OUR MISSION

DC Appleseed has worked for over 20 years to make the National Capital Area a better place to live and work. Throughout our history and through our current projects, we have taken on some of the District’s toughest problems, developed proposed solutions to those problems, worked to get our proposed solutions adopted and implemented, and then monitored the implementation to make sure it actually produces results. DC Appleseed’s projects involve working with broad coalitions, researching best practices, issuing reports, participating in regulatory proceedings, bringing lawsuits, managing public education campaigns, and meeting with and testifying before governmental decision-makers. The ultimate goal of all and projects is to do whatever is needed to achieve real, tangible improvements in the National Capital Area.
HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

CareFirst Litigation
CareFirst is the largest health insurance company in the region. The DC-based portion of CareFirst was chartered by Congress as a “charitable and benevolent” non-profit, and under District law must maintain a surplus consistent with its obligation to maximize community health reinvestment. In 2016, the D.C. Insurance Commissioner ordered the company to reinvest $51 million of $268 million in excess surplus to District community healthcare needs. We have appealed this decision, contending that the company owes District residents and subscribers $400 million.

- **Pro bono partners:** Covington & Burling LLP; Harkins Cunningham LLP; Mathematica Policy Research; and Urban Institute.

HIV/AIDS
Since we issued our first report on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 2005, we have seen a 63% decrease in new infections District-wide. The District of Columbia has had historically one of the worst HIV/AIDS epidemics in the country. After 10 years of advocacy—including a major report and follow-up report cards—we collaborated with the Mayor, the Department of Health and the Washington AIDS Partnership to produce a plan to end HIV in D.C., which facilitates important conversations between doctors and patients about their wishes for end-of-life care. The program was codified into law in 2015 and is in the implementation stages, aligning the District’s protocols with neighboring Maryland and Virginia.

- **Pro bono partners:** Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP; Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP; and Shipman & Goodwin LLP.

Improving End-of-life
As part of DC Appleseed’s work to improve the health system in D.C., we championed the creation of a Medical Order for Scope of Treatment (MOST) program which facilitates important conversations between doctors and patients about their wishes for end-of-life care. The program was codified into law in 2015 and is in the implementation stages, aligning the District’s protocols with neighboring Maryland and Virginia.

- **Pro bono partners:** Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP; Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP; and Shipman & Goodwin LLP.

Childhood Asthma
1 in 5 children in D.C. suffer’s from asthma and the rates are ten times higher among low-income children of color than their white, more affluent peers. In partnership with Children’s National Health System, and Urban Institute, we created a policy agenda to reduce the challenges that low-income families face in trying to manage this chronic disease. We are also working with the DC Asthma Coalition and the Healthy Housing Coalition to reduce asthma triggers in housing and schools that can cause life-threatening flare ups, and to facilitate children’s access to essential supports and treatments.

- **Pro bono partner:** Mayer Brown LLP

Childhood Lead Screening
After advocating for improved education, communication, and testing following the District’s lead-in-the-drinking-water crisis, DC Appleseed is advocating for the creation of a Blood Lead Screening Registry to increase participation in childhood blood lead screening. Under District law, all children must be tested twice by age 2, but according to the most recent data, only 30% of children on Medicaid receive both required screenings. A registry that complements the District’s immunization registry will help the District and its health care partners ensure that more children get tested and high blood lead levels are promptly addressed.

- **Pro bono partners:** Akin Gump LLP; Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP; Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.

Anacostia Watershed and River Restoration
DC Appleseed is working to transform the Anacostia River from one of the nation’s most polluted into a national model for urban river revitalization. We are working with the District Department of Energy and Environment, expert consultants, and community advocates to ensure that the river is clean and that the adjacent neighborhoods share the benefit from a revitalized waterfront.

- **Pro bono partner:** Mayer Brown LLP

Syringe Access Working Group to address policy challenges regarding syringe access services.

- **Pro bono partners:** Hogan Lovells US LLP and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP.
**Child Support**

Child support helps lift children out of poverty, but most of the children in the District’s child support system—30,000 out of 50,000—do not receive the child support they are owed. DC Appleseed is working to increase collaboration between the District’s workforce development and child support enforcement systems to help low-income parents earn sufficient incomes to pay their child support.

- **Pro bono partner:** Crowell & Moring LLP.

**Community College**

As part of the Working Poor Families project, DC Appleseed is helping advance a strong community college in the District, which until recently was the only major American city without one. DC Appleseed is working with leadership of University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and the District government to help ensure robust support for the types of higher education offerings that District residents need.

- **Pro bono partners:** The Brookings Institution; Deloitte; Federal City Council; Morgan Lewis; Nelson Mullins; Skadden; and Dow Lohnes.

**Early Childhood Education**

DC Appleseed is helping the District raise the quality of and access to early childhood education. Our 2016 report Solid Footing: Reinforcing the Early Care and Education Economy for Infants and Toddlers in DC, and our white paper, Results from a Survey of DC’s Early Childhood Education Workforce, outlined the need for, among other things, higher reimbursement for the child care subsidy program and better compensation and access to higher education for early childhood teachers. We successfully advocated for legislation in 2018 that makes fair compensation for early childhood teachers the law, and we continue to work with the District’s early childhood champions to build a strong system of early care and education that sustains children, families and educators.

