

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR



**Public Oversight Hearing on the
Proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Budget of the
Office of the City Administrator**

Testimony of
Kevin Donahue
City Administrator

Before the
Committee on Housing and Executive Administration
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Anita Bonds, Chairperson

Virtual Hearing

June 22, 2021
9:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chairperson Bonds and members of the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration. For the record, my name is Kevin Donahue and I am the City Administrator of the District of Columbia. With me are members of my staff, including Assistant City Administrator Jay Melder; Jenny Reed, the Director of OCA's Office of Budget and Performance Management (OBPM); Dr. Amber Hewitt, the District's Chief Equity Officer; and Linda Harllee-Harper, the Director of Gun Violence Prevention.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget of the Office of the City Administrator (OCA).

While we continue to work to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayor Bowser's FY22 budget remains focused on the health, opportunity, prosperity, and equity of all District residents. We are committed to ensuring that District residents in all eight wards have access to a high-quality public education, affordable housing, robust economic opportunities, a comprehensive and high-quality public health infrastructure, and safe neighborhoods.

OCA's Functions

The Office of the City Administrator works to achieve those goals by serving as the central hub for the administration of the District government. OCA is responsible for putting together and managing the District's budget, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the government, and working with agencies across the District on complex projects, such as our COVID-19 response. In addition, two new positions that lead critical initiatives for the District sit within OCA: the Chief Equity Officer, who leads the new Office of Racial Equity, and the Director of Gun Violence Prevention, who leads Building Blocks DC. I will speak in more detail about each office later in my testimony.

FY22 Budget Proposal

To fund OCA's work, the proposed FY22 budget for the office totals \$10.4 million, consisting entirely of local funds. Of that amount, \$1.735 million is American Rescue Plan Act funding that is treated by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer as local funds. Approximately \$9 million of OCA's total budget is dedicated to personal services and approximately \$1.38 million are dedicated to non-personal services. OCA's proposed personal services budget supports 65 FTEs, a decrease of 8 FTEs from Fiscal Year 2021. Overall, OCA's proposed FY22 budget represents a decrease of \$482,000, or 4.4%, from the approved Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

OCA's proposed FY22 budget includes two significant changes from the FY21 budget. First, the Office of Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining, which is currently a budgetary program within OCA, will instead be established as a standalone agency, separate from OCA. This change will allow for greater administrative clarity and aligns with the organization of the Council's budget hearings. The second significant change to OCA's budget in FY22 will be the addition of three temporary civic design engineers, four temporary social and data scientists, and two temporary performance and data analysts to staff the Launch, Evaluation, and Monitoring Hub, which I will also discuss later in my testimony.

Projects and Initiatives

OCA's FY21 budget and proposed FY22 budget support a number of priority projects.

Returning to the Workplace

One of OCA's major initiatives over the past several months has been planning for and guiding agencies to return safely to the workplace as our public health metrics have improved significantly. Managers and supervisors returned to the office for at least three days per week beginning on June 7, and all other staff will return to the office beginning July 12. The return-to-the-workplace initiative has been overseen by the Assistant City Administrator and the Internal Services team. I also want to take a moment to thank the thousands of government staff who have been working in-person since the start of this pandemic.

Overseeing American Rescue Plan Act Funds

Another major OCA initiative in FY21 and FY22 will be the District-wide oversight of American Rescue Plan Act funds and the District's compliance with the associated federal reporting requirements. To support this initiative, OCA will establish the Launch, Evaluation, and Monitoring Hub which will help agencies launch programs with a user-friendly and equitable resident experience; embed data collection and performance monitoring into program management; evaluate the programs using rigorous and transparent scientific techniques; and make informed decisions about which investments have positive and significant impacts on residents.

Gun Violence Prevention

Gun violence prevention is another key area that OCA will focus on in FY22. Building Blocks DC, led by the Director of Gun Violence Prevention, will continue working in partnership with impacted communities to apply a public health approach to reduce violence involving firearms by focusing on the people and places in the District most at risk. As part of this effort, the Director and her office will work to connect District residents to mental health services, stable housing, good paying jobs, educational opportunities, and other critical supports. In addition, Building Blocks DC will partner with the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services to distribute \$1.5 million in grant funding to individuals and local organizations to implement skill-building

programs, neighborhood beautification projects, and community engagement programs to reduce gun violence.

Office of Racial Equity

In addition, OCA in FY22 and the remainder of FY21 will continue its work to address racial disparities and build racial equity throughout the District. OCA's Chief Equity Officer recently hired a communications and engagement specialist and is actively recruiting for two positions with the goal of fully staffing OCA's Office of Racial Equity by the beginning of FY22. The mission of the Office of Racial Equity is to eliminate racial inequities in the District by providing leadership, guidance, and technical assistance to engage and embed the concepts of racial equity into all facets of the District government's daily operations. One of the Office's first objectives will be to create a measurement and data strategy to enable the development of the District's first racial equity dashboard. This will be a collaborative process with agency leadership, citizen experts, the Council's Office of Racial Equity, and external stakeholders. The Office will also work with agencies to develop racial equity action plans based on root cause analyses of the underlying factors driving racial inequities and a racial equity training series to help normalize conversations around race.

Performance Management Oversight and The Lab @ DC

Lastly, I want to focus on OCA's performance management program and the work of The Lab @ DC. A key goal of OCA is to develop and implement a data-informed and results-driven performance management program throughout District government. This process included an analysis of research studies, case studies, and efforts of other jurisdictions related to the proposed enhancement. The performance team also oversees and supports the performance planning and reporting process across all District agencies. In FY22, we will continue this work along with reviewing and discussing agencies' key performance indicators and strategic initiatives throughout the year.

The Lab @ DC is also critical in establishing a data-informed culture throughout the District government. The Lab will continue applying a rigorous, scientific approach to the way the District government develops and implements government policies and programs. For example, The Lab will assist the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to evaluate a pilot of discounted transit fares for low-income residents. This pilot will help us understand how to make transit affordable, effective, and equitable. The Lab will also build a predictive model to help identify high-risk drivers to support DDOT's Vision Zero work and will be involved in the District's efforts to pilot and evaluate alternatives to police dispatch for 911 calls as part of the District's ongoing work to evaluate and reimagine our public safety efforts.

Conclusion

In concluding my testimony, I want to tell you how extremely proud I am of OCA's work this past year—and the work of so many of our agencies and employees. I am especially grateful for their efforts during the public health emergency. OCA staff led the Modified Government Operations and Mission support divisions of the Emergency Operations Center, oversaw the local strategic stockpile of personal protective equipment, and rebuilt the District's budget to account for both an initial loss in local revenue and a subsequent increase in federal funds under the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act. These are just a sample of the many activities the dedicated staff of OCA participated in during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the role of the Office of the City Administrator and our proposed FY22 budget. That concludes my testimony and I am available to answer any questions you may have.