Annual Health Care Occupations Report

2026

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

PREFACE

The strength of Washington, DC's health care system depends on the strength of its workforce. Every day, thousands of health care professionals provide high-quality care across hospitals, ambulatory care centers, long-term care facilities, community health organizations, and countless other care settings. Behind every patient encounter is a workforce that must be continuously recruited, trained, supported, and prepared to meet the evolving needs of our communities.

The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership's *Annual Health Care Occupations Report* serves as the Partnership's annual assessment of the District's health care workforce landscape. More than an inventory of occupations or a summary of workforce activities, this report examines the trends shaping health care employment, the occupations driving workforce demand, and the collaborative strategies being implemented to strengthen the health care talent pipeline across the District.

Health care workforce development has become increasingly complex. Workforce shortages, changing demographics, technological innovation, evolving models of care, and growing demand for health care services continue to reshape how health care businesses recruit, develop, and retain talent. These challenges require more than individual workforce programs. They require coordinated partnerships, data-informed decision-making, employer leadership, and long-term investments that strengthen the health care workforce ecosystem. This report reflects that broader perspective.

Throughout the following pages, readers will find an overview of the District's health care labor market, analysis of high-demand health care occupations, updates on workforce initiatives, examples of successful public-private partnerships, and strategic recommendations designed to strengthen the health care workforce. The report also highlights how health care businesses, education and training providers, workforce organizations, government agencies, and community partners are working together to create more connected pathways into health care careers while supporting the workforce needs of the industry.

This year's report also marks an important evolution in the work of the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership. As workforce initiatives continue to mature, the focus has expanded beyond implementing individual programs to building the systems that support long-term workforce success. Apprenticeship, competency-based workforce development, career awareness, employer engagement, and cross-sector collaboration are no longer viewed as separate initiatives. Together, they form an integrated workforce strategy designed to strengthen the health care talent pipeline while creating greater opportunity for District residents.

Finally, this report looks beyond the current workforce landscape through Vision 2030, a forward-looking framework that explores the opportunities and challenges likely to shape health care employment over the next decade. From advances in artificial intelligence and technology-enabled care to expanded apprenticeship pathways, stronger workforce data systems, and earlier career exposure, the Partnership recognizes that preparing tomorrow's health care workforce requires sustained collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to continuous improvement.

We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for health care leaders, policymakers, educators, workforce professionals, community organizations, and all those committed to strengthening the District's health care workforce. More importantly, we hope it encourages continued collaboration around a shared vision.

SHARED VISION

A health care workforce system that is responsive to industry needs, creates meaningful career opportunities for District residents, and ensures that every health care business has access to the skilled workforce needed to deliver exceptional care for generations to come.

WELCOME

On behalf of the DCHA Program Services Company, Inc. and the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership, it is our pleasure to present the *2026 Annual Health Care Occupations Report*.

Health care is one of the District's most vital industries. Every day, thousands of professionals care for our families, neighbors, and communities while supporting one of Washington, DC's strongest economic sectors. Behind that care is a workforce that must be continuously developed, supported, and prepared to meet changing patient needs, emerging technologies, and an evolving health care landscape.

Meeting those workforce needs requires more than individual programs or isolated initiatives. It requires collaboration across health care businesses, education and training providers, workforce organizations, government agencies, philanthropy, and community partners working toward a shared vision. The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership was established to bring these stakeholders together, ensuring that workforce strategies are driven by industry needs while expanding meaningful career opportunities for District residents.



This year's report reflects another year of meaningful progress. Together, the Partnership continued expanding registered apprenticeship opportunities through the DC Health Care Employment and Apprenticeship Link (DC HEAL); advanced employer-led, competency-based workforce development; strengthened career awareness initiatives; modernized resources supporting health care career exploration; and, continued advocating for workforce investments that will benefit both business and residents. These accomplishments demonstrate what is possible when public and private partners work toward common goals.

The report also reflects an important evolution in the Partnership's work. As workforce initiatives continue to mature, our focus has expanded beyond implementing individual programs to strengthening the systems that support long-term workforce success. Workforce development is no longer simply about filling today's vacancies. It is about building a sustainable talent pipeline that prepares future generations of District residents for rewarding careers while ensuring health care businesses have the skilled workforce necessary to meet growing demand.

None of this progress would be possible without the extraordinary commitment of our health care businesses, public agencies, educational institutions, workforce partners, philanthropic organizations, and community stakeholders. Your leadership, expertise, and willingness to collaborate continue to strengthen the District's health care workforce and improve opportunities for residents across Washington, DC.

We invite you to explore this report, celebrate our collective accomplishments, and join us as we continue building a stronger, more resilient health care workforce for the District.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to this important work.



Jacqueline D. Bowens

Jacqueline D. Bowens
President & CEO
District of Columbia Hospital Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The District of Columbia's health care workforce continues to face a period of significant transformation. Increasing demand for health care services, persistent workforce shortages, changing workforce demographics, technological innovation, and evolving models of care continue to reshape how health care businesses recruit, develop, and retain talent. At the same time, health care remains one of the District's strongest economic sectors, providing stable employment, family-sustaining wages, and meaningful career opportunities across more than 200 occupations.

The *2026 DC Health Care Workforce Partnership Annual Health Care Occupations Report* examines these workforce trends while documenting the collective efforts underway to strengthen the District's health care talent pipeline. More importantly, the report demonstrates that addressing today's workforce challenges requires more than expanding training opportunities. It requires coordinated partnerships, employer leadership, data-informed decision-making, and workforce systems that connect education, training, and employment into clear, sustainable career pathways.

YEAR ONE

45 residents engaged

20 apprenticeship opportunities

16 candidates approved

12 apprentices entered employment

10 apprentices retained

DC HEAL
District of Columbia Health Care Employment & Apprenticeship Link

Throughout the past year, the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership continued strengthening this workforce ecosystem by expanding collaboration among health care businesses, education and training providers, workforce organizations, government agencies, and community partners. Together, these efforts advanced workforce initiatives that increased employer engagement, expanded apprenticeship opportunities, strengthened competency-based workforce development, improved career awareness, and enhanced alignment between workforce investments and industry demand.

One of the Partnership's most significant accomplishments during the year was the continued expansion of the DC Health Care Employment and Apprenticeship Link (DC HEAL) initiative. DC HEAL continued demonstrating the value of employment-centered apprenticeship models that connect District residents directly to careers in health care while helping businesses develop sustainable talent pipelines. During Year 1, 45 District residents engaged in the apprenticeship recruitment process; participating health care businesses created 20 apprenticeship opportunities; 16 candidates were approved for participation; 12 apprentices entered employment; and eight apprentices were retained in the program. These outcomes, combined with valuable implementation lessons, have strengthened the Partnership's approach to participant preparation, employer engagement, and workforce retention.

The Partnership also continued advancing the DC Health Care Employer-Validated Competency Framework, reinforcing the importance of foundational employability skills alongside technical training. Feedback from healthcare businesses and apprenticeship implementation consistently demonstrated that communication, professionalism, accountability, adaptability, conflict management, and emotional intelligence are essential competencies for success in entry-level healthcare occupations. These findings continue to shape workforce strategy, curriculum alignment, apprenticeship design, and advocacy priorities throughout the District.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beyond apprenticeship, the Partnership expanded efforts to position health care as a long-term career destination for District residents. Investments in career awareness, website modernization, strategic partnerships with educational institutions, and initiatives supported through the Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation are helping create stronger connections between career exploration, education, training, and employment. Together with ongoing advocacy supporting health care workforce investments, these efforts continue to strengthen the District's long-term talent pipeline.



The report also reflects an important evolution in the Partnership's work. While significant progress has been made in expanding workforce pathways and employer engagement, the focus has increasingly shifted toward strengthening the systems that sustain long-term workforce success. Workforce forecasting, employer-validated competency models, apprenticeship infrastructure, workforce data, public-private collaboration, and coordinated policy development are becoming increasingly important as the Partnership moves from implementing workforce programs to building an integrated health care workforce ecosystem.

Looking ahead, the Partnership recognizes that preparing the health care workforce of the future will require continued innovation and collaboration. The report concludes with Vision 2030, outlining strategic priorities focused on technology-enabled care, expanded apprenticeship and work-based learning, stronger workforce data systems, and positioning health care as a career destination for future generations of District residents.

The work described throughout this report demonstrates that no single organization can address the District's health care workforce challenges alone. Sustainable workforce development depends upon strong partnerships, shared accountability, and a long-term commitment to building systems that prepare residents for meaningful careers while ensuring health care businesses have access to the skilled workforce needed to serve the District's communities.

The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership remains committed to advancing that work and to strengthening the health care workforce that supports the health and well-being of Washington, DC.

COMMITMENT

The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership remains committed to strengthening the health care workforce that supports the health and well-being of Washington, DC.

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ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership is an industry-driven, community-supported sector-based alliance consisting of health care businesses from three subsectors: acute care, ambulatory and behavioral health, and nursing, residential, and long-term care services; core partners; and network supporters. Health care Businesses lead the work by defining the agenda and driving it forward. Core Partners align to implement strategic solutions to get residents career positions and keep the industry strong. Network Supporters use supportive services to plug in resources, create connections, and coordinate activities.

