

# District of Columbia (University of the District of Columbia) Annual Report - FY2021

## Report Status: Approved as of 07/08/2022

### Contributing Organizations

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University of the District of Columbia

### Executive Summary

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#### Overview

The College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) of the University of the District of Columbia is the land-grant college in and for the nation's capital. In addition to offering innovative academic programs in urban architecture and community development, urban sustainability, health education, nursing, and nutrition and dietetics, we also offer a wide range of community education programs through our land-grant centers: (1) The Center for Urban Agriculture & Gardening Education; (2) The Center for Sustainable Development & Resilience, which includes the Water Resources Research Institute; and (3) The Center for Nutrition Diet & Health, which includes the Institute of Gerontology.

CAUSES experienced a significant shortage of employees during the past fiscal year. At one point, almost 40% of the college's full-time positions were vacant. Despite this challenge, the college developed a theme entitled "Building Capacity & Strengthening the Core" that would succeed in galvanizing and focusing our efforts. This report elucidates the combined efforts of Team CAUSES.

#### Critical Issue: Climate Change

**DC Master Naturalist Program (DCMNP) Results:** The pandemic limited opportunities for DCMNP members to work at the nursery, but four members were able to complete volunteer hours there in December 2020. Those activities helped cement native plant species and cultivation of knowledge that members were introduced to in their spring taught program. Also, the activities provided valuable labor to reinstate nursery operations that will benefit future D.C. ecological restoration efforts. A total of 1900 plants from 24 native species were established in the nursery. Members engaged in a range of invasive species control, native plant restoration, environmental education, and biodiversity data collection activities. The projects and initiatives centered around these activities provided local communities, secondary students and teachers, nongovernmental organizations, and government partners with valuable contributions to connecting people with nature, enhancing environmental and STEM educational efforts, and District-wide data collection efforts. The DCMNP members themselves benefited through application of their newly acquired conservation and ecological knowledge, honing of project management and implementation skills, and community engagement experience. For example, two DCMNP members have successfully led a middle school project to install a native plant pollinator garden, another has played an integral role helping to lead a citizens' association local park restoration project, and a fourth has initiated a research project focusing on the impact of newly acquired natural history knowledge on professional and personal development. The 2021 training program began at the beginning of March and continued until the end of April. A total of 16 external instructors were recruited to lead workshops and classes on a wide range of ecological, natural history, environmental management, and citizen science topics. Via selection from a competitive application process, 24 new trainees were enrolled and participated in the program. The 2021 trainees included representatives from all eight DC wards, had a diversity of personal interests, and were at a range of stages in their professional careers, from recent graduates, to early and mid-career employees, to retirees. District partner organization volunteer opportunities that have recently been offered to trainees and members include pollinator habitat and monarch butterfly monitoring, reptile monitoring, amphibian citizen science program data collection and training, bird box monitoring and maintenance, crab conservation data collection, community garden insect pollinator data collection and teaching, and environmental program administration. These and other opportunities provide students with the chance to work and connect with the National Park Service, DC Department of Energy and the Environment, DC Department of Parks and Recreation, Rock Creek Conservancy, Capital Nature, and the Smithsonian Institution.

**Knowledge and Perceptions about Environmental Issues Results:** Staff surveyed 491 participants. The level of environmental knowledge across the age groups was relatively high and largely similar. The results suggest that Blacks care about the environment, see the environment as beneficial to their health, and are knowledgeable about natural resources. However, younger Blacks (18–25) were the least likely to think of the natural world as a community to which they belong, report feelings of connection to it, and recognize that it

impacts their personal welfare. In conclusion, Blacks in Washington, D.C. possess environmental awareness and use local environmental language, depicting the uniqueness of their community. The mainstream environmental movement may fail to recognize this local language, leading to exclusion of vulnerable populations based on a faulty premise that these populations lack knowledge or interest in environmental issues.

