH).** The District's arts economy is a key component of the economic revitalization of our city, including Downtown. We must invest in the arts for the social, cultural, and economic benefits they deliver. The FY25 budget should ensure that the Commission has an appropriate number of FTEs and grant managers to enable the CAH to efficiently and carefully allocate grants. These grants are critical to our arts community, and their careful stewardship is critical to our taxpayers. We should not sweep any CAH special revenue or fund balances and should lift the 102% growth cap on dedicated funding from sales taxes going to the CAH. As the District has emerged from the pandemic, the arts have contributed significantly to sales tax and economic growth. We must continue to foster, and not stymie, that contribution and momentum.
- **Sustain funding for the DC History Center at \$300,000.** The DC History Center plays an important role in collecting and telling our story, marking the 50th anniversary of their groundbreaking conference this year, as well as in revitalizing Downtown at the Carnegie Library and Mount Vernon Square. Its work will only grow in importance in the run up to 2026, when as part of America250 the District will have a distinctive platform to tell our story to the world. Meanwhile, the new social studies standards approved by the State Board of Education appropriately require our schools to teach DC history in every grade. DC History Center materials, already heavily used by teachers for their DC history curricula, will be increasingly in demand. Now is not the time to step back from our commitment to research and promote our history. At a minimum, we must maintain support for this important institution.