

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 *

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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:

Yes, I do. My administration would continue funding programs like Nourish DC and the Food Access Fund because food access is essential infrastructure under the Human Life Standard. At the same time, we must move beyond emergency stabilization alone and begin building long-term food sovereignty within underserved communities. I plan to support a series of interconnected projects, including rooftop urban agriculture, neighborhood greenhouses, community orchards, and open harvest zones in low-access areas across the District. I also want the District working directly with community organizations such as Bread for the City and exploring innovative models like their Breadcoin initiative, which helps residents access food with dignity and flexibility. The goal should not simply be distributing more aid every year, but reducing dependency on emergency interventions by making healthy food physically and economically accessible regardless of income. This means investing in local production, community partnerships, food cooperatives, and decentralized distribution systems so that residents are less vulnerable to inflation, supply disruptions, and corporate disinvestment. A resilient city should be capable of feeding itself neighborhood by neighborhood, not just relying on outside systems to fill the gaps.

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?

The District cannot continue treating food access as a temporary pilot program or a market experiment. Under the Human Life Standard, access to nutritious and affordable food is core civic infrastructure just like water, transit, and healthcare.

My administration would establish a permanent Food Access Stabilization Fund to continue and expand the work of Nourish DC and the Food Access Fund after federal funding expires. We would prioritize:

Community-owned and cooperative grocery models
Long-term commercial rent stabilization for food retailers in underserved areas
Public-private partnerships tied to measurable nutrition and affordability benchmarks
Expansion of healthy corner store and mobile market programs
District-supported cold storage and distribution infrastructure for local growers and retailers

We must also stop designing policy for communities without governing with communities. I would formalize Ward 7 and 8 community advisory structures with guaranteed representation in food policy implementation, budgeting discussions, and procurement oversight. These bodies should have direct influence over food investment priorities, not merely an advisory role after decisions are already made.

Food apartheid east of the river is not accidental it is the result of decades of disinvestment. My administration would treat correcting it as a citywide economic and public health priority.

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 administration would heavily invest in urban agriculture, community food production, cooperative grocery systems, rooftop farming, neighborhood greenhouses, and open harvest zones across underserved communities. Increasing local food production and distribution capacity helps reduce vulnerability to inflation, federal cuts, and supply chain instability.

Over time, this strategy can reduce reliance on SNAP and emergency food programs by replacing scarcity-based systems with stable, community-centered food infrastructure. The long-term vision is to transition more residents from short-term emergency assistance toward sustainable food security models that are locally rooted, nutritionally stronger, and economically resilient.

Food assistance should always exist as a safety net, but a successful government should also be working to make emergency dependence less necessary generation by generation.

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:

Yes and my administration intends to tie funding to: Nutritional quality, Environmental sustainability, Fair labor practices, Local sourcing, Humane treatment standards, Transparency and accountability metrics.

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 also establish a phased “DC Public Nutrition Modernization Initiative” focused on:

Fresh produce integration

Reduced ultra-processed food dependency

Scratch kitchens where feasible

Culinary workforce partnerships with local residents

Expanded contracts for local farms and minority-owned food businesses

At the Department of Corrections specifically, nutrition reform must be treated as both a human dignity issue and a public health issue. I support fully funding the Secure DC Act provisions related to nutrition and workforce development.

A city cannot claim to value rehabilitation while serving food that worsens physical and mental health outcomes.

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?

Healthcare must evolve from a reactive treatment system into a preventive wellness system.

My administration would work with hospitals, community clinics, insurers, and universities to expand:

Produce prescription programs

Medically tailored meals

Nutrition education

Community kitchens

Chronic disease prevention initiatives tied to food access

We should also integrate nutrition science, preventative health, and food literacy into public education and workforce training systems.

Race and zip code should not predict life expectancy in the nation's capital. Under the Human Life Standard, healthcare outcomes must be geographically equalized through targeted investments in nutrition, environmental health, housing stability, and preventative care infrastructure.

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:

Citywide expansion plan initiated within Year 1, with full implementation target by Year 3.

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

Large food businesses and institutions phased in beginning Year 1, with broader compliance standards by Year 2–3.

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

All agencies serving food should meet composting compliance standards within the first 18 months of the administration.

Your Food Vision for DC

The Mayor's 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?

By the end of my term, I want Washington, DC to be recognized as a national model for:

- Universal food dignity
- Hyper-local agriculture
- Preventive nutrition-centered healthcare
- Sustainable procurement
- Community-owned food infrastructure
- Climate-resilient urban food systems

My administration would pursue a “Food Sovereignty and Public Health” strategy that connects:

- Urban farming
- AI-assisted logistics modernization
- Public health data
- Green workforce development
- School nutrition
- Local manufacturing and distribution capacity

I also want DC residents to trust the food served by their government. That means transparency, routine inspections, public reporting, and leadership accountability.

Side note, yes I will personally taste-test food served in District agencies. Leadership should experience the systems residents depend on and will commit to meeting with this coalition before taking office. Effective governance begins by listening directly to residents and practitioners already doing the work.

Is there anything you would like to expand upon?

Food policy is economic policy, climate policy, healthcare policy, educational policy, and public safety policy all at once.

A child who cannot focus because they are hungry, a senior choosing between medication and groceries, or a family traveling across the city for fresh produce are not isolated problems they are indicators of structural imbalance.

The Human Life Standard asks a simple question: does our government materially improve the conditions required for human flourishing?

A modern food system should do exactly that. And in the capital of the United States, we should be capable of building one worthy of the people who live here.

“Healthy cities are not built from the top down alone they are grown, block by block, table by table, neighbor by neighbor.”

This form was created inside of Max Broad.

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