CONVENER & INTERMEDIARY

- DCHA Program Services Company, Inc.

PUBLIC FUNDING PARTNER

- DC Department of Employment Services
- DC Workforce Investment Council

HEALTH CARE EMPLOYERS/BUSINESSES

Hospitals

- BridgePoint Hospital - Capitol Hill
- BridgePoint Hospital - National Harborside
- Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center GW Health
- Children's National Hospital
- Howard University Hospital
- MedStar Georgetown University Hospital
- MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital
- MedStar Washington Hospital Center
- Sibley Memorial Hospital
- The George Washington University Hospital

Ambulatory & Behavioral Health Services

- CareFirst
- Kaiser Permanente
- Mary's Center
- McClendon Center
- Psychiatric Institute of Washington
- Whitman-Walker Health
- Unity Health Care

Nursing, Residential and Long-Term Care Services

- Ascension Living Carroll Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
- Volunteers of America Chesapeake & Carolinas
- BridgePoint Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Facility
- Forest Hills of DC
- Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home
- Premier Health Services

CORE PARTNERS

- Academy of Hope DC
- AmeriHealth Caritas DC
- Briya Public Charter School
- CityWorks DC
- Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development
- Community College Preparatory Academy
- DC Coalition of Disabilities Service Providers
- DC Coalition on Long Term Care
- DC Department of Employment Services
- DC Health
- DC Primary Care Association
- DC Health Care Association
- DCPS Academy of Health Sciences-Coolidge
- DC Workforce Investment Council
- Department of Aging and Community Living
- 1199 SEIU
- Institute for Public Health Innovation
- Jane Bancroft Robinson Foundation
- LAYC Career Academy
- SOME Center for Employment Training
- UDC Community College Division of Workforce Development & Lifelong Learning
- Trinity Washington University
- Greater Washington Community Foundation
- Office of State Superintendent of Education
- Stoddard Baptist Home Foundation
- St. Michael College of Allied Health

NETWORK SUPPORTERS

- Campaign for Fair Sentencing of Youth
- DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
- DC Department of Forensic Sciences
- DC Department of Health Care Finance
- Dress for Success Washington, DC
- Rodham Institute Pathways for All to Health Careers

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Shared Vision

The Shared Vision of the Partnership reflects the future state of the industry as a sector partner in the District of Columbia's workforce system. In that spirit, the vision is aligned with the District's strategic vision for its workforce development system. We are currently creating an industry-driven Career Pathways System where:

- DC residents are ready, able, and empowered through lifelong learning, sustained employment, and economic security;
- Health care businesses in DC are connected to market-responsive skilled DC residents to compete successfully; and
- Education, training, and supportive services are coordinated, cohesive, and integrated through public and private partners working together.



Shared Priorities

Key focus areas needed to actualize the Shared Vision.

- Health Care as a Career Destination
- Education and Training
- Career Pathways System

Economic Security **Lifelong Learning** **Sustained Employment**



STATE OF THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

Health care continues to be one of the fastest-growing sectors in the U.S., driven by an aging population, increased demand for services, and continued shifts in how care is delivered. According to Lightcast's Q1 2026 dataset, the national health care workforce now includes approximately 18.5 million jobs, reflecting significant expansion compared to prior years (Lightcast, 2026a). This represents a notable increase from the prior year's estimates, and signals continued long-term growth across the sector. Over the past five years, national health care employment grew by approximately 13%, a substantial acceleration compared to the 3% growth observed in the previous reporting period, while projected growth over the next five years remains strong at 8% (Lightcast, 2026a).

Compensation at the national level has also increased, with average earnings per job now reaching approximately $88,927, reflecting both wage growth and the increasing complexity of health care roles (Lightcast, 2026a). Demand for health care workers remains high, with more than 496,000 monthly job postings nationally, indicating sustained hiring pressure across the industry (Lightcast, 2026a). While demand remains strong, hiring competition is now considered average relative to supply, suggesting that shortages persist, but the labor market is beginning to stabilize compared to prior years of extreme demand.

Several workforce trends continue to shape the national health care landscape. Retirement risk remains a key factor, with more than 4.5 million workers aged 55 and older, maintaining pressure on workforce replacement needs (Lightcast, 2026a). At the same time, the health care workforce continues to reflect moderate diversity across race and gender, with women comprising many workers in the sector. Compared to the previous year, these structural workforce pressures remain largely unchanged, reinforcing the long-term nature of health care workforce challenges rather than signaling short-term disruption.

Regionally, the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) continues to serve as a major hub for health care employment, though workforce dynamics reveal increasing constraints. The region currently supports approximately 309,910 health care jobs, which is below the national average for a region of its size (Lightcast, 2026b). This marks a shift from prior analysis, in which the region was viewed as more aligned with national averages, to a tightening labor supply.

$88,927
National average earnings per job

496,000+
National monthly job postings

309,910
Health care jobs supported by the region



STATE OF THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

Despite this constrained supply, the MSA has experienced strong growth, with health care employment increasing by 17% over the past five years, significantly outpacing national growth rates (Lightcast, 2026b). Projected growth over the next five years is expected to reach 9%, slightly higher than national projections, reinforcing the region's continued demand for health care talent. However, this growth is occurring alongside a structural worker shortage, which may limit health care providers' ability to meet demand.

Compensation in the MSA has risen to approximately $96,686 per job, continuing to exceed national averages and reflecting the competitive nature of the regional labor market (Lightcast, 2026b). At the same time, job posting demand in the region averages approximately 8,074 postings per month, which is lower than expected for a region of this size (Lightcast, 2026b). This suggests that while demand remains strong, businesses may be moderating hiring strategies or facing constraints in filling roles. Compared to the prior year, this reflects a shift from high competition for talent to a more balanced, though still constrained, hiring environment.

Additional regional trends highlight ongoing workforce challenges. Retirement risk remains consistent with national patterns, while racial diversity in the health care workforce is notably higher than the national average, indicating a more diverse talent base in the region (Lightcast, 2026b). However, the continued gap between labor supply and demand suggests that workforce shortages will remain a defining feature of the regional health care system.

Within the District of Columbia, health care remains a critical component of the local economy, though workforce constraints are even more pronounced. The District currently has approximately 56,625 health care jobs, significantly below the national average for a market of its size (Lightcast, 2026c). While the previous year's analysis emphasized health care's strong presence locally, the updated data highlights a growing gap between labor supply and demand.

Employment growth within the District has been more modest than the broader region, with a 5% increase over the past five years and a projected 6% increase over the next five years (Lightcast, 2026c). This slower growth suggests that, while demand remains steady, expansion may be constrained by workforce availability rather than by a lack of opportunity.

$96,686
MSA average earnings per job

8,074
MSA monthly job postings

56,625
DC health care jobs



STATE OF THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

At the same time, wages in the District are significantly higher than both national and regional averages, with average earnings per job reaching approximately $112,669 (Lightcast, 2026c). This reflects both the high cost of living and the concentration of specialized health care roles within the city. However, job posting demand remains relatively low at approximately 1,445 monthly postings, indicating lower hiring competition compared to both the national and regional levels (Lightcast, 2026c).

The District's health care workforce also reflects unique demographic characteristics. Racial diversity is significantly higher than national averages, with Black workers representing most of the health care workforce, while gender distribution remains consistent with national trends, with women comprising most workers (Lightcast, 2026c). Retirement risk remains moderate, indicating a continued need for workforce replacement in the coming years.

Taken together, the updated data reflects a health care industry that continues to grow at all levels but is increasingly shaped by workforce constraints. Compared to the previous year, growth has accelerated nationally and regionally; wages have increased, and hiring competition has begun to stabilize. However, the most significant shift is the clearer emergence of labor supply shortages, particularly at the regional and local levels.

Overall, the health care sector remains a cornerstone of economic stability and workforce opportunity. However, sustained investment in workforce development, training pipelines, and career pathway strategies will be essential to addressing ongoing shortages and ensuring that health care systems can meet rising demand in the years ahead.

$112,669
DC average earnings per job

1,445
DC monthly job postings



These trends reinforce the importance of the Partnership's work. While health care employment continues to grow nationally, regionally, and within the District, persistent labor shortages, workforce replacement needs, and evolving skill requirements underscore the need for coordinated workforce strategies. The sections that follow highlight how the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership is working with health care businesses, education and training providers, workforce organizations, and public-sector partners to address these challenges through industry-driven workforce development initiatives.

References

- Lightcast. (2026a). *Industry snapshot report: Health care and social assistance in the United States* (Q1 2026 data set).
- Lightcast. (2026b). *Industry snapshot report: Health care and social assistance in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV* (Q1 2026 data set).
- Lightcast. (2026c). *Industry snapshot report: Health care and social assistance in the District of Columbia* (Q1 2026 data set).

