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# COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES



JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON  
FISCAL YEAR 2024 COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT

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**TO:** Members of the Council of the District of Columbia

**FROM:** Councilmember Janeese Lewis George  
Chairperson, Committee on Facilities and Family Services

**DATE:** April 25, 2023

**SUBJECT:** DRAFT Report and Recommendations of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services on the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget for Agencies Under Its Purview

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# I. SUMMARY

## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services (“CFFS”), chaired by Councilmember Janeese Lewis George and joined by Councilmembers Brianne K. Nadeau, Matthew Frumin, Zachary Parker and Robert C. White, Jr. The Committee is grateful for the public’s input and participation in performance and budget oversight hearings which informed the report’s findings and recommendations.

### **A Robust Child Welfare System (CFSA & OFC)**

- Increases the OFC budget by \$224,000 to fund a legal and fiscal analyst.
- Restores \$1.3 million to fully fund the Safe Shores program.
- Increases the Home Visiting program by \$300,000 to raise wages.
- Reallocates \$71,000 to right size the Grandparent and Care Giver program.
- Allocates \$250,000 to fund the “Grandparent and Caregiver Subsidy Eligibility Expansion Amendment Act of 2023.”
- Restores \$515,000 recurring and \$495,000 in one-time funding to the child placement budget to provide resources to children in care.
- Adds 300,000 in one-time funding to the Families First D.C. budget for additional support for Collaboratives and Family Success Centers.
- Adds \$67,000 for Kinship Support.
- Transfers \$196,620 to the Office of the Attorney General to fund a new Family Services Division Manager.

### **Responsive Maintenance of Public Facilities: (DGS)**

- \$7.1 million (5%) overall increase to the District’s facility operations budget over the Fiscal Year 2023 approved budget including the following:
  - \$4.5 million expansion of preventive maintenance (PM) program to all District-owned facilities along with \$13.6 million for PM in DCPS facilities;
  - \$6.9 million for dedicated work order reduction efforts citywide; and
  - \$1.1 million for door lock hardware and repair efforts.
  - Shifts \$1.9 million within DGS’ facilities operations personnel budget to support hiring three more maintenance supervisors and 14 more rank-and-file trades employees, further improving DGS’ timely closure of work order requests.
  - Shifts capital budget funding to support modernization and small capital projects in Wards 1, 3, 4 and 5 schools and recreational facilities.
- Legislates and funds the following additional maintenance and sustainability requirements:
  - Requires DGS to perform an annual comprehensive assessment of school security components (i.e., door locks, security systems, PA systems, etc.);
  - Integrates common DGS-provided service requests like broken equipment and grounds maintenance into the District’s 311 system; and

- Funds the “Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act” (Law 24-306) which will require that construction of new or substantially improved buildings that the District owns or finances to adhere to net zero energy (NZE) standards.
- Provides necessary operating supports to the District’s real estate portfolio, including:
  - \$31 million for protective services and security;
  - \$72 million for utilities expenses; and
  - \$151 million for rent and other leasing expenses.
- Makes 11 policy recommendations for improving DGS’ building maintenance program.

**Inclusive Supports for Residents with Disabilities: (DDS, ODR, MODDHH)**

- Maintains the Mayor’s \$744,000 one-time funding for the Personal Needs Allowance.
- Adds \$200,000 in one-time funding to Rehabilitation Services Administration for additional outreach with businesses and District agencies to establish and execute best practices for being a model employer for people with disabilities and addressing racial disparities in employment among people with disabilities.
- Maintains the Office for Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing’s budget, including the one-time increase of \$306,000 to support costs of an American Sign Language (ASL) contract.

## B. FY 2024 AGENCY OPERATING BUDGET

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
<b>Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)</b>						
FEDERAL GRANT FUND	\$66,150,370	\$60,462,469	\$53,237,971	\$0	\$53,237,971	(11.95%)
FEDERAL PAYMENTS	\$186,185	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
LOCAL FUND	\$146,204,433	\$161,065,175	\$165,069,751	(\$342,115)	\$164,727,635	2.27%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	\$2,334,974	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
PRIVATE DONATIONS	\$6,215	\$4,560	\$4,560	\$0	\$4,560	0.00%
PRIVATE GRANT FUND	\$460,192	\$0	\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000	0.00%
SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS ('O'TYPE)	\$870,794	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$216,213,163</b>	<b>\$222,532,204</b>	<b>\$219,392,282</b>	<b>(\$342,115)</b>	<b>\$219,050,166</b>	<b>(1.56%)</b>
<b>Department of General Services (DGS)</b>						
DEDICATED TAXES	\$224,428	\$703,347	\$0	\$0	\$0	(100.00%)

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
FEDERAL PAYMENTS	\$5,160,933	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
LOCAL FUND	\$402,879,231	\$380,069,745	\$428,459,746	\$857,554	\$429,317,300	12.96%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	\$206,246,255	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
PRIVATE DONATIONS	\$116,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS ('O'TYPE)	\$3,555,095	\$4,683,214	\$2,675,043	\$0	\$2,675,043	(42.88%)
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$618,182,442</b>	<b>\$385,456,307</b>	<b>\$431,134,790</b>	<b>\$857,554</b>	<b>\$431,992,344</b>	<b>12.07%</b>
<b>Department on Disability Services (DDS)</b>						
FEDERAL GRANT FUND	\$32,606,070	\$34,326,268	\$34,361,919	\$0	\$34,361,919	0.10%
FEDERAL MEDICAID PAYMENTS	\$16,608,946	\$14,428,661	\$16,336,324	\$0	\$16,336,324	13.22%
FEDERAL PAYMENTS	\$605,098	\$98,520	\$98,520	\$0	\$98,520	0.00%

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
LOCAL FUND	\$103,799,441	\$136,407,171	\$142,847,670	\$200,000	\$143,047,670	4.87%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	\$1,262,425	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS ('O'TYPE)	\$7,926,041	\$12,715,012	\$10,081,801	\$0	\$10,081,801	(20.71%)
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$162,808,022</b>	<b>\$197,975,632</b>	<b>\$203,726,235</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$203,926,235</b>	<b>3.01%</b>
<b>Office of Disability Rights (ODR)</b>						
FEDERAL GRANT FUND	\$392,449	\$627,570	\$637,570	\$0	\$637,570	1.59%
LOCAL FUND	\$1,269,701	\$1,452,359	\$1,467,259	\$0	\$1,467,259	1.03%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	\$227,830	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$1,889,980</b>	<b>\$2,079,929</b>	<b>\$2,104,829</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,104,829</b>	<b>1.20%</b>
<b>Office of the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (ODDHH)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	\$0	\$818,747	\$1,104,278	\$0	\$1,104,278	34.87%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$818,747</b>	<b>\$1,104,278</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,104,278</b>	<b>34.87%</b>
<b>Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	\$49,472	\$935,000	\$938,000	\$224,095	\$1,162,095	24.29%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$49,472</b>	<b>\$935,000</b>	<b>\$938,000</b>	<b>\$224,095</b>	<b>\$1,162,095</b>	<b>24.29%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$999,143,079</b>	<b>\$809,797,819</b>	<b>\$858,400,413</b>	<b>\$939,533</b>	<b>\$859,339,947</b>	<b>6.12%</b>

## C. FY 2024 AGENCY OPERATING BUDGET BY PROGRAM

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
<b>Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)</b>						
1000 - AGENCY MANAGEMENT	\$41,388,172	\$46,401,112	\$46,707,164	(\$1,266,589)	\$45,440,575	(2.07%)
100F - AGENCY FINANCIAL OPERATIONS	\$1,702,033	\$3,089,690	\$3,080,109	(\$53,558)	\$3,026,551	(2.04%)
2000 - AGENCY PROGRAMS	\$76,817,025	\$75,773,985	\$70,883,880	\$312,002	\$71,195,882	(6.04%)
3000 - COMMUNITY SERVICES	\$29,554,867	\$28,939,305	\$28,806,929	\$997,178	\$29,804,106	2.99%
4000 - ADOPTION AND GUARDIAN SUBSIDY PROGRAM	\$30,694,099	\$32,326,605	\$32,975,665	\$321,200	\$33,296,865	3.00%
6000 - POLICY AND PLANNING	\$6,073,880	\$5,865,095	\$6,335,920	(\$515,696)	\$5,820,223	(0.77%)
7000 - CLINICAL PRACTICE	\$5,070,099	\$5,011,144	\$4,676,610	(\$253,688)	\$4,422,922	(11.74%)
8000 - COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	\$24,913,858	\$25,125,268	\$25,926,006	\$117,036	\$26,043,042	3.65%
9960 - YR END CLOSE	(\$869)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$216,213,163</b>	<b>\$222,532,204</b>	<b>\$219,392,282</b>	<b>(\$342,115)</b>	<b>\$219,050,166</b>	<b>(1.56%)</b>

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
<b>Department of General Services (DGS)</b>						
1000 - AGENCY MANAGEMENT	\$13,932,061	\$14,685,823	\$15,295,133	(\$723,344)	\$14,571,789	(0.78%)
2000 - ASSET MANAGEMENT	\$4,644,255	\$4,811,209	\$5,024,612	\$0	\$5,024,612	4.44%
3000 - FACILITY OPERATIONS	\$205,207,850	\$143,121,071	\$148,789,631	\$1,433,103	\$150,222,734	4.96%
4000 - PROTECTIVE SERVICES	\$81,499,785	\$27,943,912	\$31,862,821	(\$483,710)	\$31,379,111	12.29%
5000 - CONSTRUCTION SERVICES	\$14,473,684	\$4,116,500	\$3,772,391	(\$75,000)	\$3,697,391	(10.18%)
6000 - CONTRACTING AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES	\$3,240,559	\$4,154,815	\$3,895,654	(\$105,000)	\$3,790,654	(8.76%)
7000 - ENERGY-CENTRALLY MANAGED	\$115,002,464	\$61,549,524	\$71,900,163	\$811,504	\$72,711,667	18.14%
8000 - RENT: IN-LEASE	\$180,202,134	\$125,073,451	\$150,594,386	\$0	\$150,594,386	20.40%
9960 - YEAR END ADJUSTMENTS	(\$20,350)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$618,182,442</b>	<b>\$385,456,307</b>	<b>\$431,134,790</b>	<b>\$857,554</b>	<b>\$431,992,344</b>	<b>12.07%</b>



Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
<b>Department on Disability Services (DDS)</b>						
1000 - AGENCY MANAGEMENT	\$15,595,510	\$14,893,638	\$14,857,425	\$0	\$14,857,425	(0.24%)
100F - AGENCY FINANCIAL OPERATIONS PROGRAM	\$1,447,278	\$1,933,493	\$1,957,916	\$0	\$1,957,916	1.26%
6000 - DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMIN	\$110,482,460	\$147,846,055	\$153,244,402	\$0	\$153,244,402	3.65%
7000 - REHABILITATION SERVICES	\$23,837,732	\$20,615,796	\$20,642,607	\$200,000	\$20,842,607	1.10%
8000 - DISABILITY DETERMINATION DIVISION	\$11,468,035	\$12,686,650	\$13,023,885	\$0	\$13,023,885	2.66%
9220 - DDS P-CARD DEFAULT PROGRAM	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
9960 - YR END CLOSE	(\$22,994)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
9980 - PAYROLL DEFAULT PROGRAM	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$162,808,022</b>	<b>\$197,975,632</b>	<b>\$203,726,235</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$203,926,235</b>	<b>3.01%</b>

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
<b>Office of Disability Rights (ODR)</b>						
FEDERAL GRANT FUND	\$392,449	\$627,570	\$637,570	\$0	\$637,570	1.59%
LOCAL FUND	\$1,269,701	\$1,452,359	\$1,467,259	\$0	\$1,467,259	1.03%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	\$227,830	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$1,889,980</b>	<b>\$2,079,929</b>	<b>\$2,104,829</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,104,829</b>	<b>1.20%</b>
<b>Office of the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (ODDHH)</b>						
1000 - AGENCY MGMT	\$608,027	\$640,045	\$644,610	\$0	\$644,610	0.71%
2000 - DISABILITY RIGHTS	\$1,282,190	\$1,439,885	\$1,460,219	\$0	\$1,460,219	1.41%
9960 - YR END CLOSE	(\$236)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$1,889,980</b>	<b>\$2,079,929</b>	<b>\$2,104,829</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,104,829</b>	<b>1.20%</b>
<b>Office of the Ombudsman for Children (OFC)</b>						
2000 - OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN	\$49,472	\$935,000	\$938,000	\$224,095	\$1,162,095	24.29%
<b>TOTAL GROSS FUNDS</b>	<b>\$49,472</b>	<b>\$935,000</b>	<b>\$938,000</b>	<b>\$224,095</b>	<b>\$1,162,095</b>	<b>24.29%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$999,143,079</b>	<b>\$809,797,819</b>	<b>\$858,400,413</b>	<b>\$939,533</b>	<b>\$859,339,947</b>	<b>6.12%</b>

## D. FY 2024 AGENCY FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
<b>Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	553.76	621.00	641.35	(24.00)	617.35	(0.59%)
FEDERAL PAYMENTS	3.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
FEDERAL GRANT FUND	170.63	219.60	205.52	0.00	205.52	(6.41%)
PRIVATE GRANT FUND	2.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
PRIVATE DONATIONS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS ('O'TYPE)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>730.71</b>	<b>840.60</b>	<b>846.87</b>	<b>(24.00)</b>	<b>822.87</b>	<b>(2.11%)</b>
<b>Department of General Services (DGS)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	588.50	637.50	613.50	7.00	620.50	(2.67%)

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
DEDICATED TAXES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
FEDERAL PAYMENTS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
PRIVATE DONATIONS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS ('O'TYPE)	8.00	4.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	22.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>618.50</b>	<b>641.50</b>	<b>617.50</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>624.50</b>	<b>(2.65%)</b>
<b>Department on Disability Services (DDS)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	168.02	208.20	208.90	0.00	208.90	0.34%
FEDERAL PAYMENTS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
FEDERAL GRANT FUND	163.39	179.80	180.30	0.00	180.30	0.28%

Fund Type	FY 2022 Actuals	FY 2023 Approved	Mayor's FY 2024 Proposed	Committee Variance	Committee's FY 2024 Recommendation	Committee Percent Change
FEDERAL MEDICAID PAYMENTS	41.39	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%
SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE FUNDS ('O'TYPE)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>372.80</b>	<b>428.00</b>	<b>429.20</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>429.20</b>	<b>0.28%</b>
<b>Office of Disability Rights (ODR)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	9.71	11.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	9.09%
FEDERAL GRANT FUND	2.53	3.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	33.33%
OPERATING INTRA-DISTRICT FUNDS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>12.24</b>	<b>14.00</b>	<b>16.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>16.00</b>	<b>14.29%</b>
<b>Office of the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (ODDHH)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	0.00	6.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Office of the Ombudsman for Children (OFC)</b>						
LOCAL FUND	1.01	5.00	5.00	2.00	7.00	40.00%
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>40.00%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1,735.26</b>	<b>1,935.10</b>	<b>1,920.57</b>	<b>(15.00)</b>	<b>1,905.57</b>	<b>(1.33%)</b>

## E. FY 2024 - 2029 AGENCY CAPITAL BUDGETS

Project No.	Project Title	Scenario	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	6-year total
<b>Department of General Services</b>									
PL902	Critical System Replacement	Mayor's Submission	7,514,333	5,335,774	583,618	767,590	1,290,799	1,500,000	16,992,114
		Committee Variance	1,866,721	0	0	0	0	0	1,866,721
		Committee Approved	9,381,054	5,335,774	583,618	767,590	1,290,799	1,500,000	18,858,835
BRM03	DC General Campus Renovations	Mayor's Submission	5,000,000	2,400,000	0	0	0	0	7,400,000
		Committee Variance	(2,000,000)	0	0	0	0	0	(2,000,000)
		Committee Approved	3,000,000	2,400,000	0	0	0	0	5,400,000
EA710	Eastern Market	Mayor's Submission	660,667	0	0	0	0	0	660,667
		Committee Variance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Committee Markup	660,667	0	0	0	0	0	660,667
PL901	Energy Retrofitting of Dist. Buildings	Mayor's Submission	1,500,000	2,000,000	0	0	0	0	3,500,000
		Committee Variance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Committee Markup	1,500,000	2,000,000	0	0	0	0	3,500,000
BC101	Facility Condition Assessment	Mayor's Submission	2,000,000	1,500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	7,500,000
		Committee Variance	(1,000,000)	0	0	0	0	0	(1,000,000)
		Committee Markup	1,000,000	1,500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	6,500,000
BRMFM	Fleet Replacement/ Upgrade	Mayor's Submission	1,106,721	517,894	533,431	1,177,272	652,982	672,571	4,660,871
		Committee Variance	(1,106,721)	0	0	0	0	0	(1,106,721)
		Committee Markup	0	517,894	533,431	1,177,272	652,982	672,571	3,554,150
AM0IT	IT Modernization	Mayor's Submission	750,000	0	0	0	0	0	750,000
		Committee Variance	(750,000)	0	0	0	0	0	(750,000)
		Committee Markup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BRM04	Marion S. Barry, Jr. Building	Mayor's Submission	5,580,000	4,048,000	0	0	0	0	9,628,000
		Committee Variance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Committee Markup	5,580,000	4,048,000	0	0	0	0	9,628,000
PL905	Municipal Labor Program Management	Mayor's Submission	6,152,510	0	0	0	0	0	6,152,510
		Committee Variance	(2,500,000)	0	0	0	0	0	(2,500,000)
		Committee Markup	3,652,510	0	0	0	0	0	3,652,510
BRM08	Oak Hill Campus	Mayor's Submission	3,439,111	0	0	0	0	0	3,439,111
		Committee Variance	(560,000)	0	0	0	0	0	(560,000)
		Committee Markup	2,879,111	0	0	0	0	0	2,879,111
PL602	Roof Replacement Pool	Mayor's Submission	2,000,000	1,232,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	8,232,000
		Committee Variance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Committee Markup	2,000,000	1,232,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	8,232,000
WIL02	Wilson Building	Mayor's Submission	2,665,000	1,068,750	300,000	500,000	0	0	4,533,750
		Committee Variance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Committee Markup	2,665,000	1,068,750	300,000	500,000	0	0	4,533,750
New	Amigos Park	Mayor's Submission	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Committee Variance	500,000	0	0	0	0	0	500,000
		Committee Markup	500,000	0	0	0	0	0	500,000
Department of General Services Total			32,818,342	18,102,418	3,667,049	4,694,862	4,193,781	4,422,571	67,899,023

## F. TRANSFERS IN FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

<i>Sending Committee</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FTEs</i>	<i>Receiving agency</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FTEs</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Recurring or One-Time</i>
Committee on Transportation and the Environment	\$696,000	0	Department of General Services	\$696,000	0	7000	For SETF fee increase in natural gas and electricity	Recurring
<b>Total</b>	\$696,000			\$696,000				

## G. TRANSFERS OUT TO OTHER COMMITTEES

<i>Receiving Committee</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FTEs</i>	<i>Receiving agency</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FTEs</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Recurring or One-Time</i>
Committee on Transportation and the Environment	\$109,000	1	DDOT	\$109,000	1	PD00	Program admin req'd by Sec. 2d of "Safe Streets for Students Amendment Act of 2022"	Recurring
Committee on Transportation and the Environment	\$143,000	1	DDOT	\$143,000	1	PD00	School zones updates req'd Sec. 2f of "Safe Streets for Students Amendment Act of 2022"	Recurring
Committee on Transportation and the Environment	\$123,000	1	DDOT	\$123,000	1	PD00	SRTS master plan req'd by Sec. 2i of "Safe Streets for Students Amendment Act of 2022"	Recurring
Committee on Transportation and the Environment	\$54,000	0	DDOT	\$54,000	0	PD00	Annual reporting req'd by Sec. 2j of "Safe Streets for Students Amendment Act of 2022"	One-Time
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety	\$260,000	0	OAG	\$260,000	0	9031	Domestic workers public education grants	Recurring
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety	\$140,539	1	OAG	\$140,539	1	9031	Domestic workers staffing and supplies	Recurring
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety	\$196,620	1	OAG	\$196,620	1	8100	New Family Services Division section chief staffing & supplies	Recurring
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety	\$340,000	1	ONSE	\$340,000	1	2000	Leadership Academy staffing	Recurring
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety	\$200,000	0	ONSE	\$200,000	0	2000	Leadership Academy contracts	Recurring
Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety	\$10,000	0	ONSE	\$10,000	0	2000	Leadership Academy supplies	One-Time
Committee on Business & Economic Development	\$10,500	0	DSLBD	\$10,500	0	4000	Takoma Main Street Support	Recurring
Committee on Housing	\$2,100,000	0	DHS	\$2,100,000	0	5000	ERAP enhancement	One-Time
Committee on Housing	\$1,200,000	0	DHS	\$1,200,000	0	5000	Project Reconnect Enhancement	Recurring
Committee on Recreation, Libraries, and Youth Affairs	\$5,000,000	0	DCPL	\$5,000,000	0	SPL37C	Enhance DCPL capital budget	Capital – FY24
Committee of the Whole	\$550,000	0	DCPS	\$550,000	0	0A737C	Stoddert Modernization, per request of W3 Councilmember	Capital – FY24
<b>Total</b>	\$10,436,659	6		\$10,436,659	6			

## H. REVENUE ADJUSTMENTS

The Committee recommends no revenue adjustments.

## I. FUNDING OF LEGISLATION

<i>Bill, Law, or Subtitle #</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FTEs</i>
Subtitle XXX1 "School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Amendment Act of 2023"	BSA	DGS	Confirmed as absorbed by the agency	\$0	0
Subtitle XXX2 "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023"	BSA	DGS	3000/3009/50	\$536,000	0
Subtitle XXX3 "Grandparent and Caregiver Subsidy Eligibility Expansion Amendment Act of 2023"	BSA	CFSA	4000/4012/50 4000/4013/50	\$250,000	0
Sec. 4 of "Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022" (L24-317)	Passed S2A	CFSA	Confirmed as absorbed by the agency	\$14,000	0
Sec. 4 of "Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022" (L24-306)	Passed S2A	DGS	7000/7007/11 7000/7007/14	\$90,805 \$24,699	1



## II. AGENCY FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. INTRODUCTION

<i>Performance Oversight Hearings</i>	
<b>February 16, 2023</b>	Office of Disability Rights Department on Disability Services Office for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing
<b>February 24, 2023</b>	Child and Family Services Agency Office of the Ombudsperson for Children
<b>February 28, 2023</b>	Department of General Services (public witnesses)
<b>March 2, 2023</b>	Department of General Services (government witnesses)

<i>Budget Oversight Hearings</i>	
<b>March 29, 2023</b>	Office of Disability Rights Department on Disability Services Office for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing
<b>April 6, 2023</b>	Department of General Services
<b>April 11, 2023</b>	Child and Family Services Agency Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (public witnesses)
<b>April 12, 2023</b>	Child and Family Services Agency Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (government witnesses)

The Committee received important comments from members of the public during these hearings. Copies of witness testimony have been filed with the Office of the Secretary. A video recording of the hearings can be obtained through the Office of Cable Television or at [oct.dc.gov](http://oct.dc.gov). The Committee continues to welcome public input on the agencies and activities within its purview.

## B. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY

### 1. AGENCY MISSION AND OVERVIEW

The mission of the Child and Family Services Agency (“CFSA,” or the “Agency”) is to ensure the safety, permanence, and wellbeing of abused and neglected children in the District of Columbia and to strengthen their families.

CFSA investigates reports of child abuse and neglect and provides child protection. Services include supportive community-based services that help families overcome difficulties while keeping their children out of foster care, foster care for children who cannot be safe at home, and adoption for children who cannot go home. CFSA seeks to provide the highest quality of community-based services to increase the number of families who receive preventive and supportive services and to expand the network of resources providing services to at-risk children and their families.

CFSA operates through the following eight divisions:

**Agency Programs** – provides case management for children and youth in foster care. The Agency Programs administration works to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and youth in care while moving them to permanence as quickly as possible via reunification, guardianship, or adoption.

This division contains the following seven activities:

- **Permanency** – provides case management and permanency support for children from the inception of concurrent permanency planning through finalization of reunification, guardianship, or adoption;
- **Teen Services** – provides permanency support, consultation, technical assistance, training, and case management for older youth between the ages of 15 to 21. Teen Services works to achieve permanence for older youth while at the same time providing life skills training, vocational and educational support, and transitional assistance to prepare them for independence after leaving foster care;
- **Family Resources** – provides foster and adoptive resource recruitment and support services to current and potential foster, kinship, and adoptive parents;
- **Facility Licensing** – provides licensing for CFSA’s foster homes;
- **Contract Monitoring** – provides oversight of CFSA purchases via contracts and ensures program outcomes and adherence to contractual requirements;
- **Child Placement** – identifies living arrangements for children who must enter foster care, including family foster homes, group care, and independent living programs; and
- **Kinship Support** – identifies viable family resources, conducts family team meetings, facilitates placements with relatives, expedites licensing of kinship foster parents, and provides supportive services.

**Community Services** – is composed of investigative social workers, medical professionals, social workers, case managers, and other professionals responsible for monitoring and overseeing services to children who are placed in foster care. Community Services operates CFSA’s on-site clinic and the child abuse hotline.

This division contains the following four activities:

- **Child Protective Services - Investigations** – receives reports of suspected child abuse or neglect through the hotline, investigates families whose children are alleged victims of abuse or neglect, and makes determinations regarding immediate removals and/or court referrals;
- **Clinical Health Services** – provides medical and behavioral health screenings prior to placement and expert consultation in health, residential treatment, developmental disabilities, and 24/7 on-call support for medical and mental health services;
- **Nurse Care Management** – supports a cadre of nurse care professionals to support the medical needs of children in care; and
- **Healthy Horizons Clinic** – provides medical health screenings prior to placement and expert consultation in health, residential treatment, developmental disabilities, and 24/7 on-call support for medical services.

**Adoption and Guardian Subsidy** – supports families caring for children and providing a long-term permanent placement for children.

This division contains the following four activities:

- **Adoption and Guardianship Subsidy** – provides financial assistance services to eligible relatives and adoptive parents so that they can maintain children in permanent homes;
- **Guardianship Subsidy** – provides financial assistance services to eligible relatives and non-family caregivers so that they can maintain children in permanent homes;
- **Grandparent Subsidy**– provides financial assistance services to eligible grandparents so that they can maintain children in permanent homes; and
- **Close Relative Caregivers Subsidy** - provides financial assistance services to eligible close relatives so that they can maintain children in permanent homes.

**Policy and Planning** – serves as the “state-level” function for District child welfare and supports CFSA’s policy development, planning and data analysis, Fair Hearings, D.C. Child Protection Register, quality assurance, and training functions. In addition, Policy and Planning licenses foster parents, group homes and independent living facilities that provide services to youth.

This division contains the following three activities:

- **Policy** – develops agency policy and provides review, interpretation and decision-making services to the Director and staff so that they can make decisions consistent with best practices and with statutory and regulatory requirements;
- **Planning and Data Analysis** – provides reporting, data analysis, technical assistance, and research services to the agency and external stakeholders in order to facilitate short and long-term agency strategic planning; and
- **Quality Assurance** – provides assessment, monitoring, and recommendation services to CFSA staff and key stakeholders to improve child welfare practice. In addition, Quality Assurance is responsible for facilitating qualitative review processes such as child fatality reviews and quality service reviews in order to identify areas of strength and need in line with best practices and child welfare standards.
- **Clinical Practice (Well Being)** – provides comprehensive well-being services for children in CFSA’s care, including educational services, liaisons for substance abuse and domestic violence services, and day care. This division is responsible for implementing CFSA’s trauma-informed practice.

- **Community Partnerships** – forges community partnerships and supports community-based programs and strategies designed to strengthen families and promote safety and stability for these families as well as at-risk children.

This division contains the following four activities:

- **Community Partnership Services** – provides staffing support and oversight of community-based prevention, supportive, and after-care services to families and at-risk children in their homes, maximizing the use of informal and formal support systems;
- **In-Home** – serves families in-home through social work units co-located with community partners to provide community-based family supportive services;
- **Prevention Services** – provides direct community-based prevention, supportive, and after-care services to families and at-risk children in their homes, maximizing the use of informal and formal support systems; and
- **Families First DC** – supports a continuum of prevention services focused on stabilizing and strengthening families. Services are provided through neighborhood-based resource centers, integrating government initiatives and programs to build on family and community strengths and meet families’ complex and interconnected needs.

**Agency Management** – provides for administrative support and the required tools to achieve operational and programmatic results. This division is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.

**Agency Financial Operations** – provides comprehensive and efficient financial management services to, and on behalf of, District agencies so that the financial integrity of the District of Columbia is maintained. This division is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.

### **Division Structure Change**

The Child and Family Services Agency has no division structure changes in the FY24 proposed budget.

## **2. COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **a. Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Recommendations**

The Committee recommends **approval** of the Mayor’s proposed FY2024 operating budget for the Child and Family Services Agency with the following modifications:

#### **Grandparent and Close Relative Caregiver Programs**

The Grandparent Caregiver Program (GCP) and the Close Relative Care Giver Program (CRCP) help low-income district residents who are raising kin. In 2015, CFSA drafted legislation to create a subsidy for grandparent caregivers whose ability to provide care to children is compromised by failing mental and/or physical health, or a death in the family.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, in 2019, the Close Relative Caregiver subsidy was created to address the growing needs of relative caregivers that do not meet the eligibility requirement for the Grandparent Caregivers Program.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Child and Family Services Agency Grandparent Caregiver and Close Relative Caregiver Program Annual Report 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Last year, the GCP and CRCP expanded the eligibility of the program by removing the requirement that a caregiver demonstrates that she has been a child’s primary caregiver and that the child has resided with her for the six months next preceding the application for a subsidy.<sup>3</sup> It also expanded subsidy eligibility by allowing non-blood related caregivers or godparents to apply for subsidies.<sup>4</sup> In order to be eligible for the programs, a participant’s household income must be below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the amount of subsidy that is available is offset by any Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits that a participant is receiving.

During this year’s performance and budget oversight hearings, the Committee heard testimony from witnesses who urged Council to amend the law to exclude SSI benefits from household calculations for the GCP and CRCP. According to witnesses, although caregivers may be eligible to receive a subsidy, the GCP or CRCP benefits are reduced once SSI benefits are taken into consideration. One witness provided written testimony that explained her frustrating experience with applying for the subsidy.<sup>6</sup> Caylyn Keller, from DC Kincare Alliance also testified that “[a]s a society, we provide SSI benefits to children from low-income households because we recognize that a child with a serious disability that impacts their daily life has greater needs and associated costs than a similarly situated child without a serious disability.”<sup>7</sup>

The Committee agrees with many of the witnesses and recommends that the law is amended to exclude SSI benefits from the household income calculations and subsidy considerations. The Committee is proposing a BSA address these concerns. The Committee’s proposed BSA Subtitle, the *Grandparent and Caregiver Subsidy Eligibility Expansion*, makes several necessary changes to the GCP and CRCP. The subtitle would amend the GCP and CRCP (D.C. Official Code § 4-251.03(a)(5)) by excluding SSI from household income calculations and removing SSI benefits from subsidy calculations for eligible participants.

This BSA will have a significant impact for families in the District. In calendar year (CY) 2022, the Grandparent Caregivers Program served 801 children, with a monthly average of 747 children (484 families) served. In calendar year (CY) 2022, the CRCP program served 71 children, with a monthly average of 39 children (39 families) served.

Funding considerations should also be examined for the GCP program. Last year, the Committee on Human Services added additional funding to the GCP. However, the FY24 proposed budget cuts \$413,000 from the program. The Committee is restoring \$71,000 back to the GCP to right size its budget.

### **Home Visiting**

The Committee supports CFSA’s home visiting program and has increased the budget by \$300,000 to help increase home visitor salaries. The Committee heard testimony from home visitor grantees and participants about the important work being done by volunteers. While home visiting is an evidence-based service delivery strategy, the home visitor program is in danger of losing valuable

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<sup>3</sup> B24-0462, “Grandparent and Close Relative Caregivers Program Amendment Act of 2022”.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> D.C. Official Code § 4–251.03(a)(5) (2022); see also D.C. Official Code § 4–251.23(a)(5) (2022).

<sup>6</sup> Performance Oversight Hearing, Feb. 24, 2023. Testimony of Mikeisha Blackman.

<sup>7</sup> Budget Oversight Hearing, April 11, 2023. Testimony of Caylyn Keller, DC Kincare Alliance.

workers due to low wages.<sup>8</sup> The Committee’s recommended increase is necessary to help preserve the program and will prevent CFSA involvement for families that need additional support.

### **Child Placement**

The Committee is restoring \$515,000 to the Child Placement budget. The proposed FY24 budget reduces the child placement budget by \$4.3 million. The Committee heard testimony during the budget oversight hearing about the potential consequences of these cuts. Dr. Sheryl Brissett Chapman, Executive Director of The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) testified that NCCF serves 44% of total youth who are in care and that the proposed cut will impact the current contract that the organization has with CFSA.<sup>9</sup> Sharra Greer of Children’s Law Center also testified about the concerning cuts to child placement, stating that “a \$4.3 million cut more than doubles the reductions CFSA has made to placements between FY21 and FY23 and the number of children in care, as of February 2023, has increased from the number of children in FY22 (537 to 541) and only represents a 73-child difference between FY21 and FY23. During the budget hearing, Director Matthews stated that the Agency conducted a placement needs assessment and that based on the number of kids in care and the number of beds available, the Agency does have sufficient support to help additional children. The Committee commends the Agency for conducting a needs assessment and for considering the consequences of a \$4.3 million dollar reduction. However, the Committee understands the concerns of the community and the organizations currently working with CFSA-involved children. Expecting organizations to deliver the same level of services for less funding is unreasonable and does a disservice to children and families receiving services, as well as the staff responsible for delivering services. The Committee will also continue to monitor the potential impacts of this reduction and work with the agency on addressing possible service gaps.

### **Safe Shores**

Safe Shores is the child advocacy center for the District is part of the Multi-Disciplinary Team on Child Abuse Investigations (“MDT”). MDT is a group of entities that works together to serve hundreds of children annually through its child abuse case review system, which makes the criminal legal system less traumatic and difficult to navigate for victims and their families by reducing duplicative interfacing with victims for any necessary reporting and investigative documentation. Safe Shores provides survivor-centered intervention, hope, and healing for children and families affected by abuse, trauma, and violence in the District and works to prevent and end child abuse and neglect through promising practices, policies, and partnerships.

The proposed FY24 budget removed all funding for Safe Shores. The Committee was able to restore all \$1.3 million dollars to fund the important work that Safe Shores continues to achieve for District youth.

### **Family Services Division Manager**

The Committee is sending \$196,620 to the Office of the Attorney General to hire a new section chief in the OAG Family Services Division (FSD) to advance the shared objectives of the OAG and CFSA of ensuring the health and safety of all children and promoting family cohesion. FSD attorneys currently provide legal advice and counsel to CFSA regarding both court-involved children who are in foster care and non-court-involved children who remain in homes where abuse

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<sup>8</sup> Budget Oversight Hearing, April 11, 2023. Testimony of Nisa Hussain.

<sup>9</sup> Budget Oversight Hearing, April 11, 2023. Testimony of Dr. Sheryl Chapman (NCCF).

and neglect have been reported but who have not yet been placed in foster care. There is a clear need for this same intensive case review for children who remain in-home to provide additional guidance earlier in the process, instead of after persistent problematic behavior has necessitated court involvement and foster care. Because the in-home population is currently almost double the foster care population, FSD's need for this additional section chief resource is acute.

### **Vacancies**

The Committee asked CFSA about its vacancies and recruitment strategy during its budget oversight hearing. One of the agency's strategies to recruit hard-to-fill positions includes working with the Board of Social Work (Board) to recruit Bachelor-level social workers. The Agency is working with the Board to address the social worker shortage throughout the agency. While the Committee supports the Agency's plans to address its vacancies, the Committee examined 25 positions that had been vacant and unfilled since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee was able to take \$1,219,701.81 in vacancy savings and use that for immediate, critical needs like restoring funding to Safe Shores and Child Placement.

### **b. Fiscal Year 2024 - 2029 Capital Budget Recommendations**

The Committee supports the proposed ongoing capital investment in the redesign of the District's Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS).

CFSA is the owner and implementing agency of capital project RL31AC – CCWIS Implementation. Although the proposed capital budget deletes a previously scheduled FY24 allotment of \$1,448,000, the Mayor's proposed FY23 supplemental more than makes up for this deletion. The proposed FY23 supplemental budget includes an additional \$5,448,310 for this project. The proposed FY24-29 capital improvements plan contemplates no further allotments for this project.

## **3. COMMITTEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Committee recommends that CFSA continues to work with DCHA to use the Family Unification Program Vouchers and develop an effective plan to assist youth aging out of foster care. During the budget oversight hearing, the Committee heard testimony about CFSA's failure to spend resources with the housing choice vouchers program. During his testimony, Director Matthews stated that the unspent vouchers is more about a difference in values in helping youth achieve independence once aging out of care. The Committee commends the Agency for being cautious and not wanting to "set older youth up for failure" but by not distributing vouchers to those who need it the most, the Agency could create more problems for older youth who need as much support as possible. While CFSA offers financial literacy and independent living classes for youth, the classes are not mandatory. CFSA also does not track the housing needs of youth once they age out. The Preserving Our Kids' Equity Through Trusts (POKETT) Amendment Act of 2022 addresses some of these concern by requiring CFSA to screen all youth aging out of care. The Committee recommends that the Agency work with youth and advocates to address housing concerns and develop a plan that ensures older youth who are aging out of care are receiving the necessary resources and support that they need in order to be successful.
2. The Committee recommends that CFSA be more transparent about how the Agency uses flex funds. The Committee heard testimony during the budget oversight hearing urging

“the Agency to spend down all of its flex Funds in the most permissive way possible as cash and ....to provide cash to allow parents no strings attached and no work requirements to deploy the Flex Fund for biological custodial parents as a child benefit for in-home services and for reunification purposes.”<sup>10</sup> The Committee will continue to question any unspent flex funds when so many children and families need assistance with basic necessities.

3. With the many necessary changes to the Grandparent and Close Relative Caregiver programs last year and with this year’s proposed BSA subtitle, the Committee recommends that the Agency continue to work with advocates and the Committee to monitor the programs. This will require CFSA to keep detailed reports and communicate any concerns or gaps that the Agency notices. In calendar year (CY) 2022, GCP served 801 children, with a monthly average of 747 children (484 families) served. In calendar year (CY) 2022, the CRCP program served 71 children, with a monthly average of 39 children (39 families) served. Both programs are vital in preventing children from entering foster care.

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<sup>10</sup> Budget Oversight Hearing, April 11, 2023. Testimony of Melody Webb, Mothers Outreach Network.



## C. DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

### 1. AGENCY MISSION AND OVERVIEW

The mission of the Department of General Services (“DGS”) is to build, maintain, and sustain the District of Columbia’s real estate portfolio, which includes more than 42 million square feet of District-owned and leased property and roughly \$19.8 billion in assessed District owned property in Washington, DC. The Acting Director of DGS is Delano Hunter. DGS divides itself into seven divisions:

- *Office of the Director*: provides overall leadership for the department, including policy development, planning, performance measures, accountability, service integration and customer service. The Director’s office also administers day-to-day operations of the department, including operating and capital budget preparation and administration, training, information technology management, human resources, and legal counsel.
- *Capital Construction Services Division*: implements and manages the public building needs through the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for most District government agencies. The CIP outlines agencies’ capital needs, including the rehabilitation of existing properties and construction of new facilities. This division ensures the timely and cost-effective delivery of superior quality engineering, design, and construction, as well as a variety of other technical services on all relevant capital development projects in the CIP.
- *Contracting and Procurement Division*: provides service and support to procure goods and services that fall in the following categories: construction, architecture, and engineering; facilities maintenance and operation; real estate asset management (including leasing and auditing); utility contracts; and security. Additionally, Contracting and Procurement is responsible for vertical construction procurements for any District agency without independent contracting authority.
- *Facilities Management Division*: provides comprehensive maintenance, custodial and repair services to ensure District properties are maintained in a safe, clean, and functional state to best serve the staff and residents of the city. This division is responsible for the day-to-day building management and repair of more than 800 District buildings and properties. The division’s duties, include but are not limited to maintenance of building assets and equipment, critical repairs of interior/exterior building structures, custodial and janitorial services, grounds maintenance (natural and artificial), hazardous abatement, inspections and maintenance of facility fire and life safety devices, and parking lot management.
- *Portfolio Management Division*: plans and manages the District’s real estate to achieve its highest and best use. This division engages in activities such as lease administration, allocation of owned and leased properties to District agencies, property acquisition and disposition, fixed cost forecasting for District facilities, and rent collection from entities leasing District-owned property.
- *Protective Services Division*: provides 24-hour security and special police services to support District government operations and protect District employees, resources, and facilities. Services include patrol operations, contract security guard management, electronic security systems, and access control. PSD also assists District and federal agencies during special events and criminal investigations.
- *Sustainability and Energy Division*: is responsible for transforming the District’s utilities and building footprint through energy and sustainability efforts. This division also contains

forecasted expenditures for utility and energy commodities purchased by DGS: natural gas, electricity, steam, and water.

### **Division Structure Change**

The Department of General Services has no division structure changes in the FY 2024 proposed budget.

## **2. COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **a. Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Recommendations**

The Committee recommends **approval** of the Mayor’s proposed FY2024 operating budget for the Department of General Services with the following modifications.

#### Committee Analysis and Comments

##### ***Vacancies and Recruitment***

DGS relies on skilled labor to achieve its mission. Unfortunately, DGS identified several limitations with their current workforce, namely above-average age, and lack of training with new building systems. The average age of a DGS trades employee (i.e., plumbing, boiler operator, etc.) is 55 years old – 10 years older than the average District government employee. Further, of the 220 employees in this division, only 35 of them are under the age of 40. As the District moves to a more sustainable and energy-efficient design for its buildings, its maintenance staff must be fully trained to handle these systems. DGS currently relies on contractors for completion of approximately 50% of all work orders. It is not yet known if this is the optimal balance of in-house vs contracted labor, although surely differences do exist in terms of cost and quality. Further, DGS does not have an identified goal for the optimal balance.

- *Policy Recommendation #1: DGS should develop a strategic hiring plan in partnership with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) to develop a pipeline for District residents to become the next generation of DGS maintenance professionals.*

The Committee asked DGS about its hiring plan for current vacancies, including 27 vacancies in the Facilities Management Division (FMD) and 53 total vacancies across the agency. Notably, as of DGS’s budget hearing, there were no job openings listed on the District’s HR hiring website (careers.dc.gov). DGS said it is in the process of developing a hiring plan, but that it remains challenging to recruit and retain employees – especially trades division employees – because of competitive salaries and bonuses offered for their work outside of District government. That said, without a well-articulated plan for filling current vacancies, the Committee is skeptical that all current vacancies, especially long-vacant positions will be filled within the next fiscal year.

- *Budget Recommendation #1: The Committee is recommending elimination of the following 11 vacant positions, all of which have been unfilled since before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:*
  - Performance Analyst, Position # 108382 (vacant since 11/15/16)
  - Public Information Officer, Position # 45985 (vacant since 2/19/19)
  - Program Analyst, Position # 48043 (vacant since 7/21/18)
  - HR Specialist (Employee & Labor Relations), Position #73349 (vacant since 2/8/20)

- Boiler Plant Operator Supervisor, Position # 00048362 (vacant since 12/29/12)
- Maintenance Worker (Grounds), Position # 00044356 (vacant since 5/25/16)
- Performance Management Officer, Position # 00075150 (vacant since 11/15/16)
- Utility Sys Repair Operations Supervisor, Pos. # 00073425 (vacant since 2/8/20)
- Special Police Officer, Position # 13579 (vacant since 12/10/17)
- Lead Special Police Officer, Position # 24153 (vacant since 4/6/19)
- Special Police Officer, Position # 51033 (vacant since 6/27/19)

### ***311 Integration***

As part of the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Support Act, the Council passed and funded the “School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Act of 2018,” which required DGS to integrate with the 311 system for repairs and other maintenance services at DGS-maintained facilities. The Office of Unified Communications (OUC) received one-time funding to update its system as well as recurring funds to hire an additional call-taker to assist with the increased volume of calls. DGS also received one-time funding to update its request management system.

The Council’s Committee on Transportation and the Environment, which then had oversight of DGS, included the following reasoning in support of the change: “[R]esidents lack a formal method to report any maintenance or other DGS-related service needs for DPR and DCPS facilities managed by DGS. This means that individuals either don’t report identified maintenance needs or are forced to directly email agency staff – a process that is time and effort intensive for the resident and agency staffer, who must input the work themselves.”<sup>11</sup> This statement remains true today.

Unfortunately, as of April 2023, only two DGS-facing service requests have been added to the 311 platform: dog park maintenance and pool maintenance. If a community member notices an overflowing recycling can, broken swing set, or other maintenance issue in a DGS-managed facility, they are unable to report that issue via 311. The current process is for residents to report concerns using DGS’ online Community Facilities Maintenance Request Form. Unfortunately, this system is not widely used (fewer than 2,000 requests were submitted in all FY22 and FY23 through March 1, 2023) and it does not allow requestors to include a picture with their submission. Further, this process does not automatically create a work order in Salesforce, DGS’ computerized maintenance management system, which can lead to delays and increases the risk of missed requests.

In its performance oversight hearing, DGS expressed an openness to expanding the number of service requests available via 311 this year. Unfortunately, during their hearing on the Mayor’s proposed budget for FY24, DGS said they do not have funds to expand the number of service requests in 311. In response, the Committee drafted and confirmed a cost estimate for a Budget Support Act subtitle to clarify any misunderstandings about DGS’ responsibility to integrate its services into the 311 platform.

- *Budget Recommendation #2: The Committee is recommending passage and funding for the “School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Amendment Act of 2023” to make clear that DGS must integrate more of its services into the 311 system including broken equipment, grounds maintenance and overflowing recycling cans in parks.*

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<sup>11</sup> Council Committee on Transportation and the Environment, Fiscal Year 2019 Committee Budget Report, page 138, dated May 4, 2018.

## Facility Management Division

DGS' Facilities Management Division (FMD) is DGS' largest division, both in terms of staffing and subtotal of the agency budget.<sup>12</sup> FMD prides itself on working closely with its client agencies (DCPS, DPR, etc.) to support maintenance and repair service requests throughout the District's portfolio. Unfortunately, FMD struggles to resolve work order requests in a timely manner. The issue persists across all wards, client agencies, priority levels and problem types and has confounded agency leadership for years. The Committee is pleased to increase the Facility Operations program budget by \$7.1 million in Fiscal Year 2024 over its approved Fiscal Year 2023 level (as well as \$1.4 million over the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget), but believes further reform is still necessary to achieve lasting improvement. To accurately identify the root cause of delays, the Committee endeavored to document the lifecycle of a work order from creation to completion. What follows are the Committee's preliminary findings and recommendations for improvement.

### *Work Order Entry and Prioritization*

Staff working in DGS-maintained facilities use Salesforce, the District's Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), to submit work requests to FMD for resolution. The Facilities Intake Request Service Team<sup>13</sup> ("FIRST") reviews each request's written description and problem type submitted with the request and decides if the work is within DGS' scope of responsibility, meaning located on DGS-maintained property and/or for a service that DGS provides. If the work is within DGS' scope, FIRST then approves the request and creates a work order with a unique tracking number and assigns a work team for their review.

Next, FIRST assigns each work order one of three priority levels: routine, high, or emergency denoting the level of threat to operations or safety posed by the issue. Each priority level has a single common Service Level Agreement or "SLA" for completion:

- Routine: request will be completed within 45 days;
- High: request will be completed within 10 days; or
- Emergency: request will be stabilized within 24 hours.

DGS has indicated an openness to developing a new system of SLAs by problem type in the future. Given DGS' resource constraints and the inherent variability among requests, a standard 45-day SLA for all routine issues may be neither realistic nor helpful in communicating expected completion timelines with the public or with client agencies. To achieve this shift, DGS said they would need to analyze work orders by problem type and identify the average time to complete each type of issue and then map realistic SLA completion goals by problem type. The Committee supports this effort.

- *Policy Recommendation #2: DGS should develop ambitious but realistic SLAs by problem type to ensure transparency with the public on the timeline for work orders.*

DGS also maintains a separate, special prioritization tool in Salesforce in coordination with its client agencies. The prioritization tool allows client agencies to identify which work orders should be completed first. The example cited in the hearing was if a hypothetical school had two broken

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<sup>12</sup> Excluding the "Rent-In Lease" budget, which is on DGS' books, but represents the lease costs of other agencies.

<sup>13</sup> FIRST is a part of the Office of the Director but is discussed here under FMD to highlight their role in the lifecycle of a work order.

ceiling tiles, one in the lobby and one in an auditorium, the prioritization tool allows DCPS to request that DGS fix the lobby ceiling tile first. The tool does not allow client agencies to move up a work order's estimated completion date, but rather it allows them to request special attention for specific work orders within a given priority level.

Each client agency can decide which employees have access to the prioritization tool in Salesforce. DCPS gave access to its central office staff, specifically the facilities office and members of the Cluster Support teams. DPR currently has two agency-wide users with access to the tool. DGS says they are working to enhance collaboration between agency management and site-based staff to ensure everyone is on the same page about which work orders to prioritize within each level.

- *Policy Recommendation #3: DGS should be transparent with the public, perhaps through a modification of the public work order dashboard, in identifying which work orders are on DCPS' or DPR's special priority list and why.*

### ***Assigning an Estimated Completion Date or "ECD"***

Separate from its SLA, each work order also gets a unique Estimated Completion Date or "ECD" based on a work team supervisor's review of resource constraints. The SLA is treated as more of a goal, distinct from when DGS can realistically commit to completing a work order. Work team supervisors, who are each subject matter experts in their trade group, base ECD assignments on several factors including an evaluation of resource constraints (whether personnel- or funding-based), supply chain delays, and whether resolving the issue may be disruptive to programming and should, therefore, be completed during an upcoming break.

Unfortunately, DGS' process for assigning ECDs can be quite slow. The Committee requested a list of all approved work orders opened in Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023 through March 1, 2023. The Committee found fully 59% of work orders still open as of April 14, 2023 (4,135 of 7,019 work orders), did not have an ECD assigned yet. 80 of these work orders were opened in October 2021, meaning they have been *open over 500 days without an ECD being assigned*. Perhaps it should come as no surprise, then, that *only one person is responsible for assigning ECD's in each service area* (i.e., electrical services, HVAC services, plumbing, etc.). DGS says they are designing an improved strategic approach to support the work order coordination from assignment to completion, which will include the ECD field in the system.

### ***Supervision of Work***

Once an ECD is assigned, a work order moves from "approved" status to "issued and in process" status, where a craftsperson (either in-house or a contractor) is dispatched to complete the work. Work team supervisors also play an essential role in this step as those responsible for day-to-day oversight of workers. With hundreds of new work orders coming in every day, DGS admitted that supervisors are often pulled in multiple directions and sometimes get called out to help manage emergency situations on the fly. As a result, sometimes requests slip through the cracks.

Limited supervisory capacity also presents a segregation of duties problem. Individuals should not be allowed to review the quality of their own work. In pre-hearing responses DGS said, "some Supervisors/Lead Craftsperson are wearing multiple hats to fill gaps and often are the same individuals executing the work in the field." When asked to explain further in post-hearing questions, DGS cited a hiring freeze in place for portions of FY22. Segregation of duties is an

essential best practice to ensure independent review of work in line with recent recommendations from the Office of the DC Auditor.<sup>14</sup>

- *Budget Recommendation #3: Convert 13% (\$473,128.71) of FMD’s overtime budget (CSG 15) into salary and fringe (CSG 11/14) to enable them to hire three more full-time building maintenance supervisors and managers.*

### ***Excessive Overtime***

The Committee requested a record of the top 25 overtime earners in DGS across Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023. Collectively, the top 25 overtime earners averaged an additional \$31,666 on top of their regular salary for a total of \$791,659.58. DGS’ top overtime users were primarily rank-and-file trades employees within FMD like plumbers, carpenters, welders and boiler plant operators. This makes sense, as these are the employees often asked to work longer hours in response to emergencies and other persistent maintenance challenges during DGS’s seasonal “blitz” efforts. Like the above budget recommendation, the Committee would like to see DGS hire more full-time trades employees to complete work during normal business hours where possible.

- *Budget Recommendation #4: Convert 38% (\$1,415,898.19) of FMD’s overtime budget (CSG 15) into salary and fringe (CSG 11/14) to enable them to hire 14 more full-time trades employees like carpenters, plumbers, mechanics, and boiler plant operators.*

### ***Quality Control***

DGS created a special quality control module for DCPS-based requests. The module gives DCPS 14 calendar days to review and check that work has been done properly before DGS can close out the request. The process starts with an automatic email to the work order requestor, noting that the work has been marked “complete,” and prompting them to check and make sure the work has been done to their liking. Several years ago, DCPS created school-level distribution lists for Salesforce so that all members of a school’s operations team (i.e., principal, foreman, custodians, etc.) could monitor requests together. Unfortunately, the Committee discovered that DCPS has not reliably updated each school’s email distribution list, meaning as staff moved or retired, the lists became out of date, meaning new staff members may not receive notifications of work order progress. The Committee commends DGS for working with DCPS for instituting a process to improve quality control, but coordination between each agency needs improvement.

- *Policy Recommendation #4: DGS should ensure DCPS maintains active distribution lists for work order updates, to assist with quality control (QC) of work orders in schools.*

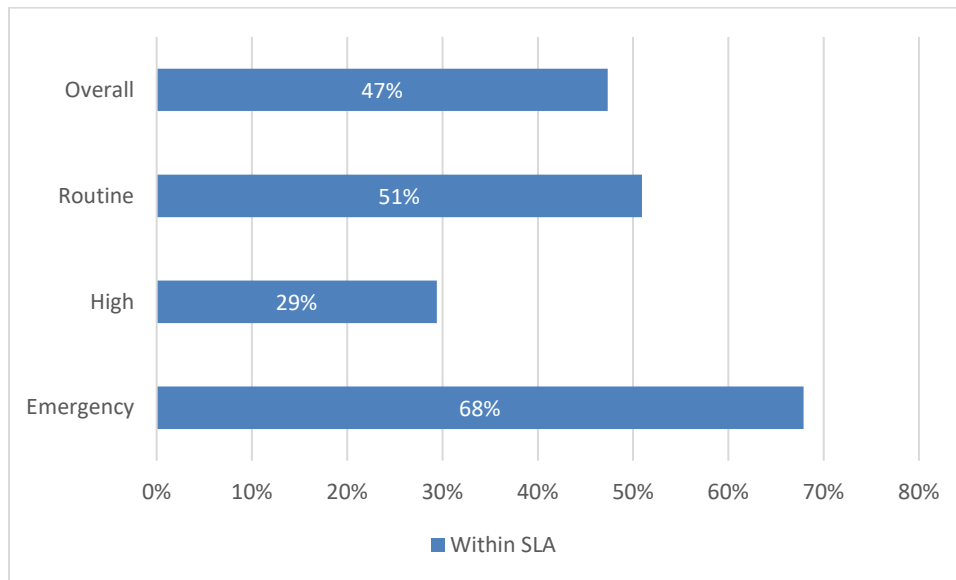
### ***Work Order Timeliness***

The Committee analyzed data on 43,000 approved work orders submitted in Fiscal Year 2022. As shown in Figure 1 below, DGS’s on-time performance for work orders varies by priority level. Overall, 47% of work orders approved in FY22 were completed within their respective SLA. But within that, 51% of routine requests were completed within the 45-day SLA, 29% of high priority work orders were completed within their 10-day SLA and 68% of emergency work orders were completed or stabilized within 24 hours.

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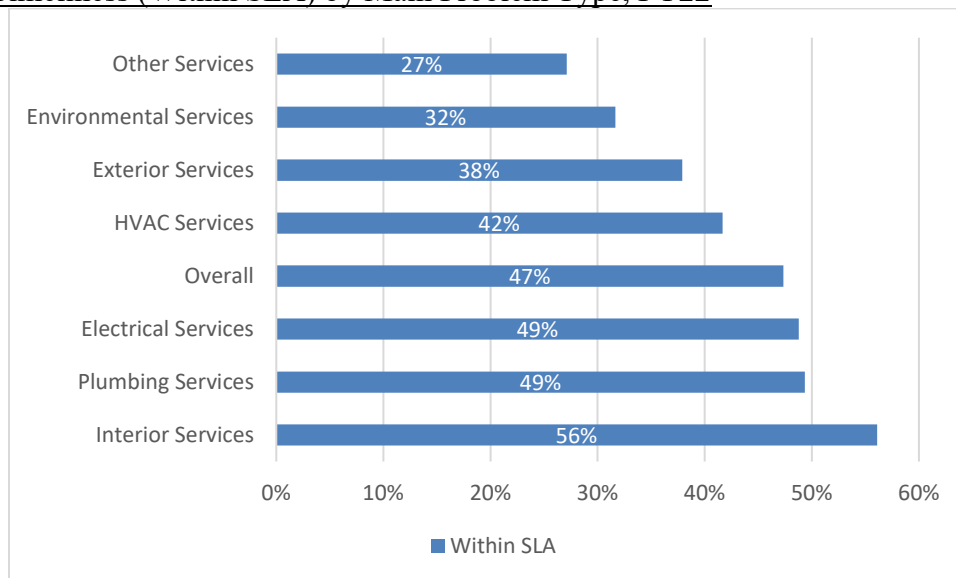
<sup>14</sup> Office of the DC Auditor, “Multiple Failures in Department of General Services Management of Work Orders,” Published November 28, 2022.

Figure 1: Timeliness (Within SLA) by Priority Level, FY22



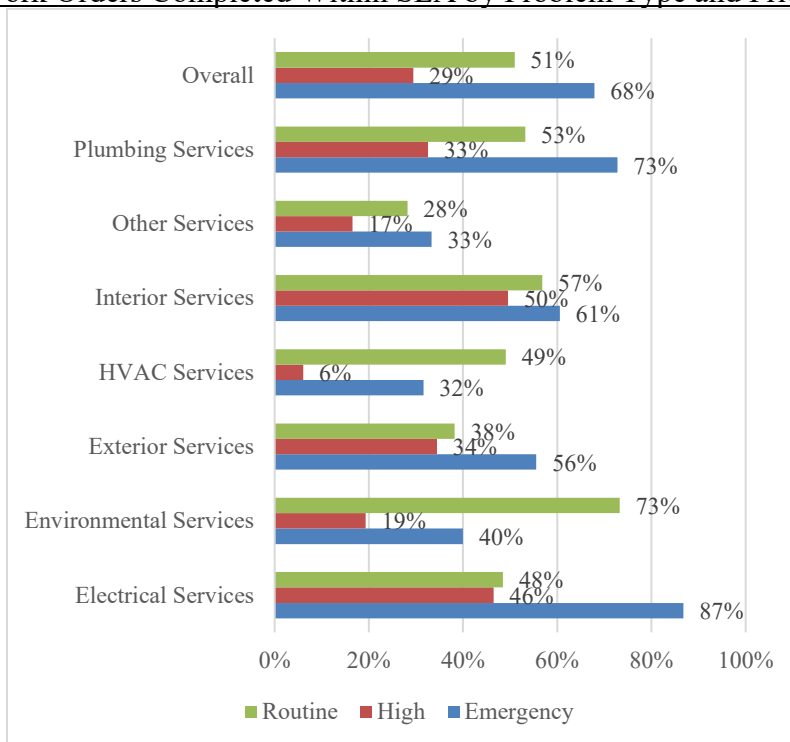
DGS’ on-time performance also varies by problem type. As shown in Figure 2 below, SLA on-time performance ranges from 56% for interior services issues which include lock and door requests and only 27% for “other services” requests which include electronic security issues.

Figure 2: Timeliness (Within SLA) by Main Problem Type, FY22



Combining problem type and priority level, Figure 3 shows even further variation. For example, 87% of emergency electrical services requests were completed or stabilized within 24 hours but only 40% of emergency environmental services requests were completed or stabilized on time. Further, there is variability among issues within the same problem type but at different priority levels. For example, among HVAC service requests, on-time performance ranges from 6% of high priority requests to 49% of routine requests.

**Figure 3: % of Work Orders Completed Within SLA by Problem Type and Priority, FY22**



Public witnesses shared several examples of frustrating work order delays, particularly in DCPS facilities. Sarah Denhardt Cissna of the Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA said, “poor DGS support for DCPS facilities affects every aspect of the school day.” She went on to cite examples of 19 pending work orders for heating or cooling issues across the three Cluster schools as well as multiple open requests for lock & door requests that have been pending since November 2022. Audrey Reese, president of the Burroughs Elementary School PTO, expresses similar concerns related to her children’s school. Burroughs recently experienced a boiler failure leading to gas leaks and floods in the building which disrupted learning and cancelled school for two days. Further, Angela Anderson, president of the Whittier Elementary School PTO, testified that it feels like “Band-Aid fixes” have become the norm in her child’s school. She shared that Whittier has suffered from several outstanding repair issues including ceiling collapses, buckling floors, roof leaks, HVAC issues, non-working water fountains, rodent infestations, and sewage backups.

**Conclusions**

The Committee will continue investigating the causes of FMD’s work order delays. In hearings, DGS cited resource constraints, supply chain issues, and challenges identifying the underlying causes of problems. Deputy Director Donny Gonzalez cited HVAC issues as an example of complex systems that may be misdiagnosed preliminarily and require additional repair work later. For electrical issues, Deputy Director Gonzalez cited unique light fixtures as an example of non-standardized parts that may require new procurements to replace. DGS says they are working to standardize equipment but that this has not been the practice for school modernizations in prior years, and so maintenance delays continue for now. Overall, the Committee believes resource constraints are a leading cause of work order delays, but that managerial improvements and better utilization of Salesforce’s documentation and tracking capabilities can help improve on-time performance amidst limited funding.



- *Policy Recommendation #5: DGS should continue to analyze the root causes of delayed work order responses to ensure adequate resources or organizational changes are made in response, and ultimately, more work order requests are closed in a timely fashion.*

### ***Preventive Maintenance (PM)***

The proposed FY24 preventive maintenance or “PM” budget for DCPS HVAC systems is \$13.9 million. This follows \$14.3 million in FY23 and \$15.7 million in FY22. This funding covers a detailed review of each building’s HVAC asset information which informs a maintenance schedule for each type of asset by season. DGS is also integrating these data into Salesforce to allow supervisors to track whether work is happening on schedule or may be upcoming. DGS is budgeting \$4.5 million in FY24 to expand HVAC PM to non-DCPS facilities. This work is already underway in FY23 with \$900,000 in funding to collect the list of mechanical system assets in MPD, FEMS and DPR facilities to later create a full schedule. DGS plans to have HVAC assets catalogued for future PM by June 2023.

DGS also does preventive maintenance on boilers across its portfolio. Preventive maintenance for boilers includes breaking down a boiler and inspecting its component parts of failures, as well as cleaning and recalibrations for operating controls. Inspectors at the Department of Buildings (DOB) also inspect every boiler each summer. One of the boilers failed at Burroughs ES in January 2023, an event which, according to DGS testimony at the performance oversight hearing, was a result of the boiler being at or near the end of its useful life. DGS has committed to replacing the boiler this summer. In performance oversight, DGS admitted that they contemplated placing a temporary boiler at Burroughs earlier this schoolyear but chose not to because they believed the old boiler could get through one more heating season before needing to be replaced. According to boiler inspection data shared with the Committee in pre-hearing responses, DGS has several other failed or failing boilers in its portfolio. In response, DGS said they are planning to replace 18 boilers<sup>15</sup> in the summer of 2023 in addition to other capital boiler plans. DGS plans to use the bulk of its critical system replacement capital project funding (\$6.7 of \$7.5 million) on boiler replacements in Fiscal Year 2024.

- *Policy Recommendation #6: DGS should continue to expand its preventive maintenance (PM) efforts across its full portfolio and include more equipment, including boilers, to ensure responsible return on investment for maintenance efforts.*

### ***Strategic Planning for Facilities Maintenance***

DGS does not currently have a strategic plan for facilities maintenance across its portfolio. A strategic plan could identify the investments in materials, training, and staffing needed to maintain both our modernized facilities as well older facilities awaiting modernization. For example, it may be better strategically for the District to use in-house labor vs contracted labor – both from a cost perspective and from a quality perspective. Additionally, it would be beneficial for DGS to use the data its work order management system, Salesforce, produces to identify what materials or funding are needed to keep our buildings in good repair. This effort could also include recommendations for DCPS to invest more in level-one custodial staff, which by some estimates, they are currently underfunding.

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<sup>15</sup> 18 boilers across six campuses: Garnet-Patterson (5), Kelly Miller (4), Old Banneker (3), Luke C. Moore (2), Miner (2) and Kenilworth (2).

- *Policy Recommendation #7: DGS should develop a long-range strategic plan for facilities maintenance to ensure modernized and unmodernized buildings are kept in a state of good repair.*

### ***District-owned Forest Maintenance***

DGS is responsible for maintaining a small number of District-owned forest spaces, mostly attached to other DPR or DCPS properties. DGS maintains these spaces as part of its larger grounds and landscaping contract, but the green spaces do not receive regular attention. The issue of forest maintenance came up recently in Ward 4 where the forested portion of the Fort Stevens Recreation Center property had fallen into disrepair amidst years of neglect. As shown in Figure 4 below, with help from DDOT, DGS was able to get an additional contracted cleanup completed and restored the forested area to a useable state once again.

**Figure 4: Fort Stevens Recreation Center Forest, Before and After DGS Intervention**



DGS would benefit from collaborating with other District agencies, namely DDOT’s Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), that may have more subject matter expertise in managing wildlife. For example, there is some disagreement as to whether DGS currently uses native plants in all its landscaping. DGS stated during the hearing that they do plant native plants as part of modernization or beautification projects. However, public witnesses Mary Pat Rowan, Allison Clausen, and Liz Crafford all testified that this has not been their experience. Director Anderson testified that DGS does not currently have a program or policy to remove invasive plants.

- *Policy Recommendation #8: DGS should collaborate with DDOT, UFD and DOEE to develop a plan for managing its grounds and landscaping duties such that the District’s natural resources are well-maintained, and we avoid the use of invasive species.*

### ***School Security***

DGS and DCPS share responsibility for maintaining the physical security of DCPS facilities. DGS is responsible for the physical security of buildings including maintenance of mechanical door locks, windows, public address systems, and fire alarm systems. DCPS does, however, manage its own intrusion detection systems, CCTV security cameras, and electronic access control systems (although DGS installs and repairs these systems). DCPS is responsible for day-to-day security

including school security personnel and collaboration with MPD through the School Safety Division. DGS does not have physical security responsibility over the District's public charter schools, which are each run by independent Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

In the summer of 2022, Councilmember Lewis George worked with Chairman Mendelson and Councilmember Robert White, then the chair of the Committee on Facilities to craft the "Back-to-School Safely Emergency Amendment Act of 2022." The bill required DGS to report out on the state of school safety issues prior to the start of schoolyear 2022-23. Because the bill was an emergency bill, however, it relied on existing funds for DCPS and DGS to complete the inventory, meaning responses relied primarily on counts of open work orders and the results of past facility condition assessments.

Therefore, it was disappointing to hear in preparation for the Fiscal Year 2024 budget, that DGS still had not developed a plan to proactively assess the safety of our schools, let alone the District's recreation facilities. The Committee held a hearing on Bill 25-170, the "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023" on April 13, 2023, with the intention of including funding for it in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget.<sup>16</sup> This bill includes a requirement that DGS work with DCPS to perform an annual comprehensive assessment of school security features like door locks, public address systems, and security alarms to ensure our public schools are safe. The bill also allows DGS to omit certain security-sensitive work orders from its public work order dashboard, in line with current temporary legislation,<sup>17</sup> given the Council receives a monthly report of such work orders.

