



# AN EMPLOYER GUIDE TO PROMOTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY





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# Background & Purpose

The food workforce system in the District is a significant economic driver, which as of 2016 employed nearly 71,300 employees and generated more than \$579.3 million in local tax revenue.<sup>1</sup> Engaged, competent employees are critical to the success of food businesses and are direct contributors to economic growth in the District. While many companies focus on retention strategies for executives and managers, high turnover rates among frontline workers are often accepted as a regular cost of doing business. However, high turnover in the food industry does not have to be the norm, and investing in the training, retention and advancement of the frontline food industry workforce is good business which leads to stronger talent pipelines, high employee productivity and engagement, quality customer service, and increased profitability. As noted in the *DC Food Economy Study 2019*, only 73% of foodservice employers surveyed could find an entry-level employee within two months, and only 33% could find a mid-level staff employee in that same time frame.<sup>2</sup> Companies that invest in frontline talent can see significant savings and through higher retention and advancement rates and create to access the employees they need in a tight labor market. Improving job quality for frontline workers also creates value for DC communities, contributing to a more economically vibrant and equitable society. Best practice retention strategies can be organized within five broad categories as shown in Figure 1 below, and successful businesses with excellent frontline retention will usually focus on a few practices within each category.

**Figure 1: Best Practice Strategies for Retention**



<sup>1</sup> *DC Food Economy Study 2019*, DC Food Policy Council, p. 7-8.  
<https://dcfoodpolicycouncil.org/files.wordpress.com/2019/09/food-economy-study.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *DC Food Economy Study 2019*, DC Food Policy Council, p.23.



With support from the Kaiser Permanente, the Food Policy Director and Food Policy Council within the DC Office of Planning (OP), along with other District agency partners, has developed the *Make Food Work: A Strategy to Strengthen the Food Workforce* focused on expanding food sector jobs that promote public health and fair working conditions in the District.<sup>3</sup> After engaging with stakeholders, researching national best practices, and analyzing the District’s current food economy, one clear need emerged: More resources are needed for employers seeking to use best practice retention strategies and to provide their employees with career advancement opportunities.

The purpose of this guide is: 1) to help food business owners implement best practices and access the curricular resources they need to support the hiring and retention of employees, particularly those employees who have experienced trauma, incarceration, and/or who have suffered from the consequences of systemic racism and generational poverty and 2) to highlight best practices through case studies of several local food businesses.

## **Methodology**

The perspectives of thirty-nine local businesses are included in this guide. Eleven were surveyed electronically and interviewed by phone regarding the challenges they face recruiting and retaining talent and the strategies they use to mitigate these challenges. Surveys and interviews took place in August and September 2019. Twenty-eight additional businesses were visited and interviewed over 2019 on their use of the best-practice retention strategies outlined in Figure 3 “Strategies for Retention.” (See appendix A for list of businesses interviewed or evaluated for Figure 3.)

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<sup>3</sup> *Make Food Work: A Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce*, 2020, DC Food Policy, DC Office of Planning.  
AN EMPLOYER GUIDE TO PROMOTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY

# Talent Gaps & The Need for Training

## I. Recruiting

As highlighted in the District's *Make Food Work: A Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce* (herein "the DC Food Workforce Strategy"), food industry employees in the District need technical skills, work readiness skills, English language proficiency, and a host of supportive and educational services in order to succeed. Additionally, local employers need to consider how their expectations for workplace behavior and assessments of employee competencies may be influenced by racial, cultural, and class bias. The employers interviewed for this guide identified a number of challenges related to recruiting and retaining talent that mirror the needs featured in the *DC Food Workforce Strategy* and offered helpful insights regarding their endeavors to maintain a qualified and engaged workforce. Employers acknowledged the importance of technical skills, but emphasized the importance of soft skills and the awareness of workplace norms as the primary contributors to productivity issues and turnover.

**"The professional stuff is delivered well by job training programs, but there's a soft skills gap."  
- Good Food Markets<sup>4</sup>**

Complicating the need to hire individuals with already developed soft skills and workplace expectations is the fact that many industries require similar skills, and foodservice is among the lowest paying and most physically difficult of those fields. Consequently, the culinary industry attracts employees with barriers to traditional employment - individuals suffering from the traumas of poverty, still developing in soft skills and work habits, and unaccustomed to advocating for their own needs to authority figures, such as supervisors. These individuals may not arrive with the desired soft skills and workplace habits, but they are trainable and can make excellent, long-term employees.

**"People can learn if you give them a higher purpose for coming." - Ambar<sup>5</sup>**

Assessing soft skills is challenging and typically cannot be done effectively in a sit-down job interview. What may seem like a soft skill shortcoming in an interview may instead be a cultural difference that runs the risk of fomenting subconscious employer bias or discrimination. Better assessments of soft skills are performed by watching potential candidates in action on the job - an argument for on-the-job tryouts or stages prior to final hiring decisions. As referenced in the *DC Food Workforce Strategy*, the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF) has a Restaurant Ready curriculum with guidelines for behaviors to look for as evidence of normal workplace soft skills.

Intense competition among restaurants for customers, public desire for inexpensive food, and slim profit margins all conspire to keep wages low. The District's plan for increasing the minimum wage, ultimately to \$15/hour, will help low-wage workers, but it also makes it difficult for employers to recruit trained, experienced talent by paying much more than the minimum wage. As one employer

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Sambol, Executive Director, Good Food Markets, interview, August 20, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Jovan Prvulovic, Service and Training Director, Ambar, interview, August 13, 2019.

who supports the District's minimum wage plan put it, "I aspire to find a way to pay a living wage. I presume in DC that is realistically over \$20/hour and I don't quite know how to do that and stay in business."<sup>6</sup> In the words of another, "We can't pay them enough. Most retail businesses pay as little as possible, and we need to compete with that."<sup>7</sup>

The workforce is moving toward a situation where entry-level employees are doing better financially but still not earning a living wage, and employers are facing more intense competition for employees. The District's full-service restaurant sector alone is projected to add over 5,200 jobs by 2026.<sup>8</sup>

The workers who apply for entry-level jobs may lack the soft skills, workplace expectations, and/or English literacy desired in a model employee. This situation presents an opportunity; a call to action. Employers who partner with training organizations and/or provide their own staff development may cultivate competent, loyal employees with strong workplace habits, soft skills, and language skills. Given a planned career path and training program, those employees are more likely to stick around long enough to advance into living wage jobs. Taking this approach, employers will find a long-term reduction in expenses related to employee turnover, and the workforce will become more equitable, supporting and sustaining for everyone who wants to work, no matter their background, culture, or experience.

## II. Retention

Skilled employees with long-term potential may not last long enough for the business to get a return on its training investment in the worker. While there are numerous possible reasons for this situation, many are controllable by the employer itself. Employees make many sacrifices for the sake of a caring employer, but they will not put their own survival at risk. A worker who loves her job, must look for alternative employment if she cannot pay her rent and food bills on her current earnings. An employee who does not see any possibility for advancement at his place of work is likely to go elsewhere with a better opportunity to grow. Staff who have never been taught techniques for conflict resolution may resort to "fight or flight" responses - neither of which supports long-term job retention - in the face of conflict. Employers who address employee needs proactively so they can survive at home and thrive at work are more likely to retain employees long enough to see a return on their training investment.

