

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Workforce Investment Council**



FY2025-2026

Performance Oversight Testimony

Drew Hubbard, Executive Director

**Committee on Executive Administration & Labor
Performance Hearing**

**Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Anita Bond, Chairperson**

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Good morning, Chairperson Bonds, members of the Committee, and staff. I am Drew Hubbard, Executive Director of the [Workforce Investment Council \(WIC\)](#). I am pleased to be here today to provide an overview of our accomplishments over the past year and our strategic priorities for 2026.

I want to begin by thanking Mayor Bowser for her unwavering commitment to ensuring that every Washingtonian has a fair shot at success. I also want to thank you Chairperson Bonds and this Committee for your continued support and partnership in strengthening our workforce system. Furthermore, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to you and the other active members of the WIC Board for your exceptional leadership during this period of transition; your work to maximize the effectiveness of our public workforce system remains vital as we navigate a shifting economic landscape.

Strengthening Oversight, Monitoring, and Compliance

The WIC operates as the oversight body designated by authority of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and District law, responsible for ensuring that the District's workforce system and its activities adhere to federal requirements and align with and enhance our local workforce goals and initiatives.

I want to use my time this morning to discuss the District's workforce system: what we are seeing in the labor market, what we have learned, and how we have responded. Intention alone is not enough in a labor market as challenging as the one jobseekers face in 2026. Our workforce system must learn and adapt, and we must continue to make data informed improvements.

The labor market in 2026 is under real pressure. The District is experiencing continued federal layoffs and cascading impacts on related industries, rapid technological change, persistent shortages in key sectors, and rising cost-of-living pressures. At the same time, thousands of residents remain unemployed or underemployed, while employers across healthcare, information technology, construction, infrastructure, hospitality, and professional services report difficulty filling critical roles. Some key facts help to illustrate the aggregate impact on the District:

- **Unemployment Rate:** The District's unemployment rate rose to **6.5%** as of late 2025.
- **Federal Job Losses:** Over **72,000** federal and regional jobs have been lost since January 2025.
- **Ward-Specific Impact:** Wards 7 and 8 continue to see the highest unemployment rates, with some estimates reaching double digits during periods of economic contraction.

The WIC is not a direct service provider; rather, we function as the governance and accountability body to test whether alignment improves outcomes and to adjust the system when

it does not. In accordance with that role, we focused on system-level actions that can improve outcomes for District residents.

Business Engagement

Business engagement ranks as a key strategy in our efforts to align systems. To strengthen these efforts, I was pleased to be able to recruit a new Associate Director of Business Engagement, who is focused on expanding private partnerships and input and improving the quality of our training providers. A recent business roundtable hosted by the WIC served as the launchpad for regular touchpoints with the private sector, ensuring our training programs meet real-time employer needs. This was the first of what will be ongoing, structured conversations and convenings designed to understand hiring demands, skill gaps, and workforce pipelines, and to feed that information back into planning and training decisions.

Another key priority has been ensuring that the WIC Board better reflects the voice and perspective of the business community. With the assistance and support of the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments, 14 new board members have been identified, 11 of whom are business members representing the District's high-growth industries. We look forward to their swearing – in and onboarding in March 2026, when they will join our existing members to help steer the District's economic recovery.

Innovative Regional Initiatives: Talent Capital and Plan to Pivot

Under the leadership of the Deputy Mayor for Education and the assistance of the WIC, DOES, and other sister agencies, the District launched Talent Capital, a first-of-its-kind regional initiative housed at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Talent Capital is an AI-powered platform designed to provide displaced workers with personalized job matching, no-cost coaching, and rapid reskilling in high-demand fields like Data Science and AI. Given the magnitude of federal job losses and the economic impact across the District, Maryland, and Virginia, local partners rose to the moment to connect jobseekers to new roles and opportunities. The work to develop TalentCapital.AI also facilitated additional engagement with the business community on how to better meet regional workforce needs. Talentcapital.ai provides a real-time snapshot of the available jobs in the region and the skills required for open positions. As part of Talent Capital, residents are also receiving free coaching and training through local universities and partners.

In addition to TalentCapital.AI, the Plan to Pivot is a strategic workforce program designed by the WIC to support former federal workers impacted by regional layoffs in their transition to the private sector. The program consists of two primary components:

- Through a partnership with the DC Public Library, the WIC offers a series of workshops focused on job search preparation. Key topics include translating federal experience into

private-sector skills, using AI for resume updates, and adjusting professional mindsets. Over 90 residents registered for the workshops and over 26 currently in an accelerated Project Management Professional (PMP) training sponsored by BuildWithin and in partnership with DOES, which is funding the trainings. The WIC trained over 150 front-line workers to ensure the District's workforce system can meet this surge in jobseeker demand, particularly with this new demographic. The WIC developed a six-module curriculum to train professional career coaches on the specific nuances of federal-to-private-sector transitions.

The initiative works alongside the Talent Capital platform to provide a comprehensive support network for displaced professionals in the D.C. region.

2026 Priorities and Vision

Our vision for the future is a workforce system that is nimble, data-driven, and equitable. A system where residents can see clear pathways to opportunity in high-growth, high-wage job sectors. A system where employers trust that engagement leads to results. And a system where public dollars are aligned, transparent, and accountable. In 2026, we will continue to work toward that vision with our sister agencies, Council, and business partners by completing and disseminating career pathway maps; increasing Board engagement to drive the priorities of the workforce system based on local needs; and scaling the Talent Capital initiative to reach more residents.

Our top priorities for 2026 include:

1. Submission of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan Modification
1. Completion and dissemination of the Career Pathway Maps.
2. Hosting the 2026 DC Workforce Summit on September 25th.
3. Increase Board engagement to that they are driving the priorities of the District's workforce system based on labor market and economic data and regional conditions.
4. Working with DME, DOES, nonprofit, employer, and regional partners to scale the Talent Capital platform to reach more residents.
5. Convening quarterly Business Roundtables to stay ahead of labor market trends.

I want to conclude by thanking the dedicated Workforce Investment Council staff for their commitment to excellence. Their hard work ensures our system runs with the efficacy and efficiency our residents and business partners deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.