

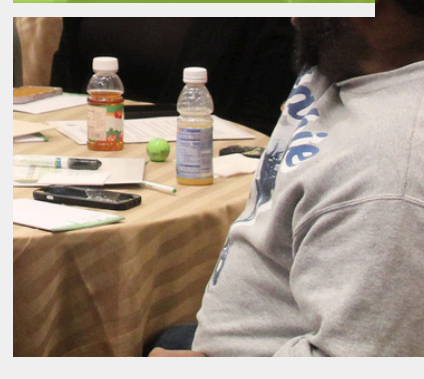
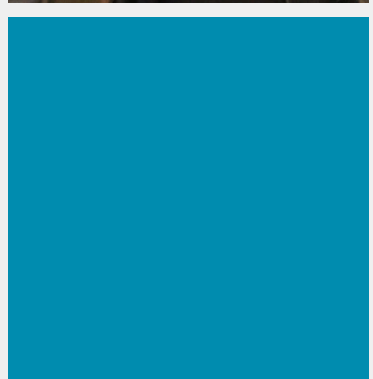
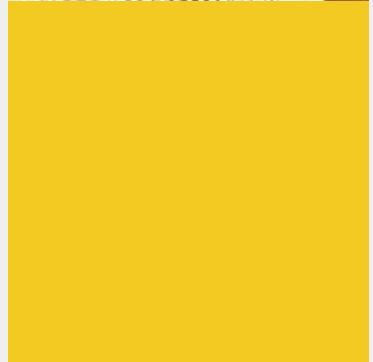


DC SPECIAL EDUCATION

cooperative

Annual Report FY25

The DC Special Education Cooperative works to create equitable and excellent educational systems where students with disabilities thrive.



Letter from the Executive Director

Partners and Colleagues,

In FY25, the Co-op launched a new five-year strategic plan anchored in three core priorities: High-Quality Instruction, Strategic Collaboration, and Strong Systems. This framework now guides every initiative, from our Demonstration Classrooms - where educators witness inclusive, evidence-based practices in action - to programs like ALL IN and DC3C that directly strengthen instruction, postsecondary pathways, and targeted supports for students with disabilities. With the support of new grants and strong school partnerships, we're helping more educators deliver high-impact instruction and more students access the opportunities they deserve.

Across every project this year, our role remained clear: to serve as a trusted partner and connector. Whether advocating at citywide working groups, coaching special education leaders, or managing complex services like school-based Medicaid, the Co-op continues to meet big needs with smart, scalable solutions. Thank you for standing with us in this work and for believing, as we do, that excellence in special education is not optional, but essential.

Julie Camerata

Executive Director



STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION

The Co-op has completed the first year of its five-year strategic plan. All work has been guided by three strategic priorities.



High Quality Instruction

all students with disabilities have access to educators skilled in delivering instruction that leads to student growth and achievement



Strategic Collaboration

charter LEAs work together to provide high-quality services to students with disabilities and city agencies are coordinated in accountability and support efforts



Strong Systems

Co-op programs and services develop and strengthen the LEA infrastructure necessary for high quality special education

HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION

The Co-op defines High-Quality Instruction (HQI) as all students with disabilities having access to educators skilled in delivering instruction that leads to student growth and achievement. Our HQI portfolio includes:

ALL IN DC

This year, the Co-op launched a new program aimed at elevating the skills of teachers and dedicated aides. In collaboration with a member LEA, the Co-op secured a three-year grant that supports several cohorts of teachers and aides. ALL IN empowers teachers to enrich their instructional methods by integrating Universal Design for Learning principles into their teaching strategies. Simultaneously, dedicated aides are gaining valuable strategies to enhance the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), ensuring more personalized and effective support for students.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE - Elevating Student Voice

On March 7, 2025, the Co-op welcomed 100 educators from across the city to learn about the impact of using Student Voice data to inform instruction. This event was the culminating activity of the Co-op's 2-year project designed to enhance partner LEAs' capacity to effectively meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students with disabilities and build on the work of the



Co-op's "All In" Summit. Anchor teachers from the project's three partner schools, BASIS DC, DC Bilingual, and Washington Leadership Academy presented their learnings and strategies with colleagues. One participant shared, "networking with other teachers, hearing real strategies that have been implemented, seeing data, and being in a room with so many inspiring people" as their favorite aspects of the event.

HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION



“ The DC SPED Co-op has been an invaluable partner in enhancing our special education evaluation and work. Their expert-led demo observations provided us with clear, actionable insights that have directly supported our...priority planning work as an organization. I highly recommend The DC SPED Co-op to any organization seeking to elevate their special education services.