Transportation and scheduling concerns come up more often among professionals interviewed for this guide than any other employee challenge.<sup>9</sup> Low-wage workers typically cannot afford DC housing prices in safe, convenient neighborhoods. Neither can they afford cars and downtown parking fees. They are highly dependent on a metro system which does not operate trains through the night, when foodservice workers often finish or start their shifts. Because of safety concerns and infrequent

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<sup>6</sup> Dan Simons, co-owner, Founding Farmers Restaurant Group, interview, August 19, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Sambol, Executive Director, Good Food Markets, interview, August 20, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> *DC Food Economy Study 2019*, DC Food Policy Council, p. 31

<sup>9</sup> Danielle Vogel, owner, Glen's Garden Market, interview, August 16, 2019. Dan Simons, co-owner, Founding Farmers Restaurant Group, interview, August 19, 2019. Philip Sambol, Executive Director, Good Food Markets, interview, August 20, 2019. Leslie Williams, Director of Operations, Nando's Peri Peri, interview, August 29, 2019.

service, busses may not be a viable option for some workers.<sup>10</sup>

Employers do not control the metro schedule, but they can control the schedule of their employees. There is no value in scheduling an employee for a shift that they cannot fully work. Instead, best practice is to speak with employees to understand their availability and ability to commute to and from their shift in an affordable manner. An employer who schedules an employee's shift when that person can conveniently and affordably get to work is likely to see the employee arrive on time every day. When an employer cannot accommodate a worker's schedule and transportation is the issue, paying for the employee's ride home can make the difference between a loyal team member and one who starts looking for work closer to home. Additional creative practices include paying for Capital Bikeshare memberships,<sup>11</sup> providing monthly metro fare,<sup>12</sup> and coaching employees through their transportation options.<sup>13</sup>

Childcare challenges, like transportation, impede an employee's ability to arrive and work as scheduled. While few foodservice employers provide childcare benefits, adjusting an employee's schedule to coincide with their access to affordable childcare helps with long-term employee retention.

### **III. Training**

Training for employees also helps with long-term employee retention. Workers who develop their soft and technical skills feel greater competence and confidence at work, which leads to greater job satisfaction and retention. Employees who learn about potential career paths in the company and how to progress along those paths are more likely to work toward those advancement opportunities within the company than those who are unaware of them.

There are challenges to providing training to employees too. While there are comprehensive foodservice and hospitality training programs in the District, employers may not know the full range of highly specialized resources and training programs that already exist. Setting up new training programs or social enterprises can be difficult because grant funders typically prefer known entities with proven track records rather than start-up organizations. However, businesses can overcome these challenges by establishing relationships with agencies like the Food Policy Council and the Department of Employment Services (DOES) which maintain lists of eligible training providers in the district, work to link local businesses with training providers, and provide funding resources.

Training programs that do not address the employees' social, emotional, and basic skills needs may not result in long-term behavior changes in the employees. Trainings need to address the deeper issues of victims of trauma or social/emotional distress. Employers then need to continue the trauma-informed approach while employees learn, develop, and secure new habits and behavior patterns.

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<sup>10</sup> Danielle Vogel, owner, Glen's Garden Market, interview, August 16, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Philip Sambol, Executive Director, Good Food Markets, interview, August 20, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Danielle Vogel, owner, Glen's Garden Market, interview, August 16, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Dan Simons, co-owner, Founding Farmers Restaurant Group, interview, August 19, 2019.

Community-based organizations and employers have the ability to develop individuals for career advancement and living-wage positions by incorporating English and digital literacy - skills fundamental to supervisory positions - into their training programs. Lack of language and digital literacy skills makes self-directed learning through reading or online courses nearly impossible, creating further barriers to advancement for workers without these skills.<sup>14</sup> There are numerous programs in DC that focus on English and digital literacy, but employees may require financial support and scheduling accommodations to attend them.<sup>15</sup> If training requires even a small financial investment (extra transportation or childcare costs, loss of work hours), employees may resist the training because of the need to pursue immediate small financial gains/savings, and to meet basic needs.

Because the loss of a single employee can result in a chain reaction of employee losses, it is important to work to train and retain all employees as much as possible. When an employee quits without notice or gets fired, the workload falls on the remaining team members. Those left behind must fight through the additional stress. Some will suffer burnout and either underperform or depart the company, further taxing the existing, hard-working staff. Not writing off a single employee, ultimately makes it easier to retain all employees.

In addition to the talent gaps and needs expressed above, the eleven employers interviewed identified the barriers to retention featured in Figure 2. The percentages reflect the percentage of employers who cite that barrier. Other barriers among the top five include transportation, childcare issues, accountability/responsibility, and customer service skills.

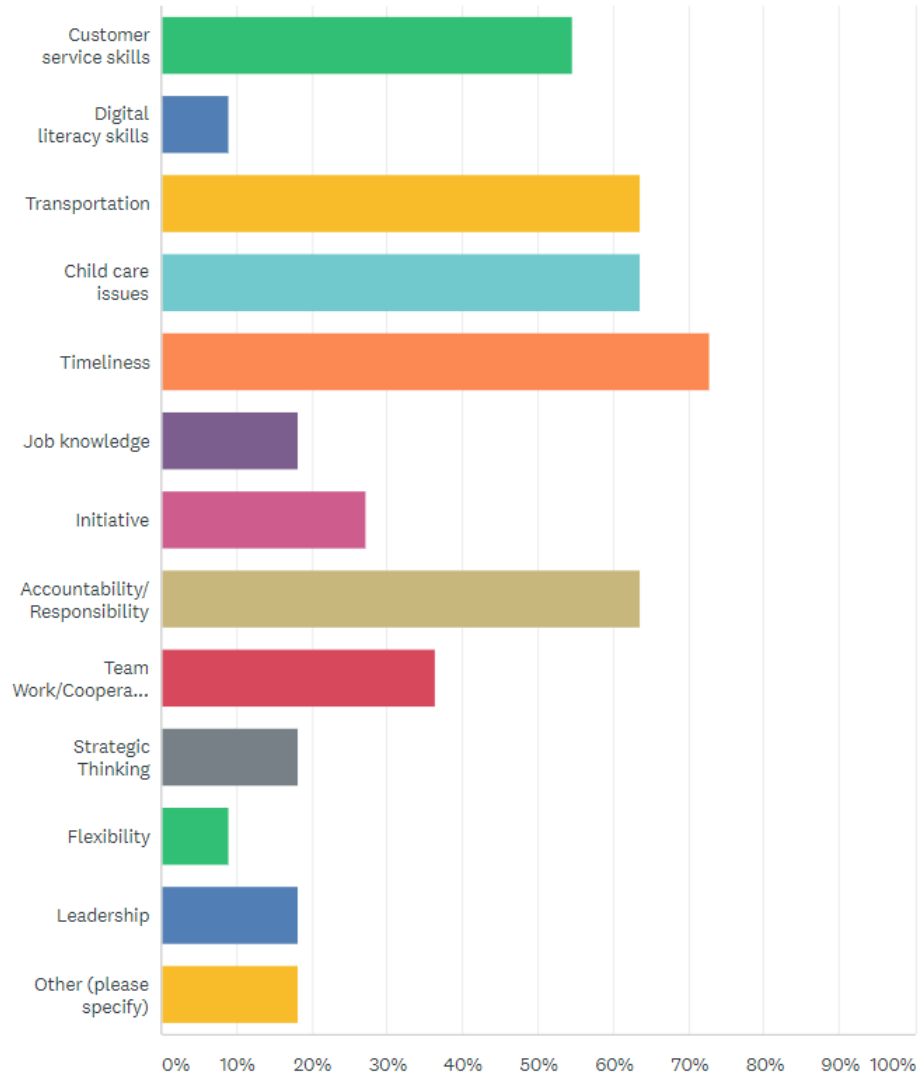
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<sup>14</sup> Daniela Hurtado, Programs Manager, La Cocina VA, interview, August 16, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Laura Monto, General Manager, Sodexo, interview, August 14, 2019.



