

# Mayoral Food Questionnaire

In 2026 food organizations local to the District convened to elevate food issues in the Mayoral election.

The [DC Food Forum](#) exists to ensure candidates engage deeply with the realities of food access, equity, and sustainability in DC. We seek to elevate the voices and lived experiences of residents, surface the root causes of food inequities, and secure clear commitments to addressing them. Through a united, nonpartisan coalition, we aim to make candidate priorities transparent and advance accountability for a more just food system.

Partners:

- Dreaming Out Loud
- DC Green Scheme
- DC Jail Food Working Group
- DC Hunger Solutions
- FRESHFARM
- DC Greens
- DC Good Food Purchasing Program

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Candidate Name \*

Gary Goodweather

## Food Access & Retail

The Nourish DC and Food Access Fund programs distributed \$23 million to food retail in Wards 5, 7, and 8, but FY2026 is the last year of federal funding. Do you commit to funding these programs to sustain food retail in low-access areas?

- Yes
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Existing District incentives have not yet addressed the grocery gap in Wards 7 & 8 east of the river. How would you expand and sustain full-service food retail in these communities? What concrete commitments will you make to ensure that community-rooted groups—like our Ward 7 and 8 [Community Advisory Board](#)—have real authority and influence in shaping the District’s food and health equity agenda?

My approach starts with acknowledging that current incentives have not gone far enough. I would expand full-service food retail east of the river by increasing locally funded incentives tied to long-term affordability requirements, streamlining permitting for grocers, and pairing retail investment with safety, transit access, and workforce development so stores can actually succeed and stay open. I also support using District dollars to sustain and grow programs like Nourish DC beyond federal funding, while prioritizing community-based and locally owned food businesses rather than relying only on large chains. On governance, I am committed to giving community-rooted groups real authority. That means formalizing bodies like the Ward 7 and 8 Community Advisory Board with decision-making power over funding priorities, requiring agencies to co-design food policy with them, and building accountability measures so their recommendations directly shape budgets and implementation.

## Federal Food Benefits & the Safety Net

Would you guarantee a multi-year commitment to DC's participation in SUN Bucks, ensuring SNAP- and Medicaid-eligible families can access federal funds for groceries during the summer?

Yes

No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Federal changes through H.R. 1 will expose approximately 140,000 DC SNAP clients to new work requirements and time limits for the first time in over 27 years, shift significant administrative and benefit costs to the District, and cut eligibility for asylum seekers and refugees. DC food prices have also [risen 4%](#) over the past year. How would you protect DC residents' access to food benefits, and how would you use the District's local supplement authority to address gaps in federal coverage?

My goal is clear. No DC resident should lose access to food because of federal policy changes. I would move quickly to protect access by backfilling federal cuts with District funding and using DC's local supplement authority to keep people enrolled and benefits stable. That includes creating a locally funded SNAP supplement to offset reduced federal benefits, extending eligibility for groups excluded under federal changes (including asylum seekers and refugees), and simplifying recertification to prevent people from losing aid due to new work requirements and administrative barriers. I would also invest in outreach and case management to help residents navigate new rules, while pairing benefits with local food access programs to account for rising costs.

### **Institutional Food — Schools & Agencies**

Do you support expanding Universal School Meals — covering breakfast and lunch at no cost — to all DC schools participating in the National School Lunch Program, including public, charter, and private schools?

- Yes
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

The Secure DC Act directed the Department of Corrections to improve nutrition standards and create workforce opportunities around food, but implementation has gone nowhere due to lack of funding. Do you commit to funding these reforms?

- Yes
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

From school cafeterias to jails to homeless shelters to DC agencies, the District serves food to thousands of residents every day. How would you raise the quality and nutritional standards of that food, expand the [Good Food Purchasing Program](#) to all DC agencies, and ensure that public food dollars support both local businesses and community values?

I would raise food quality by setting clear, enforceable nutrition standards across all District agencies and fully fund their implementation from schools, to shelters, to corrections. I support expanding the DC Good Food Purchasing Program citywide, requiring agencies to meet benchmarks on nutrition, local sourcing, fair labor, and sustainability. I would use the District's purchasing power to prioritize contracts with local and community rooted businesses, including minority owned vendors, while building pipelines for workforce development. Strong oversight and public reporting would ensure agencies meet these standards and that public food dollars reflect DC's values and directly benefit its communities.