Mary Pendleton, Senior Director of Program,
DC Prep ”

DEMONSTRATION CLASSROOMS

The Co-op’s Demonstration Classrooms (Demos) are re-envisioned professional development platforms designed as model classrooms for LEAs in need of transformational change. These classrooms provide educators with the opportunity to observe evidence-based, high-impact instructional practices in real-time. Educators who tour the Demos engage in debriefings and discussions, enabling them to effectively integrate what they’ve learned into their own teaching environments. **This year 63 educators/school leaders from 15 LEAs visited a Demo; 100% endorsed that the Demo practice would benefit students at their school!**

The four practices that comprise the Co-op’s Demo Classroom Network are: Evidence-Based Interventions, Learning Labs: Expanding the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Continuum, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). We were honored to have our UDL Demo featured by CAST! ([click here to watch the video](#)) The Co-op, with generous support from the Ceres Foundation, also embarked on a three-year project to build a “Secondary Transition” Demo which will support high impact practices for college and career readiness.

In August 2025, the Co-op released a report detailing the remarkable success each Demo had in improving student outcomes.

[Learn more!](#)



STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

The Co-op is the preeminent voice of special education in Washington, DC. The organization is working towards three goals: ensuring that charter LEAs work together to provide high-quality services to students with disabilities; a city where agencies are coordinated in accountability and support efforts; and local and national partnerships are leveraged to benefit students with disabilities attending DC charters.

ADVOCACY & COLLABORATION

The Co-op convenes and participates in numerous citywide working groups to represent the charter school perspective and the needs of students with disabilities. This year's activities included: OSSE Transportation (convener), Youth in Care (member), DC's State Advisory Panel for Special Education (chair/member), and OSSE's Reimagining Graduation Requirements Steering Committee (member). Throughout the year, the Co-op also provided public comment and testimony at various DC Council hearings. This year testimony was provided at the Mathematics Improvement Act of 2024 hearing, the Advancing Equity in Special Education Protocols Amendment 2024, and Special Education Oversight hearing.

DC3C

The Co-op's DC3C program helps students with disabilities figure out "What's Next?" This year the program supported schools by providing pre-employment transition services (PreETS) and supporting coordination between charter schools and DC's Rehabilitation Services Agency (RSA). DC3C's PreETS services included:

- **Pathways Prep** - school-based lessons
- Our annual **Next Steps: College/Career/Community Fair**
- **WorkReady** - work-based learning experiences that exposed students to careers in the culinary arts, sports management, civil service, and cloud computing to name a few!
- Our FY25 partners included DC Central Kitchen, the Washington Commanders, DC Office of Unified Communications, and Amazon AWS. DC3C also visited several colleges and universities with our students.

648
students

21
LEAs

15
Experiences

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

DC3C WorkReady Highlight!

On Monday, March 24, 2025, 31 students representing seven different LEAs embarked on an unforgettable journey to Capital One Arena for Washington Wizards Sports Career Day. From the moment students stepped into the arena, the energy was electric. They kicked off the experience with an interactive Sports Career Panel, where industry professionals shared their paths into the sports world. Students also learned about internship and career opportunities available through the Wizards and Monumental Sports & Entertainment. Following the panel, students explored a college and career fair featuring both local and national institutions. Representatives from schools were on hand to engage with our students. Many students, and even one teacher/chaperone, took the exciting first step toward college by beginning applications on the spot. After a short break, the evening continued with exclusive access to pre-game warm-ups, giving students a front-row view of the Wizards in action before the tip-off against the Toronto Raptors. For many of our students, this was their very first NBA game—and what a way to experience it! Students got to their seats just in time to witness the high-energy game (even if the Wizards didn't win this one), and several lucky participants even had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of the on-court fan tunnel and player introductions. The Wizards' Guest Services staff went above and beyond, presenting students with first game certificates, limited-edition bobbleheads, signed hats, and Wizards backpacks. The hospitality and generosity made a powerful impression, and the smiles were endless. This trip was more than a game—it was a reminder of why we do what we do. DC3C believes in opening doors, broadening horizons, and showing our students that their dreams are within reach.



STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

NONPUBLIC MANAGEMENT

LEAs are responsible for ensuring that all students with disabilities, regardless of where they are receiving special education services, are receiving a free and appropriate public education. This can be a challenge when students are placed into more restrictive environments, often referred to as “nonpublics”. LEAs must treat these placements as if they are an extension of the LEA, and provide monitoring and oversight to all students placed in them. This responsibility can be a huge challenge for small LEAs, with the bulk of the workload falling on the special education administrator. The Co-op relieves that burden, creates efficiencies, and boosts quality by centralizing nonpublic management. **In FY25, this program served 7 LEAs and 102 of their students who attend nonpublic placements.**

“

The Co-op's continuous monitoring of students in non-public private placements has been crucial. These services have played a pivotal role in maintaining continuity in education and supporting our student's emotional and academic well being. We are deeply grateful for their dedicated service to our school community.

Jade Bryant, Senior Director of Special Populations

”

“

The Co-op was instrumental in a few [ways]. First, they made us aware of the potential to receive funding via Medicaid. Second, in a very structured process, walked us through the entire application. Third, when hiccups occurred, [the team] was more than willing to get on the phone at any time to troubleshoot.

Ryan Benjamin, Senior Director, Operations, Finance, and Development

”

SCHOOL-BASED MEDICAID

The Co-op continues to offer this critical service to **32 of our member LEAs** who have chosen to participate in the program. This past year, we've focused on building efficiencies and improving compliance through regular Q&A sessions and one-on-one technical assistance.

STRONG SYSTEMS

Strong Systems is about condition setting; Co-op programs and services in this domain develop and strengthen the LEA infrastructure necessary for high quality special education and support services.

Activities include:

ELEVATED LEADERSHIP

The Co-op continues to provide 1:1 training and coaching support to special education leaders at member schools. In FY25, **10 leaders from 9 LEAs participated in this coaching** to enhance long-term capacity and quality of special education programming. This program is designed to not only provide thought partnership and real-time problem solving, but to improve special education leader expertise. We are proud to report that 8 of 9 (89%) of participants demonstrated improvement on this ELEVATE indicator.

“

It has been a privilege to partner with the Co-op in support of the Special Education department at Two Rivers. During a period of significant transition, including the absence of our Senior Director of Special Populations and the subsequent onboarding of a new leader, the Co-op provided unwavering guidance, strategic expertise, and consistent support that ensured continuity for both staff and students.

Aqueelha James, Chief Academic Officer

”

“

I just finished your asynchronous autism training and I cannot overstate how grateful I am to you for creating this experience. I feel so much more knowledgeable and have so many more ideas about how I can better support my students and staff. Your trainings have certainly made a huge difference in equipping me with a set of new mindsets, knowledge, and skills to use to help our kids.

Ben Johnson, Chief Academic Officer

”

MEMBER SERVICES

All Co-op members have access to a wide range of services that support their special education programming. These include: role-specific listservs, monthly special education leader meetings, rapid technical assistance, an online resource bank, online courses (featured courses include: Understanding Autism, Special Education 101, Introduction to Universal Design for Learning), an online job board, a monthly newsletter, an annual Special Education Leader bootcamp, ad hoc working groups, and a special education census (every 5 years).



Members

Co-op members are 57 DC charter schools that share our vision for students with disabilities. We are grateful for their commitment!

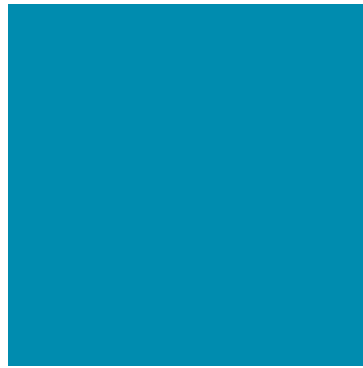


- Academy of Hope PCS
- Achievement Prep PCS
- AppleTree PCS
- BASIS DC PCS
- Breakthrough Montessori PCS
- Bridges PCS
- Briya PCS
- Capital City PCS
- Center City PCS
- Cesar Chavez PCS
- Creative Minds International PCS
- DC Bilingual PCS
- DC International PCS
- DC Preparatory Academy PCS
- DC Scholars PCS
- DC Wildflower Montessori PCS
- Digital Pioneers Academy PCS
- Early Childhood Academy PCS
- E.L. Haynes PCS
- Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS
- Friendship PCS
- Girls Global Academy PCS
- Global Citizens PCS
- Goodwill Excel Center PCS
- Harmony DC PCS
- IDEA PCS
- Ingenuity Prep PCS
- Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS
- Kingsman Academy PCS
- KIPP DC PCS
- Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS
- LAYC Career Academy PCS
- LEARN D.C. PCS
- Lee Montessori PCS
- Maya Angelou PCS
- Meridian PCS
- Monument Academy PCS
- Mundo Verde PCS
- Paul PCS
- Perry Street Preparatory PCS
- Richard Wright PCS
- Rocketship PCS
- Sela PCS
- Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS
- Social Justice School PCS
- Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS
- Statesman College Prep Academy for Boys PCS
- St. Coletta of Greater Washington PCS
- The Children's Guild PCS
- The Next Step PCS
- The SEED School of Washington, D.C. PCS
- Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS
- Two Rivers PCS
- Washington Latin PCS
- Washington Leadership Academy PCS
- Washington Yu Ying PCS
- Youthbuild PCS