**Figure 2.  
Barriers to  
Employee  
Retention**



#### **IV. Common Strategies and Gaps**

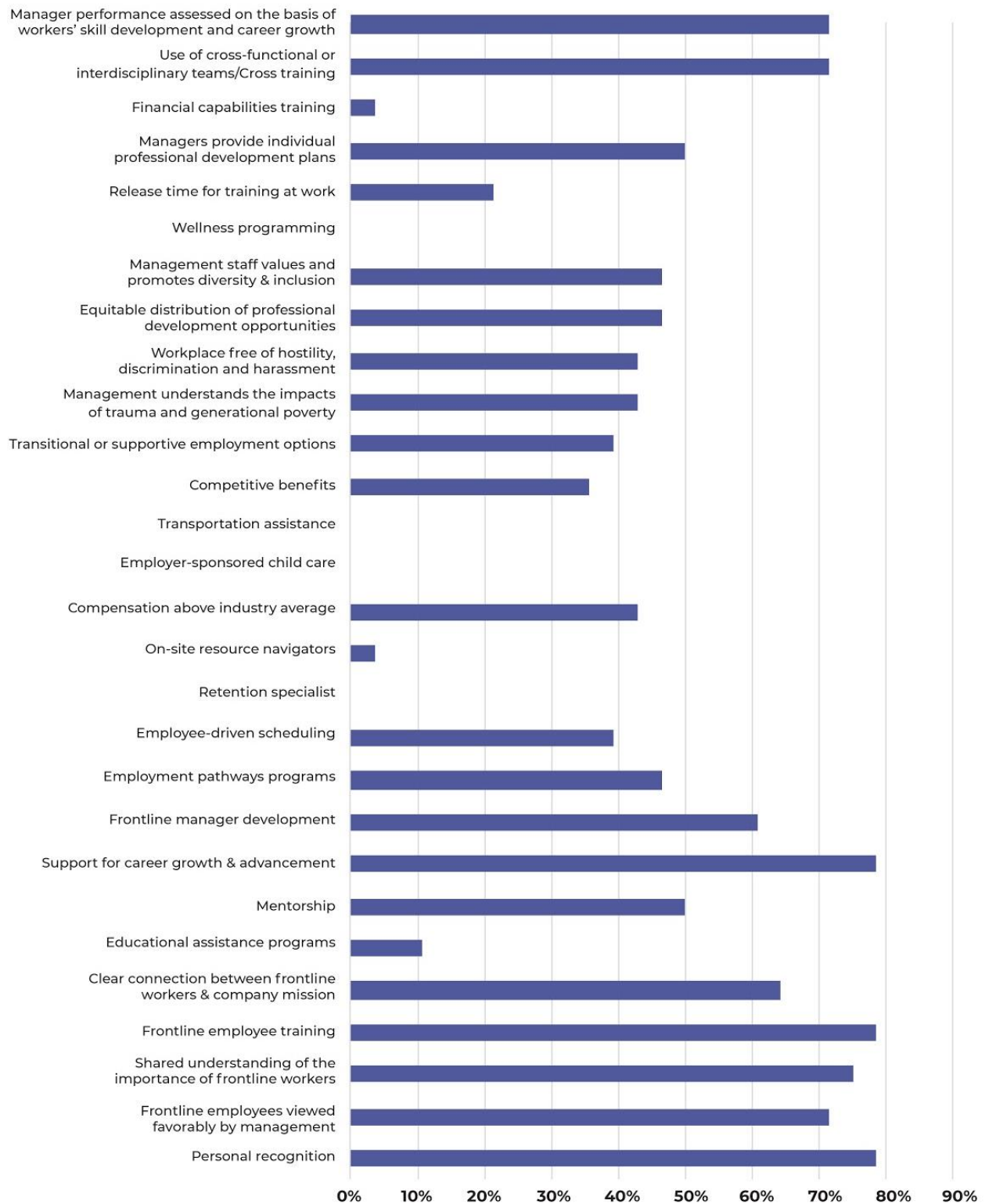
In 2019, DC Central Kitchen met with and interviewed twenty-eight employers of DC Central Kitchen graduates to determine the best-practice strategies employers used to retain their staff. Figure 3 below reflects the percentage of employers surveyed who utilize each strategy.

Some of the common strategies used include employee training, personal recognition, and support for the employee’s career growth and advancement. In other words, these organizations take the time to prepare employees to perform competently in their job, to continue to motivate them by recognizing their successes, and to help them continue to advance in their careers and incomes. Many companies also cross-train staff to make them more versatile and task their managers with developing their frontline workers.

Tellingly, none of the employers surveyed provided transportation assistance or childcare, which may explain why these challenges came up as major hurdles in more recent interviews with additional employers.

## Figure 2. Best Practice Retention Strategies Used by Local Employers

Employers surveyed (N=28)



# Mitigating Challenges & Best Practices

While talent and training gaps are prominent and challenging realities of the food workforce system in DC, local businesses are facing these challenges head-on and taking positive steps and implementing proven retention strategies to help create a more competent and reliable workforce.

Below are some of the best practices local businesses use to address some of the challenges of recruiting and retaining quality workers. These best practices come from interviews with employers and are organized according to the “Strategies for Retention” framework depicted earlier in this guide.

## I. Manage from a Caring Perspective

**Recruit a diverse workforce so all employees feel welcome and supported.** One of the obvious steps to creating an equitable workforce is to recruit a diverse set of employees. Diversity comes in many forms including race, gender, sexual identity, native language, economic background, and more. When a potential employee does not see her “identity” represented in an organization, she may not apply to work there. It is difficult to feel welcome in an organization as an outsider to the majority community. By recruiting a diverse workforce, one where every employee understands that they are not alone, the employer builds a broad community where all feel welcome.

**Provide sensitivity training and performance management training for managers.** An organization can conduct a sensitivity training with its managers by meeting to discuss “case studies” or past incidents that could have been handled from a more caring perspective. Training can include group discussions to consider alternative reasons for an employee’s behavior beyond assumptions that “the employee does not care or is not trying” and discussing ways to address the behavior beyond reprimanding the employee. At Nando’s Peri Peri, all managers receive sensitivity training to help them better understand the challenges employees face and to view them in a different way. For example, an employee with a dirty uniform may not be irresponsible as much as they just don’t have access to laundry facilities. At Nando’s, a manager would give the employee an extra uniform to allow them to make it through until the next laundromat visit. Kindness and understanding to help employees who are financially or personally disadvantaged, but who want to do a good job at work comes with a low investment and a huge rate of return.

**Train supervisors on cultural competency to decrease conflict and increase communication.** People who come from backgrounds where they have experienced trauma, poverty, racism, and more may be triggered by interactions that supervisors don’t anticipate as problematic. Supervisors should be trained to recognize that an employee outburst may be a stimulus response that is very appropriate for another context but inappropriate at work. For some employees, the home environment may be similar to the work environment, but this is not always true for people from nonprivileged backgrounds. Code

switching – adapting one’s language, behavior, and responses to the norms of various environments – is a skill required for all people to thrive at work if they do not arrive already knowing workplace norms. Employees can learn to code switch for the workplace, but it requires training and patience on the part of the supervisor, as coaching an employee to change instinctive behaviors and speech patterns takes time. An employee who is immediately dismissed for a culturally different response to a situation is typically retraumatized and unaware of what needs to change in her behavior for stable employment. If a supervisor instead increases communication with the employee, the employee has an opportunity to adapt and thrive at the job. DC Central Kitchen’s Cafe takes just this approach - teaching student employees how to code switch and behave professionally at work. The training involves counseling the employees each time they demonstrate an inappropriate response and coaching or modeling the proper, desired response. The result has been employees who can deescalate conflict on their own and value each other’s contribution to the team.

**Provide training on employment law and paid/unpaid leave requirements for all supervisors.**

The importance of managers understanding employee rights cannot be overstated when it comes to creating a more equitable workforce. According to District law, tipped employees must average at least minimum wage; if their tips do not bring them to this level, the employer must make up the difference.<sup>16</sup> In DC, the minimum wage is higher than the surrounding counties, but it still falls short of a living wage. Employees who struggle to meet their basic survival needs on minimum wage certainly cannot survive on below minimum wage. Similarly, employees who have to care for a newborn or ill family member already carry an extra burden. Employers should be well-versed on the Family Medical Leave Act and DC’s Paid Leave Program, so employees can shine at work. Not following these and similar laws, besides being illegal, leaves employees insecure and at risk of separating from work.