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

During 2025–26, the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership continued advancing a coordinated Career Pathways System designed to align workforce development, education, training, and employment strategies with the evolving needs of the District's health care sector. This work reflects a broader shift toward a more connected and industry-driven workforce model that links career awareness, employer engagement, competency development, work-based learning, and long-term career advancement into a unified workforce ecosystem.

As workforce shortages, training gaps, and barriers to entry continue to impact the health care industry, the Partnership has focused on strengthening the systems that support both residents and businesses. Through collaborative action teams, competency-based workforce strategies, and initiatives such as the DC HealthCare Employment Apprenticeship Link (DC HEAL), the Partnership is building more structured and sustainable pathways into high-demand health care occupations.

DC HEAL
District of Columbia Health Care Employment & Apprenticeship Link

Together, these efforts are helping create a workforce system that is more responsive to business demand, more accessible to District residents, and better positioned to support long-term workforce growth across Washington, DC's health care industry.

High Demand Occupations

To better respond to the evolving needs of the health care workforce, the Partnership established a series of action teams focused on strengthening collaboration, refining workforce priorities, and developing more targeted strategies across key areas of workforce development. Rather than addressing workforce challenges in silos, these action teams bring together health care businesses, education and training providers, workforce organizations, community-based organizations, and government agencies to collectively identify issues, evaluate solutions, and guide progress across the workforce ecosystem.



The action teams were developed around several priority focus areas, including refining the District's high-demand health care occupations priorities, strengthening workforce retention strategies, expanding apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities, reducing barriers to entry for District residents, and identifying long-term workforce trends that will impact the future of health care employment. The goal was not only to improve coordination across partners but also to create dedicated spaces for innovation, accountability, and measurable impact.

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

From the outset, the Partnership recognized that meaningful workforce development requires both structure and shared ownership. Through the action team model, partners were able to engage more deeply in problem-solving while aligning their efforts with broader workforce goals. Each team was tasked with identifying specific areas of focus, establishing measurable objectives, and defining clear outcomes to guide implementation and long-term evaluation.

Over the past year, the teams worked collaboratively to assess current workforce practices, identify gaps in existing systems, and evaluate opportunities for improvement. Particular attention has been given to the current list of high-demand occupations and whether existing workforce investments remain aligned with emerging industry needs. Through this work, the teams have identified opportunities to strengthen workforce infrastructure, improve coordination between training and employment systems, and better align workforce strategies with employer demand.

Collaboration has remained central to the success of the action teams. By bringing together stakeholders with different experiences and expertise, the Partnership has been able to facilitate more comprehensive discussions around workforce shortages, training capacity constraints, credentialing challenges, retention barriers, and long-term workforce sustainability. This cross-sector approach has also strengthened communication and reinforced a shared sense of responsibility among partners working to address the District's health care workforce needs.

Several action teams have also focused on improving the overall experience for residents, businesses, and workforce



stakeholders by refining communication strategies, increasing access to resources, and strengthening stakeholder engagement. Feedback from partners continues to play an important role in shaping this work and informing ongoing improvements.

As the Partnership looks ahead, the action teams will continue serving as a critical mechanism for driving workforce strategy, measuring progress, and supporting continuous improvement. Future efforts will focus on establishing stronger performance metrics, enhancing data collection and evaluation processes, and creating more sustainable systems for monitoring workforce outcomes. Through this work, the Partnership aims to ensure that workforce strategies remain aligned with industry needs while continuing to support long-term growth across the health care sector.

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

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From Framework to Practice: Strengthening Job Readiness, Job Quality & Career Pathways

As the Partnership refined workforce priorities through its action teams, another key area of focus emerged: strengthening alignment between education, training, and the real-world expectations of health care businesses. Over the past several years, health care businesses have consistently identified a growing disconnect between credentials earned and job readiness demonstrated. While certifications and degrees remain important indicators of technical preparation, businesses emphasized that credentials alone did not fully capture whether an individual was prepared to succeed in a professional health care environment.

In response, the Partnership advanced a competency-based workforce strategy grounded in business-validated skills and behaviors through the **DC Health Care Employer-Validated Competency Framework**. Now entering its third year of implementation, the framework has evolved from a planning and validation tool into an active workforce strategy shaping how talent is recruited, trained, supported, and advanced across the District's health care ecosystem.

The framework establishes a shared language across businesses, education providers, workforce organizations, and community stakeholders by identifying the core skills and behaviors necessary for success across health care occupations. Rather than replacing traditional credentials, the framework complements them by clarifying how competencies are demonstrated within real workplace environments and how employers evaluate readiness, professionalism, communication, adaptability, and career progression.

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

Built on the U.S. Department of Labor's Health Care Competency Model and validated directly by District health care businesses, the framework incorporates personal effectiveness, academic, workplace, and industry-wide competencies applicable across acute care, ambulatory care, and long-term care settings.

The competency framework is now actively informing hiring practices, onboarding processes, curriculum alignment, work-based learning models, and apprenticeship pathway development throughout the Partnership. Businesses are increasingly using the framework to strengthen hiring and onboarding processes by emphasizing demonstrated competencies and observable workplace behaviors alongside technical qualifications. Similarly, education and training providers are aligning coursework, simulations, and assessments more closely with employer expectations to ensure participants develop both technical knowledge and foundational employability skills.

The framework has also become central to the advancement of work-based learning initiatives such as Pathways to Progress and DC HEAL. By prioritizing demonstrated competency and mastery, these models support structured career progression while reinforcing the importance of workplace readiness, mentorship, communication, accountability, and adaptability.

Currently, four businesses are actively implementing competency-based apprenticeship models, helping operationalize this approach within real-world health care environments across the District. Through their participation, these businesses continue providing critical feedback regarding competency definitions, assessment strategies, progression benchmarks, mentorship structures, and workplace readiness expectations. This business-informed approach remains essential to ensuring the model is both responsive and scalable across varying health care settings and patient populations.

Importantly, this work has reinforced a key lesson learned throughout implementation: technical training alone is not sufficient for success in employment-centered health care pathways. Professionalism, emotional intelligence, resilience, communication, accountability, and workplace readiness are equally critical to long-term retention and career advancement. As a result, the Partnership has continued strengthening pre-employment preparation, onboarding supports, coaching strategies, and employer engagement practices to better support successful workforce transitions.

Together, these efforts are helping move the District toward a more transparent, competency-driven workforce system that improves job quality, strengthens career mobility, expands equitable access to opportunity, and better aligns workforce preparation with the realities of health care employment.

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Career Pathways

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

Expanding Career Pathways Through Work-Based Learning

While the action teams focused on workforce strategy and the competency framework established a clearer definition of job readiness, DC Health Care Employment Apprenticeship Link (DC HEAL) became one of the Partnership's primary implementation strategies for operationalizing these goals through structured work-based learning and apprenticeship pathways.

DC HEAL represents the Partnership's commitment to building employment-centered career pathways that connect District residents and youth to high-demand health care occupations through paid work experience, related technical instruction, and direct business engagement. Through apprenticeship and work-based learning models, DC HEAL helps participants develop the technical knowledge, workplace competencies, and professional readiness necessary to successfully enter and advance within the health care workforce.

During its inaugural year, DC HEAL focused on establishing apprenticeship pathways in high-demand health care occupations while building strong relationships with health care businesses to support employment, mentorship, and on-the-job learning opportunities. In the second year, the initiative expanded upon this foundation by strengthening existing pathways, deepening employer engagement, and developing additional apprenticeship opportunities aligned with evolving workforce priorities across the District.

A central component of both years has been the continued emphasis on job readiness, job quality, and long-term career advancement. Beyond simply connecting participants to employment opportunities, DC HEAL has focused on creating sustainable pathways that support retention, professional growth, and long-term workforce mobility.

DC Health Care Employment & Apprenticeship Link YEAR 1

DC HEAL
District of Columbia Health Care Employment & Apprenticeship Link

YEAR ONE

During its inaugural cohort, DC HEAL made meaningful progress in implementing an employment-first health care apprenticeship model while simultaneously refining program operations based on early cohort experiences and lessons learned. This first year was defined by both strong outcomes and important organizational learning that helped position the program for future growth and expansion.

A key achievement during Year 1 was the continued development of a structured apprenticeship pipeline. Apprenticeship offerings included patient care technician, CNA II-team lead, advanced nursing assistant, and certified medical assistant pathways. Nineteen candidates accepted employment offers, with 16 candidates successfully beginning employment across participating health care businesses. Of those participants, eight remain active in the program, reflecting strong retention among apprentices who successfully transitioned into the workforce environment.



Year 1 Apprenticeships

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

Progress in Related Technical Instruction (RTI) also remained strong throughout the year. Several apprentices continued advancing steadily through RTI, with one apprentice completing training ahead of schedule. While some delays occurred due to training capacity limitations, these challenges provided valuable insight that informed improvements to onboarding coordination, communication with training providers, and alignment between educational and employment systems.