- *Budget Recommendation #4: The Committee is recommending passage and funding for the "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023" to ensure DGS completes a proactive comprehensive assessment of the safety of all DCPS facilities.*

During the Committee's hearing on Bill 25-170, Chairwoman Lewis George pressed DGS on how it prioritizes security-sensitive work orders including lock and door requests. According to the most recent list shared with the Committee prior to the hearing, 85% (209 of 247) of redacted window, lock & latch, and electronic security issues were assigned the "routine" priority level – as opposed to high priority or emergency priority. DGS said they do this, especially with interior doors, because a malfunctioning door does not "impact programming." The Committee disagrees with this logic and believes most DCPS parents and staff would as well. DGS should move quicker to fix security-related issues, including interior doors that don't lock properly, which represent an inherent safety risk.

- *Policy Recommendation #9: DGS should assign "high" or "emergency" priority to all security-sensitive requests, especially lock and door requests (including interior doors), in DCPS and DPR facilities to ensure they are safe.*

DGS would also do well to streamline how it collects and responds to lock and door work orders. For example, DCPS has one dedicated contractor who manages all its CCTV security cameras and electronic access systems. DGS could use a similar model and identify a dedicated contractor or internal team to develop a specialty for managing lock and door issues. Similarly, DGS could improve its Salesforce intake form to ensure the on-site personnel entering work orders include all

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<sup>16</sup> The hearing record for B25-170 is included in Attachment C to this report.

<sup>17</sup> A24-663, the "Protecting Security-Sensitive Dashboard Data Temporary Amendment Acts of 2022".

the relevant details like whether the issue is mechanical, electrical or a combination. This will help reduce callbacks and delays in getting issues fixed the first time.

### ***Contractor Accountability***

DGS has independent procurement authority, meaning they must maintain their own internal expertise and capacity to manage complex construction, leasing and maintenance contracting relationships. A substantial portion of DGS' overall budget flows through contracts, so the Contracting and Procurement (C&P) Division is a vital part of nearly every other division's effectiveness. Unfortunately, the Committee heard repeated testimony from members of the public that contractors have been known to perform poorly and then receive repeated business from the District without consequence.

The Committee asked C&P how they ensure contractors do a good job. C&P said they work directly with each program team to evaluate contractors on an annual basis. Further, each contract contains mechanisms to enable the agency to request corrective action. In practice, however, there is little evidence that C&P or DGS' other divisions have used this power in practice. DGS shared that it has terminated four contracts in Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023 to date (as of February 2023): all for scope changes or cost changes, none for shoddy work.

The Office of the DC Auditor recently published its annual report on the DCPS school modernization program. This year's report, entitled "Multiple Failures in Roosevelt High School HVAC System," focuses on the multiyear turnover process from construction to occupancy of Roosevelt High School. The report details several instances of faulty installations, absent or non-responsive maintenance from their on-site consolidated maintenance contractor, and inconclusive recordkeeping. The Committee agrees with the sentiment shared by the Office of the DC Auditor in its response to DGS' response to the draft report: "We are concerned that DGS did not avail themselves of every remedy to ensure District dollars are being spent effectively." The Committee has filed public notification of a public oversight roundtable on this report and plans to investigate further DGS' capacity and willingness to hold its contractors accountable.

- *Policy Recommendation #10: C&P should ensure adequate documentation, contract provisions, and other resources are dedicated to holding DGS contractors accountable for quality work.*

### ***Sustainability***

DGS' Sustainability and Energy Division (SED) is responsible for the District's utilities as well as efforts to promote energy efficiency across the District's portfolio. The Committee appreciates SED's efforts to complete DGS's Energy Management Plan – a multiyear effort meant to guide the District's overall energy consumption and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The plan contains measurable goals and benchmarks for progress, and the Committee looks forward to assessing DGS' progress towards achieving greater energy efficiency.

One major contribution SED makes towards improving the District's energy efficiency is through the design and construction of net zero energy (NZE) facilities. DGS helped deliver three new NZE-ready school buildings in recent years: John Lewis ES in Ward 4, Benjamin Banneker High School in Ward 2, and Bard High School in Ward 7. The Committee supports SED's continued leadership on this front and recommends enhancing its budget with funding to repeal the Subject to Appropriations status of B24-785, the "Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022." This law, passed last year by the Council and signed by the Mayor on January 12, 2023,

accelerates the timeline for requirements that, where feasible, all newly constructed or substantially improved building be constructed to net zero building standards. The Committee worked with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer to identify the cost associated with funding the bill, given other enhancements in the Mayor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget, which has now been reduced substantially from its initial FIS of \$8.4 million in Fiscal Year 2023 and \$9.9 million over the four-year financial plan to the cost of one (1) FTE per year in recurring dollars.

- *Budget Recommendation #5: The Committee recommends an enhancement of \$115,504 in Fiscal Year 2024 and \$466,519 over the financial plan to fund an additional 1.0 FTE in the Sustainability and Energy Division to manage compliance and training of personnel associated with the Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022.*

### ***Indoor Air Quality Monitors***

The Committee appreciates SED’s recent installation of additional indoor air quality (IAQ) monitors at Whittier Elementary School in Ward 4. Whittier’s facility has struggled recently with multiple HVAC failures and plumbing issues as the school community awaits its upcoming full modernization. DGS installed dozens of IAQ monitors, each with its own digital readout of CO2 levels, in all student-occupied spaces in Whittier earlier this year.

This initiative builds upon DGS and DCPS’ COVID-era installation of approximately 12 IAQ sensors in each DCPS facility. Each sensor monitors indoor air quality and shares data with a third-party provider, who then shares regular reports back to DGS and DCPS. These reports were posted on DCPS’ website through schoolyear 2021-22, but that appears to have stopped for the current schoolyear.

The Committee believes transparency is key to accountability and public trust. The new IAQ monitors at Whittier allow teachers and students to identify in real-time when there’s been an elevated spike in CO2 levels, which can be remedied by getting the room’s air circulating again, either through activation of the room’s HVAC system or other means. Unfortunately, the roll out of the new IAQ monitors did not come with adequate explanatory materials or training for Whittier’s administration. For example, DGS was not clear with parents or administrators about what level of CO2 was acceptable or safe for classrooms. Further, there was not a clear plan given to them about how to reduce elevated CO2, especially in rooms without fully functioning HVAC systems. SED’s leadership spent time in the building and met with Whittier’s PTO and has helped to get each classroom’s thermostat repaired. However, further engagement and trust-building is necessary to make sure everyone knows how to interpret and use the data from the IAQ monitors.

The Committee supports the expansion of this initiative to other DCPS facilities with some modifications. SED should engage school-level administrators and staff on the development of an FAQ document that is accessible and clear about how to respond to elevated CO2 readings in classrooms. SED should also share real-time access to the data collected from the sensors, which will help promote trust and help train administrators in how to interpret the data. Additionally, the expansion of IAQ monitors should come with enhanced efforts to repair and maintain each school’s built-in HVAC system, ensuring all students and staff have clean air and comfortable spaces for learning.

- *Policy Recommendation #11: DGS should expand its indoor air quality (IAQ) monitoring efforts in DCPS facilities but do so with better engagement with school-level staff.*

**b. Fiscal Year 2024 - 2029 Capital Budget Recommendations**

The Mayor’s proposed capital budget for DGS provides \$73,449,023 in capital allotments during the FY 2024–2029 planning period, including \$38,368,342 in FY24 allotments. These allotments are divided among 12 projects, and the Committee recommends establishing one new project, all as summarized in the following table and discussed below in further detail.

## DGS Capital Budget

	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>FY 2028</b>	<b>FY 2029</b>
<b>Critical System Replacement</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	7,514,333	5,335,774	583,618	767,590	1,290,799	1,500,000
Committee's Recommended Change	1,866,721	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Total	9,381,054	5,335,774	583,618	767,590	1,290,799	1,500,000
<b>DC General Campus Renovations</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	5,000,000	2,400,000	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Change	(2,000,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Total	3,000,000	2,400,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Eastern Market (approve as proposed)</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	660,667	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Energy Retrofitting of District Buildings (approve as proposed)</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	1,500,000	2,000,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Facility Condition Assessment</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	2,000,000	1,500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Committee's Recommended Change	(1,000,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Total	1,000,000	1,500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
<b>Fleet Replacement/Upgrade</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	1,106,721	517,894	533,431	1,177,272	652,982	672,571
Committee's Recommended Change	(1,106,721)	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Total	0	517,894	533,431	1,177,272	652,982	672,571
<b>IT Modernization</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	750,000	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Change	(750,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Total	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Marion S. Barry, Jr. Building (approve as proposed)</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	5,580,000	4,048,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Municipal Labor Program Management</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	6,152,510	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Change	(2,500,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Total	3,652,510	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Oak Hill Campus</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	3,439,111	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Change	(560,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Committee's Recommended Total	2,879,111	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Roof Replacement Pool (approve as proposed)</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	2,000,000	1,232,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000
<b>Wilson Building (approve as proposed)</b>						
Mayor's Proposed FY24-FY29 CIP	2,665,000	1,068,750	300,000	500,000	0	0
<b>Amigos Park (new project)</b>						
Committee's Recommended Total	500,000	0	0	0	0	0
DGS Total (Mayor's Proposed)	38,368,342	18,102,418	3,667,049	4,694,862	4,193,781	4,422,571
Committee's Recommended Changes	(5,500,000)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>DGS Total (Committee Recommended)</b>	<b>32,818,342</b>	<b>18,102,418</b>	<b>3,667,049</b>	<b>4,694,862</b>	<b>4,193,781</b>	<b>4,422,571</b>

## Committee Analysis and Comments

In addition to its own capital projects, DGS is the “implementing agency” for dozens of capital projects that are “owned” by other District agencies. Although these capital projects are an important part of DGS’s activities for FY24, they are not within the Committee’s formal purview. Other Council committees are charged with making recommendations regarding the budget of these projects.

Along with the annual capital budget, the District annually approves a six-year capital improvements plan with a schedule of funding allotments for each future year. Spending authority is granted only for the year of the proposed budget (FY24). The remaining five years constitute the official plan for making and financing improvements in future years, and agencies may encumber (but not spend) expected future allotments. The most recently adopted plan serves as the initial basis for developing the next iteration of the capital budget and capital improvements plan.

### **PL902 – Critical System Replacement**

*Project Summary.* This pooled project funds the replacements of major building components such as roofs, windows, and HVAC systems that are not included in site-specific capital projects. Some of these replacements are planned in advance, and others respond to work orders requiring major replacements.

The proposed six-year plan provides approximately \$17.0 million in funding over the six-year period, including an FY24 allotment of \$7,514,333. There are no changes to the funding schedule approved in the prior six-year capital plan (FY23-28).

During budget execution, funds may be spent directly from this pooled project or reprogrammed to other capital projects for critical system work. Earlier in FY23, DGS reprogrammed approximately \$9.2 million from this pooled project to three capital projects that are owned by DCPS but implemented by DGS. DGS reprogrammed approximately \$8.3 million to GM102 – HVAC Replacement DCPS; \$650,000 to GM313 – Stabilization Capital Labor Program Management; and \$157,000 to GM303 – ADA Compliance.

These reprogrammings are consistent with DGS’s spending plan, which contemplates a boiler replacement project in DCPS facilities beginning in FY23. Although the start of this boiler replacement project was delayed by an unforeseen boiler emergency at Building 27 on the DC General campus, DGS plans in the remainder of FY23 to replace 18 boilers at six school facilities: Kenilworth (2 boilers), the former Banneker site (3 boilers), Luke C. Moore (2 boilers), Kelly Miller (4 boilers), Miner (2 boilers), and Garnett-Patterson (5 boilers).

*Committee Recommendations.* The Committee recommends approval of funding for this project as proposed.

In addition, the Committee recommends adding \$1,866,721 in FY24 allotments, comprised of \$306,721 in GO bond proceeds and \$1,560,000 of paygo, to fund the following improvements and replacements:



- \$400,000 to repair or partially replace the roof of MacFarland Middle School to stop leaking into the media center;
- \$200,000 for grading work and, as may be necessary, other land improvements to make level the primary playground at Powell Elementary School;
- \$200,000 to replace the roof of the fieldhouse that is the location of a tool-sharing library at Twin Oaks Garden;
- \$125,000, or so much thereof as might be necessary, in the event that HVAC components at Whittier Elementary School need replacement;
- \$75,000 to install a swing set with appropriate ground cover at Lamond Recreation Center;
- \$50,000, or so much thereof as might be necessary, to supplement available funding to design and improve the grounds at Lafayette Elementary School (including replacement of the track, stormwater improvements around the track and field, and drainage and soil improvements to the field) and Lafayette-Pointer Park (including soil restoration, installation of downlit light fixtures, and replacement of paved paths with permeable materials);
- \$50,000 to install bottle-filler fountains as a betterment to replace existing drinking fountains at Roosevelt High School;
- \$50,000 to install localized door alarms at MacFarland Middle School;
- \$50,000 to make traffic safety improvements in and around the Decatur Street parking lot at Barnard Elementary School, potentially including installation of a barrier gate (parking arm) and/or a paved walkway around the parking lot;
- \$50,000 to replace plumbing fixtures and components in the bathroom at the Coolidge High School track;
- \$25,000 to install a shade structure at Petworth Recreation Center;
- \$25,000 to install a shade structure at Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center;
- \$20,000 to install vertical netting to enhance the functionality of a fence at Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center;
- \$20,000 to install vertical netting to enhance the functionality of a fence at Shepherd Community Center;
- \$20,000 to replace a gate that is broken or separated from the playground fence at Takoma Recreation Center;
- \$181,721 to repair or partially replace the roof of Burroughs Elementary School;
- \$125,000 to improve the cafeteria bathroom at Langdon Elementary School;
- \$100,000 to repair or partially replace the roof of McKinley Tech;
- \$50,000 to improve, refresh, or refurbish playground equipment at Burroughs Elementary School; and
- \$50,000 to replace a control module at Noyes Elementary School.

The foregoing cost estimates have been supplied by the Committee staff, and it is understood that DGS has not fully vetted them. The Committee intends that funding be reallocated within this

capital project as may be necessary to fully accomplish all of the improvements and replacements practicable.

Further, the Committee appreciates the willingness of the Council Budget Office to make technical changes, if necessary, by swapping paygo funding with GO bond funding in the Council-wide capital budget. These technical changes may be necessary if GO bond funding is not appropriate for any of the foregoing improvements and existing paygo funds are fully committed to the estimated costs of other improvements for which GO bonds also are not appropriate.

### **BRM03 – DC General Campus Renovations**

*Project Summary.* Although much of the former DC General campus is being disposed for redevelopment, the District will keep and continue to use a significant portion. Sites being retained by the District include Building 6 (DGS warehouse), Building 8 (DOB abatement team), Building 12 (DBH detox center), Building 13 (DBH methadone clinic), Building 14 (DBH Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program), Building 15 (current use is unknown; in 2015 DGS obtained a permit to run a backup power generator), and Building 27 (Harriet Tubman women’s shelter). In addition to the retained portions of the DC General campus, the District owns the adjacent area occupied by the Central Detention Facility, Central Treatment Facility, and a building that houses the DOC Visitation Center and the Ready Center providing employment services and other reentry programs for returning citizens.

The primary purpose of this capital project is to decommission and demolish the central boiler plant at the DC General campus, which serves several campus buildings and the Central Detention Facility. The central plant will be replaced with separate boilers in Buildings 8, 12, 13, 14, and 15, all financed through this project. In addition, DGS is the implementing agency for a Department of Corrections capital project, CGN08 – Heating System Replacement, to install a separate boiler system for the Central Detention Facility. The DOC project has a \$25 million budget.

An additional purpose of this capital project is to upgrade the electric power feeder redundancy systems serving the DC Jail Visitation Center and Buildings 6, 8, 13, 14, and 27 on the DC General campus.

This capital project received a prior allotment of \$1,800,000, none of which had been encumbered or spent as of March 22, 2023. The proposed six-year plan would provide an additional \$7.4 million in funding, including \$5,000,000 in FY24 and \$2,400,000 in FY25. The proposed FY24 allotment is \$2 million greater than this project’s funding in the prior six-year capital plan.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends reducing the FY24 allotment by \$2,000,000, leaving a remaining FY24 allotment of \$3,000,000.

As far as the Committee can tell, the boiler decommissioning and replacement work is a higher priority for DGS because an architecture and engineering firm has been or will be engaged. In contrast, the Committee is aware of no movement on the electric feeder work. Thus, it appears the boiler work will begin more quickly than upgrades to the feeder redundancy systems, even though the capital budget appears to assume that both portions of the work will proceed simultaneously.

The Committee intends that DGS proceed on the boiler work with the prior allotments and FY24 new allotments for this capital project. These allotments are sufficient to support DGS's spending plan for the boiler subproject, which forecasts \$600,000 of spending in FY23, \$3,000,000 in FY24, and \$2,400,000 in FY25. The Committee intends that allotments for the feeder work be postponed until the work is ready to proceed.

### **EA710 – Eastern Market**

*Project Summary.* The proposed six-year plan contemplates includes \$661,000 in FY24 allotments (a decrease of approximately \$1.8 million from the prior capital plan) and no further funding for small capital projects at Eastern Market.

This proposed funding is in addition to nearly \$3.4 million of prior allotments that remained available for this project as of March 22, 2023. Using these prior allotments, DGS plans small capital improvements on the following schedule: installation of bollards and fire alarm upgrades in FY23 (\$674,000); replacement of HVAC controls in FY24 (\$800,000); interior and exterior restoration in FY25 (\$464,226); breezeway mezzanine restoration in FY26 (\$345,000); lighting and window upgrades in FY27 (\$750,000); and plumbing and water line heater replacement in FY28 (\$225,000)

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends approval of FY24 funding for this project as proposed; however, the Committee encourages DGS to use the large amount of prior allotments to promptly resolve HVAC deficiencies at Eastern Market. The Committee would welcome revisions to the DGS spending plan to expedite HVAC work or to ensure it addresses all the HVAC deficiencies.

### **PL901 – Energy Retrofitting of District Buildings**

*Project Summary.* The proposed six-year plan allocates \$3.5 million in funding over the six-year period, consisting of \$1.5 million in FY24 and \$2 million in FY25, for improvements to increase the energy efficiency of District buildings. Improvements can incorporate green infrastructure, integrate building systems into a single smart building network, or modify components such as windows, doors, roofs, elevators, and plumbing.

The Mayor's proposed budget is significantly less than the amount DGS requested to bring District facilities into compliance with the Building Energy Performance Standards by the Cycle 1 deadline. To achieve compliance, DGS stated that it would need approximately \$30.9 million, which exceeds the proposed FY24 allotment by \$29.4 million. DGS is currently developing a spending plan based on resource constraints.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends approval of funding for this project as proposed, because the capital funding within the Committee's purview is not sufficient to fill the funding gap.

### **BC101 – Facility Condition Assessment**

*Project Summary.* Facility condition assessments are intended to guide development of the capital budget by assessing the condition of District-owned facilities. This information can be used for planning major capital repairs or meeting future facility needs. In addition to this project, facility

condition assessments are also explicitly within the scope of at least two other DGS capital projects: Critical System Replacement and Energy Retrofitting of District Buildings.

Facility condition assessments are not the only tool for planning future capital improvements. With assistance from DGS and other agencies, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer has developed a Comprehensive Asset Replacement Scheduling System, a modeling tool that inventories all District-owned assets and their condition. Based on CARSS data and financial models, OCFO annually publishes a long-range capital financial plan report.

This project is funded in the proposed six-year plan with \$7.5 million, including \$2 million in FY24 allotments funded solely from paygo capital. Compared to the prior six-year plan (FY23-28), the proposed budget increases the scheduled allotments by \$1,000,000 in FY24 and \$500,000 in FY25.

The proposed six-year plan uses paygo funding for this project in accordance with the Home Rule Act and the District's capital borrowing policy. In the past, this project has been financed with borrowed funds, even though this project does not appear to meet the eligibility criteria for capital financing. Specifically, this project does not create a new asset or extend the life or increase the value of existing assets.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends an FY24 allotment for this project of \$1,000,000, a reduction of \$1,000,000 from the proposed allotment. Despite this reduction, DGS will have resources to conduct 39 facility condition assessments in FY24. Scheduled allotments will increase to \$1,500,000 in FY25 and remain level at \$1,000,000 for each year from FY26-29.

Although the Committee recommends retaining this project on the District's capital budget at this time, DGS and the Executive should consider transferring future funding for facility condition assessment activities to the operating budget. Iterative re-assessment of the condition of District facilities is an ongoing function that appears to belong on the operating budget.

The Committee acknowledges that OCFO integrates DGS facility condition assessments into CARSS data. But the Committee would like to see a closer relationship between CARSS data and the capital improvements that are planned by DGS.

### **BRMFM – Fleet Replacement/Upgrade**

*Project Summary.* DGS currently has a fleet of 221 vehicles. Of the DGS fleet, 192 light-duty vehicles are inventoried in the FY 2022 Vehicle Inventory Report submitted by the Department of Public Works. These light-duty vehicles are pickup trucks, cargo vans, passenger vans and cars, of which 97 were purchased and 95 are leased. It is believed that the remaining 29 DGS vehicles are medium- and heavy-duty vehicles such as stake-bed trucks and dump trucks.

The proposed six-year plan provides approximately \$4.7 million in funding over the six-year period, including \$1,106,721 in FY24 allotments, to refresh the fleet by purchasing new vehicles. This proposed FY24 allotment represents an enhancement of \$723,812 compared to the FY24 allotment that was scheduled in the prior six-year plan (FY23-28).

This capital project was first established in FY23 with an allotment of approximately \$2.1 million. Using approximately \$1.3 million of this funding, DGS has procured 25 light-duty vehicles, primarily for use by the facility maintenance and protective services divisions. Approximately \$700,000 of this prior allotment remains available for future vehicle purchases.

In FY24, DGS plans to procure five light-duty vehicles, three medium-duty vehicles, and two heavy-duty vehicles. For the first time in its written responses submitted to the Committee on April 21, 2023, DGS stated an intention to *expand* its medium- and heavy-duty fleet. By purchasing flat-bed trucks, backhoes, dump trucks, and tractors, DGS will avoid renting such vehicles when they are needed. And the acquisition of garbage and recycling trucks will hedge against the “unpredictable” performance of DGS’s waste operations contractor.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends reducing the FY24 allotment by \$1,106,721.

Although DGS’s light-duty fleet is aging, most vehicles have remarkably little mileage for their age, suggesting that the DGS fleet is too large. According to the FY22 Vehicle Inventory Report, DGS has 59 vehicles that were acquired in 2018 or earlier, yet had traveled fewer than 20,000 miles as of September 30, 2022. Only four out of 192 vehicles had exceeded 100,000 miles.

With respect to the proposed expansion of the medium- and heavy-duty fleets, DGS has not presented information to support its assertions that owning medium-duty vehicles is a better value than occasionally renting them, or that a waste contractor’s poor performance warrants acquisition of expensive garbage trucks as opposed to pursuing contractual remedies or re-bidding the contract.

The Committee believes that DGS’s FY23 allotment of \$2.1 million is sufficient to replace the subset of light-duty vehicles that should be replaced because they are both old and have been fully depreciated by use and to thoughtfully acquire a small number of medium- or heavy-duty vehicles. The Committee will be willing to consider a future light-duty vehicle replacement plan that is grounded in a reasonable analysis of the agency’s vehicle needs. In the meantime, DGS should consider reassigning underused light-duty vehicles to divisions in need.

Finally, as a technical matter that is fiscally neutral, the Committee recommends changing the funding source of all allotments for this project in accordance with the District’s policies on long-term and short-term borrowing. As proposed, all allotments are funded with proceeds of long-term debt (GO Bonds, fund detail 0300). But because the useful life of a vehicle is a poor fit with long-term financing (up to 30 years to scheduled maturity), the Committee recommends funding all allotments with proceeds of short-term debt (Short-Term Bonds, fund detail 0304).

### **AM0IT – IT Modernization**

*Project Summary.* The proposed six-year plan establishes a new IT Modernization project to be funded with a FY24 allotment of \$750,000 from proceeds of shorter-term bonds. DGS is both the owner agency and implementing agency of this information technology project.

Currently, DGS uses a variety of IT systems. Without capital funding in FY23, DGS is working with OCTO to assess its systems.

Based on results of the IT assessment, this capital project would upgrade or replace existing systems and develop new systems. This project would also integrate all DGS systems into a single platform. Although this project would take years and several million dollars, the Mayor's proposed budget proposes no funding after FY24.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends cutting the proposed \$750,000 allotment for two reasons.

First, the proposed funding is clearly insufficient to modernize DGS's IT systems. The Committee is wary of approving a little funding now and implicitly committing to an unknown amount of additional funding in the future, considering that a different District agency is currently struggling to obtain any of the promised benefits from an IT integration and modernization project that has cost 15 years and \$170 million. Without a clearly defined scope and reasonable estimates of the project cost and implementation timeline, no project should be considered.

Second, while the Committee has no reason to doubt claims that existing IT systems are insufficient, DGS has not presented a sufficient justification by explaining how and why this project would improve outcomes. Conceivably, new applications could make it easier to view and manage agency data. But it is just as conceivable that new applications would perpetuate inefficient or error-prone business processes. Without knowing the outcome of the IT assessment that is underway, the Committee cannot have confidence that one result is more likely than another. The business case for an IT modernization initiative is yet to be made.

Despite reducing the funds now, the Committee would be willing to consider a well-defined IT modernization project in the future.

#### **BRM04 – Marion S. Barry, Jr. Building**

*Project Summary.* The Marion Barry Building is a large office building owned by the District and occupied by many District agencies. The proposed six-year plan contemplates approximately \$9.6 million in funding over the six-year period including \$5,580,000 in FY24 allotments. In FY23 and FY24, planned work includes bathroom renovations, HVAC upgrades, prevention of vertical and horizontal moisture penetration, fire alarm and sprinkler work, and office space build-out.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends approval of funding for this project as proposed.

#### **PL905 – Municipal Labor Program Management**

*Project Summary.* This project pays the costs of DGS employees and contractors who manage and implement other capital projects. This project is funded partly with long-term GO bond proceeds and partly with paygo cash. These two parts appear to serve distinct purposes.

The GO-bond portion funds the personal services costs of DGS employees who work as project managers on capital projects where DGS is the implementing agency. This portion supports 23.6

FTE, although none of the positions listed on DGS's Schedule A appear to be supported with capital funds. In addition, a relatively small amount of GO-bond proceeds are budgeted for nonpersonal services.

The paygo portion funds only nonpersonal services costs that are not eligible to be paid from borrowed funds. These costs include maintenance and licenses for software applications, temporary staffing to issue purchase orders and process invoices, and legal support. It is not clear why these costs are included in the capital budget at the budget development stage. During budget execution (in FY21, FY22, and FY23, and possibly earlier also), DGS had used a "reverse paygo" action to convert the paygo-funds from the capital budget to the operating budget, where they are then spent. Because funds are not spent where they were budgeted, it is difficult to track whether funds are being used for their intended purpose.

The proposed capital budget provides \$6,152,510 in funding over the six-year period, all of it in FY24. Of the FY24 allotment, \$4,051,422 is funded with GO bond proceeds and \$2,101,088 is funded with paygo funds.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends reducing the GO bond proceeds for this project by \$2,500,000 based on observed underspending.

DGS claims that no underspending exists and has resisted adjustments to this project's budget in dramatic terms. In written responses submitted to the Committee on April 21, 2023, the agency asserted: "Reductions to this program will eliminate project managers that are responsible for implementing the District's multi-billion-dollar capital program. Should this funding be removed or cut, DGS would need to eliminate *active* and *filled* positions, rendering DGS's capital program largely inoperable. . . . Again, it is critical that this project is fully funded to avoid reductions in force (layoffs) and ensure that the tools and resources that the capital team very much depend on is available to them. Without this, the District will be unable to support our client agencies in the ongoing and successful delivery of facilities."

The Committee staff take such assertions seriously. But these assertions cannot be reconciled with financial data.

In FY23, the GO-bond portion appears on course to spend significantly less than its budget. As of April 21, 2023 (approximately halfway through FY23), the project had spent or committed a total of \$1,767,365, according to DIFS data provided by the Council Budget Office. At this rate, the project's FY23 year-end spending would be approximately \$1.0 million less than its FY23 allotment. Likewise, the project's FY22 spending was approximately \$891,000 less than its FY22 allotment.

Further evidence of a funding glut is found within FY23 DIFS data for the project. In the project's adjusted FY23 budget, fringe benefits are nearly 62% of salaries, far in excess of the observed fringe benefit rate (21.2% of salary expenditures). Committee staff interprets the parking of funds in fringe benefits as a telltale sign of overbudgeting, independent from the fact that the project's spending on salaries is not on a pace to exhaust its salary budget.

Funds are available to be cut from this project in light of its unspent FY22 allotment, overbudgeted FY23 allotment, and overbudgeted FY24 allotment. It is not necessary to eliminate or reduce this project's FTE authority in FY24.

Finally, with respect to the paygo-funded portion of this project, the Committee recommends that future budgets put operating activities on the operating budget, eliminating a need for annual reverse paygo actions and accurately reflecting the agency's intentions.

### **BRM08 – Oak Hill Campus**

*Project Summary.* The 1,000-acre Oak Hill campus, located near Laurel, Maryland, is the site of the New Beginnings secure confinement facility for committed youth and the DC National Guard's Youth Challenge academy. It also is the site of the former Oak Hill youth confinement facility and the former Forest Haven institution for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

This capital project funds infrastructure renovations and other capital improvements on the campus. Using GO bond proceeds allocated to this project, DGS will repair a failing water tower, which is failing and threatening other infrastructure. In addition, paygo funds are allocated to fund a master facility plan to guide future development and use of the campus.

The proposed six-year plan provides \$3,439,311 in FY24 allotments and no funding in other years. Of the proposed FY24 allotment, \$2,879,311 is supported with GO bond proceeds and the remaining \$560,000 are paygo funds.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends eliminating \$560,000 in paygo funding for a master facility plan because there is no compelling need for future development of the campus. Further, development possibilities may be highly constrained by federal interests. The federal government has in the past expressed a strong preference to avoid development of the Oak Hill campus due to its proximity to Fort Meade and the offices of the National Security Agency.

### **PL602 – Roof Replacement Pool**

*Project Summary.* This pooled project funds roof replacements at various buildings managed by DGS. DGS has requested approval to replace roofs at Penn Center, the MPD Public Safety Communications Center (backup 911 call center near Macmillan Reservoir), and a DPW transfer station and packer shop in FY24.

The proposed six-year plan contemplates approximately \$8.3 million in funding over the six-year period including \$2,000,000 in FY24 allotments.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends approval of funding for this project as proposed.

### **WIL02 – Wilson Building**

*Project Summary.* The John A. Wilson Building is an office building that is occupied by the Council, Executive Office of the Mayor, and other District agencies.



The proposed six-year capital improvements plan contemplates approximately \$4.5 million in funding including \$2,665,000 in FY24 allotments. The FY24 allotments are expected to fund HVAC upgrades. This project has a large balance of unspent prior allotments totaling \$6,875,934, of which less than \$300,000 was encumbered as of March 22, 2023.

A separate capital project, WIL04C – John A. Wilson Building Fund, is owned and implemented by the Council. The project has a prior allotment balance of \$1,258,910, none of which is committed.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee recommends approval of the funding for this project as proposed.

### **New Project – Amigos Park**

*Project Summary.* This new capital project will involve site acquisition necessary to fully assemble the Amigos Park site, as well as improvement of Amigos Park. Funds may be used as needed for site acquisition, design, or construction.

The future Amigos Park, at the corner of Mount Pleasant and Kenyon Streets, N.W., is a small site that is split between land owned by the District (DDOT) and a portion of a privately-owned adjacent parcel. In the last budget cycle, Council funded a \$500,000 project to establish the Park; this included \$35,000 in the FY2022 supplemental budget to allow DGS to procure a site survey and assessment before the start of the new fiscal year, in order to inform negotiations with the adjacent property owner.

Because the exact mechanics of site assemblage were uncertain—anything from a use agreement to a lease or full acquisition—Council allocated these funds as operating dollars to allow for the greatest flexibility. According to information provided by DGS, agency staff engaged in negotiations with the adjacent property owner, which resulted in acquisition by the District being the preferred course of action for site assemblage. Unfortunately, doing so would require subdividing the lot, a lengthy process, and potentially costs beyond what were budgeted for in FY2023.

Ultimately, DGS informed Council and the community that it would be moving forward with a project on the District-owned land only, retaining the funding as operating dollars. This necessitates project completion by the end of September, 2023. DGS and DDOT appear to be engaging in the expediting necessary to meet that deadline.

The current plan and timeline are acceptable under the circumstances. The community of Esquineros and the surrounding neighborhood more broadly have been waiting for this project for over a decade. However, the current plan would leave promises only half-delivered on.

*Committee Recommendation.* The Committee accepts the transfer of \$550,000 from the Committee on Public Works and Operations. The Committee further recommends the establishment of a new capital project owned and implemented by DGS and funded with an FY24 allotment of \$550,000.

The Committee asks that all agencies involved ensure clearer communication with both Ward 1 Councilmember Brianne Nadeau and stakeholders, and in the process of building out this space strive to center those who have driven this effort for so long.

### **Not Funded: PL9PR – Public Restrooms**

The District previously funded this capital project to install new standalone public restrooms pursuant to the Public Restroom Facilities Installation and Promotion Act of 2017. The project's goal was to develop a network of ten public restroom facilities citywide. In the FY23 capital budget and capital improvements plan for FY23-28, this project was scheduled for allotments of \$570,000 in each of FY24, FY25, and FY26.

The Mayor's proposed capital budget eliminates all scheduled capital funding for this project. Further, the Mayor's proposed FY23 supplemental budget rescinds all approved prior allotments, totaling \$1,040,000.

In response to questions from the Committee, DGS explained that the unit cost of public restrooms proved to be much higher than anticipated. The Committee infers a refusal on the part of the administration to realize the objective stated in the legislation. Given this refusal, the Committee does not recommend replacing the eliminated funding because the project would be unlikely to move forward.

### **3. COMMITTEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. DGS should develop a strategic hiring plan in partnership with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) to develop a pipeline for District residents to become the next generation of DGS maintenance professionals.
2. DGS should develop ambitious but realistic SLAs by problem type to ensure transparency with the public on the timeline for work orders.
3. DGS should be transparent with the public, perhaps through a modification of the public work order dashboard, in identifying which work orders are on DCPS' or DPR's special priority list and why.
4. DGS should ensure DCPS maintains active distribution lists for work order updates, to assist with quality control (QC) of work orders in schools.
5. DGS should continue to analyze the root causes of delayed work order responses to ensure adequate resources or organizational changes are made in response, and ultimately, more work order requests are closed in a timely fashion.
6. DGS should continue to expand its preventive maintenance (PM) efforts across its full portfolio and include more equipment, including boilers, to ensure responsible return on investment for maintenance efforts.

7. DGS should develop a long-range strategic plan for facilities maintenance to ensure modernized and unmodernized buildings are kept in a state of good repair.
8. DGS should collaborate with DDOT UFD and DOEE to develop a plan for managing its grounds and landscaping duties such that the District's natural resources are well-maintained, and we avoid the use of invasive species.
9. DGS should assign "high" or "emergency" priority to all security-sensitive requests, especially lock and door requests (including interior doors), in DCPS and DPR facilities to ensure they are safe.
10. DGS Contracting and Procurement should ensure adequate documentation, contract provisions, and other resources are dedicated to holding DGS contractors accountable for quality work.
11. DGS should expand its indoor air quality (IAQ) monitoring efforts in DCPS facilities but do so with better engagement with school-level staff.
12. With respect to capital projects, the Committee has expressed some project-specific recommendations along with the budget recommendations for each project. Non-budgetary project-specific recommendations are a part of the Committee's policy recommendations for DGS.

## D. DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES

### 1. AGENCY MISSION AND OVERVIEW

The mission of the Department on Disability Services (DDS) is to provide innovative, high-quality services that enable people with disabilities to lead meaningful and productive lives as vital members of their families, schools, workplaces, and communities in every neighborhood in the District of Columbia.

#### Summary of Services

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) is composed of two administrations that oversee and coordinate services for residents with disabilities through a network of private and not-for-profit providers. Support for the two services administrations is provided by agency management.

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) ensures that residents with intellectual disabilities receive the services and supports they need to lead self-determined and valued lives in the community. DDA achieves this through the delivery of outreach and service coordination services; the development and management of a provider network delivering community residential, day, vocational, employment, and individual and family support services; and the operation of a comprehensive quality management program.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) delivers vocational rehabilitation services focusing on employment and training activities that allow persons with disabilities to experience a greater quality of life by obtaining, sustaining and advancing in employment, economic self-sufficiency, and independence. RSA provides employment marketing and placement services, vocational rehabilitation, and independent living services.

#### Division Description

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) operates through the following five divisions:

**Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)** – provides individualized services, supports, and life planning to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities so that they may lead self-determined and valued lives in the community.

This division contains the following three activities:

- **DDA Service Planning and Coordination** – provides services to qualified individuals by coordinating available resources and opportunities in the community through the development of Individual Service Plans (ISPs), advocating for quality services to promote healthy and productive lifestyles for each person, completing monitoring activities to ensure the delivery of services and supports, completing all intake activities for new applicants, and coordinating activities carried out in D.C. Superior Court;
- **Quality Assurance** – examines and improves internal and external service delivery systems by conducting external provider reviews to ensure performance so that standards, federal and local regulations, quality frameworks issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), national best practices, and court mandates are met. Quality

Assurance also includes functional responsibility for incident management and enforcement, rights and advocacy, CMS and Evans performance analysis, and reporting and mortality review; and

- **DDA Consumer Resources and Operations** – manages the human care provider network and administrative functions for DDA, including budget compliance, service and billing authorization, and residential portfolio management; operates the Home and Community Based Services Waiver including provider enrollment, provision of technical assistance, and service authorization; and manages benefits and personal funds.

**Rehabilitation Services** – assists persons with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities to achieve a greater quality of life by obtaining and sustaining employment, economic self-sufficiency, and independence.

This division contains the following four activities:

- **RSA Vocational Rehabilitation Services** – assesses, plans, develops, and provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to enable them to prepare for, maintain, and advance in integrated, competitive employment; and provides services to businesses, including recruitment and job placement for people with disabilities and training for employers on issues related to hiring and maintaining employees with disabilities;
- **RSA Blind and Visual Impairment Services** – provides services to people with disabilities to help them live as independently as possible in the community. Services include advocacy, independent living skills training, information and referral, peer support, and transition – from secondary school to post-secondary activities and from nursing homes;
- **Quality Assurance** – provides monitoring and compliance reviews of internal and external operations and agencies, ensuring that RSA customers receive quality services that meet local and federal regulations; and
- **RSA Operations** – manages the human care provider network that serves RSA clients, provides oversight to the Randolph Sheppard Vending Facility Program, and processes payments for service providers.

**Disability Determination Services** – administers Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income eligibility determinations in conjunction with the federal Social Security Administration.

**Agency Management** – provides for administrative support and the required tools to achieve operational and programmatic results. This division is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.

**Agency Financial Operations** – provides comprehensive and efficient financial management services to, and on behalf of, District agencies so that the financial integrity of the District of Columbia is maintained. This division is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.

## **Division Structure Change**

The Department on Disability Services has no division structure changes in the FY 24 proposed budget.

## 2. COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

### a. Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Recommendations

The Committee recommends **approval** of the Mayor’s proposed FY2024 operating budget for the Department on Disability Services.

#### Committee Analysis and Comments

##### ***Developmental Disability Eligibility Reform Amendment Act (DDERAA):***

Council passed Bill 24-0268, the “Developmental Disability Eligibility Reform Amendment Act of 2022” by unanimous vote on March 1, 2022. It was signed by the Mayor and was enacted on April 1, 2022. The bill clarifies who is eligible to receive certain services provided by the DDS, to include individuals with solely developmental disabilities. It also requires the Mayor to seek any Medicaid waivers and exemptions necessary to extend the “People with Intellectuals and Developmental Disabilities Waiver” and the “Individual and Family Supports Waiver” to individuals with developmental disabilities.

During DDS’ performance and budget oversight hearings, the Committee heard testimony from witnesses frustrated with the long eligibility determination review process. Robin Shaffert testified that although DDS received additional funding in the FY23 budget to address the anticipated increase in applications, DDS’ performance oversight responses stated that in FY22 “eligibility determinations were made 46 days after an application was submitted, and on average, people found eligible for services did not begin receiving services for 180 days after the eligibility determination was made.”<sup>18</sup> Sandy Bernstein, from Disability Rights DC, stated that DDA has told people eligible for the waiver that they cannot have a waiver slot until they demonstrate they cannot get the services they need elsewhere.”<sup>19</sup> While the Committee is pleased to see a proposed increase of \$6,321,007 across multiple divisions to provide services and support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Developmental Disability Administration division, more work needs to be done to shorten the turnaround times for eligibility determinations.

The Committee will continue to monitor the eligibility determination wait times and monitor how the agency uses the \$6.3 million to improve services for program participants.

##### ***Direct Support Professionals Wage Increases***

Following up on the work the Committee on Human Services began in 2018, the Committee supports fully funding the Direct Support Professional Payment Rate Act of 2020. The legislation provides an annual payment to eligible providers of direct services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for the purpose of ensuring direct support professionals receive a

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<sup>18</sup> CFFS Performance Oversight Hearing. Feb. 16, 2023. Testimony of Robin Shaffert, Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Center for Child and Human Development.

<sup>19</sup> Performance Oversight Hearing. Feb. 16, 2023. Testimony of Sandy Bernstein, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services.

living wage. Multiple witnesses testified at the performance and budget oversight hearings about the urgent need to address the DSP workforce shortage and inadequate pay.

During the Agency’s budget hearing, DDS Director, Andrew Reese, stated that providers were given an allocation in January of 2023 and that by using ARPA funding, the Agency would be able to satisfy the requirement of the legislation and raise the pay of DSP workers to 117.6% of the living wage by January 2024.<sup>20</sup> The Committee recommends that DDS continue to partner with the Department of Health Care Finance to ensure DSP workers are receiving increased wages pursuant to the legislation. The Committee also supports advocates’ requests to fully fund the legislation and to increase wages above the 117.6% rate.

### ***Personal Needs Allowances Increases***

During the Agency’s performance and budget oversight and hearings, the Committee heard testimony from many public witnesses who spoke about the necessity for DDS to add a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) that the Developmental Disability Administration provides to people who reside in a nursing facility, intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities, community residence, or assisted living facility.

The current PNA of \$100 was set in 2007 and has not been increased since. Carol Grigsby, whose son receives supports from DDS, explained that the PNA is the only payment that people who receive residential supports can control for themselves and is used for day-to-day expenses that are not otherwise covered by DDS.<sup>21</sup> In recognizing that \$100 does not have nearly the same purchasing power in 2023 that it did in 2007, the Committee was pleased to see the FY24 proposed budget included a one-time increase of \$744,600 in the Developmental Disability Administration division to increase the PNA. During the Agency’s budget oversight hearing, Director Reese said that this enhancement would increase the PNAs for more than 1,200 people who receive residential supports from DDS. The Committee urges DDS to make the COLA to the PNA permanent by including it in its budget every year so that it never again is insufficient for people receiving residential supports from DDS.

### ***Home and Community Based Services Waiver Program***

The Mayor’s proposed FY23 supplemental budget rescinds \$3.7 million from the Home and Community Based Services Waiver Program due to underspending by the Developmental Disabilities Administration and underutilization of available waivers.

## **b. Fiscal Year 2024 - 2029 Capital Budget Recommendations**

The Mayor has no proposed FY2024-2029 capital budget for the Department on Disability Services.

### **3. COMMITTEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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<sup>20</sup> Performance Oversight Hearing. Feb. 16, 2023. Testimony of Sandy Bernstein, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services.

<sup>21</sup> CFFS Performance Oversight Hearing. February. 16, 2023. Testimony of Carol Grigsby.

1. The Committee recommends that DDS continue its efforts to shorten the eligibility review and processing times for DDERAA. It was evident from testimony during the performance and budget oversight hearings that there is miscommunication between DDS and applicants and advocates. While DDS believes that its policies and procedures are appropriate to handle the expanded legislation, prospective applicants and those helping prospective applicants have a different experience. During the budget oversight hearing, Director Reese acknowledged that there needs to be an evaluation to determine what steps the Agency should take to streamline the process. The Committee recommends that DDS request the assistance of the Lab @ DC, a division of the Office of the City Administrator that has brought a resident-centered design approach to the business processes of other District agencies. Because of the broad scope of its responsibilities, the Office of the City Administrator also is in a position to analyze the business process of other District agencies, such as the Department of Health Care Finance, that also play important roles in the experience of DDA consumers.
2. The Committee recommends DDS provide guidance to the community about self-direction waivers. During DDS' performance oversight hearing, Director Reese stated that the Agency amended the Individual Family Support (IFS) Waiver program to allow for self-direction for eligible participants. The IFS program allows District residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities who live in an independent environment to receive Home- and Community-Based Services tailored to their specific needs. The Committee applauds the Agency for hiring a program coordinator to monitor the program's enrollment and is looking forward to hearing about the program once more information is released.
3. The Committee recommends DDS bolster its engagement with businesses, District agencies, and community stakeholders to increase awareness of and participation in services offered by RSA. The Committee is pleased DDS currently has positions that are dedicated to encouraging businesses to participate in disability employment programs. The Committee also commends DDS for developing its first racial equity plan, which will focus on the racial disparities in employment opportunities and outcomes among people with disabilities. The Committee also urges DDS to work with District agencies to establish and execute best practices for being a model employer for people with disabilities and addressing racial disparities in employment among people with disabilities.
4. Although the Mayor's proposed budget uses "one-time" funding to increase the Personal Needs Allowance, it is the Committee's intention to maintain the increased PNA into the future. The Committee desired to modify the DDS budget to make the increased PNA recurring and instead allocate the one-time funding to waiver services that have been overbudgeted or underutilized in FY22 and FY23 (and potentially also in FY24). However, due to a quirk of budget development, the costs of PNA and the waiver services fall within the same cost center of DDS's budget. There is no budget modification that could express the Committee's desire to swap one-time and recurring funding within the very same cost center (and comptroller source group and fund detail). Therefore, as a policy recommendation, the Committee expects DDS to maintain the increased Personal Needs



Allowance in the development of operating budgets for FY25 and beyond, and the budget for waiver services should match the actual provision of waiver services.

## **E. OFFICE FOR THE DEAF, DEAFBLIND, AND HARD OF HEARING**

### **1. AGENCY MISSION AND OVERVIEW**

The mission of the Office for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (MODDHH) is to advance the civil rights of the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing community by ensuring and overseeing District-wide compliance with laws that affect the community.

MODDHH will advance the adoption of laws, policies, and programs that benefit the community; increase public awareness of the needs and issues affecting the community; provide outreach, training, and education on issues affecting the community; provide information about existing programs and services for the community; and submit an annual report that includes analysis of the accessibility of District programs, an evaluation of the availability of language access measures, and recommendations for new laws, policies, or programs that address the needs of the community.

#### **Program Structure Change**

The Office for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing has no program structure changes in the FY 2024 proposed budget.

### **2. COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **a. Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Recommendations**

The Committee recommends **approval** of the Mayor’s proposed FY2024 operating budget for the Office for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing.

#### Committee Analysis and Comments

On December 6, 2022, the Council voted unanimously to confirm Kari Cooke as the first Director for MODDHH. During her confirmation hearing on September 28, 2022, all of the witnesses testified in support of Ms. Cooke and noted her experience and enthusiasm to lead the new office.<sup>22</sup> Christopher D. Johnson from the District of Columbia Area Black Deaf Advocates, testified that Ms. Cooke’s confirmation was a great step forward to bridge the division between hearing and Deaf communities, through servant leaders of underrepresented communities and organizations.<sup>23</sup> Russell Misheloff and Judy Alden testified on behalf of the Hearing Loss Association of America, DC Chapter and stated that it was “vital that the Office have well-trained and equipped staff,” and that “Ms. Cooke was a unanimous choice among the community during the finalist interview process.”<sup>24</sup>

During the Office’s first performance oversight hearing on February 16, 2023, the testimony was overwhelmingly positive for the new office. However, a few witnesses testified that MODDHH was not focused on the Deafblind and Hard of Hearing communities and that MODDHH failed to

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<sup>22</sup> See Report on Proposed Resolution 24-0904, the “Director of the Office for the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing Kari Cooke Confirmation Resolution of 2022” 4-5 (Nov.17, 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

equally promote CART (Communication Access Real time translation) and ASL (American Sign Language) services.<sup>25</sup> Ms. Alden testified that the Deaf, Deafblind and the Hard of Hearing communities are not monoliths and that “[e]ach community must be understood and equitably supported despite the different requirements. The DeafBlind community requires distinct, often tactile accommodations [Pro-Tactile American Sign Language] (PTASL). The Deaf community relies on American Sign Language (ASL)/interpreters and Certified Deaf interpreters (CDI) to communicate. The Hearing Loss community uses an array of hearing assistive technology for accessibility.”<sup>26</sup> The Committee values all the witnesses who provided testimony during MODDHH’s performance and budget hearings and will continue to monitor MODDHH’s progress in serving the Deafblind and Hard of Hearing residents. Additionally, the Committee recommends that MODDHH expands the agency’s website to make it more accessible to various communities and for it to be a resource for District agencies. The website should include best practices for District agencies and should include more information and resources for the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing communities. Although the website is embedded under the Mayor’s Office of Community Affairs website, the website does not reflect MODDHH’s important work in the community.

The Committee supports MODDHH finding a new office space that is accessible for District residents and space that has accessible technology. During MODDHH’s budget oversight hearing, Director Cooke stated that MODDHH is working with DGS to find a suitable location and that they are in the assessment phase of finding a new space. MODDHH indicated that its budget includes funding to lease a new space. The Committee recommends that MODDHH and DGS develop a timeline for the move. The Committee will continue to monitor this development.

MODDHH’s FY24 proposed budget has an increase of \$306,000, which is due to one-time support costs related to an ASL contract, that was previously held by the Office of Disability Rights.

#### **b. Fiscal Year 2024 - 2029 Capital Budget Recommendations**

The Mayor has no proposed FY2024-2029 capital budget for the Office for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (MODDHH).

### **3. COMMITTEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Committee recommends that the MODDHH work with the community to provide more services and resources for the Deafblind and Hard of Hearing community. The staff should also include more individuals with expertise in Hearing Assistive Technology and CART. During her performance oversight hearing, Director Cooke discussed that the Agency was researching different technology /resources and conducting a full assessment of the various resources. The Committee recommends that MODDHH set a timeline for assessing and implementing these resources. MODDHH should also work with community advocates to assess the new technology. Additionally, the Committee would urge

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> See Report on Proposed Resolution 24-0904, the “Director of the Office for the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing Kari Cooke Confirmation Resolution of 2022” 4-5 (Nov.17, 2022).

MODDHH to consider that many residents may not use technology or social media and that it is important for the Agency to work with the community to enhance its community engagement outside of social media.

2. The Committee recommends that MODDHH conduct a thorough assessment of District agencies' accessibility and for MODDHH to provide guidance to District agencies on how to be more accessible for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing communities. District agencies should value MODDHH's expertise and guidance in making programs, hearings, meetings, and other activities more accessible for all District residents. While the Committee and other District agencies will continue to welcome suggestions and recommendations for improvement, MODDHH should establish written guidelines/recommendations for each agency. During her performance oversight hearing, Director Cooke acknowledged that the District already has a lot of resources but that MODDHH needs to make sure that those resources are fully accessible. MODDHH is itself a resource that should provide highly useful information, through its website or in a published report based on its assessment, on how to access services from District agencies.

## F. OFFICE OF DISABILITY RIGHTS

### 1. AGENCY MISSION AND OVERVIEW

The mission of the Office of Disability Rights (ODR) is to ensure that every program, service, benefit, and activity operated or funded by the District of Columbia is fully accessible to, and usable by, qualified people with disabilities, with or without reasonable accommodations or modifications.

ODR is responsible for oversight of the District's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as other federal and local disability rights laws. ODR provides technical assistance, training, informal dispute resolution, policy guidance, and expertise on disability rights issues to District agencies and the disability community. ODR coordinates the ADA compliance efforts of all District agencies and works with agency ADA coordinators to ensure that the District is responsive to the needs of the disability community and employees with disabilities.

ODR operates through the following two programs:

**Disability Rights** – promotes the accessibility of District of Columbia government programs and services for individuals with disabilities by coordinating and overseeing a District-wide compliance program.

This program contains the following six activities:

- **Operations** – provides overall direction, leadership, and coordination of, and guidance on, activities related to the centralized administrative support system; establishes procedures and protocols for unified operations within the agency; and assists in facilities management;
- **Training and Technical Assistance** – provides ongoing training and technical assistance to the agency's ADA coordinators and personnel;
- **Public Information and Outreach** – provides information through published literature, and provides assistance and referrals to individuals who have questions about disability rights or are experiencing obstacles to receiving services;
- **Evaluation and Compliance** – evaluates the District's compliance with the ADA, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the disability rights provisions of the Human Rights Act; reports deficiencies to the Office of Human Rights; makes recommendations for addressing deficiencies to the Mayor; and coordinates, facilitates, and supports the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities;
- **Investigations** – provides informal dispute resolution into actions or inactions of agencies in alleged violation of the ADA, the District of Columbia Disability Rights Protection Act, and other disability-related civil rights legislation; and
- **State Developmental Disabilities Council** – houses the District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) and D.C. Commission on Persons with Disabilities (DCCPD). The DDC is a Mayoral appointed body established in accordance with the mandates of the D.C. Developmental Disabilities Basic State Grant Program. It is an independent, community-based advisory committee funded by the Administration on

Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is charged with identifying and addressing the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities in the District. The DCCPD advocates on behalf of persons with disabilities and their families to promote inclusive communities and service delivery systems and to provide opportunities for public input, outreach, and education. The DCCPD also facilitates ODR's collaboration with the Office of Human Rights, the Department on Disability Services, and all other agencies, boards, and commissions of the District of Columbia that affect the lives of residents with disabilities to comprehensively implement ADA compliance and training programs.

**Agency Management** – provides for administrative support and the required tools to achieve operational and programmatic results. This program is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.

### **Program Structure Change**

The Office of Disability Rights has no program structure changes in the FY24 proposed budget.

## **2. COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **a. Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Recommendations**

The Committee recommends **approval** of the Mayor's proposed FY2024 operating budget for the Office of Disability Rights.

#### Committee Analysis and Comments

The FY24 proposed budget reflects the Office of Disability Rights' ("ODR") continued commitment to ensuring compliance with federal and local disability rights laws, including monitoring the implementation of the Five-Year State Plan ("Olmstead Community Integration Plan") for FY22-FY26.

During performance oversight and budget oversight hearings, all public witnesses who spoke about ODR were ardently complimentary about the Office. For example, Nicole J. Preston, President & CEO of Special Olympics District of Columbia, thanked both ODR Director McCullough and Executive Director Whyte of the Developmental Disabilities Council for their leadership and service to District residents with disabilities.<sup>27</sup>

ODR's FY24 proposed budget for local funds includes a decrease of \$71,609.77 for contractual services. During the FY24 budget oversight hearing, ODR confirmed this decrease is because the Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing will provide all District government American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation services in FY24. The Committee was pleased by ODR's assurances that no other services would be affected by this decrease.

ODR's FY24 proposed budget for local funds includes an increase of \$12,828 and 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position to align with projected salary and fringe benefits across multiple

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<sup>27</sup> Committee on Facilities and Family Services Performance Oversight Hearing on February 16, 2023, Testimony of Nicole J. Preston, President & CEO of Special Olympics District of Columbia.

programs. Additionally, the proposed budget includes an increase of \$2,072 in nonpersonnel services in the Disability Rights program to align resources with operational spending goals related to professional service fees.

ODR's FY24 proposed budget for federal grant funds includes increase of \$10,000 and 1.0 FTE in the Disability Rights program is to align the budget with projected grant awards.

### **b. Fiscal Year 2024 - 2029 Capital Budget Recommendations**

The Mayor has no proposed FY2024-2029 capital budget for the Office of Disability Rights.

### **3. COMMITTEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. During the FY23 performance oversight hearing, the Committee inquired into the low number of participants who attended ODR-sponsored ADA Community Trainings on Housing in FY22. The Agency's FY22 target was 200 participants, but only 60 participants attended. This was the only FY22 key performance indicator that ODR did not meet. In addition, during the FY24 budget oversight hearing, the Committee heard from public witnesses who discussed their difficulties finding low-income accessible housing and supported greater publicity of available accessible housing options. The Committee encourages ODR to continue working closely with the Department of Housing and Community Development to increase the number of and outreach for ADA Community Trainings on Housing to inform District residents with disabilities about accessible housing options. The Committee also recommends ODR establish itself as a stakeholder in all District efforts to convert commercial office space to residential housing so that such conversions result in a greater number of residential units that are accessible to District residents with disabilities.
2. During the FY23 performance oversight hearing, ODR discussed its collection and development of numerous reports, including District agencies' Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance plans and ODR's comprehensive evaluations and recommendations for all District parks and polling places. The Committee believes that these findings are essential to ensuring District government services and facilities not only comply with the legal requirements of the ADA, but also are fully accessible and usable to all people with disabilities. The Committee recommends that ODR publicly disclose as many reports as possible. The Committee also requests that when public disclosure is not permissible, ODR share the reports with the Council.

# G. OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN

## 1. AGENCY MISSION AND OVERVIEW

The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) is legislatively established as an independent, impartial office responsible to the Council of the District of Columbia. The OFC is tasked with improving outcomes for children involved with, previously involved with, or otherwise known to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), by holding agencies accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities under the law.

OFC receives complaints and make recommendation for resolution of complaints involving an administrative act of CFSA or a CFSA affiliate from CFSA constituents. OFC also facilitates interagency communication and coordination related to issues impacting CFSA children. OFC may investigate, on its own initiative, systemic concerns related to CFSA children including issues relating to interagency communication and coordination. OFC reviews and provides recommendations to policies, procedures, regulations, and directives as established, implemented, or practiced by CFSA or a CFSA affiliate. OFC will notify the appropriate CFSA contact, including the Agency Director and Office of General Counsel (OGC), if necessary, identified concerns and make recommendations for improvement. OFC facilitates communication between CFSA and CFSA constituents as needed; offers voluntary conflict resolution services, and provides education, information, and referrals to individuals as appropriate.

### Program Structure Change

The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children has no program structure changes in the FY24 proposed budget.

## 2. COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

### a. Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget Recommendations

The Committee recommends **approval** of the Mayor’s FY2024 proposed operating budget for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children

#### Committee Analysis and Comments

During this year’s performance and budget oversight hearings, the Committee heard positive testimony from witnesses who were excited to finally see the OFC operational. Stephanie McClellan from DC KinCare Alliance urged the OFC to investigate two serious issues with CFSA: “investigating and reporting on child maltreatment fatalities and near fatalities in DC.....[and] the illegal practice of kinship diversion, also called hidden foster care.”<sup>28</sup> Sharra Greer from Children’s Law Center also testified that she was impressed with the collaboration between the office and other district agencies like CFSA and DYRS.<sup>29</sup> It was evident from witnesses that the OFC had made significant efforts to meet with child welfare advocates and worked to establish relationships with district agencies.

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<sup>28</sup> Performance Oversight Hearing Feb. 24, 2023. Testimony of Stephanie McClellan, DC KinCare Alliance.

<sup>29</sup> Performance Oversight Hearing Feb. 24, 2023. Testimony of Sharra Greer, Children’s Law Center.



In March 2023, OFC’s Chief Deputy, Petrina Jones-Jesz became the Acting Ombudsperson for Children following the resignation of Shalonda Cawthon. As Acting Ombudsperson, Ms. Jones-Jesz continues to build on the work that was done to establish the office and the Committee will continue to work with the Acting Ombudsperson on the following issues:

***Staffing***

OFC is legislatively approved for five positions. The Acting Ombudsperson – who was hired as a Chief Deputy in December 2022 – and the Deputy CFSA Ombudsperson – who was hired in February 2023 – are the only current staff for the office. OFC plans to hire two additional analysts by the end of May.

These hiring plans may need to be adjusted based on issues that have been identified since bringing the OFC under this Committee. A limited budget and the need for additional legal and budgetary support could lead to a realignment of duties and/or a change in the hiring plan in the coming fiscal year. The Committee is enhancing the OFC’s FY24 operating budget by \$224,000 in order for the OFC to add two additional FTEs: a legal analyst and a fiscal analyst.

***Office Location***

OFC is working with the Department of General Services (DGS) to find an office space that is suitable for staff and for the visiting public. The proposed office space is located at 955 L’Enfant Plaza. The annual cost of rent for the space in FY2024 is \$97,254.13. The rent will increase by 2.5% every year during the lease term until 2026. The rent will be prorated for 2023 (\$47,441.04) since the OFC did not gain full access to the space until April. Although the Mayor’s proposed FY24 budget includes a 0.3 percent increase compared to the FY23 budget, the proposed budget is likely insufficient to accommodate this lease amount along with the other spending pressures the OFC is experiencing.

***Website and Complaint Database***

The website and online complaint form were launched on February 6, 2023. To date,<sup>30</sup> OFC has received 12 complaints from the public through this portal. OFC will continue to work with the District’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) on deliverables and expanding the website’s data reporting and collection functions. OFC will also work with OCTO to determine the annual maintenance fees as the office’s needs expand. It is critical that OFC stores all of its data securely.

***Appointment***

The unexpected exit by Ms. Cawthon as the first Ombudsperson created some instability in the OFC, but the Acting Ombudsperson and Deputy have worked hard to successfully continue the Office’s mission. The Committee is working with the Committee of the Whole to determine a timeline and process for appointing a permanent Ombudsperson so the OFC can continue serving the children and families of the District. It is the Committee’s goal to have a permanent Ombudsperson appointed no later than October 1, 2023.

**b. Fiscal Year 2024 - 2029 Capital Budget Recommendations**

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<sup>30</sup> OFC budget hearing, April 12, 2023.

The Mayor has no proposed FY2024 – FY2029 capital budget for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children.

### **3. COMMITTEE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Committee recommends that the OFC increase its community engagement strategy. While witnesses at the performance and budget oversight hearing testified that the OFC has interacted with child welfare advocates, the Committee is recommending that the OFC commit to more community outreach to families and school leaders. Many District residents and school leaders may not be informed about the OFC and its responsibilities as an impartial office tasked with improving outcomes for children. With CFSA’s internal ombuds duties officially shifting to the OFC, it is important to keep the community informed about child welfare system changes in the District. In addition to establishing relationships with District agencies, the OFC will need to gain the trust and confidence of some in the community who are hesitant to trust any agency that is related to child welfare. However, by being transparent with its investigations, responsive to complaints, and intentional with collaborations with other district agencies, the Committee is hopeful that the OFC will make impactful changes for CFSA-involved children and families.
2. The Committee recommends that in addition to working on its statutory responsibilities, the OFC should be prepared to make recommendations and provide statistical information on CFSA-involved children and families. The OFC is mandated to provide an annual report to the Council. However, the Committee recommends that the OFC provide additional reports on crossover youth, policy recommendations and trends, and summaries on CFSA investigations related to that agency’s policies or procedures. By working with various agencies that touch the lives of many young people in the District, the OFC is in a unique position to collect and maintain secured, confidential data trends and provide guidance on child welfare policies.

### III. BUDGET SUPPORT ACT RECOMMENDATIONS

On Wednesday, March 22, 2023, Chairman Mendelson introduced, on behalf of the Mayor, the “Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023” (Bill 25-202). The bill contains one subtitle for which the Committee has provided comments. The Committee also recommends the addition of four new subtitles.

#### A. RECOMMENDATIONS ON MAYOR’S PROPOSED SUBTITLES

The Committee provides comments on the following subtitles of the “Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023”:

##### 1. Title II, Subtitle A. Land Purchases for Affordable Housing

###### a. Purpose, Effect, and Impact on Existing Law

The Land Purchases for Affordable Housing subtitle as proposed by the Mayor authorizes the District of Columbia to purchase privately-owned residential land, but not physical buildings (improved or developed properties), and to leverage said purchases to execute affordable housing land covenants through ground leases. The “Land Purchase Partnership Program” (“Program” authorization would allow the District to obtain land irrespective of whether housing on the land is currently built, whether the housing is a single-family home or a multi-family building, or whether housing is currently occupied. As introduced by the Mayor, the condition of the land covenant in the subtitle would be a commitment to maintain at least 50% of residential property units on the land as affordable to households earning 80% of the median family income (“MFI”) or less. For a household of 4 people, 80% of MFI is equivalent to annual earnings of \$113,850, and \$79,700 for a household of one person. Additional Program parameters and fees may be created through rulemaking.

A land covenant, in this context, would be an agreement to generate public benefits executed between the District and a person or corporation owning, buying, or leasing property on the land; in exchange for public benefits, the District sells or leases its land at a discounted rate and/or waives property taxes. Public benefits of a land covenant can include requiring production of a certain amount of affordable housing, meeting certain environmental standards, providing certain public neighborhood amenities, generating a certain number or type of jobs or complying with the District’s first source hiring program, among others. As introduced, this subtitle proposed no labor, environmental, community benefit, or tenant protection land covenant stipulations. Similarly, the introduced subtitle included no fair compensation or due process rights to an existing private property owner with respect to how the District would acquire land.

A ground lease, in this context, would be a long-term lease – typically for 50 to 99 years for housing deals – in which the District maintains ownership of the land plot while the private party lessee owns and maintains any physical property existing or constructed upon the land. This public-private partnership tool allows the property owner to benefit from lower or no property taxes or lower property acquisition costs, and allows the District to benefit from binding lease

conditions like affordable housing generation or preservation. The introduced subtitle did not specify a length of time the District should consider for the Program’s ground leases.

The introduced subtitle exempts land and property transactions executed as part of the Land Purchase Partnership Program from the District’s public land surplus and disposition process, sometimes colloquially referred to as “10-801 requirements.” The Act Authorizing the sale of certain real estate in the District of Columbia no longer required for public purposes, approved August 5, 1939 (53 Stat. 1211; D.C. Official Code § 10-801 *et seq.*) provides a framework for public input and Council review of land and structures held by the city that are being turned over to private party stakeholders. Under this law, any property being disposed of for housing purposes is required to generate at least 30% of the housing units as affordable, defined as affordable to households earning less than 80% of MFI. Notably, the Land Purchase Partnership Program raises the floor amount by 20% for affordable housing generation, though it proposes to forego public and Council input processes.

The introduced Land Purchase Partnership Program establishes a new affordable housing generation tool for the District’s portfolio. By helping to control housing overhead costs like land acquisition and property taxes, the District can help the private sector spur the creation and preservation of affordable housing. This tool would complement existing land and property acquisition and disposition laws such as “10-801” referenced above, the District’s Opportunity to Purchase Act, and property acquisition and disposition policies associated with nuisance properties. In 2008 the Council passed the District’s Opportunity to Purchase Amendment Act (D.C. Official Code § 42-3404.31 *et seq.*) (“DOPA”) to guarantee the city the first purchase rights of privately-owned multifamily buildings. Though DOPA authorizes the District to obtain real property – both land and buildings – the authorization has yet to result in the District purchasing, disposing, or otherwise converting any private properties into public assets. DOPA further allows the Mayor to assign purchase rights or property ownership and management responsibilities to a private party and requires the equivalent of an affordable housing covenant to generate at least 30% of the housing units as affordable making the existing law substantially similar to the Program in the proposed subtitle. Prior to the passage of DOPA, in 2001, the Abatement and Condemnation of Nuisance Properties Omnibus Amendment Act (D.C. Official Code § 42-3171.01 *et seq.*) authorized the District to acquire abandoned, condemned, or otherwise deteriorated properties and to develop them to improve housing and safety conditions. Similarly, properties can be disposed of to private party partners. According to the Department of Housing and Community Development’s 2023 performance oversight responses, the Property Acquisition and Disposition Division (PADD) – the division tasked with remediation of blighted properties – PADD released only six requests for proposals between 2022 and the first half of 2023 for private parties to redevelop blighted properties. These laws are currently underutilized and it is unclear if or how the Land Purchase Partnership Program will create a different set of conditions to generate a greater level of public-private affordable housing partnership.