**Advanced Climate Change Science Course Results:** Eight students completed the course and six of these completed both a pre-test and post-test to assess their increase in knowledge. The average score on the pre-test was 47.75 points out of 68, indicating a low-average understanding of climate change at the start of the class. After completing the course, the average score on the post-test was 56 points out of 68, which indicates a 17% increase in knowledge and an above-average understanding of climate change. On the course evaluation, students indicated that their knowledge of climate change significantly improved (mean of 4.29 out of 5, with 5 indicating a great deal of improvement). Students indicated the course will lead them to make moderate changes in decisions or practices at work to mitigate (mean = 3.43) or adapt (mean = 3.71) to climate change. They also indicated the course will lead them to make moderate changes in decisions or practices in their personal lives to mitigate (mean = 3.71) or adapt (mean = 3.71) to climate change.

**Food Production/Agroecology Course Results:** Though classes were taught online, during discussions in class, it was evident that students were gaining knowledge in different topics related to agroecology. Discussions revolved around climate change, recycling, water conservation, waste reduction, and food security, indicating a positive shift in their behavior/attitude. Students also became adept at collecting and condensing information on course-related topics that were new to them. As a result of constant encouragement and boosting confidence in class, one student came forward with an article she authored on plastic waste recycling in Rock Creek Park. The article was published in the College's newsletter to encourage other students to publish. Students eagerly embraced a challenge to mitigate climate change impact by adopting a new habit related to waste reduction/recycling/water conservation, or by committing to what they had already adopted. A survey, administered at the end of the semester to assess changes in knowledge and behavior/attitude, indicated a positive shift, with 93% change in knowledge and 100% change in behavior/attitude. This is an encouraging trend, because students began the course with some basic understanding of climate change and agroecology, but became motivated, convinced, and confident to change behavior and attitude after taking the course. These outcomes show that the course continues to be successful, not only in imparting knowledge in agroecology and related aspects, but also in sustaining interest and enthusiasm beyond the classroom and the semester, as evidenced by email queries that came after the course ended, related to how they can build their reputation in agroecology. One student has signed on to conduct research, and another student was motivated to register as a full-time student in the Professional Science Master's in Urban Agriculture degree program as a result of taking the course.

**Facilitating Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Planning in Washington, DC through a Tableau Interface:** The use of the dashboards was demonstrated through scenarios focusing on UA in the District. The study revealed that 1) DC currently has 150 hectares (ha) of existing UGI in the form of documented projects and an additional 3012 ha potentially suitable for UGI development; 2) a total of 2792 ha is potentially suitable for UA, with 58% of that area in Wards 5, 7, and 8, which are largely food deserts and whose residents are primarily Black and experience the greatest inequities. By doing a street address search to find a specific parcel, users can identify the potential a property holds for GI including rooftop and ground UA, which is helpful for home and property owners and urban farmers. Stakeholders were asked to identify priority locations based on need. For example, a business owner is able to identify locations suitable for commercial UA. Private homeowners and schools can choose to start a rooftop garden or open up their grounds to enable the community to grow and share food. The work serves as a model for similar digital tools in other locales using Tableau and other platforms, and enables stakeholders, including private citizens, researchers, extension personnel and city officials, to access information and develop projects aimed at mitigating climate change impacts and enhancing food and nutritional security within DC. This research was conducted in collaboration with the University of Rhode Island and the Trust for Public Land. The work was published in the journal *Sustainability* in July 2021. It was presented to the DC UA working group and to DC government agencies to demonstrate how to locate priority areas for GI development using the interactive tool, which can be accessed by downloading the open access Tableau software.