Business engagement and business confidence in the model also continued to grow. Nearly all active business partners committed to participating in Year 2, with several requesting the same or an increased number of apprentices. Additional health care businesses also entered the partnership pipeline, reflecting growing confidence in the apprenticeship model and its potential to support workforce needs across the District. In response, DC HEAL began expanding apprenticeship opportunities across both clinical and non-clinical occupations while developing a more scalable framework for future pathway growth.

Beyond the quantitative metrics, Year 1 reinforced the importance of workforce readiness and emotional intelligence within employment-centered workforce models. While logistical barriers and training challenges impacted some participants, another significant lesson emerged regarding professional readiness in real-world health care environments.

In several instances, apprentices struggled to adapt to workplace expectations related to communication, accountability, responsiveness to feedback, professionalism, and navigating high-pressure environments. A small number of participants were ultimately separated from employment after beginning their apprenticeship experience because they were not yet fully prepared to manage the responsibilities and expectations associated with professional health care settings.

These experiences reinforced an important lesson for the Partnership: technical training alone is not sufficient for success in employment-first workforce models. Emotional intelligence, professionalism, adaptability, resilience, and communication skills are equally essential to long-term workforce success and retention.

YEAR ONE

In response, DC HEAL strengthened its pre-employment screening processes, onboarding structures, coaching strategies, and participant preparation activities to better assess workforce readiness and establish clearer expectations before employment begins. Additional emphasis was placed on workplace communication, professionalism, accountability, adaptability, and navigating organizational culture within health care environments.

The program also identified variability in supervision and support across employer sites, which at times compounded challenges for apprentices still developing workplace skills. This led to the development of more standardized supervisor guidance, clearer escalation pathways, increased coaching supports, and more proactive communication structures between employers and apprenticeship staff.

Together, these enhancements reflect the program's transition from an early-stage pilot model into a more responsive, stable, and scalable workforce strategy grounded in continuous improvement and long-term retention.

Thank You to Our Partner CITYWORKS DC

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

Stories from the Field - Apprentice Snapshot

Year 1 DC HEAL apprentices are navigating the transition from education into real health care careers in ways that highlight both personal growth and increasing professional readiness. Their experiences reflect what it takes not only to enter a demanding field, but to persist, adapt, and begin building a long-term career pathway in health care.

Victoria Brown, Certified Nursing Assistant



Victoria Brown offers a clear example of this journey. Her experience highlights growth within a clinical environment where expectations are high, and the work is hands-on. As a certified nursing assistant apprentice at Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home, she provides direct support to residents while learning how to operate effectively in a fast-paced care setting. She recently became the first DC HEAL apprentice to complete her Related Technical Instruction, marking an important milestone for both her and the program.

Victoria's progress reflects not only technical achievement but also increasing confidence in her ability to provide quality care. She has demonstrated reliability, skill development, and a strong commitment to her role. As a result, she is now on track to advance into a CNA Team Lead position and plans to continue her education by pursuing a nursing degree.

Renikka Robinson, Certified Nursing Assistant



Renikka Robinson's experience underscores the importance of compassion and interpersonal skills in health care settings. As a CNA apprentice at Forest Hills DC, she works in a skilled nursing and rehabilitation environment where patient interaction is central to daily responsibilities. Her supervisors have noted that residents frequently request her specifically, citing her positive demeanor and attentive approach to care.

Over time, Renikka adapted to the pace and demands of the environment while building confidence in both her technical skills and her voice as a team member. She has become more comfortable contributing to team discussions and advocating for both herself and her patients, an important step in her professional development. She plans to continue her education and advance further within the health care field.

Jonathan Tejada-Flores, Health Information & Certified Medical Assistant



After graduating high school, Jonathan Tejada-Flores traveled overseas with his family but remained fully engaged in the DC HEAL program—staying in touch with his career coach, completing assignments remotely, and completing his drug test immediately upon return to begin training. Now apprenticing at Whitman-Walker Health as a health information specialist and certified medical assistant, he is pursuing a nursing degree at Trinity Washington University.

Jonathan manages electronic health records, supports patient documentation, and has emerged as a confident leader—representing DC HEAL at public events and served as a speaker, demonstrating both confidence and a willingness to contribute beyond his immediate role. At the same time, he is balancing work, certification training, and college coursework while developing the discipline required to sustain long-term success in the health care field.

Together, these stories illustrate that DC HEAL is not simply placing individuals into jobs. The program supports apprentices as they develop the skills, habits, and mindset required to build sustainable careers. From maintaining momentum and demonstrating accountability to growing confidence and leadership, apprentices are learning how to navigate real-world health care environments while positioning themselves for long-term advancement.

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

Stories from the Field - Business Partner Snapshot

DC HEAL's business partners play a critical role in shaping the apprenticeship experience, not only by providing employment opportunities but also by creating environments where apprentices can learn, grow, and contribute meaningfully to patient care.

Whitman-Walker Health exemplifies this approach through its deep-rooted commitment to community-centered care and workforce development. As a long-standing provider in Washington, DC, the organization views apprenticeships as an extension of its mission to expand access and opportunity. Apprentices are integrated directly into the workforce as full employees, participating in standard onboarding alongside other new hires. This reinforces both accountability and belonging from day one, while setting clear expectations around professionalism, communication, and emotional intelligence. Employers emphasize that success in health care requires not only technical skills, but reliability, self-awareness, and a willingness to ask for help. Apprentices at Whitman-Walker Health begin in health information roles and progress into clinical positions, allowing them to build foundational knowledge while advancing toward patient-facing responsibilities.

Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home offers a complementary model grounded in long-term care and holistic, relationship-driven service. With over a century of experience caring for elderly residents, Stoddard Baptist emphasizes compassion, dignity, and respect as core to both patient care and workforce development. Apprentices are immersed in a multi-dimensional care environment, gaining exposure not only to nursing but also to social services, dining, activities, and medical records. This broad experience helps apprentices understand the full ecosystem of care while developing interpersonal skills essential to working with aging populations. Businesses highlight the importance of positivity, communication, and respect for residents' lived experiences, reinforcing that technical training must be paired with empathy and human connection.

Children's National Medical Center adds a third perspective, highlighting the role of large, nationally recognized health systems in building early career pathways. With over 150 years of pediatric care and a strong regional presence, Children's National approaches apprenticeships as a way to invest directly in its surrounding community. The organization is particularly focused on creating opportunities for individuals who may already have personal connections to the hospital, such as patients or family members, to transition into health care careers and contribute to the institution in new ways.

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

Preparation for apprentices at Children's National is highly intentional, with a strong emphasis on structured onboarding, mentorship, and clearly defined training plans. Mentors are positioned as a central part of the apprentice experience, helping guide participants through both the technical and cultural aspects of working in a hospital setting. At the same time, the organization places significant value on energy, motivation, and alignment with its core values of compassion, commitment, and connection.

Apprentices at Children's National are expected to take on visible, impactful roles early in their experience. In many cases, they serve as the first point of contact for patients and families by greeting visitors, supporting registration processes, and helping shape the initial patient experience.

This responsibility underscores the importance of professionalism, communication, and confidence, while also giving apprentices a meaningful sense of contribution from the outset. Employers also emphasize the value of fresh perspectives, encouraging apprentices to share ideas and insights that can improve operations and patient experience.

Children's National frames the apprenticeship as both an entry point and an opportunity for exploration. For individuals interested in health care but unsure of their long-term path, the experience offers exposure to a wide range of roles beyond traditional clinical positions. This approach aligns with a broader goal of helping apprentices discover career pathways while building transferable skills within a complex health care environment.

Across our partners, a shared philosophy is clear: successful apprenticeships require both structure and support, as well as clear expectations for accountability and growth. Businesses recognize that many participants are entering the workforce for the first time, and they emphasize mentorship, patience, and real-world exposure as key to development. At the same time, they expect apprentices to demonstrate initiative, adaptability, and a commitment to learning.

Together, these business perspectives underscore the strength of the DC HEAL model. By aligning health care organizations that are deeply invested in both patient care and workforce development, the program is creating environments where apprentices can successfully transition into careers. The result is not only a pipeline of skilled talent, but a more inclusive and sustainable approach to meeting the evolving demands of the health care industry.



We extend a special thank you to all of our DC HEAL Year 1 business partners: Forest Hills of DC, Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home, Children's National Medical Center, Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center GW Health, and Whitman-Walker Health for their leadership, partnership, and commitment to building the next generation of the health care workforce.



SHARED PHILOSOPHY

Successful apprenticeships require both structure and support, as well as clear expectations for accountability and growth.

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

DC Health Care Employment & Apprenticeship Link YEAR 2

DC HEAL
District of Columbia Health Care Employment & Apprenticeship Link

YEAR TWO

Building upon the foundation established during Year 1, DC HEAL entered its second year with an increased focus on sustainability, infrastructure development, pathway expansion, and deeper engagement with health care businesses across the District.

As of the release of this report, DC HEAL continues operating Year 1 and Year 2 activities simultaneously. The inaugural cohort included 19 applicants, 16 approved participants, and 12 active apprentices, with eight participants retained within the workforce pipeline. During Year 2, approximately 30 apprenticeship openings were identified across participating health care business partners, with a goal of onboarding 30 additional apprentices into health care career pathways.