**b. Committee Reasoning**

The District of Columbia currently faces an acute affordable housing crisis. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the District falls nearly 33,000 units short of meeting the need for extremely low-income households, households defined as earning less than 30% of

MFI. Further, for very low-income renters, those earning 30-50% of MFI, there are only 65 units affordable and available for these households per 100 renters.<sup>31</sup> For a household of 4 people, 30% of MFI is equivalent to annual earnings of \$42,700, and \$71,150 for a household at 50% MFI; for single person households the income equivalents are \$29,900 and \$49,80, respectively.<sup>32</sup> The median household income for Black or African American households in the District is \$53,239, meanwhile the median for White households is \$160,914 meaning housing that is affordable at 50% MFI (or less) levels is disproportionately needed to meet housing challenges facing Black residents.<sup>33</sup> The committee considered revising the subtitle proposed by the Mayor to tailor land covenants to achieve specific housing generation goals at the 30%, 50%, or 60% MFI levels and strongly believes public land deals must specifically focus on meeting the city's need for deeply affordable housing in order to achieve a more racially equitable housing landscape in the city. Ultimately, however, the committee had larger concerns with this subtitle and will not be including the proposed language or a revised subtitle in its committee recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023.

The subtitle proposed by the Mayor was introduced as an organic act and was not proposed as amendatory to any existing housing or real property law. This is concerning. It suggests an intent to operate a Program outside existing statutes, norms, and transparency guardrails regulating real property and District property transactions. The subtitle, as introduced, provides no framework for the type of housing it is looking to enroll in the Land Purchase Partnership Program, no framework for how the program will interact with existing affordable housing production laws, no framework for how existing property owners will be approached or compensated for a property transaction, no framework for how property owners would be held accountable for maintaining high-quality housing conditions so as to not replicate current challenges with the District subsidizing slumlord conditions,<sup>34</sup> no framework for how existing tenants would be protected against displacement in ground lease agreements, no framework for if or how current property tenants could exert their Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) rights in the process of the Program's property sale, no framework for labor agreements which are standard in land covenants, no framework for environmental commitments which District properties should abide by or aspire to, no framework for community benefit agreements or community input processes which are expected in many development deals, and no framework for construction plans and zoning adjustments on plots where housing would be newly developed. These are a lot of open-ended questions about program intention and administration - too many to responsibly address in the context of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023. While the creation and preservation of affordable housing must be a top priority for the District, the city must be careful not to greenlight policies that inadvertently accelerate displacement, weaken homeownership rights, or subsidize development deals that do not balance the interests of vulnerable renters. The committee believes tenants and property owners in the District would be better served by standalone permanent legislation and an independent public record on how the city can best leverage land acquisition tools to generate deeply affordable housing. There are two permanent bills currently pending before the Council – the Green New

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<sup>31</sup> [District of Columbia | National Low Income Housing Coalition \(nlihc.org\)](https://www.districtofcolumbia.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/2022-6-24%20IZ%20ADU%20price%20schedule.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> [2022-6-24 IZ ADU price schedule.pdf \(dc.gov\)](https://www.districtofcolumbia.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/2022-6-24%20IZ%20ADU%20price%20schedule.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> [DC Health Matters :: Demographics :: City :: District of Columbia :: Households/Income](https://www.districtofcolumbia.gov/DCHealthMatters/Demographics/City/District-of-Columbia/Households/Income)

<sup>34</sup> [The Next Hottest Rental Strategy? Market To Housing Choice Voucher Holders | DCist: DCHA mismanagement detailed in HUD audit - The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/housing/the-next-hottest-rental-strategy-market-to-housing-choice-voucher-holders-dcha-mismanagement-detailed-in-hud-audit-the-washington-post/2023/05/11/)

Deal for Social Housing (B25-191) and the Common Ground Act (B25-39) – that propose revisions to how the city thinks about housing as a public asset.

While public ownership of land for the creation and preservation of affordable housing is a tool the District should strengthen, it is unclear if or how the proposed subtitle would be utilized differently than existing acquisition laws. DOPA gives the District the first opportunity to purchase multifamily housing properties and dispose of them in exchange a 30% affordable housing generation commitment yet DOPA has never been utilized; it is unclear if developers will be more likely to partner with the District with a 50% affordability commitment or if additional public-private partnership considerations are needed. DHCD’s PADD program allows the District to redevelop vacant, blighted, and nuisance properties yet, according to their Vacant to Vibrant website, no activity has occurred in this program since 2019,<sup>35</sup> and only 4 PADD solicitations have been publicly noticed since 2009. Similarly, the District has poured billions of dollars into the Housing Production Trust Fund over the years with an annual requirement that 50% of units funded be for households earning less than 30% of MFI and 40% of units be funded for households earning 31-50% of MFI; the District has never complied with its legal obligation to spend funds in this way.<sup>36</sup> If existing public-private affordable housing partnership tools were already being maximized to generate deeply affordable housing, there would be clearer evidence of need for a new tool to be rushed forward with minimal public input or legislative guardrails.

The committee received no oral or written testimony on this subtitle during the Department of General Services budget oversight hearing; DGS is implicated in this subtitle because it manages the District’s portfolio of public assets including District owned land and can initiate a public asset surplus processes. The District must skillfully and transparently leverage every tool available to increase the supply of affordable housing, especially for those at the lowest incomes and in amenity-rich neighborhoods. The subtitle, as proposed by the Mayor, lacks targeting, procedural guidance, and transparency. With no public input into this proposal from tenants, homeowners, landlords, or developers, the Budget Support Act is not the appropriate vehicle for advancing major new policy initiatives. **For these reasons, the Committee recommends eliminating the proposed subtitle and pursuing a land purchase strategy through permanent legislation.**

**c. Section-by-Section Analysis of Introduced Subtitle**

Sec. 20001 States the short title.

Sec. 20002 Establishes the Land Purchase Partnership Program (“Program”) wherein the Mayor is authorized to purchase residential land and enter into ground leases with housing property owners or developers who agree to create housing where at least half the units are affordable to households earning 80% or less of median family income (“MFI”).

*Subsection (a)* Authorizes the creation of a Land Purchase Partnership Program (“Program”).

*Subsection (b)* Stipulates land acquisition under the Program shall be limited to land where housing currently exists or will be constructed.

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<sup>35</sup> [Vacant to Vibrant DC | dhcd; Solicitations | dhcd \(dc.gov\)](#)

<sup>36</sup> [OIG Final Report No. 20-1-23DB -- Audit of DHCD Use of HPTF.pdf \(dc.gov\)](#)

Requires use of ground leases to facilitate a partnership with a housing property owner on the land.

*Subsection (c)* Requires a property owner to enter a land covenant to guarantee at least 50% of the units of the property will be affordable to households who earn less than 80% MFI.

*Subsection (d)* Exempts the housing property from the requirements of the District’s public property surplus and disposition process (D.C. Official Code §10-801 *et seq.*).

*Subsection (e)* Allows the Mayor to establish Program fees.

*Subsection (f)* Defines MFI.

*Subsection (g)* Allows the Mayor to establish Program rules and regulation

**d. Section-by-Section Analysis of Committee Subtitle Recommendation**

The committee recommends striking Subtitle A of Title II of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023 (B25-202) as introduced March 22, 2023.

**e. Fiscal Impact**

The committee recommends striking this subtitle eliminating the need for Fiscal Impact Statement analysis. According to the FIS provide by the OCFO for the Mayor’s proposed FY24 BSA, the Land Purchases for Affordable Housing subtitle has no fiscal impact because there is no funding in the proposed budget financial plan for the program.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW SUBTITLES**

The Committee on Facilities and Family Services recommends the following new subtitles to be added to the “Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023”:

1. School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Amendment Act of 2023
2. School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023
3. Grandparent and Caregiver Subsidy Eligibility Expansion Amendment Act of 2023
4. Subject to Appropriations Repeals and Modifications

The legislative language is included in Attachment A.

**1. School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Amendment Act of 2023.**

**a. Purpose, Effect, and Impact on Existing Law**

This subtitle would require the Mayor to offer specific service requests for Department of General Services (DGS)-maintained facilities, including DCPS and DPR property. It would build on existing law (D.C. Code § 10–721; Law 22-168, § 6072) by clarifying that the 311 platform must accept the following three service requests: (1) broken equipment, (2) grounds maintenance, and (3) overflowing recycling can at a school, park, or playground.

**b. Committee Reasoning**

As part of the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Support Act, the Council passed and funded the “School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Act of 2018,” which required DGS to integrate with the 311 system for repairs and other maintenance services at DGS-maintained facilities. The Office of Unified Communications (OUC) received one-time funding to update its system as well as recurring funds to hire an additional call-taker to assist with the increased volume of calls. DGS also received one-time funding to update its request management system.

The Council’s Committee on Transportation and the Environment, which then had oversight of DGS, included the following reasoning in support of the change: “[R]esidents lack a formal method to report any maintenance or other DGS-related service needs for DPR and DCPS facilities managed by DGS. This means that individuals either don’t report identified maintenance needs or are forced to directly email agency staff – a process that is time and effort intensive for the resident and agency staffer, who must input the work themselves.”<sup>37</sup> This statement remains true today.

Unfortunately, as of April 2023, only two DGS-facing service requests have been added to the 311 platform: dog park maintenance and pool maintenance. If a community member notices an overflowing recycling can, broken swing set, or other maintenance issue in a DGS-managed facility, they are unable to report that issue via 311. The current process is for residents to report concerns using DGS’ online Community Facilities Maintenance Request Form. Unfortunately, this system is not widely used (fewer than 2,000 requests were submitted in all FY22 and FY23 through March 1, 2023) and it does not allow requestors to include a picture with their submission. Further, this process does not automatically create a work order in Salesforce, which can lead to delays and increases the risk of missed requests.

The Committee is, therefore, adding this subtitle to clarify that the Mayor must expand DGS’ integration into the 311 platform to include maintenance of DGS-maintained schools and parks – as was the intent of the 2018 Council subtitle on this topic.

**c. Section-by-Section Analysis**

Sec. XXX1. Short title.

Sec. XXX2. Amends existing DC Code § 10-721 to include a specific list of DGS-provided service requests which must be added to the 311 platform by October 1, 2023 in addition to any existing service requests already offered.

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<sup>37</sup> Council Committee on Transportation and the Environment, Fiscal Year 2019 Committee Budget Report, page 138, dated May 4, 2018.



**d. Fiscal Impact**

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer has confirmed that there is no additional fiscal impact for this subtitle.

**2. School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023.**

**a. Purpose, Effect, and Impact on Existing Law**

The purpose of Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023” was to amend the Department of General Services Establishment Act of 2011 to exempt data that is security-sensitive from public dashboard disclosure requirements, to require periodic updates to the Council regarding maintenance of certain public school security features, and to require DGS to conduct a comprehensive assessment of security features at least once per year in all District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) facilities.

**b. Committee Reasoning**

Maintaining the physical security of DCPS facilities is primarily the responsibility of DGS. With school shootings on the rise nationally, and public safety threats a major concern locally, the Committee is recommending passage and funding of this law in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. The law’s most critical change is the addition of a required once annual proactive security assessment of all DCPS campuses to ensure that the following security-related objectives are in effect:

- A. All interior doors to instructional and regularly used administrative spaces and all exterior doors must close automatically and must securely lock;
- B. School personnel must be able to close all exterior windows and lock or latch them in a manner that prevents improper entry;
- C. Public address systems must be clearly audible in all instructional and regularly used administrative spaces;
- D. Fire alarm systems must be in full working order; and
- E. Security surveillance systems must be fully operational, with properly installed and oriented cameras, intrusion alarms, and proper connections to a central security operations hub.

The law also makes permanent the omission of work orders related to the security-sensitive components listed above. This is current practice under A24-663, the “Protecting Security-Sensitive Dashboard Data Temporary Amendment Acts of 2022.” The Committee believes it is important to permanently omit work orders related to these issues so that there is not a publicly available list of security vulnerabilities in our public schools.

Notably, this subtitle only covers DCPS campuses and not DC public charter schools. Although the Committee believes all children and school staff deserve to learn in safe and secure facilities, DGS currently has no role in maintaining the physical security of charter schools. The Committee recommends the Council’s Committee of the Whole consider equivalent reporting requirements

for public charter school Local Education Agencies (LEAs) through reporting to the Public Charter School Board. Further, the Committee agrees with public witnesses who testified that the District would benefit from the establishment of cross-sector standards for facility adequacy, including building security.

**c. Section-by-Section Analysis**

Sec. XXX1. Short title.

Sec. XXX2. Amends the Department of General Services Establishment Act of 2011 to requires DGS to perform an annual comprehensive security assessment of all DCPS facilities including a check of specific security-related components in schools. DGS may omit information about these issues from its public work order dashboard, so long as they transmit monthly reports to the Council on their status.

**d. Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact of this subtitle is \$536,000 in one-time costs in FY. The Committee’s FY 2024 budget provides the funding necessary to implement the subtitle.

**3. Grandparent and Caregiver Subsidy Eligibility Expansion.**

**a. Purpose, Effect, and Impact on Existing Law**

This subtitle makes several necessary changes to CFSA’s Grandparent Caregiver (“GCP”) and Close Relative Caregiver (“CRCP”) Programs. This subtitle would amend the GCP and CRCP ((D.C. Official Code § 4-251.03(a)(5)) by excluding Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from household income calculations and removing SSI benefits from subsidy calculations for eligible participants.

**b. Committee Reasoning**

The GCP and CRCP provide subsidies to low-income relatives taking care of kin, and they have been effective at preventing entry into foster care. The GCP and CRCP Programs limit eligibility to caregivers with household income of less than 200% of the federal poverty line. All household income, including all public benefits that anyone in the household receives such as SSI are calculated to determine if the person is eligible to participate in the program. This has resulted in some households being determined ineligible for the subsidy. However, if a household member receives SSI, it is because that person needs that income to mitigate the financial impact of their disability and to provide for their basic maintenance. That income should not be expected to be available to other household members for any other purpose. When the GCP Program was originally enacted in 2005, Council’s Committee on Human Services acknowledged in its Report that “at the heart of this discussion, is the disparity of financial assistance provided to foster parents who care for the District’s adjudicated children” and those of grandparent caregivers “in spite of

the important role they have risen to accept.”<sup>38</sup> Further, DC Code Section 4-251.24(c) did not always require that GCP and CRCP benefits be offset by a child’s SSI benefits. There is nothing in the legislative history that reveals any justification for this change. In addition, there is no household income limit for the foster parent subsidy, yet there is one for the grandparent subsidy. In order to fulfill the purposes of these Programs, household income should not be defined so broadly as to exclude caregivers just because they or someone in their household receives SSI. The Committee seeks to rectify this inequity now.

The current law requires that even if a household is determined eligible, any SSI the child receives must be deducted from the subsidy amount. As such, some households have been determined eligible, only to find out that the subsidy amount will be zero because of the deduction of SSI. According to the GCP and CRCP annual report, without these subsidies, caregivers may not have the necessary financial resources to care for the children in their care. This BSA will have a significant impact for families in the District. In calendar year (CY) 2022, the Grandparent Caregivers Program served 801 children, with a monthly average of 747 children (484 families) served. In calendar year (CY) 2022, the CRCP program served 71 children, with a monthly average of 39 children (39 families) served.

**c. Section-by-Section Analysis**

Sec. XXX1. Short title.

Sec. XXX2. Amends The Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005 (D.C. Law 16-69; D.C. Official Code § 4-251.01 *et seq.*) to exclude Supplemental Security Income from household income calculations to determine eligibility and removes SSI from calculations to determine the amount someone receives monthly once deemed eligible.

Sec. XXX3. Amends The Close Relative Caregiver Subsidy Pilot Program Establishment Amendment Act of 2019, (D.C. Law 23-32; D.C. Official Code § 4-251.21 *et seq.*), to exclude Supplemental Security Income from household income calculations to determine eligibility and removes SSI from calculations to determine the amount someone receives monthly once deemed eligible.

**d. Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact of removing SSI from subsidy calculations once someone is deemed eligible is \$250,000 in FY 2024 and a total of \$1,030,000 over the financial plan. OCFO estimates that there is an unknown cost for removing SSI from total household income calculations. The Committee’s FY 2024 budget provides the funding necessary to implement the subtitle.

**4. Subject to Appropriations Repeals and Modifications**

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<sup>38</sup> DC Council Committee on Human Services, Report on Bill 16-180, the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005, at pp. 7-8, available at [https://lims.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/15508/Committee\\_Report/B16-0180-COMMITTEEREPORT.pdf](https://lims.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/15508/Committee_Report/B16-0180-COMMITTEEREPORT.pdf).

**a. Purpose, Effect, and Impact on Existing Law**

This subtitle would repeal the subject to appropriations language in two bills that the Committee is proposing to fund or partially fund the FY 2024 – FY 2027 financial plan. This subtitle would repeal the subject to appropriations language in the Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment act (B24-989). This subtitle would also repeal the subject to appropriations language in the Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022 (B24-785).

**b. Committee Reasoning**

Section 2 funds the “Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022” (B24-989). This law removed the requirement that the hiring process for educators and volunteers include reviewing the Child Protection Register and revised the statute governing the expungement of records from the Child Protection Register. The bill was passed subject to appropriations with a fiscal impact of \$14,000 for capital upgrades to the Child and Family Services Administration’s CCWIS capital project (RL0-RL31A-CCWIS IMPLEMENTATION). Since the bill’s passage, the Child and Family Services Administration has identified a manual process that they will use to implement the provisions of the bill pertaining to the expungement of eligible records from the Child Protection Register, and so no longer require additional capital funds to implement the bill.

Section 3 funds the “Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022” (B24-785). law, passed last year by the Council and signed by the Mayor on January 12, 2023, accelerates the timeline for requirements that, where feasible, all newly constructed or substantially improved building be constructed to net zero building standards.

**c. Section-by-Section Analysis**

Sec. XXX1. Short title.

Sec. XXX2. Repeals the subject to appropriations language of the Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022 Act of 2022, effective March 10, 2023 (D.C. Law 24-317, 70 DCR 851).

Sec. XXX3. Repeals the subject to appropriations language of the Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022, effective March 10, 2023 (D.C. Law 24-306, DCR 658).

**d. Fiscal Impact**

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer confirms there is no additional fiscal impact associated with Section 2, the Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022, as CFSA no longer requires additional capital funds to implement the bill.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer completed an updated analysis of the fiscal impact associated with this law. Specifically, DGS has indicated that they are already planning on incorporating net zero energy (NZE) standards for all projects in the FY24-29 plan where feasible, as is allowed under the most recent version of Appendix Z.

## IV. COMMITTEE ACTION AND VOTE

On Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Committee on Facilities and Family Services held a Committee Meeting to consider the Report and Recommendations of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services on the FY 2024 Budget for Agencies Under Its Purview. Councilmember Janeese Lewis George recognized the presence of a quorum consisting of herself and Councilmembers **XXX**.

### Dissenting, Separate, and Individual Views of Committee Members

XX

### Amendments or Other Motions

XX

### Vote on the Measure and Report

YES: XX

NO: XX

## V. ATTACHMENTS

- A. **Bill 25-202, Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023 Recommended Subtitles**
- B. **Committee Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Oversight Hearing Records**
- C. **B25-170, “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023” Hearing Record**

# Attachment A

## **SUBTITLE XXX1. SCHOOL AND PARK 311 EXPANSION CLARIFICATION.**

Sec. XXX1. Short title.

This subtitle may be cited as the “School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Amendment Act of 2023”.

Sec. XXX2. Section 6072 of the School and Park Facilities and Grounds 311 Expansion Act of 2018, effective October 30, 2018 (D.C. Law 22-168; D.C. Official Code § 10-721), is amended as follows:

(a) Designate the existing text as subsection (a).

(b) A new subsection (b) is added to read as follows:

“(b) Beginning October 1, 2023, in addition to the service requests under subsection (a) of this section, the Mayor shall permit persons to submit requests via the District’s 311 system for broken equipment, grounds maintenance, and overflowing recycling at Department of Parks and Recreation and District of Columbia Public Schools facilities and grounds that are maintained by the Department of General Services.”.



## **SUBTITLE XXX2. SCHOOL SECURITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

Sec. XXX1. Short title.

This subtitle may be cited as the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”.

Sec. XXX2. Section 1028e of the Department of General Services Establishment Act of 2011, effective September 21, 2022 (D.C. Law 24-167; D.C. Official Code § 10-551.07e), is amended as follows:

(a) Subsection (a) is amended by striking the phrase “campus facility maintenance work orders,” and inserting the phrase “campus facility maintenance work orders not exempted by subsection (e) of this section,” in its place.

(b) Subsection (b) is amended by striking the phrase “facility maintenance work orders,” and inserting the phrase “facility maintenance work orders not exempted by subsection (e) of this section,” in its place.

(c) A new subsection (e) is added to read as follows:

“(e)(1) For each District of Columbia Public School facility, the Department shall work with the principal or their designee and members of the local school advisory team to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the following security objectives at least once per year:

“(A) All interior doors to instructional and regularly used administrative spaces must close automatically and securely lock;

“(B) All exterior doors must close automatically and securely lock;

“(C) All exterior windows must lock or latch from the interior in a manner that allows school personnel to secure the windows to prevent improper entry;

“(D) Public address systems must be clearly audible in all instructional

and regularly used administrative spaces;

“(E) Fire alarm systems must be in full working order; and

“(F) Security surveillance systems must be fully operational, with properly installed and oriented cameras, intrusion alarms, and proper connections to a central security operations hub.

“(2) The Department shall omit work order data regarding any deficiency identified under paragraph (1) of this subsection, including security vulnerabilities at Department of Parks and Recreation facilities, from the requirements under subsection (a) or (b) of this section.

“(3)(A) The Department shall transmit on a monthly basis to the chairperson of the Council committee with jurisdiction over the Department a status update on any work orders for which data has been withheld from public disclosure pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection.

“(B) The Department shall present information withheld from public disclosure pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection to the Council at a closed-door briefing convened by the chairperson of the Council committee with jurisdiction over the Department.

“(C) Council briefings held pursuant to this paragraph shall be exempt from the requirements of the Open Meetings Act, effective March 31, 2011 (D.C. Law 18-350; D.C. Official Code § 2-571 *et seq.*).”.

Sec. ##03. Section 204(a) of the Freedom of Information Act of 1976, effective March 29, 1977 (D.C. Law 1-96; D.C. Official Code § 2-534(a)), is amended as follows:

(a) Paragraph (17) is amended by striking the phrase “; and” and inserting a semicolon in its place.

(b) Paragraph (18) is amended by striking the phrase “; and” and inserting a semicolon in its place.

(c) Paragraph (19) is amended by striking the period and inserting the phrase “; and” in its place.

(d) A new paragraph (20) is added to read as follows:

“(20) Information exempt from disclosure under section 1028e of the Department of General Services Establishment Act of 2011, effective September 21, 2022 (D.C. Law 24-167; D.C. Official Code § 10-551.07e).”.

**SUBTITLE XXX3. GRANDPARENT AND CAREGIVER SUBSIDY ELIGIBILITY  
EXPANSION**

Sec. XXX1. Short title.

This subtitle may be cited as the “Grandparent and Caregiver Subsidy Eligibility Expansion Amendment Act of 2023”.

Sec. XXX2. The Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005, effective March 8, 2006 (D.C. Law 16-69; D.C. Official Code § 4-251.01 *et seq.*), is amended as follows:

(a) Section 103(a)(5) (D.C. Official Code § 4-251.03(a)(5)) is amended by striking the phrase “income is under 200%” and inserting the phrase “income (excluding Supplemental Security Income) is under 200%” in its place.

(b) Section 104(c) (D.C. Official Code § 4-251.04(c)) is amended by striking the phrase “or Supplemental Security Income for the child.” and inserting the phrase “for the child.” in its place.

Sec XXX3. The Close Relative Caregiver Subsidy Pilot Program Establishment Amendment Act of 2019, effective November 26, 2019 (D.C. Law 23-32; D.C. Official Code § 4-251.21 *et seq.*), is amended as follows:

(a) Section 103(a)(5) (D.C. Official Code § 4-251.23(a)(5)) is amended by striking the phrase “income is under 200%” and inserting the phrase “income (excluding Supplemental Security Income) is under 200%” in its place.

(b) Section 104(c) (D.C. Official Code § 4-251.24(c)) is amended by striking the phrase “or Supplemental Security Income for the child.” and inserting the phrase “for the child.” in its place.

## **SUBTITLE X. SUBJECT-TO-APPROPRIATION PROVISIONS**

Sec. XXXX. Section 4 of the Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022, effective March 10, 2023 (D.C. Law 24-317, 70 DCR 851), is repealed.

Sec. XXXX. Section 4 of The Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022, effective March 10, 2023 (D.C. Law 24-0306; 70 DCR 003537), is repealed.

# Attachment B

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**MEMORANDUM**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** Nyasha Smith, Secretary of the Council  
**FROM:** Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**RE:** Closing Hearing Record  
**DATE:** April 21, 2023

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Dear Ms. Smith,

Please find attached copies of the witness list, agenda, and testimony for the Committee on Facilities and Family Services Budget Oversight Hearing for the Department on Disability Services, Office of Disability Rights, and Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing held on March 29, 2023.

The following witnesses testified at the hearing or submitted written testimony to the Committee:

**Department on Disability Services**

*Public Witnesses*

1. Robin Shaffert, Senior Policy Associate and Research Instructor, Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
2. Anjanette Shelby, Chair, DC Developmental Disabilities Council
3. Carol Grigsby, Public Witness
4. Sandy Bernstein, Legal Director, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services
5. Ian Paregol, DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers
6. Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah, Public Witness
7. Thomas Mangrum, Jr., Co-President, Project ACTION!
8. Ricardo Thornton, Sr., Co-President, Project ACTION!
9. Maedi Tanham Carney, Public Witness (*for the record*)
10. Vijay D'Souza, Public Witness (*for the record*)
11. Christie Gardner, Public Witness (*for the record*)
12. Sarah Grigsby, Public Witness (*for the record*)

*Government Witnesses*

1. Andrew Reese, Director, Department on Disability Services

**Office of Disability Rights**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Mathew McCollough, Director, Office of Disability Rights



## **Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing**

### *Public Witnesses*

1. Judy Alden, President, Hearing Loss Association of America- DC Chapter (*for the record*)

### *Government Witnesses*

1. Kari Cooke, Director, Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE MEETING**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

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**COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**ANNOUNCES A BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR THE**

**DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES**

**AND THE**

**OFFICE OF DISABILITY RIGHTS**

**AND THE**

**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DEAF, DEAFBLIND AND HARD OF HEARING**

**Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 9:00 a.m.**

**Remote Hearing via Virtual Platform**  
**Streamed live at [www.janeeseward4.com/live](http://www.janeeseward4.com/live).**

**AGENDA AND WITNESS LIST**

- I.** Call to Order
- II.** Opening Remarks
- III.** Budget Oversight Hearing

**Department on Disability Services**

*Public Witnesses*

1. Robin Shaffert, Senior Policy Associate and Research Instructor, Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
2. Anjanette Shelby, Chair, DC Developmental Disabilities Council
3. Carol Grigsby, Public Witness
4. Sandy Bernstein, Legal Director, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services
5. Ian Paregol, DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers

6. Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah, Public Witness
7. Thomas Mangrum, Jr., Co-President, Project ACTION!
8. Ricardo Thornton, Sr., Co-President, Project ACTION!
9. Shonnie Jones, Public Witness
10. Doreen Blue, Executive Director, Family Voices of DC

*Government Witnesses*

1. Andrew Reese, Director, Department on Disability Services

**Office of Disability Rights**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Mathew McCollough, Director, Office of Disability Rights

**Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Kari Cooke, Director, Mayor's Office of Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
**DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES**

**Andrew Reese, Director**  
One Independence Square  
250 E Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024  
202.730.1700 | [www.dds.dc.gov](http://www.dds.dc.gov)

**FY 24**  
**BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING**

**MARCH 29, 2023**  
**9:00 A.M.**

**TESTIMONY OF**  
**ANDREW P. REESE,**  
**DIRECTOR,**

**BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**THE HONORABLE JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON**



Good morning, Chairperson Lewis George, members, and staff of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. I am Andrew Reese, the Director of the Department on Disability Services, or “DDS.” With me today is Anthony Young, our Agency Fiscal Officer.

The mission of DDS is to provide innovative, high-quality services and supports that enable people with disabilities to lead meaningful and productive lives as vital members of their families, schools, workplaces, and communities in every neighborhood in the District of Columbia. On behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser, I am pleased to provide testimony today on the Mayor’s Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan.

On March 22nd, Mayor Bowser presented her Proposed Budget and Financial Plan for FY 24. With historic investments in public safety, economic development, and health equity, the Mayor’s budget is a roadmap to a sustained and equitable District comeback. And I am proud to share today that the Mayor’s commitment to equity and the full inclusion of people with disabilities informs every element of her proposed budget for DDS.

The proposed Fair Shot budget fully funds our agency’s vital work. It is thoughtfully constructed, it is informed by careful analyses of expenditures, growth rates, and potential spending pressures, and it is what we need to meet the needs of everyone we support.

### **Agency Budget**

The Mayor’s proposed FY 24 total budget for DDS is \$203,726,235, a 2.9 percent increase from last year’s approved budget of \$197,975,632. This includes a 4.7 percent increase in local funds, from \$136,407,171 in FY 23 to \$142,847,670 in FY 24. The proposed budget also includes \$34,361,919 in federal grant funds, \$16,336,324 in anticipated Federal Medicaid payments, \$10,081,801 in special purpose revenue, and \$98,520 in other federal payments.



The proposed FY 24 budget funds 428 FTEs. The budget books reflect 429.2 FTEs, but that is not accurate: 1.2 FTEs properly assigned to OCTO were assigned to us in error, and this will be corrected through the errata process.

Our FTEs include 62.5 FTEs within Agency Management; 185 FTEs in the Developmental Disabilities Administration, or “DDA”; 106.5 FTEs in the Rehabilitation Services Administration, or “RSA”; and 62 FTEs within the Disability Determination Division, or “DDD.” We also fund 12 Financial Operations positions with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. There have been no substantive staffing changes within our administrations, and no restructuring has taken place within the agency.

We currently have 40.5 vacancies, including 23 in active recruitment. Of the 17.5 that are not currently in active recruitment, there are nine fully federally funded vacancies in DDD on hold pending Social Security Administration approval; one position that will be filled in early April; and one position that is currently under classification review. Two of the remaining vacancies are Agency Fiscal Officer positions, and only 4.5 vacancies have not seen recent recruitment activity, 2.5 of which are fully locally funded.

### **Developmental Disabilities Administration Budget**

The proposed FY 24 budget for DDA is \$152,244,401. This represents an increase of three percent from the FY 23 approved budget of \$147,846,055, and it fully funds all activities under the purview of this Administration. \$132,130,623 of DDA’s budget is supported by local funds, \$8,781,801 is supported by special purpose revenue, \$11,212,107 is from Medicaid payments, and \$119,870 is indirect cost recovery from Medicaid, represented in the budget books as “federal grants.”



You will notice that the numbers I shared today are a little lower than what you see in the budget books: that is because \$1,000,000 in local funds supporting CSG 50, “Subsidies and Transfers,” was erroneously allocated to DDA’s budget, rather than to RSA’s budget. The initial error, here, occurred in last year’s budget, and it was on the basis of last year’s approved budget that this year’s proposed budget was developed. To sum up, \$1,000,000 too much was allocated to DDA last year, when it should have gone to RSA, and fixing that error will require both a reprogramming for FY 23 and an errata letter for FY 24. At bottom, this was an administrative error that will be corrected before the budget is finalized.

DDA operates two Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waivers. The “IDD” Waiver for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities provides 23 services and supports to more than 1,800 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their own homes and in integrated, community-based settings. DDA also operates the Individual and Family Supports, or “IFS,” Waiver, which focuses on people who don’t require residential supports and can leverage supports from family or friends to meet their needs. 72% of DDS’s local budget is allocated to the District’s share of the costs of Waiver services. In FY 24, that local share is projected to be \$102,191,592 for the services in the two Waivers.

In late 2021, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved the District’s multi-year plan for additional resources under the American Rescue Plan Act, or “ARPA.” DDS continues to work with the Department of Health Care Finance, or “DHCF,” to use ARPA funds to make key investments to strengthen the HCBS workforce and to deliver leaps forward in service delivery.



The “Direct Support Professional Payment Rate Amendment Act of 2022,” a subtitle in last year’s Budget Support Act, required the Executive to raise the pay of Direct Support Professionals to 117.6% of the living wage by Fiscal Year 2025. Using ARPA funds, we will be able to achieve this by January 2024. In January of this year, providers were given an allocation that allowed them to pay DSPs 110% of the prevailing living wage. In January 2024, providers will receive an allocation allowing them to pay the full 117.6% of the living wage required by the BSA subtitle. ARPA dollars are also supporting a behavioral health initiative, a waiver provider rate study, self-direction in the IFS Waiver, personnel and training for DD expansion, the DDS Housing Coordinator, a telehealth initiative, upgrades to our information technology system, stakeholder technical assistance, a COVID-19 impact study, and expanded access to assistive technology and remote supports. In addition, ARPA dollars have been used to support our DSP workforce, funding bonuses, vaccination incentives, and two retainer payments.

These initiatives have been carefully designed to make a long-term impact without making the agency reliant, for its basic operations, on time-limited ARPA dollars. Our ARPA-funded Behavioral Health Initiative, for example, provides ongoing training in Positive Behavior Supports to teach providers, DDS staff, and staff at other District agencies how to respond to behavior on the part of people with both intellectual or developmental disabilities and co-occurring behavioral health challenges. That knowledge will persist long beyond ARPA’s timelines. Likewise, ARPA funds have financed one-time expenditures that got telehealth devices to providers and allowed us to purchase the equipment we needed to handle the data processing of our new information technology system. These one-time costs will have long-term impacts.





One locally funded initiative in our FY 24 budget that we anticipate will have a positive impact on the people we support is an increase to the Personal Needs Allowance, or “PNA,” for Waiver participants who receive residential supports from DDA. Mayor Bowser included a budget enhancement of \$744,600 to allow us to increase PNAs by 50%, from \$100 to \$150 per month. How the Personal Needs Allowance functions, however, requires some explanation.

The people we support in our residential Waiver placements—that is, people who receive our residential habilitation and supported living Waiver services—have many needs that are not directly met by Medicaid. Residential supports, and related costs, such as food, utilities, clothing, medical supplies, furniture, household furnishings, phone, cable, and internet services, cannot be paid through the Medicaid Waivers.

It costs approximately \$26,500 per person per year to support someone in one of these settings, and that \$26,500 is funded using three distinct revenue streams. The first is Special Purpose Revenue, which, here, takes the form of the contribution to costs each person makes, often using their Social Security (“SSI” or “SSDI”) benefits. Special Purpose Revenue, however, can only pay for a portion of occupancy costs. The maximum monthly SSI payment is currently \$914 a month, \$814 of which is available to fund residential supports. That represents \$9,768 out of the \$26,500 it costs to support someone in a residential Waiver home.

The second funding source that supports people in residential Waiver homes is Medicaid earnings from indirect cost recovery and administrative claiming. This accounts for approximately 25% of the cost of residential supports.



The remainder is covered by local funds. The more we pay in local funds, the less people are required to contribute to the costs of their care. That means we are able to let the people we support keep more of their money to use at their discretion as a Personal Needs Allowance.

The enhancement that DDS is providing this year has been thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of the people we support. It is also consistent with the increase to the PNAs of people in nursing facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities, or “ICFs,” recently announced by DHCF. Since 2007, when the PNA was last increased, the size of SSI payments has grown by approximately 50%. DHCF’s PNA enhancement largely mirrored those gains, increasing the PNAs of people in ICFs by 43%. The enhancement people in residential Waiver homes will see this year represents an increase of 50% over than their previous allocation.

We aim to better align the Personal Needs Allowance with the Social Security Administration’s COLAs going forward, and this is just the first step in doing so. For now, we are grateful for the engagement of self-advocates, families, and other community members on this important issue, and we are excited to see the PNA increase included in Mayor Bowser’s budget.

### **Rehabilitation Services Administration Budget**

RSA’s proposed FY 24 budget is \$21,642,607. Although this appears to be a 5.0 percent increase from its approved FY 23 budget of \$20,615,796, again, you will notice that the FY 24 amount is different from what you see in the budget books. That is because of the error I mentioned earlier that resulted in the RSA budget being \$1,000,000 too low, and the DDA budget being \$1,000,000 too high, in the budget books for both this year and last year. This administrative error will be corrected before the budget is finalized, and when all is said and



done, RSA's FY 24 local spending authority will be \$27,000 greater than its FY 23 spending amount.

RSA provides supports by leveraging several federal grants, including those for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Supported Employment, Independent Living Services and Independent Living Older Blind Services. RSA's budget also includes the Assistive Technology grant, which is currently a pass-through to the District's Assistive Technology Center at Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services. Federal grants account for \$15,599,416 of the RSA budget, while local funds account for \$4,743,191. RSA's budget also anticipates that the Administration will receive approximately \$1,300,000 in special purpose revenue. The proposed budget is sufficient to meet the needs of every person supported by RSA in FY 24.

### **Disability Determination Division Budget**

DDS is the agency host for DDD, the District office in which the Social Security Administration's review and determination of Social Security disability claims takes place. This operation is 100 percent federally funded, with a proposed FY 24 budget of \$13,023,885. This budget is an estimate based on likely workload. Still, there is a mechanism allowing for an increase in federal funds in the event that DDD needs additional funding. It is therefore possible that the DDD budget may increase, but not in a way that could impose local costs on the District generally or DDS in particular.

Thank you, Chairperson Lewis George, for the opportunity to share our vision for FY 24. We at DDS are grateful to have such a thoughtful and dedicated partner.



Thank you, also, to our providers and staff. Your resilience, skill, and compassion are what helped us to confront the unprecedented public health emergency. You embody person-centeredness every day.

That person-centered spirit is shared by our community of self-advocates, family members, and other partners who challenge us to rise to the occasion and to ensure that our work is worthy of the people we serve. We at DDS know that we are never alone in pursuing our mission, and there is no more authentic form of support than the honest, thoughtful feedback our stakeholders continue to provide.

Finally, I would like to thank Mayor Bowser. The budget before this Committee is the manifestation of a profound commitment to ensuring the full inclusion of people with disabilities on the part of the Mayor. That abiding commitment, in lockstep with the commitment that defines our staff and provider communities, is part of why people with disabilities are, and will continue to be, integral participants in the District's comeback.

This concludes my testimony. My team and I are happy to address your questions.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Office of Disability Rights



Fiscal Year 2024  
Budget Oversight Hearing

Testimony of  
**Mathew McCollough**  
Director

Before the  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Virtual Hearing  
Wednesday, March 29, 2023  
Time: 9:00 am



Good morning, Chairperson Lewis George and the members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. My name is Mathew McCollough, and I am the Director of the Office of Disability Rights (ODR). It gives me great pleasure to speak on the agency's proposed Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024) budget. Mayor Bowser's FY2024 budget makes strong, strategic investments in building local businesses and the area economy, affordable and accessible housing, education, human services, public safety, transportation, infrastructure, and employment services that provide our residents with disabilities with a viable pathway to improve their own trajectory and quality of life. Furthermore, these investments reflect the prominent needs and priorities identified by District residents at the three Budget Engagement Forums conducted in February during the budget formulation process.

### **Our Purpose**

ODR focuses on the District of Columbia Government's commitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and compliance with all other federal and local disability-related laws. The District serves as a nationally-recognized leader in ensuring that programs, services, and facilities operated are fully accessible to, and useable by, people with disabilities. ODR actively supports, promotes, and works to advance the protections available under the ADA and other laws impacting our citizens with disabilities in areas of community living, employment, housing, transportation, emergency preparedness, and other Government programs and services.

Specifically, our agency proudly provides the following services: guidance, information, and technical assistance to District Government agencies and people accessing government programs and services; resolution of requests for reasonable accommodation and modification of policies for District employees and community members with disabilities regarding accessibility to District buildings, services, programs and activities; ADA and Sensitivity Training; aid to District agencies in accessing effective communication services involving sign



language and braille interpretation; and providing staff and administrative support to the federally-funded Developmental Disabilities Council and the Mayor's DC Commission on Persons with Disabilities.

### **Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

As detailed in our budget chapter, ODR proposes a total operating budget of \$2,104,829, an increase of \$24,900 from Fiscal Year 2023. In local funds, ODR's proposed budget includes an increase of \$12,828 and one Full-time Equivalent (FTE) across multiple programs to align with the projected salary and fringe benefits across multiple programs. Additionally, the local funds budget proposal includes an increase of \$2,072 in nonpersonal services in the Disability Rights Program to align resources with operational spending goals related to professional service fees. In Federal Grant funds provided to the Developmental Disabilities Council, a proposed increase of \$10,000 and one FTE in the Disability Rights Program is to align the budget with projected grant awards during FY2024.

Federal funding of \$637,570 is allocated to the Developmental Disabilities Council to assist in their efforts in implementing their new 2022-2026 State Plan to improve the quality of life for all District residents with developmental disabilities and their families. The remaining operating budget of \$1,467,259 constitutes sixteen (16) staff who have an unwavering commitment for greatness, excellence, and discipline while ensuring that the District of Columbia continues to serve as a national model of urban accessibility.

### **Looking Toward the Future**

The Mayor's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget supports ODR in offering strong leadership, direction, and implementation to the following projects and initiatives:



- Host the Mayor’s Disability and Diversity Expo in October, which will also serve as a celebration of the 16<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ODR and our continued commitment to full inclusion and accessibility.
- In partnership with multiple District agencies, continue to monitor and implement the District’s *2021-2024 Olmstead Community Integration Plan*.
- In collaboration with HSEMA, effectively support all partnering agencies in developing and implementing effective emergency plans, tools, and resources inclusive of people with disabilities and the aging population in accordance with the Emergency Preparedness settlement.
- Continue to cultivate opportunities for respect and social inclusion among the aging population, neighbors, and visitors through multi-generational and cultural activities in partnership with the Age-Friendly DC Taskforce.

In closing, the Office of Disability Rights anticipates a strong future in the upcoming fiscal year. On behalf of ODR and our stakeholders, we are proud of the strong leadership provided by Mayor Bowser to ensure that the District of Columbia continues to serve as a national model of accessibility. I extend my greatest appreciation and respect to my staff, the DDC, and the DC Commission on Persons with Disabilities for their tireless efforts and commitment in improving the trajectory and quality of life for all citizens with and without disabilities. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak before this esteemed Committee and the Council. I welcome any questions you may have.





**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DEAF, DEAFBLIND AND HARD OF HEARING**



**Fiscal Year 2024  
Budget Oversight Hearing**

**Testimony of  
Kari Cooke  
Director**

Before the  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson

Wednesday, March 29, 2023  
9:00 a.m. (Virtual)





Muriel Bowser  
Mayor

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayor's Office of Deaf, DeafBlind, & Hard of Hearing



Kari Cooke  
Director

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Good afternoon, Chairperson Janeese Lewis George, members of the Council, staff of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services, and residents of the District of Columbia. My name is Kari Cooke, and I am honored to serve as the Director of the Mayor's Office of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (MODDHH) under the bold leadership of Mayor Muriel Bowser. I am pleased to testify today on Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2024 DC Fair Shot Budget Plan.

Last week, Mayor Bowser delivered the Fiscal Year 2024 Fair Shot Budget to the Council. As she stated, this budget comes at a critical juncture for our city. We are fortunate that even in tight times, the District remains well-resourced and able to continue delivering world-class programs and services. Still, the budget reflects many tough choices and it was formed with an eye towards how we get the best outcomes for our residents and make a strong comeback.

Today, I am pleased to report that as a new office, Mayor Bowser's Fair Shot budget responsibly navigates the needs of the Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened community.

MODDHH's FY24 proposed budget is \$1,104,278. This budget will support our staff and necessary overhead. We are grateful for Mayor Bowser's commitment to seeing our Office thrive, which aids our Office in providing accessible communication in braille as well as through virtual sign language phone communications.



Muriel Bowser  
Mayor

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayor's Office of Deaf, DeafBlind, & Hard of Hearing



Kari Cooke  
Director

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In FY24, MODDHH will continue supporting Mayor Bowser's Administration's core government functions that focus on improving the quality of life for all DC residents and businesses.

We will continue to focus our work on the following areas:

- **Public safety:** We are excited to partner with MPD – particularly the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Unit – to improve relations between our hardworking public safety officials and Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened residents. We are also excited to work together on unique communication accessibility tools to help residents with hearing loss have equal access to safety with law enforcement. We are most excited about a burgeoning partnership with the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement to increase accessible services and resources for residents with hearing loss.
- **Revitalizing Downtown:** At a 12% unemployment rate for Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened residents, according to the National Deaf Center on Post-Secondary Outcomes, the District has one of the highest unemployment disparities among its counterparts in the country. We know that one of the key paths to the middle class is to become a business owner. Thus, in addition to partnering with the great work of DDS' Vocational Rehabilitation Services, MODDHH aims to amplify the many opportunities of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and our partnerships with the Department of Licensing and Consumer



Muriel Bowser  
Mayor

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayor's Office of Deaf, DeafBlind, & Hard of Hearing



Kari Cooke  
Director

Protection and the Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking. During National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, we will host the #HHDBDeafDCWorksSummit, offering opportunities for residents to enroll in workforce development training programs and interview for employment opportunities in the District.

- **Education:** I mentioned earlier the increasing number of children with hearing loss in the District, and as such, we are highlighting our work in language acquisition and early childhood education. We look forward to partnering with Strong Start to increase access to services in ASL for families and children with hearing loss. Additionally, we hope to address the high numbers of intimate partner violence at the high school level for youth with hearing loss by partnering with the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Behavioral Health.
- **Statehood:** The District has long been the heartbeat of democracy. As we approach Emancipation Day, we are reminded that DC has always celebrated the importance of every voice being heard in the way government operates and serves. We are excited to create cultural competency training programs for DC agencies and divisions that will make all resources in DC government accessible to our constituency.
- **DC Future:** One thing that makes all the staff of MODDHH proud to work for Mayor Bowser is her commitment to innovation. We see DC becoming the most accessible city



Muriel Bowser  
Mayor

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayor's Office of Deaf, DeafBlind, & Hard of Hearing



Kari Cooke  
Director

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(and future state) in the country by providing accessibility to residents with hearing loss, especially our senior citizens who have contributed so much to the District. Additionally, as the host of the Global Accessible Technological Summit, we bring world leaders in accessible technology to the District as DC builds a worldwide reputation as a leader in accessible technology.

We are excited to see the ways Mayor Bowser has prioritized the real needs of District residents and how fittingly it overlaps with the unique needs of residents with hearing loss.

In closing, I want to thank Mayor Bowser for her leadership and the opportunity to serve in this capacity. I often say that I have moved so many times, but living in DC, I have finally found my home; as such, it is truly an honor to serve in such a direct and impactful way. I also want to thank my colleagues in MOCA, MOCRS, ODR, DDS, and more for their continued commitment to ensuring residents with hearing loss enjoy the best DC has to offer.

I look forward to our continued work together to achieve our shared goals and give all residents a fair shot to benefit from Washington, DC's continued prosperity. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions at this time.

Judy Alden

Written testimony re Council Member George's March 26, 2023, Budget Hearing: Mayor's Office on Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (MODDHH).

April 4, 2023

My name is Judy Alden, president of the Hearing Loss Association of America-DC Chapter (HLAA-DC). HLAA is the leading voice for the approximately 15% of the US population with hearing loss. Website: [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org). The approximately 2-5% of the population who are Deaf/deaf and use American Sign Language (ASL) are represented by various special interest Deaf/deaf organizations. I avidly advocate for accommodations for each of the named constituencies and our many long standing, shared priorities to improve life in DC (emergency preparedness; workforce development; cradle to grave support; MPD app and training; etc.) but my lived experience is some forty years in the Hard of Hearing community.

I'm submitting this written testimony after attending the March 26, 2023, budget hearing because I feel CM George asked some critical questions, as she did at the Performance review, where I testified about these same issues. I do not challenge the requested MODDHH budget increase; indeed to serve the Hard of Hearing community, I recommend an increased budget IF it includes staff who identify as Hard of Hearing and are knowledgeable about the array of Hearing Assistive Technology that provides effective and cost-effective accessibility. Currently, to my knowledge and based on various meetings, all MODDHH staff identify as Deaf/deaf (some may be oral deaf).

While I can cite many examples, I'll be brief because the issues, in addition to staff self-identification, are likely driven in part by the organization chart: MODDHH reports to the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) and the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs (MOCA). As CM George, noted at the budget meeting, MODDHH has an active communications director... and I see many posts of the MODDHH staff attending Mayoral sanctioned events. (With an acknowledged interest in social media to reach constituents, ASL is quite Instagrammable). However, I'm at a loss to find examples of ways MODDHH is supporting the Hard of Hearing community as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and as stated in DC's establishing Law/Code. Since MODDHH was staffed in October, I've been told much is in the works and I look forward to those improvements! Near term, however, there are some informative "mindshare" actions that can enable immediate accessibility for the Hard of Hearing

CM George pointedly said every DC agency as well as Council need guidance regarding how to be supportive and truly accessible... we need long term progress and immediate adjustment to behavior both immediate adjustments to behavior as well as longer term progress (I think I'm referencing that correctly but CART had so much latency and missed words, I had to go back to review the posted video). I wholeheartedly agree and venture MODDHH should demonstrate best practice regarding these expectations.

I have no doubt MODDHH leadership and staff are very busy (as I note on FaceBook and Twitter). My request is for accountability supporting the agency's named communities around both immediate and longer term accessibility. I respect that there is much research in process, especially by the Policy staffer, to assess "current reality" and determine optimal next steps, particularly given the rapidity of technological change.

Below are three "in the moment" concerns that warrant both attention and an equitable solution as the Budget is reviewed.

- 1) The proposed 2024 budget includes onetime \$360,000 contract to support ASL, which I don't question. What is proposed plan and budget to improve CART?
- 2) At the budget hearing, CM George inquired about the MODDHH website and was told it was operational. That day, I went to the referenced address [communityaffairs.dc.gov/moddhh](https://communityaffairs.dc.gov/moddhh) . Recognizing the Effective Communications Program transitioned earlier this year from ODR to MODDHH, why is there a hotlink to the ASL request form (albeit from ODR site) but no mention nor link to CART?
- 3) Currently, who on the MODDHH staff is the "go to" for knowledgeable information and practical expertise about Hearing Assistive Technology, including but not limited to CART?
- 4) The recently formed Policy Workgroup is a step in the right direction. But, do I understand the Advisory Committee is chosen by the Mayor from among her supporters?

Council Member George, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. And, thank you for your excellent questions around accountability and budget requirements.

Your consideration of my point of view and suggestions is appreciated

Sincerely,

Judy Alden







**Testimony of Sandy Bernstein, Legal Director  
Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services  
Before the Council of the District of Columbia  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
DC Department on Disability Services Budget Hearing  
March 29, 2023**

Good morning, Councilmember Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. My name is Sandy Bernstein and I am the Legal Director at Disability Rights DC (DRDC) at University Legal Services. DRDC is the federally-mandated Protection and Advocacy Program for people with disabilities in D.C. and also serves as the Client Assistance Program for people in D.C. seeking vocational rehabilitation services. As the Protection and Advocacy Program, DRDC has represented hundreds of individuals supported by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and has assisted even more through our systemic advocacy and investigations. DRDC also provides assistance to people with disabilities with funding from the D.C. Bar Foundation's Access to Justice Initiative and we thank the Foundation for their support.

DRDC generally supports the Mayor's proposed FY24 budget for the Department on Disability Services (DDS) and appreciates her commitment to maintaining the level of services provided by DDS to District residents with disabilities. On the DDA side, the budget will allow the agency to continue providing the critical community-based services needed for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities, who do not have the IQ score required for an intellectual disability diagnosis, became eligible for DDA

services for the first time in October 2022 and the budget allows DDA to continue providing long-awaited services to that population.

As DRDC mentioned in our oversight testimony in February, we are very troubled with how long it takes from the time someone submits an application for DDA services until they actually receive their first service and question whether DDA's budget for staffing is adequate. DDA's policy requires eligibility determinations to be made within 45 days<sup>1</sup> yet we are seeing decisions take weeks longer.<sup>2</sup> After a finding of eligibility, DDA assigns a service coordinator. In DRDC's experience, that assignment typically takes at least a month. Then, an Individual Support Plan (ISP) meeting is scheduled-- often several weeks later. Afterwards, DDA submits an application for I/DD or IFS waiver services so that these individuals can receive the services they need. DDA has told DRDC staff repeatedly that it takes ninety days for a waiver application to be approved. After approval, the person selects a waiver provider and services can begin. Through all of these steps, the person is left waiting for services. This timeline is consistent with DDS' responses to the Council's oversight questions which revealed that, in FY 22, it took an average of 180 days from the date of eligibility until the person received their first service.<sup>3</sup> This delay is unacceptable.

DDS has reported it hired additional staff to manage the increase in applications due to the change in eligibility criteria at DDA. It appears the number of staff hired is not sufficient if the wait for needed services is at least six months. DRDC therefore, recommends, that the budget include more staffing positions at DDA to decrease this wait. If not, families are left struggling to support their loved ones and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://dds.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dds/publication/attachments/Intake%20Policy.pdf>, Section 6.D.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/230209-DDS-POH-Responses.pdf>, Question No. 26.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/230209-DDS-POH-Responses.pdf>, Question No. 27.

are not getting the residential and other services they need to maintain their skills and live safe and productive lives in the community.

The Mayor's proposed budget for DDS includes a one-time increase of \$744,600 in DDA's budget to increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for people in DDA-supported residences. Such an increase is long overdue as the \$100 rate for the PNA, which is the only amount people supported by DDA in waiver homes receive from their SSI or SSDI checks, was put in place in 2007 and has not been increased since that time. There has been cost of living allowances (COLA) each year but those increases have only been provided to the District and not to the people living in DDA-supported homes. Director Reese reported in DDS' community forum on March 24<sup>th</sup> that the PNA will be increased from \$100 to \$150 in October 2023, to address the failure of the District to provide a COLA to people supported in DDA-residential homes all of these years. Director Reese also reported that, starting in January 2024, people supported by DDA will receive a portion of the COLA every year. This is very welcome news as DRDC often hears from individuals living in DDA's residential waiver homes who have been frustrated with the stagnant \$100 they receive every month from their SSI or SSDI checks .<sup>4</sup> DRDC truly appreciates and supports the inclusion of this increase in the Mayor's budget.

In regard to RSA, DRDC remains concerned about the high caseloads for the agency's vocational rehabilitation counselors. According to DDS' oversight responses, the average caseload for the counselors is 131.<sup>5</sup> DRDC regularly hears from RSA clients regarding the lack of communication with their counselors, delays in scheduling meetings, their failure to receive clear information regarding deadlines for when documents are needed for funding support and

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<sup>4</sup> See also D.C. Department of Health Care Finance Transmittal No. 23-13, Personal Needs Allowance Increase, dated January 31, 2023. DHCF announced it is raising the PNA for people in Intermediate Care Facilities for People with Intellectual and Developmental (ICF-IDD) and nursing facilities from \$70 to \$100 and will provide the people living in these facilities with a portion of the COLA.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/230209-DDS-POH-Responses.pdf>, Question No. 50.

which documents are needed and assistance gathering information and documentation. DRDC imagines it is difficult for counselors to provide the support needed when their caseloads are so high. Therefore, DDS' budget should include funds to hire additional counselors to reduce the caseload of existing counselors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Hello, my name is Maedi Tanham Carney. I am a Ward 3 resident and my daughter Ellie is a Department of Disability Services client. DDS provides numerous important services that make it possible for my daughter to live independently in the community. DDS funds direct support staff, physical fitness, and other wellness services that are critical for Ellie and the numerous other DDS clients. I wanted to express my support for full DDS funding and emphasize the important gap these services fill for the numerous DC residents with intellectual and other disabilities. I also want to note the importance of providing full funding for the proposed wage increase for the disability support professionals that work with Ellie and other DDS clients to the full 117% of the DC living wage. One of the greatest challenges facing DDS service providers is recruiting and retaining staff, and higher salaries will help with this challenge. Please know that these services are crucial for DC residents and their family and support networks.

Sincerely,

Maedi Tanham Carney  
5603 Potomac Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20016

I am submitting the following statement as written testimony for the Committee on Facilities and Family Services Budget Oversight Hearing on Wednesday March 29.

Hello, my name is Vijay D'Souza. I am a Ward 5 resident and the brother of a Department of Disability Services client. DDS provides numerous important services that make it possible for my brother to live independently in the community. DDS funds direct support staff, physical fitness, and other wellness services that are critical for both my brother and the numerous other DDS clients. I wanted to express my support for full DDS funding and emphasize the important gap these services fill for the numerous DC residents with intellectual and other disabilities. I also want to note the importance of providing full funding for the proposed wage increase for the disability support professionals that work with my brother and other DDS clients to the full 117% of the DC living wage. One of the greatest challenges facing DDS service providers is recruiting and retaining staff, and higher salaries will help with this challenge. Please know that these services are crucial for DC residents and their family and support networks.

Sincerely,

Vijay D'Souza  
2331 1<sup>st</sup> St NW  
Washington DC 20001

My name is Christie Gardner. I'm a Ward 8 resident and senior with a disability.

I have been a resident of Washington D.C. for 60 years and I am a member of the DC Guaranteed Income Coalition. The coalition has as its mission, among others, to build a permanent guaranteed income program in Washington, DC while preserving existing social insurance and safety net programs.

I'm the Secretary for Bread for the City Client Advisory Council, a board member for the Community Grocery Cooperative, and a member of Ward 8 Ambassadors with UPO. I receive disability benefits, and I need assistance with rent.

I believe the District's FY2024 budget should demonstrate its commitment to communities of color disproportionately harmed by policies and practices that place their families at economic risk.

For all District families -

- I am asking that the DC Council fund additional Guaranteed Income pilot Programs.
- I am asking for the Guaranteed Income Program to be transparent about who receives benefits and for the program to be inclusive to parents of color.
- I am also asking that the DC Council establish a fund to protect families who participate in GI Pilots.
- And finally, we thank the Council for the work it has started doing to protect benefits. But the work is not done, and we hope that you will ask for any and all waivers needed to protect other benefits that may be at risk, such as housing and SNAP benefits.

This is important to me because my SSI will pay only my rent, not my electricity. I only get \$65 in SNAP benefits. I go to food pantries to offset groceries.

The extra funds from the Guaranteed Income Program would help my family to become more independent.

Thank you for your time.

To Whom It May Concern;

Although I live in Oregon, I am writing to enthusiastically support increased funding for personal needs allowances and the cost-of-living increase for PNA which has been needed for years. My nephew who lives in DC gets support from DDS and this support allows him quality of life, independence and safety, and his parents peace of mind.

Thank you very much.



**TESTIMONY BY CAROL A. GRIGSBY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES  
MARCH 29, 2023**

Madame Chair and other councilmembers, my name is Carol Grigsby, and I am happy to appear again before the Committee on Facilities and Family Services to address the DDS budget for fiscal year 2024. I'd like to start by saying how impressed I was by your well-researched questions in the February performance hearing, and I also want to thank you for the remarks that your chief of staff Kelly Hunt made at Quality Trust's Better Together reception earlier this month.

I rotated off DC's federally-mandated Developmental Disabilities Council in December, but I continue to play an active role in advocacy through my blog, DDinWDC (<https://www.DDinWDC.com>), in which I cover key issues affecting people with developmental disabilities and their families.

My son has received residential supports through DDS since 2014, so I was especially happy to see that \$745,000 is included in the mayor's budget to cover catch-up funding in the personal needs allowance beginning in October of this year, as well as the first PNA cost-of-living increase in January 2024. Maintaining the PNA at the same amount for the past fifteen years has meant constant erosion in the small amount of funds in people's individual control, and this change was both unexpected and very welcome.

As you know, DDS is fielding increased administrative costs with respect to the revised eligibility criteria for long-term supports, and is also anticipating post-ARPA funding requirements. This comes at a time when ongoing budget surpluses in the DC budget are not assured. In this context, although I initially favored fare-free bus service in DC, I have reconsidered this and believe the council should focus more strategically on less sweeping but nevertheless essential priorities for the Douglass Commonwealth.

Looking toward the future for people with disabilities in DC, I am focusing my efforts, in conjunction with other advocates, on two specific issues:

- **One - Making employment of people with disabilities, with the workplace supports they need, a community priority.** This needs to include a concerted effort by the DC government and DCPL to serve as model employers of disabled people. We will be working in the coming months to sharpen the focus of this initiative, and will be in communication with your office as we do.
- **Two - Opening up more housing options for people with disabilities.** While empty office buildings downtown now create revenue issues for DC, as plans for residential conversions advance, we need to seize the opportunity to ensure there is more affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities in DC.

As the parent of a young person getting supports from DDS, I have a stake in seeing that we make progress on these two issues, and I hope that you and other members of the DC council will join with advocates to help us make progress. And in the here and now, please ensure full funding of this DDS budget proposal for FY 2024.

Thank you for giving me the chance to testify today. I hope to see you at tomorrow's final celebration of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

**CHARLES AWUSIN INKO-TARIAH**

**(DeafBlind 99% Self-Educated Ex-Bank Clerk-Typist, Poet, Author & Publisher)**

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March 22, 2023

**THE DC COUNCIL**

Government of the District of Columbia

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20004

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: GIFTED DEAF-BLIND WRITER AND POET TESTIMONY ON DDS/DRDC  
INTRANSIGENCE**

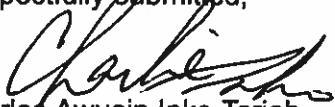
Good Morning. My name is Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah and I am DeafBlind, currently on probation having been conditionally released from Federal custody at Federal Medical Center, Butner, North Carolina effective December 14, 2018 after 25-year indefinite commitment and I made considerable progress in assimilation into the free community and contributing positively to society as a productive law-abiding citizen. I have written 7 upcoming books and poetry while being confined. In fact I have self-published 3 books and poetry. I am a role model for disadvantaged people to emulate.

Initially I had a positive view of the **DC Department of Disability Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)** and **Disability Rights DC** until the monster reared its ugly head on **January 27, 2023** and **March 21, 2023**. America would rather hire a white person with a felony record than a black person with a clean record or help fix job employment prospects for a disabled white person with less skills than a black person with more skills as my experience with DDS former counselor **Heather Callahan** illustrated. Behind the facade of claiming to be helpful and supportive she did the opposite by obstructing, employing delaying tactics and dragging out my employment opportunities exacerbating my ordeal for 7 months costing me lost income. I have already waited 30 months for the green card renewal by USCIS since March 2020-September 2022.

I have good work experience with a renowned French bank - Societe Generale, Lagos, Nigeria as clerk-typist 1986-1990 and attended college at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC 1992-1993, (Busboy) - La Trattoria Italian Restaurant, Bethesda, MD 1994-1995 as well as volunteer Administrative Office Assistant at Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital, (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation), NW, Washington, DC 1996-1997. In addition I have worked for 15 years at Vocational Rehabilitation Workshop, Federal Medical Center, Butner, North Carolina 1999-2014. I have strong work ethic and conducted myself professionally before Heather Callahan yet she deviously manipulated facts and claimed that "I am not a good candidate for employment at this time due to experiencing severe mental health symptoms and do not present with the skills and abilities to participate in securing employment successfully." I appeared before her several times and conducted myself appropriately. Is her eyes deceiving her? If I am white disabled person, no doubt she has no problem putting me on a fast track for job employment opportunities even if I am less skilled."

I am dismayed that Disability Rights DC has declined to help me advocate for back pay of \$70,000 for the 7 months delay in determining my eligibility for services including pain and suffering. I doubt that they (DRDC) would help a black person at the expense of their fellow white skinned professional who wronged him. I am testifying before the DC Council that race-based discrimination against blacks is prevalent at DC DDS and DRDC. How can someone of my caliber and talents who is 99% self-educated at mainstream schools for 12 years 1970-1982, worked in a bank, attended college and wrote 7 upcoming books and beautiful poetry have no skills, abilities or strong work ethics as Ms. Callahan of DC RSA insinuated. They jealously played down the unique accomplishments of black DeafBlind genius while lavishing praise on Helen Keller. They also discriminated against me based on my religious belief.

Respectfully submitted,



Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah

aka "The Tragic-Hero"

(Deaf/Blind 99% Self-Educated Former Bank Clerk-Typist, Poet, Author and Publisher)

**CHARLES AWUSIN INKO-TARIAH**  
**(Deaf/One-Eyed 99% Self-Educated Ex-Banker, Poet, Author and Publisher)**  
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March 14, 2023

**OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING (OAH)**  
441 4th Street, NW,  
Suite 450 North  
Washington, DC 20001



**RE: INFORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW - COMPENSATION FOR 7 MONTHS LOST WAGES AND SUFFERING (\$70,000) - 34 CFR Sec.361.57 and 29 DCMR Sec. 149**

Dear Sirs,

The aforementioned subject matter refers. In accordance with **34 CFR Sec. 361.57** and **29 DCMR Sec. 149** I am writing to the Office of Administrative Hearing (OAH) for review and indemnification.

In light of the Informal Administrative Review decision by **Ricky L. Wright**, Program Manager, DC Department of Disability Services (DC DDS) overturning the January 27, 2023 Ineligibility Letter decision by **Heather Callahan**, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, I am requesting that DC DDS indemnify me for the 7 months lost wages, pain and suffering due to unemployment as a result of Ms. Callahan discrimination based on race, nationality and religion. Behind the facade of claiming to be helpful and supportive she did the opposite.

During the tortuous 7 months interview and lengthy evaluations I gave a good account of myself with appropriate conduct and answered all her questions and that of **Dr Frances Colon**, P.HD (Psychologist) at IMA GROUP satisfactorily yet she manipulated facts and claimed falsely in collusion with **Yukiko Cabas**, (Case Manager), **Deaf-REACH Inc. (DEAF HORIZONS)** 3722 12th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017-2533 that **"I am not a good candidate for employment at this time due to experiencing severe mental health symptoms and do not present with the skills and abilities to participate in securing employment successfully"**

just like The Washington Post (Metro Section 8-1-98, 8-4-98 and **8-4-99**) article on notorious underground interstate metro subway \$200.00 arson havoc disruption 7-31-98 protesting great injustice, stating falsely that I suffers from a "**serious mental disease**" while suppressing facts about politically-motivated kidnapping and police brutality as well as conspiracy to frame me in murder so as to be executed by the Norfolk, Virginia Police Department led by Detective J. Rick Malbon acted in concert with Gallaudet University, Washington, DC that provided cover for the CIA-inspired 500-mile road round trip covert operation on Saturday 10/03/92.

My race, nationality and religion was a factor in her biased appraisal in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If I am white U.S citizen like her, she has no problem placing me on a fast track for gainful employment even if I am less skilled. How can someone of my caliber who have written up to 7 upcoming books and poetry as well as self-published three in addition to having working experience in a renowned French bank Societe Generale, Lagos, Nigeria as Clerk-Typist (1986-1990) and attended college at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC 1992-1993 in addition to doing Volunteer work as Administrative Office Assistant at Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital, (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation), NW, Washington, DC 1996-1997 among other work experiences have no skills and abilities to participate in securing employment successfully? Even when I was indefinitely committed for 25-years mostly at Federal Medical Center, Butner, North Carolina 1998-2018, I worked for 15 years in Vocational Workshop 1999-2014 as clerk-typist. Is her eyes deceiving her about my ~~skills~~ intelligence and potential as well as work ethics?

Regarding religion, her colleague Betsy Wohl (white woman) asked me during the protracted assessment whether I am Christian and I replied in the affirmative adding however that ~~it~~ was a flawed religion and this made her uncomfortable. My position is that over time my faith in Christianity is not strong because a situation where they (white Roman soldiers and Jews) killed/executed (crucified a righteous black man Yahshua The Messiah - Jesus Christ in the most gruesome manner) hang him on the tree (cross) naked, tortured, bloodied and humiliated then worshiped him as God almighty incarnate does not make sense! They claimed Jesus Christ as their lord and savior yet rid the world of him! And that white folks will NEVER kill or crucify their own good, popular and holy white man. They will always do that to a charismatic black leaders like Dr Martin Luther King (USA), Nelson Mandela and Chris Hani (South Africa), Marcus Garvey (USA), Honorable Elijah Muhammad (USA), President Samora



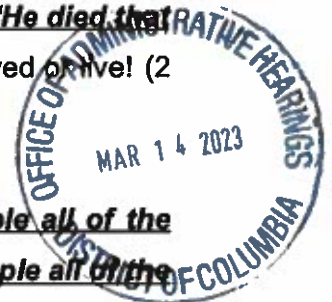
Machel (Mozambique), Dr Dwight Malachi York (USA), Medgar Evers (USA) and Patrice Lumumba (Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo) etc.

