

ECONOMY




\$ | ECONOMY

The District is the economic engine of the Washington metropolitan region and a national center of economic importance. However, to remain strong, the District needs to keep its growth rate high and to continue to diversify its economy to reduce its reliance on the federal government.¹⁷ While the District's unemployment rate has fallen from 8.4 percent in February 2013 (when the Sustainable DC plan was first released) to 5.6 percent in August 2018,¹⁸ it is higher than the national average of 3.9 percent at that same time.¹⁹ Further, unemployment rates are unequal across the city. As of December 2017, while Wards 2 and 3 have unemployment rates of 3.2 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively, Wards 7 and 8 have unemployment rates of 9.9 percent and 12.8 percent, respectively.²⁰ Recent analysis shows that the unemployment rate for black residents is 12.9 percent—more than eight times higher than the unemployment rate for white residents at just 1.5 percent.²¹

The District's economic plan, the DC Economic Development Strategy, has two goals: 1) grow a vibrant and resilient economy driven by private sector expansion, and 2) foster economic prosperity for all District residents by increasing job opportunities and decreasing employment disparities.²² The Economy section of Sustainable DC 2.0 mirrors these goals, with the added context of sustainability. Focusing on sustainability, related goods and services will help grow the economy and create new jobs—both in the District and regionally. For example, in 2016, U.S. job opportunities in the solar industry increased by 25 percent²³ and the number of people working in the wind energy field increased by 32 percent.²⁴

To prepare residents—especially underemployed residents—to work in the green economy, training programs with wraparound services are necessary. The District Government has several successful existing models for green job training programs, including Solar Works DC, which provides 12 weeks of hands-on training in solar energy, and the DC Infrastructure Academy, which recruits, screens, and trains residents for jobs in high growth infrastructure fields such as renewable energy and stormwater management. The Department of Energy and Environment also runs several green employment initiatives, including the Green Zone Environmental Program which teaches young adults about energy and environmental issues, and provides work experience on projects such as installing solar, building rain gardens, and installing storm drain markers.



Sustainable DC 2.0's actions on economy have real benefits for Washington, DC at all levels:

INDIVIDUAL

Green jobs can pay well! The median hourly wage for solar installers in the District is \$26, which equals roughly \$54,000 annually as a full-time job. 25

NEIGHBORHOOD

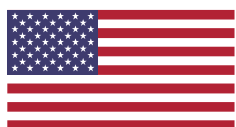
The green economy also helps businesses save money by being more sustainable. The District Government offers innovative financing and generous financial incentives to help small businesses use less energy, install solar panel and green roofs, while other financing programs help business of any size tackle the costs of installing energy efficiency measures.

DISTRICT

The highest unemployment rates in the District are in Wards 7 and 8 among black residents without a bachelor's degree. To help address this disparity, the Sustainable DC 2.0 plan recommends providing effective green job training programs. Smart, green job-training programs are an important part of the solution.

The DC unemployment rate is **5.6%.**

The national unemployment rate is **3.9%.**^{xxi}



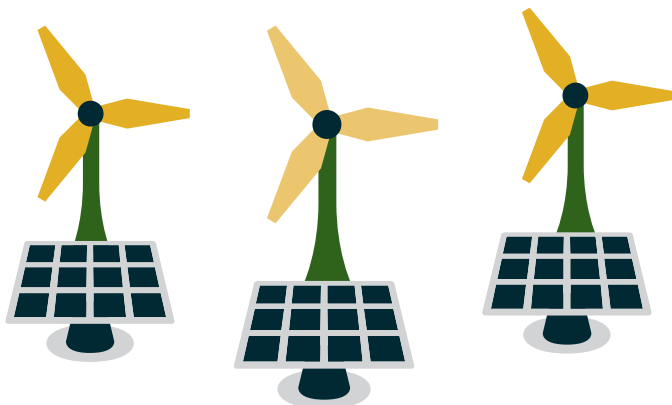
17%

of US workers work for government.