**National Green Infrastructure Certification Program (NGICP) Results:** The 360-degree feature made it possible for participants to view the GI practices from a variety of angles, bringing the static photos from the text to life and allowing them to truly explore the space, and how the various components of each GI practice that they have studied work together. The use of virtual field trips ensured that everyone had access to view the local practices by bringing the real-world examples to them. Participants were excited to explore the areas and learn what green infrastructure looks like in their city. In addition, the student intern who assisted with the production of the video had the opportunity to gain new experience and exposure in creating this type of video. Fourteen participants attended the UDC Utility Training Sessions and 11 passed the final exam to fully complete the training, a completion rate of 79%.

## Critical Issue: Food Safety

**Commercial Kitchen Licensure Results:** In fiscal year 2020-2021, a Certificate of Occupancy application for the Van Ness commercial kitchen was completed and the certificate was obtained. A response policy for clean-up of vomiting and diarrhea as well as a University commercial kitchen health policy was written and accepted by DC Department of Health. Contractual agreements with a district-licensed pest control company, trash and solid waste collection, grease recycling company and ventilation hood system cleaning are required and have also been obtained. All required documentation for the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, who issues the business license, was completed and submitted. Also, the DC health inspection was passed and a business license was obtained.

## Critical Issue: Global Food Security and Hunger

**Combating Food Insecurity in Underserved Wards of the District of Columbia Results:** Three hundred thirty-seven (337) pounds of food harvested from soilless systems at Firebird Farm and the Van Ness main campus have been donated to the Student Food Pantry, reaching 300 students. One hundred ninety (190) pounds were donated to Jones Memorial Church, reaching 25-30 residents each delivery.

**Urban Agriculture Soilless Series Certificate Program Results:** After completion of the workshops, a total of 21 participants completed the certificate program. This included 231 direct contacts; 462 pre- and post-surveys; 50 indirect contacts in the form of hands-on demonstration videos and questions through phone/email regarding information of the course; and 21 evaluations sent. All participants showed an increase in knowledge in all 11 topics covered throughout the certificate program, resulting in a better understanding of skill and knowledge for urban agriculture soilless systems, specifically hydroponic and aquaponic systems.

Evaluations showed that participants' expectations were met. A few responses are included below.

"Much more info than I expected." "It was super, I learned a lot." "Will use what was learned in this event."

Evaluations also showed how participants plan to use this change of knowledge including addressing food security in their neighborhoods, and ultimately mitigating potential climate change effects. A few responses are listed below.

"Oh yes, I am a student and hoping that this course will be beneficial to work in horticultural sector." "I will use in the public school setting."

"Yes, I hope to start an aquaponic farm one day to grow food."

**Assessing the Urban Production Potential and Nutrient Profiles of a Crop Native to the Tropics Results:** Genotype PI 286316 produced copious flowers, especially in the high tunnel. Production of leaves was highest in the field row, despite this system being most frequently attacked by Japanese beetles. PI 273388, PI 275414, and green hibiscus produced the highest mass of leaves. Most minerals were influenced by the production systems, but most notable is that genotypes differed in amounts of some nutrients regardless of the production system. The locally adapted green hibiscus, which was cultivated in the Washington, DC area for many years, produced a moderate number of flowers, was a top producer of leaves in all systems, was least attacked by Japanese beetles, and had higher levels of nutrients than some other genotypes. Overall, our work demonstrates that *H. sabdariffa*, a tropical plant, can be grown in temperate, urban systems.

**Soil-Based and Soil-Less Production Internship Results:** Three hundred brassica seedlings were transplanted in the high tunnel directly on beds prepared one week before. Ecological management practices were used that eliminate the need for chemical applications to control pathogens, insect pests, and weeds in producing nutrient dense food. The same management practices were also used to grow over 700 cool-weather plants in the aquaponics system. The first harvest is expected for early December 2021. All harvested crops and inputs will be tracked and recorded, and final report will be compiled with economic analysis at the end of the internship. The intern and his supervisor also harvested, washed, packed, and donated 164 pounds of mixed greens to UDC food pantry, and to a Center for Nutrition, Diet, and Health (CNDH) project specialist for her field programming.

