

NEWSLETTER



Marshall Heights Community Development Organization (MHCDO) was honored to participate in Zion's Christmas Adopt-A-Child Ministry this holiday season. Through this meaningful initiative, MHCDO adopted a six-year-old girl, embracing the opportunity to bring joy and hope to a child during a time of year that can be especially challenging for many families. Our team was grateful for the chance to extend love beyond our walls and support a ministry dedicated to uplifting children and strengthening the community.

In learning about her simple but heartfelt Christmas wishes of bright butterflies, a unicorn doll, dinosaurs, a scooter and books, MHCDO eagerly fulfilled her list with care and excitement. Each item represented a piece of her imagination, curiosity, and childhood wonder. It was our privilege to help her experience the magic of the season, and we remain committed to partnering with initiatives that make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families throughout our community.





“We are pleased with the results of this cohort. MHCDO is uniquely positioned to support the RFK stadium and other upcoming development projects contributing to the growth and development of the District.

-Babatunde Oloyede, MHCDO President

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Blythe Patenaude
Director, Business
Development

Workforce Development

December proved to be a busy month for the Workforce Development Unit and the DOES Job Readiness Training Cohort. District residents with culinary arts and construction interests ranging from ages 22 to over 60 came together with entry-level interests, individuals with colleagues well as near Journeyman status seeking full time employment. Having completed nationally recognized certificates for Food Handlers and Food Managers with a bonus workshop in Customer Service, program participants launched into additional capacity skills-building programs in Digital Literacy and Financial Literacy sponsored by Vets Group's Joe Wynn and serial entrepreneur Cynthia Harrison respectively.

Earlier in 2025, Program Manager Blythe Patenaude observed that program participants continued to struggle with some basic life skills. While making great strides in obtaining specific occupational credentials, participants continued to struggle with applying for jobs through their phones and on the internet. Moreover, participants who received stipends for training over several weeks seemed to lack budgeting skills that prepared them to sustain basic food and transportation expenses between pay checks. In addition, skills in emotional intelligence were added to increase job retention by reviewing a number of common scenarios encountered by new and older employees alike and resulted in unnecessary or early termination. These three components have been added to a full-service job readiness program that increases both job attainment and longer retention. Each component contributes an integral part of entering and remaining successfully in the “world of work.”

Since this particular program targeted food service and construction, the next program was Safety Week - OSHA 10, Fall Prevention, and CPR followed by CORE Basics. Because safety in the workplace is so important, a full week is spent reviewing policies, procedures, and protocol at which point construction basis are added to close out a full complement of topics including the construction process, power tools, hand tools, construction math, etc.



Mary Dade
Program Manager, Housing Department

NATURAL DISASTERS



Housing Department

Marshall Heights Community Development Organization (MHCDO) invites you to join us, either in person or virtually, for our inaugural “The Keynote Panel” on Thursday, February 26, 2026, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Following the success of two Readiness Conferences, one of which was a global event, and an invitation to the National HUD Intermediary Training Conference to speak on the topic of Emergency Preparedness, MHCDO proudly announces the inaugural “The Keynote Panel.”

All of our speakers are experts in their respective fields. Expertise in resilience Hubs, climate mental health, the Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) role, climate Justice relating to unconstitutional policies, clean transportation, and flood preparedness. On February 26, 2026, we invite you to meet these truly talented experts, along with several others. The Keynote Panel will showcase the prevailing information, enabling Ward 7, the District of Columbia, and beyond to establish a preparedness plan for residents and families.

Please see the following page for registration.