**Collaborate with employees when writing schedules to help everyone achieve a work-life balance.**

At Ambar, they have experienced that sometimes an employee’s lateness is due to a family stressor at home. An employee may be afraid to share that she cannot arrive on time because her husband is getting home late from work to watch the kids. Ambar works with employees with family stressors to adjust their schedules for a better work-life balance. At Nando’s, they offer a lunch shift ideal for working parents. Scheduling an employee to allow for work-life balance helps the individual to fit work into their lives comfortably. When work responsibilities overwhelm a person’s ability to care for their family needs, that person is likely to either underperform at work or leave for a more accommodating employer. Ambar adds that not changing a person’s planned schedule is also critical to work-life balance. Even if the employee can adjust, they may find repeated changes not worth the added stress of continuing employment.

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<sup>16</sup> Information about DC wage hour requirements for tipped workers can be found at [www.does.dc.gov/service/office-wage-hour-compliance](http://www.does.dc.gov/service/office-wage-hour-compliance).

**Speak with employees individually to find out their barriers to work and accommodate them when possible.** For some employees, it may be a language barrier. For others, it may be soft skills challenges. An operation may not be able to accommodate every employee's need, but when an employer accommodates an employee, that employee is less likely to find a better employment situation elsewhere. Providing various trainings in languages that the employees speak helps significantly. Providing space and equipment supports for those with disabilities is another. The importance of scheduling and transportation accommodations have been discussed elsewhere in this report.

**Give employee improvement plans to workers who struggle.** Ambar does not assume that an employee who makes repeated mistakes is a lost cause. Instead, they take the time to identify the challenge the employee faces and give the employee concrete steps to overcome the challenge. This approach is called an employee improvement plan. An employee improvement plan identifies the employee's problematic behavior. Together, the employee and employer write out steps with targeted behavior standards and deadlines to achieve them. The plan also states the consequences for not making the deadlines. The result is a written contract that the employee agrees they can achieve. The plan could cover anything from the completion of training to substance abuse treatment to just arriving on time. No matter the problem area being addressed, the employee improvement plan helps to communicate clear steps and expectations for employees.

**Identify whether an employee's performance challenge is the result of a gap in diligence, skill, or knowledge; each requires a different intervention.** Good Food Markets looks for the underlying cause behind problematic behavior before assuming the employee is a bad fit. They categorize the causes as a gap in diligence, skill, or knowledge. A knowledge gap requires training to ensure the employee has the information they need to complete a job properly. A skill gap requires training and practice time to allow the employee time to develop the skill. A coach or mentor can also mitigate a skill gap. A diligence gap is the only area that suggests the employee may be a bad fit. The use of an employee improvement plan would communicate the expectations of the employer clearly to confirm whether the gap can be corrected by the employee or not.

## **II. Provide Purpose in the Workplace**

**Provide vigorous training to prepare employees to succeed.** For some operations, training is treated as a single day to show an employee their job tasks before they are left to perform their job independently. In other operations, training is done in piecemeal segments on an as-needed basis. Good Food Markets takes a more in-depth approach. They have a curriculum for each position and deliver it for a full week in a one-on-one, hands-on format to ensure employees have learned the right skills and knowledge. The second week, new employees shadow more senior ones before slowly taking on the responsibilities of their position. While different businesses will vary in results,



those that devote more time and energy to training upfront should see fewer employee errors in job performance. More competent and confident employees are less likely to leave a job in frustration or be fired for poor performance.

**Provide a two-week training curriculum and mentor for all positions; check in after thirty days with supervisor to determine if sufficient progress is being made for the employee to continue.**

Glen's Garden Market pairs new employees with a mentor for a full two-weeks. Each position at Glen's Garden Market has a detailed curriculum for training employees including connecting the employee's job to the organization's mission. Employee and mentor go through the curriculum for the first two weeks before allowing the employee to demonstrate their independent job performance. The training period gives sufficient time for most employees to learn the skills required for the job. At the thirty-day mark, the new employee meets with the Director of Service to evaluate the employee's progress. If the supervisor feels that the employee has not made sufficient progress, they let the employee go. Most individuals in any job need time to learn new skills and to adapt to a new organization. Rather than have employees pick up skills in a piecemeal fashion, Glen's invests the time in training in an intense front-loaded format. The thirty-day evaluation puts the onus on the organization to make sure that the training is as effective as possible. If it isn't, the employer cuts its losses quickly but also has to put the money and time into finding and training a new employee. If all employers were to invest that seriously in training, turnover rates might drop. At Glen's Garden Market, 72% of their staff have been with them over a year.

**Utilize e-learning platforms for most of the training, with tablets on property for staff to use, to standardize training and eliminate bias.** There is always the risk that human biases and prejudice filter into training. Low expectations of employees become self-fulfilling prophecies. Nando's Peri Peri addresses this challenge by providing all new employees an initial standardized training via web-based, e-learning platforms. The training is done through videos accessible by smartphone at any time. Employees who are not technologically literate can be trained relatively quickly how to access and watch the videos. For those who do not have smartphones, Nando's offers tablets in every restaurant. While there is still in-person follow-up training for promotion and advancement, automating the initial training allows individuals with personal challenges to learn the required job skills and demonstrate competent job performance. Utilization of technology minimizes the chance of human bias in the training process and gives all employees an equal chance to demonstrate their acquisition of the job skills.

### **III. Create Opportunities for Learning and Growth**

**Share with each employee a career roadmap, showing their position, the position above that one, and what to do to advance.** Farmers Restaurant Group provides salaried employees a highly interactive, online document that stays with the employee forever. They currently provide hourly workers a static document, but they are working to make it an interactive tool as they migrate their

training online. In both cases, the document includes milestones for employees to advance based on skills and behaviors rather than on time. The benefit of the interactive tool is that accountability is a two-way street. Employees have to take the initiative to learn and grow with the training, but the employer can track employee skill acquisition, provide opportunities for learning that the employee still needs, and prioritize advancement for employees who have completed the required training and competency demonstration for the position above them. The result is a targeted advancement plan with shared responsibility. Rather than wondering how to advance in an organization, these employees know exactly what to do and learn to move ahead. An organization need not develop an interactive online tool either. A simple list of job duties, competencies to learn and perform, and tasks to complete and demonstrate proficiency would serve the same purpose. If those demonstrated tasks are documented by a supervisor along the way, the organization and the employee will know when the employee is ready to advance.

**Coach employees via mentors on how to handle work and personal challenges.** Students at La Cocina VA's culinary job training program are paired with mentors both during their training and once working in the industry. The mentors are professionals who are succeeding now but who had challenges to overcome earlier in their careers. The mentors work with their mentees to help them problem-solve work and personal challenges that might otherwise get in the way of stellar job performance. Similarly, Glen's Garden Market also provides mentors to employees as part of the training process. Nearly every foodservice organization ought to be able to pair new employees with more experienced employees as informal mentors for little to no cost. The benefit of having a mentor who isn't a supervisor is that the mentee can share challenges candidly to brainstorm solutions without fear that the revelation of the challenge will impact future job opportunities. The structure of such a program should outline mentor/mentee confidentiality guidelines and encouragement for regular check-ins, but otherwise may be left unstructured to allow for partnered employees to flexibly adjust to each other's needs.