**Master Gardener Training Program Results:** The value of volunteer time is \$48.67 per hour (according to *Independent Sector*). Therefore, a total value of **\$46,966.55** was invested in the District of Columbia through the Master Garden program over a three-month period. The program also tallied 3,038 indirect contacts and 523 direct contacts with DC residents. Multiple Master Gardener projects and partnerships were established throughout all eight wards including:

- Maintenance and care for community gardens, urban farms, public parks and gardens and streetscapes
- Pollinator corridor along Connecticut Ave
- Native plant care, maintenance, and distribution to urban farms and community gardens
- Seedling production and distribution to school gardens on the Van Ness Green Roof

- Produce production and donation to UDC Student Food Pantry
- Educational programming at public libraries

**Master Gardener Training Program: Participatory Planning Results:** Two hundred and twenty-eight (228) people participated in the listening sessions and the survey, including current and prospective Master Gardeners. The findings revealed many recommendations for the program, which were published in a report in March 2021, and included:

- Investing in a new urban-focused and DC-centric curriculum;
- Investing in an accessible learning platform to offer basic training;
- Contracting a volunteer management system to manage volunteers more effectively;
- Offering financial aid to participants;
- Creating a computer loaner program;
- Developing an equity initiative to make the program more accessible to all; and
- Developing a website to host all program information.

The report served as a guide for rebuilding the DC Master Gardener program in 2021-2022.

**DC Master Gardener: Rebuilding the Program Results:** The highest number of applicants for the fall basic training came from Ward 7 (19%), and 29% of all applicants came from Wards 7 and 8 combined. On top of this, 30% of all applicants are African American. The program has also successfully reengaged 110 community volunteers since March 2021 who are actively participating in projects across the city. A cohort of 24 students (three from each ward in DC) enrolled in the course, which will run until December 2021. By the end of September 2021, the attendance rate for the classes was an average of 92%. At the end of each class session, students complete an evaluation survey. Feedback from the students has been positive and the class formats and structures have been adjusted based on their input.

**DC Master Gardener Program: Continuing Education Results:** Three classes were held between April and June 2021. Topics included urban tree care, cicadas, container gardening, compost systems, native plants, pollinators, pruning, soil health, and a history of African American garden clubs. There were 152 participants, total, with an average of 30 in each class. Additionally, recordings of the sessions are uploaded on the UDC YouTube channel, where they are accessible for later viewing. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation survey at the end of each class. Seventy-two were received, and most were overwhelmingly positive.

*“The presenter provided additional knowledge about urban gardening, plants and their purpose that were inspiring and added value to my current skills and looking forward to applying to future accomplishments.” “Excellent! One of the best talks I have attended.” “An absolutely great presentation. Lots of info that generated lots of ideas and the desire to learn more. Loved the simple 3-point breakdown on soil composition and NPK.” “The Garden Planning workshop by Samaria King was excellent/outstanding.”*

Others provided valuable suggestions about how to improve future sessions:

*“Good job. Consider adding 30 minutes to the workshop. Presenters and host are forced to lecture too fast.” “More time for Q&A; more interaction between the presenter and the participants. Chat moderation is a great format - it is great when the questions are posted there and read by the moderator. The use of this format has proven to maintain the best use of time and forces participants to keep their questions brief.”*

Nine classes were held between July and September 2021. Topics included: how to build an ecosystem in the DMV, composting for Soil Health, tree communication, growing Healthy, Easy-Care Roses, and how to build a raised bed.

**Critical Issue: Health, Nutrition and Childhood Obesity Prevention**

**Bodywise Program Results:** Throughout a six-month period, 870 seniors enrolled and participated in the Bodywise classes. Bodywise participants complete an annual survey, administered through SurveyMonkey, to measure the effectiveness of the Program. Efficacy reported by participants polled was rated at 98%.