MHCDO

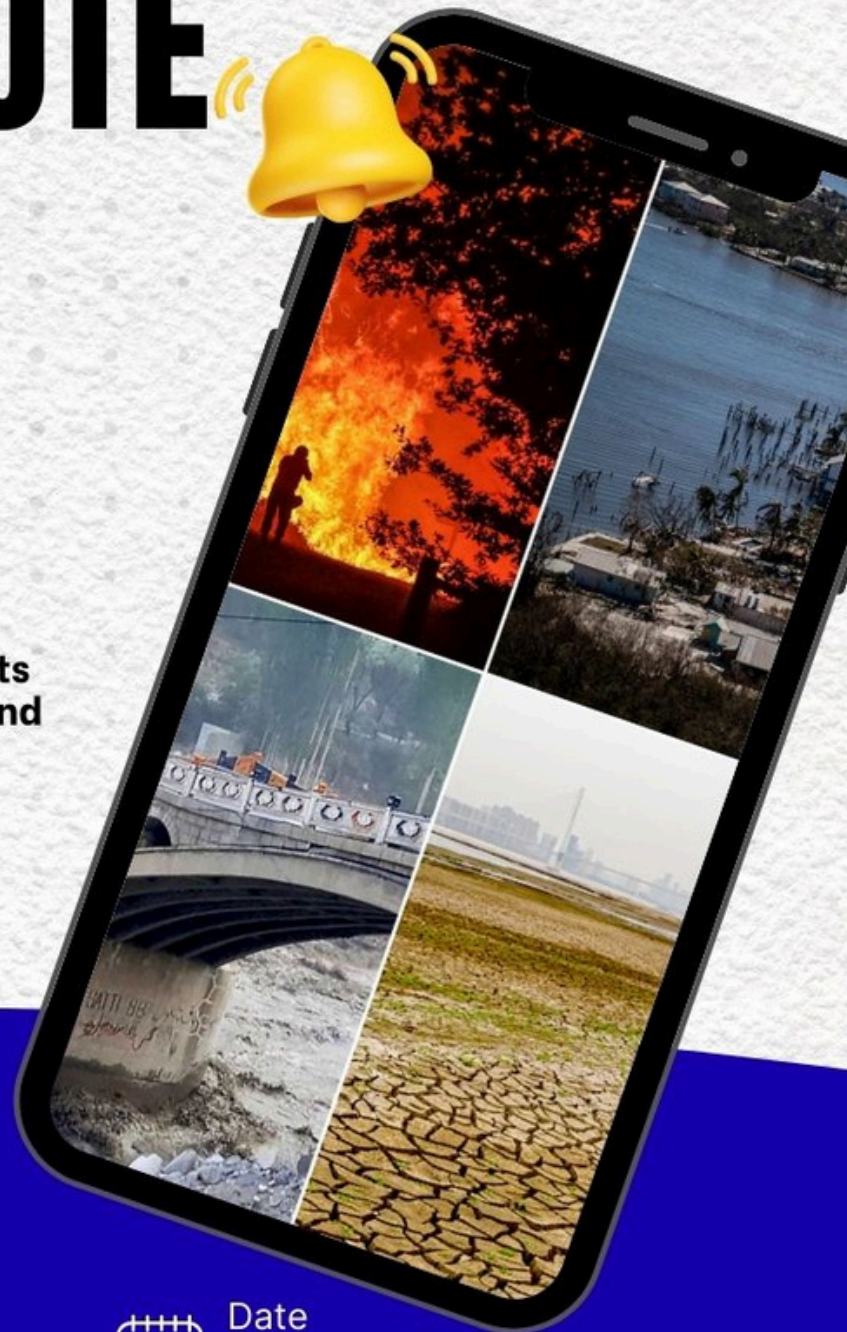


THE KEYNOTE PANEL

A VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON EVENT

Join us for an exciting night with experts
in climate, emergency preparedness and
disaster recovery.

Registration is required.



REGISTER NOW



VIRTUAL



IN-PERSON



Date

**February 26, 2026
5:30 PM- 7 PM**



Phone

(202) 396-1200



Address

**3939 Benning Road NE
Washington, DC 20019**



Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, Inc. and The NRP Group to Break Ground on 109-Unit Mixed-Income Community in Washington, D.C.

Transit-oriented community strategically located near RFK Stadium and steps from the Benning Road Metro Station will offer residents seamless access to the greater Washington D.C. metroplex

Marshall Heights Community Development Organization (MHCDO), Inc. and The NRP Group announced the financial closing and upcoming groundbreaking of Benning Road, a 109-unit, mixed-income community in Washington, D.C.'s Ward 7. The new affordable housing development will be reserved for families and individuals earning up to 30%, 50% and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).



The milestone underscores MHCDO's commitment to expanding its portfolio of high-quality, best-in-class affordable housing at a time when the District faces heightened economic uncertainty and tightening capital markets.

"This is a truly unique and uniquely challenging site, but it offers great unparalleled connectivity through the nearby Metro station and bus lines along Benning Road and East Capitol Street," said Chris Marshall, Vice President of Development at The NRP Group. "Benning Road exemplifies our strategic approach: to partnering with mission-driven organizations like MHCDO to fearlessly tackle tough but very well-located sites, to ensure that cost-burdened families can afford easy access to transportation options and daily amenities. This project is a testament to the District's commitment to ensuring essential housing remains viable, even as development hurdles intensify."

Located at 4435 Benning Road NE, the transit-oriented community is just one block from the Benning Road Metro Station and multiple bus lines, offering residents means to reach the entire District. The site provides nearby bike-share access and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, creating a highly walkable environment in a neighborhood where land availability is limited and parking is scarce.

The project coincides with the District's broader revitalization efforts, including the planned redevelopment of the RFK Stadium site and the return of the Washington Commanders in 2030. The housing development is located one stop away from the Stadium-Armory station, giving residents quick access to the RFK Stadium campus, which is undergoing a transformative \$2.7 billion redevelopment that will create approximately 14,000 construction jobs and 2,000 permanent positions, fueling economic growth in Ward 7.