**Train employees in culinary and wine knowledge and cross-train them for other positions.** Farmers Restaurant Group trains employees in culinary and wine knowledge beyond what is needed for their immediate jobs. The additional training better prepares them to advance and/or step into other roles when needed. Nando's Peri Peri identifies cross-training as key to their labor model; it solves multiple problems for the organization and its employees. Employees gain additional skills, so they can cover another position if necessary. The employees are also able to work full-time hours more easily; if one position is slow in a given week, they are able to assist in busier departments. Finally, by learning new skills, employees are better prepared for advancement. The training time is pulled out of the labor targets for the week, so managers are not penalized for higher labor costs if the extra labor hours are spent on training. While the benefits may seem more for employees than the employer, the ability to offer a consistent full-time schedule to employees helps reduce turnover of staff who need steady income. Cross-trained employees are better prepared to assist in emergencies due to absenteeism or unexpected business levels. The organization may even benefit

from interdepartmental brainstorming instead of siloed thinking. In short, the investment in additional training pays for itself in the long run.

**Train employees to get food handler and ABRA licenses.** In addition to company-specific training for a job, Glen's Garden Market employees are sent to trainings to pursue and obtain a food handler's license and to complete alcohol awareness, ID compliance and other training required or recommended by DC's Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA). Every operation needs an employee with a food handler license present when the operation is open. By training all incoming managers who need the license, an operation not only meets its legal obligation, but it also aligns all of its staff with the same food safety values. Glen's also sends employees transitioning to a supervisor position to one-day seminars on employment law and the Family and Medical Leave Act.<sup>17</sup> Rather than filtering out candidates who do not have all of the requisite management skills, the company provides its existing loyal workforce with management training, so they can promote internally into those positions.

**Provide in-house training on hospitality customer service.** Expertise in customer service provides employees opportunities for front-of-the-house jobs and promotion opportunities, which give employees greater access to living wage jobs while increasing customer satisfaction. Sodexo brings in a trainer from Seattle to deliver customer service training and team building for their employees.<sup>18</sup> Sophia Miyoshi, of Restaurant Opportunities Center DC, explains the challenge to employees who do not have customer service skills. "Front of the house employees tend to be white... and they get lots in tips," she says. Employees who only have indirect interaction with customers, such as bussers, are "reliant on someone else's ability to get good tips." Providing customer service training allows all employees to contribute to customer service, thus driving up the tips for all tipped employees. Furthermore, the training empowers individuals in lower-tier positions to pursue direct customer interaction jobs, such as a server or bartender position, where they can take more control over their income by working toward higher tips.

**Encourage certifications through outside organizations.** Sodexo supports employees who wish to pursue a certification through the American Culinary Federation. They provide the financial resources needed to apply for certification. The result is that budding chefs can pursue their professional goals while at Sodexo, and the company can boast a highly certified staff. Pride in professional advancement builds the employee's sense of competence and satisfaction at work too, possibly encouraging the employee to pursue higher level positions within the company.

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<sup>17</sup> The DC Office of Human Rights offers a training series called Understanding ADA and DCFMLA. Information on upcoming trainings can be found at [www.ohr.dc.gov](http://www.ohr.dc.gov).

<sup>18</sup> The brand name of the training used by Sodexo is called "Spark Interaction."

**Encourage employees to complete their GED.** Sodexo encourages its employees to pursue and complete their GED if they don't already have a diploma. Allotting time and funds for GED completion is an expense, but the return is an employee with better literacy and math skills which are key requirements for more efficient job performance in most jobs.

## **IV. Invest in People-Centered Management**

**Set up a career pathway for employees to advance; aim for a high internal promotion rate.**

Multiple foodservice operations interviewed expressed the desire for existing employees to advance within the organization. Farmers Restaurant Group offers career maps showing employees how they can advance from one job to the next to work their way up through the company. Sodexo strives to help employees understand that good work performance leads to a promotion. Nando's has trainers in each restaurant and has a goal of a 70% internal promotion rate. Glen's Garden Market gives preference to internal candidates for promotion and tasks existing managers to develop future ones. Management skills need to be taught. When employers view their existing staff as future managers and take the responsibility for preparing them for those roles through internal or external training, more entry-level employees will stay with their existing employer to advance to a higher paying job.

**Mandate that supervisors train future leaders from within.** By making the training of future managers part of a supervisor's annual evaluation, employers can help advance their existing frontline workers by requiring that their supervisors train frontline workers for advancement. Glen's Garden Market requires their supervisors to train future leaders for the organization. Farmers Restaurant Group and Good Food Markets demonstrate a commitment to internal promotion through career road maps and mentoring of entry-level employees. Accountability for training future leaders can be difficult as not every trainee will work out. However, everyone who wishes to pursue supervisory positions can be given training and an opportunity to prove themselves. Managers overlook potential leaders for any number of reasons. Mandating training for all who wish to advance gives managers the chance to look at their employees in a new way - as potential leaders - rather than leaving some employees in low-level positions and hiring outside for more senior jobs. Because the best way to provide a worker a living wage is to train them for a higher paying position, mandating leadership training helps bring equity to an organization's workforce.

## **V. Make Benefits Relevant**

**Support employee transportation needs through accommodating schedules, Capital Bikeshare memberships, DC Transit benefit, and the occasional taxi ride.** All of the foodservice operators interviewed for this guide cited transportation challenges as a major hurdle for employees. While all wish for a more reliable, extended hour metro system, they have each developed means to support their employees. All speak with their employees to determine what hours the employee can work, and then they schedule the employee for those hours. While this can create limitations in an employee's

ability to perform some jobs, most operations with a larger workforce are able to use their employees productively during their available hours. Good Food Markets gets Capital Bikeshare memberships to help their employees commute to work inexpensively. Glen's Garden Market provides employees monthly metro fare. Farmers Restaurant Group has covered Uber rides when needed. Nando's now looks at proximity to public transportation options when determining where to locate new properties to ensure employees have commuting options. Transportation does present a major hurdle, but employers have options to help employees get to work on time and work when needed.

**Provide employee meals.** When an employee is paid at or close to minimum wage, that employee needs every dollar to make their home function. For them, three meals a day may become a luxury. An employer, like DC Central Kitchen, who provides meals to staff ensures that the employee has enough fuel to think clearly and work productively through an entire shift.

**Connect with a local credit union to assist employees with financial needs.** Employees at the bottom end of the pay scale are likely to have financial challenges. The inability to purchase a home or pay down debt can drive a good worker out of the foodservice industry for a higher paying field. Sodexo has partnered with a local credit union to help its employees access the benefits, like lower cost loans, that come with credit union membership.

**Loan employees money to help them handle emergencies.** Despite an employer's best efforts to create supportive systems, an employee may run into an emergency situation. Anything from an emergency doctor's visit to a burglary to a child's need to purchase supplies for school can throw a worker on a tight budget off course. In such situations, an employer has to decide whether to prioritize the near-term expense of loaning the employee money or the long-term expense of replacing the employee, who may leave the job for another. Farmers Restaurant Group has provided the occasional employee loan as part of their supportive work environment. A small no-interest or low-interest loan to an employee can help keep them present at the company and focused on work instead of on a family stressor. The loan supports the well-being of the employee, who by continuing to work at the operation has the ability to repay the loan from future wages.

**Provide employee crisis management support for legal, childcare, and financial issues.** While a company could provide referrals to nonprofits to assist employees with a range of services, Sodexo uses the services of a company called Life Works to provide those benefits directly to the employees. LifeWorks offers a suite of counseling services to assist employees with mental, physical, and financial health issues. While Life Works is one comprehensive option, a business could partner with a nonprofit or other organization to provide tailored services to its staff to boost their well-being. Something as basic as offering all employees paid vacation, which gives them a chance to recharge without suffering financially, improves an employee's overall health. Employees who are healthier mentally, physically, and financially perform better at work with lower rates of absenteeism.



# Training & Supportive Services

## Community-Based Organizations, Post-Secondary Providers, Department of Employment Services

While there is a clear need for more training in the food workforce system in DC, and all businesses interviewed for this guide indicated that they provide training and desire to do more, most businesses don't know enough about the variety of resources available through local training providers and business associations. Of eleven businesses surveyed, 54.4% indicated that they have partnerships with local training providers, primarily for hiring. Only approximately 18% refer individuals for incumbent worker training and most indicated that they didn't realize that training providers could be used for the purposes of upskilling their current workforce.

