



Making DC More Equitable by Reforming our Workforce Development System

February 15, 2022

Three years ago, in light of emerging data describing the significant wealth disparities between black and white residents, DC Appleseed began a long term study focusing on the workforce development system. Our purpose was to help improve that system as a means to provide low-income people and people of color an opportunity to receive education and training needed to compete for better-paying, sustainable jobs.

Our plan was to produce a broad landscape analysis researching the current system and to follow that with regular report cards assessing the performance of some of the key elements and key participants. Using a report card to measure and evaluate the system is a tool that DC Appleseed previously used effectively to help bring significant change in [how the District responded to the HIV/AIDS crisis](#).

After we began our work, the city was hit by the pandemic. The pandemic has hit people of color and under-served populations especially hard and it has therefore made the need to transform our workforce development system even greater. At the same time, the pandemic has also significantly altered the workforce landscape and has required us to change our analysis of that landscape and the ways it needs to be improved to offer low income people and people of color improved opportunities to compete for better jobs.

In undertaking to perform an analysis of the current workforce development system and following that with periodic report cards, DC Appleseed is collaborating with Georgetown University's [Policy Innovation Lab](#) (a division of the McDonough School of Business) to understand how racism creates and sustains workforce disparities. We are also collaborating with a number of pro bono partners who are working with us to identify the role currently being played by various participants in the workforce system, and how those participants could better cooperate to produce better outcomes for low income people and people of color. Our pro bono partners include: [Arent Fox LLP](#), [Arnold & Porter](#), [Covington & Burling LLP](#), [Deloitte](#), [Latham & Watkins LLP](#) and [Steptoe & Johnson LLP](#).

Transforming the District's workforce development system will take time, focus, and resources, but we think doing so is critical both in narrowing the racial wealth gap in the city and in offering more DC residents an opportunity to raise their income and better provide for themselves and their families.

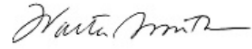
If you would like to help us advance this important work, please click [here](#) to donate.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Neil Richardson
Deputy Director

DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice



Walter Smith
Executive Director
DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

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