

2017 Policy Agenda

Maximize our Certified Business Enterprises (CBE) and Workforce Development Funding

The District has about \$600 million in local funding available to purchase goods and services that will go towards the support of CBEs, and federal funding for workforce development, but in past years not all of these available dollars were spent with CBEs or on workforce development. The Chamber will hold District government accountable for meeting its CBE targets, enforcing CBE requirements, and spending down all of its federal grant dollars in these areas. We will also work to ensure that training and funding for workforce development is aligned to the needs of DC employers across industries.

Encourage Prompt Payment of Contracts by District Government

Our members, like all businesses, need to be paid on time. The Chamber will work to secure better performance from the District and, specifically, to see laws like the DC Quick Payment Act enforced.

Maintain the 100-Point Scoring Scale in District Government Procurements

We want to ensure that the District's contracting policies are fair, efficient, and effective for local and certified business enterprises. The DC Chamber is committed to ensuring that business opportunities for CBEs are maximized and preference points are consistent. When contracts are announced well in advance, responses are timely, and priorities are made clear, small, local, and disadvantaged businesses can compete well with large companies from other jurisdictions.

Reduce the Ball Park Fee or Pay Off Debt Sooner

The Chamber will work to protect the use of dedicated fund sources for their intended purposes and support business friendly tax policies. The ballpark fee currently collects approximately \$35m in revenue from businesses annually (more than what is needed to service the debt) and on top of that, businesses in the District pay more taxes than we would in other jurisdictions. Businesses choose to invest in and serve DC in spite of the tax high rate want to make sure that any increases or dedicated taxes go toward the purposes they were created for, and not a black hole. The Ballpark Fee is working well and receipts should allow the District to pay off stadium debt ahead of schedule – so long as District government stops using those funds to pay for other budget items.

Encourage Business Engagement in Comprehensive Planning

The DC Office of Planning is updating the Comprehensive Plan, DC's 20-year visioning document. In light of the city adding 1,000 residents per month, redeveloping neighborhoods at a breakneck pace, and growing a maker economy, we can expect some large scale changes. It will be important to make sure that these changes don't limit existing entrepreneurs or take away from established retail corridors.

Ongoing Matters

We seek a more balanced and thoughtful legislative process that encompasses the shared interest of all stakeholders and the ultimate goal of creating economic growth opportunities. The DC Chamber will oppose proposed measures that seek to dramatically increase the cost of doing business in the District, hurt entry-level job opportunities, and decrease our economic attractiveness as a jurisdiction. We will fight against policies that add to the cumulative impact of employer's regulatory burdens, weaken business owners' flexibility and effectiveness, micromanage their staffing, and impede the employer-employee relationship. The Chamber will continue to monitor and shape policies and legislation in regard to income, government transparency, infrastructure investment, and transportation.