Establishing partnerships with community-based organizations like DC Central Kitchen, post-secondary education providers like the University of the District of Columbia, and District agencies like the Department of Employment Services (DOES), can help businesses shape the local talent pool according to industry standards, hire and retain qualified workers, and promote upward mobility through career pathways advising, incumbent worker training, and apprenticeship. In addition to skills training, most programs also include a suite of supportive services that address the life and soft skills challenges some employees face, while also providing language, digital literacy, and basic literacy/numeracy instruction. The *DC Food Workforce Strategy* includes a chart of community and government resources that can help employers with their workforce training needs.

Employers should note that many of the training programs listed in the *DC Food Workforce Strategy* are free to the employer. If an individual registers with DOES and goes through an intake process, that person can receive up to \$5,000 in scholarships to attend any training provided by an eligible training provider. Businesses that take the time to work with DOES may be able to leverage available funds and existing training providers to train their entire staff for free.



## Case Studies

The three case studies that follow showcase some of the recommendations from the previous section. While any given employer will likely not adopt all the best practices included in this guide, the adoption of even just a few best practices has a significant impact on the employee experience and the workforce in general. Employers can pick and choose the approaches that work best for them and their operation. Each case study illustrates how each employer utilizes a different set of practices to address the challenges they face retaining and advancing traditionally overlooked and underemployed populations. The case studies also include a success story from an employee's perspective.

### Case Study: DC Central Kitchen

DC Central Kitchen is a nonprofit organization that develops and operates numerous social ventures to target the cycle of hunger and poverty in the Washington area. Included among its ventures are Culinary Job Training, Community Meals, Healthy School Food, and Healthy Corners. Operating all of these ventures requires a significant number of employees.

DC Central Kitchen hires individuals who have faced significant barriers to success, such as

those who have been incarcerated or have suffered from generational poverty. Because the Kitchen's food service businesses operate during daytime hours, transportation issues relevant to metro and bus schedules and safety are not as significant of a challenge as they are for restaurants who operate late at night. Most of the challenges hiring managers face at the Kitchen are related to workplace behaviors and life skills.

DC Central Kitchen mitigates these challenges by paying a living wage, investing in best-practice retention strategies, meeting individuals where they are, and providing individualized professional development plans and supportive services. Because DC Central Kitchen provides fair scheduling, comprehensive career pathways advising, employee engagement opportunities, and comprehensive benefits, including covering 100% of each employee's health insurance, the turnover rate is only 21%, which is significantly lower than the industry average.

DC Central Kitchen views all of its hiring practices through a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) lens and prioritizes hiring graduates of its training programs, as well as promoting from within. Nearly 50% of the Kitchen's staff are comprised of training program alumni, and these individuals are represented in all departments include program managers. According to Tee Okasi-Nwozo, DC Central Kitchen's Chief Human Capital Officer, DC Central Kitchen's career pathways approach places employees in the driver seat of their own learning and development. As an organization, the Kitchen has focused on creating tools that make it easier for staff to understand options that exist to support their continuous learning and development within their current roles as well as navigate their career paths. The career pathways tools also support managers and their staff with ongoing performance assessments (creating an important feedback loop), coaching, and guidance throughout the career development process.

## **DC Central Kitchen Success Story<sup>19</sup>**

Ronald Taylor had worked in foodservice for years in low wage positions and with no promotion opportunities. He did not feel supported by his employers, who passed him over for promotions repeatedly. In an attempt to help bring in extra money, he made an unfortunate decision and was arrested. Burdened with the stigma of being on probation, Ron was concerned about getting his life back on track at an older age.

Ronald first joined DC Central Kitchen as a student in their Culinary Job Training program. Despite having worked steadily, Ronald was receiving SNAP and on Medicaid. He was already used to getting up early and arriving on time to work every day, so he thrived in the program. One benefit of the program he had not expected was financial literacy training. Learning the importance of savings, Ronald saved as much of his weekly stipends as possible.

Upon completion of the program in August 2016, Ron was hired as a Production Cook at DC Central Kitchen. His savings covered his transportation costs for the first few weeks, and he

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<sup>19</sup> Ralph Green, Business Operation Specialist, Georgetown University, interview, September 3, 2019.

received free lunch at work, which allowed him to save on the expense of buying lunch each day. The living wage paid by DC Central Kitchen meant that Ronald no longer needed to receive food stamps.

In addition to a decent wage and steady paycheck, Ronald also receives benefits, such as health insurance and life insurance. While the benefits were not the reason Ronald took the job, he quickly came to appreciate their importance. Ronald got sick and was out of work for an extended period of time. During that time, he was able to cover all his bills thanks to insurance.

Ronald's commitment to DC Central Kitchen and his hard work ethic helped him to advance. All he needed was an opportunity. He advanced to a Nutrition and Community Education Assistant doing cooking demonstrations for the public. In March 2019, he was promoted again to a Culinary Instructor at DC Central Kitchen Café.

Ronald's advice to employers is simple: "Respect everyone. Starting a new job is difficult. Take the time to orient new employees and train them. Treat everyone the same. The problems start when you discriminate against people or treat one person better than another because you like them."



## Case Study: Good Food Markets<sup>20</sup>

Good Food Markets is a grocery operation with a mission of “developing retail solutions that work in, and for, food desert communities.”<sup>21</sup> They work with local growers, producers, and distributors to support local businesses while also taking care of the healthy grocery needs of their community. Their community-caring approach includes the deliberate decision to support community members who need jobs who may not be able to find them elsewhere.

Good Food Markets hires employees, often with challenges, who might be passed over by other businesses. Philip Sambol, Executive Director for Good Food Markets, notes that job training programs typically do a good job with professional skills, but employees still need soft skill development, particularly in stress management and conflict resolution. Employees’ lack of experience and issues with transportation are two major challenges that they face.

Good Food Markets offers a vigorous training program for all employees new to a position. The training begins with a full week of in-depth, hands-on, one-on-one training followed by a week of shadowing before employees slowly take on the responsibilities of their position. When an employee is lacking in a performance area, they identify whether the issue is a problem of diligence, skill, or knowledge as each requires a different intervention.

While they have referred incumbent workers to outside training, most do not take advantage of the opportunity. The workers need income immediately, so they do not see the value of long-term training. Good Food Markets’ in-house, position-specific training yields more immediate results.

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<sup>20</sup> Philip Sambol, Executive Director, Good Food Markets, interview, August 20, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Information about Good Food Markets can be found at [www.goodfoodmarkets.com/about-us](http://www.goodfoodmarkets.com/about-us).



Sambol says that training employees how to do their job better, to be creative and insightful is a great way to get more value out of every labor dollar. He feels that if businesses had access to cost-free/revenue neutral training, they would all provide it to improve their workforce's productivity. When trained for their specific position, employees get to put their new skills to use right away.

Transportation can be a challenge for Good Food Markets' employees, too, so they work with staff individually to figure out the best schedule and transportation options for them. The Market provides Capital Bikeshare memberships and occasional taxi rides home as further support. By working with the employees to come up with solutions together, Good Food Markets provides the employees the schedule and resources that they need to shine at work.

## **Good Food Markets Success Story<sup>22</sup>**

Several years ago, Crystal Jackson participated in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. She did not gain access to the jobs she hoped to earn. As a mother of six, she found most job interviewers dwelling on how she could possibly get to work with six children rather than on whether she had the skills to do the job. For a while, she tried to juggle three part-time jobs to make ends meet. Then, she interviewed at Good Food Markets.

Crystal lives near Good Food Markets, so she is able to get her kids to school and walk to work. Her family rallies together to support everyone's needs. Her older children get the younger ones ready for school and watch them as needed. All Crystal needed was a chance to prove herself.

