

AN ACT

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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District of
Columbia
Official Code*

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To establish a Commission on Poverty to evaluate programs designed to help District residents break the cycle of poverty, to make recommendations to improve the economic, educational, healthcare, and housing status of District residents living in poverty, and to focus on efforts aimed at reducing the rates of concentrated poverty and childhood poverty in the District, and to sunset the Commission after 2 years.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Commission on Poverty Establishment Act of 2006”.

Sec. 2. Establishment of Commission on Poverty.

There is established a Commission on Poverty (“Commission”) to evaluate programs designed to help District residents break the cycle of poverty, to make recommendations to improve the economic, educational, healthcare, and housing status of District residents living in poverty, and to focus on efforts aimed at reducing the rates of concentrated poverty and childhood poverty in the District.

Sec. 3. Members.

(a)(1) The Commission shall be composed of no more than 21 members appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Council.

(2) No more than 9 members shall be employees of the government of the District of Columbia.

(3) The public members of the Commission may be representatives of organizations providing services to District residents living in poverty, the faith community, the business community, academic or policy research institutions, advocacy organizations, or persons with other relevant interest or expertise.

(4) No fewer than 5 of the public members shall be persons who live in census tracts with poverty rates of at least 20 percent or who have personal experience living in poverty.

(b) The Mayor shall transmit to the Council proposed resolutions to approve the appointment of each member of the Commission for a 45-day period of review, excluding days of Council recess. If the Council does not approve or disapprove a proposed resolution within

the 45-day review period, the proposed resolution shall be deemed approved.

(c) If a position on the Commission becomes vacant, the Mayor shall, pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, nominate a new member of the Commission within 30 days of such vacancy.

(d) The Mayor shall designate one member as Chairperson of the Commission.

(e) The Mayor may remove any member of the Commission for any cause adversely affecting the member's ability or willingness to perform his or her duties.

(f) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties.

(g) The Director of the Department of Human Services shall designate 2 employees to serve as staff to the Commission.

Sec. 4. Meetings.

(a) Meetings of the Commission shall be held in public, at times and places determined by the Chairperson, and in locations accessible to District residents living in poverty.

(b) The Commission shall adopt rules and procedures as may be necessary to conduct business.

Sec. 5. Duties.

The Commission shall:

(1) Accept testimony from the public;

(2) Review relevant research and statistical information compiled by the District, the federal government, and nongovernment organizations;

(3) Determine whether commonly used measures of poverty, such as the Federal Poverty Level, accurately reflect the basic cost of living in the District of Columbia and, if existing measures are inadequate, develop the basis of an adequate alternative;

(4) Evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs designed to help individuals break the cycle of poverty;

(5) Recommend any changes in eligibility guidelines that would better match the universe of people eligible for a program's services with the universe of people actually in need of the services;

(6) Analyze the reasons why poverty is becoming increasingly concentrated in certain areas of the District and evaluate the District's strategies to reverse this trend;

(7) Assess the effectiveness of the District's efforts to reduce the childhood poverty rate; and

(8) Compile its findings and recommendations in a final report to be issued no later than December 1, 2008 to the Mayor and Council, and made available to the public.

Sec. 6. Sunset.

This act shall expire on December 31, 2008.

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Sec. 7. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(3)).

Sec. 8. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of Congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.

Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia

Mayor
District of Columbia