

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the City Administrator



**Performance Oversight Hearing on the
Office of the City Administrator**

Testimony of:
Kevin Donahue
City Administrator

Before the

Committee on Housing and the Executive
The Honorable Anita Bonds, Chairperson

February 25, 2022
Noon

Good afternoon, Chairperson Bonds, and members and staff of the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration. I am Kevin Donahue and I have the privilege of serving as the City Administrator. I am here today to discuss the performance of the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) during Fiscal Year 2021 and Fiscal Year 2022.

I am joined today by members of my team:

- Assistant City Administrator Lindsey Parker
- Director of the Office of Budget and Performance Management, Jenny Reed
- The District's Chief Equity Officer, Dr. Amber Hewitt; and
- The District's Director of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, Linda Harlee Harper.

Last year, I stated that our performance oversight hearing was unique as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to impact our city. I want to thank our District Government employees who have kept our city running and continue to provide services to our residents and businesses. I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the employees, friends, and residents we have lost over the past year to COVID-19.

I am proud of my Office's staff who have been involved in nearly every aspect of the District's COVID-19 response. OCA's work this past year exemplified our mission to coordinate and facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of Mayor Bowser's programs and policies by providing leadership, support, and oversight of District agencies.

Functions of the Office of the City Administrator

The Office of the City Administrator serves as the central hub of District Government operations. We prepare and manage the District's budget, like a household balances its checkbook. This means we monitor agency budgets throughout the year, try to predict what costs the District will see in the coming years, secure funds from the federal government, and evaluate whether programs are effectively using budgeted funds. We work closely with agencies to set operational goals and implement the legislative actions and policy decisions of Mayor Bowser and the Council. We also negotiate working conditions and compensation terms with unions in the District through the Office of Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining.

Coordinating the District's COVID-19 Response

As the agency responsible for the day-to-day management of District Government, OCA has been intensely involved in our coordinated response to the pandemic. The Internal Services team, led by Assistant City Administrator Lindsey Parker, has been working closely with every District agency to ensure they have what they need to maintain services delivery to our residents throughout the pandemic. Thanks to their efforts, 60 percent of the District Government's workforce was able to shift to telework with just a week's notice in 2020 and then safely return to the office in June 2021.

Our public safety, transportation, public works, health, and human services teams never stopped coming to their offices and worksites throughout the pandemic. We provided these essential employees with the PPE, equipment, and resources they needed to be safe at work. This allowed for operational agility in our response and recovery – from ensuring students could return to their classrooms in February 2021, to supporting the largest expansion in our city's history of voting options during last year's elections, to setting up and running covid testing sites at many of our fire stations and libraries, to the strategic sourcing and stockpiling of essential PPE despite severe supply chain challenges. I am very proud that in the past month, we have opened full-service COVID centers in all eight wards that provide residents with vaccinations, booster shots, PCR tests, and take-home rapid tests.

The District is firmly committed to having a safe work environment for its employees as they deliver critical services to our residents. We implemented a vaccine requirement for District employees. We also provided paid time off for those who contracted the virus and for employees to get vaccinated.

I am pleased that through our efforts, 88 percent of all District Government employees to date are fully vaccinated.

Budget, Performance Management, and The Lab @ DC

Maintaining essential government operations in the midst of the pandemic requires us to be excellent financial stewards as we anticipated a significant decrease in revenue and an increase in need from our residents facing layoffs and evictions.

The Office of Budget and Performance Management, led by Jenny Reed, leverages data, innovation, and strategic planning to create priority objectives that guide investments. OBPM formulates the budget and tracks agencies performance through quarterly performance cluster meetings where each agency's key performance indicators and strategic initiatives are reviewed and discussed.

The budget team maximized the use of federal funds to meet District needs and successfully secured reimbursement for all expenses eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance. The District's Recovery Plan will infuse over \$2 billion of federal relief funds for our residents and businesses.

Through our budget, Mayor Bowser has made significant investments in affordable housing, a priority we share with our residents. We also know it's important to connect residents to resources for homeownership. In Fiscal Year 2021, OCA's Lab @ DC, in collaboration with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, created the user-friendly website, [FrontDoor.dc.gov](https://frontdoor.dc.gov).

Building Blocks DC and the Office of Gun Violence Prevention

As we continue with our COVID response, we recognize there's a second public health crisis facing our community – gun violence. In February 2021, Mayor Bowser launched Building Blocks DC to provide a whole-of-government approach to addressing gun violence using public health tools. This strategy is designed to connect programs and services to individuals impacted by gun violence, as well as remediate environmental issues in neighborhoods most affected by gun violence.

Linda Harllee Harper serves as the District's first Director of Gun Violence Prevention and in this role, she is responsible for developing policy and strategic initiatives to support the vision of the Office as well as advise on budget allocations, coordinate with District agencies and implement a robust community engagement process. She led the Gun Violence Prevention Emergency Operations Center which was our short-term vehicle to coordinate agencies while we developed a long-term, sustainable process. That resulted in the creation of the Office of Gun Violence

Prevention. Its mission is to have a citywide view of all the work underway to reduce gun violence, including coordinating cross-agency efforts and measuring the impact of those efforts.

Mayor Bowser also made a historic-sized investment in gun violence prevention efforts. Those investments focused heavily on creating employment opportunities that are specifically set aside for persons most at risk of gun violence so we can provide them a pathway to financial stability. These employment opportunities also include wraparound services needed to meet the health, education, and housing needs of participants. It includes 150 job training slots at the Department of Employment Services; 110 jobs at the Department of Public Works; and doubling the size of Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement's Pathways Program.

We also provided grant funding to our residents and community-based organizations to help them break the cycles of violence and address the needs they see in their communities.

Office of Racial Equity

In April 2021, Mayor Bowser appointed Dr. Amber Hewitt as the District's first Chief Equity Officer to lead the newly created Office of Racial Equity (ORE). ORE's mission is to ensure policy decisions and programs are evaluated through a racial equity lens. Dr. Hewitt and her team's accomplishments include:

- Establishing the Interagency Committee on Racial Equity to advise on the development and implementation of racial equity plans, tools, and resources.
- Creating the Racial Equity Pilot Cohort, a partnership with 12 District agencies to test racial equity tools, complete departmental assessments, and develop agency-specific racial equity action plans.
- Establishing the Racial Equity Data Standards Pilot Project, which collaborates with four District agencies and community partners to develop guidance on race and ethnicity data collection and analysis.
- ORE is currently working on a District-wide strategic plan and Racial Equity Action Plan.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, the Bower Administration remains focused on recovering from the pandemic and addressing the priorities of District residents. We will continue to:

- Establish the Launch, Evaluation, and Monitoring (LEM) Hub to track the effectiveness of the more than \$2 billion in American Rescue Plan Act funding we expect the District to receive.
- Develop plans and strategies on the “future of government.” We will strategically analyze the District Government workforce, facilities, contracting, and technology and identify changes that are needed to meet the future of government.
- Coordinate key aspects of the District’s COVID-19 response and recovery, to safely maintain core services and maximize the use and impact of federal relief funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to share highlights of my team’s work. I am prepared to take your questions.