She had never worked in a grocery before and lacked computer skills, but Good Food Markets invested the time in training Crystal. They showed her skills and patiently mentored her through them until she mastered them. They gave her opportunities to practice new skills rather than dismiss her after early missteps or worse, before giving her an opportunity to learn. Now, she is the general manager of the Rhode Island Avenue store. She uses computers proficiently, purchases and receives products, and greets and deals with customers daily. Before Crystal started at Good Food Markets, she received food stamps and minimal cash assistance. In 2017, when she was hired as a clerk, she earned \$12/hour. Thanks to the patience and training of Good Food Markets, Crystal was promoted through several positions and became general manager in October 2018, earning \$18/hour.

Asked what employers can do to support a more equitable workforce, Crystal states, "Be compassionate. Don't judge. Listen to people." She adds that having a degree or being a certain race or gender don't prove an ability to do a job. Crystal attributes her success to her supervisor "embracing her, being patient, respectful, and believing in her."

Crystal Jackson embodies the potential that the often overlooked or dismissed segment of the population has, if only they are given training and a chance to prove themselves.

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<sup>22</sup> Crystal Jackson, General Manager, Good Food Markets, Interview, August, 29, 2019.



## Case Study: Founding Farmers<sup>23</sup>

Farmers Restaurant Group is an organization that manages three different restaurants in Washington, DC, including the Founding Farmers restaurant. The concept behind all their businesses is to focus on products from American family farms. Included in their values is a commitment not only to high quality but also to sustainability. Their work supporting the American workforce extends beyond farms to the local community as well.

Farmers Restaurant Group partners with DC Central Kitchen to find employees. They train DC Central Kitchen learners for their internships; some gain employment there upon graduation. Dan Simons, co-owner of the Farmers Restaurant Group, says that his challenges with employees is the same whether they come from difficult backgrounds or not. They “lack familiarity with the overall expectations and requirements of a workplace in general,” he says. “Their life challenges are transportation - a big one - and the ability to work the required schedule.”

To address these challenges, Farmers Restaurant Group provides mentoring and one-on-one coaching to help find solutions for their employees. They may provide transportation or even loan people money; they focus on providing a supportive work environment.

To help employees grow, the restaurants give each worker a structured career roadmap, which includes

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<sup>23</sup> Dan Simons, Co-owner, Founding Farmers Restaurant Group, interview, August 19, 2019.

not only a description of their current job, but also one of the jobs above them and what the employee can do to advance.

Simons sees a role for government in solving some of the structural challenges to providing an equitable workforce. He cites free and better public transportation as an important step. He also wishes for better worker access to soft skills and emotional intelligence development. He can “train how to use a knife, if someone else can train relationship building.”

Foodservice employers might be able to provide this training and transportation supplements if the city provided a tax incentive for them to do so. Simons would like to take care of his workers; they already provide them paid vacations. But as he says “I aspire to find a way to pay a living wage. I presume in DC that is realistically over \$20/hour, and I don’t quite know how to do that and stay in business.”

If the city were able to supplement the employers’ costs for those individuals who would otherwise receive government benefits, the companies might be able to provide the training and transportation themselves and pay all employees a living wage.

## **Founding Farmers Restaurant Group Success Story<sup>24</sup>**

Asha Webb was released from prison in October 2018. Immediately upon release she began the enrollment process at DC Central Kitchen. She started classes January 2019. Asha had worried that with a felony record she would never be able to find employment, but on May 1st, she began working at Founding Farmers.

Asha did her internship with Founding Farmers, and they transitioned her to full-time employment. She now works as the Head of Pantry where she makes 1,700 salads a day. Despite earning \$14/hour, Asha calls her work “a great job.” She anticipates a promotion and raise at six months. Asha is a transplant from Philadelphia, so she is happy with the relatively higher DC minimum wage, though she recognizes it’s difficult to pay DC rents at \$14/hour.

The partnership between DC Central Kitchen and Founding Farmers seems to have worked out well for both as well as for Asha. Asha identifies the “self-empowerment training to learn how to work in the workplace, stay sober, and maintain relationships” as the most valuable thing she learned at DC Central Kitchen - that same soft skills training desired by Farmers Restaurant Group’s Dan Simons. Founding Farmers got a reliable, hard-working employee, and DC Central Kitchen got a partner that helped with internship training and graduate hiring.

Asha has made adjustments, too, to stay sober and focused every day. She works, takes care of her kids, and stays with her family. She “leaves the negative things alone being around positive energy.”

Founding Farmers provides that positive energy by treating Asha “like family.” Asha confirms that Founding Farmers provides transportation assistance and schedule adjustments for personal needs.

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<sup>24</sup> Asha Webb, Head of Pantry, Founding Farmers, interview, September 6, 2019.

Mainly, she is grateful that they gave her a chance to prove herself despite her record.

Asha recommends that DC employers hold customer service classes for their employees to help them advance and have a network of resources to help employees find what they need to succeed. She believes that if more training programs existed for youth, fewer young people would get caught up in the streets.

Most of all, Asha encourages DC employers just to make all employees feel welcome, treat everyone the same, and make them feel comfortable at work. "Treat them like family," she advises, "and they won't go anywhere because family is forever."





## Conclusion

While there are challenges to improving equity in the DC workforce, foodservice employers have an opportunity to make a significant impact in improving the current situation and to improve their profits while doing so.

The cost of employee turnover is significant in any operation. Replacing an employee requires recruitment expenses, time spent interviewing candidates, and onboarding and training expenses. Additionally, during the interval between an employee's last day and a replacement employee's first day working proficiently - which is never their first day - guests may be left unhappy, product may be ruined, overtime may be paid to other employees, and business may be lost. In short, if an organization could reduce its turnover, it could save a great deal on expenses and thus bolster its bottom line.

The most important thing that an employer can do to reduce turnover is to support their employees; to think of them as human beings with social, emotional, and financial needs. Most employees want to do a good job. They like the feeling of competence and success that can be found at work, but they can only overcome so many barriers on their own.

Employers can reduce these barriers in a variety of ways:

**Manage employees from a caring perspective.** Show compassion for their needs and adjust to support employees whenever possible. This includes creating a diverse work space where all feel welcome, showing patience for trainees while they are still learning how to do their jobs well, and making adjustments to work schedules or tasks to allow employees to show their best selves and to perform competently and responsibly.

**Provide purpose in the workplace by training employees thoroughly and effectively.** Most people do not master a skill because they have been taught it once or been told to do it by a supervisor. Employees need a supervisor or trainer to coach them until they get it. As long as an employee continues to make progress, the employee will get the job in time. When an employee understands their job, its importance to the organization, and the expectations for good job performance, they will work to meet job expectations if they want to keep their job.

**Create opportunities for learning and growth.** Once an employee has learned their own job, continue to teach them other skills. Show them what they can do to advance in the company, or just support them in their personal growth. For some individuals, this means giving them a career road map. For others, this simply means supporting their pursuit of a GED with time and funding. Community-based organizations are an underutilized resource for providing training to both individual employees in need and to companies as a whole. An employee who sees an improving future for themselves within a company is likely to remain with that company to reap the investment in training they have made. An employee who does not see the possibility of a better future within a company will look for one elsewhere. Ongoing training demonstrates to an employee that there is more for them to learn and achieve with the organization.

**Invest in people-centered management.** By growing future leaders from within the company, the organization not only communicates that advancement is possible, but it naturally develops caring leaders. The leaders who advance from the lowest rungs of the company understand the requirements of their employees. They can manage from a compassionate but realistic perspective because they have been in that role themselves. They know what accommodations can be made and what adjustments the employees must make themselves.