- **Pro bono partners:** Squire Patton Boggs LLP and Zuckerman Spaeder LLP.

**Special Education**

DC Appleseed continues to advocate for strategies that will reduce the District’s reliance on litigation to resolve special education disputes, in order to help special education students get the services they need and get them more quickly. Our current effort focuses on helping to ensure that students with disabilities achieve at grade level, and improving the likelihood of success for special education students who are transitioning into or out of non-public schools.

- **Pro bono partners:** DLA Piper LLP; Reed Smith LLP; K&L Gates; Mayer Brown, FTI Consulting.
JOBS & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Adult Literacy
DC Appleseed is advocating that the District expand adult literacy services and better integrate them with vocational training and education using a career pathways approach in order to increase earning capacity for D.C. residents without a high school diploma.

- **Pro bono partner:** Steptoe & Johnson LLP.

Affordable Housing at the Anacostia Waterfront
Since 2014, the District has been implementing a law we helped develop that requires affordable housing to be provided whenever the District disposes of public land for private residential development. This proposal was guided by our experience monitoring development along the Anacostia Waterfront to ensure that legal obligations for affordable housing are met there. We are also investigating ways to reduce the cost of providing affordable housing by streamlining financing and permitting, including by highlighting the importance of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process in an amicus brief on the Bruce Monroe and Park Morton developments. Finally, we are advocating for implementation of the District’s Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA), which would allow the D.C. government to purchase housing and keep it affordable.

- **Pro bono partners:** Hank Brothers; Gensler; Kirkland & Ellis LLP; Victor Reinoso; Robert Bobb Group; and Steptoe & Johnson LLP.

Workforce Intermediary
DC Appleseed worked with the District to create a Workforce Intermediary to match hospitality and construction employers with qualified District residents as new jobs become available. DC Appleseed continues to monitor the funding and effectiveness of the Workforce Intermediary as their role evolves to meet the needs of businesses, job seekers and training providers.

- **Pro bono partner:** Steptoe & Johnson LLP.

Improving Workforce Development
Access to high quality adult education and training is essential to helping low-income District residents achieve economic security, and that means ensuring that the pieces of the workforce development puzzle — education, training, jobs and supports — are all working together to create a seamless experience for residents and business owners. DC Appleseed works with businesses, government officials and other advocates to create access for all District residents to career pathways that align with the needs of employers.

- **Pro bono partners:** Crowell and Moring, LLP.

Increasing Quality of Home Health Jobs
Because two-thirds of the working poor families in the District are headed by single women, DC Appleseed is working to design career ladders, raise wages and improve working conditions in occupations dominated by women, in particular home health care. This work is part of DC Appleseed’s participation in The Working Poor Families Project.

- **Pro bono partners:** Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP.
D.C. DEMOCRACY

D.C. Attorney General

D.C. elected its Attorney General for the first time in 2014. That first election was the result of a 2010 referendum, through which we urged the Council to let the voters decide whether they wanted an elected Attorney General. After voters decided that they did, we worked to ensure that the first election took place through successful litigation in the D.C. Court of Appeals. Since then, we have monitored the transition from the old appointment model to ensure that the District is protecting the integrity and independence of the government's legal services.

- **Pro bono partners:** Goldblatt Martin Pozen LLP; Latham & Watkins LLP; Perkins Coie LLP; Reed Smith LLP; and Troutman Sanders LLP.

D.C. Budget Autonomy

In 2013, D.C. voters overwhelmingly ratified a Charter amendment giving the District the right to spend local revenue without an affirmative act of Congress. We developed the legal theory behind the amendment, which was upheld by the D.C. Superior Court in 2015. We supported Mayor Bowser and the Council in their efforts to exercise control over local dollars.

- **Pro bono partners:** Arent Fox LLP; Goldblatt Martin Pozen LLP; Hunton & Williams; and Latham & Watkins LLP.

Public Financing of Election Campaigns

At the request of the D.C. Council, we have investigated and are supporting a system for public financing of election campaigns in the District, with the goal of promoting integrity, responsiveness to the public interest, and greater civic participation. We advocated for passage of legislation adopting such a system, and are working with the Office of Campaign Finance to implement the legislation.

- **Pro bono partner:** Arent Fox LLP.

Gun Safety

DC Appleseed has long advocated for the Council’s authority to enact sensible gun safety measures consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in District of Columbia v. Heller. We have supported the District’s D.C. DEMOCRACY new registration and public-carrying requirements in several federal lawsuits, and are working to develop new legislation to better protect public safety. We are also monitoring congressional efforts to overturn the District’s gun safety laws and preparing possible responses.

- **Pro bono partners:** Arent Fox LLP; Hughes Hubbard LLP; Hogan Lovells US LLP; and WilmerHale LLP.

Congressional Voting Rights

D.C. residents continue to be denied voting representation in Congress, even though Congress is the city’s ultimate governing body. DC Appleseed has served as the primary legal architect of the effort to give the District voting rights and is devising both local and federal strategies to bring full democracy to D.C. residents through legislation and litigation.

- **Pro bono partners:** Arent Fox LLP; Goldblatt Martin Pozen LLP; Harris, Wiltshire & Grannis LLP; Hunton & Williams; Jenner & Block; Latham & Watkins LLP; Perkins Coie LLP; and Sidley Austin LLP.