It is my opinion that none of the Roman Catholic Popes, no leader and certainly nobody else liked being portrayed in such barbaric, degrading and humiliating manner as "tragic-looking" Jesus Christ was on that damn cross naked, tortured, bloodied and humiliated! That late Evangelist Billy Graham had been deceiving the gullible masses worldwide for many years by writing articles in The Charlotte Observer as columnist and consistently preaching that "God sent his beloved son Jesus Christ on earth to die as final and complete sacrifice for sin." I said which loving parents in their right frame of mind would offer their own beloved children to die as "sacrifice" so that bad people (sinners) be saved? Isn't it sheer madness to the human mind, logical reasoning, preposterous and contrary to the laws of nature. Yet he (Evang. Billy Graham) will NEVER agree to offer his own beloved son and heir The Reverend Franklin Graham to die as "sacrifice" so that bad people (hardened criminals) be saved! (John 3:17). When a President sends his emissary or personal representative, say Secretary of State or Ambassador to a foreign country, what does he expect from them? He expects them to treat him with dignity and respect not mock or murder him, so likewise when God sent a prophet to Earth he expects us to honor and respect them not murder/crucify him! The Whiteman/European Church miscreant twisted the word of God (Bible) to say "He died for our sins." "He died that we might be saved" The word "might" indicate no guarantee that we can be saved or live! (2 Corinthians 5:15).

U.S President Abraham Lincoln once said..."You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

That the names of black Egyptian Pharaohs and the year of their reign (Akhenaten, Tuthmosis, Tutankhamen, Khufu, Cheops etc) have been deleted is proof that the Bible has been tampered with during Hebrew to Greek translation (Septuagent) and needs to be reinterpreted so that mankind will not be snared by the falsehood that had been added or deleted from it.

This is what made Betsy Wohl (white colleague) and Heather Callahan (white woman counselor) uncomfortable hence they sabotaged my employment eligibility prospects with the DC Department of Disability Services. Before I file disability discrimination lawsuits under color



of law, I am offering an olive branch and a way out of this mess as lawyers involved will exacerbate and accumulate more fees. I trust that you will do the right thing and resolve this matter amicably by indemnifying me for the 7 months loss of gainful employment and income.

Sincerely,



Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah

**(Deaf/One-Eyed 99% Self-Educated Bank Clerk-Typist, Poet, Author and Publisher)**

Attached

Cc: Client Assistance Program  
University Legal Services, Inc.  
220 I Street, NE Suite 130  
Washington, DC 20002





Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>

## Informal Administrative Review Finding

Wright, Ricky (DDS) <Ricky.Wright@dc.gov>

Tue, Mar 7, 2023 at 5:05 PM

To: "charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com" <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>, "Kittrell, Kelli (DDS)" <Kelli.Kittrell@dc.gov>

Cc: "Johnsonjr, Damon (DDS)" <damon.johnsonjr@dc.gov>

Mr. Inko-Tariah,

Please review the attached finding from your Informal Administrative Review. You have been found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. You may have already been in communication with a counselor. If not, you will soon be contacted by a VR Counselor to continue with your case.

@Kittrell, Kelli (DDS) please ensure the attached document is uploaded in Mr. Charles' file.

Thank you.

*Ricky L. Wright, M.S.*

Program Manager—Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Government of the District of Columbia

Department on Disability Services (DDS)

Rehabilitation Services Administration

One Independence Square

250 E. Street SW

Washington, DC 20024

(202) 442-8756 (Office)

[Ricky.wright@dc.gov](mailto:Ricky.wright@dc.gov)



 **Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah Admin Review .docx**  
546K





**LIFE. YOUR WAY.**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES**

**Andrew Reese, Director**  
One Independence Square  
250 E Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024  
202.730.1700 | www.dds.dc.gov

**Rehabilitation Services Administration  
Informal Administrative Review**



RSA Consumer: Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah  
Date of Review: February 16, 2023  
Date of Decision: February 18, 2023  
Reviewer: Ricky L. Wright, M.S., (RSA) Program Manager

Mr. Inko-Tariah:

You are receiving this notice because a recent decision has been made that may affect your case with the District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

**Background:**

On February 16, 2023, an Informal Administrative Review meeting was held regarding Mr. Inko-Tariah's eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Particularly, on January 27, 2023, Mr. Inko-Tariah received a letter of ineligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Services from VR Counselor, Heather Callahan. On the same day (January 27, 2023), upon receipt of the ineligibility letter, Mr. Inko-Tariah requested an Informal Administrative Review meeting.

During the meeting, Mr. Inko-Tariah provided a copy of his current Supplemental Security Income Award Letter from the Social Security Administration. Mr. Inko-Tariah also presented, physically, with obvious disabilities identified as core founding disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Relief Sought:**

Mr. Inko-Tariah requests the decision of ineligibility be overturned and he be determined eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

**Reviewer's Findings and Decision:**

After careful consideration of all the evidence submitted and testimony heard during the Informal Administrative Review meeting, it is this Program Manager's decision to overturn the findings in the January 27, 2023, Ineligibility Letter and find Mr. Inko-Tariah Eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.



LIFE. YOUR WAY.

**Reviewed by:** Ricky Wright, VR Services Program Manager

**Signature:** *Ricky Wright*

**Date:** March 7, 2023

You have a right, if you disagree with the above decision, to request a fair hearing from the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH), 441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 450 North, Washington, DC 20001 in accordance with 34 CFR § 361.57 and 29 DCMR § 149. This request shall be in writing, signed by you and submitted within 15 business days to OAH either personally or via US mail. If you need assistance with this you may also contact University Legal Services:

Client Assistance Program  
University Legal Services, Inc.  
220 I Street, NE Suite 130  
Washington DC 20002

CAP's telephone number is 202-547-4747. Assistance from CAP is available at no cost.





Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>

## VR Services - Eligibility

Callahan, Heather (DDS) <heather.callahan@dc.gov>  
To: Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>  
Cc: Yukiko Cabas <CabasY@deaf-reach.org>

Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 10:33 AM

Hi Mr. Inko-Tariah,

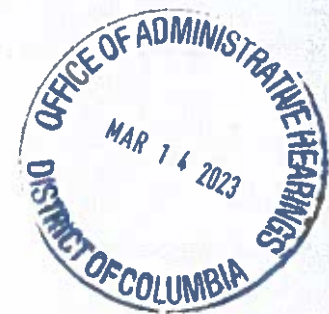
I hope all is well. I am reaching out to you via email as written communication is your preferred method of communication. After completion of the psychological assessment with IMA Group on 01/19/2023, Psychologist, Frances Colon PH.D., has indicated that you are currently not a good candidate for employment at this time. I have attached a letter indicating the reasons for this decision. However, if you choose to still seek employment, you have the right to utilize the One Stop Job Centers in DC. They assist with employment. I've included their contact information for you below.

If you wish to discuss further in person, please let me know. Unfortunately, at this time I will have to move forward with closing your case. Please let me know if you need resources or contact information for any other local community programs.

Contact Email: [does@dc.gov](mailto:does@dc.gov)

Contact Phone: 202-727-9675

American Job Center | [does \(dc.gov\)](https://does.dc.gov)



Best,

**Heather Callahan, MRC, CRC**

**Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, Sensory Unit**

Rehabilitation Services Administration

Department on Disability Services

One Independence Square

[250 E St. SW](#)

Washington, D.C. 20024

Phone: (202) 251-3254 (voice/text)

Videophone: (202) 794-9805

Fax: (202) 442-8720

Email: [heather.callahan@dc.gov](mailto:heather.callahan@dc.gov)

Tour of Duty: 7:30am-4:00pm

Telework Days: Monday and Thursday

---

 **C.Inko-Tariah Letter of Ineligibility.pdf**  
306K



**Re: Manipulating The Evaluation Report Denying Employment**

Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah &lt;charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com&gt;

Thu, Feb 2, 2023 at 6:08 PM

To: "Callahan, Heather (DDS)" <heather.callahan@dc.gov>, Concetta "Connie" Pucci <puccic@deaf-reach.org>, Juliana Sardokey <SarkodeeJ@deaf-reach.org>, Laurie Hooper <hooperl@deaf-reach.org>, Lucille Dorsey <dorseyl@deaf-reach.org>, Michele May <maym@deaf-reach.org>, Stephen Smith <Stephen\_Smith@dcp.uscourts.gov>, Theresa Baumgartner <Baumgartner@deaf-reach.org>, Yukiko Cabas <CabasY@deaf-reach.org>, "jpanthony\_verizon.net" <jpanthony@verizon.net>

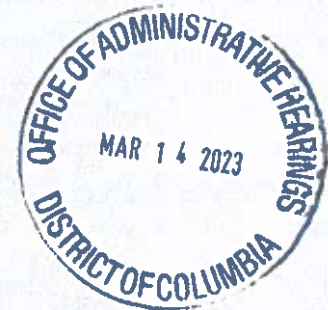
Hello Yukiko Cabas,

According to DC DDS Counselor Heather Callahan letter dated January 27, 2023 titled "Letter of Ineligibility" (page 2, paragraph 3) she attributed the determination to Psychologist Dr Frances Colon, PH.D stating that I am not a good candidate for employment at this time and that I am experiencing severe mental health symptoms and do not present with the skills and abilities to participate in securing employment successfully when I gave a good account of myself during evaluation examination.

When I talked to Dr Colon office during visit last week they strongly denied making such negative appraisal and said that the case worker (yourself) is behind such manipulation. On August 15, 2022 I collapsed face down outside Deaf Reach Inc., office due to excessive forced medication (injection of powerful psychotropic drugs Haloperidol 150 mg-200 mg (now 75 mg) 512 times and counting. You took a whole 7-10 days to get me to hospital for medical attention whereas Nancy Conger (white member) gets immediate medical attention within minutes of collapsing inside CMH with 2 EMS Van outside the house sirens blaring nonstop, 10 black specialists attending to her. All I get from Deaf Reach Inc., staff was an untreated water to drink by Theresa Baumgartner.

I have not forgotten about your recommendation to take INVEGA supposedly to help clear up "confused thoughts" when in fact it will destroy me, according to my research of its side effects on Google. You behaved like a "friendly foe" or "foeish friend" because you manipulated the assessment behind my back pretending that you have my best interest at heart but is waiting to betray me. How can they say that I have no skills when I once worked in a bank and wrote and self-published 3-7 upcoming books and poetry? What an accomplished liars they are!!!

Inko





Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>

## VR Services - Eligibility

Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>  
To: "Callahan, Heather (DDS)" <heather.callahan@dc.gov>  
Cc: Yukiko Cabas <CabasY@deaf-reach.org>

Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 12:49 PM

Dear Heather Callahan,

I am no longer interested. You have shown me your true colors. I will find out from IMA GROUP psychologist Dr Frances Colon whether she actually wrote negative appraisal of me after I have satisfactorily answered all her questions during evaluation on Thursday January 19, 2023. I have exhibited no thought disorder yet you claimed that I have serious mental health issues.

I have every reason to believe that my religious beliefs about Christianity as flawed which made your white colleague Betsy Wohl uncomfortable is the reason I am denied eligibility for job placement by DC DDS. I will contest the results in a mediation hearing but I am not interested in working for white people because I don't want to complain of discrimination but go utilize my talents, ingenuity and creativity to produce something worthwhile like writing 7 upcoming books and poetry. Right now several reputable publishing companies have contacted me expressing interest in working with me to make my dream a reality.

Your position reminds me of the comments about white Americans by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad (Founder of the Black Nation of Islam) in his book "The Fall of America"... "In many cases they have come with good intentions, however behind these is a hidden agenda, ulterior motive and hidden plot. They will strike when one least expect." A white inmate former U.S Navy Officer James Visk, 45, from Chicago, Illinois told me in 2000 at Federal Medical Center, Butner, North Carolina that the "U.S has ulterior motive in everything they do."

America would rather hire a white man with a felony record than a black man with a clean record! That is what discouraged me from working with Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital, (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation), NW, Washington, DC after volunteering as Administrative Office Assistant 1996-1997. I decided to go pool all my talents and resources together to improve my situation in times of extreme adversity than go to white peoples cap-in-hand begging for a job then complain about discrimination! Gallaudet University, Washington, DC white officials promised to further my promising career and college education in a letter of admission 1991 but instead have sowed the seeds of my destruction with hard earned tuition money (\$15,000 in 1992) gone to their coffers and I have been treated with racist taunts and miseducation as well as kidnapped, brutalized by Police and framed for murder in Norfolk, Virginia on a 500-mile road round trip so as to be executed on Saturday October 3, 1992.

DC DDS has discriminated against me based on my political and religious beliefs.

Sincerely,

Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah  
(Deaf/Partly Blind 99% Self-Educated Former Bank Clerk-Typist, Poet, Author and Publisher)  
1203 1/2 Otis Street, NE  
\*P. O. Box 29074  
Washington, DC 20017-2516  
Email: [Charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com](mailto:Charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com)  
(202) 855-3530 (Direct Line iPhone)  
(202) 235-2832 (Video Phone iPad)

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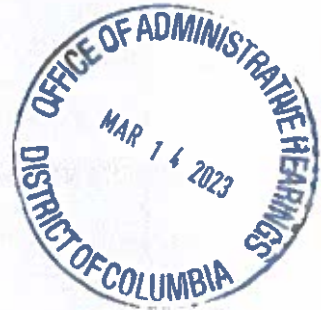


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES  
Rehabilitation Services Administration

## Letter of Ineligibility

January 27, 2023

CHARLES Inko-Tariah  
1203 1/2 Otis Street NE  
P.O Box 29074  
Washington, DC 20017



Dear CHARLES Inko-Tariah,

A preliminary assessment has been completed that included: 1) information that you, your family, other authorized representatives and advocates provided; and 2) information from existing records and other information. Based on this assessment it has been determined that:

at this time, you are not a good candidate for employment and will not benefit from receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

The reason for this decision is:

DCRSA's determination of an applicant's eligibility for VR services shall be based only on the following basic requirements:

A determination by qualified personnel that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment;

A determination by qualified personnel that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment for the applicant;

A determination by a qualified VR specialist employed by DCRSA that the

applicant requires VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment that is consistent with the person's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice. For purposes of an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs under this part, a person is presumed to have a goal of an employment outcome; and

A presumption that the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of VR services. The applicant's completion of the application process for VR services is sufficient evidence of the person's intent to achieve an employment outcome

Upon completion of the psychological evaluation with IMA Group on 01/19/2023, it was determined by Psychologist, Frances Colon, PH.D., that you are not a good candidate for employment at this time due to experiencing severe mental health symptoms and do not present with the skills and abilities to participate in education or training program, and thus will not result in securing employment successfully.

At this time, it is recommended you continue with psychiatric treatment as currently provided with Anchor Mental Health. DC RSA will move forward with closing your case as you cannot benefit from vocational rehabilitation services at this time.

Please refer to Deaf REACH, your Case Manager - Yukiko Cabas, and your Mental Health Provider - Anchor Mental Health, for any community support services that you may need.

If you disagree with the decision of ineligibility, you have the right to appeal the decision within ten(10) business days. Please review the enclosed right to appeal to determine which action you would like to pursue.

Sincerely,

Heather Callahan





Encl. Right to Appeal



## Right to Appeal

**A) Request an Informal Administration Review Meeting:** An informal administrative review meeting is a non-binding, non-adversarial process where the applicant or person receiving services and/or his or her authorized representative meet with the DCRSA Deputy Director, or his or her designee, in order to expeditiously and informally resolve his or her dispute(s) regarding the provision of services. In accordance with 29 DCMR 138, you must request an administrative review, in writing, within ten (10) business days of receipt of this letter. Your written request must be sent to:

Quality Assurance and Performance Management Administration  
Attention: Deputy Director  
Department on Disability Services  
250 E Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20024  
[dds@dc.gov](mailto:dds@dc.gov)



**B) Request Mediation:** Mediation is a voluntary, informal process aimed at resolving a dispute the applicant or person receiving services has concerning the provision of services. Mediation is facilitated by the D.C. Office of Administrative hearings (OAH) and is available whenever an impartial due process hearing is requested in accordance with paragraph (c) below.

**C) Request an Impartial Due Process Hearing with OAH:** If the informal administrative review meeting was unsuccessful, you can request an impartial due process hearing in accordance with 29 DCMR 146 and 149 no later than fifteen (15) business days after receiving an adverse decision based on an informal administrative review. In the absence of an informal administrative review meeting, you must request a hearing within thirty (30) business days of this notice.

To request mediation or an impartial due process hearing, you must write a letter or file for a hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings, located at 441 4th Street, N.W. Suite 450 North, Washington, D.C. 20001.

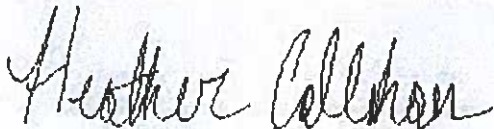
D) Request an Interpreter or Other Method(s) of Communication: You have the right to request a qualified interpreter who is fluent in your primary language including sign language, or other methods of communication such as auxiliary aids to ensure effective communication during an informal administrative review meeting, mediation or impartial due process hearing.

If you have any questions about the above options, please contact Ms. Alice Aguehounde, Program Support Assistant in the State Office of Policy, Planning and Innovation, at (202) 442-8686 (voice) or [dds@dc.gov](mailto:dds@dc.gov).

In addition, if you need assistance with any of these actions, you may contact:

Client Assistance Program ("CAP")  
Disability Rights DC  
University Legal Services, Inc.  
220 I Street, N.E., Suite 130  
Washington, DC 20002

CAP's telephone number is (202) 547-0198 (voice) and (202) 547-2657 (TDD). Please ask to speak with the Intake Specialist when you call. Assistance from CAP is available at no cost to you.



Heather Callahan  
VR Specialist

Encl.





Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>

## VR Services - Eligibility

Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah <charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com>  
To: dds@dc.gov

Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 1:16 PM

Dear Ms. Alice Aguehoude,

I would like to file a Right To Appeal the VR Services Ineligibility decision. I need C.A.R.T Interpreter. The attached response is self-explanatory.

Best,

Charles Awusin Inko-Tariah  
(Deaf/Partly Blind 99% Self-Educated Former Bank Clerk-Typist, Poet, Author and Publisher)  
Email: charles.inko.tariah12@gmail.com

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(202) 832-6681 (TTY/V)

3722 12<sup>th</sup> St NE Washington, DC 20017

(202) 832-8454 (FAX)

[www.deaf-reach.org](http://www.deaf-reach.org)

September 29, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Deaf-REACH Inc, I would like to introduce Mr. Charles Inko-Tariah to your organization.

Mr. Inko-Tariah has been connected to Deaf-REACH Inc for behavioral health services and housing for almost 4 years as part of his release plan from the Butner Correctional Facility in North Carolina where he had been remanded for over 20 years.

We work with his current attorney and parole officer on a regular basis to ensure compliance with his release plan and to assist Mr. Inko-Tariah in obtaining other kinds of social services and supports.

His community support worker at Deaf-REACH Inc is Yukiko Cabas. If you have any questions please contact us.

Sincerely,

Michele May, LICSW  
Executive Director

**Thomas Mangrum**

**Project ACTION! Co-President, Advocate, and Ward 2 Voter**

**FY24 Budget Hearing for Department on Disability Services (DDS)**

**Committee on Facilities and Family Services**

**March 29, 2023**

---

Good morning, Chairperson Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. My name is Thomas Mangrum, and I am testifying today as an advocate for people with disabilities and Co-President of Project ACTION!, DC's self-advocacy coalition. In Project ACTION!, we have 2 of everything – 2 presidents, 2 vice presidents, 2 secretaries, and 2 treasurers. We all support each other. I live and vote in Ward 2 and am active in many committees. I am a person with a disability. I am a native Washingtonian, and I love DC!

I'm here to testify about DDS's budget. DDS has been good to me; they've helped me. Their budget should be maintained or increased so they can serve more people. There is work to be done to pay staff better and find more affordable and accessible housing.

Staff wages and training should be better. Staff should be paid more so they can stick around longer. I would love to have a staff person who is gay-friendly and who will stay for a long time. Some staff say they can work with anyone, but that's usually not true. It's important to match people with staff who will respect their identity, including their sexuality and religion. Staff should get more training about privacy and what to say when strangers ask them about the personal business of the people they serve. Sometimes strangers ask a DSP, "what's wrong with that person? What is their disability?" DSPs don't always know how to respond, and they need more training to re-direct these offensive questions.

I live in my own apartment, which I rent with my own money. My apartment is very small and it's hard for me to move around in my motor chair with ease. I can't have friends and family over because there isn't enough room. I want to find a better apartment in DC that allows me to still get services here and meets my mobility needs. What else can DDS and other DC government agencies do about housing to help people like me stay in DC? Are accessible homes being reserved for people who need them? If so, who is monitoring that? How is the DC budget supporting people with disabilities who are low income to get housing that meets their needs?

I also want to say that the Office of Disability Rights and Mat McCollough are doing important work because everyone should know about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and follow it. They should work more with the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) to make sure all sidewalks are accessible. I still end up in the road sometimes when sidewalks are inaccessible. Not all the sidewalks in DC are accessible, and it is dangerous for wheelchair users.

As Project ACTION! Co-President, I want to thank Andy Reese and many of his staff for attending Project ACTION! meetings every month and showing us they care about our issues.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions you have!



**DC Council    Committee on Facilities and Family Services**  
**Budget Oversight Hearing - Department on Disability Services**  
**Wednesday, March 29, 2023 – 9AM**

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Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis-George and members of the Facilities and Family Services Committee. I am Ian Paregol, and I serve as the Executive Director of the DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers. The DC Coalition currently represents over 50 provider agencies, supporting over 2,300 persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and employing over 4,700 staff - most of whom are residents of the District of Columbia. Member organizations provide residential, day, employment, in-home and other home and community-based waiver services as well as Intermediate Care Facility (“ICF”) supports to residents of the District with intellectual and developmental disabilities (“IDD”).

On behalf of the DC Coalition and its membership, we support the Mayor’s FY 24 budget, but we do urge the Mayor to issue the written findings from the Healthcare Workforce Taskforce which she convened over the summer of 2022. Within the committee member proposed recommendations there were a number of suggested strategies to address the workforce crisis that continues to exist within the healthcare industry. One such recommendation - which was generated within several sub-committees reports - was increasing the benchmark funding threshold for direct support staff to 120% of the Living Wage, replacing the 117.6% factor that was borne of legislation passed in 2019 through this body’s DSP Rate Payment Act.

Unfortunately, the DSP Rate Payment Act remained largely unfunded by the Mayor, and turnover and vacancy rates continued to swell. And then Covid struck, which resulted in a parabolic rise in vacancies from an already dangerously high baseline. As a result, the DC Coalition, as well as numerous other healthcare advocates including long term care leaders, home health service providers, and the SEIU would suggest that recruitment and retention needs will require an even more substantial commitment to funding.

Increased Front-line Staff Funding

While the funding arm of DD supports, the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF), has offered supplementary funding in FY23 which attains 110% of the DSP Wage Act mandated 117.6% funding, at this point, DD providers are just too far behind with continually mounting turnover and vacancy rates. Vacancy rates are at 23% with some providers reporting vacancy rates as high as 40%. We would submit that in spite of recent efforts, the 117.6% increase - *which will not be fully funded until January 2025* - will just not be enough to attract and recruit staff for these demanding jobs and will not have an impact on staff vacancy rates.



*Unlike other industries, direct care services must be provided. Providers cannot simply choose not to staff someone who requires direct supports.* Instead, those supports are covered by already exhausted staff persons working at an overtime rate. Funding does not include any adjustment for overtime within its funding formula, so those overtime hours are only funded at the base living wage rate resulting in substantial unsustainable fiscal losses for service providers.

The anticipated funding increases for FY23 seek an averaged wage of \$18.15/hr, but even that calculation remains very close to Minimum Wage, netting a mere \$66.00 gross weekly upside on average versus a straight Minimum Wage paycheck. Given the significant training requirements, independent responsibilities and the array of documentation required of DSP staff, the role of the DSP is much more involved than one that pays at or near the DC minimum wage, and in order to protect workers as well as those supported, it cannot be treated as such.

For a historical perspective, in 2013, hourly wage rates for DSP workers were 162.5% of the Minimum Wage. In fact, the District's wisdom in creating a favorable DSP wage differential yielded results that led the nation for lowest vacancy and turnover rates. We need to return to those successes. At the end of the day, **even at averaged funding of 10% above the Minimum wage, there is no economic reason for a job seeker to choose to become a DSP.** And without a suitable workforce, the District will fail to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents, while also failing to address the socio-economic equity arguments surrounding this workforce that others have raised.

Providers need some accommodation or additional funding to account for the overtime generated from these staff vacancy rates which now result in even higher operational expenses. This is exactly the scenario that we testified about back in 2017 and 2018 and why we needed to address wages five (5) years ago - so we would not find ourselves in this situation now.

The DC Coalition recommends that any continuing wage enhancements for front-line staff include allocations for expected continued overtime costs resulting from the vacancy and turnover rates within the industry.

Finally, I wish to restate the concerns that the DC Coalition shared at the Performance Oversight Hearing in February:

### Wage Compression

As hourly rates for the substantial direct support workforce are projected to increase, we do need to address the wage compression impact that those increases are having upon the mid-level managers and supervisors. In part because of the difficulties in recruiting and retaining front line workers have resulted in significant overtime wages occasioned by the unsustainable vacancy rate among front line workers, those who are providing direct supports are now earning - on an annual basis - more than their supervisory team. Albeit more weekly work hours are required to attain those weekly pay levels, but the consequence has been that mid-level staff and supervisors are vacating their supervisory positions because they can earn more with overtime as a direct care worker. This has left a supervision gap and an inability to recruit mid-level leadership for the IDD provider community.

We are recommending additional fiscal support for these mid-level staff so that providers can maintain appropriate supervision ratios.

### Nursing Shortage

Similarly, funding for our nursing cohort lags behind the wages that these same nurses can earn in more traditional or institutional settings where they have a more clearly defined work schedule and actual hours where they can be “off duty.” As a result of severe nursing shortages in community based services, IDD nurses are on-call *all day, everyday*, and are not funded at comparable levels to those in more traditional settings even for a 40 hour work week.

We do recognize that there are nursing shortages throughout the region, but we are also seeing our IDD providers can pay their nurses much more competitive.

### DD Post-PHE

Lastly, we do fear what will happen when the additional Federal funding occasioned by the Public Health Emergency status is withdrawn in November 2023. Providers are using PHE-abled funds to cover overtime and per diem staff coverage, but our staffing shortfalls will not be remedied by the Fall. And in fact, supplements that are keeping the Intermediate Care Facilities afloat will disappear in July. We need to engage in a strategic dialogue now which considers projected vacancy data and post-PHE funding support in order to chart a sustainable future for services that is not reliant on PHE stabilizing assets.

Of course, this has ramifications throughout all of the waiver supported services, but we recommend convening a team of stakeholders to consider the fiscal implications of the Post-PHE world.

On behalf of the DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony at today’s Budget Oversight Hearing, and I welcome any questions that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,



Ian Paregol  
Executive Director, DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers



*GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY*  
Center for Child and Human Development

**Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Budget Oversight Hearing  
Department on Disability Services  
March 29, 2023**

**Submitted by:  
Robin Shaffert**

**Senior Policy Associate and Research Instructor  
Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities  
Center for Child and Human Development  
2115 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Sixth Floor  
Washington, DC 20007**

On behalf of the Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (Georgetown UCEDD), thank you Chairperson Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services, for the opportunity to testify at today's Budget Oversight Hearing for the Department on Disability Services (DDS).

Overview

The Georgetown UCEDD is a federally mandated and funded program of the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is part of a national network of 67 UCEDDs that began in 1963 with university centers in every state and in U.S. territories. Georgetown University is the UCEDD for the District of Columbia.

The Georgetown UCEDD's mission is to advance self-determination among the diversity of people with developmental and other disabilities and their families, throughout the life course, and advocate for their full participation in all aspects of community life. <https://ucedd.georgetown.edu/index.php>. For six decades, the Georgetown UCEDD has been recognized as a local, regional, national, and international leader in service, policy, research, professional development, and training to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and other disabilities across the life course.

Mayor Bowser emphasized that the FY 2024 proposed budget includes investments that are strategic and focused on ensuring a strong and equitable comeback for Washington, DC. For the District to achieve this strong and equitable comeback, DDS must receive adequate funds to promote community living and self-determination for DC residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). People with IDD are a part of all of DC's diverse communities, including those in which languages other

than English are spoken. The Georgetown UCEDD appreciates this Committee's attention to ensuring that DDS has the funds necessary to implement the revised eligibility criteria for services from the Developmental Disability Administration (DDA), implement self-directed services, and undertake other important initiatives. A strong and equitable comeback also requires an increase in the personal needs allowance for people receiving residential support from DDA as well as a significant investment to strengthen the direct care workforce.

#### Increase to Personal Needs Allowance

The Mayor's 2024 proposed budget includes a \$744,600 one-time enhancement to increase the personal needs allowance of people receiving residential supports from DDA to \$150. People receiving residential supports are required to contribute the money they receive from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) to the costs of that support. People supported retain only a personal needs allowance. The allowance was set at \$100 in 2007 and has not been raised since. Over time, inflation has steadily decreased the value of the allowance, even as SSI and SSDI benefits have increased through cost-of-living adjustments. The Georgetown UCEDD appreciates the Mayor taking this important step to restore the value of the personal needs allowance. This Committee and the Council should ensure that the personal needs allowance retains its value by not only providing this one time increase but also continuing this increase in future years and each year adding a cost-of-living adjustment to the personal needs allowance.

#### Addressing the Direct Support Workforce Crisis

DC's community-based system of disability services is in crisis, with vacancy rates among direct care workers in the 20% range. The Council should include additional funds in the FY 2024 budget to stem the workforce crisis. In 2020, the Council recognized the critical role direct care workers play and acted to stem the growing workforce crisis by unanimously passing the Direct Support Professional Payment Rate Act of 2020. Yet, the Act has never been fully funded. Fully funding that Act now is imperative as a first step. Additional funding should be provided to enable providers not only to increase the wage rate but also to pay the significant cost of overtime that has resulted from the high vacancy and turnover rates. As the workforce stabilizes, further steps to improve working conditions and increase available training opportunities must be considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.



**Testimony by Anjanette Shelby**  
**Chair, DC Developmental Disabilities Council**  
**FY24 Budget Hearing for the DC Department on Disability Services**  
**Committee on Facilities and Family Services**  
**March 29, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis George and other members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services! My name is Anjie Shelby, and I am the Chair of the DC Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) and Vice Chair of the Commission on Persons with Disabilities. I am testifying on behalf of the DD Council about the proposed FY24 Department on Disability Services (DDS) Budget. I am also a Ward 6 voter, recipient of services from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and advocate for people with disabilities and seniors. The DD Council's role is to strengthen the voice and presence of people with developmental disabilities and their families in support of greater independence, inclusion, empowerment, and the pursuit of life as they choose. We create change that eliminates discrimination and removes barriers to achieve full inclusion, equity, and diversity.

We were pleased not to see major cuts to DDS's budget. DDS provides essential services to people with disabilities, and in a moment of expanding eligibility for services to additional DC residents who need support, it is imperative that DDS have the resources, including staff, training, and expertise, to provide quality services.

We applaud the first increase in the personal needs allowance (PNA) since 2007, from \$100 to \$150 per month. We recognize this is a one-time increase and encourage the agencies and Council to implement a permanent cost of living adjustment in the PNA.

Regarding Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages, we understand there is a plan to increase DSP wages over the next couple of years and achieve full funding of the DSP Wage Rate Act of 2019. The DD Council advocated for the passage of this bill and has since advocated for full funding. We have also said that full funding, while a necessary step in the right direction, would still be inadequate for addressing the workforce crisis. There are additional social justice and equity issues we must face. The DSP workforce is primarily people of color, many of whom work multiple jobs to make ends meet. Caring for people with disabilities requires critical thinking skills, creativity, a compassionate personality, and often technical expertise. Elevating the professional recognition and wage equity of DSPs is necessary to bring dignity and fairness to these workers and the people they serve.

With recent eligibility changes for DDA services, we anticipate that some of the newer applicants with developmental disabilities (DD), but not intellectual disabilities, may have unique needs that will require additional staff training or different service approaches. We are interested in hearing how the FY24 Budget will amplify existing person centered thinking efforts and provide opportunities for additional training to learn best practices in serving people with various types of DD.

The DD Council partners closely with DDS on several initiatives, including the Bridging Aging and Disability Networks and Racial Equity Community of Practice, the Supporting Families Community of Practice, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month activities, the Employment First Leadership Workgroup, and outreach and engagement with DC's diverse cultural and linguistic communities. DDS sits on the DD Council, along with 22 other members appointed by the Mayor. We enjoy a positive working relationship in our programs and advocacy and always stand ready to support and advise on priorities.

On behalf of the DD Council, we look forward to working with you and seeing you tomorrow at the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM) Celebration at DDS! Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to taking any questions you may have.

**Ricardo Thornton and Donna Thornton**

**Project ACTION! Co-President, Advocate, and Ward 4 Voter**

**FY24 Budget Hearing for the Department on Disability Services (DDS) and Office of Disability Rights (ODR)**

**Committee on Facilities and Family Services**

**March 29, 2023**

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Good morning, Madam Chair Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. My name is Ricardo Thornton, and I am here today with my wife Donna. I am the Co-President of Project ACTION! and serve on many committees, including as the Vice Chair of the Developmental Disabilities Council. My wife and I are both former residents of Forest Haven and now live and vote in Ward 4. I have worked at DC Public Library for over 40 years, and Donna is retired after working at Walter Reed Medical Center for over 30 years. Project ACTION!'s motto is "Let Your Voice Be Heard!" I am here to let my voice be heard!

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) is doing a good job overall. Andy Reese keeps us updated on what's going on, and he comes to Project ACTION! every month. He has shown us that he is committed to us.

We see that the personal needs allowance (PNA) will go up from \$100 to \$150 per month. This is money people use for transportation, movies, cable, cell phone, or other activities with friends and families. I'm glad the amount is going up this year, but it should go up every year. I'd like to see us look at that more and put more funds into people having independence.

I don't want to see us go backwards because we're not staying on top of what we need to. DDS needs to keep its budget and increase it when more people need services.

I also want to thank Mat McCollough and his team at ODR for working hard to make sure everyone in DC government follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ODR needs more money to do training and support government agencies to make accommodations. It is crucial that all of DC government be accessible to people with disabilities!

Thank you, Madame Chair, for the opportunity to speak today, and I look forward to answering any questions.

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**MEMORANDUM**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** Nyasha Smith, Secretary of the Council  
**FROM:** Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**RE:** Closing Hearing Record  
**DATE:** **April 21, 2023**

---

Dear Ms. Smith,

Please find attached copies of the witness list, agenda, and testimony for the Committee on Facilities and Family Services Budget Oversight Hearing for the Department of General Services held on April 6, 2023.

The following witnesses testified at the hearing or submitted written testimony to the Committee:

**Department of General Services**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Delano Hunter, Acting Director, Department of General Services



**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**AGENDA & WITNESS LIST**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

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**COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**ANNOUNCES A BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR THE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

**Thursday, April 6, 2023, 3:00 p.m.**

**Remote Hearing via Virtual Platform**  
**Streamed live at [www.janeeseward4.com/live](http://www.janeeseward4.com/live).**

**AGENDA AND WITNESS LIST**

- I.** Call to Order
- II.** Opening Remarks
- III.** Budget Oversight Hearing

**Department of General Services**

*Government Witnesses*

- 1. Delano Hunter, Acting Director, Department of General Services

- IV. ADJOURNMENT**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Department of General Services**



**Fiscal Year 2024  
Budget Oversight Hearing**

Testimony of  
**Delano Hunter**  
**Director**  
**Department of General Services**

Before the  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson

Thursday, April 6, 2023  
3:00 pm

Via Zoom Video Conferencing System

## **Introduction**

Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis George, councilmembers, and staff of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. I am Delano Hunter Director of the Department of General Services (DGS). I am pleased to be here today to present testimony regarding the DGS Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget. Joining me today are members of my Executive Team.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mayor Muriel Bowser introduced *A Fair Shot*, the FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan and the District's 28<sup>th</sup> consecutive balanced budget to Council. This budget season has been a difficult one, amidst a more pessimistic economic outlook, given the expansion of remote work, higher interest rates impacting the real property market, and national political uncertainties. As such, across the District, government agencies have had to make tough choices and review their budgets line-by-line to accommodate reduced revenue estimates.

I am proud to report, despite various budget reductions that DGS has had to make, that our core services and operations remain strong and resilient, and our workforce will continue to meet our core mission to build, maintain and sustain the District of Columbia's real estate portfolio. DGS remains well-resourced to contribute to the District's comeback and poised to continue to deliver high quality services to District residents and employees.

## **Strategic Investments in Government Services**

The Mayor's *Fair Shot* Budget signifies her continued commitment to invest in government services to enhance the District's operational readiness, to improve risk management, and

strengthen service delivery, especially within a post-pandemic financial environment that continues to experience increased costs and vulnerable supply chains.

In FY24, DGS' total operating budget is \$431 million, which represents a 12 percent increase over the approved FY23 budget. The funds come from two sources:

- \$428M (or 99%) in local funds; and
- \$2.7M (or 1%) in special purpose revenue or o-type funds.

This budget reflects the expansion of the preventative maintenance program to all District-owned facilities, dedicated funding for work order reduction efforts, critical investments in government-wide security needs, and increased funding for fixed-costs in energy and rent.

The agency's total six-year capital budget authority is \$73.4M, with \$38.4M allocated for FY24 for DGS-owned capital projects. The budget also supports a strong team of 617 full time employees who work tirelessly to ensure that the agency delivers on its commitments to District residents.

I would like to take a moment to thank Mayor Bowser for her leadership and support. To help ensure that DGS continues to deliver the highest quality services and world-class facilities to the residents and employees of the District of Columbia, the Mayor included critical investments in facility management, security, fixed costs, and capital modernizations. I will provide an overview of the Mayor's enhancements in each of these areas, as well as note how her budget enhancements will affect agency operations.

## Facility Management Investments

As the District's buildings age, we face the challenge of maintaining facilities within an expanding and diverse portfolio. Facilities management is critical as it not only protects our capital investments, but it also ensures the health and safety of our residents and supports their educational and recreational performance.

DGS' FY24 budget reflects continued investments in effective building maintenance. As the Committee is aware, Mayor Bowser has invested a significant amount in facilities maintenance, with particular emphasis on HVAC performance and work order completion. To help ensure that DGS continues to advance the significant progress made to-date, the Mayor included the following in DGS' FY24 operating budget:

- \$6.9M for city-wide work reduction efforts.
- \$4.5M to expand preventative maintenance of HVAC systems to non-DCPS facilities.
- \$2.7M to support Consolidated Maintenance Contract (CMCs) for DCPS.
- \$1.1M for building lock hardware and repair; and
- \$550K for DCPS air quality monitoring.

These new investments are in addition to existing and recurring funds that have proven critical to facilities management in our schools and city-wide District facilities. These include:

- \$13.6M for HVAC preventative maintenance for DCPS facilities.
- \$3.7M for specialized maintenance at 5 additional schools; and
- \$2.7M for expanded fire and life safety improvements at District facilities.

With these investments, DGS will continue the significant progress made to survey critical HVAC assets across the DCPS and city-wide portfolio, improve work order productivity, and enhance operational readiness.

### Investing in a Safer, Stronger Community

From day one, Mayor Bowser has taken decisive action to make District communities stronger and safer for residents across all eight wards. In FY24, she continues to make significant investments in public safety. Specifically, the Mayor included:

- \$4.5M to support city-wide costs of security services; and
- \$1.1M to address locks and door hardware work orders across the DGS portfolio, with special focus on DCPS and DPR facilities.

DGS will continue to work with our client agencies to make essential upgrades that will ensure that our public buildings are safe and secure for District residents, employees, and the visiting public.

### Fixed Costs Investments

The Mayor's FY24 budget also reflects major strides that DGS has made to deliver the best value in real estate and acquisition to District residents. The agency's Portfolio team has been hard at work to leverage the challenging market conditions and help ensure that we secure the best possible deals for District leases. This work is reflected in the \$27.5M enhancement in the *Rent: In Lease Division* to support citywide leasing costs. This funding supports new leases, including

the new DGS headquarters located in Ward 7 at Minnesota and Benning Avenue, as well as two large leases that will shift to DGS' local portfolio—899 North Capitol and L'Enfant Plaza.

DGS' FY24 budget also includes \$14.9M to support city-wide costs of energy and utilities for District agencies. As has occurred globally, the district has seen unprecedented year-over-year growth in utility costs in the last two years, driven mostly by the increase in electricity rates due to the rise in natural gas prices. Looking at electricity supply rates alone, we see an increase of over 250% between 2020 and 2022. As such, this enhancement is critical for ensuring that DGS has the local funding needed to cover increasing utility costs in FY24.

### **Long-Term Capital Planning**

The Mayor's Capital Improvements Plan supports smart dependable investment through transparent, long-term capital planning. In the *Fair Shot* Budget Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), Mayor Bowser allocated \$73.4M of capital funding for DGS-owned projects across the six-year CIP. In addition, DGS is responsible for implementing over \$3.6 billion of capital funds to support the District's construction and modernization projects across the CIP. This includes over \$983 million in FY24 capital construction projects, \$517M (or 53%) of which is in DCPS.

Specific capital investments included in the CIP which DGS will implement are as follows:

- *Public School Modernizations, including:*
  - \$2.5B for 41 school modernizations and expansions, including buildouts for Plummer Elementary School (Ward 7), Leckie Elementary School (Ward 8), and Hardy Middle School (Ward 2).

- \$110M to turn the old Banneker school into the new Center City Middle School;
- \$77M to renovate and expand the new MacArthur High School in Ward 3; and
- \$12M to support facility improvements at Excel Academy in Ward 8.
- *Parks and Recreation projects including:*
  - \$364M for parks and recreation capital projects, to include:
    - Upgrades and renovations to 22 recreational facilities;
    - \$60M for a new indoor sports complex, providing expanded all-season recreation opportunities for District residents;
    - \$12M to modernize the Rumsey Aquatic Center;
    - \$6M for Walter Reed Pool and \$5.7M to replace Rosedale Pool; and
    - \$5M for a “splash pad blitz” to renovate the outdoor splash pads at 14<sup>th</sup> and Park in Columbia Heights and at the Takoma, Hillcrest, Fort Stevens, Palisades, Watkins, and King-Greenleaf Recreation Centers.
- *Public Safety and Economic Development projects including:*
  - \$55M for the renovation and relocation of fire and police stations, including MPD’s 7<sup>th</sup> District headquarters and FEMS Company 26;
  - \$276.5M through FY2029 to build a new annex to the District’s Correctional Treatment Facility that will provide DC Department of corrections (DOC) a new modernized facility reflecting their vision for up to 1,000 inmates; and
  - \$434.4M to complete the construction of a new NICU Level II hospital and ambulatory center at St. Elizabeth’s; and \$10M to complete the construction of the new McMillan Community Center.



The Mayor also allocated capital funding towards critical capital upgrades to ensure that public facilities remain in good condition, maintain the long-term capital value of District owned facilities, and support environmentally conscious delivery of municipal programs and services.

Capital funding for these needs include:

- \$43M in FY24 and \$60M through the 6-year CIP to replace heating and cooling systems that have reached their useful life to ensure that classrooms and schools do not experience disruptions.
- \$7.5M in FY24 and \$17M through the 6-year CIP for critical system replacements, HVAC systems, boilers, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing capital work for non-DCPS facilities; and
- \$3.5M to retrofit District government buildings to reduce environmental impact and energy costs.

We are very excited about the Mayor's capital investments and look forward to continuing to work with our partner agencies to deliver these important projects for District residents.

### **Conclusion**

I am proud of the DGS team and want to thank them for working tirelessly on behalf of District residents, to ensure that our real estate portfolio is safe, sustainable, and secure. DGS is a fiscally resilient agency, with a world-class team of employees. This team has realized the return on the Mayor's investments, specifically in the successful rollout of our DCPS preventative maintenance program, the completion of over 25,000 work orders in FY22, the installation of

solar sites throughout the District, and the construction and modernization of our state-of-the art, LEED-certified buildings.

Although we face difficulties due to a challenging revenue forecast, Mayor Bowser's FY24 *Fair Shot* Budget positions DGS to continue our record of accomplishments in line with the agency's core mission to build, maintain, and sustain the District's facilities portfolio.

In this time of economic uncertainty for many District residents, we will continue to work closely with the Mayor's office and Council to ensure that the resources allocated to DGS continue to serve as a foundation for long-term, sound management of the District's infrastructure. In addition to using funds allocated in our FY24 budget, we will search for every opportunity to become more efficient and access outside funding. The Council and this Committee are critical allies in this effort, and I look forward to our continued work together to achieve our shared goals under the *Fair Shot* Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

# DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

FY24 BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING

APRIL 6, 2023



# FY24 BUDGET FRAMEWORK

## IMPLEMENT AN ADAPTIVE APPROACH TO CLIENT AGENCY OPERATIONS



**PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE**  
to reduce unexpected needs



Dedicated investments for  
**EFFICIENT RESPONSE OF KNOWN FACILITY PRIORITIES**



Agency-wide projects that will  
**CREATE LONG-TERM OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS**

## STRENGTHEN INTERNAL OPERATIONS AT DGS



One-time enhancements for unprecedented increases in  
**energy costs**



Enhancement in the  
**Rent: In Lease Division** to support citywide leasing costs.



Rightsizing the Security Services budget to fund the District's existing security guard footprint.



## OPERATIONAL READINESS

Through a strong focus in preventative maintenance, this budget invests in **systemic repairs, program implementation, and FTEs with long-term benefits to the District.**



## RISK REDUCTION

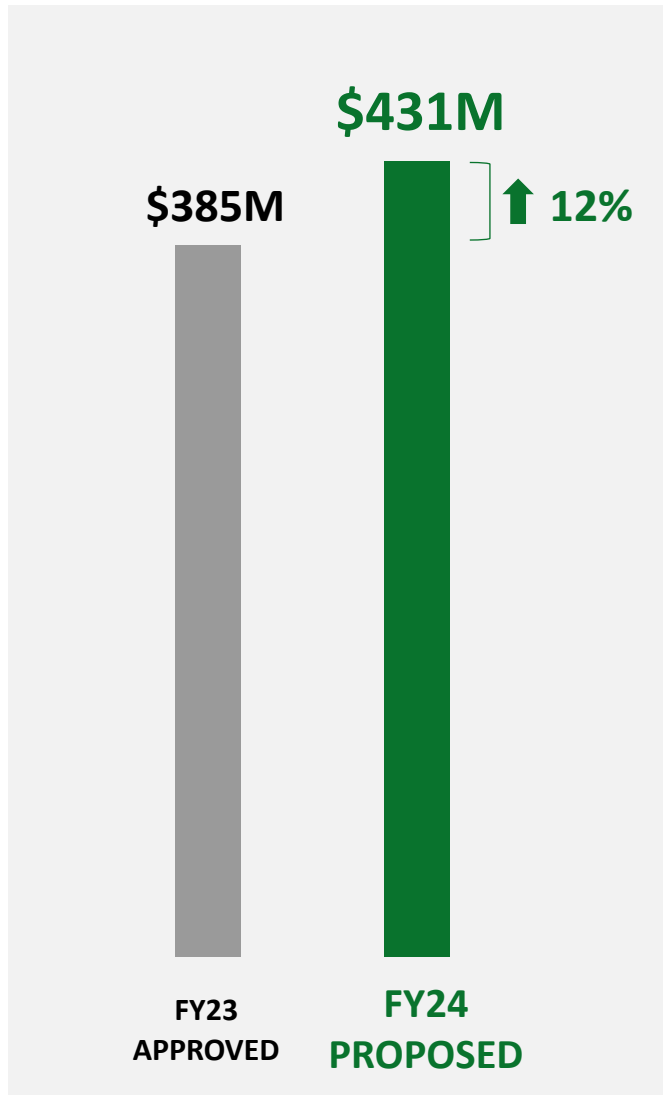
Amid rising costs, volatile markets, and vulnerable supply chains, this budget makes **smart investments into known operational challenges to improve planning.**



## RACIAL EQUITY

In alignment with Mayor Bowser's Racial Equity Action Plan, this budget strives to enhance DGS' mission to ensure District residents can **ACCESS, EXPERIENCE, and BENEFIT** from District facilities in equitable and just ways.

# FY24 Budget Summary



In FY24, DGS' total operating budget is \$431 million, which represents a 12 percent increase over the approved FY23 budget.

The funds come from two sources:

- \$428M (or 99%) in local funds; and
- \$2.7M (or 1%) in special purpose revenue or o-type funds.

The agency's total six-year **capital budget authority** is **\$73.4M**, with **\$38.4M** allocated for **FY24** for DGS-owned capital projects.

The budget also supports a strong team of **617 FTEs** who work tirelessly to ensure that the agency delivers on its commitments to District residents.

# INVESTING IN FACILITIES READINESS

## PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

**\$4.5M** to expand Preventative Maintenance of HVAC systems City Wide  
**\$13.6M** for HVAC Preventative Maintenance at DCPS

## EFFICIENT RESPONSE TO KNOWN FACILITY PRIORITIES

**\$6.9M** for work order reduction efforts City Wide

**\$2.7M** to support Consolidated Maintenance Contracts (CMCs)

**\$3.7M** to support Consolidated Maintenance Contracts (CMCs)

**\$740K** for Maintenance Support at DPW facilities

**\$2.7M** for expanded Fire, Life, & Safety improvements at DCPS and DPR

## LONG-TERM OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS

**\$375K** for DCPS Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act inspections

**\$550K** for continued DCPS air quality monitoring

**\$1.6M** for Stormwater Maintenance and Compliance program



**FY24 Enhancement** Recurring Funds

**FY24 BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING**

# STRONGER, SAFER COMMUNITIES



**\$4.5M** to support city-wide costs of facilities security services, **including electronic security and contract security guards**

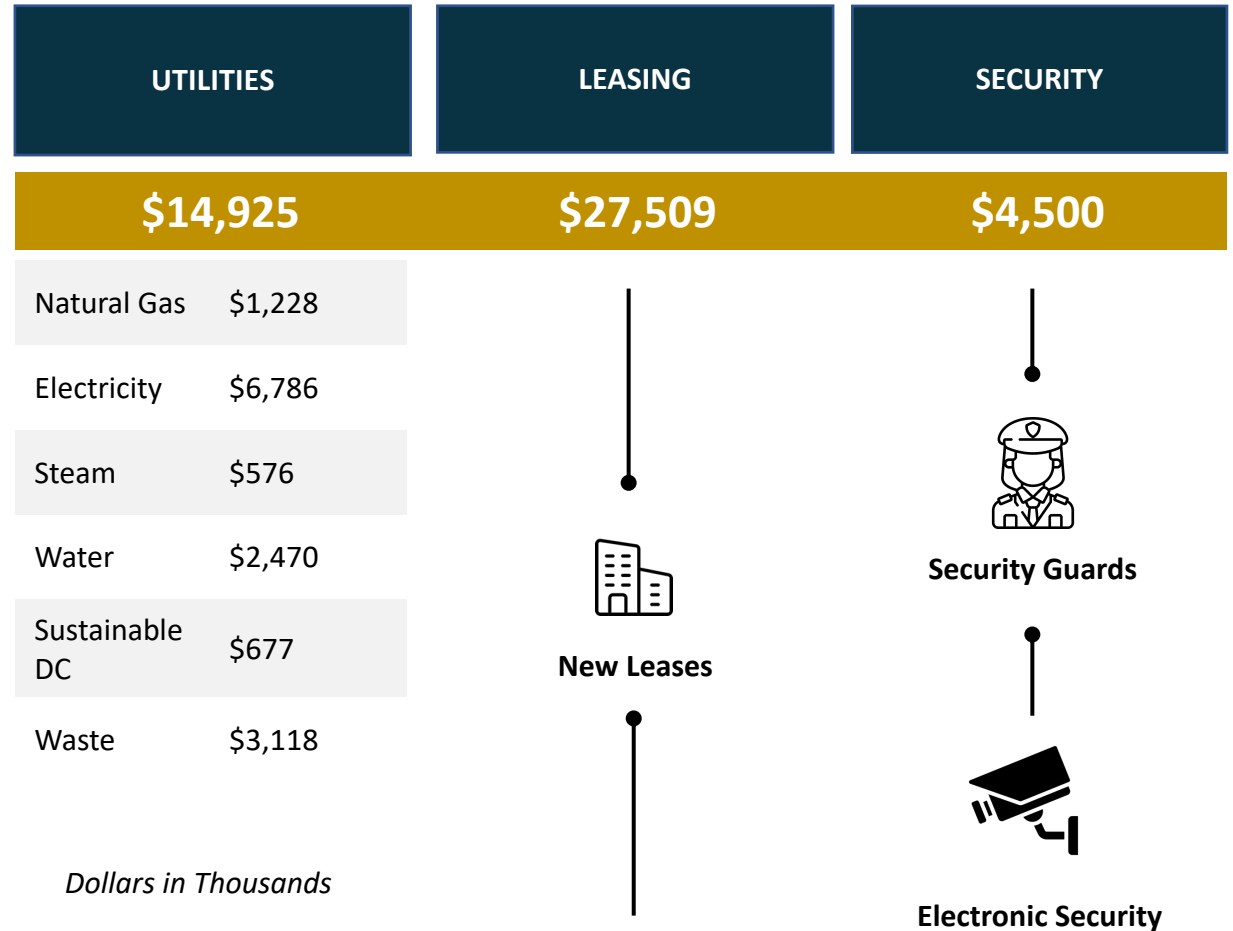


**\$1.1M** to address locks and door hardware work orders, **with a focus on DCPS and DPR**

# AGENCY FIXED-COST ENHANCEMENTS

The Department of General Services must budget for **non-discretionary fixed cost financial obligations.**

These enhancements allow DGS to meet our projected FY24 fixed costs without impacting programmatic budgeting.





# LONG-TERM CAPITAL PLANNING

**\$3.6B**

Capital Funds

**\$983M**

FY24 Capital Projects

**\$517M**

FY24 DCPS



<b>41 School Modernizations</b>	\$2,500,000
<b>Old Banneker</b>	\$110,000
<b>MacArthur HS</b>	\$77,000
<b>Excel Academy</b>	\$12,000
<b>HVAC Systems</b>	\$43,000

<b>Renovations at 22 sites</b>	
<b>Indoor Sports Complex</b>	\$60,000
<b>Rumsey Aquatic Center</b>	\$12,000
<b>Walter Reed Pool</b>	\$6,000
<b>Rosedale Pool</b>	\$5,700
<b>Splash Pad Blitz</b>	\$5,000

<b>MPD/FEMS Stations</b>	\$55,000
<b>CTF Annex</b>	\$276,500
<b>St. Elizabeth's</b>	\$434,400

<b>Non DCPS Critical Systems</b>	\$7,500
<b>Energy Retrofit</b>	\$3,500
<b>McMillan Community Center</b>	\$125,500

*Dollars in Thousands*

# DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES



## Agency Management

Office of the Director, and other teams including

- Human Resources
- General Counsel
- Communications
- Legislative Affairs
- Performance
- IT
- Fleet Management



## Asset Management

Management team of real estate experts who oversee the District's owned and leased property portfolio.



### Leasing Costs

5 million plus square feet of leased space.



## Facilities Operations

Maintenance services across over 840 District properties, including

- Landscaping
- Snow Removal
- Electrical Repairs
- Playgrounds
- Fields/Turfs
- Roofing
- Emergency Repairs
- Elevators
- Environmental
- Pool/Spray Parks
- Plumbing
- Fire, Life & Safety
- HVAC



## Protective Services

Monitoring of CCTV cameras, alarms, and access control devices through 24/7 Central Command Center.

Provides electronic security (x-ray machines and metal detectors) and security guard services at District owned and leased properties.



## Capital Construction

Program/Project Management, contract support, Quality Assurance, Safety, and other capital project implementation resources.



### Capital Budget



## Contracts & Procurement

Team overseeing the successful procurement and contract actions required to implement our work.



## Sustainability & Energy

Team responsible for transforming the District's utilities and building footprint in support of citywide climate and sustainability initiatives.



### Utility Costs

District-Wide energy costs including electricity, water, waste, natural gas, and steam.

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**MEMORANDUM**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** Nyasha Smith, Secretary of the Council  
**FROM:** Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**RE:** Closing Hearing Record  
**DATE:** April 21, 2023

---

Dear Ms. Smith,

Please find attached copies of the witness list, agenda, and testimony for the Committee on Facilities and Family Services Budget Oversight Hearing for the Department of General Services held on April 6, 2023.

The following witnesses testified at the hearing or submitted written testimony to the Committee:

**Department of General Services**

*Public Witnesses*

1. Joy Taylor, Public Witness (*no written testimony*)
2. Tischa Cockrell, President, Friends of Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center
3. Robert Oliver, Public Witness
4. Sebrena Rhodes, Community Organizer, Empower DC
5. Geoff Gilbert, Technical Assistance Director, Beloved Community Incubator
6. Reyna Sosa, Public Witness (*no written testimony*)
7. Eloisa Diaz, Public Witness (*no written testimony*)
8. Charles Burger, Chair, Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC)
9. Monte Edwards, Chair, Capital Improvements Subcommittee of Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee
10. Neil Flanagan, Archives Advisory Group of the Council of the District of Columbia
11. Bill Rice, Public Witness
12. Marcy Bernbaum, DC Public Restrooms
13. Kate Coventry, Deputy Director of Legislative Strategy, DCFPI
14. Leonard Greenberger, DC Public Restrooms
15. Scott Williamson, Sierra Club District of Columbia Chapter
16. Karen Kassekert, Public Witness (*no written testimony*)
17. Dylan Craig, Roosevelt STAY Opportunity Academy
18. Daniel Iwaniec, Performing Arts Teacher, Jackson Reed High School
19. Elijah Gold-Moritz, Student, Jackson Reed High School
20. Bea Gumbinner, Student, Jackson Reed High School
21. Sara Scherlinder, Student, Jackson Reed High School (*no written testimony*)
22. Isabelle Posner Brown, Student, Jackson Reed High School
23. Simon Holland, Student, Jackson Reed High School (*for the record*)

24. Luther Hoy, Student, Jackson Reed High School
25. Miya Walker, Public Witness (*no written testimony*)
26. James Avis, Public Witness (*for the record*)
27. Carl Bergman, Friends of the DC Archives (*for the record*)
28. Anne Cauman, Public Witness (*for the record*)
29. Anne deBuys, Public Witness (*for the record*)
30. Scott Heit, Public Witness (*for the record*)
31. Courtney Leatherman, Public Witness (*for the record*)
32. Amy Levin, Public Witness (*for the record*)
33. Binney Levine, Public Witness (*for the record*)
34. Vivian Otteman, Public Witness (*for the record*)
35. John Seichter, Public Witness (*for the record*)
36. Sarah Shapiro, Public Witness (*for the record*)
37. Adele Silver, Public Witness (*for the record*)
38. Leigh Snitiker, Public Witness (*for the record*)
39. Stephen Vardas, Public Witness (*for the record*)
40. Gail Williams, Public Witness (*for the record*)

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**AGENDA & WITNESS LIST**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

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**COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**ANNOUNCES A BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR THE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

**Thursday, April 6, 2023, 9:00 a.m.**

**Remote Hearing via Virtual Platform**  
**Streamed live at [www.janeeseward4.com/live](http://www.janeeseward4.com/live).**

**AGENDA AND WITNESS LIST**

- I.** Call to Order
- II.** Opening Remarks
- III.** Budget Oversight Hearing

**Department of General Services**

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- 1. Joy Taylor, Public Witness
- 2. Chrysanthe “CC” Courniotes, Commissioner, ANC 4D04
- 3. Tischa Cockrell, President, Friends of Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center
- 4. Robert Oliver, Public Witness
- 5. Sebrena Rhodes, Community Organizer, Empower DC
  
- 6. Felix Macaraeg, Organizing Director, Beloved Community Incubator
- 7. Zainab Kamara, Public Witness
- 8. Reyna Sosa, Public Witness
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23. Elijah Gold-Moritz, Student, Jackson Reed High School
  
24. Beau Gimbiner, Student, Jackson Reed High School
25. Sara Scherlinder, Student, Jackson Reed High School
26. Isabelle Posner Brown, Student, Jackson Reed High School
27. Simon Holland, Student, Jackson Reed High School
  
28. Luther Hoy, Student, Jackson Reed High School
29. Setina Dawit, Student, Jackson Reed High School
30. Colette Barnards, Student, Jackson Reed High School
31. Wesley Hoy, Student, Jackson Reed High School

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

Dear Councilmembers:

As a 50 yr resident of Foggy Bottom/West End community, I object to the proposed transfer of funds currently in the West End Library and Fire Station Maintenance Fund into the general fund in order to close the FY2024-2025 budget gap.

The Fund was established in 2011 under DC Code Section 1-325.181 in order to ensure that the new West End Library and Fire Station would not deteriorate from lack of capital funding and would remain an asset to the Foggy Bottom/West End community.

The proposed transfer would negate current law and compromise the ongoing maintenance condition of the buildings. Therefore, I request that you keep the Fund intact in order to preserve two of the most important public buildings in Foggy Bottom/West End.

Name: James Avis

Address: 2450 Virginia Ave e632

Email: [jamesavis@verizon.net](mailto:jamesavis@verizon.net)

Date: April 11, 2023

**Friends of the DC Archives**  
**Testimony Before the**  
**Committee on Facilities and Family Services**  
**FY2024 Budget Hearing**  
*on the*  
**Department of General Services**  
Thursday, April 6, 2023, 9:00 AM

Councilmember Lewis George, my name is Carl Bergman. I am testifying for the Friends of the DC Archives (FDCA). Formed nine years ago, FDCA is an organization of professional archivists and concerned citizens. We are interested in preserving and managing DC's records and archives.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify on the Mayor's proposed FY2024 Budget for the Department of General Services (DGS). Our concern is the planning and construction of the new DC Archives Facility.

We believe the Committee should focus on these issues:

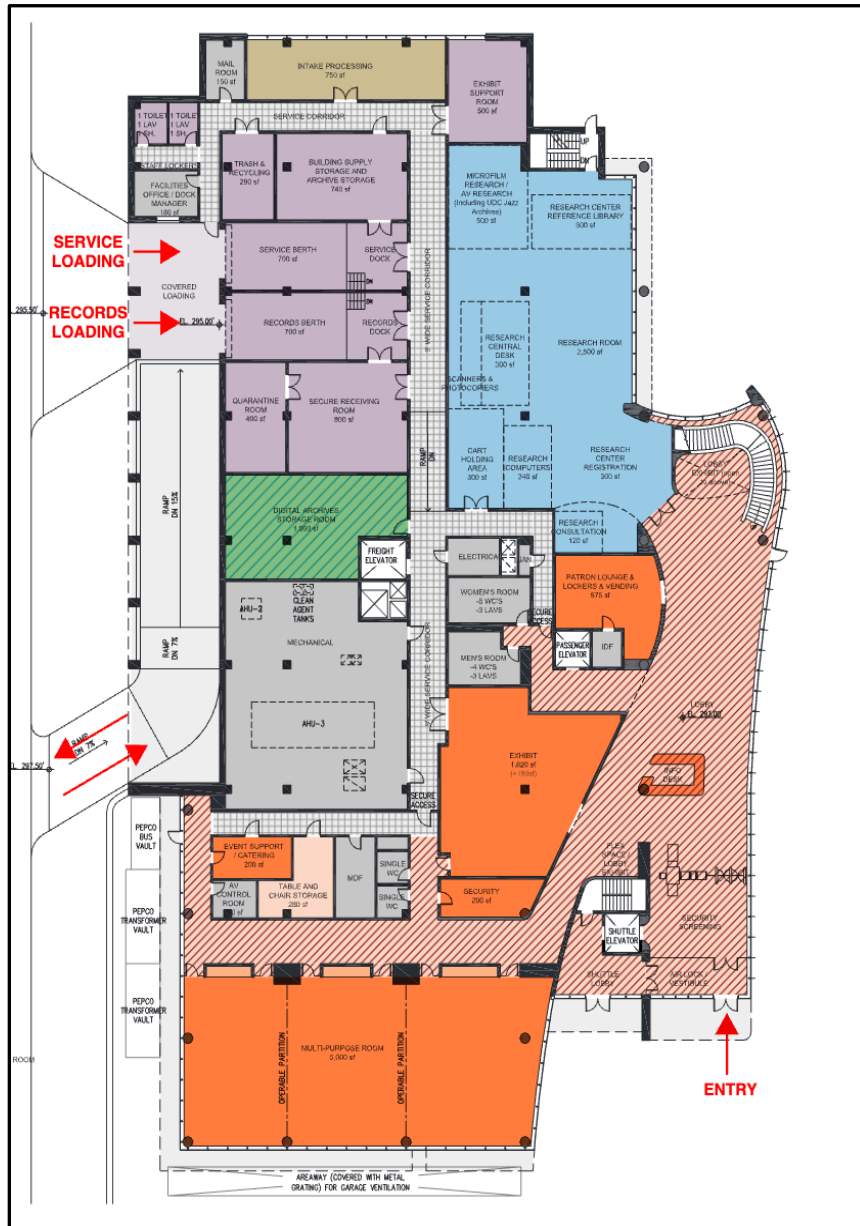
1. Inflation Facility Construction Cost. We understand that DGS has an FY2023 Supplemental Budget to correct for inflation costs. The FY2024 Capital Budget before the Committee is still \$73 million. Even with the supplemental, DGS needs to develop its own inflation construction cost estimates. Instead, DGS relies on its consultants. This lack of in-house capacity is a dangerous course for the Archives and all capital projects. We need a cost estimate we can depend on. We hope the new DGS Director will reverse this poor policy.
3. UDC-OS. OS' new Archive building will replace UDC's Building 41. UDC will locate its University and Felix Grant Jazz Archives in the new building. However, the UDC-OS relationship is unknown. For example, will UDC contribute to either the construction or operating costs for the building?
4. Digital Resources. The new facility's consultants, Hartman Cox, released the building's [Concept Design](#). See the First Floor below. The Concept Design, however, treats digital records as an afterthought. The design has one 1,000 sqft Digital Archives server room on the first floor. The second floor has one Electronics Records Processing room of 400 sqft. What resources will go in these rooms? How does the design account for growth? Has there been any study comparing in-house servers with off-site systems?
5. LEED. Currently, the Budget does not include any LEED standard for energy or the environment. This omission means the building will be obsolete the day it opens. Building a new facility and ignoring LEED standards is unconscionable, but that is what the plan calls for.



DC's new Archives promises to breathe life into an obscure but essential city program. Our current Archive, despite the hard work of its staff, is a hidden resource. The new one will have a far more public face. Fulfilling this ambitious goal requires new resources and new approaches. The District needs to act decisively to address the issues if it wishes to have a modern Archive in reality and not just a name.

Thank you.

Carl Bergman  
FDCA  
1301 Geranium Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20012  
202 291 8212



## Department of General Services FY 2024 Budget Hearing April 6, 2023

### Testimony submitted by Marcia Bernbaum, DC Public Restrooms

Committee on Facilities and Family Services Chair George, fellow Committee members,

When I testified on behalf of [DC Public Restrooms](#) at the February 28 DGS 2022 Oversight Hearing, our concern was the delay on the part of DGS in implementing the recommendations of the Working Group named by the Mayor of a model and two locations for the Standalone Public Restroom Pilot included in Law 22-280. Never on my wildest dreams did I think I would be back to testify at today's DGS FY 2023 budget hearing.

A little over a week ago I was strolling the streets of Prague, as part of a one month vacation in the Czech Republic and Germany, when I received a long distance call from Councilmember Nadeau's office informing me that the Mayor's proposed FY 2024 budget, which had just come out, included a provision that inserted an amendment [Law 22-280, Public Restroom Facilities Installation & Promotion Act of 2019](#) to put funding on hold for the Standalone Pilot until such time that funds might be available, and eliminating in the FY 2024 budget at the Capital and Operating funds that have appeared in every annual budget since 2020 for this pilot.

