



Guide to DC Budget on Food

The annual budget process is where decisions are made about how DC spends its money – from food assistance and school meals to grants for food businesses. Residents' voices are crucial to shaping a budget that supports an equitable, healthy, and sustainable food system. Use this guide to identify the program or issue you want to give feedback on, which agency and committee oversee, and steps on how to share your thoughts with decision makers.

How and when is the DC budget decided?

Agency-level Planning

Agencies submit their budget requests to the Mayor for the next fiscal year (from October 1 to September 30).

Mayor's Proposal

Mayor submits a proposed budget to the DC Council.

Final Budget

Council Committees make changes and the full Council votes on a final budget.

FALL

JAN - FEB

MID-MAR

MAR - APR

MAY - JUNE

Performance Oversight Hearings

Council Committees hold public hearings about how each Agency is serving residents needs and their effectiveness in implementing last year's budget.

Budget Oversight Hearings

Council Committees hold public hearings about each Agency's proposed budgets for the next fiscal year.

Which agencies and Council Committees oversee vital food services in the District?

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Department of Health

- Healthy Corner Stores
- Medically-tailored Home Delivered Meals
- Joyful Markets
- Grocery Plus
- SNAP-Ed and DC WIC
- WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs
- Produce Plus
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program

Department of Health Care Finance

- Produce Rx
- Medicaid nutrition service coverage

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Department of Human Services

- SNAP or food stamps
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- Summer EBT
- Emergency Shelters
- Office of Migrant Services

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

- Healthy Schools Fund
- Healthy Tots Program
- CACFP
- Healthy Food Curriculum Grant
- DC Youth Meals (Summer meals)

DC Public Schools

- School meals

COMMITTEE ON EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION & LABOR

Department of Aging and Community Living

- Community Dining Programs
- Home Delivered Meals

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Department of Correction

- Meals served at DC Jail

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

Department of Energy and Environment

- Urban Agriculture Grants
- Urban Farm Tax Abatement
- Green Purchasing Program
- Sustainable DC
- Donation & Reuse Grants
- Ditch the Disposables Grants

Department of Transportation

- Farmers Market Permits

COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Department of Small and Local Business Development

- Robust Retail
- Aspire, DREAM
- Food Waste Grants

Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development

- Food Access Fund
- Nourish DC
- Resilient Food System Infrastructure

COMMITTEE ON RECREATION, LIBRARIES & YOUTH AFFAIRS

Department of Park and Recreation

- Community Gardens
- DPR Farms
- DC Youth Meals (Summer meals)

Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services

- Meals served at Youth Services Center

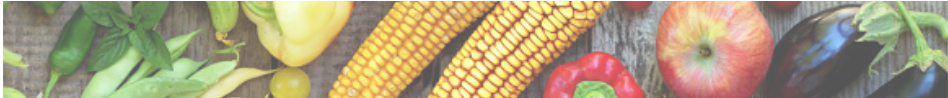
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS & OPERATIONS

Department of Public Works

- Curbside Compost
- Food waste drop-off at Farmers Markets
- Zero Waste DC

Department of Licensing & Consumer Protection

- Business and vending licenses



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



Testify at a Hearing

1. You must register online at least 2 business days before the hearing.
2. Click the hearing you want to testify on [the Council's Hearings website](#).
3. Click the "Register to Testify" box, then complete and submit the form.
4. If you need language & ASL interpretation, inform the committee 5 business days before the hearing.



Submit a written or voicemail testimony

1. Click the hearing you want to testify on [the Council's Hearings website](#).
2. Click the "Submit Testimony" box and complete the form.
3. Upload your statement or type your testimony directly onto the form. Then submit.
4. To leave a voicemail testimony, contact the committee for instructions.
5. Typically, you have 10 days after the hearing to submit.









Contact Committee or your Councilmember





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

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

Tips for writing testimony

-  Thank Committee Chair for convening the hearing and greet any other Councilmembers present.
-  Briefly introduce yourself and/or your organization/business.
-  Explain the issue you care about and the program or service you are testifying about.
-  Express any concerns or suggestions you have to improve agency services and programs.
-  Share personal stories about your experience. Provide specific examples where possible.
-  Close by thanking the Councilmember(s) for listening and clearly re-stating your recommendations.

Tips for testifying live

-  You typically have 3 minutes to speak. Practice reading aloud. A 3-minute testimony is between 450 and 600 words, or one page single spaced.
-  You can also submit written testimony, which can be as long as you like and include more information than you read aloud.
-  After you testify, you may be asked questions. It is ok if you don't know the answer to a question. You can always say, "I'll get back to you."
-  You will not be assigned a specific time to testify and you will be expected to be present when your name is called. You may estimate when this will be based on the witness list that is shared the day before the hearing. When it is your turn to testify, you will be called on. If you're testifying virtually, you will need to have access to Zoom. The virtual hearing will be publicly visible.