Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Oversight Hearing on the Office of the City Administrator

Testimony of:
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City Administrator

Before the

Committee on Executive Administration and Labor
The Honorable Anita Bonds, Chairperson

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Good morning, Chairperson Bonds, members, and staff of the Committee on Executive Administration and Labor. I am Kevin Donahue, and I have the privilege of serving as the City Administrator. I am here to discuss my office's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget. I am joined by Jenny Reed, the Director of the Office of Budget and Performance Management, and Dr. Amber Hewitt, the Chief Equity Officer.

Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget reflects many tough choices, yet enables the District Government to continue delivering world-class programs and services by making the necessary investments that focus on the essential pillars of long-term growth for Washington, DC.

Functions of the Office of the City Administrator

The Office of the City Administrator (OCA) serves as the central hub of District Government operations. We prepare and manage the District's budget, like a household balances its checkbook. We monitor agency budgets throughout the year to try to predict what costs the District will see in the coming years, and evaluate whether programs are effectively using allocated funds. We work closely with agencies to set operational goals and implement the legislative actions and policy decisions of Mayor Bowser and the Council. My office is also the hub of coordination for several critical priorities, including creating a more racially equitable city and preventing gun violence.

OCA Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Proposal

Mayor Bowser's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget for the OCA is $10.3 million, consisting entirely of local funds. The OCA proposed budget includes $9.3 million for personal services costs, which funds 62 FTEs, a decrease of 10.1 FTEs from FY24. And it includes almost $1 million in non-personal services costs, a decrease of $1.1 million from FY24. Overall, OCA's proposed FY25 budget represents a decrease of $1.8 million from the approved FY24 budget.

Projects and Initiatives

The proposed FY25 budget funds several OCA initiatives with citywide impacts. I will summarize the impacts made by each of the offices within the OCA.

Office of Gun Violence Prevention

Preventing gun violence is one of our highest priorities. Mayor Bowser's FY25 Budget for the Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) is $1.2 million and supports 6 FTEs. OGVP

coordinates the citywide Building Blocks DC public health strategy for gun violence prevention by working in partnership with all agencies who have a potential impact on preventing or reducing gun violence. OGVP ensures that coordination is taking place across DC Government and holds agencies accountable for their gun violence prevention work. Since first taking office, Mayor Bowser has made historic-sized investments in gun violence prevention efforts. Those investments are heavily focused on creating employment opportunities and wraparound services to meet the financial, health, education, and housing needs of persons most at-risk of gun violence.

We know we cannot do this work without collaborating with District residents. Through the Building Blocks DC mini-grants, OGVP has awarded almost $3 million directly to community members, providing opportunities for District residents to implement their solutions to assist in breaking the cycles of violence and addressing the needs they see in their communities. The Spring mini-grants are being implemented now and we will be announcing the Summer grants by June.

Office of Racial Equity

Mayor Bowser's FY25 Budget funds several initiatives aimed at addressing racial equity, including flood resilience upgrades for homes at risk for flooding, learning acceleration strategies through education training in literacy and math, high-impact tutoring, an expanded school improvement program, and expanded emergency 911 operations.

Dr. Amber Hewitt and her team at the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) are continuing their work to build an infrastructure and further embed racial equity principles into government operations. ORE released the District-wide Racial Equity Action Plan on February 1, 2024, and is working with 25 District agencies to develop agency-level Racial Equity Action Plans. ORE has completed 50 racial equity training sessions since October 2021, attended by 1,659 District Government managers and staff, to improve staff understanding of the legacy of opportunities and inequities in the District, develop a shared language of racial equity, increase skills to analyze policies and practices through a racial equity lens, and highlight tools that equip personnel to better identify and address issues of racial equity.

ORE and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer are developing the District's first Racial Equity Dashboard. Once completed later this fiscal year, the dashboard will be a comprehensive, multi-page, online platform providing timely, relevant, and accessible data on 43 racial equity

indicators across seven dimensions of life in the District. The OCA FY25 budget includes funding to refine the dashboard and add additional key racial equity indicators. The FY25 budget will also allow ORE to continue community engagement efforts to build on the 16 engagements that happened in FY23 and two engagements in FY24 to date.

Internal Services

Our Internal Services (IS) team, led by Assistant City Administrator Chris Rodriguez, is helping DC Government run more efficiently. IS will be working to improve the agency hiring process, make sure we are adequately utilizing space in the District's portfolio, and look to smart contracting to save taxpayer dollars. The IS team is assisting the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) in its efforts to operationalize Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, utilizing best practices and policies to safely and effectively roll out AI initiatives to make our government work better.

Office of Budget and Performance Management

The Office of Budget and Performance Management (OBPM), led by Director Jenny Reed, leverages data, strategic planning, and innovation to ensure the efficient use of public funds and drive continuous improvements to agency programs and services. The OBPM team is responsible for formulating the District Government's annual operating and capital budgets and administering our annual performance planning process. The team also leads the District's strategic planning and program development work.

The Lab @ DC

Lastly, I want to highlight the work of The Lab @ DC and how they use data, resident input, and rigorous science to help us answer important questions facing our government. Our investment in The Lab and Performance team through the Launch, Evaluation, and Monitoring (LEM) hub has generated better-informed budgetary and programmatic decisions through ongoing reporting, data analysis, and an impact evaluation.

The Lab continues to work with the Department of Human Services on the implementation and evaluation of Career MAP; the Mayor's FY25 budget includes $18.9 million for this program. More than 500 families are currently enrolled for the five-year pilot and receive rental assistance, career coaching, and cash payments to cover the loss of government assistance as families earn

more. The Lab helped design the program and is evaluating its impact on jobs, income, and performance in school using a randomized evaluation.

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I am proud of the work done by OCA this past year. I am equally proud to work in an administration where so many of our agencies and employees go above and beyond in ensuring our residents are well served. We know the upcoming fiscal year will present many new challenges. I have full confidence that we will meet those challenges and excel in moving our city forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the role of the Office of the City Administrator and our proposed FY25 budget. I am available to answer any questions.