## Food, Health & Community

DC's urban farms serve as both critical food sources and community gathering spaces. Do you commit to robust support for urban agriculture, including working directly with growers to reduce the regulatory barriers that make it difficult to sell food locally and regionally?

- Yes
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Fresh produce and food access are increasingly recognized as clinical interventions that reduce health disparities. How would you embed "Food is Medicine" programs into DC's budget and healthcare systems, and what steps would you take to ensure that a resident's health is no longer largely determined by their race or zip code?

I would embed Food is Medicine into DC's budget by creating a dedicating funding stream to integrate produce prescriptions, medically tailored meals, and nutrition counseling into Medicaid and DC Health programs. I would partner with local providers, community organizations, and food businesses to deliver these services in the neighborhoods most affected by diet related illness. To address disparities tied to race and zip code, I would target investments in ward 5, 7, and 8, align food access with primary care and public health systems, and track outcomes to ensure resources are reducing chronic disease gaps. The goal is to treat food as a core part of healthcare while addressing the structural inequalities that drive poor health outcomes.

I will also build indoor vertical farms throughout the city and employ DC residents. The city will produce food for itself locally and consistently.

## Composting & Food Waste

Do you commit to expanding residential curbside composting to all DC households, including multifamily buildings, and requiring District agencies that serve food to compost their organics?

Yes

No

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What timeline would you set for expanding composting to multifamily homes:

The goal would be to fully expand curbside composting to multifamily buildings within my first term. The rollout would begin in year one with priority implementation in Wards 5, 7, and 8. This would be paired with investments in infrastructure, education, and building-level compliance support to ensure participation is practical and sustained across all housing types.

What timeline would you set for expanding composting to food businesses:

A full rollout to all food businesses within the first two years of my first term. The first year would prioritize high-volume food generators like restaurants, schools, hospitals, and large institutions. The second year would complete expansion to all remaining small and independent food businesses with technical assistance and compliance support.

What timeline would you set for expanding composting to DC agencies:

All DC agencies that serve or handle food within two years. The first year would require large agencies and high-volume food operations to begin composting with full infrastructure and contracting support in place. The second year would complete rollout across all remaining agencies and include enforcement, staff training, and compliance monitoring to ensure consistent participation.

**Your Food Vision for DC**

The Mayors Proposed FY27 budget cuts the Food Policy team. If elected would you continue to invest in our city's food needs by supporting this work in the budget and the Food Policy Council?

- Yes
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In your first year in office, will you personally taste-test food served at DC agencies — including schools, shelters, and the Department of Corrections?

- Yes
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you commit to holding a roundtable with this coalition before taking office to discuss resident-driven priorities around food access, nutrition, and food systems?

- Yes
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What food-related priorities — not covered above — would define your administration, and what would you want DC's food system to look like by the end of your term?

My food priorities would be grounded in the idea that food access cannot be treated in isolation. It is directly connected to housing stability, transportation access, neighborhood safety, and the broader accessibility and affordability crisis facing DC residents. If people cannot afford rent, cannot safely get to grocery stores, or live in neighborhoods without reliable transit or safe retail corridors, food insecurity persists no matter how strong food programs are. This is why I continue to bring up Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Food sits alongside housing and safety as a basic human need that must be met before people can fully participate in education, work, or civic life. When those foundational needs are unstable, everything else in an individual's life becomes harder to sustain. By the end of my term, my goal would be to have a fully integrated system where food policy is aligned with housing, transportation, and public safety investments so that basic needs are met together. The result would be a more affordable and stable city where no resident's access to food is determined by their zip code or economic status.

Is there anything you would like to expand upon?

One additional point is that food policy is often treated as a "program issue", when in reality it is infrastructure and economic policy. If the district does not align land use, transit planning, wage policy, and small business support with food access goals, then even well-funded food programs will continue to operate in a fragmented way. There is also an opportunity for DC to treat food systems as a core part of climate resilience. Local production, composting, and shorter supply chains are not only equity strategies but also reduce emissions and strengthen the city's availability to withstand disruptions. Sustained progress depends on governance. Community groups, especially those rooted in Wards 7 and 8, need formal power in shaping budgets and accountability mechanisms. Without shared decision-making, inequities in the food system will continue to reproduce themselves even as new programs are added. I would be honored to earn your support in this effort to build a food system that is more just, connected, and accountable to the people it serves.

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