38%

of DC workers work for government.^{xxiv}

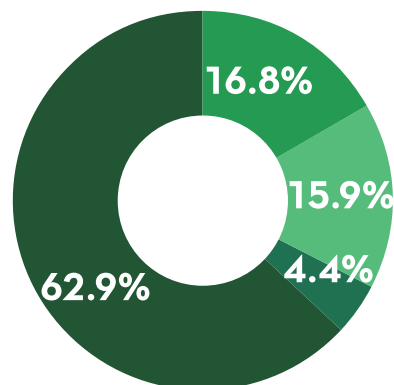
US solar jobs increased by **25%** in 2016.^{xxv}



The median hourly wage for solar installers in the District is **\$26.**^{xxv}

The number of people working nationally in wind energy increased by **32%** in 2016.^{xxvi}

Number of Jobs Openings in DC by Education Requirement^{xxiii}



- No requirement listed
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Associates degree or vocational school
- Bachelors degree or higher

The unemployment rate for black residents is

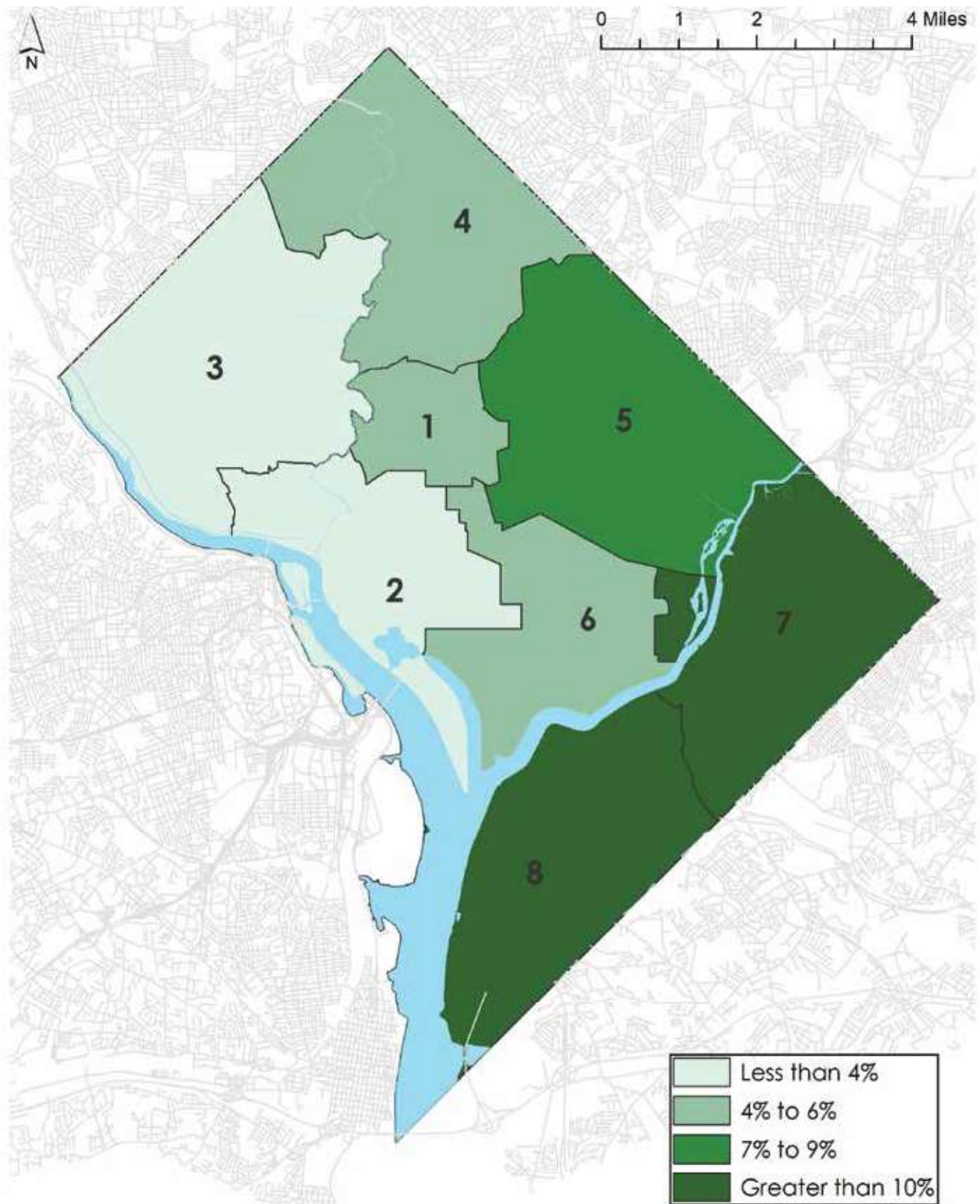
8 times higher than the rate for white residents.^{xxii}