To put it mildly, I was stunned.

Law 22-280 received its first funding in DC's FY 2020 budget and yearly funding for both the Standalone Public Restroom Pilot and the Community Restroom Incentives Pilot has been included in annual DC budgets since. I have a hard time -- given the clearly documented need for and clear recognition that all residents and visitors to our Nation's Capital deserve access to a clean, safe restroom when the need arises -- and the effort that the Deputy Mayor's Office for Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of General Services (DGS) have gone to in paving the way for the pilot to launch, why the Mayor has chosen to remove funding for the Standalone Public Restroom Pilot in her proposed FY 2024 budget.

As I believe you are aware, our approach (first as members of the People for Fairness Coalition's Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative and now as DC Public Restrooms) has been based on research documenting both the need for clear, safe restrooms in our National's Capital and identifying standalone public restroom models that are clean, safe and affordable.

This research, which both inspired and informed the contents of Law 22-280, makes it very clear that, unlike in other major cities in Europe and Asia that recognize the importance of making public

restrooms available in key areas and increasingly other cities in our own country, our Nation's Capital has a dearth of clean, safe public restrooms in its downtown commercial areas.

A study we carried out in 2015, 2016, and 2017, in which we visited businesses in 5 areas to see if their restrooms were clean and safe and open to the public, further found over this period businesses in downtown commercial areas of DC were increasingly denying restrooms access to individuals who are not customers <sup>1 2</sup>.

From a human perspective, there is no doubt that ready access to clean, safe public restroom is a necessity for a society that values health and quality of life:

- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 64/292, issued on July 10, 2010, declares that : "*safe and clean drinking water and sanitation is a human right essential to the full enjoyment of life and all other human rights."<sup>3</sup>*
- Access to clean, safe public restrooms is critical to personal health. Articles available from the National Institutes of Health <sup>4</sup> and the Scandinavian Journal of Nephrology <sup>5</sup> show that lack of access to a clean, safe public restroom when nature calls can have adverse medical repercussions: (1) women generally need to urinate more frequently than men. Involuntary urinary retention can lead to increased frequency of urinary tract infections (UTIs), which can in turn lead to more serious infections and, in rare situations, renal damage. (2) medical evidence shows that health problems can result if individuals delay defecation: constipation, abdominal pain, diverticulitis and hemorrhoids.
- These articles also demonstrate that individuals who are restroom challenged <sup>6</sup> in particular face major challenges given that when the urge comes they must find a restroom immediately. Many are limited in their choice of work and shopping locations, and in their participation in physical fitness activities, by the limited availability of public toilet facilities. Those who do choose to go out without the assurance of a clean, safe public restroom nearby risk suffering an embarrassing accident.

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<sup>1</sup> *Access to Restrooms in Downtown Washington DC That are Clean, Safe, & Available 24/7*. Report of study carried out by the PFFC Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative, 2017. <https://dcpublicrestrooms.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Restroom-Inventory-Full-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Key outcomes of this report: (1) as of 2015 there were only 6 restrooms off the Mall, open to the public 4 of which were open during the day for limited hours, and two open 24/7, both were located in areas not frequented by pedestrians late at night; (2) of 85 businesses visited in 2015, 43 (51%) made their restroom available to the public; by 2017 this number had gone down to 11 (or 13%). Since 2017 most businesses in downtown DC post signs indicating that restrooms are only available to customers.

<sup>3</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/687002?ln=en>

<sup>4</sup> National Institutes of Health (NIH) Publication No. 95-2754, July 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Nielsen, A. Waite, W., "Epidemiology of Infrequent Voiding and Associated Symptoms," Scandinavian Journal of Urology and Nephrology. Supplement 157, pg.49-53, January 1994

<sup>6</sup> <https://americanrestroom.org/who-are-the-restroom-challenged/>

- Human fecal waste is a health hazard. Cleaning up fecal waste left on the streets wastes water, and detergents are damaging for the environment. Human feces pose a health hazard as they may contain a range of disease-causing organisms, including viruses, bacteria and eggs or larvae of parasites.<sup>7</sup> Once out of the body feces are subjected to environmental bacteria that may use the excrement as food and thrive. The longer the stool has been outside the body, the more potential for harmful bacteria to inhabit the gases originating from the fecal material.<sup>8</sup>
- Shoppers, walkers, joggers, bike riders, taxis, Ubers, and delivery drivers, people going to and from work, young children, the elderly, people experiencing homelessness, indeed all of us –need access to a clean, safe public restroom when the need arises.
- The over 20 million tourists visit DC every year. As a DC tour guide said in a January 2018 testimony supporting Bill 22-0223, they will all some point the need to pee.

Access to clean, safe public restrooms also makes good business sense

- Knowing that there are public restrooms nearby, tourists visiting Washington DC are more apt to leave the Mall to eat and shop in downtown DC's commercial areas, thus contributing to DC's economy.
- People who are restroom challenged (seniors, pregnant women, individuals taking certain medication), knowing that there are accessible public restrooms nearby, are more apt to come to commercial areas to shop.
- Knowing there are clean, safe standalone restrooms nearby, fewer people will ask businesses to use their restrooms.
- And there will be less poop to scoop as well urine to scrub off of buildings, sidewalks, lampposts and other areas.

I find it interesting that in the three and a half years since Law 22-280 has been funded and gone into effect -- as we wait for procurement for a standalone restroom model to take place and a final selection of the two locations for the standalone --a number of other cities in the US, recognizing the need, have gone ahead and purchased and installed standalone public restrooms.

- This list includes, among others: San Francisco CA, Oakland CA, Miami FL, Hoboken NJ, San Diego CA, Seattle WA, Charleston NC, Eugene OR, and Hyattsville, MD.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/hygiene/emergencies/em2002chap8.pdf](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/emergencies/em2002chap8.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Matt Russell, Ph.D. in Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Tennessee

<sup>9</sup> <https://portlandloo.com/loo-locator/>

- Just in the last couple weeks we have heard that Philadelphia PA has announced it will be installing four standalone restrooms; Sommerville, MA three, and Bellingham WA two.

I also find it interesting that a recent amendment to the DC Comprehensive Plan DC directs the DC government to take action to ensure that more clean, safe public restrooms are installed where they are needed and provides guidance for this to take place.<sup>10</sup> The importance of increasing access to clean, safe public restrooms in commercial areas of DC is implicit to the achievement of the three point vision included in the DC Comeback Plan issued by the Mayor in January .<sup>11</sup>

To quote a statement made by the CEO of Centro Antonio, San Antonio Texas's Public Investment District (referring to the benefits encountered by police and organizations responsible for keeping Downtown San Antonio clean as a result of installing two standalone public restrooms open 24/7) that equally applies to Washington DC:

*"The cost to the city would be much greater if people didn't perceive downtown to be a welcoming and clean place to visit."*<sup>12</sup>

Council Member George, for the reasons listed above, we urge you and your fellow members of the DC Council to take action to reinstate the Capital and Operating funds taken away by the Mayor in DC's FY 2024 budget.

Our Nation's Capital cannot afford, while other cities in the US recognizing the need are install clean, safe public restrooms, to take a step backwards, putting an indefinite pause on funding provided for by law to increase access to public restrooms.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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<sup>10</sup> Action UD- 2.1.D: Public Restrooms in Streetscapes) states that "when designing and upgrading streets and sidewalks in commercial areas, investigate opportunities to install attractive, clean, safe standalone public restrooms that are accessible at all hours".

<sup>11</sup> The DC Comeback Plan envisions: (1) A city where every neighborhood offers its residents, of all races and genders, the chance to achieve their full potential, (2) An urban center that is a destination of choice for innovators, job creators, and visitors. (3) A place where people choose to live, work, visit and thrive.

<sup>12</sup> In Defense of San Antonio's \$100,000 Toilet, San Antonio Current, June 17, 2017: <https://www.sacurrent.com/the-daily/archives/2017/06/15/in-defense-of-san-antonios-thousand-dollar-toilet>

Good Day,

My name is Chuck Burger and I am before you today as the Chair of the Eastern Market Advisory Committee. First, I would like to thank the Chair, Councilmember Lewis George, for the opportunity to speak today and recognize the (fellow members of Committee). EMCAC look forwards to working with you and your Committee to ensure the continued success of the Eastern Market Special District.

In 1999 legislation was established by the DC Council creating the current structure by which Eastern Market would be managed, regulated, financed and improved. It placed the Market under the jurisdiction of the Department of General Services (DGS) and created the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC) in a unique partnership to advise DGS about the operation, management, budget and capital improvements for Eastern Market

EMCAC is an advisory group governed by D.C. legislation and regulations, that represents the interests of the Eastern Market Community and District. EMCAC consists of representatives from elected or duly appointed representatives from the ANC6B, Office of the Mayor, Ward 6 Councilmember, Eastern Market merchants/vendors and community representatives from CHAMPS (Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce), CHRS (Capitol Hill Restoration Society), CHV (Capitol Hill Village) and an elected Community Representative.

Within our responsibilities EMAC utilizes three Committees: Tenants Council, Operations and Capital Improvements. These Committees have proven to be of tremendous value in our successful working relationship with DGS and to the benefit of the Market and the best interests of the District.

We are here today under one of EMCAC's most important legislated responsibilities, which is provide our recommendations during this annual budget review. This budget is critically important to the maintenance and preservation of the Market. This budget has a direct impact on Market operations, and thus its ability to continue to serve as a major economic engine and historic cultural asset for the District economy. This is only highlighted by Eastern Market's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year Celebration, as one of District's largest non-federal government local and tourist destinations.

With me today, is our Chair for the Capital Improvements Committee, Mr. Monte Edwards. As dictated by legislation we are required to "review and comment" on the yearly budget. As I have stated we, view this as only of our most critical responsibilities. We have worked tirelessly with DGS in providing budget recommendations that are **fiscally responsible, insightful and cost effective**. In this light we present our requests today.

If closing, I would to thank DGS and Barry Margeson, our Market manager in building this effective relationship with EMCAC as first envisioned in the legislation.

Personally, I would most like to publicly thank Mr Edwards in recognition for over 20 years of volunteer service to the success of the Market and EMCAC. Much of what we have achieved today is solely due to his contributions.

With that I thank you.

BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES

APRIL 6, 2023

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ANNE CAUMAN IN OPPOSITION TO THE FAILURE TO FUND THE  
GREENER GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ACT AND THE ALMOST NON-EXISTANT FUNDING FOR BEPS  
COMPLIANCE

SUBMITTED APRIL 11, 2023

My name is Anne Cauman. I have lived in the District for over 30 years, mainly in Ward 3. I care passionately about fighting climate change. I am a member of the Green Healthy Affordable Buildings group of Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), the Sierra Club, Temple Sinai, and the Ward 3 Democratic Committee. While this is my personal testimony, all four entities are extremely concerned about climate change and work to combat it.

Global warming is an existential danger and it has been obvious in recent years that it is worsening faster than expected.

Roughly three weeks ago, the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its latest synthesis report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report indicating that “earth is likely to cross a critical threshold for global warming within the next decade, and nations will need to make an immediate and drastic shift away from fossil fuels to prevent the planet from overheating dangerously beyond that level. . .” (New York Times, ***Climate Change Is Speeding Toward Catastrophe. The Next Decade Is Crucial, U.N. Panel Says, March 21, 2023***)

The District of Columbia government (“District” or “DC”) has an impressive, and in some instances pioneering, record on passing climate legislation. Now is the time for the District to double down on fighting climate change, but the Mayor’s proposed budget does not adequately fund that fight.

One of the pieces of important legislation passed last year is the Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022 (the Act) which requires that construction of new or substantially improved buildings owned or financed in significant part by the District must adhere to net zero energy standards and not incorporate fossil fuel consumption. But the Act will only take effect if funded; without funding it is meaningless.

The fiscal impact statement for the Act stated that: “The bill will cost \$8.4 million in fiscal year 2023 and \$9.9 million in the four-year financial plan.” The fiscal impact statement further stated: “The Department of General Services reviewed its planned school building projects and

estimates that two projects have [sic] a planned completion date prior to 2026 could be capable of meeting net zero standards but are not currently planned as net zero projects.” However, there is no budget allocation for implementation of the Act. Especially with schools this is a missed opportunity. Fossil fuel free schools are healthier and more comfortable for children. There has been considerable publicity recently about the health harms of gas stoves (asthma, cancer, etc.), but these harms are not limited to gas stoves. “Natural gas” is methane and fossil fuel driven heating and hot water also produce toxic air pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter

The Department of General Services’ (DGS) capital budget only includes \$1.5 million for retrofitting District Buildings in FY 2024. DGS manages hundreds of buildings many of which will need improvements to comply in the first compliance cycle with the District’s pioneering Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS). Some of those buildings might need as much as a million dollars each to comply. Even if many need considerably less, \$1.5 million is meaningless in terms of beginning to meet the District’s BEPS compliance mandate.

Failing to provide adequate funding to address climate change is a pennywise pound-foolish choice. Energy efficient buildings save money and net-zero buildings save considerable money. A school in Arlington built to net-zero standards in 2015 has had yearly energy bills \$118,000 lower per year than a typical school.

Spending on energy efficiency is an investment in future savings. Over time energy improvements will create significant savings for the District and District taxpayers.

Additionally net-zero buildings are healthier and more comfortable to live and work in. While this is especially important for the health of children, these buildings are healthier for everyone. Net-zero buildings which contain no combustible fossil fuels remove toxic air pollution which, as previously noted with regard to schools, contributes to asthma and other serious health issues.

I am also concerned that the Mayor’s budget cuts funds for lead line replacement and creates a 3-year delay in BEPS implementation. BEPS is the District’s most powerful tool for fighting climate change. A delay would be inexcusable.

While as I mentioned previously this testimony is purely my own, I want the Committee to be aware that the Ward 3 Democratic Committee has recently passed a resolution opposing any delay in BEPS implementation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anne Cauman  
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Ward 3  
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**April 6, 2023**

**Testimony for DGS Budget Hearing by:**

**Tischa Cockrell, President**

**Friends of Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center (FORLR)**

**5521 Chillum Place NE**

**Washington, DC 20011**

**202-247-0547**

Hello Chair and Councilmember Janeese Lewis-George:

My name is Tischa Cockrell, and I am the President of the Friends of Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center. We are partnered with DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). We work together with the Site Director, Shirleta Settles and the staff at our community Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center. We are here today per our previous testimonies via the Committee on Facilities and Family Services' previous performance and budget hearings, to make an additional plea to receive funds to assist with site maintenance and new item requests.

Some of our requests have been rectified such as lighting, camera placement and repairs, etc and for that, we thank you very much. However, some items are still pending.

Please see our most recent follow-up notes (highlighted in red or green to denote status level) regarding our list of recreation center requests raised by our community that we mentioned in our testimony on February 21, 2023.

#### **Outdoor Recreation Center Issues**

- A new environmentally friendly turf field, that replaces the current field which is deemed unsafe that includes a walking track (Seems to be listed in DPR's FY25 Ready2Play budget. We would like more clarity regarding this).
- Repair netting for goal or the fence on field. Kick balls roll out of a hole into the street. (ticket# 699035 has been submitted. Reportedly on hold for procurement April 2023).
- Address field lighting (ticket# 724927 has been submitted. Reportedly approved for completion April 2023).
- Outdoor fitness equipment on grassy area (Discussed but status unknown).
- Enhance security of the outdoor restrooms. Replace doors that don't lock (Reportedly completed?).
- Outdoor splash park (In progress with ongoing issues such as water pressure, etc.).
- Sun shading for new playground (Unknown status. Needs clarity).
- Bring back our outdoor garden between school and old playground (Unknown status).

#### **Indoor Recreation Center Issues**

- ~~Replace or repair exterior entrance door on the Nicholson Street NE side. The front door push bar is broken (Completed).~~
- Repair/replace gym roof – periodic leaking since 2008 (Needs immediate attention. Reportedly on hold for April 2023).
- The gym basketball rim is stuck and won't come down. Prohibiting full court play (A ticket has been submitted. Reportedly approved for completion?).

- Replace the HVAC system with a new system (Reportedly completed?).
- Install new window shades instead of aluminum blinds (Unknown status).
- Repaint building interior (A ticket has been submitted. In progress?).
- Add a mural to the lobby (Unknown status).
- Repair/replace windows in the Multipurpose room (Unknown status for this room).
- ~~Replace door to gym (Completed).~~
- New fitness equipment for weight room (In progress?).
- Purchase a multipurpose projector and drop-down screen for the Multipurpose Room (Unknown status).
- New ping pong table, etc. (In progress).
- Allotment for community children for summer camp and Little Explorers ages 3 to 5 years (Changed to lottery process. Completed?).

While we have been grateful for all the good works and the assistance given to help us rectify and maintain our community center, we also want to be sure that attention is paid to our detailed list provided here, regarding why we need funding to enhance further projects, address needed repairs, maintenance, and upgrades. We have mentioned before that our center has been subjected to deferred maintenance and neglect for several years. Other recreation centers across the city have access to modern technology and aesthetics, we are requesting the same attention and resources.

We hope to continue our discussions to see these issues completely rectified and resolved. Feel free to contact us with any questions. We appreciate your attention concerning this matter and look forward to your further assistance.

Thank you,

Tischa Cockrell, President  
 Friends of Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center (FORLR)  
[www.friendsofriggsrecctr.org](http://www.friendsofriggsrecctr.org)



**Testimony of Kate Coventry, Deputy Director of Legislative Strategy  
At the Budget Oversight Roundtable on  
the Department of General Services  
DC Council Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
April 6, 2023**

Chairperson Lewis George and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Kate Coventry, and I am the Deputy Director of Legislative Strategy at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI). DCFPI is a non-profit organization that shapes racially-just tax, budget, and policy decisions by centering Black and brown communities in our research and analysis, community partnerships, and advocacy efforts to advance an antiracist, equitable future.

DCFPI is here today to ask the DC Council to restore the funding to building standalone public restrooms that the mayor removed in her proposed fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget. Public restrooms promote racial and economic equity, as a local study found that businesses were more likely to deny access to a restroom to Black non-customers who appeared possibly homeless than white customers who appeared housed.<sup>1</sup> Most residents experiencing homelessness do not have money to make purchases at these establishments to be able to gain access to the restroom. The Mayor's proposed change is a callous one, among many others in her budget for housing and homelessness programs.

### **Public Restrooms are Fundamental to Human Dignity and Health**

Passed unanimously by the Council in late 2018, the Public Restroom Facilities Installation and Promotion Act calls for the creation of pilot standalone restrooms in the District in locations recommended by a working group appointed for this purpose. The working group released a draft report with proposed locations in May 2022. The legislation required the mayor to install two public restrooms within 180 days of the release of the report. Rather than installing these restrooms, the Mayor removed funding for public restrooms from the proposed FY 2024 budget and includes language in the Budget Support Act making the standalone restroom provision subject to the appropriation of funding.

Public restrooms are especially critical for people who are restroom-challenged.<sup>2</sup> When seniors, pregnant women, young children, and people on certain medications have to go, they have to go urgently. Knowing that there are public restrooms readily accessible, people are more apt to visit parks, ride their bikes, jog, and walk. Easily accessible, clean, safe restrooms make good business sense and help foster tourism.<sup>3</sup> As a result, more and more cities are investing in public restrooms.<sup>4</sup>

Residents experiencing homelessness in particular stand to benefit from restroom expansions. The pandemic made restroom access worse, as many downtown businesses closed restrooms that non-customers once were able to use. And even prior to the pandemic, there was evidence that fewer businesses were allowing non-customers to use their restrooms. The People for Fairness Coalition (PFFC) visited 85 businesses in five areas of DC that have high levels of pedestrian traffic and people experiencing homelessness to see if they would allow the general public to access their restrooms. In 2015, they found that just over half of the businesses allowed anyone to use their restroom.<sup>5</sup> One year later, they visited these businesses again and found that 10 of these businesses now limited access to individuals who weren't customers.<sup>6</sup> They also found that businesses discriminated against a PFFC member experiencing

homelessness who visited the restrooms. They allowed a white woman who appeared housed to use the restroom but not a Black man who appeared possibly homeless.<sup>7</sup> Most residents experiencing homelessness do not have money to make purchases at these establishments to be able to gain access to the restroom.

The lack of access to bathrooms is not merely an inconvenience—it can have devastating health and public health consequences. People are encouraged to wash their hands frequently to stop the spread of COVID. Catherine Crossland of Unity Healthcare has testified about her patients skipping lifesaving blood pressure, heart and HIV/AIDS medications because they can lead to an urgent need for the restroom.<sup>8</sup> Southern California experienced a large Hepatitis A outbreak from 2017 to 2019 because of the lack of toilets and handwashing facilities for residents experiencing homelessness.<sup>9</sup> At least 21 people died as a result.<sup>10</sup>

By increasing access to public restrooms, the District can be a friendlier place for residents with illnesses and disabilities, tourists, children and their caretakers, and residents experiencing homelessness. I urge the Council to restore funding for standalone restrooms.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> People for Fairness Coalition, “[Revisiting, One Year Later, Private Facilities in DC That Let Us Use Their Restrooms](#),” January 2017.

<sup>2</sup> People for Fairness Coalition, “[The Restroom Challenged, from the American Restroom Associate website](#),” Accessed March 29, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Beth Quirk, “[The Future of Tourism is Public Toilets](#),” Consumerist, the blog of Consumer Reports, September 5, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Breitenbach, “[Cities Look to Public Restrooms to Clean Up Downtowns, Attract Tourists](#),” Huffington Post, September 5, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> People for Fairness Coalition, “[Does Downtown Washington DC Have Restrooms That Are Clean, Safe, and Available to Everyone 24/7](#),” Accessed April 3, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> People for Fairness Coalition, “[Revisiting, One Year Later, Private Facilities in DC That Let Us Use Their Restrooms](#),” January 2017.

<sup>7</sup> The People for Fairness Coalition dressed the tester who was to appear homeless in a large, tattered jacket, a sock hat, and loose slacks. People experiencing homelessness have many looks just as others do.

<sup>8</sup> Catherine Crosland, “[Testimony Regarding B22-223 ‘Public Restroom Installation and Promotion Act of 2017](#),” Unity Health Care, January 10, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Gorman, “[‘Medieval’ Diseases Flare as Unsanitary Living Conditions Proliferate](#)” California Healthline, March 12, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## **DGS Testimony for Roosevelt STAY Opportunity Academy**

Good morning, I am Dylan Craig, a teacher and union representative at Roosevelt STAY Opportunity Academy. I am here to discuss some urgent needs that are currently not funded in the scope of construction for our move to the Garnet-Patterson building.

But first, I would like to thank the council and DGS for the work thus far with Roosevelt STAY, as I know the move to the Garnet-Patterson building was short notice and a large undertaking. Our community is very thankful to have our own space and it has benefited the school culture and student success greatly already.

Still, in many ways, our community is still being shortchanged. The budget to move us into the Garnet-Patterson was enough simply to renovate a swing space for a smaller school. Enough money was not budgeted to make the appropriate changes for an entire school community to stay permanently. We are already cutting corners to stay within the construction budget, minimizing how many walls need to be removed, limiting new furniture, and keeping the worn floors in many rooms.

However, there are two items that cannot be ignored to make our building suitable for students and staff.

First, we do not have a modern HVAC system in the building. Currently, we are working with the boiler and window air units in each room. The temperature is so difficult to control that most staff members have their window units running along with the boiler, and often the window cracked as well. The temperatures also vary throughout the day and from room to room. The Garnet-Patterson building is a very large. Window units and the boiler may have been acceptable options while it was only a temporary swing space, but now with the building in full use, this is a wildly unsustainable and wasteful way to heat and cool the areas. As I am sure you know, both window units and boilers use energy significantly less efficiently than modern HVAC systems, and we are using both, again, at the same time. Compounded with the size of the building, we are wasting an incredible amount of energy and making a very uncomfortable environment for our students and staff. These learning conditions are going to have an impact on our school's success.

Second, there are currently no funds for an elevator to the basement level of the building, where our cafeteria and CTE programs will be housed. This is unacceptable and seems like a lawsuit waiting to happen. Having the cafeteria and a substantial amount of our programming not accessible to students and staff with disabilities is unheard of and completely irresponsible. Also, our cafeteria and custodial staff will not have an elevator to take supplies, food, and garbage to and from the areas, forcing them to take large and cumbersome hauls up and down the stairs. This is both inefficient and unsafe. Again, the lack of accessibility is unfair and negligent, and it is almost unbelievable that we have to testify and ask for funding for an elevator before a student is unable to access their classroom and a place to eat with their friends.

Overall, budgeting an HVAC system as a capital project would be aligned with the city's and DGS's sustainability and environmental goals. Budgeting an elevator to our lower-level for the cafeteria and CTE programs will create accessibility to our entire building for everyone. Both asks are reasonable and are investments that will pay off immediately and in the future.

Thank you for your time.

**DC Council Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
Budget Oversight Hearing for the Department of General Services (DGS)**

**Testimony by Anne deBuys, DC resident**

Chairperson Lewis George, Committee Members, and Council Staff,

My name is Anne deBuys, and I am a resident of Ward 3. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the record in support of the Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022 and the Department of General Services' implementation of the District's Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS).

Councilmember Lewis George, you show such strong leadership on the Council regarding the environment and the District's climate goals, particularly relating to the health and safety of our residents. Your advocacy for both net-zero new building standards and high-efficiency building retrofits for public housing is outstanding. You co-sponsored the Greener Government Buildings Act<sup>1</sup> when it was introduced, and you understand well that investments now in buildings' energy efficiency represent future financial savings for our public schools, recreation centers, and other government buildings. I hope that the entire Committee membership<sup>2</sup> will work together to locate funding for the GGBA now in law.

During the next year, the Mayor proposes to expand and repair public housing and make major capital investments in school upgrades. Deferred maintenance has no doubt created an urgent need. But the Mayor's budget radically under-funds and under-staffs capacity to support the transition to net-zero energy standards for buildings managed by the Department of General Services.

The Greener Government Buildings Act fiscal impact statement showed a cost of \$8.4 million for fiscal year 2023. The Chief Financial Officer estimates a total of \$9.9 million over the next four years for net zero construction on projects already underway. (Long-term savings on net zero buildings' energy costs were not factored into the CFO's calculations, however.)<sup>3</sup>

But only \$1.5 million has been allocated in DGS's capital budget toward retrofitting government buildings in 2024. And no FTEs are funded in the FY24 DGS budget to implement the policy.

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<sup>1</sup> DC Law 24-0306, the Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022;  
<https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/laws/24-306>

<sup>2</sup> The Committee on Facilities & Family Services includes Councilmembers Briane Nadeau, Matt Frumin, Zachary Parker, and Robert White, Jr., who introduced the Greener Government Buildings Act, as well as Chairperson Janeese Lewis George.

<sup>3</sup><https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/586732/lobbyists-for-washington-gas-tried-to-neuter-a-major-clean-energy-bill-they-failed/>

A reading of DGS's Energy Management Plan points to approximately \$25 million in funding needed for FY24 energy retrofits. Of the nearly 300 large buildings the DGS manages, approximately half will require modifications in order to meet the Building Energy Performance Standards in the first compliance cycle. Window replacements, added insulation, and lighting upgrades to increase building efficiency can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per building and can total as much as \$1 million per project, according to the Energy Management Plan.

But instead of funding the DGS's implementation of the Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS), the Executive has instead chosen to delay BEPS. Tens of millions of dollars have already been spent on energy audits, and over 75% of out-of-compliance building owners have selected pathways towards meeting BEPS standards. DC Government partners have met their compliance obligations, with DGS having submitted their pathway selections. The three-year hold-up the Mayor proposes in her Budget Support Act results in wasted time, effort and resources toward BEPS compliance and casts uncertainty and doubt on the District's enforcement of the standards it has already established.

Net-zero modifications need to be made *now*, not later, to sooner benefit DC residents' health through eliminating all fossil fuel combustion in buildings. Low-income residents suffer disproportionately from poor indoor air quality when living with fossil-fuel burning appliances, particularly gas stoves. BEPS compliance for public housing will also serve to lower utility bills for these same residents, who have a more onerous energy burden. Thus the Mayor's delay unfairly penalizes the very population she claims to prioritize.

The FY24 budget includes an \$8 million enhancement in school maintenance. The Mayor's FY23 Supplemental Budget shows \$1.2 million for "boiler replacements at schools and other critical systems replacements."<sup>4</sup> According to the contractor, Design Tech, Inc., this is part of a multi-year renovation program for DC Public School buildings with a project scope involving complete renovation of the boiler plants at seven schools: Adams ES, Amidon ES, Davis ES, Duke Ellington HS, Garnet-Paterson MS, Kimball ES and Peabody ES.<sup>5</sup>

In February, a gas leak from malfunctioning boilers at John Burroughs Elementary School caused a dangerous situation and resulted in students' missed attendance because carbon monoxide had permeated the building. (Interestingly, Burroughs Elementary does not appear in the above list of DC public schools slated for boiler upgrades.)<sup>6</sup> Logically, the sudden failure of an aging school heating system must be prevented, but I have to wonder how much consideration in the Mayor's planning has been given to replacing gas-powered boilers with clean energy-fueled (electric or geothermal) heating systems and eliminating outdated, inefficient HVAC systems by installing air-sourced or geothermal heat pumps instead.

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<sup>4</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bbd09f3d74562c7f0e4bb10/t/6435b5475572065e36d89a90/1681241415698/FY23+Supplemental+Budget+Narrative+%28MMB+Proposed+Budget%29.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.designtecheng.com/dc-public-schools-boiler-replacements>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/education/gas-leaks-no-heat-floods-burroughs-elementary-dcps/65-867079e1-539c-4c91-a040-fd0156c3f9d9>



The economic and health benefits of net zero buildings have already been well-established. The Greener Government Buildings Act codifies a Sustainability and Energy Division within the Department of General Services and requires DGS to host net zero energy construction and maintenance training for stakeholders every two years. The DGS is the main agency of jurisdiction for the GGBA, and the necessary funding must be found so that the agency can manage the implementation of this important legislation.

As reflected in her proposed FY24 budget, the Mayor seems to have lost sight of the climate goals that she proudly supported through the CEDC Act, and the means to achieve them. The Department of General Services has a vital role to play in meeting our climate commitments, through supporting energy efficiency and the elimination of fossil fuel use in all of the District's government buildings, during the next critical decade for our planet.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne deBuys  
Ward 3

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
Committee on Facilities & Family Services

***Budget Oversight Hearing - Department of General Services***

Statement of Monte Edwards  
April 6, 2023

Good morning, Committee Chair Lewis George,

I am the Chair of the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC) Capital Improvement Subcommittee.

The DGS budget now before Council for Eastern Market capital improvements provides **only \$660,667** for Eastern Market for FY2024, with **zero** for FY, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028 and 2029. But, Eastern Market's capital requirements for FY24-FY29 is **\$1,723,475**. That cost is **LESS** than the original DGS budget request of **\$2,412,866**. Thus, Eastern Market requires **an additional \$1,062,808** over the \$660,667 currently in the budget before Council so that Eastern Market can continue to operate successfully into the future.

EMCAC is mindful that beginning in 2024, D.C. is projected to experience a significant drop in revenues from commercial real estate taxes and an end to federal stimulus and Covid funding. Therefore, EMCAC has examined DGS's Eastern Market budget submission of \$2,412,886 for FY24-FY29 and identified projects that are less critical and can be deferred and only included the most crucial projects. The proposed FY24-29 budgets contained projects that were approved as part of the 2022 budget and earlier, but have not been accomplished. Also, funding needs have changed. In that context, we are proposing a minimal but necessary budget requirement of **\$1,7423,475**, rather than the original DGS request of \$2,412,886 for FY24-FY29.

The most important change included in this budget adjustment is the determination that the HVAC project will cost over \$800,000 (in 2022 dollars) more than the current HVAC contract. The additional cost is for the replacement of fan, pump and valve controllers. In the current HVAC project, the contractor, Cinnovas/Southlands is replacing all of the controllers that have failed, but has also identified other controllers, not included in the current project, that are nearing the end of their service life and should be replaced over the next few years (see attached October 18, 2022 letter from Cinnovas/Southland). Preemptive replacement of these controllers is essential to insure the continued operation of the new HVAC system. The priorities of replacing the controllers cannot be determined until the new HVAC system is started up this summer, but they will not need to be replaced at once, and thus the cost can be spread over two years, FY 24 and FY 25 (\$666,000 and \$312,500 respectively).

The Farmers' Shed electrical outlets are used frequently and sometimes roughly, weekend after weekend, by Eastern Market's small businesses and require replacement; this work can be done in FY26 (\$217,198). In FY 27, the Market must focus on brick replacement and regrouting, replacement of the basement stairs, and other small capital projects (\$91,476) recommended in

the Facilities Conditions Assessment (FCA)<sup>1</sup>. In FY28, the FCA calls for the replacement of two hot water pumps (\$54,707) and FY29 requires regrouting of the exterior historical bricks (\$37,500).

To repeat, the estimated cost of these Eastern Market capital requirements for FY24-FY29 is **\$1,723,475** as detailed on the attached spreadsheet. That cost is LESS than the original DGS budget request of \$2,412,866. Thus, Eastern Market requires an **additional \$1,062,808** above the \$660,667 currently in the budget before Council so that Eastern Market can continue to operate successfully into the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Monte Edwards, Chair, Capital

Improvements Subcommittee, EMCAC

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<sup>1</sup> The Eastern Market Condition Assessment report is provided to DGS to provide a Facility Condition Assessments (FCAs) for District of Columbia Government facilities. The report provides a summary of equipment inventory, evaluation of the visually apparent condition of the property together with a forecast of capital expenditures anticipated over the next 10 years.



October 12, 2022

Mr. Hares Sayed  
Department of General Services  
2000 14th Street, NW, 8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20009

**Subject:** Eastern Market – BMS Controls Replacement  
Recommendations

Dear Mr. Sayed:

This letter is to provide a summary of existing conditions and recommendations regarding the existing building automation system (BMS) at Eastern Market.

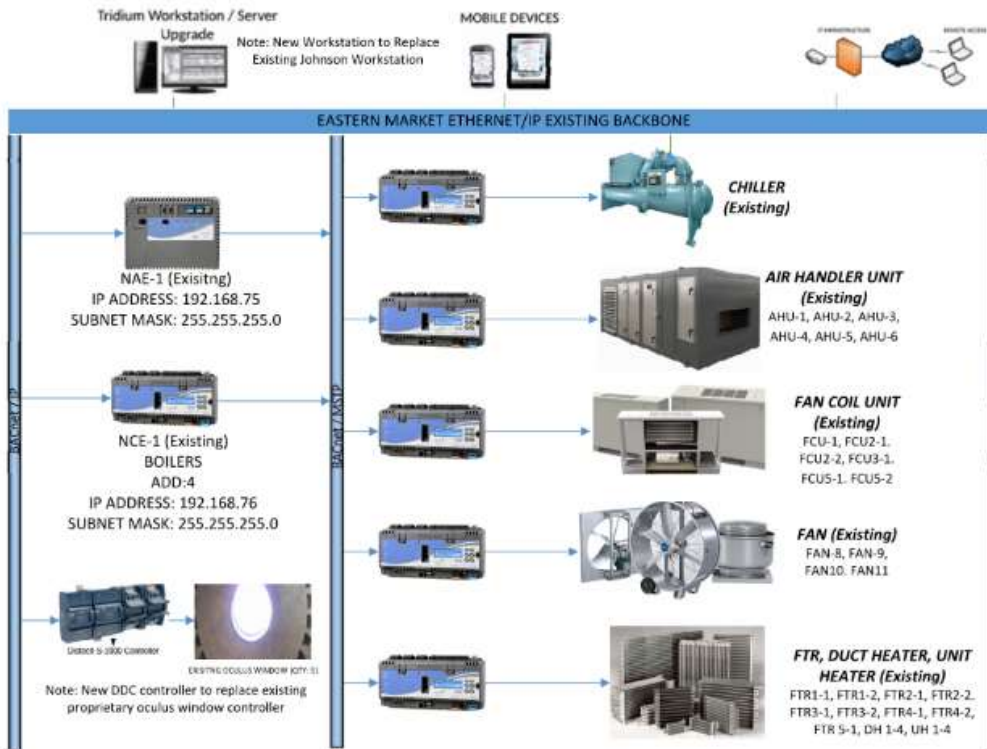
### **System History**

The currently installed system is from Johnson Controls Inc. The system was installed during the Eastern Market rehabilitation project around 2008. The system is approximately 14 years old and the typical expected lifespan for a properly maintained control system is around 15 years. To our knowledge the existing Johnson Controls field controllers and end devices / instrumentation have not been maintained with preventative maintenance routines.

### **Summary of Findings**

- 1) The existing Johnson Controls workstation is non-functioning and needs to be replaced as currently there is not an easy way to access the existing Eastern Market building management system. This workstation is being replaced with a new open architecture Tridium BMS workstation in the current Eastern Market Chiller Replacement Project.
- 2) Below is a conceptual diagram of the BMS at Eastern Market. Note the chiller system is being replaced with a new Multistack indoor / outdoor solution that will interface to the new Tridium BMS workstation.

**EASTERN MARKET  
INTEGRATED BUILDING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPGRADE ARCHITECTURE DIAGRAM  
(CONCEPTUAL)**



**List of Recommendations**

- 1) Leave in place the new Tridium BMS workstation and open architecture Distech BACnet controllers that are being provided as part of the Eastern Market Chiller Replacement Project. These systems include the new Multistack chiller system, the existing rooftop fans, North and South Hall power monitoring interface and the existing Oculus windows that are having their actuators replaced and new Distech controllers installed with the control of the windows.
- 2) Install a new open architecture Tridium N4 JACE, with I/O modules, to replace the failing NCE in the boiler room and integrate the existing JCI controllers into the new front end.
- 3) Develop new sequences of operation that work for the facility and the installed equipment to best control the spaces.
- 4) Develop a phased plan to replace / update all existing Johnson Controls legacy controllers and existing controls instrumentation for existing Johnson Controls controlled systems over a 1-5 year period. These systems include the following existing mechanical systems at Eastern Market:
  - a. Replace network level controllers NCE-1 and NAE-1 with open architecture Tridium JACE controllers.
  - b. Replace system controls as noted below with open architecture Distech BACnet controllers:
    - i. Air Handlers controls AHU 1-6 (QTY 6)
    - ii. Existing finned-tube radiation controls FTR-1-1, FTR-1-2, FTR-2-1, FTR-2-2, FTR-3-1, FTR-3-2, FTR-4-1, FTR-4-2, FTR-5-1 (QTY 9)
    - iii. Existing unit heaters controls UH-1-1, UH-1-2, UH-1-3, UH-1-4 (QTY 4)
    - iv. Miscellaneous existing fans F-8, F-9, F-10, F-11
    - v. Existing boiler system BMS controls interface / monitoring
    - vi. Chilled/Hot Water Plant Optimization
      1. Variable chilled water
        - a. VFD installation on (2) CHW pumps
        - b. Change AHU valves from 3-way to 2-way on AHUs 1, 2, 3, & 5

- c. AHUs 4 & 6 to remain 3-way to maintain minimum flow
  - 2. Temperature reset based on outside air
- vii. Air Handling Units
  - 1. Conversion to single zone variable-air -volume systems
    - a. Add VFDs to supply fans (Qty 6)
    - b. Control fan speed off of return air temp
  - 2. Supply air temperature reset

Anticipated BMS Controls Replacement Project Budget Range (Per Scope Above): \$600,000-\$800,000

Jack Hunter

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Eastern Market Capital Needs FY24-FY29

<b>FY24</b>	\$	<b>660,000</b>
Controllers Part 1	\$	550,000
<b>Total</b>	\$	<b>550,000</b>
20% Contingency and escalation	\$	110,000
<b>Total with Escalation</b>	\$	<b>660,000</b>
<b>Funding for FY24</b>	\$	<b>660,667</b>
<b>Funding Gap</b>	\$	<b>-</b>

*10% contingency + 5% inflation for each of two years (total of 20%)*

<b>FY25</b>	\$	<b>312,500</b>
Controllers - Part 2	\$	250,000
<b>Total</b>	\$	<b>250,000</b>
25% Escalation & Contingency	\$	62,500
<b>Total with Escalation</b>	\$	<b>312,500</b>

*10% contingency + 5% inflation for each of three years*

<b>FY26</b>	\$	<b>217,193</b>
Farmers Line Shed Outlets	\$	151,883
<b>Total</b>	\$	151,883
50% Escalation & Contingency	\$	65,310
<b>Total with Escalation</b>	\$	<b>217,193</b>

*30% contingency + 5% inflation for each of four years*

<b>FY27 - ORIGINALLY, NO CAPITAL PROJECTS PROPO</b>	\$	<b>91,576</b>
<i>Items brought forward from FY28 and items from prior years</i>		
Pavement - Brick Pavers @ South and West Stair Wells	\$	15,280
Basement Wood Stairs Renewal (South Hall)	\$	9,868
RegROUT the bricks throughout basement	\$	15,370
Roof Access Ladder	\$	3,412
Floor Finishes Fish/ Bakery Market Stands	\$	15,151
<b>Total</b>	\$	<b>59,081</b>
55% Escalation & Contingency	\$	32,495
<b>Total with Escalation</b>	\$	<b>91,576</b>

*30% contingency + 5% inflation for each of five years (total of 55%)*

<b>FY28</b>	\$	<b>54,707</b>
Heating Hot Water Pumps - Two 5 HP Pumps Renewal	\$	34,192
<b>Total</b>	\$	<b>34,192</b>
60% Escalation & Contingency	\$	20,515
<b>Total with Escalation</b>	\$	<b>54,707</b>

*30% contingency + 5% inflation for each of six years (total of 60%)*

<b>FY29</b>	\$	<b>387,500</b>
Exterior Walls Exterior Brick RegROUTing (from prior years)	\$	250,000
65% Escalation & Contingency	\$	137,500
<b>Total with Escalation</b>	\$	<b>387,500</b>

*30% contingency + 5% inflation for each of six years (total of 65%)*

Total Needs for FY24-29	\$	1,723,475
Total Funding proposed by Mayor for FY24	\$	660,667
Funding Gap/Surplus	\$	<b>(1,062,808)</b>

**TESTIMONY**  
**Before the Committee on Facilities and Family Services**  
**Department of General Services Budget Oversight Hearing**  
**On behalf of the Archives Advisory Group of the**  
**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**delivered by Neil Flanagan, Member**

**April 6th, 2023**

Thank you chairperson Lewis George for the opportunity to speak. My name is Neil Flanagan. I am testifying on behalf of the Archives Advisory Group of the Council. Our mandate, as outlined in the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Support Act of 2020, is to “advise the Council of the District of Columbia about Project AB102C in the District’s Capital Improvement Plan to construct a new archives facility for the District of Columbia.”

FY24 is a critical year for the construction of the new archives facility at the University of the District of Columbia. The \$30 million provided by the Mayor in the FY 2023 supplementary budget, B25-0205, is very welcome. That funding addresses cost inflation incurred over years of delay since the original appropriations in 2015. Securing that funding is essential to giving the District’s most comprehensive historic resource the dignity it deserves and bringing that history to the people of the District of Columbia.

Yesterday, the design team, led by Hartman-Cox Architects, presented the latest iterations of the proposed building. We felt they showed significant improvement over the design released in January 2023. Similarly, we believe the discussion led to several productive adjustments. There are many decisions still to be made in the design process, so we look forward to future discussions. But this is a substantial investment, and we believe the best return on that commitment will only be realized by better and more responsive management by the Department of General Services. In the budget support act, we recommend that the Council direct DGS to improve its execution of the project in the following ways:

First, a building that opens in 2026 should be designed with the level of sustainability expected in that year. This means a net-zero design that complies with the Greener Government Buildings Act of 2023 and the spirit of the DC Clean Energy Act of 2022. **Recognizing budget constraints, we recommend that the Council mandate a design that maximizes on-site power generation. Similarly, we recommend that the Council ask DGS and OPR to explore passive climate control techniques.** To its credit, the current proposed design is all-electric and gas-free. In short, we think that the best use of these capital funds is a building that not only showcases DC’s rich history, but that showcases DC values and our commitment to environmental sustainability.

Second, the building will be built on the campus of UDC, literally on top of its parking garage. Consequently, multiple agencies including DGS will need to sign a memorandum of agreement that assigns rights and restrictions to all parties. DGS has not been forthcoming about this process, and we have not seen any version of the document. We did learn at yesterday’s consultation that a preliminary “letter of consent” has been issued. **We recommend that the Council direct DGS make this letter and the MOA public, and further ask them to use the MOA process to explore programmatic opportunities for all agencies involved.**

And finally, the public deserves transparency and engagement throughout the rest of the project. Even for the Advisory Group, getting basic information has been difficult. The design contract was issued with minimal public input. The program of requirements and Schematic Design documents were only released after weeks of pressure. This is not a good way to design a public building. Yesterday’s design consultation demonstrated that the public has expertise, both professional and lived, that it can contribute to the project. The spectacular



outcome of the Martin Luther King Memorial Library renovation testifies to that, and we should be looking for the same kind of engagement. **We recommend the Council direct DGS to post updates as soon as they are complete, continue design consultations, and communicate directly with the Archives Advisory Group.**

For the first time since Home Rule, the District of Columbia is on the path to preserving its heritage that stands toe to toe with its peers among the states. It is an investment, and a substantial one that must be implemented carefully. The Archives Advisory Group recommends that it return the most of that investment by requiring a vision of sustainability, exploring all programmatic opportunities, and committing to dialogue and transparency with the public during the design process and beyond.

Thank you for your time and attention, I am happy to answer any questions.



April 6, 2023

Geoff Gilbert  
Beloved Community Incubator  
Legal and Technical Assistance Director

**Testimony before the Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
Re: DGS Use of DC USA Mall Parking Garage**

My name is Geoff Gilbert and I am the Legal and Technical Assistance Director at Beloved Community Incubator. I organize with street vendors part of Vendors United // Vendedores Unidos.

I'm testifying to ask that the Committee on Facilities & Family Services and the Department of General Services consider committing part of the parking garage at DC USA Mall toward community benefit in the form of support for low-cost storage space for local street vendors.

To develop DC USA Mall in the early 2000s, the District provided significant subsidies to New York-based Grid Properties and Gotham Organization, Inc., including tax breaks<sup>1</sup> and other direct financial support like continued city ownership of the facility's parking garage, which was essential to the initial financing for the project.<sup>2</sup> The DC USA Mall parking garage, the construction of which was financed by a \$46.9 million tax increment finance bond issued by the DC government,<sup>3</sup> has been severely underutilized since it was completed in 2008. In 2008, the DC government entered into a covenant regarding the use of the parking garage whereby DGS is responsible for contracting for day-to-day management of the garage. However, the covenant restricts use of the garage to only parking spaces that serve the retail tenants in DC USA Mall and the covenant can only be changed by a unanimous decision of DGS; Grid Properties, the owner of DC USA Mall; and Target, the anchor tenant of DC USA Mall.

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<sup>1</sup> Citibank, "Columbia Heights Wins 2010 Award for Excellence from Urban Land Institute"(Citi Community Capital financed DC USA with an \$88.6 million construction loan, a \$55.3 million mini-perm loan and a \$46.9 million tax-exempt bond purchase).

<sup>2</sup> David Alpert, "Now there's really too much parking at DC USA," *Greater Greater Washington* (April 27, 2009), <https://gwwash.org/view/1644/now-theres-really-too-much-parking-at-dc-usa> (A major sticking point in the negotiation of the financing of the development of DC USA Mall was the parking garage. The DC government agreed to take ownership of the parking garage, which, for years, cost the city in excess of \$2 million each year. The costs have been financed by the Neighborhood Investment Fund, which is supposed to pay for affordable housing, mixed-use, and community facilities.)

<sup>3</sup> Citibank, "Columbia Heights Wins 2010 Award for Excellence from Urban Land Institute"(Citi Community Capital financed DC USA with an \$88.6 million construction loan, a \$55.3 million mini-perm loan and a \$46.9 million tax-exempt bond purchase).



In exchange for city support for the development of the DC USA Mall, the owner, Grid Properties, agreed to provide certain community benefits, including making available retail space inside the mall at a discount to local and minority-owned businesses. We ask if the Council or the Mayor has any record of any community benefits provided?

We also ask that DGS act to transition use of portions of the garage toward uses that can benefit the surrounding community, including the creation of low-cost storage space for local street vendors. DC USA is right at the center of the highest activity vending area in Columbia Heights. Given the high cost of rent in the District, street vendors face significant storage challenges. Storage bills cost vendors hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars each month and vendors must travel significant distances at the start and end of each day between the storage units they are able to access and their vending spots on 14th St in front of DC USA Mall. We ask that DGS work with local street vendors to create low-cost storage space in the underutilized DC USA Mall parking garage.

Sincerely,

Geoff Gilbert  
Beloved Community Incubator  
Legal and Technical Assistance Director

**Testimony to the Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
For the Budget Hearing for Department of General Services (DGS)**

**Elijah Gold-Moritz**

**Student, Jackson-Reed High School**

**April 6, 2023**

Good afternoon Chair Lewis George and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Elijah Gold-Moritz and I am a Ward 4 resident. I am a sophomore at Jackson-Reed High School. I joined the drama program in my Freshman year after doing theatre in middle school. **I am here today to bring attention to the state of disrepair that the Jackson Reed auditorium has been under. The shortcomings of our theatre equipment have made it impossible to put on productions in our auditorium.** We are asking that the Committee allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed.

I joined the theatre program in my freshman year because acting is a passion of mine and a great way that I have found for me to express myself artistically. I was nervous when I first joined the program, but I was met with kindness and acceptance as soon as I walked in the door. My first production at Jackson-Reed was put on in the auditorium, and the issues with the space, as well as the theatre equipment, were apparent. These issues caused the actors, and especially the technical staff, to put in an enormous amount of effort to just put on the production normally, in spite of the problems. One issue was the sound system in the auditorium: there weren't enough mics for everyone with speaking parts in the cast, so we had to share, scrambling between scenes to give mics to the people that needed them next. Even then, many mics didn't even work. Several actors, including myself, were forced to simply project, and hope we were heard over the band. There were also some set pieces from another year's production hanging from the ceiling on the stage, which were an issue to remove due to the lift machine not working. Instead, the technical staff had to come up with a solution to temporarily hide these set pieces so that they did not interfere with the show. Baring witness to these instances thinking that it was definitely time for new equipment, and that it was irresponsible for the play staff to have not replaced this equipment yet. I later found out that in 2011, when Jackson-Reed had its renovation, the Department of General Services purposefully purchased used and discontinued equipment to save money when building the auditorium. This is the equipment still being used in the Jackson-Reed auditorium today. We can't find parts to repair the faulty equipment, as the equipment has been discontinued. This faulty equipment includes lights, sound equipment, and stage projectors. This lack of functioning equipment has forced the drama program to begin exclusively putting productions on in the black box theater, which has less than a fourth of the seating capacity of the auditorium, with maybe half of the stage space.

**We have three recommendations.** First, we are asking that the Committee allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed. Specific repairs should include 1) Space/seating (\$250K), 2) Electrical systems, Walls, Floors (\$50K); 4) Sound systems (\$50k); 5) Lighting systems (\$100k); 6) Lifts (\$35K); 7) Audio Visual Systems (\$15K) and 8) Other equipment and furnishings (\$50K). Next, we ask that DGS be required to communicate with and issue quarterly reports to a Jackson-Reed High Appointed Advisory Board. Finally, we ask that the Committee require DGS to develop and share comprehensive maintenance and leasing plans to ensure that the auditorium remains in excellent condition for Jackson-Reed and community use for the foreseeable future.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this issue, I hope you take our requests into great consideration.

**Department of General Services FY 2024 Budget Hearing  
April 6, 2023**

**Testimony submitted by Leonard S. Greenberger, DC Public Restrooms  
(draft, April 3, 2023)**

Committee on Facilities and Family Services Chair George [and other members of the committee],

I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

I have been working with DC Public Restrooms for more than eight years now to bring better access to safe, clean public restrooms for residents, workers and tourists in our wonderful city. It's been a long and at times frustrating process, but ultimately I have always found it very fulfilling because, despite the many obstacles that we've had to overcome, I've always felt as though we were making real progress towards that important goal.

It is therefore with great regret that I must report to you that for the first time, I feel as though we are about to take a giant step backwards. The prospect of putting funding on hold for the Standalone Public Restroom Pilot and of having no funds in next year's budget for that pilot seems almost impossible to believe, and yet here we are.

So, with my time today I'd like to take us back to first principles. In the 30+ years that I have lived in Washington, D.C., and its environs, I've watched the city grow from what was a pretty sleepy, little southern town into a world-class metropolis

with incredible museums, restaurants, attractions and a robust economic engine powered by far more than federal government spending. And yet, when it comes to providing access to clean, safe public restrooms, we simply don't match up to other world-class cities around the globe.

And that matters to a lot of people. It matters to the businesses that suffer because people are reluctant to visit the city's downtown core because they worry about finding a restroom when the need arises – or because they have a lot of poop to scoop around their stores or businesses on a Monday morning.

It matters to the millions of tourists who visit the city. We know that your guides avoid certain areas of town because they can't be sure that they'll be able to find a restroom for their guests should the need arise. And we know that international visitors are often shocked when they learn that public restrooms aren't as widely available as they are in the cities they call home.

It matters to the bus drivers and gig workers who depend on public restrooms when the need arises.

And it matters to bikers and walkers and runners (like me) who often have to map their routes carefully to make sure they are never too far from a public restroom.

In fact, just a few weeks ago, my fiancé and I brought her three young children down to the Mall and as we were enjoying a beautiful day, we suddenly had an urgent need for a restroom. Fortunately, the Hirshhorn Museum was open and

relatively close by. But had the need struck just 20 minutes later, the Hirshhorn and all the other Smithsonian Museums would have been closed, and I honestly don't know what we would have done – other than broken the law. It was a not-so-subtle reminder of why the work we've been doing over the past eight years is so important.

But that work remains unfinished. On behalf of myself and the many, many residents, business owners and runners like me, I strongly urge the committee to restore funding for the Standalone Public Restroom Pilot. Together, we've made incredible strides on this vital issue. Let's keep moving forward.

Thank you.

**Testimony to the Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
For the Budget Hearing for Department of General Services (DGS)**

**Beatrice Gumbinner**

**Student, Jackson-Reed High School**

**April 6, 2023**

Good afternoon Councilmembers and Chairwoman Lewis George.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. My name is Bea Gumbinner, I am a Ward 3 resident, and a junior at Jackson-Reed high school. I work with Young Women's Project as a youth advocate, lead an environmental club, and participate in theater. I plan to attend college post-graduation and major in environmental studies. I am here today to ask the Committee to allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed, as described below.

This is currently my third year participating in theater at Jackson-Reed High School. Last Year, we did a production of Les Miserables, An incredibly enjoyable experience for myself and my classmates. Theatre for many of us is a crucial part of our lives. A chance to make friends, to socialize, learn new skills, and escape our boring everyday lives. Despite this passion and enjoyment, there is one thing holding us back: our theatre. Last year, due to sound system issues, the audience had trouble hearing us over the band. Sometimes the microphones worked, but they frequently cut in and out. The sound system is a major issue, but it is not our only problem. When it rains, water leaks through the roof, causing further equipment damage and a safety hazard to performers. During a rehearsal, last year, a leak in the roof caused me to lose my balance, and slip. All I want is the opportunity to perform, but it is being stripped away from me, due to the continued hesitancy to fix the auditorium. In order to work around the troubled space, we have moved our current production of Into the Woods to the black box theater, which is a small black box room in our school. To work with the new space, the ensemble of the show is significantly smaller than it could be if we used the auditorium, denying a portion of students from exploring their passion.

The impacts of the issues with the auditorium extend beyond the theater, Jackson Reed has a significantly large student body, thus for important class meetings, we gather in the auditorium, as it is the only space in the school large enough to hold our entire grade. However, the projectors don't function properly, causing barriers to communication between the administration and the student body. Beyond even the school, Theatre events are part of our community. I know some of you in the audience were present for our production last year, and I would hope you've seen the state it's in. This is a plea not just for our own sake, but for the community, thus it is imperative that funds be allotted toward the restoration of our auditorium. When this body is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on charter schools, it's leaving behind public schools. It's leaving behind our experiences, our education, and our future.

We are asking the Committee to consider three recommendations. First, we are asking that the Committee allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally



designed. Specific repairs should include 1) Space/seating (\$250K), 2) Electrical systems, Walls, Floors (\$50K); 4) Sound systems (\$50k); 5) Lighting systems (\$100k); 6) Lifts (\$35K); 7) Audio Visual Systems (\$15K) and 8) Other equipment and furnishings (\$50K). Next, we ask that DGS be required to communicate with and issue quarterly reports to a Jackson-Reed High Appointed Advisory Board. Finally, we ask that the Committee require DGS to develop and share comprehensive maintenance and leasing plans to ensure that the auditorium remains in excellent condition for Jackson-Reed and community use for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

I would like to register my displeasure at the poor state of the Jackson Reed High School facility especially the theater auditorium. Recently I attended a parents' meeting for the upcoming musical production. My daughter (a sophomore) has a role. This meeting was held in the "Black Box" room where the musical will also apparently be held. Following the meeting, the discussion veered into why the show won't be performed in the much larger main auditorium. Perhaps you are familiar with the many years of roof, lighting, sound system, chair, and other theater system issues. Being the father of a theater kid, I certainly am familiar with them. Despite the apparent best efforts of the school administration, little progress has been made. While talking about this and the broken bathroom toilets throughout the school, a mouse literally scurried along the wall behind the theater teacher. As I walked home past the portable classroom trailers, I became more and more upset with the state of the school I send my daughter to everyday. We've lived in DC for more than twenty years, and while I haven't always been pleased with how things are run, I have never felt so disappointed in the city. It is my understanding that DC spends an incredible amount on each student. Why aren't we doing better?

Scott Heit  
4346 Brandywine St NW  
Washington, DC 20016

Hello, my name is Simon Holland, and I'm a resident of Ward 3 and currently a junior at Jackson-Reed High School in Northwest D.C. I'm the incoming editor-in-chief of the student-run newspaper the Beacon, a member of our student-run theater group the Players, and a participant in our theater program. I have been in the cast of all of our main stage productions last year and this year. I request that this submission be included with the written testimony that supplements the live testimony you heard last week.

As you can imagine, theater has become central to my life at school, and has allowed me to hone my talents as an actor, make friends, and helped me find a true place of belonging within my school. Not only that, but being a part of the program has given me opportunities to develop certain life skills. I've figured out how to manage large groups of people as the stage manager of the Players' winter play, Girls Like That, become a more confident speaker and presenter as a performer in various shows, and developed practical building and construction skills through participation in stage crew.

This year, our shows have made a transition from our 800-person auditorium to the much smaller Black Box theater. We were forced to make this transition due to the poor condition of the auditorium—it has multiple leaks in the roof, outdated and ineffectual sound equipment, lights that are impossible to reach, and stage projectors that have never worked.

This change in performance space massively restricts the scope and inclusivity of our productions for those interested in participating. Last year, we had two main stage musicals, one of which was Les Miserables in spring, which had a cast size of about 65. This year, neither "main stage" productions get close to this scope, with our spring musical having a cast size of around 40.

While I have been lucky enough to be in the cast of both of these shows, the massively limiting nature of the Black Box has made theater less inclusive than it once was. When we had the auditorium, it was much easier to ensure anyone who wanted to participate could, but now, casts are much smaller and cuts are more frequent. Our theater program has been incredibly formative for me, and it's sad that we're having to stop others from joining who want to.

Additionally, we now have to frequently turn away fellow students, teachers, parents, and community members who want to check out the shows. Where the auditorium could easily seat hundreds, ensuring that those who wanted to see the productions could, the Black Box fits 175 audience members max, leading to many excited potential audience members being turned away.

While the shows we've put on this year have been amazing in their own ways, the impacts of not having use of the auditorium are overwhelmingly negative, and damage school culture surrounding theater. We are asking for \$550,000 to help repair our auditorium so we can return to having productions in it. Repairing the auditorium will also help repair our school's theater culture. This commitment would truly demonstrate your care for the arts on a high school level as well as your support for your constituents.

Simon Holland (he/him)

**Testimony to the Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
For the Budget Hearing for Department of General Services (DGS)**

**Luther Hoy**

**Student, Jackson-Reed High School**

**April 6, 2023**

Good afternoon Chair Lewis George and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Luther Hoy and I am a junior at Jackson-Reed High School. I am heavily involved with theater as the head of the ensemble, and a participant in the stage crew. Currently, I am spending my afternoons at rehearsal for the upcoming musical Into the Woods. While I hope to attend college for public policy and government, theater has given me a space to enhance vital performance skills, public speaking, and creative thinking. I am here today to testify on the repairs needed in the Jackson Reed Auditorium – which is currently unusable for theatre productions, forcing us to perform in the rundown, much smaller black box.

**We are asking Committee to allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed.**

I came to Jackson-Reed with no prior experience or knowledge of theater. I never imagined myself being so heavily involved in it. However, it was the community that lured me into it and made me continue to participate in theater all year round. I have met the kindest, most welcoming people in the theater that I have formed everlasting friendships and connections with. One of the best parts of these productions last year in the auditorium was that there was no fear of rejection- everyone was able to perform in the show with such a large theater! Participating in the ensemble of Les Miserables was one of the best couple months of my life, even if my role would be considered minimal to the onlooker. In reality, the ensemble of a show is the most important group that makes these high-scale productions come together and generates the most community building.

This year came with a huge change. Moving into a much smaller performing stage, cast sizes had to be cut down. This created a much more competitive environment and eliminated the welcoming, community-building theater I knew at the beginning of my sophomore year. Furthermore, performing in a smaller space cuts down on the number of people in an ensemble, which, as I said before, is the most important piece of a show. Working in a smaller environment has left us feeling stressed, overwhelmed, angry, and quite frankly, unfriendly. I miss the culture we had when new-to-theater Luther was able to join with no difficulty and have a substantial role. I miss when rehearsals valued everyone, not just the few, highest casted individuals. I miss the opportunity to work in a larger, much more collaborative environment. And most of all, I miss the ensemble.

Fixing the auditorium would not only give the school a much-needed technological upgrade, but it would also bring back the theater pride and love that I so dearly miss. As the head and representative of the ensemble at Jackson-Reed High School, I call upon DGS to finally give Jackson-Reed theater the funding we deserve and have asked for, for so long. Thank you.

**Testimony to the Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
For the Budget Hearing for Department of General Services (DGS)**

**Dan Iwaniec**

**Theatre Teacher, Jackson-Reed High School**

**April 6, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chair Lewis-George and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dan Iwaniec and I am a Ward 5 DC resident. I am the theater teacher at Jackson-Reed High School and recently named the Performing Arts Teacher of the Year by DCPS. I am also proud to serve as the director for our Spring musical, "Into the Woods", and our Fall play, "And Then There Were None" as well as the sponsor for our Stage Crew. Through classes and after school programs, I've worked with over half the student body at Jackson-Reed. I've been lucky enough to work with Tony Award winner & Oscar nominated designers, Broadway performers, and internationally renowned artists; experiences that I'm able to share with my students. But working in our Auditorium has been the most mental taxing, physically exhausting, and stress inducing experience of my entire career. I've worked with literal opera Divas with less issues than this space. We are asking that the Committee allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed.

However, I've been extremely proud of our work in our theater program. We won Best Musical from the National Capital Cappies Awards for our production of "Hair." Our production of "Rent" was featured in Idina Menzel's documentary, "Which Way to the Stage." And several of our students have been able to perform with Lin Manuel Miranda for the Kennedy Center Honors. During the pandemic, we wrote six original musicals that were staged and performed outdoors entirely by our students. You really haven't experienced the desperation for live theater until you've heard teenagers belting out "Bohemian Rhapsody" on a 90-degree day on top of a concrete slab.

When I began teaching at Jackson-Reed (then Wilson High school), many problems with the space already existed. The auditorium was poorly designed, unfinished, and outfitted with obsolete equipment. As an example, the theater was installed with windows that had broken shades. If we have a performance during the day or late-night soccer game, we have to block the windows with plywood from the sun or stadium lights. Also in my first few months, a projection screen broke and was unable to be pulled up again. Almost 10 years later, it is still hanging there. If I go through the entire list of issues of inaccessible lighting, defective sound system, obsolete A/V equipment, structural concerns, water damaged curtains, dysfunctional fly system, deteriorating seats from the 1930's, and on and on, I would be here all day. But I've done it many, many, many times before. And I keep getting redirected over and over again with no solutions.

But we are not the only group that depends on the space. Our yearly Homecoming Talent Show usually takes place in the fall. The Chinese department has invited artists from Beijing Opera to perform for our students. Our music department performs their band, jazz, orchestra, and choir concerts there. Our library team has hosted authors and guest speakers in the space. And once a year, our Forensic classes investigate a murder that their teacher stages in the back of the auditorium. But, we've been unable to do any of these things for our students in the auditorium.

I'm familiar with defunding the arts. But this feels more sinister. We completely fund ourselves. So by allowing the auditorium to deteriorate by the powers that be, it feels like we're being slowly strangled out rather than a clean cut.

We have three recommendations. First, we are asking that the Committee allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed. Specific repairs should include 1) Space/seating (\$250K), 2) Electrical systems, Walls, Floors (\$50K); 4) Sound systems (\$50k); 5) Lighting systems (\$100k); 6) Lifts (\$35K); 7) Audio Visual Systems (\$15K) and 8) Other equipment and furnishings (\$50K). Next, we ask that DGS be required to communicate with and issue quarterly reports to a Jackson-Reed High Appointed Advisory Board. Finally, we ask that the Committee require DGS to develop and share comprehensive maintenance and leasing plans to ensure that the auditorium remains in excellent condition for Jackson-Reed and community use for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee has.

My name is Courtney Leatherman. I am a Ward 3 resident and a parent of a senior at Jackson Reed High School. I ask that this submission be included with the written testimony that supplements the live testimony you heard regarding the decrepit conditions of Jackson Reed's theater.

My daughter is in her 14th year in DCPS – having started in pre-K at Janney, matriculating from there and Deal Middle School - and yet this is my first time writing to the Council to complain about school facilities. Knowing how fortunate we are to live in this Ward, with all its advantages, I have been reluctant to ask for more.

But I'm asking now– even as my daughter prepares to depart for college and will not reap the benefits of these much-needed repairs. Fix the roof!

The largest high school in the city, serving all eight wards, is a beautiful facility, of which the city should be proud. Instead, the building is becoming a joke. Every time it rains, Jackson Reed staff becomes a bucket brigade. Water leaks in through that beautiful atrium and, of course, onto the stage of the auditorium. My daughter has learned to shrug at the drips raining in throughout the building, but the cancellation of a full-scale musical has left her depressed.

My daughter has been singing and dancing on DCPS stages since she caught the musical bug in 4th grade at Janney, under the direction of Karen Harris. These productions have been a highlight of her schooling and an influence on her future. And that's true of so many alums of Wilson's drama department. (I know of one who has gone on to study stage production at Northwestern University and another who is studying acting at University of Southern California, to mention just two.)

And the productions are always stellar. But what has struck me is that they are really much more than high school musicals. They are community-building events. Last spring, the line of people snaking down the block, waiting for admission to each performance of "Les Miserables," was testament to that. Families of current, past and future students lined up, as did hopeful DC Council representatives. It was truly a delight to witness that rallying around a local event, one that provided much-needed relief from the isolation of Covid.

The repairs to Jackson Reed's roof and theater are long overdue; you can no longer delay this much-needed maintenance. It's short-sighted and only becoming more, and more expensive. Repair Jackson Reed's roof and auditorium.

Thank you,  
Courtney Leatherman  
4422 Davenport St NW



My name is Amy Levin. I am a Ward 3 resident and the parent of a junior and a freshman at Jackson-Reed High School. I request that this submission be included with the written testimony that supplements the live testimony you heard last week.

The auditorium at Jackson-Reed is a critical place of community. Not only the community experienced by my son—a participant in every main stage theater production in the last two years and a leader in the student run theater group, The Jackson-Reed Players—but also the community the auditorium facilitates beyond the students, teachers, and staff of Jackson-Reed.

I led ticket sales for the spring 2022 production of Les Miserables, which meant I was able to witness hundreds of people lining up every night—from the theater entrance down to and around the corner of Nebraska avenue—to see the amazing production Jackson-Reed students put on under the guidance of Karen Harris and Dan Iwaniec. It wasn't just parents and grandparents; it was friends, neighbors, alumni, and people who saw the line, asked what was going on, and decided to buy a ticket.