Board of Directors

Our dedicated board is working to ensure that the Co-op is a strong organization able to support DC's charter sector.



Raymond Weeden
Executive Director
Thurgood Marshall PCS
Co-op Board Chair



Jack McCarthy
President & CEO
AppleTree Institute for
Education and Innovation
Co-op Board Secretary



Shelley Jacobson Hughes
Director of Finance
NewSchools
Co-op Board Treasurer



Alexandra Pardo ED.D
Partner
TenSquare
Co-op Governance Chair



Daniela Anello
CEO
DC Bilingual PCS
Co-op Advancement Chair



Jonathan Beall
Senior Vice President
& C&I Relationship Manager
Eagle Bank



Leicester Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
Academy of Hope Adult PCS



Olivia Smith
Executive Director/Founder
Bridges PCS



Peter Timothy Anderson
Head of School
Washington Latin PCS



Grants & Awards

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our generous funders. With your contributions, we've been able to advance our mission and impact countless lives. Your partnership and dedication inspire us to continue striving for excellence. Together, we are making a difference!

THE MORRIS AND GWENDOLYN
CAFRTZ FOUNDATION

We are so grateful to the Cafritz Foundation, a long-standing funder of the Co-op's work. With the Cafritz operating grant, the Co-op is able to provide ongoing programming aligned with our strategic priorities.



Ceres support enabled the Co-op to launch our Secondary Transition Demonstration Classroom-building project. Over the next two years, we will work with a cohort of 120 students and two LEAs to ultimately show what can happen when secondary transition is done right!

EDUCATION
FORWARD DC



Funding from EdForward supported the Co-op's Demonstration Classrooms. The award enabled the organization to develop implementation guides for each classroom, enhancing its ability to scale Demo practices across the city.



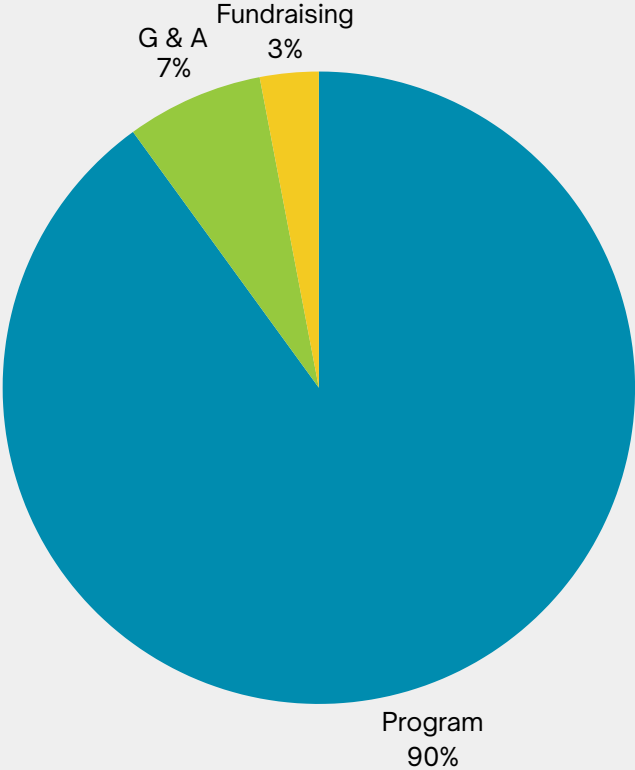
The Gamba Foundation's support has been pivotal in growing our Demo Classrooms program. The partnership allowed the Co-op to allocate staff time to coordinating Demo tours and compensate Demo teachers for their exceptional work in creating model classrooms for students with disabilities.