1,691 DC-certified business enterprises (small businesses)^{xxvii}



UNEMPLOYMENT BY WARD (JUNE 2018)



Data Source: DOES & DC GIS



GOAL 1

Grow and diversify the District's economy, focusing on sustainability, climate, and resilience industries.



TARGET 1

By 2032, develop two times as many small, District-based businesses.



TARGET 1 BASELINE

1,124
businesses

EC1.1

Provide training, financial assistance, and marketing for jobs in sustainability business start-ups, targeting strategic populations.

About half of new businesses close within four years of opening their doors.²⁶ Training, financial assistance, and promotion from the District Government (including the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) can be the difference in helping a new business succeed. To strengthen the sustainability economy, the District will provide new training programs on sustainable business opportunities, provide financial and technical resources, and help promote businesses that meet sustainability standards. These resources will strategically focus on populations underrepresented in business ownership.

TIMEFRAME

Medium term

LEAD

DOEE, DSLBD

PARTNERS

DHCD, DMGEO, DMPED

EC1.2

Coordinate with anchor institutions such as hospitals and universities to encourage purchasing from local sustainability-related businesses.

Anchor institutions are major stable organizations and corporations in a city that are unlikely to relocate, such as universities, hospitals, and large international institutions. The District Government will partner with these major institutions to direct their substantial purchasing power to help establish and grow small businesses related to sustainability. A successful example of this is the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland that supply fresh produce, green laundry services, and energy efficiency improvements to universities and healthcare institutions in the University Circle area through a long-term agreement.

TIMEFRAME

Medium term

LEAD

DOEE

PARTNERS

DSLBD, OCP

EC1.3

Work with private partners to support new incubators and “maker spaces” with a focus on communities most in need.

New entrepreneurs often have difficulty accessing specialized equipment and technology required to operate their businesses, which is too expensive for most people to buy on their own. The District Government will collaborate with private partners to facilitate and help fund projects to foster new business incubators and “maker spaces” that provide affordable shared access to specialized equipment and technology to make things. Locations and types of equipment will prioritize communities with the greatest need and least access to such equipment in addition to industries for which there is existing demand. A successful existing example is the District of Columbia Public Libraries fabrication labs that allow residents to use laser cutters, 3-D printers, soldering tools, and sewing machines, while offering workshops on how to use them.

TIMEFRAME

Medium term

LEAD

DMPED, DSLBD

PARTNERS

DCPL, OP,
DMGEO

EC1.4

Increase the number of businesses that offer sustainable products and services by connecting them to third party certification programs.

As more businesses offer sustainable products and services, it’s increasingly important to separate the real deal from “green washing”—pretending to be environmentally friendly to attract new customers. Third party certification programs like Cradle to Cradle, Green Seal, Green America, R2, and B-Corporations—along with resident education—can help make it clear which businesses have legitimate sustainable options. The District Government will help educate businesses on options for certification, provide financial assistance to reduce the cost of certification programs, and help educate residents on the value and meaning of these certifications.