**Community Health and Nutrition Education Results:** Certificates were awarded to attendees who completed the *Quick Tips to Understanding the Nutrition Facts Label* and *Telework 15 – Nutrition Tips on How to Avoid Weight Gain* workshops. Twenty-five pre- and post-evaluations were completed for the *Quick Tips to Understanding the Nutrition Facts Label* workshop between October and December 2020. The pre- and post-evaluations consisted of five knowledge and/or skill related questions. Of the nine participants who completed the post-evaluation, 88.9% indicated they would always read the nutrition facts label (question 1), were able to identify calories on the nutrition facts label (question 2), identify and discuss the percent daily value (question 3) and identify the serving size on

the nutrition facts label (question 4). Twenty-two percent indicated they would always and sometimes consume the serving size, whereas 55.6% indicated they would usually consume the serving size (question 5) after completing the workshop. Of those that completed the post evaluation for the Quick Tips to Understanding the Nutrition Facts Label workshop between January 2021 and March 2021, 100% indicated they would always read the nutrition facts label (question 1), and 100% responded that their knowledge level was high in identifying and discussing the percent daily value (question 3) after completing the workshop. Ten (76.9%) of the *Intro to Nutrition* lecture students earned a grade of 80% or better and seven students (78.6%) earned a grade of 70% or higher in the *Intro to Nutrition* laboratory.

**Community Education - Dietary Guidelines Education Results:** In the second quarter, 190 residents in Maryland and in D.C. Wards 1 - 8 have been exposed to regular dietary guidelines education sessions through online adult seminars with Iona Senior Services (Ward 2), So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.) (Ward 8), Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center (Ward 8), and CAUSES WebEx workshops (Wards 1 - 8 and virtually anywhere). English and Spanish versions of recipes were provided to 66 participants of the Sixth Church Food Closet in Ward 4. National Nutrition Month educational materials were provided to 22 participants in Ward 8 and 45 participants in Ward 7 through Covenant Baptist Food Pantry (Ward 8) and Good Success Christian Food Ministries (Ward 7). Eight people attended the online Eating Healthy on a Budget Certificate workshop. Five participants who answered the satisfaction survey planned to eat more plant foods after attending the workshop and agreed that the course was useful, engaging, and taught something new, such as: “how to reduce my food budget with healthy food”; “I plan to find more ways to make what I eat both affordable and healthy and to be a nutrition ambassador to others.”; and “how to read labels.” Additional connections have been made in Ward 3 (TERRIFIC Inc), Ward 5 (Crowder Owens Calvary Food Bank), and Ward 6 (So Others Might Eat [S.O.M.E.]), to provide regular, virtual, community nutrition programs.

In the third quarter, 190 residents in Maryland and in D.C. Wards 1-8 have been exposed to regular dietary guidelines education sessions through online adult seminars with Iona Senior Services (Ward 2), So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.) (Ward 6), Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center (Ward 8), and CAUSES Webex workshops (Wards 1-8 and virtually anywhere). English and Spanish versions of recipes were developed, and distributed to 90 participants of the Sixth Church Food Closet in Ward 4. Nutrition educational materials were distributed to 78 participants in Ward 8 (Covenant Baptist Food Pantry), and 105 participants in Ward 7 (Good Success Christian Food Ministries).

Of the 13 UDC Nutrition and Dietetics students who registered for Senior Seminar and Research, 11 of them successfully completed all research projects, and successfully finished the course. Five of those students presented their research during UDC’s Research week.