We sold tickets until five minutes before curtain and could do so confidently because we knew the auditorium could hold so many people. Inside the theater, every night felt like Broadway; it was truly magical to witness a community coming together to enjoy this wonderful production and to see the students' hard work recognized in the applause of a full auditorium.

This fall, Dan Iwaniec put together a phenomenal production of the Agatha Christie mystery *And Then There Were None*. But his only option was to stage it in the Black Box, which seats 175 max. Again, I led ticket sales, and for five nights, we sold out at least half an hour before showtime. I felt terrible turning people away, especially knowing how good the show was, how hard the students had worked, how far some people had traveled to see the show, and (frankly) how much money the school was forgoing in ticket sales.

The shows ended up being intimate events for family and friends, and they were lovely in their own way. But we lost that larger community feeling, that feeling of what high school theater should be: an opportunity for people to gather and enjoy a night of affordable entertainment, to recognize and appreciate the hard work of the students, teachers, and staff who commit so many hours to making public art.

Please show your commitment to theater as a community-building activity by prioritizing the \$550,000 request for fixes to the Jackson-Reed auditorium.

Amy Levin  
5108 34th Street NW

## Perkins, Will (Council)

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**From:** Binney Levine <binney.levine@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 12, 2023 1:10 PM  
**To:** Pinto, Brooke (Council); Lewis-George, Janeese (Council); Perkins, Will (Council); mfurmin@dccouncil.gov; Nadeau, Brianne K. (Council); Parker, Zachary (Council); White, Robert (Council); Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL); McDuffie, Kenyan (Council); Bonds, Anita (Council); Henderson, Christina (Council); Allen, Charles (Council); Gray, Vincent (Council); Bunn, Sheila (Council); White, Sr., Trayon (Council)  
**Subject:** West End Library/Firehouse Maintenance Fund

Dear Councilmembers and the Committee on Facilities & Family Services:

As a resident of the Foggy Bottom/West End community, I object to the proposed transfer of funds currently in the West End Library/Firehouse Maintenance Fund into the general fund to close the FY2024-2025 budget gap.

The Fund was established in 2011 under DC Code Section 1-325.181 in order to ensure that the new West End Library and Firehouse would not deteriorate from lack of capital funding and would remain an asset to the Foggy Bottom/West End community.

The proposed transfer would negate current law and compromise the ongoing maintenance condition of the buildings. Therefore, I request that you keep the Fund intact and preserve the two of the most important public buildings in Foggy Bottom/West End.

Thank you,

Binney Levine

3 Washington Circle NW

Washington DC 20037

[binney.levine@gmail.com](mailto:binney.levine@gmail.com)

April 22, 2023

Mr. Will Perkins,  
Director, Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
Office of Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George

Dear Mr. Perkins,

It is an honor to testify before Ward4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, the Committee on Facilities & Family Services, and invited guests.

My name is Robert T. Oliver and I represent the Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association (LRCA) Development Task Force (DTF). Our current task is to convert greenspace located at the intersection of South Dakota Avenue and Riggs Road NE into a viable park for our diverse and growing community.

The greenspace was created when DDOT reconfigured the intersection of Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue NE by removing the traffic ramps from and to eastbound Riggs Road to further development goals. The result was the creation of a 1.5-acre greenspace currently owned by DDOT and maintained by DGS.

The Lamond-Riggs community and the DTF have worked to convert this area into usable parkland. Our major accomplishments are:

- LRCA initiated a Small Area Plan that the DC Office of Planning completed in 2008.
- It was approved by the DC Council in 2009.
- And it was incorporated into the DC Comprehensive Plan in 2021.
- Lastly, on September 24, 2022 a Site Experience Event (SEE) was hosted on the site to solicit community input via survey that was later published on the LRCA website.

We thank Ward 5 Councilmember Zachary Parker for including the parkland request into his Budget Letter to the Mayor. We also thank the Mayor for responding to that request.

However, more work needs to be done. First, we request that the ownership of the greenspace be transferred from DDOT to DPR. We understand that DGS has the authority to do so.

Lastly, we ask that the Councilmember protect the funding in the Mayor's FY24 Budget that supports this project.

Sincerely,

Robert T. Oliver, Co-Chair  
LRCA Development Task Force

Dear Committee Members:

As a resident of Foggy Bottom/West End community, I object to the proposed transfer of funds currently in the West End Library and Fire Station Maintenance Fund into the general fund in order to close the FY2024-2025 budget gap.

I am a frequent user of the Library and go there often.

The proposed transfer would negate current law and compromise the ongoing maintenance condition of the buildings. Therefore, I request that you keep the Fund intact in order to preserve two of the most important public buildings in Foggy Bottom/West End.

Name: Vivian Otteman

Address: 2450 Virginia Avenue NW, E630, Washington, DC 20037

Email: [votteman@verizon.net](mailto:votteman@verizon.net)

Date: April 11, 2023

Affiliation(s): Friend of the Library, Member of Foggy Bottom Association, member of Foggy Bottom West End Village

**Testimony to the Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
For the Budget Hearing for Department of General Services (DGS)**

**Isabelle Posner-Brown**  
**Student, Jackson-Reed High School**  
**April 6, 2023**

Good Morning committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is [Isabelle Posner-Brown](#) I am a Sophomore at Jackson Reed High School. I am a proud product of DCPS, having attended Horace Mann Elementary and Hardy Middle School. I am a soccer player and a member of the newspaper staff. I have also been part of every Jackson-Reed Theatre production since I started high school. Right now, we are in rehearsals for the upcoming spring musical of 'Into the woods'. I asked to testify before you today to urge you to consider the much needed repairs to the Jackson Reed Auditorium. *We are asking the Committee to allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed.*

Last year, being part of the spring musical production of Les Miserables was the highlight of my year. I met new friends, felt part of the community and I was so proud to be part of a show that looked so professional.

This year, due to serious equipment challenges, we are performing all of our productions in the black box theater. The Black Box is a small theater that only seats less than 200 people as opposed to the large auditorium. Due to the size limitations, the cast has to be smaller, limiting opportunities for all to participate. The point of high school theater is not only to be good quality but to be a great learning experience for all.

Additionally, the small space means fewer community members can see our shows. In the fall production, my uncle was turned away at the door. My grandma, a 77 year old woman, stood in line for an hour so she could see the show. They are both DC residents. The Jackson-Reed Theatre department has a great reputation at the school and within the community and serves as an opportunity to bring the neighborhood together, by operating in a smaller space,

Jackson-Reed is an important part of the DC community and we ask that the committee consider allocating \$550,000 dollars to the DGS budget to make sure that next year we can make full use of the auditorium and continue to showcase the amazing talent we have here.

**We have three recommendations.** First, we are asking that the Committee allocate \$550,000 in the FY2024 Department of General Services (DGS) budget to support the assessment and repairs of the Jackson-Reed Auditorium to ensure it is fully functional as originally designed. Specific repairs should include 1) Space/seating (\$250K), 2) Electrical systems, Walls, Floors (\$50K); 4) Sound systems (\$50k); 5) Lighting systems (\$100k); 6) Lifts (\$35K); 7) Audio Visual Systems (\$15K) and 8) Other equipment and furnishings (\$50K). Next, we ask that DGS be required to communicate with and issue quarterly reports to a Jackson-Reed High Appointed Advisory Board. Finally, we ask that the Committee require DGS to develop and share comprehensive maintenance and leasing plans to ensure that the auditorium remains in excellent condition for Jackson-Reed and community use for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for for your time

COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE,  
CHAIRPERSON  
COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES  
ANNOUNCES A BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

Thursday, April 6, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

My name is Sebrena Rhodes, I'm a Community Organizer with Empower DC and ANC 5D02 Commissioner in Ivy City.

I want to talk about Crummell School site being maintained. There's glass on the concrete and dog poop in the grass. There are children that want to play and will get seriously hurt if they fall on the ground. We have to call to get the trash dumped and there's a trailer that burned that needs to be removed. We have a daycare in the area who have stopped bringing the babies to the playground because of the glass. We also need cameras and Wi-Fi to monitor the grounds. DCPL will be bringing a Pop-Up Library to Crummell beginning April 25<sup>th</sup>. We would need the site cleared of glass by then. Let us know how we can help to have maintenance come and help us out.

At 1601 W. St. NE where the proposed OSSE Bus Terminal is being built. Contractors through DGS have been working at 1am, up to 4am, with residents have been sending me the videos. This is disgraceful and disrespectful. The community has objected and has been opposed to the bus terminal and DGS insist on moving forward with the project. When asking DGS about doing an Environmental Impact Assessment for this site in Brentwood, the community was misinformed by DGS, that one was done. An EAI was done weeks later. Seven Petroleum tanks were found underground at the site and the community was not supported or assured that they were safe from exposure, and dust coming from the site have covered their cars and homes.

This is environmental injustice! Ward 5 has been the subject of industrial uses with no regard of the residents. We understand some areas are industrial zoned, but residents are supposed to be protected by toxins and pollution.

Chair, Lewis-George, please consider looking into these situations. We're fighting against environmental injustice in Ward 5 collectively, that has been brought on by District agencies, and when employees in these agencies care less for our communities, we will be left to fight for



ourselves. We are taking ownership and responsibility to make sure our families live in an environmentally friendly neighborhood where we will breathe clean air free from trash, toxins, and pollution and we refuse to bear the burden of being a dumping ground for the district or neglected by the district.

We want to work with DGS and DPR to bring “LIGHT” Ivy City with meaningful community engagement and planning that is resident led. Crummell has been a long time coming and we are ready to sit at the planning table with both agencies to bring back what we have longed waited for.

Thank you!

**Testimony of Bill Rice**  
**Committee on Facilities & Family Services**  
**Department of General Services/DC Archives Budget Hearing**  
*Thursday, April 6, 2023, 9 am*

Good day. I am Bill Rice, testifying for myself about the DC Archives. I am a longtime advocate for the preservation, dissemination and examination of our DC history, including as a founding member of the Friends of the DC Archives (FDCA). My advocacy goes back to the early Barry Administration when Phil Ogilvie set up the present DC Archives at 1300 Naylor Court, NW.

We are about to celebrate two anniversaries: 50 years ago, on Christmas, 1973, President Nixon signed the Home Rule Act and on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, we will celebrate our 250<sup>th</sup>, semi-quincentennial, Independence Day. Unfortunately, the Naylor Court facility and DC records management are not as ready as they should be for these events.

However, the Council and Mayor Bowser are acting to correct these failings. A new Archives building is to be built at UDC, Dr. Lopez Matthews has been appointed as our State Archivist, the Council established the Archives Advisory Group (AAG) and Mayor Bowser is asking for an additional \$30 million to account for inflation—which I strongly support.

The Department of General Services (DGS) is the key implementing agency for the new Archives. This involves coordination with UDC (including how the Archives will fit in with the UDC and jazz archives), with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, with the District Secretary and State Archivist and with the community. DGS must listen to and respond to the constructive comments from Neil Flanagan, speaking for the AAG, and Carl Bergman, for the Friends of the DC Archives. Yesterday's public discussions with Hartman-Cox, DGS' design consultants, is a good start.

Without taking anything away from previous DGS leadership, I welcome Director Delano Hunter and ask that he take a direct interest in this project and its connections to our Home Rule and Independence anniversaries.

Thank you. I am ready to answer your questions.  
Bill Rice, 202-437-7787/c, [ricebill@aol.com](mailto:ricebill@aol.com)

**Perkins, Will (Council)**

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**From:** John Seichter <john.seichter@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 12, 2023 10:28 AM  
**To:** Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**Cc:** Lewis-George, Janeese (Council); Frumin, Matthew (Council); Nadeau, Brianne K. (Council); Parker, Zachary (Council); White, Robert (Council)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony - April 6th Budget Oversight Hearing

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
FOR THE BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024  
COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES  
APRIL 6, 2023

Dear Councilmembers:

My name is John Seichter, and I live at 2450 Virginia Ave NW. I am the Secretary of West End Library Friends and Treasurer of the Columbia Plaza Tenants Association.

As a resident of Foggy Bottom/West End community, I object to the proposed transfer of funds currently in the West End Library and Fire Station Maintenance Fund (Fund) into the general fund in order to close the FY2024-2025 budget gap.

The Fund was established in 2011 under DC Code Section 1-325.181 in order to ensure that the new West End Library and Fire Station would not deteriorate from lack of capital funding and would remain an asset to the Foggy Bottom/West End community.

The proposed transfer would negate current law and compromise the ongoing maintenance condition of the buildings. Therefore, I request that you keep the Fund intact in order to assure that two of the most important public buildings in Foggy Bottom/West End remain in first-class condition.

Respectfully submitted,

John Seichter  
2450 Virginia Ave NW #E640  
Washington, DC 20037

## **Perkins, Will (Council)**

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**From:** Sarah Shapiro <sarahseventytwo@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 11, 2023 9:12 PM  
**To:** Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**Subject:** don't re-purpose the West End Library fund

I object to the proposed transfer of funds currently in the West End Library and Fire Station Maintenance Fund into the general fund. I understand the budget problem, but taking this fund to fill the hole is simply not right.

The fund was established in 2011 specifically for the upkeep of the then-new West End Library and fire station. The proposed transfer would negate that purpose, as stated in the law that established the fund. Such a transfer would be literally unlawful, also unfair and unseemly.

Sarah Shapiro  
2400 Virginia Ave NW C529  
Washington DC 20037

## Perkins, Will (Council)

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**From:** ADELE SILVER <adelsilver@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 11, 2023 7:16 AM  
**To:** Perkins, Will (Council)  
**Subject:** KEEP WESTEND/LIBRARY MAINTENANCE FUND

Dear Councilmembers and the Committee on Facilities & Family Services:

As a resident of the Foggy Bottom/West End community, I object to the proposed transfer of funds currently in the West End Library/Firehouse Maintenance Fund into the general fund to close the FY2024-2025 budget gap.

The Fund was established in 2011 under DC Code Section 1-325.181 in order to ensure that the new West End Library and Firehouse would not deteriorate from lack of capital funding and would remain an asset to the Foggy Bottom/West End community.

The proposed transfer would negate current law and compromise the ongoing maintenance condition of the buildings. **Therefore, I request that you keep the Fund intact and preserve two of the most important public buildings in Foggy Bottom/West End.**

Adele Z Silver

1111 23<sup>rd</sup> Street NW #8B

[adelsilver@aol.com](mailto:adelsilver@aol.com)

April 11, 2023

My name is Leigh Snitiker, I am a Ward 3 resident and parent of a sophomore at Jackson-Reed High School. I would ask that this submission be included with the written testimony that supplements the live testimony you heard today.

My daughter has been involved in DC public school productions since the 4th grade. One of the biggest disappointments of the pandemic was the inability to perform in person during her seventh and eighth grade years. The Jackson-Reed Theatre program was a light at the end of the tunnel.

Her decision to attend Jackson-Reed was primarily dictated by the theatre department; she determined that private schools, and School Without Walls would not offer as many opportunities to perform. And she luckily she was not disappointed. Her freshman year, she was cast in the two large-scale musicals, *Working* and *Les Miserables*, as well as a smaller production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. These productions were staged in the Jackson-Reed Theatre despite the major challenges: a substandard sound system, a lighting system that only one person was willing to take on, and a curtain that could not open or close.

The year, after years of elaborate work-arounds, finally, the staff has declared the theatre unusable. The productions have been smaller, and sadly my daughter did not make the cut for the first two performances of the year. And while that's "Show Biz" what makes me sad and angry is that she has no hope that the theatre will ever be fixed, and certainly not while she attends. She has no faith that DCPS and the DC government will support Jackson-Reed Theatre, and that it's a lost cause.

As parents, we have been proud to support DC by sending our child to DCPS the past eleven years when many have chosen to leave DC or go private, but now we are just regretful and disappointed with the physical condition of Jackson-Reed and the bureaucracy that is standing in the way of improvements.

I cannot accept that the largest high school in DC, that serves children from all over the city, that is arguably thought of as a jewel in the crown of DCPS, would have a theatre in such disrepair with no concrete plans for it to be fixed. My understanding is that the other more recently updated high schools have state of the art theatres that are not even being used for performances! This affects not only kids who are part of theater programs, but all the choir, orchestra, school group collaborations, assemblies, and community use of the auditorium.

Please prioritize the fixes to the Jackson-Reed auditorium, and give our kids some hope that civic engagement can have an impact.

Thank you,  
Leigh Snitiker

Written Testimony  
for the Budget Oversight Hearings for Fiscal Year 2024  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
April 6, 2023

Dear Councilmembers:

My name is Stephen Vardas, and I live at 2450 Virginia Ave NW. I am a member of the West End Library Friends and participate in programs offered by the West End Library.

As a resident of the Foggy Bottom/West End community, I object to the proposed transfer of funds currently in the West End Library and Fire Station Maintenance Fund (Fund) into the general fund in order to close the FY 2024-2025 budget gap.

The Fund was established in 2011 under DC Code Section 1-325.181 in order to ensure that the new West End Library and Fire Station would not deteriorate from lack of capital funding and would remain an asset of the Foggy Bottom/West End community.

The proposed transfer would negate current law and compromise the ongoing maintenance condition of the buildings. Therefore, I request that you keep the Fund intact in order to assure that two of the most important public buildings in Foggy Bottom/West End remain in first-class condition.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Vardas

Good morning, Chairman and all Members of the Council in attendance, I am Gail Williams, a DC resident for 69 years, a Senior Advocate on the Ward 4 mini-Commission on Aging and member of the Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association. I am pleased to testify before you today about the repairs needed at the Lamond Recreation Center. Today, as we discuss this important topic, I propose consideration on providing necessary maintenance and upgrades wherever possible.

As a senior who attends and enjoys the various activities at the Lamond Recreation Center daily, I have noticed some things that have needed repair for a long time. The bleacher in the gym must be pushed/pulled by DPR staff to make them retract. Since it takes several staff members to do this, a lot of space is taken up in the gym which limits chair exercise seating, it would be great if the bleachers worked as they should. One of our seniors loves to play basketball. She is 65 and has played with other seniors, however, one of the baskets is stuck and doesn't retract. There is a problem with the kitchen door. I don't go in



there, but there is something wrong with it as it looks like it's been propped up.

There is a chain and a note to go around to the front door on the door leading to the parking lot. Some Seniors park in the parking lot as it is easy access to the rec. However, it makes it hard for those who are in wheelchairs or walkers to have to walk around. I don't know why the door is chained, however, isn't that a fire hazard? The handicapped motion detector to open the front door by waving your hand isn't working. If a senior with a walker, wheelchair or cane tries to enter, they have a hard time trying to open the door and walk through. Isn't this in violation of the Disabilities Act?

The video projector, sound system and the television aren't working properly. The Seniors have movie day on Friday's, if someone doesn't bring in something to make the tv work, we are just sitting there. Ceiling tiles where the Seniors eat lunch are filthy and need to be replaced. The cabinet doors where the Seniors sit are falling off or coming apart. There needs to

be a new playground for the kids as the ground on the playground is peeling away. There are ants and rats running throughout the building. Basically, the building needs organizing and cleanup.

I am a citizen and am not privy to the process of getting these items fixed but hope someone at DPR has documented the repairs needed and has reported it to the appropriate DGS staff.

Please help the Seniors and community at Lamond repair items I have listed above as well as any others that may have been reported.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify and am happy to answer any questions you may have.





# SIERRA CLUB

## DC CHAPTER

Testimony of Scott Williamson  
Sierra Club DC Chapter  
Budget Hearing for the Department of General Services  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
April 6, 2023

### INTRODUCTION

Councilmember Lewis George, thank you for the opportunity to testify at this budget hearing on the Department of General Services (DGS). My name is Scott Williamson, and I volunteer on the Clean Energy Committee of the Sierra Club DC Chapter. The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with millions of members and supporters. The DC chapter has about 3,000 dues-paying members. We have chapters in all 50 states.

Last year, this council bravely passed the Greener Government Buildings Act,<sup>1</sup> which mandates that buildings owned or financed in significant part by the District government must adhere to net-zero energy standards. Councilmember Lewis George, thank you for sponsoring this bill when it was introduced a year ago.<sup>2</sup> But the Greener Government Buildings Act will only take effect if it is funded. If the DC Council fails to fund the law, its passage is meaningless.

The mayor's budget fails to adequately support this transition for government buildings managed by the Department of General Services (DGS). The fiscal impact statement on the Greener Government Buildings Act stated, "The bill will cost \$8.4 million in fiscal year 2023 and \$9.9 million in the four year financial plan."<sup>3</sup> The fiscal impact statement also indicated the need for four FTEs to implement the policy.<sup>4</sup> The Mayor's budget does not appear to include any additional FTEs for this purpose, and the DGS capital budget includes only \$1.5 million for retrofitting District buildings in 2024.

How far does \$1.5 million for retrofits fall short? DGS manages nearly 300 large buildings, just of half of which need improvement to even comply with the Building Energy Performance Standards in the first compliance cycle. DGS's own Energy Management Plan<sup>5</sup> estimates that

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<sup>1</sup> Law L24-0306, Effective from Mar 10, 2023 Published in [DC Register](#) Vol 70 and Page 003537

<sup>2</sup> B24-0785 - Greener Government Buildings Amendment Act of 2022, <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B24-0785>.

<sup>3</sup> Transportation and the Environment Committee report on B-24-0785, the Greener Government Buildings Act, November 30, 2022,

[https://lms.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/49460/Committee\\_Report/B24-0785-Committee\\_Report2.pdf](https://lms.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/49460/Committee_Report/B24-0785-Committee_Report2.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Committee report, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Department of General Services, "District Government Energy Management Plan," pp. 15, 30-32

even minor improvements to building operations cost in the tens of thousands, and can require up to a quarter million dollars to implement. Improvements at the level of upgrading windows, insulation and lighting have costs that easily rise over a hundred thousand per building, and can reach as high as a million dollars per project. In this context, a budget of \$1.5 million would amount to a decision to make effectively no progress on the energy performance and carbon footprint of DC buildings in the coming year.

In addition to the failure to address climate change, the missed opportunities for future budget relief are dramatic. Net-zero buildings have proven to save their operators serious money on utility bills. Just across the river in Arlington, Discovery Elementary School was built to a net-zero standard in 2015. So far, its energy bills every year have been \$118,000 lower than for a typical school.<sup>6</sup> A city spending millions per year on energy should consider energy efficiency an investment in future savings.

In addition to saving significant amounts of money for DC taxpayers in the future, high efficiency and net zero energy schools, recreation centers, and government agencies will enable DC children and adults to learn, play, and work in more comfortable and healthy indoor environments. Net zero energy buildings eliminate all combustion of fossil fuels in the building, removing toxic indoor air pollution that contributes to asthma and a range of severe health impacts.

From our reading of DGS's Energy Management plan, DGS should be funded at around \$25 million for FY24 for energy retrofits. We realize it may not be possible for the committee to add this amount of funding to the DGS budget, but whatever additional funding you can add will pay significant dividends for the District in the future.

More broadly, the Sierra Club is deeply concerned that the mayor's proposed budget fails to fund several essential programs that are vital both for the District to achieve its climate change goals - namely to become carbon-neutral citywide by 2045 - and to improve the quality of living and working in DC. We are disappointed to see that the proposed budget would defund so many crucial environmental programs, from Zero Waste initiatives like the "Ditch the Disposables" program to Clean Water initiatives relating to lead line replacement and Clean Energy initiatives like the Building Energy Performance Standards. We strongly oppose the Mayor's proposal to delay the Building Energy Performance Standards by three years. The District cannot afford to delay or defund such programs.

Thank you, Councilmember Lewis George, for the opportunity to testify today. The Sierra Club very much appreciates your environmental and climate leadership on the DC Council, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming years.

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<sup>6</sup> Presentation of November 2019 meeting of the DMV Net-Zero Energy Coalition. Slide 37. Available at [https://sites.google.com/view/dmv-nze-coalition/home/resources\\_1/november-1-2019-meeting](https://sites.google.com/view/dmv-nze-coalition/home/resources_1/november-1-2019-meeting)

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**MEMORANDUM**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** Nyasha Smith, Secretary of the Council  
**FROM:** Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**RE:** Closing Hearing Record  
**DATE:** **April 21, 2023**

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Dear Ms. Smith,

Please find attached copies of the witness list, agenda, and testimony for the Committee on Facilities and Family Services Budget Oversight Hearing for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and Child and Family Services Agency held on April 12, 2023.

The following witnesses testified at the hearing or submitted written testimony to the Committee:

**Office of the Ombudsperson for Children**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Petrina Jones Jesz, Acting Ombudsperson, Office of the Ombudsperson for Children

**Child and Family Services Agency**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Robert L. Matthews, Director, Child and Family Services Agency

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**AGENDA & WITNESS LIST**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

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**COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**ANNOUNCES A BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR THE**

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN**

**AND THE**

**CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY**

**Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 9:00 a.m.**

**Remote Hearing via Virtual Platform**  
**Streamed live at [www.janeeseward4.com/live](http://www.janeeseward4.com/live).**

**AGENDA AND WITNESS LIST**

**I.** Call to Order

**II.** Opening Remarks

**III.** Budget Oversight Hearing

**Office of the Ombudsman for Children**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Petrina Jones Jesz, Acting Ombudsman, Office of the Ombudsman for Children

**Child and Family Services Agency**

*Government Witnesses*

1. Robert L. Matthews, Director, Child and Family Services Agency

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**



**COLLABORATION. SERVICE. ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC)  
Budget Oversight Hearing  
April 12, 2023**

**Acting Ombudsperson, Petrina Jones-Jesz  
Written Statement of Testimony**

**Council of the District of Columbia  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Councilmember Janeese Lewis-George, Chairperson**



*Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis George, members of the Committee and community stakeholders,*

### Introduction

My name is Petrina Jones-Jesz and I am currently serving as the Acting Ombudsperson for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, also referred to as the Office or the OFC. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to present and discuss the FY 2023 and FY 2024 budget for this new Office as well as provide an update on our efforts to stand up the office and implement OFC's legislation. I also want to take a moment to express gratitude for the work completed by the former Ombudsperson, Ms. Shalonda Cawthon, which has established an infrastructure that will support the development of the office and our ongoing engagement of CFSA and outreach to the community.

The enabling legislation for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children passed in 2020 and was later amended and made effective as D.C. Law 23-270 on April 5, 2021. It legislatively established the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children as an independent, impartial agency responsible to the Council for helping to improve outcomes for CFSA children, by holding CFSA and other child and family serving agencies accountable for their responsibilities under the law.

My employment with the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children began on December 5, 2022, as the Chief Deputy Ombudsperson; and I have been serving as the Acting Ombudsperson since March 14, 2023. As the Acting Ombudsperson, the Office has continued to carry out the duties established by the first Ombudsperson for Children in the District, to stand up the office, and build relationships with CFSA staff and community agencies to identify trends in the district's child welfare system.

In February of this year, the Ombudsperson and I came together to identify core areas of focus that will require funding to carry out the effort to improve outcomes for children and families going forward. These areas included identifying and paying for office space; continuing with the need for upgrades to our new website, database, and online complaint form; resources for community outreach; and hiring a qualified and committed staff. I am pleased to announce that we have received the funding to continue with these efforts which are critical to setting up the new office. For FY 2023, the OFC's approved budget is \$935,000. For FY 2024 the proposed budget is \$938,000.

And so, I would like to spend the next few minutes of my time with an overview of our proposed spending plan in key areas.

### Office space occupancy

For FY 2023, the Office has included a prorated budget in its spending plan to pay the rental expense of a new office space for the OFC. This office space is located at 955 L'Enfant Plaza and the occupancy began on March 1, 2023, per the agreement. However, the agency has not had full access to the space until April 4, 2023. The annual rent for the Office's new space is prorated \$47,441.04 for the current fiscal year. The annual cost of rent for the office space is included in the spending plan for FY 2024 at \$97,254.13.

### OFC Employee staffing

In terms of staffing the office, classification requests were developed by the Ombudsperson during the FY 2023 for four of the five approved positions for the Office. The overall approved budget for staff salaries and benefits is \$653,000 for FY 2023. We are requesting \$725,816.16 for salaries and benefits in FY 2024. Two of the four positions have gone through the entire hiring process, from classification to selection. Those positions are the Chief Deputy Ombudsperson with an onboarding date of December 5, 2022, and the Deputy CFSA Ombudsperson who started on February 27, 2023. Classification requests for the remaining two positions, the Ombuds Analyst, have been completed and the positions are currently posted to recruit potential candidates. Our goal is to fill the Ombuds Analyst positions by May 2023.

### OFC website, complaint form, and database

On February 6, 2023, the OFC launched the website, database and online complaint form developed in partnership with the District's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO). We continue to work with OCTO to ensure that all agreed upon deliverables have been completed and to identify additional improvements. In March 2023, members of the OCTO team and the OFC attended a demonstration of the system used by the Virginia Office of the Child's Ombudsman. From this demonstration, we were able to identify other features and functions that would be helpful to the running of an Ombuds office such as a data reporting function, task lists, and a case tracking function. It is our goal to ensure that all data received by the office is stored securely within the existing system to maintain confidentiality.

### Community Outreach

It is our goal to continue engaging and communicating with agencies about the work of the Office. This ongoing work includes intensive outreach with the community including families, children, and youth served directly by CFSA. We are also excited about engaging child welfare advocates, and agencies that serve CFSA children and their families. In our spending plan, we have included budget line items to support our efforts to engage with the community including funds to secure community meeting space and materials, and incentives for family participation in meetings with the Office.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to discuss our budget and spending plan for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children. We believe our budget will allow us to address the current needs of the Office while creating a foundation for further growth in the future. It also allows for the flexibility needed for funding at this early stage with a new agency, as we continue to identify what the Office will need to meet its goals. We are committed to moving forward with the Office's core beliefs focused on improving outcomes for children and families in the district by assessing the child welfare system and identifying areas for growth and improvement.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Child and Family Services Agency**



**Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Oversight Hearing**

Testimony of  
Robert L. Matthews  
Director

Before the  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Janeese Lewis George, Chair  
Council of the District of Columbia

April 12, 2023  
via  
WebEx Virtual Conference



Good morning, Councilmember Lewis George, members of the Committee, and Committee staff. I am Robert L. Matthews, Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and I am honored to testify before you today on our budget plans for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024). Joining me this morning is our Chief of Staff, Tanya Trice, and Agency Fiscal Officer, Justin Kopca.

I would like to begin my testimony with gratitude for Mayor Bowser's leadership over this past year and her commitment to the children and families of the District of Columbia (District). This year's budget is focusing on getting back to basics by improving core CFSA programs and enhancing services to children and families. That strategic determination, along with the support of this Committee and Council, undergirds this year's budget and ensures that CFSA can continue carrying out its mission to protect child victims, support children at risk, assist their families, and advance its vision of "Keeping DC Families Together".

A few weeks ago, Mayor Bowser presented the FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, the District's 28th consecutive balanced budget. In the "Fair Shot" budget, the Mayor will continue making major investments to support the city's most vulnerable communities, including the children and families directly served by CFSA, as well as those who benefit from our prevention and early intervention work.

The Mayor's proposed budget for CFSA, which I will present today, demonstrates her continued commitment to ensuring the agency is resourced to provide preventative, supportive, and community-based services that help families keep their children out of foster care; guarantees that appropriate placements are available for children when they are not safe at home; and creates forever homes and positive, life-long connections for children who cannot be reunited with their birth families. This support is critical as CFSA transitions from a child welfare agency to leading the *child and family well-being system* that our community deserves.

My testimony today will provide an overview of what CFSA's FY 2024 budget supports, where the agency has made important investments, and where we have made strategic reductions.

## **FY 2024 Focus and Priorities**

CFSA's proposed FY 2024 budget continues to reflect the District's longstanding commitment to child welfare prevention and early intervention, quality services for children in foster care, and support for program performance improvements. For FY 2024, we will also continue our focus on diversifying our placement array, strengthening supports for staff recruitment and retention, sustaining our kinship navigator program website and mobile application, and *Keeping DC Families Together*. These investments are even more critical now as the most vulnerable children and families of our city recover from the coronavirus' (COVID-19's) impact on their health, education, and economic stability.

## **Proposed Budget Overview**

The overall FY 2024 budget request for CFSA is **\$219.39 million**, with a net decrease of **-\$1.4 million** under our FY 2023 approved budget, includes **\$166.1 million** in local and special purpose funds and **\$53.23 million** in federal funds. The FY 2024 proposed budget includes a reduction of \$745,373 to account for the removal of one-time funding appropriated in FY 2023, which consisted of \$450,000 to support the District's Safe Shores initiative and \$295,373 to support the Child Protective Services Educational Neglect Unit in locating children disconnected from school and reconnecting them to a formal education setting.

Additionally, our FY 2024 proposed budget continues to include the adjusted capital and staffing support for the replacement of our federally approved Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) which we have enthusiastically titled STAAND— Stronger Together Against Abuse and Neglect in DC. We are in the process of deploying the system on an incremental basis. The system's first release went live in February and future releases are being planned. By the end of FY 2024 most of the project should be completed.

## **Placement Array Investments**

We are continuing to diversify our placement array and are finding better ways to ensure that we can provide appropriate placement settings to address even the most unique needs of our children and youth. It is not just about the number of beds, but also ensuring the right supports and resources accompany the placement to ensure placement stability. CFSA has seen a significant decrease in our foster care population compared to pre-pandemic levels. In 2020, our census was 692 and as of February 2023, there were 521 youth in care. Throughout FY 2023, CFSA made sound investments in our placement array, including The Bridge Program with a projected cost of \$900,000, and establishing a Therapeutic Group Home (Sasha Bruce) with a projected cost of \$532,111. The Bridge Program is a nurturing group home environment that will provide immediate short-term placement support: 24-hour board and care, social service supports (wholistic health and education, assessments to help inform long-term placement options). The Bridge Program will be available for up to eight youth (male and female) between the ages of 12-17. A potential vendor has been vetted and is going through the licensing process, which once completed, a contract will be executed. The anticipated opening date is July 31, 2023.

On March 6, 2023, the contract was awarded to Sasha Bruce, a well-respected provider in the District, for the Therapeutic Group Home, which will house six beds. Sasha Bruce is currently going through the facility licensing process. Hiring, onboarding, and training are expected to be completed for youth to be placed by July 2023.

Last year, we significantly reduced the number of children and youth who have stayed overnight at CFSA headquarters, and we continue to do a better job reducing the need for emergency placement beyond 30 days. We have also made progress on reducing placement disruptions. While the placement crisis has abated, we will continue to assess and diversify our placement array.

## **Educational Investments**

In FY 2024, CFSA will continue to collaborate with partners in the community in locating children disconnected from school and connecting them to resources and support. We have

converted four not to exceed employees (NTEs) to full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) to support addressing educational gaps on the front end. CFSA has partnered with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the high-impact tutoring (HIT) Program, as well as other community-based support, to provide tutoring services for children in foster care.

OSSE is leading a three-year, \$39 million investment in scaling and supporting HIT across the District, with a particular focus on at-risk students and other students who experienced disrupted instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. This investment is a core part of the city's recovery strategy, given the strong body of evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of HIT as an intervention that can produce dramatic gains in student learning.

As a means to support schools, CFSA holds weekly office hours with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to cross-collaborate on educational issues as they arise. LEAs have the opportunity to ask questions about the educational neglect reporting and investigation processes. They can also vocalize concerns about attendance issues with students within their school community and get recommendations for next steps.

## **Recruitment and Retention of Staff**

In FY 2024, CFSA will be expanding its recruitment efforts and ways that we can improve the retention of our staff. CFSA engaged with the Board of Social Work (Board) to consider a proposal to allow CFSA to recruit licensed Bachelor level social workers. The Board and our agency understand the current strain on health and human services agencies due to not having enough licensed Master level social workers in the pool to relieve the current workforce. The Board will be reviewing our proposal and we are optimistic it will be accepted. It is our hope that if our proposal is approved, it will open a pool of social workers that CFSA previously would not have been able to hire. We are continuing to engage local colleges/universities to develop a strong candidate pool and utilizing external job boards to expand and strengthen our recruitment efforts, increasing visibility and talent opportunities. It is our hope that an increase in social workers will lead to a decrease of burnout among our staff and improvement in our social work workforce retention.

## **Kinship Navigator Program**

Kinship caregivers help keep families together, and with the right support, can help provide children a more stable and safer home. The Kinship Navigator Program is designed to provide those supports to children and their relative caregivers in the District.

A component of the Kinship Navigator Program is having access to information and support. On December 8, 2022, CFSA launched the Kinship Navigator website allowing participants to have access to supports and services and the ability to apply online for The Grandparents Caregivers and Close Relative Caregiver subsidy programs. We thank Mayor Bowser for her commitment to permanent funding, so residents will also be able to continue to access assistance for concrete needs such as utility assistance, back rent, food, clothing, and other tangible needs.

As of March 25, 2023, the website has had 1.2K unique visitors and 4K page views. Fifty percent of visitors are utilizing their desktop to navigate the site via their browser, 48 percent are using mobile devices and 2 percent are using their tablets. The user acquisitions are 66.3 percent direct access to the website through the URL, 16.9 percent are referrals from the CFSA website, and 16.8 percent are through search engines.

The mobile application for the Kinship Navigator was recently released in March of this year. The app allows the applicant to access information regarding supports and services and apply for the subsidy programs and emergency financial assistance.

## **Keeping DC Families Together**

In order to successfully implement our transformation from a child welfare agency to a child and family well-being system, we need enhanced coordination among DC government agencies who serve children and families: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Unified Communications (OUC), Department of Youth Rehabilitation (DYRS), Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), DC Health (DOH), District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), Department of Disability Services (DDS) and the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL).



CFSA has already seen how this can work through its close partnership with the Office of the Attorney General's (OAG) Family Services Division (FSD.) FSD attorneys have been co-located with CFSA for over 20 years providing legal advice and counsel in court-involved matters involving child abuse and neglect. In its budget submission, FSD has requested an additional manager to support work involving CFSA's in-home population. We support this request as it will build on the partnership already in place and strengthen the efforts to ensure all resources are being accessed to keep children safe and families together.

Through this collaborative approach, children and families will be linked to resources in their communities with the goal of preventing them from coming to the attention of CFSA, unless there is abuse or neglect present.

Integral to our transformation from a child welfare system to a child and family well-being system, is the creation of a city-wide Warmline and Community Response (WL/CR) model, which will voluntarily connect children, families, and individual community members to DC government systems of care and community-based services before they come to the attention of the Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline. The creation of a citywide WL/CR model fundamentally transforms how we approach child protection and community prevention—by getting ahead of the challenges that individuals and families experience instead of reacting to mitigating, or penalizing crises.

CFSA has also developed a model where families with lived expertise (Lex) can engage with our work to Keeping DC Families Together. The Lived Expertise (Lex) Advisory Council is involved in helping to design, create, inform and implement programs, services and supports beneficial for our DC residents. Our intentionality of engaging people with lived experiences through our Thriving Families, Safer Children initiative is because CFSA understands the value that these individuals and their stories bring to the table as trusted advisors, to inform us on how to better support children and families in the District.

Our vision for this initiative is that we aspire to create a caring, diverse community comprised of residents, non- and for-profit organizations, and government agencies – each with unique

roles and strengths – working together in seamless coordination to ensure that all individuals, children, and families thrive in the District. We would like District agencies to take a unified approach to well-being. With this approach, families are trusted, and their voice is central to decision-making and problem solving.

## **Conclusion**

In closing, the FY 2024 proposed budget makes certain that CFSA can continue to support performance improvements, meet our mission, and provide critical services to children and families. Sufficient funding presents us with the unique opportunity to rethink what is possible for child welfare, and with these investments, CFSA is poised to help improve the lives of those in our community. Mayor Bowser and the DC Council are critical allies in our efforts to support the District’s most vulnerable children and to give them and their families a fair shot at recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic as strong as the rest of our great city. I speak on behalf of everyone at CFSA when I say I am grateful for your partnership.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am prepared to answer your questions at this time.

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**MEMORANDUM**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** Nyasha Smith, Secretary of the Council  
**FROM:** Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**RE:** Closing Hearing Record  
**DATE:** April 21, 2023

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Dear Ms. Smith,

Please find attached copies of the witness list, agenda, and testimony for the Committee on Facilities and Family Services Budget Oversight Hearing for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and Child and Family Services Agency held on April 11, 2023.

The following witnesses testified at the hearing or submitted written testimony to the Committee:

**Office of the Ombudsperson for Children**

*Public Witnesses*

1. Sharra E. Greer, Policy Director, DC's Children's Law Center

**Child and Family Services Agency**

*Public Witnesses*

1. Nisa Hussain, DC Action
2. Ralph Belk, Deputy Executive Director, Program Administration, The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF)
3. Sheryl Brissett Chapman, Executive Director, The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF)
4. Chrysanthe Courniotes, Commissioner, ANC 4D04 (*no written testimony*)
5. Arika Adams, Executive Director, CASA for Children of DC
6. Felix Hernandez, Advocacy and Fatherhood Program Manager
7. Marcos Martinez, Participant, Father Child Attachment Home Visiting Program
8. Nandi Barton, Family Support Worker, Mary's Center
9. Dionne Bussey-Reeder, Chief Executive Officer, Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative (*no written testimony*)
10. Cherie Craft, Founder/CEO, Smart from the Start, Inc.
11. Caylyn Keller, DC KinCare Alliance
12. Melody Webb, Executive Director, Mother's Outreach Network
13. Tiffany Blakney, Legal & Advocacy Fellow, Mother's Outreach Network / DC Guaranteed Income Coalition
14. Maria Jackson, Legal & Advocacy Fellow, Mother's Outreach Network / DC

- Guaranteed Income Coalition
15. Tamara Brooks, Community Family Life Services
  16. Pastor John Davis
  17. Amy Harfeld, National Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Institute (*for the record*)
  18. Clare Williamson, Public Witness (*for the record*)
  19. Marie Cohen, Public Witness (*for the record*)
  20. Demetruis Harvin, Participant, Father Child Attachment Home Visiting Program (*for the record*)

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**AGENDA & WITNESS LIST**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

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**COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**ANNOUNCES A BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR THE**

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN**

**AND THE**

**CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY**

**Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 12:00 p.m.**

**Remote Hearing via Virtual Platform**  
**Streamed live at [www.janeeseward4.com/live](http://www.janeeseward4.com/live).**

**AGENDA AND WITNESS LIST**

- I.** Call to Order
- II.** Opening Remarks
- III.** Budget Oversight Hearing

**Office of the Ombudsman for Children**

*Public Witnesses*

1. Sharra E. Greer, Policy Director, DC's Children's Law Center

**Child and Family Services Agency**

*Public Witnesses*

1. Kimberly Perry, Executive Director, DC Action
2. Nisa Hussain, DC Action
3. Ralph Belk, Deputy Executive Director, Program Administration, The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF)

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14. Tiffany Blakney, Legal & Advocacy Fellow, Mother's Outreach Network / DC Guaranteed Income Coalition
15. Maria Jackson, Legal & Advocacy Fellow, Mother's Outreach Network / DC Guaranteed Income Coalition
16. Travis Ballie, Public Witness
17. Tamara Brooks, Community Family Life Services
18. Pastor John Davis

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**



**Submitted Written Testimony  
CASA for Children of DC  
220 I St NE, Suite 285, Washington DC  
202-887-0007 [info@casadc.org](mailto:info@casadc.org)  
[www.casadc.org](http://www.casadc.org)**

**To: The Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Re: Budget Oversight Hearing, Child and Family Services Agency  
April 11, 2023**

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### **Introduction**

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Good afternoon Councilmember Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. My name is Arika Adams, I am the Executive Director of CASA for Children of DC. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. CASA DC is grateful for all that the Child and Family Services Agency does for DC's child welfare involved youth. We applaud efforts of CFSA to narrow the front door, to provide preventative resources to avoid uprooting and separating families, while ensuring stability and support. Yet abuse and neglect is still a reality for all too many of DC's youth. And we must ensure that their ongoing needs are addressed to improve outcomes for DC's youth.

CASA DC believes that through increased funding and enhanced partnership opportunities, we can ensure greater paths for youth to thrive. Recognizing the decrease in federal funding that CFSA is now faced with, we believe that there is even greater opportunity for CASA DC to enhance the services and supports provided to CFSA's youth, especially through working together to receive federal Title IV-E funding.

Like CFSA, CASA DC is dedicated to helping DC's youth thrive. For more than 20 years, CASA DC has provided compassionate, trauma-informed, and cost-efficient care to DC's foster youth, with proven success. Founded in 2002 with an initial focus on foster youth, CASA DC has provided vital support to over 2400 DC youth with well-trained, trauma-informed volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA volunteers). We were founded with a vision that every vulnerable, court-involved youth in DC is supported by a positive adult figure, who can serve as a consistent support and a voice for that youth, so that they can thrive. This work is driven by volunteers - members of the DC community - dedicating their time and passion to supporting DC's future – and most vulnerable youth.

Our work is essential. Children in foster care have experienced trauma, predisposing them to lower academic achievement, high risk behavior, and future unemployment and homelessness. While CFSA is providing services to address these challenges – more can be done for our youth.

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(202) 887-0007 • Fax (202) 887-0010 • [www.casadc.org](http://www.casadc.org)**

**Kelli McTaggart, President • Keanne Henry, Vice President/Secretary • Julia Matthews, Treasurer  
Erin Lucien, Eric Bruce, Cortney Weinbaum, Raeann Vuona, Patricia Johnson, Paige Soya, Mike Veronis**



20 YEARS

CASA DC has proven success in helping DC's youth thrive. Our youth are doing better in school than their peers. They are building coping mechanisms and developing strategic goals. CASA youth are receiving vital one-on-one support from a positive adult figure dedicated to meeting their individual needs. Yet we are serving less than one-third of CFSA's youth. We have the capacity to serve more, and volunteers who want to serve – but greater partnership is needed from the agency to identify and refer youth for services and to collaborate for expanded funding opportunities. CASA DC is taking care of the District's children and positioning them for brighter futures. But not only are we receiving less referrals than we have the capacity to serve, but we are not getting paid by the District for the services that we provide.

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### One-on-One Mentorship and Advocacy for DC's Youth

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CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates - specially trained volunteers who provide mentorship and best interest advocacy to court-involved youth. CASA volunteers serve as a protective factor for traumatized youth - stable and positive adult figures who help to mitigate the impact of trauma through mentorship and advocacy.

Youth who have experienced trauma are paramouly impacted. They face lower academic achievement & increased risk of future unemployment, homelessness, & high-risk behavior. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), causing trauma, have been linked to risky behavior, lessened school performance, relationship difficulties, & chronic health conditions, diminishing opportunities through adulthood. (CDC, 2019) Positive adult figures are an identified protective factor against the impact of trauma (CDC). CASA volunteers are this person for their youth.

What does this look like? CASA volunteers are recruited from the community based on their passion for supporting youth. Many bring preexisting experience - from teaching to law - but all of our volunteers complete background checks and a 30-hour trauma-informed culturally responsive training. From there, they are matched with only one child or sibling group, with whom they develop a mentoring relationship - engaging youth in positive activities, like visiting a museum, and assisting the youth with goal attainment - improving grades or applying for jobs.

Based on the relationship formed, CASA volunteers represent their youth's best interests in Court. We are the only organization in DC that unites child advocacy with mentorship - in fact, it is the personalized one-on-one relationships that our volunteers form with youth that drives their advocacy, ensuring that the child's voice is heard in court.

Youth with a CASA volunteer are positioned for greater outcomes. CASA for Children of DC is committed to providing court-involved youth with individualized support to achieve present goals and improve lifelong outcomes across four domains explicitly identified to help mitigate the impact of trauma in youth.

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In 2022, CASA Volunteers dedicated more than 10,000 hours to mentoring and advocating for DC's youth. With their support:

- 205 youth were supported in Permanency, with 184 CASAs helping to support youth's placement stability by promoting positive caregiver/youth interactions.
  - With this support, 127 CASA youth remained stable in the same placement over the past year
- 201 youth were assisted with education and learning by their CASAs
  - Though research indicates that somewhere between 30 to 96% of foster youth perform below grade level (Morton, 2015), more than 4/5ths, or 188, of CASA DC youth were on grade level.
  - More than half of CASA youth (n=139) met or exceeded academic expectations – 8 times higher than CFSA-involved youth overall and 65% higher than DCPS students as a whole (OSSE DC School Report Card Assessments)
- 207 CASA youth were supported in building Life Skills to strengthen their future, with 177 CASA volunteers recommending resources and supports to enhance building life skills
  - 155 CASA youth were engaged in skill-building activities
  - 196 of youth were empowered to have established future goals
  - 108 older youth were engaged in workforce preparation
- Nearly 500 recommendations were made to the Court to promote the best interests of youth; more than two-thirds were supported or ordered by the Judge.
- With CASA volunteers by their side, even with the ways the pandemic decimated the availability of our volunteer-force and the social support of many, 219 CASA youth had a trusted adult figure in their life

CASA volunteers are having a transformative impact on youth's well-being - an area reduced in CFSA's FY24 budget.

- 216 youth were supported in well-being, including social wellness support, mental health, and physical well-being
  - 211 youth served by CASA demonstrate positive prosocial behaviors
  - 211 youth demonstrate positive communication skills
  - 210 youth can identify positive coping strategies and 208 of those youth practice positive coping strategies at least some of the time

While CFSA has indicated this will be reallocated in other areas, CASA DC can bridge gaps to this support, and ensure increased well-being services.

This support came with no financial support from or cost to the District. With DC funding, we could do so much more.

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## Funding

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While DC's Child & Family Services operates at \$18,138 per youth, per month, CASA DC's services are provided at \$471 per youth, per month, \$350 of which is covered by the DC Superior Court. Not only does CASA DC make a difference – but we do so in a cost-efficient manner. Despite this, CASA for Children of DC has not been included in DC's budget since Mayor Fenty's time in office. Nor do we have any formalized contracts with the Child and Family Services, despite the hundreds of CFSA-involved youth we provide vital service to each year.

CASA DC has never received VOCA funding from the District, despite providing case management services to and community education on youth victims of abuse. As early as 1998, the Office for Victims of Crime determined Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs were eligible to receive VOCA funding through state victim assistance grants. CASA programs are uniquely qualified to use the direct service funds to support the recruitment, screening, training & supervision of CASA volunteers, enabling local CASA programs to cost-effectively provide direct services for victims of child abuse. VOCA has since become one of the most significant funding sources for CASA organizations throughout the country. In 2019, over 500 state & local CASA organizations in 46 states received a total of over \$73M in VOCA funding. This trend highlights that CASA programs are widely recognized as effective & cost effective as direct support for child victims. CASA DC, however, has never benefited from VOCA funding.

In addition to VOCA funding, CASA DC's services clearly qualify for federal Title IV-E Funds. However, a contractual relationship with CFSA is necessary to secure this funding. Not only would this benefit CASA at no cost to the agency – but the agency could receive additional funds by pursuing this opportunity. In 2010, the Department of Health & Human Services Administration on Children, Youth, and Families to NCASA explicitly determined that the training provided to CASA volunteers is eligible for Title IV-E funding. Receiving this funding would require a formalized contract between CFSA and CASA DC to allow for reimbursement – but doing so is a win-win. CASA DC trains community-based volunteers to provide increased services and supports to CFSA youth. Not only that, but CFSA would have the opportunity to retain 25% of the Title IV-E funding awarded while providing 75% to CASA DC. That means more money for DC's youth – *if* CFSA is willing to extend a partnership opportunity.

There is so much more that can be done for our youth. And while CFSA is doing a lot, it is not enough – particularly in the areas of education and mental health. CASA DC is now using its own funding to build additional support to youth in these areas.

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## Providing Needed Services

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### Expanded Therapeutic Services

Up to 80% of children enter the foster care system with significant mental health needs. (Lohr and Jones. 2016). CASA has seen firsthand the profound impact that trauma has on our youth and the vital need for therapeutic services, especially following the compounded trauma and isolating impact of the COVID pandemic. We have also seen firsthand the difficulties our youth face in gaining appropriate therapeutic support; and we recognize the barriers to participation – from limited resources, to community taboos, to access gaps.

Last year, CASA DC decided to begin offering behavioral and mental health services to youth and families, ensuring that we are better meeting our youth, and their needs, where they are. Since its launch in late 2022, our individual therapy program has treated 45 youth and/or families, providing treatment and support for the trauma and adjustments that they are going through. Our programming is designed to reduce barriers - particularly important as more than 90% of the youth who we serve are Black. We know that historic racism and lack of access has led Black communities to be less likely to utilize mental health support. We connect with youth and families in-person and virtually, during days and evenings, in our office and in the community. We also provide all of our services at no-cost to youth and families with the support of federal, local, and foundation funding. CASA DC strives to provide treatment and support without barriers, to help our youth thrive.

CASA DC's traditional therapy services are offered to youth ages 2-21 who are already served by the organization, involved with the court system, impacted by childhood traumas (including substance abuse and gun violence), and youth identifying as LGBTQ+. The modalities we utilize most often in therapy are Dialectic Behavioral Therapy techniques, Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, and Play Therapy.

#### Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Techniques

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy, otherwise known as DBT, is a four-tier approach focused on emotional regulation, mindfulness, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness skills.
- This approach works best with those who have difficulty managing their emotions in various ways including anger, irritability, inattention, sadness, and anxiety. Often youth within the foster care system face traumatic situations that evoke many of these emotions. DBT helps them learn how to best navigate and tolerate those emotions.
- DBT uses mindfulness based skills to teach youth the best ways to reduce their suffering and alleviate symptoms.
- It can be adapted to treat a wide variety of disorders such as Behavioral/Conduct Disorders, Bipolar Disorder, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

#### Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a commonly used framework efficient with clients suffering from Depression and Anxiety.
- In addition to this framework, Trauma Focused- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy stresses the importance of a trauma-informed approach in meeting our youth's needs.

- TF-CBT includes the creation of a Trauma Narrative- the chance for our youth to tell their story using whatever creative medium they choose whether that be writing a story, creating a song, choreographing a dance, or drawing.

### Motivational Interviewing

- Motivational Interviewing is used most often with youth who are suffering from behavioral disorders, substance abuse, or overall difficulty with motivation.
- In allowing youth to create their own goals and establish their plan for change, this modality allows the youth to be in the driver's seat of their own treatment.
- We know that with so many things out of the youth's control in various court interactions, the decision making power and ability to make their own decisions is extremely helpful in well-being, self-esteem, self-development, and learning to make healthy decisions as they grow into a young adult.

### Play Therapy (younger youth, typically ages 2-10 depending on developmental stages)

- Play is a child's language, and utilizing play therapy techniques in our work with younger kids is a priority. This is key in meeting the youth where they are at.
- Using tools that we have available in the office including books, musical instruments, art, and toys help youth to process their difficulties and emotions in ways that make sense to them.

Our therapists serve CFSA-involved youth – yet there is no cost to the agency. However, youth must be referred to CASA DC to receive this support – something that CFSA should be doing at a far more increased rate to ensure greater service to youth. And with VOCA funding, more clinical staff can be hired to enable increased therapeutic support for our youth. There is so much more that can be done for DC's youth with expanded funding and services.

## **Supportive Peer Groups**

In addition to our individual therapy, we are also serving youth in the community through evidence-based peer circles. Offered at BARJ Drop-In Centers, DYRS Achievement Centers, and virtually, these Circles, based on the evidence-based One Circle model, incorporate Motivational Interviewing, Cultural Responsivity, Strengths-Based approaches, and Trauma-Informed practices. Utilizing gender-responsive interventions designed in evidence-based principles and practices, One Circle's curriculum incorporates Motivational Interviewing, Cultural Responsivity, Strengths-Based approaches, and Trauma-Informed practices. Studies have revealed the following outcomes with youth when using the One Circle Curriculum:

- Increases in positive body image
- Increases in social support
- An increase in attachment to school
- A decrease in self-harming behavior
- A decrease in rates of alcohol use

Circles help youth learn and engage in healthy and appropriate social interactions, self care, relationships, and expression. They engage youth in activities, dialogue, and self expression while helping to increase emotional, social, and cultural literacy, promoting valuable relationships between peers and facilitators in trusting and supportive environments. In just 3 months, CASA has served 75 youth through the groups held at BARJ centers.

We are also building partnerships to offer Unity Circles to LGBTQ+ youth and their allies which build on these principles with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and intersectionality. Unity Circles create a space beyond the gender binary that responds to the needs and strengths of LGBTQ+ communities, gender diverse and gender non-conforming youth, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) populations and allies. Unity Circles promote an emotionally safe and brave setting and structure in which all youth and/or adults can develop supportive and healthy connections.

When youth and adults voice their ideas, opinions, and lived experiences in a safe environment, it strengthens their confidence and self-esteem. It encourages them to express themselves more fully and critically think through their behaviors and choices. By examining cultural factors and social conditioning in a circle setting, they gain a deeper awareness of their perspectives and affirm their ability to make healthy choices that align with their values. We also provide interested youth with individual mentoring to help foster and support their overall well-being and ensure healthy physical, mental, and social development.

### **Enriching Opportunities**

Safe, engaging activities are an identified protective factor against adverse childhood experiences. (CDC, 2021) CASA for Children of DC is dedicated to providing opportunities for our youth to have positive, enriching experiences, and to build skills to live independent and fulfilling lives.

Throughout the year, CASA youth are given the opportunity to engage in a variety of fun activities, from nature scavenger hunts to sports games. We are committed to giving our youth memories to last a lifetime and positive experiences to help them heal. In 2022:

- CASA DC youth had the chance to learn about their history and heritage at the National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Youth nourished health and community at an overnight camping retreat with art, swim, archery, challenge courses, hiking, yoga, and more
- Youth explored nature on a scavenger hunt with the National Zoo's Conservation Nation.
- We celebrated Spring with a Bunny Hop for our youngest youth, while older youth had a self-care day enriching their minds and bodies with yoga and learning hair and skin care.
- Families had a chance to bond together at a Family Movie Night, a Family Game Day, and a Cooking and conversation night
- We celebrated Halloween with crafts and a movie.



20 YEARS

- 250 backpacks were donated to youth at a Back to School drive, ensuring that every CASA DC youth at each grade level had supplies.
- CASA youth attended a birthday party with Washington Commanders Star Wide Receiver, Terry McLaurin.
- Sixty-Six CASA DC families were provided with items for a Thanksgiving meal, along with books and free haircuts.
- Youth engaged in fun and festivities at CASA DC's annual Youth Holiday Party, with card making, cookie decorating, and more.

In 2023, we are proud to launch CASA Days – monthly opportunities for CASA youth of all ages to engage in skill-building workshops and positive activities. In January, our youth enjoyed hands on STEM activities and free sports equipment. In February, we are promoting self-love with a 'Treat Yourself Day' – including brunch, painting, self-care activities, and Black History Month trivia. In March, we will be offering an art series.

There is so much that CASA DC has to offer to DC's court-involved youth. With increased collaboration and funding, we can make an even greater difference.

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## Conclusion

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CASA for Children of DC has been dedicated to DC's foster youth for more than 20 years. Our volunteers empower DC's youth to greater outcomes and success. Our unique hybrid model of advocacy and mentorship makes a measurable, transformative difference in youth's lives. We are so proud of the no-cost, barrier-breaking support that we are able to offer DC's youth and families through our new Clinical Program and the continued support we provide to help DC's youth not only to survive, but to thrive.

We have the capacity to serve more youth and to make a difference in more lives. But strengthened partnership and collaboration is necessary to ensure CFSA's youth are referred for these supports. We implore the agency to consider formalized partnership or referral procedures.

Thank you Councilmember Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. We welcome any questions. Thank you all, for your time and for your support.



**Mary's  
Center**  
Quality healthcare. Stronger communities.

Testimony for The Committee on Facilities and Family Services

April 11, 2023

Submitted By Nandi Barton

Family Support Worker / Home Visitor

Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care, Inc.

to Councilmember Janeese Lewis-George

Good morning, and nice meeting you council member Janeese Lewis-George and committee members, as always, I appreciate the chance to testify. My name is Nandi, I am a Home Visitor at Mary's Center for the Fatherhood Child Attachment Home Visiting Program. I Want to provide a snapshot of my experience, concerns and within hope this will create change.

As a community leader and as SINGLE mother I took on this role because I know based on my experience the importance of having someone support you with navigating life as a parent. However, after trainings I learned how imperative this job is; within my role, I offer counsel, I mentor provide individualized education regarding child development, support in customizing family goal plans, provide public health education, case management. Implement ALL 6 protective factors BY SUPPORTING parent resilience, social connection, concrete SUPPORTS FOR PARENTS, reducing stressor by helping them find housing (which 3 dads found housing and is no longer homeless! And I'm ever so proud of them! AND THIER RESILIENCE), food resources, CLOTHING provide one on one mental health support and creative ways to strengthen families and children's lives. We put our participants first and walk with them on this journey of parenthood. We meet with our participants as many times as they need, to support them and their children. I sit down and educate families on how to nurture the development of their children. The list goes on, I have many roles in one. This program helps fathers immensely.

Based on The Fatherhood Initiative study, children with involved fathers have a solid foundation for child well-being. A healthy Father Presence lowers the risk for poor childhood outcomes, such as Poor School Performance, Teen Pregnancy, Incarceration as Juveniles, Alcohol and

Substance Abuse Criminal Activity, Suicide and more that you can see on the fatherhood initiative website. This program strengthens fathers so they can be the dad's children need.

I felt honored to be in this role, I immediately said yes because as someone with a high ace score I can provide support to the lives of the children and the family of our community, and I honestly thought the government cared about my role as well. Yet to my surprise, there is little to no investment or concern about the wellbeing of a home visitor. I am I thankful that CFSA (Child and Family Services Agency) took the especially crucial step to create a program that Is long overdue to support the fathers that has been neglected since they were in their mother's womb? Because the city has not provided adequate support to low-income families for centuries. As we know based on the CDC (Center for Disease Control) Adverse childhood experience Study, one of the largest investigations of the link between childhood maltreatment, health, and well-being later in life childhood trauma I linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence and adulthood. HIGH ACE SCORES can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential. Which make my role even more important because OUR FAMILIES ARE STILL living in under-resourced AND racially segregated neighborhoods, experiencing food insecurity, WHICH CAUSE toxic stress THAT can negatively affect children's brain development, immune systems, and stress-response systems. MY ROLE SUPPORTS PARENT IN CREATING sustainable safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families to prevent ACEs so their children can reach their full potential and thrive. I also implement protective factors states to help fathers reverse the trauma they received, due to the struggles THEIR PARENTS HAD, because of the underfunding and racism. We are still here! Yet I do not receive the same respect and regard as social worker, nurse, therapist, and other health care professionals. I had no Idea that I was going to struggle more as a home visitor and must fight every morning to put my own struggles aside because we are so underpaid to the point, I can't even care for my own family. I'm often late on my rent and bills I cannot qualify for food stamps or any type of government assist, OR RECIEVE CHILDCARE because I'm 5 dollars over the ever so low poverty line. I'm constantly struggling to stay afloat. We need more pay that matches all the work and efforts we put into the lives of our families and community. I choose to wipe my tears and continue to sacrifice because I know how much our participants need this program. programs because there are few that especially support dads. We need more programs so fathers can get the resources they need to be a present dad. OUR CHILDREN NEED THEIR FATHERS TO INCREASE THE CHANCES OF A GOOD LIFE. LOOK AT THE STATS!

To close, I hope that the testimonies, reiteration of the studies and data create space in the hearts and minds of the council members to see the urgency of immediate change to our system and the need for more funding, and community support. I hope the council members and other organizations here will work to collaborate to create more safe spaces, resources, and opportunities for fathers in our city. We need to stand together to create a better community for the future of the CHILDREN AND OUR COMMUNITY, the point of having hearing, that create space for public testimonials is for us to collaborate and create solutions for our community and bring awareness to file the gaps here, today. The more trauma-informed interventions that help to mitigate negative outcomes the better we can be.



Thank you,

Nandi Barton

Father Child Attachment Home Visiting Program Family Support Worker / Home Visitor

Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care, Inc

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social current  
Advancing the Power of the Social Sector

Testimony of  
Ralph D. Belk, LICSW, LCSW-C  
Deputy Executive Director, Program Administration  
The National Center for Children and Family (NCCF)  
2023 Budget Oversight Hearing  
Child and Family Services Agency, CFSA  
Council of the District of Columbia  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson  
April 11, 2023  
VIA Zoom  
12:00 Noon

Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. My name Ralph Belk, and I am the Deputy Executive Director, Program Administration with the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF), a nationally accredited child and family serving organization incorporated in 1915. Today, NCCF serves nearly 50,000 youth and families annually in the National Capital Region.

NCCF is pleased to continue its partnership with CFSA as its primary private provider of family based foster care services to 250 District of Columbia's children and youth placed in NCCF's care in Maryland, as well as their siblings and families. As you know, NCCF has been CFSA's primary provider since the conception of the Temporary Safe Haven one-provider model in the Fall of 2017. Over the last five years, NCCF continues to evolve our approach and enhance our services to ensure that youth are safe and thriving and are moving towards permanency with families that are prepared to care for them. NCCF is excited to have played a critical role in partnering with CFSA as the agency successfully exited court oversight in 2022.

In early 2022, NCCF reformed and expanded our strategic and integrated approach by focusing on the extended family and renamed our program the Family Focused Initiative (FFI) with our focus on family engagement and well-being. We have spent the year refining policies and procedures and fully integrating team roles.

As NCCF has shifted from child welfare to child and family well-being, we have returned back to the basics! As the District follows the national trend with the decrease in the number of children and youth in foster care, NCCF's FY23 contract has been reduced from 300 to 250. *As a result, NCCF has already right sized its budget to include a significant reduction in personnel and placement costs.* While the number of youth overall in the District in care may be decreasing, the number of youth NCCF has served has stabilized and the acuity of youth served continues to increase. Currently, NCCF serves 44% of the youth who are in care. As a result, the District must maintain is

investments in the City's child welfare system as to not undo the tremendous gains that have been made over the last several years. NCCF cannot afford the 6% cut that is in the CFSA budget for FY24.

In FY22, NCCF served an average of 297 children and youth per month. Thus far in FY23, NCCF has served an average of 280 children and youth. These include youth in foster home beds, youth in alternative placements to include protective supervision as well as siblings of youth in care. Thus far in FY23, NCCF received 149 referrals from CFSA. What is most notable is that 44% of these referrals are children and youth who have disrupted from CFSA resources homes in the District. These youth were already in multiple placements before coming to NCCF which reflects their level of instability as CFSA attempted to keep them in the District. NCCF is frequently the last resort for many youth.

- 44% of referrals were for sibling groups (ranging from 2 to 5)
- 40% of youth were referred were ages 13 to 17
- 16% of referrals for older youth (ages 13-20) engaged in acts of verbal and/or physical aggression towards adults and/or peers
- 26% of the older youth (ages 13-20) referred have significant mental health concerns, including multiple hospitalizations, untreated diagnosis, and suicidal and/or homicidal ideation
- 5% of the referrals for older youth ages 13-21 are victims of human trafficking and have excessively high AWOL and truancy rates
- 9% of older youth referred engaged in delinquent behaviors and/or unsafe activities (substance misuse, destruction of property, robbery, assault, theft etc.)
- 7% of the youth referred display inappropriate sexual behavior and cannot be placed in a home with other youth.

As indicated, as we have worked to maintain youth with their families in the community, the needs of youth who come into care continues to increase. Youth have experienced layers of trauma and abuse which manifests itself in challenging behaviors and mental health needs that must be addressed. This requires continued investment in culturally specific services and interventions targeted for youth and their families in addition to supports and incentive to foster families that provide temporary care until youth achieve permanency. I have included a sampling of some of the most challenging cases that NCCF team members serve each day. As you will see, they include youth who are not assenting to being in foster care so they are frequently in abscondence, involved in criminal activity, have severe mental health concerns, involved with substance abuse and sex trafficking. Youth are exercising their right to be where they want to be and not participate in recommended treatment.

**E.T. (Delinquent/Criminal Involvement)**

E.T. is a 15-year-old African American male. He has been in care since 2016. He has been in and out of abscondence for the entirety of his time in care. He has refused to remain in a foster home setting. After many arrests and encounters with the police, E.T. was finally detained and has been placed in a youth detention center since January 2023 due to criminal charges including the destruction of property, armed robbery, and car theft. While in the detention center, he has had 17 aggressive incidents towards staff including spitting at staff and assaults. This youth refuses medical treatment and mental health care for a serious transmittable healthcare condition that could have a devastating long-term impact on his life if left untreated.