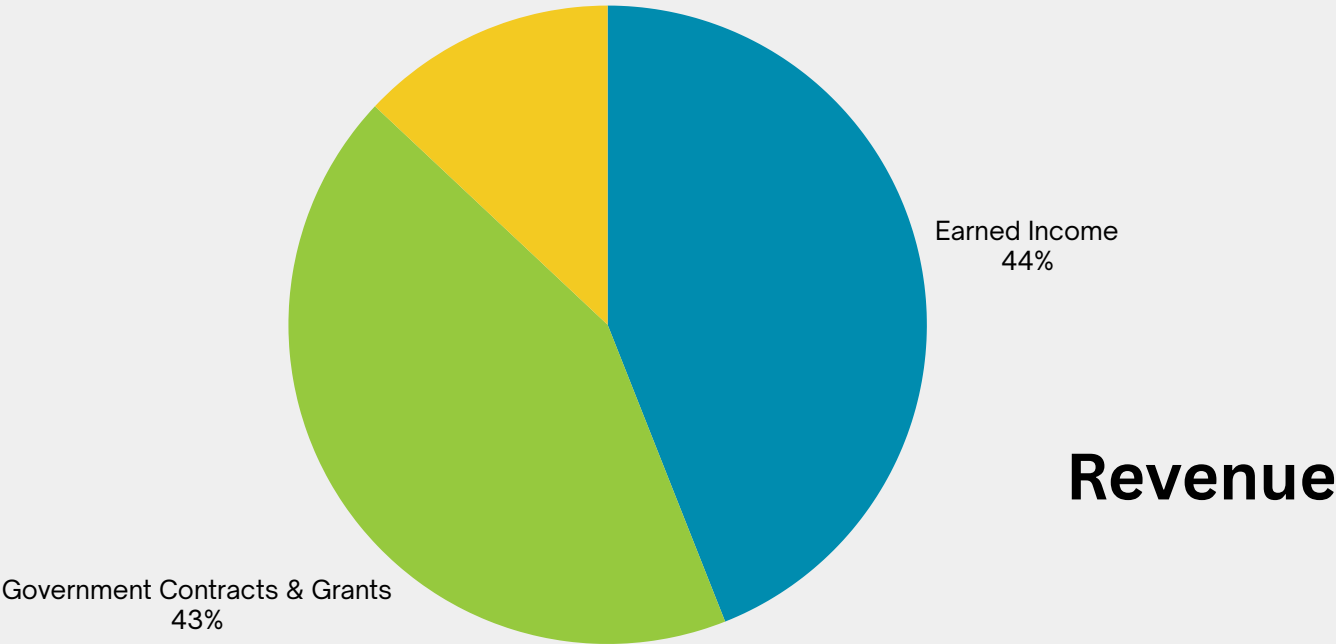
This year the Co-op wrapped up our "Centering Student Voice to Improve Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities" project, designed to enhance partner LEAs' capacity to effectively meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students with disabilities. The Co-op won a second 3-year SOAR grant, "Reimagining Professional Development to Enhance Teacher Quality and Improve Educational Outcomes for Students With Disabilities". We look forward to sharing results in the coming year.

Financial Highlights

Functional Expenses

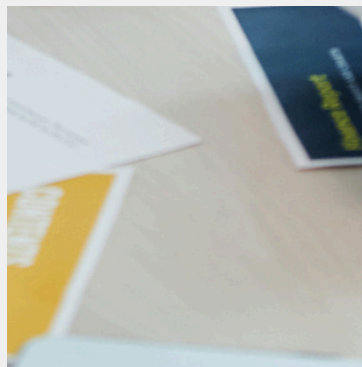
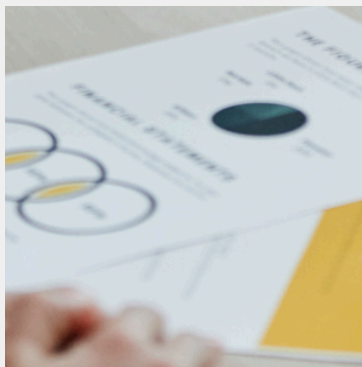
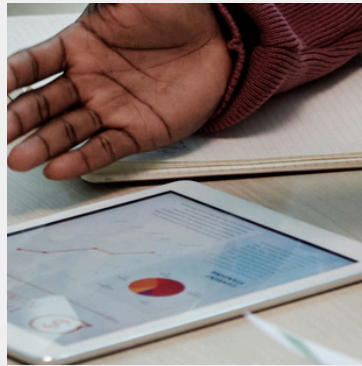


Revenue




Thank you!


This year's Next Steps Fair and ELEVATE conference were made possible with the generous support of our sponsor:





Contact Us

 202-656-2667

 info@specialedcoop.org

 www.specialedcoop.org