Throughout Year 2, DC HEAL continued strengthening partnerships with health care businesses, educational institutions, workforce agencies, and training providers to support pathway development and workforce expansion. The initiative worked closely with Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center GW Health, Children's National Hospital, Whitman-Walker Health, Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home, and Sibley Memorial Hospital to align apprenticeship opportunities with workforce demand and strengthen employment pathways for District residents.

CEDAR HILL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
GW HEALTH | WASHINGTON, DC

Children's National

Whitman-Walker Health
We see you.

Stoddard Baptist Nursing Home

Sibley Memorial Hospital
Johns Hopkins Medicine

A major focus of Year 2 involved the continued development of registered apprenticeship occupations and future pathway planning. In addition to the existing clinical medical assistant and patient care technician pathways, DC HEAL continued to develop occupations such as pharmacy technician, biomedical equipment technician, specialty health care service representative, care manager, advanced CNA, and other health care support roles. Several of these pathways are expected to move through the apprenticeship approval process as implementation continues.

Educational partnerships also expanded significantly during Year 2. Collaborations with Trinity Washington University, the University of the District of Columbia Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning Division, and additional training providers strengthened access to technical instruction, credential attainment, and clinical learning opportunities while allowing participants to earn wages during training.

Trinity

University of the District of Columbia 1851

At the same time, recruitment and outreach expanded considerably through partnerships with adult charter schools, workforce organizations, and community outreach, as well as direct engagement with District residents interested in health care careers. The program also strengthened intake, screening, and participant support systems to improve alignment between candidates and available apprenticeship opportunities while supporting long-term retention efforts.

Year 2 Apprenticeships

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEM

DC Health Care Employment & Apprenticeship Link YEAR 2

In addition to direct participant services, Year 2 focused heavily on strengthening the workforce infrastructure necessary to sustain and scale health care apprenticeships across the District. The DCHA Program Services Company, Inc. continued to strengthen its role as both an apprenticeship intermediary and an apprenticeship sponsor while enhancing operational systems, pursuing additional funding opportunities, improving reporting processes, and convening workforce partners through the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership.

As Year 2 continues through October 2027, DC HEAL remains positioned to further expand career pathways, deepen business engagement, strengthen workforce coordination, and continue building a sustainable long-term apprenticeship infrastructure for the District's health care workforce system.

BUILDING ON YEAR TWO PROGRESS

Building on YEAR 2 Progress

As DC HEAL continues implementation, the initiative remains focused on strengthening apprenticeship operations, deepening business engagement, and supporting participant success across existing pathways. During Year 2, considerable effort was devoted to expanding partnerships, refining participant support systems, enhancing coordination between Related Technical Instruction and on-the-job learning, and strengthening the infrastructure needed to deliver apprenticeships across multiple health care settings.

The initiative also continued to develop and refine registered apprenticeship pathways in high-demand health care occupations, working closely with health care businesses, educational institutions, workforce agencies, and training providers to ensure that pathway development remained aligned with workforce demand. These efforts have strengthened the foundation necessary to support continued program growth while improving the quality and consistency of the apprenticeship experience for both participants and business partners.

As implementation continues, DC HEAL remains focused on delivering high-quality apprenticeship experiences, strengthening workforce retention, and supporting health care businesses in developing sustainable talent pipelines. Additional long-term expansion opportunities and future workforce strategies are discussed in the Vision 2030 section of this report.

HEALTH CARE AS A CAREER DESTINATION

During 2025–26, the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership continued advancing a comprehensive strategy to position health care as a long-term career destination for District residents. This work focused on two interconnected priorities: improving how residents and businesses access and engage with health care career information, and expanding the long-term infrastructure needed to strengthen awareness, education, and workforce pathways across the District. Together, these efforts are helping create a more visible, accessible, and coordinated health care workforce ecosystem.

Engagement & Outreach Strategies

As part of this strategy, the Partnership undertook a comprehensive redesign of the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership website to better support both residents exploring health care careers and businesses seeking to engage in workforce development initiatives. The updated platform now organizes content into two clearly defined pathways: one for jobseekers and one for business partners. This redesign significantly improves how users navigate the broader landscape of health care careers, training opportunities, apprenticeship programs, and workforce partnerships across the District.

For jobseekers, the redesigned platform creates a more intuitive and engaging entry point into the health care sector. The site now highlights career pathways, required skills, training providers, DC HEAL opportunities, and success stories from District residents working in health care occupations. These updates help individuals better understand available opportunities, visualize long-term career growth, and identify actionable next steps through integrated application links and career exploration tools.

By simplifying navigation and expanding access to information, the site supports residents at every stage, from initial career exploration through employment and advancement.

For businesses and workforce partners, the redesigned site provides clearer guidance on how organizations can participate in strengthening the District's health care talent pipeline. Dedicated sections outline opportunities to host apprentices, co-design training pathways, participate in action teams, and collaborate on broader workforce development strategies. This structure helps streamline engagement and reinforces the importance of industry participation in building a sustainable workforce ecosystem.

The redesign serves as a critical component of the Partnership's broader effort to increase awareness of health care careers, align workforce training with industry demand, and make health care occupations more accessible and appealing to District residents.



ENGAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL

The Partnership is helping foster a more coordinated, industry-driven approach to workforce development across the District.

HEALTH CARE AS A CAREER DESTINATION

Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation Investment

In addition to expanding public access to career information, the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership continued strengthening long-term workforce infrastructure through strategic investments focused on health care career awareness, education, and pathway development. In support of this work, the DCHA Program Services Company, Inc. received funding from the Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation (Kovler Foundation) to advance initiatives designed to build earlier and more sustained connections between District students and health care careers.

A major component of the Kovler Foundation investment is a feasibility study exploring the development of a health care-focused high school in the District. The study will examine the potential for a model that integrates academic instruction with health care career training to better prepare students for post-secondary education, apprenticeships, and employment within the health care industry.

The investment will also support enhanced health care career training opportunities across DC Public Schools (DCPS), DC Public Charter Schools, and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. Through this work, the Partnership aims to increase awareness of the more than 200 clinical and non-clinical health care occupations available across the industry while positioning health care as a viable and long-term career destination for District students.

In addition, the Kovler-funded work emphasizes early and sustained career exposure by connecting students to health care careers beginning in middle school and continuing throughout high school. Through targeted career awareness activities, classroom engagement, career fairs, and direct interaction with health care businesses and professionals, students will gain greater insight into the broad range of opportunities available throughout the health care sector.

The investment also prioritizes the expansion of critical workforce infrastructure, recognizing it as essential to sustaining long-term workforce development efforts. Central to this strategy is strengthening the capacity to develop, expand, and scale apprenticeship pathways that connect education, training, and employment opportunities. By reinforcing this underlying infrastructure, the Partnership aims to create more durable talent pipelines and clearer entry points into health care careers for District residents.

Together, these efforts reflect the Partnership's broader commitment to building a more connected and sustainable health care workforce system, one that increases awareness of career opportunities, strengthens workforce pathways, and supports long-term industry growth throughout the District.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS

The support from the Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation helps increase awareness of the 200+ clinical and non-clinical health care occupations available in the District, while positioning health care as a viable and long-term career destination.

ADVOCACY & PUBLIC-PRIVATE ENGAGEMENT

Educational Investments

The Partnership's work continues to shape advocacy and engagement around the District's workforce development investments and opportunities. Over the past year, we remained focused on advancing educational opportunities for DC students by championing equitable access to career pathways—regardless of ZIP code. The Partnership strongly advocated for sustained and increased funding for the District's two Advanced Technical Centers as part of the FY27 budget.

During a challenging budget cycle, the District of Columbia Hospital Association's 501(c)(3), DCHA Program Services Company, Inc., further demonstrated its commitment to building the health care workforce by fully funding the **High Need Healthcare Career Scholarships Program** through DC Health. This investment ensures DC residents have access to the certifications and training needed to pursue high-demand health care careers.

Continued investment in health care occupation training programs is essential to meeting the future needs of the entire sector. The Partnership will continue to advocate for sustained investments in training programs at every educational level from middle school through university. One priority of our investment in apprenticeship programs has been to maximize the braiding streams of funding support to minimize the expenses for both employers and DC residents. The University of the District of Columbia, particularly Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning, has been an incredible partner in this effort. Investments in and partnerships with UDC and Trinity Washington University have opened new doors to DC residents in achieving a pathway for family sustaining wages.

Over the next year, we will continue to advocate for funding for critical training and apprenticeship programs to ensure all DC residents have the opportunity to obtain careers in health care with a career ladder to continue their advancement. Additionally, the Partnership will continue to advocate to ensure pre employment training programs include conflict management, de-escalation and improved communication skills. These are areas employers have flagged as needed across the board for entry level positions.

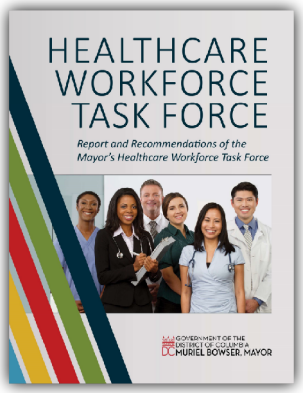
EVERY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

The Partnership will advocate for sustained investments in training programs at every educational level - from middle school through university.