**Make benefits relevant.** The foodservice industry is highly competitive. There is pressure to keep wages as low as possible. However, at some point, employees cannot keep their employment and survive. Relevant benefits can make the difference between an employee who can get by until a promotion comes and an employee who has to find another job. Transportation assistance and meal benefits are some of the most affordable and highly relevant benefits. Assistance during emergencies can increase employee loyalty greatly. Ultimately, employees will need to advance to a living wage, but until they have earned that promotion, benefits can keep them from jumping ship for the slightest pay increase elsewhere.



When a highly skilled employee begins work with a company, there is a good chance that individual will have multiple offers and opportunities elsewhere very soon. Employers seek out the best, but the cost of turnover may make those individuals more expensive than they seem on paper.

To suggest that DC has a labor shortage is in some ways a mischaracterization. There are many individuals who want a chance to work but who are often passed over by companies because of their lack of experience, their appearance, their approaches to communication, or their cultural norms. If given a chance, these employees would stay with their employer longer because experience has taught them that they have fewer opportunities in the marketplace.

Employers reference soft skills as a job requirement, but no one is born with fully developed soft skills. These skills are learned. If a company puts in the time to properly train its employees, those employees can develop those skills over time. The same is true with technical skills. If an employee feels that they are learning a great deal at an organization, they are likely to stay.

Additionally, employers have support from government and community organizations. Community-based organizations train residents who are unemployed with basic soft and technical skills, so they can meet or exceed the minimum threshold for employment. Increased communication and partnerships between employers and community-based organizations will help both groups. For the hospitality industry to achieve its potential, existing community-based organization-led training and talent pipelines should be expanded and diversified. The industry would be well served to work with government and philanthropy to develop and implement strategic, large-scale investments and ensure that current investments in training are aligned with business needs.

With a concerted effort to partner with community-based organizations, hire those traditionally overlooked by society, and train and care for all employees as human beings, employers will be able to improve the current inequities in the system to create a more equitable workforce that benefits employees, businesses, and society alike.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

List of businesses interviewed or evaluated

- Avery Road Treatment Center
- B Lin Catering
- Beefsteak
- Cosmos Club
- Entertainment Cruises
- Fairmont Hotel
- Farmers and Distillers
- Farmers, Fishers, and Bakers
- Hyatt House, The Wharf
- Levy at Audi Field
- Levy Inc.
- Marriott Key Bridge
- Marriott Marquis DC
- Nando's 7th Street
- Nando's Chinatown
- Nando's Navy Yard
- Nando's Rosslyn, VA
- Old Ebbitt Grill
- Perkins Management
- Shake Shack
- Sodexo at Marriott International
- Sodexo at National Geographic
- Sodexo at National Zoo
- Sodexo at USCCB
- The Line Hotel
- The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City
- The Wing DC
- Whole Foods Market

# Appendix B

## List of references

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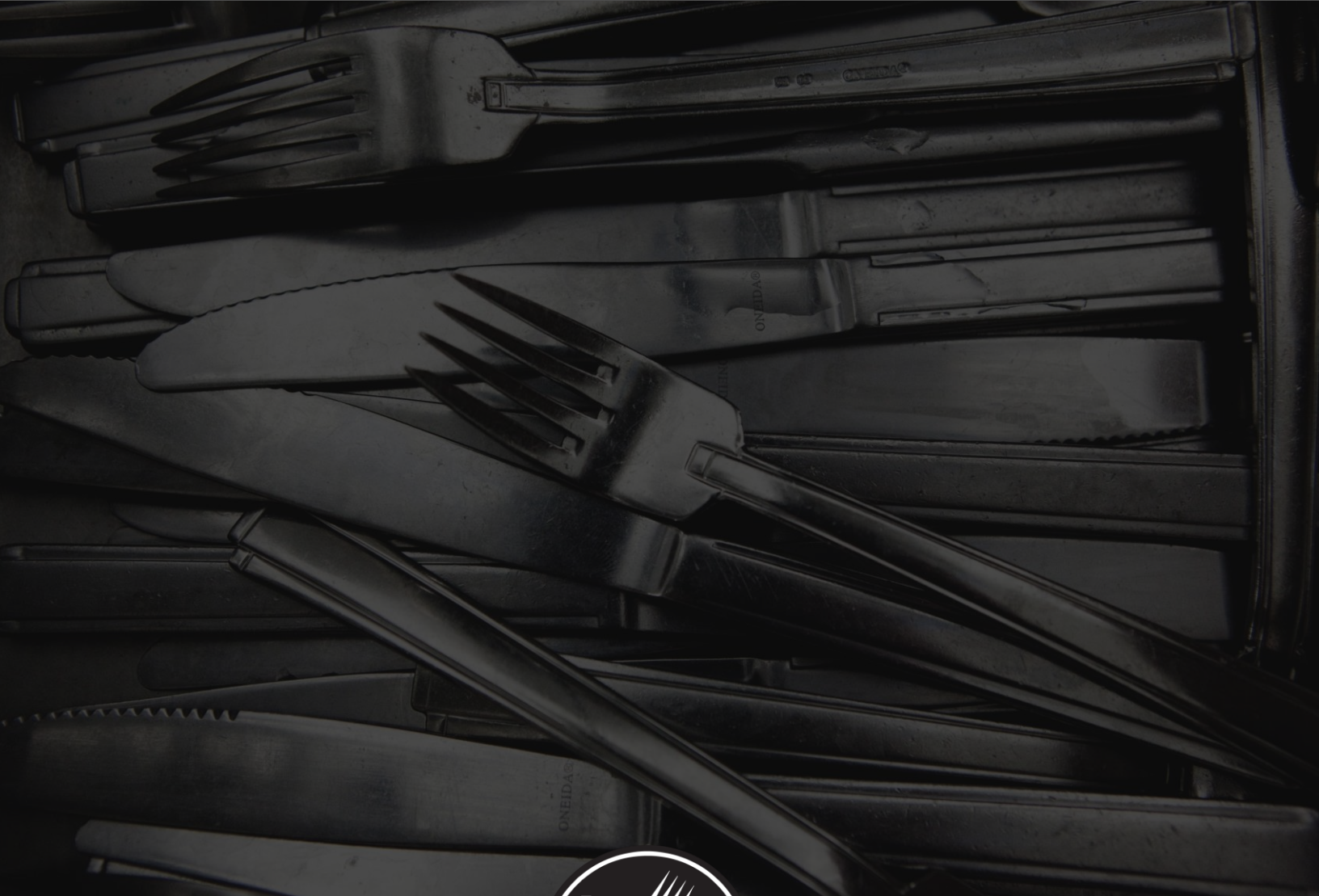
## ABOUT DC CENTRAL KITCHEN

DC Central Kitchen (DCCK) is an iconic nonprofit and social enterprise that combats hunger and poverty through job training and job creation. The organization provides hands-on culinary job training for individuals facing high barriers to employment while creating living wage jobs and bringing nutritious, dignified food where it is most needed. DCCK's social ventures include serving scratch-cooked farm-to-school meals in DC schools, delivering fresh, affordable produce to corner stores in neighborhoods without supermarkets, and operating a fast-casual cafe. DCCK has been featured in national media including The Washington Post, The Atlantic, National Geographic, PBS NewsHour, and more. To learn more, visit [dcentralkitchen.org](http://dcentralkitchen.org).



## ABOUT THE FOOD POLICY DIRECTOR AND THE DC FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Located within the DC Office of Planning (OP), the Food Policy Director and DC Food Policy Council (FPC) promote food access and equity, sustainability, and the local food economy in the District of Columbia. Before the Director position and FPC were created by legislation in 2014, several different District agencies and community organizations had addressed issues of food access, urban agriculture, challenges for small businesses, and diet-related health disparities in the District of Columbia for many years. The Director and FPC convene these stakeholders to collaborate and align priorities to advance a more equitable, healthy, and sustainable District food system. The FPC is an official public board and commission of the District of Columbia government and submits an annual report on the state of the District's food system. For more information, visit [www.dcfoodpolicy.org](http://www.dcfoodpolicy.org).



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