

## **A District that Works: The Mayor's Strategy for Workforce Development**

### **The Workforce problem**

Our current workforce system is not meeting the needs of low-income, less-skilled residents, nor is it meeting the needs of those businesses that have jobs. An analysis by the Brookings Greater Washington Research Program identified between 51,000 to 61,000 working-age low-income District residents (below 200 percent of the poverty line) in need of workforce development programs to increase their skills, employment and earnings.

### **A New Vision for Workforce Development**

Under the Mayor's vision for the workforce system, any District resident who wants and needs a job, or needs help in advancing out of low-wage employment in the future, will be able to readily access the opportunities that exist. Furthermore, due to improvements in the system in the next two years, 2,500 residents will be placed in jobs, will advance in their current jobs or will be placed in career and technical education programs designed to lead to employment.

### **A Comprehensive Workforce Strategy**

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty has established 3 strategic goals and accompanying implementation strategies to achieve his vision and the target of assisting 2,500 residents achieve employment. These strategies have been shaped by the research and recommendations of the Brookings Institution and in consultation with District residents, employers, unions and non-profit providers during the transition,

**Strategic Goal #1: Organize publicly-funded workforce development programs around specific industry sectors and occupations that are in-demand in the city and the region, and that offer jobs and career ladders for people with less than a four-year degree.**

### **Implementation Strategies:**

1. Work with education and training institutions to develop a series of programs along the skills continuum, with clear transitions from programs at one skill level to another including:
  - a. Develop a bridge program for GED students to specifically prepare them for post-secondary education, including study skills, admissions and financial aid, and time management.
  - b. Expand the number of career and technical education-related certificates and two-year degrees. These programs must be designed for low-skilled adults and tied into the local and regional labor market.
  - c. Accelerate the implementation of Career Academies in DCPS, and also support Career Academies in public chartered schools. Launch three in the 07-08 school year, and three more in the 08-09 school year.
  - d. Provide additional resources, assistance and incentives for programs serving adults with very low skills (below 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade), for whom post-secondary education or other technical skills training is not a realistic short-term goal.
2. Support a stronger leadership role for the Workforce Investment Council to develop workforce policy and engage the private sector to create a strategic workplace plan, as well as oversee the workforce investment system.

**Strategic Goal #2: Develop and support programs for ex-offenders and disconnected youth, who are likely to experience difficulty in succeeding in the labor market.**

**Implementation Strategies:**

1. Create a transitional jobs program for ex-offenders providing short-term, wage-paying subsidized jobs, coupled with supportive services and assistance finding an unsubsidized job.
2. Expand youth community service employment programs for disconnected youth by enhancing and expanding existing programs

**Strategic Goal #3: Review and improve the current strategies, services, and performance of publicly funded workforce programs.**

**Implementation Strategies:**

1. Complete a thorough review of the Department of Employment Service, its staff, services, programs, and working relationships with other agencies and organizations
  - a. Develop a plan to improve the services offered through the One-Stop employment centers.
  - b. Review the list of training providers with whom DOES contracts to determine if they offer the appropriate mix of services.
  - c. Review and, if necessary, improve operations of the Summer Youth Employment Program, the Youth Leadership Institute, programs for out-of-school youth, the Transitional Employment Program, and pre-apprenticeship programs.
2. Review all publicly-funded workforce and education programs, including programs operated directly by government agencies, those operated by nonprofit organizations using public funds, and programs for which workforce development is one component in a broader mission.
3. Hold quarterly CapStat sessions on the progress towards developing a more effective workforce system.