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Advancing the Health Care Workforce Task Force Recommendations



Since the release of the **Mayor's Health Care Workforce Task Force Report**, the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership, convened by the DC Hospital Association, has continued aligning its work with the report's recommendations while helping advance a more coordinated and sustainable approach to health care workforce development across the District. Over the past year, the Partnership has focused on translating the Task Force recommendations into actionable workforce strategies centered on strengthening workforce pipelines, expanding work-based learning opportunities, improving alignment between health care businesses and training providers, and supporting long-term workforce sustainability.

Rather than approaching workforce challenges through isolated initiatives, the Partnership has continued emphasizing system-wide coordination across health care providers, education and training institutions, workforce agencies, and community-based organizations. This collaborative approach has allowed the Partnership to move beyond short-term workforce interventions and toward building a more connected workforce ecosystem capable of responding to both immediate staffing needs and long-term industry challenges.

July 2025 - March 2026: Expanding Pathways & Strengthening Business Alignment

During this period, the Partnership focused heavily on expanding workforce pathways that move beyond career exposure and toward structured entry into health care employment. Building upon earlier internship and career awareness initiatives, the Partnership worked closely with health care businesses and training providers to strengthen work-based learning opportunities that connect District residents more directly to employment within the health care sector.

A major component of this work was the continued development and implementation of the DC HEAL program administered by DCHA Program Services Company, Inc. Through DC HEAL, the Partnership supported the design and expansion of apprenticeship pathways in high-demand health care occupations, including clinical and patient-facing roles. These efforts directly align with the Task Force recommendations related to expanding apprenticeship and internship opportunities while creating clearer pathways for long-term advancement within health care careers.

At the same time, the Partnership strengthened coordination among health care businesses to better understand workforce demand, identify operational challenges, and improve alignment between hiring needs and workforce development strategies. Through the DC Hospital Association's engagement with hospital partners and health care stakeholders, businesses increasingly collaborated around workforce planning, apprenticeship integration, onboarding expectations, and pathway expansion opportunities. This work helped create a more coordinated approach to workforce development across participating health care organizations.

ENGAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL

The Partnership strengthened coordination among health care businesses to better understand workforce demand, identify operational challenges, and improve alignment between hiring needs and workforce development strategies.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership also continued strengthening alignment between the workforce and education systems. Efforts to connect youth-serving organizations, training providers, and health care businesses supported a more intentional transition from career exposure into employment opportunities. Concurrently, the Partnership worked with training providers to begin addressing challenges related to training capacity, instructional consistency, and alignment between Related Technical Instruction (RTI) and business expectations, particularly within entry-level health care pathways.

Together, these efforts reflect continued progress toward several of the Health Care Workforce Task Force's core priorities, including increasing District resident participation in health care careers, strengthening workforce pipelines, expanding training opportunities, and deepening collaboration across the health care workforce system.

April - June 2026: Strengthening Infrastructure & Addressing Workforce Gaps

Building upon the progress achieved during earlier implementation phases, the Partnership is now increasingly focused on strengthening the infrastructure necessary to sustain and scale workforce initiatives over the long term. While expanding pathways remains important, the current phase of work is centered on improving operational alignment, strengthening workforce supports, and addressing structural gaps that impact long-term workforce sustainability.

A primary focus during this period has been the continued refinement of the DC HEAL program. Current efforts emphasize improving coordination between on-the-job training and related technical instruction, strengthening apprentice retention strategies, and addressing operational challenges identified during the program's earlier implementation phases. These refinements are critical to ensuring that apprenticeship pathways remain both effective and scalable as the initiative continues to grow.

The Partnership has also placed increased emphasis on business readiness and employer engagement. Through ongoing coordination with health care businesses, DCHA has worked to strengthen support structures for supervisors, mentors, and preceptors while clarifying expectations for participation in workforce initiatives. This work recognizes that successful apprenticeship and workforce models require not only participant readiness, but also organizational readiness among health care employers responsible for supporting workforce development within operational environments.

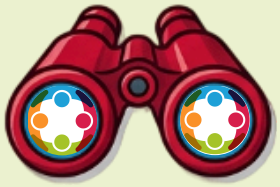


STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

At the same time, the Partnership has continued expanding its focus beyond youth populations by strengthening pathways for adult learners, career changers, incumbent workers, and individuals re-entering the workforce. Recognizing the need for broader workforce inclusion strategies, the Partnership has worked to deepen relationships with adult education providers, workforce agencies, and community-based organizations to expand access points into health care careers across multiple populations.

Efforts are also underway to further strengthen the District's training infrastructure. This includes evaluating existing training models, identifying opportunities to improve instructional consistency, and strengthening alignment between Related Technical Instruction, credentialing requirements, and employer expectations. These activities are intended to support more sustainable and scalable approaches to health care workforce training across the District.

In addition, the Partnership continues strengthening its role in supporting data-informed workforce planning and decision-making. Through ongoing collaboration with health care businesses and workforce stakeholders, DCHA has continued tracking workforce trends, evaluating program outcomes, identifying workforce gaps, and contributing to broader discussions regarding health care workforce policy, planning, and long-term investment strategies.



Looking Ahead: Positioning for Continued Progress

Taken together, these efforts reflect the Partnership's continued commitment to advancing the recommendations outlined within the Mayor's Health care Workforce Task Force Report. While meaningful progress has been made in strengthening workforce pipelines, expanding work-based learning opportunities, and improving collaboration across the health care workforce ecosystem, the Partnership recognizes that significant work remains.

Moving forward, continued focus will be needed to strengthen career pathways, expand training capacity, improve workforce retention, and ensure that workforce initiatives remain aligned, scalable, and sustainable over time. Long-term success will depend not only on expanding workforce opportunities, but also on building the infrastructure, coordination, and data systems necessary to support lasting workforce transformation across the District.

Through DCHA's leadership and convening role, the Partnership remains positioned to support the development of a more connected health care workforce system, one that creates clearer entry points into health care careers while also supporting long-term advancement, workforce stability, and economic mobility for District residents.

The Partnership also made significant progress in expanding health care career awareness and public engagement throughout 2025. Marketing and outreach efforts generated more than four million digital impressions across multiple platforms, helping increase awareness of health care occupations, training opportunities, and workforce pathways available to District residents.

While awareness and engagement efforts have expanded significantly, additional work is needed to better understand how awareness activities translate into career exploration, training participation, employment outcomes, and long-term workforce retention. Similarly, opportunities remain to strengthen alignment across workforce systems, improve data-sharing capabilities, and ensure that workforce investments continue supporting the District's highest-priority occupations.

These areas will remain important considerations as the Partnership continues advancing workforce development efforts and are explored further within the Vision 2030 section of this report.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPACT DASHBOARD



Exceeded Employer Engagement Goals

Achieved 95% employer commitment, surpassing the Partnership's original employer engagement target.



Reached More Than 4 Million People

Expanded awareness of health care careers and training opportunities across the District through targeted marketing and outreach efforts.

Created a Unified Gateway to Apprenticeships

Launched DC HEAL, establishing a centralized entry point for apprenticeship opportunities and employer engagement.

DC HEAL



Expanded Access to Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Strengthened pathways that connect training directly to employment and support hands-on career development across the District.

Advanced Workforce System Coordination

Increased alignment among employers, education providers, workforce agencies, and training organizations around shared workforce priorities.





Program Development to Long-Term Systems Building

Year 6 marked a transition from creating new initiatives to strengthening the infrastructure needed to sustain workforce impact over time.

VISION 2030

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership was established to help create a more coordinated, responsive, and sustainable health care workforce system for the District of Columbia. Over the past six years, significant progress has been made in strengthening workforce partnerships, expanding work-based learning opportunities, increasing employer engagement, and building new pathways into health care careers.

At the same time, health care continues to evolve. Advances in technology, changing workforce demographics, increasing demand for care, workforce shortages, and shifting employer expectations are reshaping how health care services are delivered and how workers enter, advance, and remain within the profession.

The next phase of the Partnership's work will focus not only on addressing current workforce challenges, but also on preparing the District for the future of health care employment. This vision is centered around four interconnected priorities:

Preparing for AI & Technology-Enabled Care by ensuring that workforce training programs reflect the realities of increasingly digital health care environments.

Expanding Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning by creating additional pathways for youth, adult learners, incumbent workers, career changers, and other populations seeking entry into health care careers.

Building a Data-Driven Workforce Ecosystem through improved workforce forecasting, retention analysis, wage sustainability research, longitudinal outcome tracking, and stronger alignment across partners.

Positioning Health Care as a Career Destination through expanded career awareness activities, stronger CTE alignment, earlier exposure to health care careers, and the continued development of sustainable talent pipelines for District residents.