“MHCDO has proudly served under-resourced neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. for more than 45 years, and we are honored to collaborate with The NRP Group on this transformative project,” said Babatunde Oloyede, President and CEO of Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, Inc. “Our headquarters is located just six blocks from the new development, which allows us to remain deeply connected to the residents of this community. This partnership sets a new precedent for delivering high-quality affordable housing that ensures residents have access to the resources they need to thrive. Through our holistic approach to economic development, we aim to help Ward 7 residents move up the economic continuum and create pathways to better lives and greater opportunities.”

Benning Road comprises a mix of studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom residences, including 22 permanent housing units reserved for individuals at risk of homelessness or previously unhoused.

The 109-unit, single-building apartment spans nine floors and features a wide range of amenities. On the first floor, a multi-use space will serve as a hub for resident programs, while the second floor will feature a fully equipped fitness center and a reservable family function room for events and gatherings. MHCDO will provide a robust suite of resident services, including financial literacy workshops, job readiness training and access to professional development opportunities.

Outdoors, residents will enjoy a landscaped front lawn along with a well-designed playground and seating areas that encourage social interaction. In addition, the project will include a placemaking art installation to reinforce neighborhood identity and contribute to the beautification of the site. The piece will be highly visible and created by a local artist.

Financial partners for the new development includes a mix of public and private institutions, including the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which provided soft debt; the DC Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA), serving as the bond issuer; and DC Green Bank, supporting sustainable development initiatives. Private sector partners include KeyBank as the lender and U.S. Bank as the tax credit investor.

Benning Road will break ground in Q1 2026 and be complete by the end of 2027.

“DHCD is committed to ensuring that income-restricted housing remains a priority. This project delivers deep affordability while also reserving units at 80% AMI for essential workers who serve the District. Benning Road reflects our commitment to financing developments that combine long-term affordability with access to economic mobility.

-Colleen Green, Director of the DC Department of Housing and Community Development



Eldridge R. Allen
Director, Small Business Development Program

Year- End Review: Your Business Roadmap to a Stronger Year Ahead

- 01 Reconnect With Your Mission**
Before planning ahead, revisit your mission, values, and original business plan.
- 02 Celebrate Your Wins**
Identify your biggest accomplishments and note what actions led to success.
- 03 Learn From the Challenges**
Review the goals you didn't meet and identify root causes.
- 04 Review Your Financial Health**
Examine your profit & loss statement, cash flow, and balance sheet.
- 05 Evaluate Operations & Processes**
Identify bottlenecks or tasks that can be automated. Operational improvements support sustainability.
- 06 Set SMART Goals**
Turn aspirations into actionable steps using **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant & Time-bound** goals.
- 07 Refresh Your Business Plan**
Update your plan to reflect new goals, market conditions, and business needs.
- 08 Schedule Quarterly Check-Ins**
Set aside time each quarter to review progress, adjust strategies, and celebrate wins.





Ariana L. Vasquez
Associate Director, Economic Development and
Sustainability



To report illegal dump sites or illegal dumping that has already occurred please call 311 or [report it online](#). To report illegal dumping in progress call 911.

To find information on the correct disposal method for trash within the District, please visit DPW's Zero Waste program page: ["What Goes Where"](#)



Thriving Communities

It is estimated that over 20,000 pounds of trash enter District waterbodies each year due to illegal dumping. Illegal dumping happens when trash, furniture, construction debris, or other waste is dumped in public spaces instead of being disposed of properly. In Ward 7, illegal dumping often shows up in alleys, green spaces, and along residential streets, impacting neighborhood health, safety, and quality of life.

Through our Thriving Communities grant work, MHCDO is taking a closer look at how illegal dumping impacts our community and what solutions actually work. We're asking residents, business owners, commuters, and community members to share their experiences – where dumping happens most often, what's been effective, and what needs to change.

Take our short community survey (5-7 minutes) and help us identify dumping hotspots, improve outreach about DC services, and shape community-driven solutions for a cleaner, healthier Ward 7.

Take the survey:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/IllegalDumpingW7





Deanwood Heights Main Street

In the spirit of community and giving, Deanwood Heights Main Street teamed up with Coach KD of Ward 7 and the inspiring Boxing Not Bullets program to bring joy to local families this holiday season. Together, they distributed 60 brand-new bikes, along with toys and warm coats, to children in the Deanwood neighborhood.



Paul Spires
Program Manager,
Deanwood Heights Main Street

This heartfelt initiative highlighted the power of local partnerships in supporting youth and promoting positive alternatives to violence through boxing and mentorship. Smiles lit up the faces of recipients as they received these thoughtful gifts, creating lasting memories and reinforcing the strong sense of unity in Ward 7 during the holidays.