In the fourth quarter, 426 residents in Maryland and in D.C. Wards 1-8 were exposed to regular dietary guidelines education sessions through online and in-person seminars and workshops. Adult online seminars included residents of So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.) (Ward 6), Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center (Ward 8), and CAUSES Webex workshops (Wards 1-8 and one participant residing in London, England). In-person sessions were given to 27 children twice weekly in July at Golden Rule Apartments Kids Wellness Camp (Ward 6), twice monthly at Sixth Church Food Closet (Ward 4), 2- 3 times monthly at Good Success Christian Food Ministries in Ward 7 and twice monthly at Covenant Baptist Food Pantry in ward 8. English and Spanish versions of information on nutrition and the immune system were developed and distributed along with recipes and My Plate materials to 57 participants of the Sixth Church Food Closet in Ward 4. Sixty adult participants in Ward 8 Covenant Baptist Food Pantry and 144 participants in Ward 7 (Good Success Christian Food Ministries) also received these materials. Fresh produce was provided to all of these food pantries in September. In addition attendees at a Health Fair in Ward 7 on September 25, 2021.

Between July and September 2021, 18 pre-evaluations and 6 post-evaluations were completed via Qualtrics for the *Quick Tips to Understanding the Nutrition Facts Label and Telework 15 – Nutrition Tips on How to Avoid Weight Gain While Working at Home workshops*. In addition, 11 factsheets were distributed.

Results from the pre-evaluations of both workshops indicated that seven (38.8%) respondents usually read the nutrition facts label and two (11%) respondents always read the label. Results from the post evaluations of both workshops indicated that two (33.3%) respondents usually read the label and four (66.7%) respondents always read the label. Unfortunately, there were low completion rates for both pre- and post-evaluations.

**Critical Issue: Sustainable Energy**

Nothing to report.

**Community Engagement, Friends of Oxon Run and Urban Land Use Planning Students Results:** Urban Land Use Planning (ULUP) students received opportunities to: engage in hands-on application of their academic land use planning learning; develop empathy in working with a historically marginalized community; experience the value of receiving local knowledge; and learn from professionals in the Oxon Run community, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and a Youth Development and Adult Education expert. The Oxon Run community developed agency in sharing their experiences and in hosting the broadly attended community listening session; learned about planning through the planning primer prepared by ULUP students in response to their specific concerns and interests; and increased their sense of agency in having their voices amplified and shared in a professional format with DPR. DPR strengthened its relationship with the Oxon Run community. UDC strengthened its relationships with the Oxon Run community and with DPR.

**Senior Companion Program Results:** The Senior Companion Program (SCP) volunteer vaccination rate increased throughout the year. Confirmation of COVID-19 vaccination was received from 60 volunteers, and one volunteer submitted a religious exemption. SCP will continue to communicate with the five volunteers who are not yet vaccinated. SCP will assign volunteers to assist the Bodywise Program with individual socialization calls. These calls will enable volunteers to serve seniors at sites that remain closed due to COVID-19. From January to April 2021, seven healthy eating, nutrition, and food safety workshops, and food demonstrations were conducted. Total enrollment in the workshops was 239 including 51 SCP volunteers. participants enrolled in the workshops. The virtual WebEx monthly in-service training meetings were attended by 73 SCP volunteers and 12 participants from the Aging Network. Senior Companion volunteers made 4,273 individual direct contacts with clients and other home-bound older adults in the community. Between July and September 2021, nine Healthy Eating, Nutrition and Food Safety workshops and food demonstration were conducted. Total enrollment in the workshops was 289 including 61 SCP volunteers. The virtual WebEx monthly In-Service training meetings in partnership with the Department of Aging and Community Living was attended by 108 SCP volunteers and 10 participants from the Aging Network. SCP volunteers made 4,092 individual direct contacts with 186 clients and other home-bound older adults in the community during this period.

## **Merit and Scientific Peer Review Processes**

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### **Updates**

None

## **Stakeholder Input**

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### **Actions to seek stakeholder input that encouraged their participation with a brief explanation**

Virtual Community Listening Sessions with stakeholders were held to collect feedback on program effectiveness and recommendations for improvement. Community Listening Sessions were meant to include a range of participants, including Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs), D.C. and federal government agencies, non-profit organizations, volunteers, workshop participants, community members, and private sector businesses. The goal of the sessions was to determine how the Center for Nutrition, Diet and Health (CNDH) and Center for Urban Agriculture and Gardening Education (CUAGE) can improve their efficiencies and effectiveness regarding community impact and outreach. The sessions were led by a third-party facilitator, who supported session neutrality and allowed all participants' viewpoints to be heard and acknowledged. To accommodate participants' schedules, the sessions were held virtually from 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 and Thursday, September 16, 2021 (second session was 1.5 hrs.). The focus of the listening session in June was CNDH, while the focus of the listening session in September was CUAGE.