These priorities will guide the Partnership's efforts to ensure that Washington, DC develops a health care workforce system that is equitable, adaptive, technology-enabled, and capable of meeting the needs of both residents and health care businesses through 2030 and beyond.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



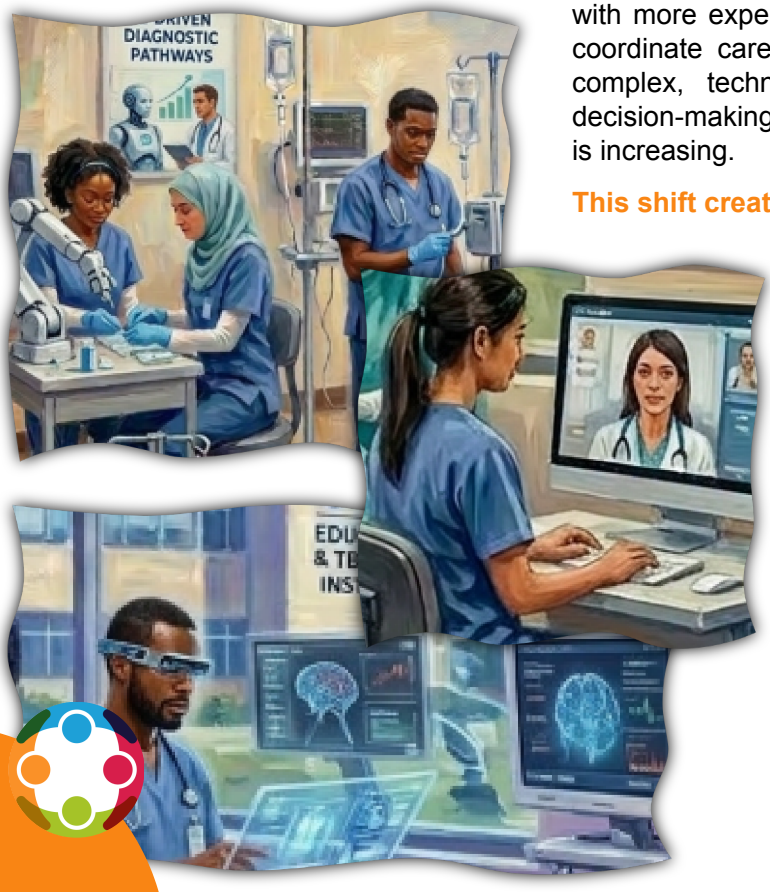
Artificial Intelligence & the Future of Entry-Level Health Care Careers

Health care is changing. Not in a distant, abstract way, but in real time, inside hospitals, clinics, and care settings across Washington, DC. Digital tools and artificial intelligence are becoming part of everyday health care delivery. From documentation systems that suggest clinical notes, to patient monitoring tools that flag changes in real time, to scheduling systems that automate workflows, technology is already shaping how care is provided. The question is no longer whether AI will impact health care. It already is.

What is less understood is what this means for the workforce, particularly for individuals entering health care careers. For decades, entry-level roles in health care have been built around routine, task-based work. Roles such as certified nursing assistant, patient care technician, and medical assistant have served as critical entry points into the field, allowing individuals to build experience while contributing to patient care. These roles have traditionally relied on repetition, observation, and on-the-job learning.

That model is beginning to shift.

As health care providers adopt more digital and AI-supported systems, many of the tasks that once defined entry-level work are being automated or enhanced by technology. Documentation is increasingly supported by digital systems. Patient monitoring is becoming more data-driven. Scheduling and intake processes are more streamlined and automated. While these changes improve efficiency and support care delivery, they also reshape what is expected of workers. Entry-level staff are now being asked to do more than complete tasks. They are being asked to navigate systems, interpret information, recognize when something is wrong, and communicate effectively with patients in environments where technology is always present.



At the same time, intermediate roles are evolving in parallel. Workers with more experience are expected to engage more deeply with data, coordinate care across systems, and apply judgment in increasingly complex, technology-enabled environments. The value of human decision-making, communication, and adaptability is not decreasing. It is increasing.

This shift creates both a challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge is that workforce training models have not fully kept pace. Many pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs are still designed around older versions of health care roles. As a result, individuals may enter the workforce without the skills needed to succeed in modern care settings, and employers may need to invest additional time and resources into onboarding and training.

The opportunity is to respond intentionally.

The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership is beginning a focused effort to better understand how AI and digital tools are shaping health care work across the District. This work is not about teaching artificial intelligence as a technical discipline. It is about understanding how work is changing and ensuring that training models reflect that reality.

VISION 2030

Over the next eight months, the Partnership will engage health care providers to identify the tools currently in use, examine how tasks and workflows are evolving, and better understand where entry-level workers are encountering challenges.

This effort will also define what digital literacy means in a health care context.

Digital literacy, in this case, is not about advanced technical skills. It is about ensuring that workers can function effectively in technology-enabled environments. This includes the ability to navigate systems, interpret basic data and alerts, understand when to escalate issues, and maintain strong communication with patients while using digital tools.

These are becoming foundational skills, alongside communication, professionalism, and problem-solving.

The goal of this work is not to replace existing training models, but to strengthen them. By aligning pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs with how health care work is actually performed today, the Partnership can ensure that individuals are better prepared to enter and advance in health care careers.

This effort also supports a broader vision: positioning health care as a career destination.

As the field continues to evolve, health care careers are becoming more dynamic, more technology-enabled, and more interconnected. For individuals entering the workforce, this creates new opportunities for growth, advancement, and long-term career development. For employers, it creates a need for workers who are adaptable, confident, and prepared to work in modern care environments.

The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership is well positioned to lead this work. By bringing together employers, training providers, and workforce partners, the Partnership can help ensure that the District's health care workforce is not only prepared for today's needs, but for the future of the field.

This is not about reacting to change. It is about preparing for it.



It's not about reacting to change, it's about preparing for it.

VISION 2030

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Expanding Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning

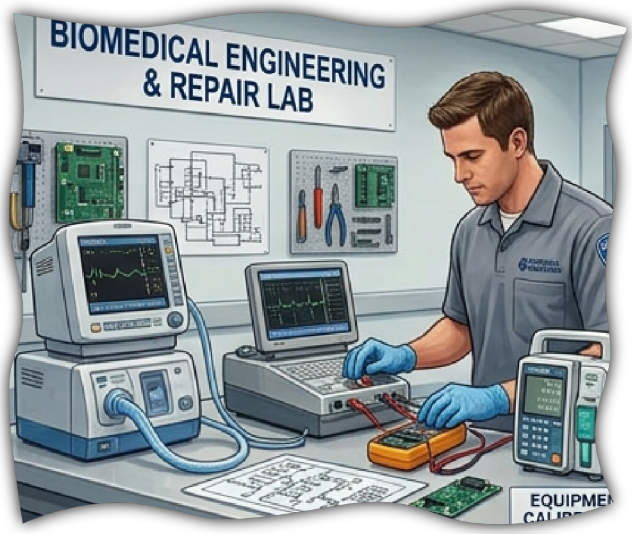
Over the next five years, the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership envisions apprenticeship becoming a foundational workforce strategy across the District's health care sector. While apprenticeship has historically been concentrated in a limited number of occupations, health care businesses are increasingly recognizing its value as a tool for workforce development, retention, internal mobility, and succession planning.

Building on the foundation established through DC HEAL, the Partnership will continue working with health care businesses to expand apprenticeship opportunities across clinical and non-clinical occupations. Future pathway development will focus on creating entry points for youth and new workforce entrants, and on supporting incumbent workers, career changes, and individuals seeking advancement within the health care industry.

The Partnership anticipates continued growth in pathways such as sterile processing technician, licensed practical nurse, pharmacy technician, biomedical equipment technician, clinical operations representative, care manager, and other occupations identified through employer engagement and workforce demand analysis. These pathways will help create more structured opportunities for career progression while supporting health care businesses in addressing workforce shortages and strengthening talent pipelines.

Long-term success will require apprenticeships to become fully integrated into workforce planning, educational pathways, and business operations. By 2030, the Partnership envisions a health care workforce system where apprenticeship serves not as a standalone program, but as a recognized and sustainable workforce development strategy that supports recruitment, retention, advancement, and workforce mobility across the District.







By 2030, the Partnership envisions a health care workforce system where apprenticeship serves as a recognized and sustainable workforce development strategy that supports recruitment, retention, advancement, and workforce mobility across the District.

VISION 2030

WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM

Building a Data-Driven Workforce Ecosystem



As workforce challenges become increasingly complex, data must play a larger role in guiding workforce strategy, investment, and decision-making. The Partnership envisions a future where health care workforce planning is informed by timely, accurate, and actionable data that allows stakeholders to better anticipate workforce needs rather than simply react to them.

Over the coming years, the Partnership will continue working toward stronger workforce forecasting capabilities, improved labor market analysis, and enhanced coordination of workforce data across health care businesses, education providers, workforce agencies, and training organizations. A more connected workforce ecosystem will allow stakeholders to identify emerging workforce shortages, better understand occupational demand, and align investments with areas of greatest need.