**M.R. (Teen Mom/Lack of Stability)**

M.R. is an 18-year-old African American female. She has been in care for half of her life, following the incarceration of both her parents and the subsequent relinquishment of guardianship rights of a parent caregiver while she was in elementary school. During her time in foster care, M.R. has had over 30 placements. Frequent disruptions to foster care placements results due to physical and extreme verbal aggression, absconding, sex trafficking, community violence, and truancy. M.R. also has lengthy abscondences where it is believed she is involved in sex trafficking. M.R. has two children, both of whom were removed from her care for their safety and are currently also placed in foster homes. She has refused to engage in mental health services, drug testing, school participation, curfew, etc. Although she is on probation, she refuses to comply with all services with minimal juvenile probationary oversight.

**R.C. (Inappropriate for Foster Care/Criminal Involvement)**

R.C. is a 17-year-old African American male who was in abscondence during which time he acquired two assault charges in Maryland. He subsequently entered a guilty plea to the two charges and in exchange received a 53-year sentence with all, but 15 years suspended in prison. Upon his release, R.C. will be on probation for 5 years. On March 23, 2023, R.C. colluded with two co-defendants to rob drug dealers in Maryland. Surveillance cameras showed R.C. assaulting his victims with a weapon and shooting one youth with a firearm.

**L.E. (Mental Illness/Behavioral Concerns)**

L.E. is a 14-year-old Latino male who was removed from his caretaker in 2018 due to sexual abuse and his caregiver's inability to protect him. Since the removal, he has had over 10 placements. He is diagnosed with ADHD, PTSD, ODD, Bipolar Disorder, and DMDD. He engages in property destruction, threatens to harm others, and other forms of self-harm when he does not get his way. L.E. frequently urinates and defecates on

himself, the floors in the home, and in public. Medical reasons for his diagnosed enuresis and encopresis have been ruled out.

**C.B. (Criminal Charges/Danger to Others)**

C.B. an 18-year-old African American female placed in a professional foster parent home. She has an 8-month-old son who was removed from her due to her lack of stability, and inability to provide safety and appropriate care. She is also pregnant with her 2<sup>nd</sup> child. C.B.'s placement is unstable due to her threatening to kill other youth in the home, destruction of property, and explosive mood dysregulation. She has had multiple lengthy abscondences and has disrupted various foster placements due to property destruction, threatening foster parents, and other youth in the home. C.B. has an open criminal case right now and is on probation for assault with a deadly weapon. She is charged as an adult and not compliant with the requirements of her probation.

**A.S. (Drug Use/Criminal Charges/Mental health/Refusal to use Services)**

A.S. is a 19-year-old African American female. She is currently in abscondence and has refused to remain in placements long-term since her removal in 2019. She is enrolled in school but does not attend regularly. In 2023, she was hospitalized for suicidal ideations as she was found on a rooftop with a weapon, threatening to jump. She was hospitalized for a short period and released to the community as she refused to return to a foster placement. She also refuses to engage in mental health services. A.S. is currently using prescription drugs and marijuana regularly but refuses substance use services. She is also facing various legal charges including 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree assault, reckless endangerment, disorderly conduct, and theft.

**K.Z. (Mental Illness/Inappropriate for Foster Care)**

K.Z. is an 11-year-old African American female diagnosed with ODD, ADHD, and other intellectual disabilities. She is typically medication compliant. K.Z. has had over 10 placements including placements with professional foster parents and an extended stay at an in-patient psychiatric institute. At discharge, she was recommended for placement in a residential therapeutic group home that is currently not available through a referral to CFSA. K.Z. is extremely physically aggressive, verbally aggressive, destroys property, and steals. She threw a brick through a glass door and creates serious safety concerns for her foster parents and others in the home. During her recent participation in a psychiatric assessment center, she responded well to a therapeutic, structured environment. Foster care was identified as an inappropriate placement given her diagnosis, behaviors, and trauma history. Her behaviors have reoccurred while awaiting appropriate placement.

In addition to the profiles of youth just mentioned, the NCCF FFI team has had to manage many critical incidents this year that have led to the death of a young person or birth parent. As you can imagine, this affects these professionals as well as the foster parents who engage our program participants. Clinical debriefings have proven essential

to retain staff and foster parents. Child welfare is hard work. The city must continue its investment so that we can maintain a qualified workforce and continue to recruit and retain foster families.

For your review, I have included a summary of the client deaths that NCCF has experienced just this fiscal year:

**Mother death - Dallas M.** (35 y/o) was the birth mother to Dawn. M., 4 year old who was removed in 2021, due to concerns about the mother's mental health and substance abuse. Ms. M. was involuntarily hospitalized, and Dawn needed immediate care and supervision. Dawn's permanency goal was reunification, but the agency requested a goal change to adoption and a TaL was pending. Ms. M. was found deceased in her home in late 2022, after a welfare check was requested. The police reported drugs and alcohol in the home. The cause of death is unknown. Dawn is pending adoption.

**Mother death (death) - Brenda B.** (29 y/o) was the birth mother to three children: Lynn (7 y/o), Ryan (10 y/o), and Nira (6 y/o). The children were removed due to lack of supervision and concerns of domestic violence. Lynn and Nira were removed in 2021. They are in the care of their birth fathers and their cases are closed. Ryan was removed in 2022. The permanency goal is reunification. Ms. B. was beat to death with a bat, the assailant is unknown, and her case is one of the murders unresolved in the district.

**Mother death (cause of death unknown) - Reese R.** (32 y/o) was the birth mother to five children: Karen (14 y/o), Neal (13 y/o), Layla (11 y/o), Troy (9y/o) and Xia (2 y/o). The children were removed in late 2021 due to the birth mother's substance and physical abuse. Xia had a stable relationship with her father and is home under Protective Supervision pending reunification with her father. Her siblings are in two foster homes, two with a grandparent and two with a foster parent who have a goal of reunification with their mother. In early 2023, Ms. R. was found deceased in her home. The cause of death is currently unknown.

**Mother death (homicide) – Gayle J.** (30y/o) was the mother of three children, James (7 y/o), Tosha (6 y/o), and a Jeremy (3 y/o). One youth is in care while the other two have been adopted. In early 2023, Gayle was found stabbed to death in her home. The assailant was the father of the baby that Gayle had admitted to discarding in the trash dumpster after being born in 2021. The father was convicted in her death and is serving his sentence.

**Child death - Greg N.** (1 day old), son of Alena M. (26 y/o) and an unknown father. Alena was known to the Agency as her older son, Kyle (1 y/o) was removed from her care in early 2021, due to concerns related to untreated mental health, neglect, and domestic violence with her boyfriend. Kyle's goal is reunification, and the birth father is somewhat engaged and making some progress towards the goal. Alena M. gave birth prematurely to a son who was premature in 2022 and was found deceased later the same day. The mother made no effort to seek assistance to revive her son. Cause of death is still pending.

**Child death - Irwina B.** (10 y/o) was removed from his parents' care in 2012 due to ongoing medical neglect. Irwina had extensive disabilities due to his multiple congenital birth defects; he was diagnosed with a rare syndrome. The parents did not follow up with medical appointments or ensure that Irwina's durable medical equipment (oxygen tanks, ventilator, and compressors) were regularly serviced. His permanency goal was adoption while he lived in a long-term foster home placement with a foster parent who specialized in caring for medically fragile children. Irwina passed away in late 2022 due to complications from his medical condition.

### **Successful Outcomes**

Despite all of the challenges and increasing needs of children and youth, the NCCF FFI Team continues to achieve positive outcomes with its mission. In FY22, 103 youth achieved permanency with 45% of youth being adopted, 33% reunification and 10% guardianship. Thus far this fiscal year, 34 youth have achieved permanency as of March 31, 2023.

Due to the FFI reforms, the NCCF team demonstrated major performance improvements in our last CFSA Quality Service Review which were recognized by Director Matthew and his staff. I have included some of this year's highlights:

### **FY23 CFSA Quality Service Review (QSR) Highlights**

#### **Birth Parent Engagement**

- NCCF's FFI Program scored an 88% overall system performance
- In FY23 NCCF's engagement of birth mothers improved in each of the following categories, engagement 83%, assessment 87%, and support and services 100%
- In FY23 NCCF's engagement of birth fathers score high in each of the following categories, engagement 91%, assessment 88%, and support and services 83%

#### **Notable Themes in Practice of Engaging Birth Parents by FFI Social Workers**

- Developed positive relationships with parents
- Able to engage in discussions on services and permanency planning
- Provided support (i.e., mental health, domestic violence, transportation assistance) to parents working towards reunification

#### **Child and Caregiver Highlights**

- QSR reported FFI is making good and consistent efforts to engage, assess, and provide supports as needed for children and caregivers
- FFI scored above 90% in the following in the following categories, engagement of child, engagement of caregiver, assessment of child, assessment of caregiver, supports and services for child, supports and services for caregivers

#### **Notable Themes of Strengths in Practice with Children**

[www.nccf-cares.org](http://www.nccf-cares.org)

1438 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20018  
6301 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20817

- Maintained a trust-based working relationship with the children in the case planning process
- Ongoing assessment to address children's safety, well-being, and placement stability
- Formal assessments completed to determine appropriate support and services
- Interventions implemented are appropriate and match the identified needs

**Conclusion:**

NCCF continues to evolve, informed by evidence, to implement best practices as we serve youth in out- of-home placement and their families. We have right sized our program. We have been responsive to our CFSA partner. We have performed. NCCF has designed an approach to engaging birth families with success. Why force NCCF to do more with less? Why force regression. This is not the place to make cuts as it impacts vulnerable youth and families of the District of Columbia.

Thank you, Chairperson Lewis George and Committee members for this opportunity to provide testimony.



**Testimony before the Facilities & Family Services Committee of the DC Council  
Child and Family Services Agency Budget Oversight Hearing**

**Tiffany Blakney, Legal & Advocacy Fellow  
Mother's Outreach Network  
Tuesday, April 11, 2023 12 p.m.**

Good afternoon. My name is Tiffany Blakney. I have two children, my oldest is 17 and my youngest is 7.

The first concern I would like to talk about today is how CFSA spent their budget for Fiscal Year 22. In FY22, we found that CFSA had a lot of money allotted for helping families, which they did not spend. For example:

- They had 36 housing choice vouchers they could have given to families under the Family Unification Program. But in FY22, they only gave away 4 of those housing vouchers, so there were 36 that they did not use.
- They allocated \$145,000 for "emergency funds," but they only spent \$63,000. So there was almost \$82,000 which they had but did not spend.
- They allocated \$142,000 for "childcare clothing," but they only spent \$84,000. So there was almost \$58,000 which they had but did not spend.
- They allocated \$115,000 for "food vouchers," but they only spent \$91,000. So there was \$24,000 that they did not spend.

Last time I testified in front of this Committee for CFSA's Performance Oversight Hearing, I talked about how I did not think CFSA provided enough mental health resources for families, especially for children who aged out of foster care. I asked about what programs exist for children once they are too old to be in CFSA custody, for their mental health.

I want to know, are you considering using some of the budget money to fund those kinds of programs? Since there is clearly money left in CFSA's budget that they are not spending, they could use that money to fund the mental health resources I'm talking about.

Also, maybe some of the leftover money could be used to fund college scholarships for children once they age out of CFSA custody. If we really want to help these children, we can't just help them when they are young. We have to help them even as they age out of the system in order to be successful.

Lastly, I want to share my own experience: the first time I reached out to CFSA was when my son was in 5th grade, because I felt that he needed some help at school. I realized he needed mentorship resources, and since I was a single mother raising a young man, I was looking for

help to provide that mentorship. I went to CFSA to see if they could help provide mentorship resources. We explained the situation and waited in the lobby for 30 minutes, but when someone came to speak to us, she explained that CFSA could not help because my son was not in the system. She referred me to 3 other places, where my son would have to live at in order to get help. I ended up getting help from a church, not from CFSA. I am not alone: I know a lot of people who asked for help but were turned away by CFSA.

Someone should not have to be in the system already for CFSA to help them. CFSA should be trying to prevent families from being in the system in the first place. Since they have the extra money, they should use this money to help families, before their issues become more serious. As the Child and Family Services Agency, they should be providing resources to all children and families, with the leftover money in their budget.

I am Tamara Brooks, Program Manager and Parent Educator at Community Family Life Services. I'm speaking on behalf of women and families of the District of Columbia. We serve both Re-entry and Domestic Violence victims. I appreciate your consideration and the opportunity to speak with you today!

CFLS has provided mostly women, their families and individuals with the tools and resources to help them move beyond poverty and homelessness in the District for more than 50 years. With our commitment to Women Re-entry we strive to provide safe housing with wrap around supportive services to aid and assist our clients with the skills to move towards permanent self sufficiency.

Funded through CFSA since 2013, we have provided group and individual Nurturing Parent sessions with Home Visitation to hundreds of families in the District of Columbia under the Community Based Child Abuse Presentation (CBCAP) grant. Also, we have able to reach women in DC Correctional Center, Fairview Halfway House, CSOSA and many community partnerships such as Sasha Bruce, My's Sister's Place and House of Ruth.

Home visitation allows caregivers to impact families significantly. Studies have shown that Home Visitation can benefit and help:

- Increase Parents knowledge and involvement in milestones and development
- Helps detect possible Health concerns as well as Developmental delays
- Helps prevent the recurrence of child abuse and neglect
- Help identify learning disabilities early
- Referrals families to programs an services through relationship with Community partnerships

Home Visitation provides a unique service that is valuable with a comprehensive approach to combat barriers and connect families to resources. Pay increases can ensure that Home Visitation programs remain stable. This can only come with an increase to Home Visitation compensation. I heard during a testimony that Home Visitation hasn't received an increase since 2019. In research, the average Home Visitor salary was 27,000 to 41,310, this averages a gross bi-weekly pay at \$1,300 (Mouth drop). In the scope of that reality pleading for a \$300,000 increase for Home Visitation budget is a miniature ask in the scope of things. Home Visitation is a Preventive Care! Prevention in aiding the decrease of developmental delays, mistreat of children, to reduce the risk of children entering into CFSA database and as well has child abuse prevention.

Thank you Council member Janeese Lewis George and associates for allowing me to testify today, it was a Honor and Privilege!

Tamara Brooks  
Program Manager/ Parent Educator  
@ Community Family Life Services



Testimony of  
 Sheryl Brissett Chapman, Ed.D., LHD, Ed.D., ACSW  
 Executive Director  
 The National Center for Children and Family (NCCF)

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2024 Budget Oversight Hearing; Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)  
 Council of the District of Columbia  
 Committee on Facility and Family Services  
 Janeese Lewis George, Chair

April 11, 2023  
 VIA Zoom  
 9:00 AM

Chairwoman Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facility and Family Services, my name is Dr. Sheryl Brissett Chapman, and I am the Executive Director of The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF). I am pleased to be able to express NCCF’s concerns regarding the FY ’24 CFSA Budget which is before for Council oversight.

Following Director Matthew’s presentation to the CFSA Stakeholders on Thursday, April 6, we wanted to bring the ensuing budgetary issues to the attention of this committee. CFSA plans to cut the NCCF contract by 6% (\$1.4M) which is 46% of the Department’s overall scheduled cut (\$3.1M), and 33% of the cuts for placements which was \$4.37M. Director Matthew described among his strategies the expansion of therapeutic group placements and an additional short term placement option (BRIDGE). What is distressful is that these NCCF planned cuts also will destabilize an emerging practice model that began in 2017 when the City consolidated the private providers to achieve quality services for the District’s primarily poor, Black children and their families East of the river. This is frankly, irresponsible, and undermines the concept of a “essential, business model” that was described as being needed.

NCCF has been working strenuously with CFSA since 2017, and often under distress, to ensure parity of quality service delivery. We right sized last year, and as you heard, our overall numbers did not decrease while the acuity of the overall needs have sky rocketed. Currently NCCF serves 44% of total youth who are in care. 44% of CFSA referrals to NCCF are youth who have disrupted from a CFSA resource home. There is no basis for assuming that the proposed increase in group care beds or intensive foster homes singularly will resolve the dilemma.

As the NCCF Deputy Executive indicated, we have fully redesigned the program model, FFI, and right sized in FY '23 to 250; however, NCCF now averages 280 children a month in foster care, alternative placements, protective supervision, and siblings of children. We see more and more children demonstrating severe mental health issues, using substances, involved with criminal activity, refusing assent to placement and treatment, and being sex trafficked. The good news is that 97 children and youth or 42% currently are placed with relatives in Maryland, and this is growing. Yet this also requires considerable and increasing cross jurisdictional efforts by our teams, including compliance with MD COMAR regulations, and community engagement and support of birth parents.

NCCF has reformed and expanded our strategic and integrated approach, *demonstrating cultural competency* by focusing on the extended family via the **Family Focused Initiative (FFI)**. FFI offers success to families facing the challenges of child abuse and/or child neglect by providing parenting education and supports, reliance on family strengths and community resources to assist parents to provide a safe, nurturing home environment where children can grow and thrive, and when necessary, a continuum of culturally competent family-based care outside of the home. FFI engages extended birth family systems through a holistic approach which addresses social justice barriers, compounded impact of trauma, and which provides opportunities to gain parental confidence, economic stabilization, mental and physical wellness, and an ability to lead their family, independently.

FFI's Redesign has significantly improved and created the basis for documenting revised protocols and policies which are evaluated based on evidence. (SEE Belk's Testimony) FFI dramatically improved engagement of birth parents, especially to include fathers effectively, and implemented targeted interventions for both the youth and their families.

### **Retaining Social Workers**

Although Social Worker recruitment and retention is a national crisis, we have achieved full social worker capacity. The CPI is 8.7%, yet we believe a 3% salary increase would help our professionals cope with the escalating inflationary expenses and choose to remain involved in this very difficult vocational calling.

**\$324,263.77**

**Expanding Essential Positions**

As noted, FFI needs three additional positions to address the workload and meet the ever increasing and acute needs of the youth referred to NCCF by CFSA.

- Mental Health Therapist
- Foster Parent Coach
- After Hours On-Call Specialist

**\$232,500**

One additional Leased Vehicle is necessary to comply with the McKinney-Vento Act ensuring that youth in care maintain their appropriate, neighborhood based educational placement while working toward reunification with their family.

**\$ 15,459**

**Placement Stability Incentive**

As NCCF’s foster parents have received no adjustments to their stipend rate since the commencement of the TSH Redesign since 2017, we advocate for an award if a placement stabilizes for one year (\$1,500). This proven practice at NCCF will enhance foster parent retention, which is essential.

**\$240,500**

**Our Ask**

We prefer to do what we know is right for those children, youth and families we serve in the District. We finally recognize what works, and heartedly protest the reduction in the contract to \$19,742,931, Instead, we seek a 7% increase, in the FY ‘24 contract to \$22,633,300 for a positive difference of **\$1,482,180**. In light of the fact that the District is moving into its first full year of being out from under court oversight, and that NCCF has been of assistance as a loyal, and productive partner during these years, we are particularly focused on our mutual responsibility to ensure that children who need temporary out of home care, either within their family or without, receive the very best services possible. Unlike CFSA, NCCF has no capacity whatsoever to cut its budget and the children, youth, families, and communities we serve in the District deserve a stable, and ethical response. We should not save the City’s budget on their backs.

I welcome your questions and thank you again for this opportunity to speak before the committee.

TO: Janeese Lewis-George, Nikita Easley  
FROM: Marie Cohen  
DATE: April 19, 2023  
RE: Home Visiting in the CFSA Budget

There are many reasons for concern about the CFSA budget for home visiting, and contrary to what was said at the hearing, I think there is room for savings. That is because most of these programs are either not evidence-based or not shown to reduce child maltreatment, and the costs per program completer are either not provided or incredibly high. Home visiting is simply not a proven intervention for primary prevention of child maltreatment or for preventing its recurrence. The table below the narrative tells the whole story best and this narrative simply supports the table. I suggest printing out the table and looking at it as you read the narrative. All the data in the table comes from CFSA's oversight responses, as indicated in the source note.

The table shows the four home visiting programs funded by CFSA. The first three are part of the CBCAP program, which is dedicated to "primary prevention" of abuse or neglect, that is prevention of abuse and neglect before it starts. So they serve people who are not yet involved with CFSA. The last one, Healthy Families America/Parents as Teachers is provided by DC Health to CFSA via an MOU and is part of CFSA's Family First services for families that have already received a substantiation and have in-home cases. The point is to prevent the child being placed in foster care. CFSA matches the federal spending of \$160,471.

#### Concerns

1. First two table columns: "Evidence-based" means nothing unless you are talking about a specific model, a specific outcome, and a specific impact. We don't have that information for any of these programs. Home visiting is not a model but a delivery method. For the two of the first three programs, there is no model specified, so it is impossible to call them evidence-based. Regarding outcomes, any program funded by CFSA should have an impact on child abuse and neglect. Yet, **for the three program models listed—HIPPY, Healthy Families America, and Parents as Teachers—none have a demonstrated effect on child abuse and neglect according to the leading child welfare clearinghouse**, the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare.<sup>1</sup> **Home visiting is simply not a proven intervention for primary prevention of child maltreatment (except Nurse Family Partnership) or for preventing its recurrence.** And since it can't be mandated, it is not a good intervention for those who have already been substantiated for abuse or neglect.

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<sup>1</sup> There is only one program that has been found by the [leading child welfare clearinghouse](#) to be "well-supported by research evidence" for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and that is the Nurse Family Partnership Program. There are only two programs that are rated as "supported," which are Child FIRST and Project Safecare. None of the programs that CFSA funds use any of these models. Moreover, in all the testimony supporting home visiting, there was not a word about preventing child abuse or neglect.

2. **For the three primary prevention programs, CFSA is not able (or interested) to provide the number of people who were served last year** with the funds they had, which are the same levels proposed this year, . In answer to your oversight question of “how CBCAP dollars were spent,” CFSA’s table on pp. 94-95 provides only the “projected slot allocation” for FY22. That makes no sense, since FY22 ended on September 30. There is no excuse for not being able to tell you how many people were served. I understand that the home visitor at the hearing testified that they served fewer people because of staff vacancies, but we still need to know how many were served with the staff they had. How many of these slots were filled and how many were empty?
3. For the two programs provided by DC Health, HFA and PAT, CFSA is able to answer the question of how many were served, but that is on page 23, while the funding is on page 94. If you put those numbers together, you find that **last year CFSA spent \$160K in state funds and the same amount in federal funds to serve 33 families, of which 16 completed the program. That is a grand total of about \$100K per program participant and \$200K per program completer.** That is not surprising given what Mr. Matthews said. CFSA families, especially those who really need it, don’t want to have home visitors. And as CM Lewis-George suggested, it is those who least need the help who want it. Moreover, I have heard that home visiting programs in the District are vastly underutilized in general. So what is DOH doing with this money? Perhaps they are serving non-CFSA families? It is definitely worth talking to the Health Committee about.

What does this mean? At a minimum, I would suggest that you not fund any of the first three programs until you find out how many people were served in FY 2022 (including an explanation of the impact of staff vacancies.) You might want to ask whether they have a waiting list. If there is no waiting list, then it’s unlikely that they would have served more people with a full complement of staff. I would suggest that you drastically cut funding funding from CFSA from the DOH home visiting account for HFA/PAT. It is possible that DOH is using this money to fund home visiting for non-CFSA clients. But that money should not come from CFSA.

Please see the table on the next page.



Program Model/ Provider	Evidence base (from cebc4cw.org)	Target Population	Local Funds	Federal Funds: Source/Amount	Number Served FY 22	Number Completed FY 22	Cost per program completion	Impacts
HIPPY/CS C	Supported for child wellbeing but not for child maltreatment prevention	Young Latino or immigrant mothers	0	CBCAP: \$50,000	???	???	???	???
Unknown/ CFLS	???	Homeless, DV and incarcerated moms	\$160,000	0	???	???	???	???
Unknown/ Mary's Center	???	Fathers with children 0-5	\$150,000	0	???	???	???	???
Healthy Families America/P AT/ DC Health	No effect on child maltreatment prevention; "well supported" and "promising" for child wellbeing	Parents of children 0-5 with CFSA cases	\$160,471	Title IV-E: \$160,471	33	16	\$200,000	???

Source: CFSA Oversight Responses, Tables on pp. 19, 23, 94, and 95.

**Cherie A. Craft, M.Ed**

**Founder/CEO, Smart from the Start, Inc.**

**Woodland Terrace & Carter Langston Family Success Centers**

Testimony: Committee on Human Services Oversight Hearing

Regarding Families First D.C., Child and Family Services Administration

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

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Good Afternoon Chairperson and Members of the Committee, thank you for affording me an opportunity to address this hearing as a representative of the CFSA Families First DC Success Center Network of organizations serving communities in Wards 5, 7 & 8.

My name is Cherie Craft and I am the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Smart from the Start, Inc. I am also proud to lead the Woodland Terrace & Carter/Langston Family Success Centers.

Smart from the Start is a comprehensive family support and community engagement organization that has as its mission to promote the physical, developmental, and emotional health and wellness of young children, youth and families living in underserved communities. Smart's family and community driven programs and services provide the tools, resources and supports they need in times of crisis as well as to break cycles of generational poverty, and to ensure that our families thrive. Our multi-generational, evidence-based programming empowers families by identifying and building upon protective factors, while employing a strengths-based approach to mitigating the effects of trauma and addressing the social determinants of health that are essential to promoting positive, sustainable change for families and communities. All services are culturally reflective and ultimately serve to ensure the overall wellbeing and upward mobility of engaged children and families.

I speak on behalf of the entire network of Family Success Centers this afternoon in first expressing our deepest gratitude to you all for your support. Our family Success Centers, funded by CFSA in wards 5, 7 & 8 offer unprecedented access to well resourced, neighborhood based, holistic programs and services uniquely effective in meeting the immediate needs of thousands of children and families, while providing opportunities for educational growth, economic advancement, civic empowerment and optimal health and wellness. The deliberate effort to nurture relationships among grantee organizations has been successful in weaving a tighter safety net for families across Wards 5, 7 & 8, while encouraging collaboration, shared resources, and joint problem solving. We have collectively served literally thousands of children and families in coordinated programs and services that are preventative in nature, while providing supports to intervene and assist families in difficult times or when crises arise.

Programs include trauma informed early childhood and parenting programs, on-site physical and mental health and wellness programming, health and nutrition classes, adult and parenting education, educational enrichment and support for our children and youth, civics and leadership training and opportunities, professional certification courses, employment services, life skills, financial literacy and self-sufficiency programming and more.

While proven to reduce the numbers of children in care and increase the well-being of children and their families, the concept of child welfare investing in upstream, preventative services is still new and not

widely embraced. Child welfare agencies are still largely seen as foster care, “child protection” agencies. The innovative and significant multi-million dollar investment by Mayor Bowser and this council stands as a national, evidence-based model for the prevention of family separation, child maltreatment and the promotion of physical, mental, developmental and financial health within our families and communities. The return on investment as the result of the dramatic reduction of children in foster care or juvenile justice systems, remedial education services, health disparities, self-medication and other preventable and costly challenges prove this to be a wise use of public funds. For example, the recidivism rate among young fathers in our trauma-informed professional development and enrichment program has dropped below 8% according to independent evaluation by Tufts University.

I want to emphasize that this highly successful initiative is unique due to the freedom it allows grantees to innovate and customize programming in close partnership with the families and residents we serve, while collaborating with our large network of agency partners. While Smart was founded as a family and community driven organization, often funding of this magnitude comes with a rigid set of guidelines that explicitly determine who recipients of service must be, what services must be provided, when, where, how and by whom.

I personally have been invited to share the Families First DC story on webinars, podcasts and at conferences nationwide as other cities and municipalities look to Washington, DC and CFSA for guidance and best practice to launch or improve their own preventative programs and services.

Our Success Centers, now in year three of active programming have continued to increase our staffing capacity by hiring not on DC residents but many of those we previously supported in our programs. Several months ago, in response to the uptick in violence, depression and self-medication as a result of ongoing trauma amongst our youth, our Woodland Terrace Family Success Center in partnership with DCHA, open the first Youth Empowerment and Success Center in Woodland Terrace. Six members of our staff are graduates of our young parents program including four young fathers. Children 8-17 years old now have a safe place of their own in their community where they are provided hot, nutritious dinner six nights a week, have the support of trained therapeutic mentors, can engage in homework help, counseling, and physical fitness, toast masters, STEAM educational programs and more. They have the added benefit of being supported by young parents with lived experience from their very own neighborhood. This is just one example of how CFSA’s Family Success Centers innovate and create interventions and supports specifically based on the needs of the children and families we support, fight for and uplift in our communities.

The ongoing extensive, training, technical assistance, Octavia Shaw and her team at Families First DC continue to provide for the network of Success Centers ensures efficacy and high quality programming. The multiple opportunities provided for the Success Center network to collaborate, partner, share resources and best practices with one another have led to seamless service delivery across communities and the coordination of the Families First data collection system tracks our progress, evaluates our outcomes and ensures continuous quality improvement.

In closing, on behalf of children, youth and families in Wards 5, 7 & 8 along with my Success Center partners I want to thank this Council, Mayor Bowser, Director Robert Matthews, Octavia Shaw and the wonderful, committed team at CFSA and Families First DC. The deep and long lasting impact on the lives of those engaged, supported, equipped and empowered by this project cannot be overstated and the

ongoing investment in the powerful, resilient and gifted population of families who benefit will lead to safer children, stronger families and a more vibrant Washington, DC.

John Davis, Co-Chair of the Thriving Families Safer Children, Warmline/Community Response Subcommittee and member of CFSA's Lived Experience Advisory Council  
Before the Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
Regarding the Budget Oversight Hearing  
April 11, 2023

Good Afternoon Chairperson Lewis George, members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services and Committee Staff.

I am Pastor John Davis of Keep It Moving Empowerment Ministries, and am very pleased to testify before you today.

It is such an honor for me, having a seat at the table as a member of the Lived Experience (LEx) Advisory Council, Co-lead of the Warmline/Community Response Subcommittee with Child and Family Agency/ Keeping DC Families Together. The time I spend working with the Director, staff members, Advisory Council members, community leaders and people from all 8 wards throughout the District, leads me to be 100 percent certain that the Warmline is not only a necessity, but it will brighten the outcomes for many of our struggling families and children. The many hours I've spent working on this effort are counted with joy on my end, because I know the harm that's being done when we lessen the alternatives for families that already come to their plight with very limited opportunities.

The Warmline will focus on prevention and be dedicated to finding alternatives to breaking up the family structure, searching for better solutions to keep families together, and working with families to overcome their struggles rather than punishing them for struggling. The hotline works fine, but often times the end result of the help that should be provided to those in need is separation of families and in most cases that is not the best solution. The Warmline would be another alternative to the CPS hotline.

In order to fully implement KEEPING DC FAMILIES TOGETHER, the District needs to have the infrastructure and resources to support a Warmline and Community Support Model. That involves financial support and partnerships from all DC Government Sister Agencies, Community Based Organizations and community members who are members of our KDCFT Citywide Steering Committee.

Thank You.



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Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council  
Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
April 11, 2023

Public Hearing:  
FY2024 Budget Oversight  
Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and Child and Family Services Agency

Sharra E. Greer  
Policy Director  
Children's Law Center

## **Introduction**

Good morning, Chairperson Lewis George, and members of the Committee. My name is Sharra E. Greer. I am the Policy Director at Children's Law Center and a resident of the District. Children's Law Center believes every child should grow up with a strong foundation of family, health and education and live in a world free from poverty, trauma, racism and other forms of oppression. Our more than 100 staff – together with DC children and families, community partners and pro bono attorneys – use the law to solve children's urgent problems today and improve the systems that will affect their lives tomorrow. Since our founding in 1996, we have reached more than 50,000 children and families directly and multiplied our impact by advocating for city-wide solutions that benefit hundreds of thousands more.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Mayor's proposed FY24 budget for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) and Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). At any given time, Children's Law Center represents approximately half of the children involved with CFSA – several hundred children in foster care and protective supervision each year.<sup>1</sup> We are heavily invested in CFSA's success because, in our view, CFSA succeeding means our clients will have the best opportunities to overcome the traumas they have experienced and achieve positive outcomes in health, education, and family stability. Ensuring CFSA's budget is sufficient

for effectively meeting the needs of the children and families the agency serves is a high priority for us.

Over the past 10 years, the number of children in care has been reduced from 1542 in 2012 to 537 in 2022.<sup>2</sup> This dramatic reduction is due in large part to the work of CFSA narrowing the front door and building a system that prioritizes keeping families together over removal. While we believe the agency has more work to do to ensure proper guardrails are in place to protect children's safety, we generally support CFSA's efforts to minimize the number of children entering foster care.<sup>3</sup>

Although the number of children in foster care has decreased, we must recognize that the children who do enter the system often have experienced high levels of trauma resulting in significant behavioral health needs and challenges in finding stable foster care placements.<sup>4</sup> CFSA's budget must include sufficient resources to ensure children in foster care receive the physical and behavioral health supports they need, and that the agency is able to maintain a placement array that meets the needs of the children in care (including specialized and supported placements that are often quite expensive). Unfortunately, the Mayor's proposed budget makes a significant cut to Child Placement (line 2066) which could impact the quality and availability of placements for children in foster care.<sup>5</sup>

Further, as the District moves closer to transforming our child neglect system into a "child well-being system,"<sup>6</sup> sustained investments in prevention programs and services



are critical. Although the Mayor's proposed CFSA budget includes significant new investments in prevention services, it does not include any new funding for home visiting which is a proven prevention model. Additionally, the proposed budget includes a \$413,000 cut to the Grandparent Caregiver Program, which provides financial supports to grandparents caring for children.<sup>7</sup> We are concerned that reducing and providing no further investment in these important prevention programs will undermine our larger goal of successfully keeping children with their families instead of removing them to foster care.

We urge this Committee to examine these proposed cuts to CFSA's budget carefully and to work with the agency to understand how the proposed cuts will impact services and programs and ensure cuts are not made at the expense of the children and families CFSA serves.

### **The Proposed Budget Cuts Funding to Placement Which Could Slow CFSA's Momentum in Establishing a Sufficient Placement Array for Children in Care**

Although we appreciate the Mayor's proposed investment of \$237,000 into teen services as well as the maintenance of funds for many key programs, we are concerned about the significant cut to placement in the FY24 proposed budget. Fewer children in care, while admirable, does not necessarily mean fewer resources are needed to support them. It is especially concerning to see a cut in an area where CFSA has consistently struggled.<sup>8</sup>

Once a child is removed from their caregiver they must be placed in a supportive home. Ideally, a child would be placed once and stay in that home until they leave foster care. Moving a child from place to place creates instability that leads to further trauma, anxiety, and pain.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, too many children and youth in care experience multiple placements due to an insufficient placement array.<sup>10</sup> We appreciate that CFSA has been investing in specialized treatments as well as widening and improving its placement array to meet the needs of all children in care including a new contractor for intensive foster care, increasing the number of trauma-informed professional foster parents, and partnering with sister agencies to establish a residential treatment facility.<sup>11</sup> These are important and significant investments that must be maintained to continue to address the placement crisis.

Unfortunately, the Mayor's budget cuts \$4.3 million from CFSA's placement (line 2066).<sup>12</sup> The agency stated during its budget briefing that this cut will not impact the placement array, however, we continue to have concerns. A \$4.3 million cut more than doubles the reductions CFSA has made to placements between FY21 and FY23, and the number of children in care, as of February 2023, has increased from the number of children in FY22 (537 to 541) and only represents a 73-child difference between FY21 and FY23.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, as stated above the children in care represent some of those with the highest needs. From our clients' own experiences, CFSA still continues to struggle to

find appropriate and stable placements. For example, we continue to see a lack of independent living options for older youth.

We urge this Committee to work with the agency to understand the true impact this large of a cut will have on securing stable, appropriate placements that meet the unique needs of every child in the care and custody of CFSA.

### **The Proposed FY24 Budget Makes Key Investments to Support Prevention Efforts**

#### *Prevention*

First and foremost, we would like to take a moment to acknowledge some of the places where the Mayor has proposed key investments to support CFSA's work. We believe CFSA has the right long-term vision focused on targeting and coordinating prevention services to keep families together. This includes a more flexible services array that meets and supports families where they are as well as providing alternatives to removal such as informal family planning arrangements, safety plans, and providing in-home services. We commend CFSA for working to build a nuanced system that prioritizes families and the community while working to keep children safe. Therefore, we appreciate the Mayor's addition of \$926,000 to the prevention services (line 8030 under Community Partnerships) at CFSA.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, we are glad to hear that the Warmline is receiving private funding seeding the startup costs of this important resource. The Warmline is envisioned as an alternative for reporting a family in need to the Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline.

Instead, a family or a community member may be able to contact the Warmline and be connected with appropriate services or resources instead of having a CPS investigation opened. We are supportive of these efforts and have been active participants on the Keeping DC Families Together Warmline Subgroup (formerly Thriving Families, Safer Children). While we are glad to see this initial investment, the Warmline will require long-term, stable funding to ensure its success.<sup>15</sup> We ask this Committee to work with the agency and the Mayor to ensure there is a secure avenue of funding after the Warmline is established.

*Kinship Support, Close Relative Caregiver Subsidy, and Families First DC*

Kinship Support, Close Relative Caregiver Subsidy, and Families First DC are three other critical parts to CFSA having a sufficient service array for their prevention efforts. All received increases in the proposed FY24 budget. Both Kinship Support and Close Relative Caregiver Subsidy provide financial and other supports to caregivers who take in children whose parents are unable to care for them, helping prevent entry to foster care.

Last year, we testified to the growing need of the Close Relative Caregiver Subsidy. We advocated for an increase of approximately \$119,500 to minimally meet the increased demand for the program. Therefore, we are pleased to see that the proposed budget almost doubles that and provides for an increase of \$237,000 (line 4013). Ensuring there is sufficient funding in this program will allow for more low-income residents to

access money to help them be able to raise their siblings, nieces, nephews, and cousins. In a similar vein, we support the increased investments in Kinship Supports and Families First DC which help support programs like the kinship navigator and Family Success Centers, both of which act as primary prevention services for families and caregivers when in need of tangible supports like money, food, and clothing. Continuing to invest directly into families is a critical component of CFSA's prevention work.

### **Mayor's Proposed FY2024 Budget Needs Additional Investment to Continue to Support Prevention**

CFSA's home visiting programs are designed for unique populations who are drawn to and benefit from the programs' ability to address their specific needs. These include families experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, a parent returning home from incarceration, as well as programs that focus on fathers, parents of children 0-5, and young Latino (or immigrant) mothers (ages 17-25 with children 0-5).<sup>16</sup> These programs help parents access services, learn parenting skills, and support them to raise their children in nurturing, caring, and supportive environments.<sup>17</sup>

Home visiting has a strong evidence base for promoting positive outcomes for parents and young children across different types of families and settings. Studies have demonstrated that high-quality home visiting has led to a decrease in childhood abuse and neglect.<sup>18</sup> Home visitors can provide screening for maternal depression, education about parent-child interaction, and connect parents to community-based supports that address challenges that might impact their parenting.<sup>19</sup>

In 2021, the DC Home Visiting Council (HV Council), a coalition of home visiting providers, local government representatives, early childhood advocates, and community-based programs, surveyed home visitors in the District of Columbia to understand the landscape of home visiting. This culminated in the *Voices from the Field* report which found, “too many home visitors leave the field due to low compensation and high administrative workload, disrupting the care and relationship between the home visitor and the families they support, diminishing the positive effects of home visiting on family, child, and community outcomes.”<sup>20</sup>

Many home visitors report having highly rewarding relationships with the families they work with and enjoy the work they do but do not feel there is appeal or longevity to a career in home visiting due to duplicative reporting requirements, heavy administrative workloads, and the lack of a salary that is in line with the cost of living in the District.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the desire and need for more funding to support the home visiting workforce, the program funding has remained primarily flat. The grants for home visiting have not been adjusted for inflation since 2019.<sup>22</sup> The total local funding for CFSA home visiting programs in FY21 and FY22 stayed consistent at \$470,471.<sup>23</sup> In the FY23 budget, the Council added a \$70,500 recurring enhancement to CFSA home visiting programs as part of the overall Community Partnership funding in the CFSA budget.<sup>24</sup>

We appreciate this additional investment into this critical program but know more is needed.

Therefore, we are glad to see there are no apparent cuts to home visiting in CFSA's proposed FY24 budget. However, we believe additional money is needed to support this program and grow its workforce. We are, therefore, asking for an additional \$300,000 to be added to CFSA's home visiting program to stabilize home visitors' salaries and sustain the program.

### **Mayor's Proposed FY24 Budget Makes Cuts to A Critical Prevention Service - Grandparent Caregiver Subsidy**

#### *Grandparent Caregiver Subsidy*

This year during performance oversight CFSA reported there were no families on the waiting list for the Grandparent Caregiver Program (GCP) for FY22. This is a significant improvement as compared to FY20 and FY21 when there were 53 and 68 families on the GCP wait list, respectively.<sup>25</sup> We want to ensure that every year going forward is like FY22 - no waiting list. It is our understanding that CFSA cut funding of \$413,000 to the program due to the projected demand for GCP not materializing in FY23.<sup>26</sup> We, however, do not believe it is prudent to make an immediate cut to the program because of a one-year decrease. Minimally, the funding level should remain at FY23 levels to ensure the program has enough money to meet the need and we do not see a return of families being turned away and put on the waitlist.<sup>27</sup>

## **Funding was Maintained in the Proposed FY24 Budget for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children**

The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) has a critical role to play in the shared goal of moving from a child-welfare to a child well-being system. Over the current fiscal year, the OFC has worked to build a strong foundation focused on collaboration, service, and accountability to foster improved outcomes for CFSA-involved children and families. The OFC is still in the early stages of building this new agency, including hiring staff and establishing the necessary practices and procedures to best serve CFSA-involved children and families. We, however, believe the OFC has made a strong start and are glad to see funding maintained at FY23 levels.<sup>28</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Children’s Law Center attorneys represent children who are the subject of abuse and neglect cases in DC’s Family Court. CLC attorneys fight to find safe homes and ensure that children receive the services they need to overcome the trauma that first brought them into the child welfare system. DC Children’s Law Center, About Us, available at: <https://www.childrenslawcenter.org/content/about-us>. The term “protective supervision” means a legal status created by Division order in neglect cases whereby a minor is permitted to remain in his home under supervision, subject to return to the Division during the period of protective supervision. D.C. Code § 16-2301(19).

<sup>2</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, *Annual Public Report*, p. 25, (2012), available at: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/CFSA\\_2012\\_Annual\\_Public\\_Report.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/CFSA_2012_Annual_Public_Report.pdf); FY22 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q101, available at:



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[https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Facilities & Family Services, (February 24, 2023), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer\\_Childrens-Law-Center\\_Performance-Oversight\\_FY2022-23-CFSA\\_final.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer_Childrens-Law-Center_Performance-Oversight_FY2022-23-CFSA_final.pdf); Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 17, 2022), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf); Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 25, 2021), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-25-2021-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-25-2021-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *See, e.g.*, Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Facilities & Family Services, (February 24, 2023), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer\\_Childrens-Law-Center\\_Performance-Oversight\\_FY2022-23-CFSA\\_final.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer_Childrens-Law-Center_Performance-Oversight_FY2022-23-CFSA_final.pdf); *Mental and Behavioral Health Needs of Children in Foster Care*, American Academy of Pediatrics, (July 21, 2021), *available at*: <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/foster-care/mental-and-behavioral-health-needs-of-children-in-foster-care/>; *Child Welfare and Foster Care Statistics*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, (May 16, 2022) *available at*: <https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-welfare-and-foster-care-statistics>; Peter J. Pecora et al., *Mental Health Services for Children Placed in Foster Care: An Overview of Current Challenges*, National Library of Medicine, (March 21, 2011), *available at*: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3061347/>.

<sup>5</sup> Mayor’s Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency, Table RL0-4, line 2066, *available at*: [https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl\\_cfsa\\_chapter\\_2024m1.pdf](https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl_cfsa_chapter_2024m1.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> CFSA created a plan to transform DC’s child welfare system into the “child well-being system that strengthens families in their homes and communities by ensuring they have access to supports and resources that are available to them.” *See* Robert Matthews, Director of Child and Family Service Agency, Oral Testimony, Committee of the Human Services, Roundtable, “The Implementation of the Child and Family Services Agency’s Safety Planning and Informal Family Planning Arrangement Policies,” (December 13, 2022), *available at*: [http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view\\_id=2](http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view_id=2).

<sup>7</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, *Grandparent Caregivers Program and Close Relative Caregivers Program: Annual Status Report 2022*, p. 1, (February 28, 2023), *available at*: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/CFSA%20Grandparent%20Caregivers%20Program%20%20Close%20Relative%20Caregivers%20Program%20Annual%20Status%20Report%202022%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Facilities & Family Services, (February 24, 2023), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer\\_Childrens-Law-Center\\_Performance-Oversight\\_FY2022-23-CFSA\\_final.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer_Childrens-Law-Center_Performance-Oversight_FY2022-23-CFSA_final.pdf); Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 17, 2022), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf); Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 25, 2021), *available at*: <https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp->

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[content/uploads/2021/07/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-25-2021-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing\\_FINAL.pdf](#).

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Facilities & Family Services, (February 24, 2023), *available at*:

[https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer\\_Childrens-Law-Center\\_Performance-Oversight\\_FY2022-23-CFSA\\_final.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer_Childrens-Law-Center_Performance-Oversight_FY2022-23-CFSA_final.pdf); *Mental and Behavioral Health Needs of Children in Foster Care*, American Academy of Pediatrics, (July 21, 2021), *available at*:

<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/foster-care/mental-and-behavioral-health-needs-of-children-in-foster-care/>; *Child Welfare and Foster Care Statistics*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, (May 16, 2022) *available at*:

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-welfare-and-foster-care-statistics>; Peter J. Pecora et al., *Mental Health Services for Children Placed in Foster Care: An Overview of Current Challenges*, National Library of Medicine, (March 21, 2011), *available at*: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3061347/>.

<sup>10</sup> We shared during performance oversight regarding the consistent struggles our clients face. In our review of over 400 of our most recent guardian-ad litem cases, we found that approximately one-fourth of our clients experienced some form of placement instability within the last year or so. Some particularized forms of placement instability included the inability to find a placement due to juvenile justice involvement, placements that are not supportive of their specific behavioral health or educational needs, and placements that are unstable due to conflicts with other residents of the home. Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Facilities & Family Services, (February 24, 2023), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer\\_Childrens-Law-Center\\_Performance-Oversight\\_FY2022-23-CFSA\\_final.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-E.-Greer_Childrens-Law-Center_Performance-Oversight_FY2022-23-CFSA_final.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> CFSA Budget Stakeholders Forum, April 6, 2023, slides on file with Children’s Law Center. See Child and Family Services Agency, Annual Needs Assessment, (2022), p. 25, *available at*:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Mayor’s Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency, Table RL0-4, line 4012, *available at*:

[https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl\\_cfsa\\_chapter\\_2024m1.pdf](https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl_cfsa_chapter_2024m1.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> In FY21 the actual budget for Child Placement was \$48,614,000, in FY22 the actual budget for Child Placement was \$46,704,000, and in FY23 the approved budget for Child Placement was \$45,694,000. These changes respectively represent a \$1.9 million and a \$1 million decrease. See Mayor’s Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency, Table RL0-4, line 2066, *available at*:

[https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl\\_cfsa\\_chapter\\_2024m1.pdf](https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl_cfsa_chapter_2024m1.pdf). In

FY2021 there were 614 kids in care. See FY21 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q109, *available at*: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>.

In FY22 there were 537 kids in care, and in FY23, to date (February 2023), there were 541 kids in care. See FY22 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q101, *available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> As reported by CFSA during the CFSA Stakeholder Budget Forum, they moved some of the money from the In-Home budget line (8020) to Prevention Services (line 8030). We ask this Committee to confirm this is not in fact a cut that will impact the capacity for CFSA in-home care services that allow the agency to work collaboratively with families so that children can remain safely in their homes. See Mayor’s Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and

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Family Services Agency, Table RL0-4 *available at:*

[https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl\\_cfsa\\_chapter\\_2024m1.pdf](https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/rl_cfsa_chapter_2024m1.pdf);

Child and Family Service Agency (CFSA), In-home Services, (May 27, 2022), *available at:*

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program\\_Policy\\_In-Home\\_Services\\_Update\\_%282022%29.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Policy_In-Home_Services_Update_%282022%29.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> CFSA Budget Stakeholders Forum, April 6, 2023, slides on file with Children’s Law Center.

<sup>16</sup> FY22 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q53, *available at:* [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway, Home Visiting Programs, *available at:*

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/prevention-programs/homevisit/homevisitprog/>; Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Are home visiting programs effective in reducing child maltreatment?*, (September 27, 2022), *available at:* <https://www.casey.org/home-visiting-programs/>.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy, Strengthening Families, *available at:* <https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/>. Center for the Study of Social Policy, Strengthening Families Through Home Visiting, *available at:* <https://cssp.org/resource/sf-through-home-visiting>; DC Action, DC Home Visiting Council, *available at:* <https://www.wearedcacion.org/our-initiatives/home-visiting#:~:text=Home%20visiting%20helps%20parents%20deepen,to%20meet%20their%20child's%20needs>.

<sup>20</sup> DC Action, *Standardizing Wages, Boosting Funding, and Streamlining Reporting Will Strengthen the Home Visiting Profession*, 2023, *available at:* <https://www.wearedcacion.org/standardizing-wages-boosting-funding-and-streamlining-reporting-will-strengthen-home-visiting>.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> We are also asking minimally for an additional \$1,200,000 to DC Health and an additional \$300,000 to CFSA for a total of \$1.5 million to address the immediate need to close gaps in home visiting funding in the District. *See* Leah Castelaz, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Health, (April 10, 2023), *available at:* <https://childrenslawcenter.org/audience/policy-testimony/>; Sharra E. Greer, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Facilities and Family Services, (April 11, 2023), *available at:* <https://childrenslawcenter.org/audience/policy-testimony/>.

<sup>23</sup> FY22 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q53, *available at:* [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Mayor’s Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency, Table RL0-6, *available at:*

<https://app.box.com/s/kabhvjznbplwq1tkwd2gv66187aw37ii/file/1170978161849>.

<sup>25</sup> FY20 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q73, *available at:* <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FY20-21-CFSA-Pre-Hearing->; FY21 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q100, *available at:* <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> In FY20, the GCP served 521 families, in FY21 the GCP served 562 families, and in FY22 GCP served 481 families. FY20 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q73, *available at:*

<https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FY20-21-CFSA-Pre-Hearing->; FY21 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q100, *available at:* <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>; FY22 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q92, *available at:*

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[https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf). See also Mayor's Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency, Table RL0-4, line 4012, *available at*:

<https://app.box.com/s/kabhvjznbplwq1tkwd2gv66187aw37ii/file/1170978161849>.

<sup>27</sup> In FY2020 and FY2021 CFSA had to invest had additional \$600,000 and \$800,000, respectively, to enroll new families that were on the waitlist for the GCP. See Child and Family Services Agency, *Grandparent Caregivers Program and Close Relative Caregivers Program: Annual Status Report 2021*, p. 4, (February 28, 2022), *available at*:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/CFSA\\_Grandparent%20Caregivers%20Program%20Annual%20Report%202021\\_2-28-22.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/CFSA_Grandparent%20Caregivers%20Program%20Annual%20Report%202021_2-28-22.pdf). Funding in FY23 was \$6,640,000. See Mayor's Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency, Table RL0-4, line 4012, *available at*:

<https://app.box.com/s/kabhvjznbplwq1tkwd2gv66187aw37ii/file/1170978161849>.

<sup>28</sup> Mayor's Proposed FY 2024 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, Table RO0-1, *available at*:

<https://app.box.com/s/kabhvjznbplwq1tkwd2gv66187aw37ii/file/1170978161849>.



Children's Advocacy Institute

## Testimony Urging Expedient & Full Implementation of L24-0939 Preserving Our Kids' Equity Through Trusts (POKETT) Act

**TO:** D.C. Council, Facilities and Family Services Budget Committee  
**FROM:** Amy Harfeld, National Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Institute  
**DATE:** April 11, 2023

My name is Amy Harfeld and I serve as the National Policy Director at the Children's Advocacy Institute, based at the University of San Diego School of Law, which works to strengthen the rights of vulnerable youth, children in and aging out of foster care and to increase accountability within child welfare systems. I have served as a child welfare attorney and policy advocate for over 20 years. I am here to urge the expedient and full implementation of L24-0309, The POKETT Act, related to the screening, application, and proper use of foster youth's federal benefits. This bill took effect on Mar 10, 2023.

As one former foster youth stated about this shocking practice, *"I never thought that the system that was supposed to be helping me really was stealing from me the entire time."*

In passing this bill, the District of Columbia became one of several leading jurisdictions to cease the unjust, unconstitutional, and imprudent policy of seizing foster children's federal benefits to offset the cost of their own care. This new policy should be lauded as a source of pride across our nation's capital, and has already been held up as a model for other states to follow. Since passage of the POKETT Act, some states such as [Minnesota](#) and [Oregon](#), are considering bills which go considerably further- rightfully providing for *retroactive refunds* to youth whose benefits were improperly seized by the foster care agency.

Yet, in spite of the bill's modest provisions to simply stop taking children's money to alleviate CFSA budget distress and actually use these children's benefits to their benefit, no foster children or youth in D.C. have seen any relief to date.

CFSA claims that implementation of this bill presents insurmountable challenges. Yet, the people and members of the Council have demanded that this practice change and passed legislation to do so.

If passage of this bill by the Council and a simple recognition that this is wrong is not sufficiently compelling, it should be noted that failing to expediently and fully implement the POKETT Act exposes the District to the prospect of costly litigation. My organization filed [suit against San Diego County](#) for this practice just last month, and we won a case as amici in Alaska. A further ruling on the case is pending before the [Alaska Supreme Court](#). Surely it is in D.C.'s interest to avoid the accompanying headlines, ["San Diego County embezzled funds from foster children"](#),

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## Children's Advocacy Institute

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*[“San Diego County has taken thousands of dollars from orphans' social security benefits / Lawsuit seeks changes.”](#)* Responding to litigation of this nature would most certainly cost the District more than the small amount required to implement the POKETT Act. Positive headlines like *[“Local Bill Would Help Foster Youth in Washington, D.C., Keep Their Benefits”](#)* are a much better look.

Jurisdictions across the country including [Maryland](#), [Nebraska](#), [Connecticut](#), [Illinois](#), [California](#), [Oregon](#), [Hawaii](#), [New York City](#), [Philadelphia](#), and [Los Angeles](#) have already acted to limit or stop this practice and have worked or are working through the same challenges claimed by CFSA. Surely the capable leadership and staff of CFSA are qualified and capable of doing the same.

Parents work hard to set their children up for success. When CFSA acts as the legal parent of foster children, it should work towards, not undermine, that same goal. Full and fast implementation of the POKETT Act will help move D.C. in that direction.

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## Testimony for The Committee on Facilities and Family Services

April 11, 2023

Demetruis Harvin

### Father Child Attachment Home Visiting Program Participant

My name is Demetruis Harvin, I am a single parent of 5 children, I have 2 sets of twins, and the youngest who I delivered myself so as you can see, I am a proud black father. Right now, I am frustrated with this system. Please listen to understand and not judge me by my anger. Please like my amazing few Nandi listen with empathy. My anger comes from my children being pawns in this messed up system, my children mean the world to me, and my children are being affected by the inadequate people running these government agencies.

What will it take for Father of color to have the same rights as the mother until? Without having to fight in court for legal and physical rights. It took two years for me to get physical custody of children and to be seen as their legal guardian. I am still fighting to get sole custody of my children when I am responsible for 100% of their care. I make sure my children are fed, clothed in school, everything you can think a father is supposed to be doing. Yet I am constantly having to prove that I am a single parent. The last time she seen her children was in May 2022. She has not called, texted, or had any concern regarding her children. Imagine how my babies, when are you going to hold her accountable like y'all would've did me as absent black father. I would have been arrested, children removed if I were neglecting them and/or having to pay child support, does this city really care about the children? It does not look like it to me. Yet I still must have the mother present to support my children.

This system is messed up, you have all this money, yet you want to sit back and watch amazing, hardworking fathers like me who care about their children unconditionally. struggle! Everyone needs support, I'm sure there was a time when you needed a helping hand or needed someone to listen to you. I am asking you to do the same. Now listen How does DHS have documentation and proof that I have custody of my children, whom I will repeat again lives with me and have been for the last 2 years. Allow their mother to walk into the building to present fake documents and cause my case to be kicked out of the system 3 times. They assumed I was doing fraud, yet believe a woman was claiming a 43-year-old man. Who is the father of her 5 children, Council members? How is that right? How is it okay to assume that I am lying when all my documentation is in order? If you are not checking the integrity of the workers in the agencies, how am I supposed to trust that my testimony today will be heard? I've been complaining to supervisor regarding the workers not verifying documents and allowing the mother of my children to get benefits when she does not have children. That should be disciplinary action! A father should not need the mother to get the birth certificate for his children and again as their father I'm tethered to them and have been present in all their lives since birth. I've been waiting for someone in TANF to contact me back in October 2021. I do not have a case worker either, my FSW Nandi has reached out and filed multiple complaints yet she or I have not heard anything from them. I've reported my children mom committing fraud to the IRS, police department and nobody did anything. I have evidence that she opened my check via video, told me that she was going to cash check and then the check was cashed meaning she forged my signature! The police do not want to do anything! Still I know I take the role of being a father important, I hope I can receive the support to make sure I'm not pushed out of my children's lives, intentionally or unintentionally.

I believe that the fatherhood program is very important and is needed. Not only has it made me change my ways of thinking it also helps me understand the importance of being in my children's lives. Nandi has helped me out with that and always give me good information and connect me to helpful resources and it motivates me. I thank her for that, I believe that it gives fathers hope and helps them

want to be the dad that they never had and it uplifts me knowing that I have someone who is dedicated to their job helping me and others.





# Mary's Center

Quality healthcare. Stronger communities.

Testimony for The Committee on Facilities and Family Services

April 11, 2023

Submitted By Felix Hernandez

Advocacy and Fatherhood Program Manager

Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care, Inc.

to

Councilmember Janeese Lewis-George

Good morning, Chairwoman Lewis-George and members of the Committee on Child Family Services Agency. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you all as you conduct this budget oversight hearing for the Department of Health Care Finance. I am Felix Eduardo H. and am the Advocacy and Fatherhood Program Manager at Mary's Center and am a member of the Home Visiting Council. I am here to share some considerations and feedback that focus on Home Visiting. Specifically, we are here seeking an investment increase of \$300,000 for CFSA for workforce retention.

Many of our neighbors in DC have not been able to access home visitor support and services primarily because the health care and support workforce is seeing an incredibly steep turnover rate, something that the pandemic has magnified greatly. For Home Visitors the primary factor and driver of this trend is due to the high administrative burden coupled with a salary that does not adequately compensate them for the impact and services they deliver. The interruptions to our services due to low wages have a negative impact on the demographics we hope to partner with and support. From October 2021 to May 2022, we had only 1 Home Visitor because when the first 2 two people we offered the job to rejected the salary we were able to offer based on the funding limitations of our grants. Many participants have shared that they've had to work two jobs to make ends meet. I've also had many home visitors share the same. The Grants DC offers for Home Visiting programs directly impacts the salary amounts we can offer. Many of the challenges participants confront are usually about housing, food, job security and family wellbeing and in the last couple of

years, I've heard Home Visitors share that they're also navigating the same. We need stronger investments for a stable healthy workforce.

Recently, the mayor is set to invest \$750K to refurbish 4 tennis courts into Pickleball courts and a \$20M increase to New Police Recruit Sign on bonuses from 20K-25K. I'm sharing this with you as we consider the modest invest we're requesting for HV. I invite this committee to make sure prevention services like Home Visiting have abundant resources to make thriving wages possible. The work of prevention can positively improve community safety and wellbeing. I'm observing policing intervention strategies get more resources and attention and would like us to consider how stronger abundant investments into prevention should be where we pour the bulk of our efforts towards. I am confident that this committee can find resources to increase our Home Visiting Grants and ensure a thriving workforce and even higher thriving community of parents and families we partner with. I am confident that prevention is where we can ensure our community is safe and healthy. As others have said, a healthy and safe society is made of healthy and safe individuals.

To conclude we suggest that CFSA together with DC Health join in strengthening Home Visiting Grants by increasing CFSA's Home Visiting budget by 300K so that all home visiting programs have robust funds to ensure we can increase workforce retention.



**Testimony of Nisa Hussain  
Program Manager of Early Childhood, DC Action  
Child and Family Services Agency  
Committee on Facilities and Human Services: Budget Oversight Hearing  
Fiscal Year 2024  
Council of the District of Columbia**

Good morning Chairwoman Lewis George and members of the Committee on Facilities and Human Services. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council as it conducts this budget oversight hearing for the Child and Family Services Agency. My name is Nisa Hussain and I am the Early Childhood Program Manager for DC Action, Chair of the DC Home Visiting Council, member of the Under 3 DC Coalition, member of the Fair Budget Coalition, and Ward 1 resident.

DC Action uses research, data, and a racial equity lens to break down barriers that stand in the way of all kids reaching their full potential. Our collaborative advocacy initiatives bring the power of young people and all residents to raise their voices to create change. Through our signature coalitions, Under 3 DC and the DC Home Visiting Council, we empower families and communities. We are also the home of DC KIDS COUNT, an online resource that tracks key indicators of child and youth well-being.

Today, my remarks will focus on the critical role of CFSA's early childhood home visiting programs and the need for increased funding, so that programs can operate as effectively as they can for the families who want and need these services.

For context, CFSA funds the Parent Support and Home Visitation program at Community Family Life Services, the Father-Child Attachment program at Mary's Center, and the HIPPPY program at The Family Place. Additionally, CFSA provides intra-District funds to DC Health to administer Mary's Center's Parents as Teachers program.

**We are asking this Committee to consider the importance of home visiting programs in the FY24 proposed budget and ask for an increase of \$300,000 to the current home visiting grants at CFSA.** This modest investment will allow programs to raise home visitor salaries and better meet the needs of families.

We are grateful for Chairperson Lewis George's and the rest of DC Council's support of home visiting programs over the years. We are also grateful for CFSA's participation on the Home Visiting Council. We hope that the DC Council, the Mayor's administration, and the agencies can all work together to ensure home visiting programs receive sufficient funding to continue upholding these critical programs that support families in the District.

**Home visiting is a preventative, two-generation early childhood strategy.**

Home visiting is an evidence-based service delivery strategy that supports expectant parents, new parents, and families with young children. The service pairs a family with a trained professional or home visitor to assess the family's needs, guide them towards their goals, and offer educational and health resources. These services use a two-generation model and a holistic, public health approach to support the entire family and ultimately, the rest of the family's community. Research has shown home visiting to reduce child abuse and neglect, improve maternal and child health outcomes, increase school readiness, and improve family economic self-sufficiency.

A key component of home visiting is the timing. These services focus on expectant parents and families with young children under 5 years old, both of which are critical windows of time for a child's foundation and future trajectories. During these early years, a child's brain develops rapidly and absorbs experiences that can create lasting effects on their cognitive, emotional, and physical development. Home visiting works to minimize negative experiences that can turn into adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), enhance the protective factors, and teach parents how to maintain a safe and stable environment for their children to grow up in. This is an important strategy to ensure children have the opportunity to thrive, support families in communities facing difficult scenarios, and to minimize stressors in order to reduce child abuse and neglect.

Home visiting programs in DC focus on families with low-incomes and many participants also face several risk factors. In particular, CFSA home visiting programs serve populations with specific challenges. Mary's Center's Father-Child Attachment program supports fathers and masculine caregivers with children under 5 years old. Community Family Life Services' Parenting Support and Home Visitation program works with parents experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, or previous incarceration and seeking to reunify with their children. The Family Place's

HIPPY program focuses on Spanish-speaking families with children ages 3-5 who are low-literacy or from marginalized communities. In 2022, these three programs served 173 families.

These are programs that allocate time, attention, and care for families that are navigating challenge after challenge. Much of that success comes from the trusted, long standing relationships that home visitors build with the families.

**Home visiting programs face the risk of losing a dedicated workforce of home visitors.**

Home visitors are highly educated—over 80% have a bachelor's degree or higher—and many have a background in social work, child development, or public health. The majority of the workforce is made up of women and people of color. The workforce is dedicated and works hard to balance their time building relationships with families, delivering the home visiting model curriculum during visits, responding to family participant emergencies, and completing administrative requirements of the program. Home visitors are committed to the families they work with and have built trust with over time.

However, home visitors in DC have been leaving the workforce for higher paying jobs and as a result, services to those families are disrupted.

The average salary for DC home visitors is \$44,000. This low range of pay prevents many home visitors from being able to afford to live in the communities where they work. Some home visitors are forced to take on a second job.

When home visitors are forced to quit their roles to find higher-paying jobs to support their own families, the meaningful relationships they build with participants are cut short. And when a home visitor leaves, the program is often left with an overburdened, understaffed team and cannot operate at peak capacity. This can impact the quality of visits to families and the reach to families who may benefit from these services.

Home visiting programs need more funding to increase home visitor salaries and address turnover. Home visitors deserve the recognition and compensation. Without them, the District will lose a talented and invaluable team that are committed to supporting specific populations facing complex challenges in a way that other health and social supports cannot.

**Long-term investments will stabilize the home visiting field and allow programs to sustainably support families over time**

Home visiting is one of several key strategies to support the District's efforts to produce positive health and family outcomes. While home visiting may not be the one single solution for every family, it can be one of many effective approaches within a robust system of care to support families during the perinatal, postpartum, and early childhood period of time. Families,

especially families dealing with compounded challenges and risk factors, deserve the option to choose from support that meets them where they are at. Home visiting is uniquely positioned to support families in a holistic and individualized way. And due to the trusted relationships that home visitors build with the families, they are able to successfully connect these families to other vital health services and community-based supports the District offers.

However, home visiting programs cannot continue to provide the highest quality care and reach as many families as they need to if they are underfunded, short-staffed, and underinvested in.

Home visiting programs need more funding to address the risk of losing valuable staff and lowering participant retention. Home visitors deserve higher wages to be able to continue working in the roles they love to do without needing a second job. Families deserve uninterrupted, quality home visiting services. Additionally, home visiting grants have historically remained at flat funding and need to be adjusted for inflation, which has risen exponentially in recent years. Programs have been working hard since the start of the pandemic to meet the needs and resources of families who have been hit hard over the past three years. An increase of \$300,000 would enable programs to raise home visitor salaries and catch up with inflation rates. This increase will stabilize the local home visiting programs and allow them to address these current workforce challenges.

Beyond CFSA's portfolio, we have been seeking a \$1.2 million increase to DC Health-funded early childhood home visiting programs and exploring an option to leverage Medicaid to fund evidence-based home visiting programs. With deeper investments in the FY24 budget for all home visiting programs overall, DC has the ability to stabilize the home visiting field and create a stronger, more sustainable funding structure.

Home visiting offers clear, evidence-backed benefits and based on the inspiring experiences that you will hear from witnesses later in this hearing, home visiting supports DC families in a holistic way that few services can. However, year after year, we continue to ask our dedicated home visiting teams and families to appear at public hearings to describe the value of home visiting for very modest funding increases. We are hopeful that this budget season, the District will recognize home visiting as a critical fixture within the early childhood system of care.

We ask the DC Council to invest in families and their communities for the long-term by increasing CFSA home visiting funding by \$300,000 in the FY24 budget. We are confident that this modest investment will make all the difference in stabilizing the workforce and ensuring families continue to receive the support they deserve in their parenting journey.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I welcome any questions.

Nisa Hussain, [nhussain@dckids.org](mailto:nhussain@dckids.org)

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**Testimony before the Facilities & Family Services Committee of the DC Council  
Child and Family Services Agency Budget Oversight Hearing**

**Maria Jackson, Legal & Advocacy Fellow  
Mother's Outreach Network  
Tuesday, April 11, 2023 12 p.m.**

Good afternoon. My name is Maria Jackson testifying with Mother's Outreach Network. I just moved to Ward 2. Before that I lived in Ward 7.