### **Methods to identify individuals and groups and brief explanation**

The CAUSES marketing team assisted with designing marketing campaigns via Eventbrite and on CAUSES' digital media platforms. The team delivered email campaigns, inviting CAUSES' mailing list, event attendees, volunteers, and community partners. At the beginning of the virtual Community Listening Sessions, participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe their involvement with CAUSES. There were fifteen (15) total participants for both community listening sessions. The participants were government stakeholders, community partners, ANC leaders, and DC residents.

### **Methods for collecting stakeholder input and brief explanation**

Participants were then divided into small virtual rooms to discuss topic areas (or areas of involvement) identified for CNDH and CUAGE programs. Several questions were used to guide participants' reflections and group discussions. The themes for the three sets of guided questions asked were communication, accessibility, and youth programs. The participants were also asked if they wanted to discuss

anything else besides the three identified themes. Following the Listening Sessions, participants completed a survey to assess satisfaction with CNDH and CUAGE programming, the overall structure of the Listening Sessions, and to gather any other feedback not addressed during the sessions. The project team collated notes and developed vital takeaway points to help build the final report, including challenges and recommendations brought up by participants

**A statement of how the input will be considered and brief explanation of what you learned from your stakeholders**

Two (2) key overarching themes emerged from the Community Listening Sessions: Communication and Accessibility and People and Partnerships. Participants at both listening sessions expressed a need for UDC-CAUSES to be more strategic about their communication. The participants expressed concern regarding senior citizens' ability to work technology needed for virtual events and classes such as a computer and logging onto Zoom or other similar programs. They emphasized that without a certain level of familiarity with technology, these specific community members have limited access to available programs. The stakeholders also expressed a concern with the overall way that CNDH and CUAGE advertise their programming. Many of them were unaware of much of the Centers' programming. These community members recommended advertising via flyers, TV, local radio stations, contact with community directors/ward leaders, schools and parents, faith-based groups, buses, and metro ads.

Participants at both listening sessions noted that CAUSES needs to reach out to the community in more ways than by email and online. CAUSES must find out how the community gets their information in order to more effectively reach their audience. The participants identified several recommendations to improve communication processes and accessibility such as adopting a boots-on-the-ground approach to make direct connections with the community.

Related to people and partnerships, the participants expressed a desire for CAUSES to work with community centers across the eight (8) wards in the district, as well as increase communications with low-income communities. One way they suggested CAUSES do this is by partnering with black-owned businesses, as well as partnering with churches and other groups where there is available space that could sustain an urban garden. The participants also expressed a need for access to nutritious food, stating that CNDH education programs about health “will be meaningless if there is no access to food that is part of nutritious diet.” They suggested that CNDH utilize data to identify and target problem areas where they could focus more programs. In addition, the participants suggested that CAUSES utilize community gardeners to spread the word about UDC programs and get more people involved.

The sessions revealed that the community is looking for CAUSES to be a partner with transparent and reliable communication, an increase in direct community engagement, strategic partnerships that enhance programs and policy issues, and improved organizational structures and processes. The sessions were the first step in achieving CAUSES' mission and vision to provide community outreach programs that measurably improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of people and neighborhoods in the District of Columbia, the nation and the world.

**Highlighted Results by Project or Program**

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Type	Projects / Programs
<b>Projects / Programs without a Critical Issue</b>	<b>0</b>
Not Provided	