The Partnership also recognizes the importance of strengthening outcome measurement. Beyond tracking enrollment and completion metrics, future workforce systems must better understand retention, career advancement, wage progression, and long-term workforce participation. Developing stronger longitudinal data systems will help provide a more complete picture of workforce success while informing future policy and investment decisions.

By 2030, the goal is to support a workforce ecosystem that is increasingly data-informed, transparent, and capable of responding proactively to changing workforce conditions. Stronger data systems will ultimately help health care businesses, workforce organizations, and policymakers make more strategic decisions that improve workforce outcomes and strengthen the District's health care talent pipeline.

CAREER DESTINATION

Positioning Health Care as a Career Destination



The Partnership believes that building a sustainable health care workforce begins long before an individual applies for a job or enrolls in a training program. Increasing awareness of health care careers and helping residents understand the breadth of opportunities available within the industry will remain a central priority over the coming years.

Health care offers more than 200 occupations spanning clinical, administrative, technical, operational, and support functions. Yet many students and residents remain unaware of the full range of opportunities available to them. The Partnership envisions a future where health care career exploration begins earlier, reaches more residents, and creates stronger connections between awareness, education, training, and employment.

VISION 2030

Building on investments such as the redesign of the DC Health Care Careers website and the Kovler Foundation-supported initiatives, future efforts will focus on expanding health care career awareness beginning in middle school and continuing throughout high school and post-secondary education. This includes strengthening Career Technical Education pathways, expanding career exposure opportunities, increasing engagement with health care professionals, and creating clearer connections between education and workforce opportunities.

The Partnership will also continue exploring innovative approaches to health care career development, including the feasibility of a health care-focused high school and expanded partnerships with DC Public Schools, public charter schools, workforce agencies, and community-based organizations. Through these efforts, the Partnership seeks to create a more intentional and connected talent development system that positions health care as a visible, attainable, and rewarding career destination for District residents.

S U S T A I N A B I L I T Y

Sustaining the Health Care Workforce System

While significant progress has been made in strengthening workforce pathways and expanding opportunities, sustaining these efforts over the long term will require continued investment, collaboration, and shared ownership across the health care workforce ecosystem.

The Partnership recognizes that workforce development is not a short-term initiative, but an ongoing commitment that requires stable infrastructure, sustainable funding models, and coordinated leadership. Future success will depend on the ability of health care businesses, workforce organizations, education providers, government agencies, and community stakeholders to continue working together toward common goals.

By 2030, the Partnership envisions a health care workforce system that is more coordinated, equitable, and resilient. A system where workforce strategies are aligned with business needs, where residents have clear pathways into family-sustaining careers, where businesses have access to the talent they need to provide quality care, and where workforce investments are supported by the infrastructure necessary to sustain long-term impact.

The health care workforce challenges facing the District cannot be solved by any single organization. They require a collective commitment to innovation, partnership, and continuous improvement. The work outlined throughout this report represents important progress toward that goal. The vision for 2030 is to build upon that foundation and create a health care workforce system capable of meeting the needs of both residents and health care businesses for years to come.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership is a direct result of the dedication, collaboration and contributions of program staff, consultants, health care businesses, core partners, and network supporters.

We are especially grateful to the members and stakeholders who contributed to the launch and success of the DC Health Care Employment & Apprentice Link (DC HEAL) program.

As the convener of the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership, our program team is essential to advancing our shared vision. Thank you to Justin Palmer, Christian Jones, Kianna Cooper, Chloe Hill, Suchi Patel, Jennifer Hirt, Dr. John Norman, and Ebony Gilreath for their outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to this mission.

www.dchealthcareers.org

APPENDIX

Year 1 Apprenticeships



Patient Care Technician



CNA II - Team Lead



Senior Clinical Operations Representative



Certified Medical Assistant

Year 2 Apprenticeships



Pharmacy Technician



Biomedical Equipment Technician



Sterile Processing Technician



Specialty Health Care Services Representatives



Lead Care Manager



Advanced Certified Nursing Assistant

APPENDIX

DC Health Care Employer-Validated Competency Framework

INDUSTRY SECTOR COMPETENCIES

Patient Interaction | Health & Disease | Infection Control | Medication

Documentation | Diagnostic Procedures | Rehabilitation Therapy

INDUSTRY-WIDE COMPETENCIES

Health Industry Fundamentals | Health Care Delivery | Health Information

Health Industry Ethics | Laws & Regulations | Safety Systems

WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES

Creative Thinking | Customer Focus | Planning & Organizing | Scheduling & Coordinating

Problem Solving & Decision-Making | Working with Tools & Technology | Teamwork

ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES

Reading | Writing | Mathematics | Science & Technology | Communication

Critical & Analytical Thinking | Basic Computer Skills

PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS COMPETENCIES

Interpersonal Skills | Integrity | Professionalism | Initiative

Dependability & Reliability | Adaptability & Flexibility | Lifelong Learning

Health Support Pathway

HOME HEALTH AIDE
0-1 Years | $17.79

ORDERLY
1 Year | $19.90

OR

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES TECH
1-2 Years | $25.34

HEALTH EDUCATION SPECIALIST
2-3 Years | $49.24

OR

DIETETIC TECH
2-3 Years | $19.98

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER
4-5 Years | $31.93

OR

REHABILITATION COUNSELOR
4-6 Years | $29.66

OR

INDUSTRIAL HYGIENIST
4-6 Years | $60.97

CASE MANAGER or HEALTH CARE SOCIAL WORKER
6-8 Years | $40.13

OR

MEDICAL & HEALTH SERVICES MANAGER
5-6 Years | $69.40



Education Requirement Key

- High School Diploma/GED
- Certificate/Diploma
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Art/Science
- Master's/Doctoral Degree

Priority Career

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

Diagnostic Services Pathway

HOME HEALTH AIDE
0-1 Years | $17.79

PHLEBOTOMIST
1-2 Years | $20.10

PATIENT CARE TECHNICIAN
1-2 Years | $20.10

RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST
2-3 Years | $41.88

OR

MEDICAL IMAGING SPECIALIST (MRI TECHNOLOGIST)
2-3 Years | $44.54

OR

DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHER
2-3 Years | $44.66

CARDIOVASCULAR TECHNOLOGIST
2-3 Years | $47.97

OR

RADIATION THERAPIST
2-3 Years | $50.84



Education Requirement Key

- High School Diploma/GED
- Certificate/Diploma
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Art/Science
- Master's/Doctoral Degree

Priority Career

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

Biotechnology Pathway

HOME HEALTH AIDE
0-1 Years | $17.79

RESEARCH ASSISTANT
4 Years | $31.47

OR

MEDICAL & CLINICAL LAB TECH
4 Years | $30.05

HISTOTECHNOLOGIST
4-5 Years | $30.05

OR

PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENTIST (BIOPHYSICIST)
6-8 Years | $32.10

OR

MEDICAL SCIENTIST
6-8 Years | $54.93

OR

BIOCHEMIST
6-8 Years | $32.10



Education Requirement Key

- High School Diploma/GED
- Certificate/Diploma
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Art/Science
- Master's/Doctoral Degree

★ Priority Career

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

Health Informatics Pathway

HOME HEALTH AIDE
0-1 Years | $17.79

MEDICAL RECORDS SPECIALIST (CODER, BILLER)
1-2 Years | $29.48

OR

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNICIAN
1-2 Years | $41.45

INTERPRETER
4-5 Years | $37.14

OR

HEALTH CARE FINANCE MANAGER
4-6 Years | $75.05

OR

MEDICAL & HEALTH SERVICES MANAGER
4-6 Years | $53.21



Education Requirement Key

- High School Diploma/GED
- Certificate/Diploma
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Art/Science
- Master's/Doctoral Degree

★ Priority Career

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

Therapeutic Pathway

HOME HEALTH AIDE
0-1 Years | $17.79

NURSING ASSISTANT (CNA, CMA, LNA, PCA)
1-2 Years | $22.22

OR

MEDICAL ASSISTANT
1-2 Years | $23.42

OR

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN
1-2 Years | $22.81

OR

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE
1-2 Years | $32.55

OR

SURGICAL TECHNICIAN
1-2 Years | $32.94

REGISTERED NURSE (OPERATING ROOM NURSE, CRITICAL CARE NURSE
4 Years | $50.59

OR

BEHAVIORAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES
6-8 Years | $29.66

OR

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN
0-1 Year | $22.36

NURSE PRACTITIONER
6-8 Years | $64.08

OR

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
6-8 Years | $59.78

OR

PHARMACIST
6-8 Years | $67.46



Education Requirement Key

- High School Diploma/GED
- Certificate/Diploma
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Art/Science
- Master's/Doctoral Degree

Priority Career

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership

Dentistry Pathway

DENTAL ASSISTANT
1-2 Years | $25.42

DENTAL HYGIENIST
2-3 Years | $57.55

DENTIST
8 Years | $79.95



Education Requirement Key

- High School Diploma/GED
- Certificate/Diploma
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Art/Science
- Master's/Doctoral Degree

Priority Career

DC Health Care Workforce Partnership