



DC Action for Children

1616 P Street, NW, Suite 420
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 234-9404
(202) 234-9108 fax
www.dckids.org
dcaction@dckids.org

What's in it for kids? Summary of FY 2009 Budget Support Act of 2008

How the District's Policy Priorities Are Set

The budget is the Mayor's most important policy document, as it highlights the Mayor's priorities and spending for the upcoming fiscal year. Each year, at the beginning of the budget season, the Mayor presents two pieces of legislation regarding the budget, called the Budget Request Act and the Budget Support Act. The Budget Request Act lists the expenditure level and appropriation through local and federal funds for each District government agency and commission.

At the same time, the Mayor submits a significant piece of legislation that accompanies the budget called the Budget Support Act, which includes changes to existing laws as a result of policy initiatives or budgetary changes; new policy initiatives; and earmarks - one time grants that are not competitively bid - for specific agencies and organizations. In terms of issues related to families and children, this year's Budget Support Act places its greatest emphasis on housing and education initiatives.

While the "FY 2009 Budget Support Act of 2008" covers a variety of issues, DC Action for Children wishes to highlight the issues and acts affecting children included in the legislation; this is simply a summary of those issues affecting children and youth, the entire Budget Support Act is available at budget.dc.gov.

Housing

- "Unified Housing and Community Development Establishment Act of 2008" - is a nonlapsing fund, which means that unspent money does not revert back to the general fund at the end of the year, but will be continually be available for purposes or programs including : providing financial assistance to low- and moderate-income residents of the District to help with housing needs, including down payment assistance and rehabilitation of dilapidated properties. (full listing is available on pages 18 and 19)
- The "Housing First and Homeless Services Reform Amendment Act of 2008" will use the Housing First Fund to provide supportive services and housing assistance for families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This effort will follow the city's "housing first" approach to dealing with homelessness, which aligns resources to meet service and housing needs from the first contact with a family or individual who is homeless.

Schools

- The Budget Support Act includes changes to align credentialing, educational licensing and child care payments with the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007.

- The "Residency Verification Amendment Act of 2008" requires that all children enrolled in District public or public charter schools funded by the District or who are placed in a educational settings paid for by the District must verify residency annually or pay tuition. The process for determining residency will be standardized among public and public charter schools.
- "The Truancy Centers Amendment Act of 2008" requires the State Superintendent of Education to establish truancy centers in the District, which the Metropolitan Police Department will use to take children and youth believed to be truant. The truancy centers will be developed following consultation with DC Public Schools, the Public Charter School Board, Child and Family Services and the Metropolitan Police Department.
- The "Uniform Per Student Funding Formula for Public Schools and Public Charter Schools Amendment Act of 2008" increases the uniform per pupil spending formula from \$8,322 per student in FY 2008 to \$8,770 per student in FY 2009. This act includes several schedules that affect the actual rates paid for students based on grade level, special needs add-ons, residential add-ons, and special education add-ons. The amounts are available in the "FY 2009 Budget Support Act of 2008" (pages 39-43). This act also sets the per-pupil facility allowance for Public Charter Schools at no more than \$3,109 for FY 2009 and beyond.
- The "Public School Support Amendment Act of 2008" requires that the public have the opportunity to participate in the annual budget process - the same process used by other Cabinet-level District agencies. This means that, prior to the budget's adoption, the Council of the District of Columbia will hold a public hearing.

Human Support Services

- The Budget Support Act includes the establishment of the Access to Recovery Voucher Program (ATR) through the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration (APRA), which will provide residents with culturally sensitive substance abuse treatment and recovery services. ATR is the result of a three-year federal Access to Recovery grant. The program will include community outreach as well as treatment with a target service population of over 11,000 individuals.
- The "On-site Meal Expenses Amendment Act of 2008" allows the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services to use funds from its operating budget to provide meals for on-site employees, when required, to allow them to manage, operate, and implement programs and policies.
- The "Support for At-Risk Youth Act of 2008" allows funds received from the Public Fund for Drug Prevention and Children at Risk tax check-off to be administered by the Department of Parks and Recreation for drug-prevention services and programs.



Proposed Appropriations from changes proposed to commercial property tax relief:

The Mayor included approximately \$81 million of FY 2009 Local fund appropriations from changes to the commercial property tax relief made in the FY 2009 Budget Support Act of 2008. Those affecting children and families include:

- \$29 million for the Home Purchase Assistance Program and Land Acquisition for Housing Development Opportunities in the Department of Housing and Community Development's proposed FY 2009 budget;
- \$19.2 million to establish the Housing First Fund to provide housing and supportive services to homeless individuals and families;
- \$4 million for enhanced social services in the targeted New Communities areas; and
- \$2.6 million for 220 new high-quality pre-Kindergarten placements in the public schools.

Earmarks to Groups that Serve Children

The following agencies were allocated funds through the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development:

- \$398,000 to study the feasibility of a new D.C. Children's Museum;
- \$200,000 grant to Field of Dreams; and
- \$232,000 grant to Keely's Boxing and Youth Center.

The following are one-time payments to the Chief Financial Officer to be allocated as follows:

- \$40,000 grant to Camp Imagine;
- \$100,000 grant for DC Youth Orchestra;
- \$250,000 grant to East of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative;
- \$10,000 grant to Friends of Hillcrest Recreation Center;
- \$50,000 grant to Friends of Kennedy Playground;
- \$50,000 grant to the High Tea Society;
- \$75,000 grant to the Higher Achievement Program;
- \$200,000 grant to Kids Set Sail Program of the National Maritime Heritage

Foundation

- \$50,000 grant to the Northeast Performing Arts Group;
- \$1,000,000 grant to Peaceaholics;
- \$100,000 grant to Positive Choices;
- \$65,000 grant to Set Point, Inc.
- \$2,000,000 grant to THEARC;
- \$60,000 grant to Ward 7 Education Initiative; and
- \$100,000 grant to the Ward 8 Tennis and Education Council.



Advocacy on the Issue:

The public hearing on the "FY 2009 Budget Support Act of 2008" is set for Friday, April 25 at 10:00am in the Council Chamber, Room 500. *To register to testify at the hearing contact Aretha Latta at (202) 724-8196 or email at alatta@dccouncil.us.*

The Committee on the Whole (the full Council) will consider the "FY 2009 Budget Support Act of 2008" on May 13, and the second reading and vote is scheduled for June 3.