I was born and raised in Washington, DC. I am a mother of four. I've dealt with Child Protective Services and CFSA for three years. I am here today to speak on behalf of people who can't speak for themselves.

My first concern is with how CFSA spent its budget in Fiscal Year 22. Our research found that CFSA spent the following:

- They had \$142 thousand to spend for childcare clothing. They spent about \$84 thousand. So there was \$58 thousand dollars left in their budget that they did not spend for clothing for children. I am concerned about this, because I want to know, what did they do with the money? Are they really taking care of the kids in the group home, to make sure they can have a good wardrobe?
- They had 36 housing choice vouchers for family unification, and they gave away four. So they did not use 32 of their housing vouchers. If CFSA really wanted to help children not get taken away, they would use these housing vouchers to support families who need housing.

My second concern is about access to lawyers. I think that a family should be given a lawyer as soon as a case is open. When CFSA shows up at your house, you have no idea what's going on. You don't know your rights. If families were given lawyers, they could make sure they are making the right decisions about removing their children. I think that next year's budget should provide enough money for all families to get lawyers, to help them make the right decisions and understand what they are getting into.

Finally, I would like to know what CFSA is doing to prevent false accusations. These accusations waste the social worker's time and the time of the person who was accused. CFSA should do something about the people who make false accusations.





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**Testimony Before the Council of the District of Columbia**

**Committee on Facilities and Family Services**

**Budget Oversight Hearing  
Child and Family Services Agency  
April 11, 2023**

**Caylyn Keller**

**Staff Attorney, DC KinCare Alliance**

Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis-George and Members of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. My name is Caylyn Keller, and I am a staff attorney with DC KinCare Alliance. Our mission is to support the legal, financial, and related service needs of relative caregivers who step up to raise children in their extended families in times of crisis when the children's parents are not able to care for them due to COVID-19, mental health and substance use disorders, incarceration, death, abuse and neglect, and/or deportation. Approximately 22,000 Black and brown DC children are living in kinship care arrangements, representing about 20% of all DC children of color.<sup>1</sup> In the five years since our founding, we have helped over 600 relative caregivers raising more than 700 DC children in over 700 legal matters. DC KinCare Alliance is a member of the Fair Budget Coalition, and we support budget priorities and policies that alleviate poverty in the District of Columbia.

I am pleased to testify today regarding our proposals to amend the Grandparent Caregiver Program ("GCP") and Close Relative Caregiver Program ("CRCP") to ensure their purposes are fully achieved. Specifically, we ask the Council to consider a change to the eligibility limits as well as the subsidy amounts to address inflation and the escalating costs of raising a child in DC. With respect to the eligibility limits, we request that the Council implement a stepped approach to eligibility such that a caregiver would not be terminated from the program when they obtain a job or a better paying job that would push them just over the income limit. In this regard, we recommend that the household income cutoff be raised by 200% to 300% of FPL. We note that even at 300% of FPL, a family in DC is still poor and has a difficult time making ends meet as

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<sup>1</sup> United States. Census Bureau 2021 American Community Survey, *available* at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>.; this is consistent with national statistics, where "the likelihood that African-American children will experience kinship care is more than double that of the overall population, with 1 in 5 black children spending time in kinship care at some point during their childhood." Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Stepping Up for Kids," *available* at <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-SteppingUpForKids-2012.pdf>

the FPL does not account for different cost of living standards in different jurisdictions. It is important to note that even though informal kinship caregivers are caring for many children who would otherwise enter the foster care system, they are not entitled to the foster care subsidy, which does not have any income eligibility requirements.

We further ask the Council to amend the law to provide that, when determining financial eligibility, SSI benefits should not be included in calculating the household's income. If a household member receives SSI, it is because that person needs that income to mitigate the financial impact of their disability and to provide for their basic maintenance. The Council should not expect that income to be available to other household members for any other purpose, and should not include that income for financial eligibility purposes for the caregiver subsidy.<sup>2</sup>

Correspondingly, we believe that a child with a disability who receives SSI benefits and whose relative caregiver is otherwise eligible for the GCP or CRCP subsidy should not have the amount of their GCP or CRCP benefits reduced because of the child's SSI benefits. As a society, we provide SSI benefits to children from low income households because we recognize that a child with a serious disability that impacts their daily life has greater needs and associated costs than a similarly situated child without a serious disability. As District residents, we provide the GCP and CRCP subsidies to relative caregivers from low income households because we recognize that suddenly taking in a traumatized child is expensive. When we deduct the amount of a child's SSI benefits from their GCP or CRCP benefits, we are telling a relative caregiver that we think they should magically be able to meet the increased needs and costs of caring for a child with a disability for the same amount of money that a child without a disability receives.

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<sup>2</sup> Indeed, both the earned and unearned income of a household member receiving SSI is not attributable to the child when determining SSI eligibility for a child. 20 C.F.R. 416.1160. At a minimum, DC should not include the SSI income of household members when determining eligibility for the caregiver subsidy.

Our relative caregivers who raise children they were not expecting to raise are heroes. Our relative caregivers who raise children with disabilities are superheroes. At CFSA's performance oversight hearing in February, you heard from two relative caregivers of children with disabilities who applied for the Close Relative Caregiver Program, who were eligible, and who were approved, but whose benefits were calculated to be zero because the amount of their CRCP benefits were entirely offset by the amount of child's SSI benefits. That is no way to treat our superhero relative caregivers or the children with disabilities who they raising. It is worth noting that DC Code Section 4-251.24(c) did not always require that GCP and CRCP benefits be offset by a child's SSI benefits. There is nothing in the legislative history that reveals any justification for this harmful change. We need to rectify this inequity now.

As DC relies more and more heavily on relatives to raise children outside of the foster care system, it should work to ensure the safety and stability of these kinship families. DC's relative caregivers are primarily women of color who live in Wards 7 and 8. Most live at the economic margins of our society, even before they are called upon to raise a relative child. Many report a significant disability themselves. The children who come into their care arrive with nothing but the clothes on their back and relative caregivers have to scramble to buy food, clothing, shoes, toiletries, bedding and even a bed. The up-front and ongoing costs of having a child come into their homes unexpectedly are great and our kinship caregivers do not have savings or other resources available to cover these costs. Often, they wind up falling further into poverty, with no money to pay for rent, food, heat, water, or electricity.

We know that there are devastating impacts for children growing up in poverty.<sup>3</sup> Advancements in neuroscience have made it possible to demonstrate that poverty disrupts the

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<sup>3</sup> Toxic Stress Key Concepts," Harvard University Center on the Developing Child. <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>.

developing brain architecture, which leads to significantly lower educational achievement, earnings, and overall health, as well as a disproportionately higher rate of developmental delays and learning disabilities.<sup>4</sup> And, research has found that there is a “dose-response” pattern, such that outcomes are worse the longer children are exposed to poverty.<sup>5</sup> These studies posit that interventions aimed at increasing the income of families with children can alter the link between childhood poverty and deficits in cognition and academic achievement. You can make this a reality by taking action to ensure the purposes of the GCP and CRCP subsidies are fully met.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>4</sup> Perry Firth, “Homelessness and Academic Achievement: The Impact of Childhood Stress on School Achievement,” Firesteel: The Network of Washington YWCAs Washington. (September 8, 2014). <http://firesteelwa.org/2014/09/homelessness-and-academic-achievement-the-impact-of-childhood-stress-on-school-performance/>

<sup>5</sup> Hair NL, Hanson JL, Wolfe BL, Pollak SD. Association of Child Poverty, Brain Development, and Academic Achievement. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2015;169(9):822–829. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.1475. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2381542>.

Testimony for The Committee on Facilities and Family Services

April 11, 2023

Marcos Martinez

Father Child Attachment Home Visiting Program Participant

Good day Council and members of the committee, my name is Marcos Martinez, and consider myself a hardworking student and parent. I am also a Father-Child Attachment Home Visiting Program participant. I graduated from high school in May 2021 and am studying computer science at University of the District. FCA helped me seek child custody in late 2020. I was first connected to the DC Multi-Door Court Mediation Program arbitrated custody, and FCA helped me find a custody attorney to prove legal paternity for my kid. My Family Support Worker, Mr. Jaime Llanos, has helped me attend school during this time. He introduced me to Generation Hope, which supports my academic goals.

Home Visiting benefited me. These home visits have helped me enhance my academic performance, develop my knowledge, and identify vital solutions for my professional and personal life since they constantly follow up with me as a student and parent. It also helped me receive aid for any current issues. I am grateful that I can share my story with you. Even though before I had problems being able to visit my son, little by little I have been working with my lawyers and with the court in Washington D.C. to help me get ahead and be able to have my son for longer. I have gone through many bad times and situations of great stress but little by little I have been helping myself to be able to get ahead thanks to all the things I have done. Today I can having my son at my house overnight now that I get to pick up my son on Friday morning and drop him off on Saturday afternoon means i can spend a whole day going out with him that fills my heart with joy for all this time not being able to do this. After the first testimony that I delivered in 2020, I have made a lot of progress with my situation as a parent. I have had the pleasure of helping other parents with the same situation, also in my personal life. I have been able to confront all the things that have happened to me head on and little by little I am expanding the opportunities I have as a father after a long time in this program. I have learned a lot to value the time and effort of the people who do it for me; so, thank you all to the people in this group in this organization have helped me to get ahead and be the person and father that I am today.

This program helped me locate attorneys to help me with my son's legal procedure when I needed it; connected with other groups to explore new educational options and gave me a chance to succeed. I have benefited most from this program's individualized assistance, which has helped me find calm in the middle of the storm and fulfill my educational objectives. It also helps me when I need to speak up for myself, I know how to do this now. I wish to share how great this support is. Jimmy helped me address problems and manage during home visits. For instance, Mr. Jaime Llanos has advised me on how to better my academic life and how to best prepare for my future employment.



Testimony at the  
Budget Oversight Hearing  
on the Child and Family Services Agency  
Committee on Families and Facilities  
Melody R. Webb, Esq.  
Mothers Outreach Network  
Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chairperson Lewis-George and Committee Members. My name is Melody Webb, and I am the Executive Director of Mothers Outreach Network, head of the DC Guaranteed Income Coalition, and also a native Washingtonian, resident of Ward 6. MON is a non-profit advocacy organization that advances family preservation through focusing on engaging Black moms in the struggle to transform government income and child welfare systems from punitive to uplifting through legal and policy advocacy and community engagement to fight poverty and racial inequity. In addition, this month we will launch the first of three phases of a privately-funded guaranteed income cash pilot for moms who have been involved or have involvement with Child and Family Services Agency. It is with our Mother Up pilot participants in mind and the myriad mothers and 16% of our DC population that lives in poverty that I share my testimony today.

The Coalition's mission is a moral one, to achieve a permanent guaranteed income that provides unconditional payments to our District neighbors, ensuring everyone lives above the income floor of the federal poverty line, \$24,000 for a two-person household.<sup>1</sup> Ours is rooted in a solidarity and care economy. Some 16 percent of the city's total population (about 105,000 people) subsist below it.<sup>2</sup> Pre-pandemic, 42.1% of single

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<sup>1</sup> "2021 Poverty Guidelines," Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, accessed February 16, 2023, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/2021-poverty-guidelines>.

<sup>2</sup> "American Communities Survey: S1701 | Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months," United States Census Bureau, accessed February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, <https://data.census.gov/table?g=1600000US1150000&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S1701>.



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mothers in the District of Columbia lived in poverty.<sup>3</sup> And poverty has consequences that include family destabilization and CFSA involvement, and the shame of our nation, family separation.

### **How CFSA involvement reflects poverty.**

In 2020, according to the US Health and Human Services Child Maltreatment Report, nearly 9 out of 10 open cases at CFSA involved neglect; and in 2019, 4 out of every 5 D.C. cases in foster care, stemmed from neglect-based allegations alone. Neglect, defined by statute, includes harming the “health or welfare” of a child under 18 years of age and doing so through failing to accord them “adequate food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.” Moreover about 12% of open cases involved families with housing insecurity, in both 2019 and 2020.

### **Child Protection Register Changes**

In terms of our request, first, we appreciate the Agency's efforts in making much-needed changes to the Child Protection Register and understand implementation will require a budget that we fully support particularly in light of our own legal work to help D.C.s parents clear a path to employment, activities with their children's schools and dignity that removal from the CPR will afford.

### **Prioritizing Poverty: Agency Alternative Spending on Anti-Poverty Priorities**

The laudable changes in the law blunting the historical and deleterious effects of the Child Protection Register forges a path to prevention of system involvement but there is

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<sup>3</sup> “State: District of Columbia,” National Women's Law Center, accessed February 16, 2023, <https://nwlc.org/state/district-of-columbia/>.





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more to do. A war on poverty was declared during the Covid-19 Pandemic and the weapon for that is increasingly plain and simple – cash, cash as guaranteed income. Guaranteed income quite simply is regular payments used to individuals, usually below an income floor, (such as the federal poverty line) with no strings attached and no work requirement. Strong Families Strong Futures program was one such example.

I am here today to press the need for this agency's leadership to deploy Agency dollars through new and existing programs, to eradicate poverty and in this way prevent family involvement. Some 80% of the Agency's cases are neglect-based and many poverty-driven.

(1) Our organization's mission broadly is to do this through guaranteed income. (2) In addition, however, we urge the Agency to spend down all of its Flex Funds in the most permissive way possible as cash and (3) to provide cash to allow parents no strings attached and no work requirements to deploy the Flex Fund for biological custodial parents as a child benefit for in-home services and for reunification purposes. The Agency should use all of the funds, not leave any unused and use all of its housing vouchers for families.

We support the use of funds from this budget to support the proposed District Child Tax Credit and the Financial Support for Families with Children bills as a guaranteed income style program. See Appendix A.

**Flex Funds.** We pose several questions about the expenditure of funds by the in-home administration. What percentage of dollars is actually spent on families for furniture or rental arrears? It is not clear what goes to actual families and what latitude the Agency has pursuant to law, rules or other policy. The attached chart reflects Agency failure to



### **Mother's Outreach Network/ D.C. Guaranteed Income Coalition**

provide the flex funds numbers in detail to show a breakdown of in-home vs. foster care amounts. It provides only one amount and, as a result, combines both types of spending. As referenced in the appendix, it appears that \$137,100.73 went unspent; additionally, in FY 2022, \$24,330.58 went unspent. Further, as of now for FY 23, \$0 have been spent of the \$141,918 approved for food vouchers and for childcare. Similarly, what went unspent was: \$58,043 in the childcare-clothing category.<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A.

### **HUD Family Unification Program Housing Choice Vouchers**

· Similar failure to spend resources in the area of Housing Choice Vouchers occurred in the Family Unification Program. At the start of Fiscal Year 22 (FY), there was an allocation of 36 HCV remaining under the Family Unification Program (FUP). In FY22, the Agency allocated 4 FUP vouchers to DC parents with children in foster care to support reunification. In FY23 (Oct 22 - Dec 22), the Agency allocated 1 FUP voucher to DC parents with children in foster care to support reunification. HUD originally awarded CFSA 48 vouchers to give to DC parents when the family was at risk of homelessness with a child in the home. In FY22 and FY23, the Agency allocated to 1 family a voucher due to risk of homelessness with child in home and an open CFSA case.

*Our question to the agency is: why does the Agency struggle to award these vouchers when housing insecurity is so rampant? Some 12% of families with CFSA involvement have been housing insecure in recent years.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> DC Child and Family Services Oversight Pre-Hearing Questions and Answers. Page 195-196

<sup>5</sup> DC Child and Family Services Oversight Pre-Hearing Questions and Answers. Page 9.



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Washington, DC is on the cusp of creating a guaranteed income for all. This Agency should help move DC in this direction by fully deploying resources for families in the Flex Fund and in the Housing Choice FUP Voucher program. With proper investment in a larger and broader guaranteed income program across the city, we can in fact reach that destination.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Mother's Outreach Network/ D.C. Guaranteed Income Coalition**

**Appendix A.**

**Housing Vouchers and Flex Funds Underspending<sup>6</sup>**

**Housing Vouchers**

Wayne Place - CFSA and DBH provide transitional, supportive housing (18-months) for youth who are aging out of the foster care system or youth transitioning from psychiatric residential centers/require intensive services to stabilize in a community environment.

- Youths served in FY22 - 33
- Youths served in FY23 - 15

Genesis - Intergenerational community residence where older adults provide mentorship/social support to vulnerable individuals and families. Consists of 27 units of affordable rentals where young moms who grew up in foster care live alongside seniors on fixed incomes. (Permanent)

- Youths served in FY22 - No new referrals
- Youths served in FY23 - No new referrals

Chaffee - Aftercare supports for former foster youth in D.C. after all other resources have been exhausted. (12 months up to the age of 23)

- Youths served in FY22 - 5
- Youths served in FY23 - 0

Family Unification Program/Fostering Youth to Independence Vouchers - FUP vouchers to youth who are between 18 and 24, who left foster care after 16, or will leave foster care within 90 days and are homeless/at risk of homelessness. Time-limited (36 months) vouchers to help provide assistance for individuals to transition to safe housing. Recent policy changes have extended FUP and FYI programs for additional 2 years (total of 5 now) if certain criteria are met.

- Youths served in FY22 - 21
- Youths served in FY23 - 7

HUD Family Unification Program Housing Choice Vouchers

- At start of FY22, allocation of 36 HCV remaining under FUP
- FY22 - 4 FUP vouchers allocated to DC parents with children in foster care to support reunification
- FY23 - (Oct 22 - Dec 22) - 1 FUP voucher allocated to DC parents with children in foster care to support reunification
- HUD originally awarded CFSA 48 vouchers to give to DC parents when family was at risk of homelessness with child in home
- FY22 and FY23 - 1 family allocated voucher due to risk of homelessness with child in home and an open CFSA case

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<sup>6</sup> DC Child and Family Services Oversight Pre-Hearing Questions and Answers. Pp. 9,195-196



## Mother's Outreach Network/ D.C. Guaranteed Income Coalition

### Flex Funds

- Line items for parents vs. foster parents?
  - The below amounts are flex funds for children and families served by the In-Home Administration and those in foster care
- What percentage of dollars is actually spent on families for furniture or rental arrears?  
Lack of clarity on what goes to actual families and what latitude they have.
  - Childcare (other services)
    - FY22 approved budget - \$687,677.83
    - FY22 expenses - \$550,577.10
      - Unspent - \$137,100.73
    - FY23 approved - \$687,677.83
    - FY23 to-date expenses - \$128,612.93
  - Emergency funds
    - FY22 approved budget - \$145,000.00
    - FY22 expenses - \$63,299.71
      - Unspent - \$81,700.29
    - FY23 approved - \$70,000
    - FY23 to-date expenses - \$1,900
  - Food vouchers
    - FY22 approved budget - \$115,000
    - FY22 expenses - \$90,669.42
      - Unspent - \$24,330.58
    - FY23 approved - \$115,000
    - FY23 to-date expenses - \$0
  - Childcare - clothing
    - FY22 approved budget - \$141,918
    - FY22 expenses - \$83,875.00
      - Unspent - \$58,043
    - FY23 approved - \$141,918
    - FY23 to-date expenses - \$0
  - Childcare - furniture
    - FY22 approved budget - \$177,583.36
    - FY22 expenses - \$128,045.48
      - Unspent - \$49,537.88
    - FY23 approved - \$177,583.16
    - FY23 to-date expenses - \$0
  - Sources:
    - [Page 10](#) for FY22 approved
    - [Page 9](#) for FY22 expenses, FY23 approved, FY23 to-date



### **Mother's Outreach Network/ D.C. Guaranteed Income Coalition**

- FY = Oct 1 – end of December (Based on page 195 which says that FY23 covered period of October 2022 – December 2022)
  - The document does not explicitly define fiscal periods, but based on other sections, I figured this was the time period.
- The chart providing the flex funds numbers does not provide a breakdown of in-home vs. foster care amounts. It provides only one amount and, as a result, combines both types of spending.

Good day Councilmember Lewis- George and committee members. My name is Clare Williamson, and I have been a Home Visitor in the District of Columbia for almost seven years. Currently, I work with the Parenting Support Program at Georgetown University, which supports parents with intellectual and developmental disabilities- (IDD). I am also a supporter with the U3DC Home Visiting Council. District families are often among the most stressed about their economic well-being; home visitors provide expectant parents and families with young children the support and positive reinforcements necessary to manage their family life alongside a challenging external environment.

My testimony today focuses on continuing support for the role of home visitors, as well as advocacy for home visiting that creates a strong, effective, and connected early childhood system within the District. Home visitors, like childcare teachers, have been some of the most dedicated yet underpaid professionals working with the District's families and children for years. Some benefits to home visiting include increased school readiness, family economic self-sufficiency, improved child health and development, reduced child abuse and neglect. As a home visitor my values are building parental confidence and supporting equitable parent experiences. These values matter to me because it has led to positive family outcomes and strengthened the parent's voices. Depending on the social worker, parents who are involved in the reunification process, can effectively voice their needs, strengths, and ask questions they may have about

their case. In the work that I do at PSP, many families are referred by the Child and Family Services Agency or (CFSA). CFSA has made improvements in recognizing the unique support needed for parents with IDD, and if continued will build parental confidence and trust in the system. Home visitors are crucial in supporting the whole family and building trust with the caregiver. This can help with navigating the intervention process with the social worker, foster or resource parent, guardian- ad litem, and other parties relevant to the family or situation. The collaboration between home visiting and CFSA could have greater, continued ripple effects if there were increased inclusion of children's time with their parents within their natural environments, and parental attendance during the child's medical appointments, to broaden the level of services to all families.

Home visitors across programs are doing great work; at the same time home visitors are leaving their positions, programs are experiencing huge turnovers; due to low wages and limited opportunities for advancement in their careers. Home visiting grants have received level funding – despite increased pressure from the pandemic and rising inflation rates. To address the rising inflation, on behalf of the DC Home Visiting Council, I respectfully ask that the Council consider an increase of \$300,000 for existing home visiting programs under CFSA. Increasing wages for home visitors will help retain a workforce critical to achieving the District's goal of reducing maternal mortality and building a first-class early childhood system. I would like to take the opportunity to thank CFSA for



seeing the need for home visiting, and ask your support for the continued growth of the home visiting profession.

Thank you, Councilmember Lewis- George and committee members, for hearing my testimony.

# **Attachment C**

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**MEMORANDUM**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** Nyasha Smith, Secretary of the Council  
**FROM:** Janeese Lewis George, Chairperson of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services  
**RE:** Closing Hearing Record  
**DATE:** **April 21, 2023**

---

Dear Ms. Smith,

Please find attached copies of the witness list, agenda, and testimony for the Committee on Facilities and Family Services Public Hearing for Bill 25-170, “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023” held on April 13, 2023.

The following witnesses testified at the hearing or submitted written testimony to the Committee:

*Public Witnesses*

1. Eboni-Rose Thompson, President and Ward 7 Representative, State Board of Education (*no written testimony*)
2. Frazier O’Leary, Vice President and Ward 4 Representative, State Board of Education
3. Cathy Reilly, Ward 4 Education Alliance and SHAPPE
4. David Alpert, Chair, Ross LSAT and Present, Ward 2 Education Council
5. Mary Filardo, Executive Director, 21st Century School Fund
6. Sarah Cissna, Capitol Hill Cluster PTA

*Government Witness*

1. Donny Gonzalez, Deputy Director for Facilities Management, Department of General Services

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE MEETING**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

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**COUNCILMEMBER JANESE LEWIS GEORGE, CHAIRPERSON**  
**COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING**

**on**

**B25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**

**on**

**Thursday, April 13th, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.**

**Remote Hearing via Virtual Platform**  
**Streamed live at [www.janeeseward4.com/live](http://www.janeeseward4.com/live).**

**AGENDA AND WITNESS LIST**

- I.** Call to Order
- II.** Opening Remarks
- III.** Witness Testimony

*Public Witnesses*

- 1. Eboni-Rose Thompson, President and Ward 7 Representative, State Board of Education
- 2. Frazier O’Leary, Vice President and Ward 4 Representative, State Board of Education
- 3. Cathy Reilly, Ward 4 Education Alliance and SHAPPE
- 4. David Alpert, Chair, Ross LSAT and Present, Ward 2 Education Council
- 5. Mary Filardo, Executive Director, 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund

*Government Witnesses*

- 1. Donny Gonzalez, Deputy Director for Facilities Management, DGS

- IV. ADJOURNMENT**

**Testimony of David Alpert**  
**President, Ward 2 Education Council and LSAT Chair, Ross Elementary School**  
**B25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
**April 13, 2023**

Good afternoon chairperson Lewis George, members of the committee, and staff.

My name is David Alpert and I am the President of the Ward 2 Education Council and chair of the Ross Elementary LSAT.

I support [Bill 25-170](#) and appreciate your efforts to improve school security and transparency. At Ross, our school has lacked a working PA system for a considerable time. As an old and historic building it is not easy for DGS to repair or replace the PA system, but our school administration has been waiting for a long time.

Repeatedly, DGS specifies a completion date in the near future but then arrives and says they need parts or can't do it, and the cycle repeats. Just last week they told your staff that the task would be completed on April 7. It was not.

We all fervently hope that there is never an active shooter type event in our school or any other, but in the horrible eventuality something like that did happen, our school leaders may not be able to communicate with everyone.

Also, we have large windows in our attic where the library, art, and music rooms are located, which are wonderful, but teachers have no way to black out the windows in case students need to shelter in their room. And in the art room, at least, the lights cannot be turned off.

This bill would take significant steps toward improving school safety. I have a few specific suggestions for the bill..

First, in the list of items for the security plan listed in (e)(1), please add:

(F) blinds on interior windows; and

(G) the ability for a teacher to turn off lights in any instructional room.

(Also you have two items labeled (C), which I'm sure you already noticed and will fix.)

DGS should further ensure that all of these items are part of a checklist considered during the design of any school modernization or addition. Perhaps the law should specify that as well?

Second, please include LSATs in the list of entities who DGS must consult with on the comprehensive security assessment as well as principals. Principals or their designees should certainly be the main point of contact and the main decider, but this is the kind of topic LSATs should advise on. It will ensure that some parents and teachers including the WTU building representative are able to see the plan and notice any problems or omissions.

Third, I likewise recommend you specify that DGS can, and ideally must, also share information on the work orders with principals and LSATs of schools as well as the chair and staff of the committee. Right now if principals aren't getting anywhere with safety work orders, the LSAT is one group they can go to, and we should ensure DGS doesn't refuse to share updates, or even refuse to share them with the principals themselves.

If the only other pathway is to contact your staff, that could be a large burden on them. Plus, what if one day there is a less accessible and proactive oversight chair over DGS? Allowing LSATs to be engaged in understanding the safety issues will allow principals to have backup in dealing with them and avoid creating an administrative bottleneck.

Finally, should safety work orders have to be disclosed publicly after being fixed? I agree with the sentiment that we don't want these publicly listed so that security holes are not advertised. But if the work orders can appear on the dashboard within 30 days after being fixed, for instance, that would allow people to see what DGS has in fact achieved.

A parent or teacher, nervous about the progress, could see it was fixed. And if DGS improperly marks something fixed, people can notice and intervene. A potential perpetrator would not know that it wasn't really fixed – or even believe it's fixed and thus be deterred.

Perhaps there is an important safety reason not to do this, but I think we should err on the side of disclosure to make this dashboard the most useful it can be.

Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023"  
April 13, 2023

**From:** "Delgado, Leticia (DGS)" <[leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)>  
**Date:** April 5, 2023 at 5:02:19 PM EDT  
**To:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>, "Allen, Charles (COUNCIL)" <[CAllen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS)" <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>, "Cuddihy, Sean (Council)" <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>, "Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL)" <[PMENDELSON@dccouncil.gov](mailto:PMENDELSON@dccouncil.gov)>, "Lewis-George, Janeese (Council)" <[jlewisgeorge@dccouncil.gov](mailto:jlewisgeorge@dccouncil.gov)>, "White, Robert (Council)" <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>, "Wynn, Monique (Council)" <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>, "Powe, Donielle (DCPS)" <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>, "Anderson, Keith (DGS)" <[Keith.Anderson@dc.gov](mailto:Keith.Anderson@dc.gov)>, "Noth, Alyssa (DCPS)" <[Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov)>, "Jordan, LeKisha (Council)" <[ljordan@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ljordan@dccouncil.gov)>, "Cocilova, Caitlin (Council)" <[ccocilova@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ccocilova@dccouncil.gov)>, "Webster, Toussaint (DCPS)" <[toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov](mailto:toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov)>, "Feldman, Sophie (EOM)" <[sophie.feldman@dc.gov](mailto:sophie.feldman@dc.gov)>, "Thomas, Maggie (DCPS)" <[Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov)>, pam [REDACTED]@gmail.com, "Gore, Wayne (DGS)" <[Wayne.Gore@dc.gov](mailto:Wayne.Gore@dc.gov)>, "Sudah, Sundiata (DCPS)" <[sundiata.sudah@k12.dc.gov](mailto:sundiata.sudah@k12.dc.gov)>, "Link, Sean (DGS)" <[sean.link@dc.gov](mailto:sean.link@dc.gov)>, "Stokes, John (DGS)" <[John.Stokes@dc.gov](mailto:John.Stokes@dc.gov)>, [wperkins@dccouncil.gov](mailto:wperkins@dccouncil.gov)  
**Subject:** RE: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

Good afternoon,

Please see the updates below regarding the work orders listed below.

1. RM G03 – WO 722906;- There has been communication with the school letting staff know that when the technician was on site, he was unable to locate the door needing repair. G-03 is a double hung aluminum door that is operational. The picture included in this work ticket is a wood door (see picture attached). We are awaiting a response from the school for updated location information.
2. RM 115 – WO 722904; ECD 12/27/22 - ECD updated to May 2023- awaiting parts.
3. 117 – WO 722905; ECD 12/30/22 - ECD updated to May 2023 - awaiting parts order
4. 119 – WO 722410; ECD 12/30/22 - Just updated ECD to May 2023

Best,

Leticia

Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023"  
April 13, 2023

*Leticia Delgado*

*Legislative Analyst*

Department of General Services

Franklin D. Reeves Municipal Center

2000 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

Washington, DC 20009

Cell: 202-497-2493

Email: [leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)

<https://dgs.dc.gov/>

**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 30, 2023 3:10 PM  
**To:** Allen, Charles (COUNCIL) <[CAllen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.gov)>  
**Cc:** Delgado, Leticia (DGS) <[leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)>; Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>; Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>; Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL) <[PMENDELSON@dccouncil.gov](mailto:PMENDELSON@dccouncil.gov)>; Lewis-George, Janeese (Council) <[jewisgeorge@dccouncil.gov](mailto:jewisgeorge@dccouncil.gov)>; White, Robert (Council) <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>; Wynn, Monique (Council) <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>; Powe, Donielle (DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>; Anderson, Keith (DGS) <[Keith.Anderson@dc.gov](mailto:Keith.Anderson@dc.gov)>; Noth, Alyssa (DCPS) <[Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov)>; Jordan, LeKisha (Council) <[ljordan@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ljordan@dccouncil.gov)>; Cocilova, Caitlin (Council) <[ccocilova@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ccocilova@dccouncil.gov)>; Webster, Toussaint (DCPS) <[toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov](mailto:toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov)>; Feldman, Sophie (EOM) <[sophie.feldman@dc.gov](mailto:sophie.feldman@dc.gov)>; Thomas,



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April 13, 2023

Maggie (DCPS) <[Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov)>; pam [REDACTED]@gmail.com; Sudah, Sundiata (DCPS) <[sundiata.sudah@k12.dc.gov](mailto:sundiata.sudah@k12.dc.gov)>; Link, Sean (DGS) <[sean.link@dc.gov](mailto:sean.link@dc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

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Will DGS please advise on the status of lock repairs for the classrooms with drug use (G03) and the other classrooms listed below?

I have heard rumors that the extensive for DGS did to address the fire/ water damage at Stuart-Hobson over the weekend can be linked to a broken lock on the door of the 8th grade science classroom where the fire originated. Can DGS clarify whether the science classroom at issue has a working lock post-fire?

On Mar 20, 2023, at 10:01 AM, Allen, Charles (Council) <[callen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:callen@dccouncil.gov)> wrote:

Thank you. DGS, could we get an update? I was at the school recently and found several doors unable to close and unable to lock. These work orders seem to be open for months and months on end with no repairs in sight.

Thanks,

Charles

---

**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 10:09:19 AM  
**To:** Delgado, Leticia (DGS); Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS); Cuddihy, Sean (Council); Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL); Lewis-George, Janeese (Council)

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**April 13, 2023**

**Cc:** Allen, Charles (Council); White, Robert (Council); Wynn, Monique (Council); Powe, Donielle (DCPS); Anderson, Keith (DGS); Noth, Alyssa (DCPS); Jordan, LeKisha (Council); Cocilova, Caitlin (Council); Webster, Toussaint (DCPS); Feldman, Sophie (EOM); Thomas, Maggie (DCPS); pam [REDACTED]@gmail.com; Sudah, Sundiata (DCPS); Link, Sean (DGS)  
**Subject:** Re: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

With CMs added.

On Mar 18, 2023, at 10:05 AM, Danielle Drissel <[danielle@websterious.com](mailto:danielle@websterious.com)> wrote:

Adding Chairman Mendelson and CM Lewis George to this thread which has been asking for repairs since August. The 4 pending classroom locks at Stuart Hobson listed below were referenced in testimony to both FFS and COW. All broken classroom locks are a safety issue that should be resolved within days, not months.

I am acutely concerned about classroom GO3 where the lock has been broken since last Spring. The classroom is by the student entrance on 4th Street. The last DGS assigned ECD was January 13. This week the unlocked classroom by the school entrance was used for smoking pot. The teacher is at her wits end (as am I).

PLEASE HELP!

Danielle Drissel

Ward 6 resident

Proud parent of DCPS scholars since 2011

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April 13, 2023

On Feb 27, 2023, at 1:17 AM, Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hi Ms. Delgado.

I am circling back on the follow lock work orders for Stuart Hobson.

1. G03 – WO 722906; Expected Completion Date (ECD) 12/30/22.
2. 115 – WO 722904; ECD 12/27/22
3. 117 – WO 722905; ECD 12/30/22
4. 119 – WO 722410; ECD 12/30/22

On January 4 you offered a new ECD for these repairs of January 13. However, as of Friday 2/17 all of repairs were still pending. I’m hopeful process may have been made over the break. Can you please provide a status report and new ECD for each work order?

Thank you.

Danielle

**From:** Delgado, Leticia (DGS) <[leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 4, 2023 12:40 PM  
**To:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>; Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>; Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>  
**Cc:** Allen, Charles (COUNCIL) <[CAllen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.gov)>; White, Robert (Council) <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>; Wynn, Monique (Council) <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>; Powe, Donielle (DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>; Anderson, Keith (DGS) <[Keith.Anderson@dc.gov](mailto:Keith.Anderson@dc.gov)>; Noth, Alyssa (DCPS) <[Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov)>; Jordan, LeKisha (Council) <[jordan@dccouncil.gov](mailto:jordan@dccouncil.gov)>; Cocilova, Caitlin (Council) <[ccocilova@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ccocilova@dccouncil.gov)>; Webster, Toussaint (DCPS) <[toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov](mailto:toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov)>; Feldman, Sophie (EOM) <[sophie.feldman@dc.gov](mailto:sophie.feldman@dc.gov)>; Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov)>; pam [REDACTED]@gmail.com; Sudah,

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Sundiata (DCPS) <[sundiata.sudah@k12.dc.gov](mailto:sundiata.sudah@k12.dc.gov)>; Link, Sean (DGS) <[sean.link@dc.gov](mailto:sean.link@dc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

Good afternoon,

Thanks for reaching out regarding lock/door issues at Stuart Hobson. Please note when we provide updates ECD stands for “**estimated completion date**”. We make every effort to meet these deadlines, but issues such as parts delivery or contractor scheduling outside DGS control may affect completion dates.

In reference to the work orders below, we anticipate being able to have the work completed by January 13<sup>th</sup>. We have also confirmed with DCPS that there is not an active leak. DGS staff were on site once they were notified and found that water was coming from a running hose. Again, we have confirmation from school staff that this is no longer an issue.

Best,

Leticia

*Leticia Delgado*

*Legislative Analyst*

Department of General Services

Franklin D. Reeves Municipal Center

2000 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

Washington, DC 20009

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April 13, 2023

Cell: 202-497-2493

Email: [leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)

<https://dgs.dc.gov/>

<image001.png>

**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 3, 2023 6:17 PM  
**To:** Delgado, Leticia (DGS) <[leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)>; Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>; Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>  
**Cc:** Allen, Charles (COUNCIL) <[CAllen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.gov)>; White, Robert (Council) <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>; Wynn, Monique (Council) <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>; Falcicchio, John (EOM) <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>; Bowser, Muriel (EOM) <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>; Powe, Donielle (DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>; Anderson, Keith (DGS) <[Keith.Anderson@dc.gov](mailto:Keith.Anderson@dc.gov)>; Noth, Alyssa (DCPS) <[Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov)>; Jordan, LeKisha (Council) <[lordan@dccouncil.gov](mailto:lordan@dccouncil.gov)>; Cocilova, Caitlin (Council) <[ccocilova@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ccocilova@dccouncil.gov)>; Webster, Toussaint (DCPS) <[toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov](mailto:toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov)>; Feldman, Sophie (EOM) <[sophie.feldman@dc.gov](mailto:sophie.feldman@dc.gov)>; Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov)>; pam [REDACTED]@gmail.com  
**Subject:** RE: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from [danielle@websterious.com](mailto:danielle@websterious.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Happy new year! Circling back with any update about the Stuart Hobson “back to school” HVAC and lock needs from my August email plus a new burst pipe issue. Most of our outstanding work is

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on the first floor used primarily by 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Our next open house is in 2 weeks. Timely work to help our facilities attract rather than deter potential enrollees would be most appreciated.

**HVAC** The HVAC issues appear to be fully resolved. The auditorium was toasty for our Lion King performances. Thank you!

**LOCKS** Unfortunately, no process was made on any of the 4 door locks with an ECD by end of year.

5. G03 – WO 722906; Expected Completion Date (ECD) 12/30/22. Photo from today attached.
6. 115 – WO 722904; ECD 12/27/22
7. 117 – WO 722905; ECD 12/30/22
8. 119 – WO 722410; ECD 12/30/22

All rooms with broken locks are on entry level to the building. These outstanding repairs include a counseling room and a room where the broken lock was reported in Spring 2022. Can someone from DGS please a new ECD for each order?

**Burst Pipe** A pipe burst in the first floor ceiling today, flooding out two classrooms. I don't yet know if these happen to be two of the first floor classrooms with broken locks. But definitely on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade floor. Is it possible for a plumber to address this before the 1/17 open house?

Thank you.

Danielle Drissel

**From:** Delgado, Leticia (DGS) <[leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 2, 2022 1:25 PM  
**To:** Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>; Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>  
**Cc:** Allen, Charles (COUNCIL) <[CAllen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.gov)>; White, Robert (Council) <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>; Wynn, Monique (Council) <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>; Falcicchio, John (EOM) <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>; Bowser, Muriel (EOM) <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>; Powe, Donielle

Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”  
April 13, 2023

(DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>; Anderson, Keith (DGS) <[Keith.Anderson@dc.gov](mailto:Keith.Anderson@dc.gov)>; H, Alyssa (DCPS) <[Alyssa.Nothing@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Nothing@k12.dc.gov)>; Jordan, LeKisha (Council) <[ljordan@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ljordan@dccouncil.gov)>; Cocilova, Caitlin (Council) <[ccocilova@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ccocilova@dccouncil.gov)>; Webster, Toussaint (DCPS) <[toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov](mailto:toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov)>; Feldman, Sophie (EOM) <[sophie.feldman@dc.gov](mailto:sophie.feldman@dc.gov)>; Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov)>; Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

Good afternoon,

I am responding on behalf of Director Anderson. Work order 697217, requesting to have room 306 door lock put on a master lock key has been completed and closed out. The attached pictures were included in the work ticket certifying the work.

Best,

Leticia

***Leticia Delgado***

***Legislative Analyst***

Department of General Services

Franklin D. Reeves Municipal Center

2000 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

Washington, DC 20009

Cell: 202-497-2493

Email: [leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)

Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”  
April 13, 2023

<https://dgs.dc.gov/>

<image001.png>

**From:** Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 1, 2022 5:04 PM  
**To:** Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>  
**Cc:** Allen, Charles (COUNCIL) <[CAllen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.gov)>; White, Robert (Council) <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>; Wynn, Monique (Council) <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>; Falcicchio, John (EOM) <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>; Bowser, Muriel (EOM) <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>; Powe, Donielle (DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>; Anderson, Keith (DGS) <[Keith.Anderson@dc.gov](mailto:Keith.Anderson@dc.gov)>; Noth, Alyssa (DCPS) <[Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov)>; Delgado, Leticia (DGS) <[leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)>; Jordan, LeKisha (Council) <[ljordan@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ljordan@dccouncil.gov)>; Cocilova, Caitlin (Council) <[ccocilova@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ccocilova@dccouncil.gov)>; Webster, Toussaint (DCPS) <[toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov](mailto:toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov)>; Feldman, Sophie (EOM) <[sophie.feldman@dc.gov](mailto:sophie.feldman@dc.gov)>; Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Maggie.Thomas@k12.dc.gov)>; Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

Hi Sean,

My apologies for the error there. We believe that DGS is best suited to address the specific work order update and what hurdles remain in the way.

Lewis



**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
April 13, 2023

**From:** Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 30, 2022 3:18 PM  
**To:** Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>; Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>; Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Allen, Charles (Council) <[callen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:callen@dccouncil.gov)>; White, Robert (Council) <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>; Wynn, Monique (Council) <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>; Falcicchio, John (EOM) <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>; Bowser, Muriel (EOM) <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>; Powe, Donielle (DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>; Anderson, Keith (DGS) <[Keith.Anderson@dc.gov](mailto:Keith.Anderson@dc.gov)>; Noth, Alyssa (DCPS) <[Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Noth@k12.dc.gov)>; Delgado, Leticia (DGS) <[leticia.delgado@dc.gov](mailto:leticia.delgado@dc.gov)>; Jordan, LeKisha (Council) <[ljordan@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ljordan@dccouncil.gov)>; Cocilova, Caitlin (Council) <[ccocilova@dccouncil.gov](mailto:ccocilova@dccouncil.gov)>; Webster, Toussaint (DCPS) <[toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov](mailto:toussaint.webster@k12.dc.gov)>; Feldman, Sophie (EOM) <[sophie.feldman@dc.gov](mailto:sophie.feldman@dc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

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Chancellor Ferebee,

Respectfully, I find the note that the Stuart-Hobson staff needs to enter a work order for the lock on room 306 concerning. Here are excerpts from various updates that DGS and DCPS have provided to Councilmember Robert White's office in recent months regarding work order **697217**:

June 13, 2022:

1. "Requesting to have **room 306** door lock put on a master lock key."
2. Status: "On hold for parts"
3. Notes: "Parts have been ordered and we are awaiting delivery."
4. Estimated completion date: July 1, 2022

August 25, 2022:

5. Status: "On Hold for Funding"
6. Estimated completion date: [none]

**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
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October 18, 2022:

7. Status: “On hold for parts”
8. Estimated completion date: [none]

November 15, 2022:

9. Status: “Issued and in process”

November 17, 2022:

10. Date requested: **January 24, 2022**
11. Estimated completion date: November 22, 2022

I do not understand how there was a work order open for this classroom for 11 months including as recently as 2 weeks ago, and yet the school is now being told to submit a work order. It would be helpful if someone from DGS or DCPS could explain exactly what work was done on this lock, who performed the work, and why the work order was closed if the work was not satisfactory.

Sincerely,

**Sean Cuddihy | Deputy Committee Director**

Committee on Government Operations and Facilities

Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr., Chair

Council of the District of Columbia

[1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 117, Washington, DC 20004](#)

**Phone:** [202-394-5269](tel:202-394-5269) | **Pronouns:** [he/him](#)

**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
April 13, 2023

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**From:** Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 30, 2022 2:16 PM  
**To:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>; Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.gov](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.gov)>; Allen, Charles (Council) <[callen@dccouncil.gov](mailto:callen@dccouncil.gov)>; White, Robert (Council) <[rwhite@dccouncil.gov](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.gov)>; Wynn, Monique (Council) <[mbexley@dccouncil.gov](mailto:mbexley@dccouncil.gov)>; Falcicchio, John (EOM) <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>; Bowser, Muriel (EOM) <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>; Powe, Donielle (DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

Good afternoon, Ms. Drissel,

Thank you for raising these issues regarding Stuart Hobson. Please see the responses to your inquiries highlighted below.

HVAC: The auditorium on Saturday was 55 degrees. No heat at all. Our community performances of Lion King Jr start in two weeks and our oldest and youngest community members may not feel safe to attend. I've been told the theater space at Eliot Hine is also without heat. The broken HVAC at these schools threatens to undermine efforts to showcase and celebrate the extraordinary work of DCPS students and teachers. Please prioritize these repairs.

1. Pro Air responded to no heat in auditorium. Technician determined bad board on the unit. Replacement part on order. ITM awaiting confirmation of receipt of part for completion of repair. The original estimated completion date was 11/22/22, but we're awaiting confirmation for final repair. This requests is being tracked via work order (WO) 726768 and was re-escalated on 11/28.

**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
**April 13, 2023**

Locks: My building tour revealed broken locks in Classrooms Rooms G02, G03, 115, 117, 119, and 306. I believe current issue with room 101 is no master key was provided to the school when repair was done. This is another issue that poses risk when the building is opened to the larger community. Ms. Thomas, can pair what I saw with your findings on the DGS side to move these lock problems to resolution?

9. G02 – school needs to submit a work order
10. G03 – WO 722906; Expected Completion Date (ECD) 12/30/22
11. 115 – WO 722904; ECD 12/27/22
12. 117 – WO 722905; ECD 12/30/22
13. 119 – WO 722410; ECD 12/30/22
14. 306 - school needs to submit a work order
15. G03 – WO 722906; Expected Completion Date (ECD) 12/30/22. Photo from today attached.
16. 115 – WO 722904; ECD 12/27/22
17. 117 – WO 722905; ECD 12/30/22
18. 119 – WO 722410; ECD 12/30/22

Kind regards,

Lewis

**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Monday, November 21, 2022 at 8:11 AM  
**To:** Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.us](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.us)>, Charles Allen <[callen@dccouncil.us](mailto:callen@dccouncil.us)>, Robert White <[rwhite@dccouncil.us](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.us)>, Monique Wynn <[MBexley@dccouncil.us](mailto:MBexley@dccouncil.us)>, Falcicchio, John (EOM) <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>, Bowser, Muriel (EOM) <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>, Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>, Powe, Donielle (DCPS) <[Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Donielle.Powe2@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP update on locks and HVAC

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**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
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Happy Thanksgiving week.

I looked into facilities issues when volunteering on-site for the Lion King Jr. opening night on 12/9. Updates below on time sensitive needs for HVAC and locks.

HVAC: The auditorium on Saturday was 55 degrees. No heat at all. Our community performances of Lion King Jr start in two weeks and our oldest and youngest community members may not feel safe to attend. I've been told the theater space at Eliot Hine is also without heat. The broken HVAC at these schools threatens to undermine efforts to showcase and celebrate the extraordinary work of DCPS students and teachers. Please prioritize these repairs.

Locks: My building tour revealed broken locks in Classrooms Rooms G02, G03, 115, 117, 119, and 306. I believe current issue with room 101 is no master key was provided to the school when repair was done. This is another issue that poses risk when the building is opened to the larger community. Ms Thomas, can pair what I saw with your findings on the DGS side to move these lock problems to resolution?

I hope we can have these two issues resolved before the holidays. I'd love us to celebrate these repairs together at Lion King.

Thanks for your ongoing assistance.

Danielle

On Nov 16, 2022, at 10:30 AM, Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov)> wrote:

Thank you for elevating! We will investigate this matter promptly and circle back shortly.

Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”  
April 13, 2023

Thank you.

—

Respectfully,

**Maggie K. Thomas**

Chief of Staff

*pronouns: she/her/hers*

**Office of the Chancellor**

District of Columbia Public Schools

1200 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
T 202.906.9350  
E maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov

@joindcps

*We're on a mission to rewrite the narrative of what an urban public education can do for our students. What role will you play?*

**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>

**Date:** Sunday, November 13, 2022 at 6:41 AM

**To:** Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <scuddihy@dccouncil.us>

**Cc:** Charles Allen <callen@dccouncil.us>, Robert White <rwhite@dccouncil.us>, Monique

Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023"

April 13, 2023

Wynn <[MBexley@dccouncil.us](mailto:MBexley@dccouncil.us)>, Thomas, Maggie (DCPS) <[maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov)>, Falcicchio, John (EOM) <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>, Bowser, Muriel (EOM) <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>, Ferebee, Lewis (DCPS) <[Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Lewis.Ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP-another disappointing update

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Good morning

Unfortunately we have entered term 2 of the school year without the lock repairs. Is there any way to elevate the need for these lock repairs? Rooms 115, 117 and G 03 were highlighted below. I heard this morning rooms 101 and G02 do not lock either.

The teachers and students in each classroom are distressed by the ongoing safety concern.

Please hold DGS and DCPS accountable for making these repairs before the Thanksgiving holiday.

Danielle

On Oct 28, 2022, at 8:57 PM, Danielle Drissel <[danielle@websterious.com](mailto:danielle@websterious.com)> wrote:

Greetings.


I'm reaching out with another disappointing update on the locks at Stuart Hobson middle school. Three rooms which had broken lock work orders pending since Spring 2022 are still not repaired: Rooms 115, 117, and G-03. My understanding is DGS closed the tickets for these rooms without any fix. See attached photo clearly showing fix not made. Please help ensure these three doors are fixed BEFORE the end of term 1.

**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
**April 13, 2023**

Lack of facilities support is contributing to teacher attrition. This is another sad example of why DGS should not be permitted to close work orders without school sign off.

Thank you for your continued oversight.

Danielle Drissel

 [address redacted]

<image0.jpeg>

On Aug 29, 2022, at 3:32 PM, Cuddihy, Sean (Council) <[scuddihy@dccouncil.us](mailto:scuddihy@dccouncil.us)> wrote:

Hi Ms. Drissel,

Thank you very much for all your work to bring attention to facilities issues at Stuart Hobson, including the locks. CM White’s team has repeatedly brought reports of widespread lock problems at Stuart Hobson to DGS’s attention, dating back to at least May of this year. CM Allen and his team have been excellent partners in working to hold DGS accountable. Although we’re making progress, the administration’s approach has been frustrating and we appreciate your collaboration in keeping them focused on this pressing issue.

Last month, the Council unanimously passed the Back-to-School Safely Emergency Amendment Act of 2022, which among other things required a closed-door briefing from DCPS and DGS to Councilmembers and staff regarding school security. CM White led that meeting on Thursday, and we learned that all of the lock and door work orders that DCPS and DGS jointly identified as “high priority” were scheduled for completion by this week, while other lock and door work orders are scheduled for completion by the end of September. Based on a phone conversation that I had with my main contact at DGS after that Thursday meeting, I believe that most of the interior door lock issues at Stuart Hobson did not make the “high priority” list. This was a shock given how much the faculty, community and Council have all emphasized the importance of fully functional door locks at



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Stuart Hobson specifically, but I'm told it's mostly because the agency is **still waiting on parts deliveries and the delivery dates are still uncertain**. In one case I believe they are still working to hire a vendor to produce new keys. We will not be sharing room-specific security updates on social media so as to avoid providing vulnerability information to anyone who might use it to cause harm, but we will continue to follow up to help make sure these gaps are addressed as swiftly as physically possible. I hope you'll continue to share any updates you receive with both our offices.

Thanks again!

**Sean Cuddihy | Deputy Committee Director**

Committee on Government Operations and Facilities

Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr., Chair

Council of the District of Columbia

[1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 117, Washington, DC 20004](#)

**Phone:** [202-394-5269](tel:202-394-5269) | **Pronouns:** [he/him](#)

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**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>

**Date:** Monday, August 29, 2022 at 9:23 AM

**To:** "Allen, Charles (Council)" <[CAllen@DCCOUNCIL.US](mailto:CAllen@DCCOUNCIL.US)>, "White, Robert (Council)" <[rwhite@DCCOUNCIL.US](mailto:rwhite@DCCOUNCIL.US)>, "Wynn, Monique (Council)" <[MBexley@dccouncil.us](mailto:MBexley@dccouncil.us)>, "[jasmine.coilton@dc.gov](mailto:jasmine.coilton@dc.gov)" <[jasmine.coilton@dc.gov](mailto:jasmine.coilton@dc.gov)>, "Wynn, Monique (Council)" <[MBexley@dccouncil.us](mailto:MBexley@dccouncil.us)>, "Bowser, Muriel (EOM)" <[muriel.bowser@dc.gov](mailto:muriel.bowser@dc.gov)>, "Ferebee,

Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023"  
April 13, 2023

Lewis (DCPS)" <[lewis.ferebee@k12.dc.gov](mailto:lewis.ferebee@k12.dc.gov)>, "Falcicchio, John (EOM)" <[john.falcicchio@dc.gov](mailto:john.falcicchio@dc.gov)>, "Thomas, Maggie (DCPS)" <[maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov](mailto:maggie.thomas@k12.dc.gov)>  
**Cc:** CHCS PTA President <[president@chcspta.org](mailto:president@chcspta.org)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP-disappointing update

Happy first day of school.

I'm glad for DGS visit yesterday afternoon which did result in ceiling tile fixes. But classrooms at Stuart Hobson including room 313 which I specifically flagged in my Saturday email still do not have working locks. Pictures of broken locks on first day is below. Patch job suggests some broken locks were removed. What is ETA on install of working locks?

Thank you for your attention to the needs of our students and teachers.

Danielle Drissel  
[253 11th Street SE](#)  
202-262-5568

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** August 28, 2022 at 3:19:02 PM EDT  
**To:** "Allen, Charles (Council)" <[CAllen@dccouncil.us](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.us)>  
**Cc:** "Wynn, Monique (Council)" <[MBexley@dccouncil.us](mailto:MBexley@dccouncil.us)>, "White, Robert (Council)" <[rwhite@dccouncil.us](mailto:rwhite@dccouncil.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP.

Good news Charles! Ms Irving from the Mayor's office called to say DGS is on site at Stuart now to address hvac, locks and ceiling tiles.

Her description of DGS tickets confused me: no pending ticket for HVAC, locks ticket for one classroom not dozen. I asked for follow up and hope for partnership on next steps.

Thanks for your advocacy!!!

Danielle

**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the "School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023"**  
April 13, 2023

On Aug 28, 2022, at 8:39 AM, Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thanks Charles.

I appreciate your work to support our schools and promote basic accountability for DGS when they fail our children. The needs at Watkins and other schools are significant as well.

I am concerned that longstanding facilities issues go unresolved not only due to insufficient resources but also due to fear that publicizing needs to the broader community will have adverse effects on the individual school and its personnel.

Thank you for being an advocate for DCPS families.

Danielle

On Aug 28, 2022, at 8:20 AM, Allen, Charles (Council) <[CAllen@dccouncil.us](mailto:CAllen@dccouncil.us)> wrote:

Danielle,

Thanks for your email and pictures. I wanted to quickly get back and let you know I've been talking with the DGS Director and City Administrator to focus more specifically on Stuart-Hobson and its needs. I've also spoken with a few teachers there as well. The answers back from DGS aren't cutting it for me, and I'll keep pressing. Unfortunately, I'm seeing the same at several schools around Ward 6.

Charles

---

**From:** Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Saturday, August 27, 2022 1:37:03 PM

**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
**April 13, 2023**

**To:** Allen, Charles (Council); Wynn, Monique (Council); White, Robert (Council)  
**Subject:** Re: Stuart Hobson back to school needs ASAP.

Resending with pictures attached.

<image0.jpeg>

<image1.jpeg>

On Aug 27, 2022, at 12:32 PM, Danielle Drissel <[REDACTED]>wrote:

I came to Stuart Hobson Middle School today and was appalled to find the commitments to DCPS building readiness were not met : HVAC flooding, broken door locks, mice, and failing ceiling tiles. As a 10th year DCPS parent I am disheartened the promises to our children were not met. Please let me how we can ensure DGS will address these 4 concerns.

1)the HVAC that underwent major repairs 3 weeks ago broke in a way that flooded out classroom 313. The flood had been stopped but the bandaid is unacceptable when a full HVAC replacement need was identified years ago

2) despite security concerns and ticket submissions the broken door lock in 313 and over a dozen other classrooms have not been replaced.

3) the rodent problem has not been resolved. A mouse ran down the hall on the first floor midday with many people about suggesting the problem with these timid nocturnal creatures is widespread.

4) ceiling tiles on first floor are sagging and show water damage. The attached photos show the disrepair our kids will see when they walk in on Monday.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your timely feedback.

<image001.jpg>

<image002.jpg>

<image003.jpg>

<image004.jpg>

<image005.jpg>

**Email thread started Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA advocacy chair in support of S. Cissna testimony before Committee on Facilities & Family Services Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**  
**April 13, 2023**

<image006.jpg>

<image007.jpg>

<image008.jpg>

**Written testimony of Sarah Denhardt Cissna before Committee on Facilities & Family Services  
Public Hearing on Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”  
April 13, 2023**

Chairperson Lewis George and members of the Committee, my name is Sarah Denhardt Cissna. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Capitol Hill Cluster School PTA at the public hearing on Bill 25-170, the School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023.

We remain proud parents of DCPS students attending Peabody Early Childhood Campus, Watkins Elementary School, and Stuart-Hobson Middle School. We have chosen DCPS and the Capitol Hill Cluster School because of the amazing opportunities these schools afford our children, despite the disheartening state of the DCPS facilities. My prior written testimony from the February 28, 2023 agency performance oversight hearing for the Department of General Services outlined myriad failures regarding HVAC, elevators, plumbing, pest control, and door locks. Today I will provide what limited updates I have regarding door locks and safety.

Because the DGS dashboard website does not list any pending lock repairs at any DCPS school, I’m not able to provide a full list of open work orders, but I am able to provide the following information:

- Pending lock repairs at Stuart-Hobson include the following work orders with ECDs as of April 5, 2023:
  - WO 722906, technician was unable to locate the door needing repair despite classroom number and photo
  - WO 722904, original ECD 12/27/22, updated to May 2023 – awaiting parts
  - WO 722905, original ECD 12/30/22, updated to May 2023 – awaiting parts order
  - WO 722410, original ECD 12/30/22, updated to May 2023 – no reason given
- At Watkins, a sign reading “Please do not close and lock door. I do not have a key.” was still posted on a classroom door during our final enrollment open houses this week.
- At Peabody, staff and caregivers have been using the 5<sup>th</sup> Street side door since before Winter Break as the C Street front doors do not fully close and lock. We have now also been advised to use only the northern of the two 5<sup>th</sup> Street doors as the southern door no longer closes by itself.

We know you have heard from your constituents about these issues at DCPS buildings across the city. The DGS dashboard system does not result in timely responses to meet the needs of DCPS schools, and since door lock work orders aren’t listed, they’re even harder to track down.

Why must school staff and community members spend time tracking down the status of door lock work orders when their time can be better spent supporting our students?

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Changing a door lock is a routine task that happens daily in our society. But this task appears to be insurmountable when it comes to the Department of General Services and classroom door locks within DC Public Schools.

Since neither DGS nor DCPS leadership appears willing to take ownership and address the system-wide failures to meet the needs of our schools, we appreciate the Council’s efforts at an intervention. In addition to submitting the School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023 for Mayoral approval, we urge you to pursue the following other immediate interventions:

- Reintroduce the School Work Order Integrity Amendment Act to require D.C. Department of General Services to get approval from a school principal, foreman, or other school employee before a work order ticket can be closed.
  - We encourage you to strengthen this proposal by also mandating DGS establish mechanisms for the leaders of individual schools to report when the dashboard does not accurately and comprehensively reflect pending work orders.
- Convene a roundtable on DGS procurement processes, using elevator and door lock acquisition as case studies.
- Request the DC Auditor leverage its prior work to assess whether DGS has sufficient employees and contractors dedicated to DCPS to meet quantified needs of our schools.
  - Consider a specific assessment of the discrete question of whether DGS has sufficient locksmiths on payroll and under contract to support the ongoing demand for replacement and repairs during school hours.
  - Consider a broader assessment of whether DGS has sufficient staff in the DGS Procurement and Facility Maintenance Divisions.
- Leverage federal resources including Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) to invest in DCPS facilities and system reform.
  - Among the baseline investments, ensure DGS’s maintenance budget for DCPS is fully funded timely, to cover all current contracts for service and repairs.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns. We need your help to keep our schools safe.

School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023  
Testimony of Mary Filardo, Executive Director, 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund  
April 13, 2023

I am here to speak about the School Security and Transparency Amendment Act. I think as a temporary measure, it can be passed, as is. However, I have 2 major concerns.

1. It is an ad hoc approach to facilities condition oversight and accountability.
2. It only applies to DCPS and not to charter schools.

In a systems approach to accountability and transparency, you will want to understand:

- **The full set of facility features that need inspection.**
  - Should there be inspections for health, safety, and security?
  - What about fire code inspections that are already done, but apparently not for charter schools.
  - The Healthy Schools Act requires lead in water inspections for all DCPS and charter schools and posting of results – a good model, but very limited accountability, since only on lead in water.
- **The standards against which the inspections are evaluated.**
  - Who will determine the standards against which assessments will be made?
  - E.g. must every school have a public address system and a security surveillance system?
  - How will the standard be developed and kept up to date?
- **The requirements for reporting and transparency.**
  - E.g. charter LEAs do not need to report their building conditions, capacities, or utilization. This makes all of the District’s boundary and educational facilities master planning deficient.
  - What are the consequences of non-compliance with standards or inspection access for any school or LEA—with holding the facility allowance? Fines?

The Council needs to be working on a systems approach to facilities oversight and accountability that applies to both sectors. To do this, the Council needs to modify a range of facilities and reporting policies to create a more coherent policy on facilities oversight and accountability that applies to both DCPS and charter schools.



Good morning Ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Frazier O'Leary and I am testifying this morning as an educator and the Ward 4 Representative on the State Board of Education. My testimony is the result of my observations of our Ward 4 schools.

These observations do not represent the Board as a whole but I am sure that they represent what is happening throughout our city.

The safety of everyone who works in our schools is of primary importance. No child or adult should have to work in a building that is not safe because the measures that we have provided do not work, are poorly maintained, or are neglected.

It shouldn't be too much to ask that all of our school buildings have working security systems, public address systems that are continually functional, and doors and windows that lock. These are basic needs

For much too long, there has been a lack of accountability from the appointed members of the executive branch who are responsible to take care of the basic safety needs of all who work and learn in our school buildings.

The epidemic of violence in school buildings that has seeped into our society is only one person with an automatic weapon away from having us join the line of mourners in our brother and sister states.

The reason that our schools no longer have open campuses is that in 1995 a student at Cardozo ,Antar Hall, was killed by one of his classmates who had left the campus at lunch time to get a weapon and came back.

The next day, secondary campuses were closed and security rules changed.

All of our students take the measures that they use daily to enter the buildings for granted but if the doors are not able to shut properly, or the public address system doesn't work, or if the alarms are dysfunctional, we are skating on thin ice.

This bill will finally allow there to be a continual link between the schools and DGS so that if something doesn't work, there will be an immediacy to fix it that has been lacking for too long.

All of those who are in the school buildings every day deserve no less than that.

DC Council Hearing on

B25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”

Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm noon

Cathy Reilly of Ward 4 Ed Alliance and SHAPPE

The problems with the security objectives are well documented. However I have been reluctant to publish them in the meeting notes. Often the way things rise to the top of a priority list is for them to be highlighted and made public. We support this bill. The publication of repairs needed to a security system actually put that school community at greater risk.

The repairs needed are significant. In meetings I have chaired, school leaders have spoken of exterior doors of secondary schools that do not close and securely lock; secondary schools without exterior doors that are alarmed. In school modernizations there are office spaces that do not have a PA system. When schools need to re-purpose space this has also been an issue, where the new use does not have any PA system, all offices should be required to have a PA.

The issue with interior doors has been long standing and is primarily in the newer buildings. DGS has outlined the 7 step process and noted that this is by far the most frequently reported issue. Is it at all possible that these repairs of interior locks specifically could be addressed by the custodial staff?

It is now over 15 years since some of the first schools were modernized. Their security surveillance systems are not all functional and are outdated to an extent that compromises their ability to keep their building secure. This is a small capital budget issue.

The DGS response noted that when there is a window longer than 45 days this rises to the level of reporting to the Council. That seems too long for the more serious issues particularly exterior doors.

While this bill addresses the requirement for DGS to work with each DCPS school’s principal to conduct a comprehensive assessment, the real need is for these things to actually be fixed. This will be more challenging in an environment where they are not public. There should be some metric where the satisfactory completion rate is noted. If these issues are not addressed in a timely manner, school communities will be forced to take the issue public in hopes of getting them resolved.

DGS notes that the inspections were formerly performed by DCPS and in the case of charter schools by the LEA. There will be cost in requiring this of DGS. Since they are responsible, it seems correct they should be part of the inspection. In noting the answers from the PCSB it does present the question: To what extent is the City Government responsible to the families in public charter schools for their safety? They are public schools. However the LEA is responsible as noted.

I appreciate your committee working on all of the aspects of this. Thank you.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Department of General Services**



Public Hearing on

**Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023”**

Testimony of

**Donny Gonzalez**

Deputy Director, Facilities Management Division

Department of General Services

Before the

Committee on Facilities and Family Services

**The Honorable Janeese Lewis George**

**Chairperson**

Council of the District of Columbia

Thursday April 13, 2023

12:00 PM

Live Via Zoom Broadcast

Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis George, Councilmembers, and staff of the Committee on Facilities and Family Services. I am Donny Gonzalez, Deputy Director for the Facilities Management Division of the Department of General Services. I am pleased to be here today to present testimony regarding Bill 25-170, the “School Security and Transparency Amendment Act of 2023.” Joining me here today is Jerome Jimason, Supervisory Management Analyst for the Facilities Intake Request Service (FIRST) Team, and Sean Link, Facilities Operations Specialist, in the Facilities Management Division.

This legislation would require DGS to complete an annual comprehensive security assessment to ensure the following lock, door, window, security camera, and security alarm maintenance requests have been identified and appropriately entered in the work order management system:

- All interior doors to instructional and regularly used administrative spaces and all exterior doors that do not close automatically and securely lock.
- All exterior windows that school personnel are not able to close, lock, or latch and may not prevent against improper entry.
- Public address systems that may not be clearly audible in all instructional and regularly used administrative spaces.
- Fire alarm systems that are not in full working order, and
- Security surveillance systems that are not fully operational with properly installed and oriented cameras, intrusion alarms, and proper connections to a central security operations hub.

Additionally, the bill builds on legislation that allows the agency to omit certain work order data for DCPS facilities from the public facing dashboard as they have been deemed security sensitive. Bill 25-170 extends these protections to work order data at Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) facilities. To balance transparency with school building safety, DGS provides the Council with a copy of all security sensitive work orders older than 45 days on a monthly basis. The agency supports this redaction to ensure that a hostile party will not have access to information that could be used nefariously to target these public facilities.

DGS has worked to upgrade its online public work order dashboard, which can be used to track all open work orders within DCPS buildings. The data includes specific location, description, prioritization, and aging periods for each work order listed on the dashboard. The dashboard also includes information on work performed in buildings. This reporting tool is a milestone for the agency and furthers DGS’s goal to provide accountability and a new level of transparency to school communities, especially given that the dashboard includes information on anticipated timeframes for when repairs will be completed. DGS is excited that, starting in October 2023, the dashboard will include work order data for all DPR facilities.

The Department of General Services supports the intent of Bill 25-170, but we would like to raise some considerations. DGS does not currently complete an annual comprehensive security assessment and instead relies on our partner agency DCPS to enter requests through the work order system. Each school building is unique and has different features and systems installed. This is also the case for DPR facilities. This legislation will need to account for resource and operational changes needed to implement these requirements. DGS building managers, DCPS staff, and school security personnel will work to address the criteria listed in the bill. DGS stands ready to work with the Committee and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer to calculate a fiscal impact for the legislation as funding will be needed to implement this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this measure. We are happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.