TIMEFRAME

Short term

LEAD

DOEE

PARTNERS

DMPED, DSLBD,
OCP

EC1.5

Provide training and connect District businesses to financial resources to operate more sustainably.

Few small- to medium-sized business owners find time to learn how and why to make their business operate more sustainably, but the payoff in financial savings and new customers is well worth the effort. The District will lower barriers to “going green” by making training easy to find and participate in, and connecting businesses to financial assistance for solar installation, energy efficiency, stormwater management and other sustainable improvements. Community partners may include Think Local First, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and business improvement districts.

TIMEFRAME

Short term

LEAD

DOEE

PARTNERS

DSLBD, DMPED

EC1.6

Launch the DC Green Bank by 2020.

Mayor Bowser proposed the “District of Columbia Green Finance Authority Establishment Act of 2018,” which was enacted in 2018. Widespread installation of renewable energy (energy sources that do not use fossil fuels) and energy efficiency projects are critical to meeting Sustainable DC’s energy and climate goals. However, financing large-scale deployment is often so complicated that it prevents important investments in sustainability. New innovative financing through the DC Green Bank will lower these barriers by removing or lowering the upfront cost of adoption, leveraging private investment, and increasing the efficiency of public dollars.

TIMEFRAME

Short term

LEAD

DOEE



GOAL 2

Train District residents to be competitive for livable wage jobs in growing industries such as sustainability, the environment, and resilience.



TARGET 2

By 2032, reduce unemployment in severely unemployed populations by 50%.*



TARGET 2 BASELINE

20%

*A population or community with an unemployment rate higher than 10%.

EC2.1

Partner with the Workforce Investment Council to identify the fastest growing sustainability fields for future job training programs.

The Workforce Investment Council (WIC) is a private sector-led board responsible for advising the District Government on the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of an integrated and effective workforce investment system. By working with the WIC to identify jobs in sustainability that align with the District's current six high growth sectors (such as construction and transportation) the District will be in the best position to design sector-specific training sessions to ensure District residents are prepared to benefit from new sustainability job opportunities. Promising opportunities include solar installation and rain garden maintenance in the high growth construction sector.

TIMEFRAME

Short term

LEAD

DOEE,
DOES

PARTNERS

DMGEO,
DMPED, WIC

EC2.2

Help connect underemployed residents with jobs in sustainability with opportunities in growing fields.

After working with the WIC to identify the best opportunities for new jobs in sustainability, the District will connect underemployed residents to those training programs and any necessary social services. Working with the Department of Employment Services (DOES), community organizations, and local businesses, the District Government will match trained residents with jobs in sustainability and climate that pay living wages. The District will also match candidates with necessary wrap-around services to help residents succeed in these positions.

TIMEFRAME

Medium term

LEAD

DHS, DOES

PARTNERS

DMPED, DOEE

EC2.3

Create new paid job opportunities in sustainability fields for young adults and high school students, focusing on populations with highest unemployment rates.

The unemployment rate for black District residents is 8.5 times higher than that of white residents.²⁷ Jobs in sustainability can play a role in reducing this disparity. The District Government will create a training pipeline for jobs in sustainability starting with paid opportunities for young people (up to 24 years old), including high school students. The pipeline could include partnering with public schools and universities to support career education programs, including work-based learning opportunities and high-quality certification programs that can be applied to jobs in sustainability in high growth sectors.

TIMEFRAME

Medium term

LEAD

DOEE

PARTNERS

DCPS, DOES, OSSE, UDC



EC2.4

Track the economic impact of jobs in sustainability on the local economy.

Without good data to back up assumptions and case studies, it has been difficult to make a strong case for investing in sustainability jobs. By dedicating the resources to accurately track the economic impact of sustainability jobs on the local economy, the District can make better investments in training programs, wrap-around services, and sustainability-focused businesses.

TIMEFRAME

Short term

LEAD

DOEE, OP

PARTNERS

DMPED, DOES

