Who Lives in DC

When our country’s founders chose a location in 1790 for the new capital city, there weren’t many people living here. That has changed, and today there are over 700,000 residents of Washington DC -- more than the states of Vermont and Wyoming. We’re a diverse group, too: 46% of us are African American, 46% White, 4% Asian, and 11% are of Hispanic origins. Just about every ethnic group you can imagine is represented in our cultural “melting pot.”

We’re proud to live in the Nation’s Capital, but the truth is that most of us lead everyday lives quite separate and apart from the monuments, the government agencies, the embassies, and the museums that constitute official Washington. We are everyday Americans.

We Work for a Living

- Most District residents (over 67%) work in the private sector, not in government.
- The vast majority work in various professional, scientific, or technical services. Residents are also doctors, nurses, police, plumbers, painters, carpenters, electricians, and other skilled workers. Our offices get cleaned, our trash picked up, and our children taken care of by many hard-working men and women.
- A sizeable minority work for trade, professional, and other associations. The good works of these nonprofit associations extend way beyond the Beltway.

We Educate Our Children and Ourselves

- 240 public schools, including 128 public charter schools and 106 private schools, teach our children.
- 7 major private universities and our own public university, the University of the District of Columbia, provide post-secondary education.
- 26 public libraries serve the District.

We Defend our Country

- Active Military: over 10,000 men and women serve in Active-Duty Military. DC has more active military serving in the US forces today than 27 states in the Union.
- The DC National Guard: more than 2,700 serve as Soldiers and Airmen in the DC National Guard.

We Worship
• We’re home to some of the oldest, largest, and most beautiful churches, including the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and the Washington National Cathedral.
• Virtually every denomination and faith tradition is represented here in hundreds of places of worship throughout the city.

We Take Care of Our Communities

• Non-partisan “Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners” and civic associations volunteer their time to improve our neighborhoods.
• A long history of boys’ and girls’ clubs and associations continue today and serve youth across all four DC quadrants.
• Over 30 public community gardens and many neighborhood garden clubs work to feed our communities and beautify our residences and public spaces.

We Play

• Approximately 1000 acres of parkland are available for recreation and leisure, with over 50 swimming pools and 73 recreation centers for the good health and enjoyment of our residents.
• Plus, 12 dog parks provide for the good health and enjoyment of our furry friends!
• Major professional men’s and women’s sports teams plus a variety of Little League teams are available.
• Book clubs, hiking clubs, singing clubs, golfing clubs – we have clubs enough to serve just about any interest or hobby you can imagine.
• And, we celebrate the seasons with spring house and garden tours, summer outdoor music events, fall Oktober Fests, and winter Christmas caroling.

Many of Us Are Long-Time Residents

• Although DC’s population has grown along with DC’s reputation as an attractive city to live and work, nearly 40% of DC residents were born in the District.
• Many families date their connection to the District to the Civil War and earlier.
• The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of Washington, DC, founded in 1865, is DC’s oldest civic organization and is still very active.

Just like you, we raise our families, pay our taxes, serve on juries, fight for our country, and work together to create strong, caring communities. Just like you, we deserve the rights and representation enjoyed by Americans who live in the 50 states.
The DC Statehood Toolkit is designed for citizens across the country to learn more about the District of Columbia and why DC Statehood matters to the residents of our nation’s capital. The Toolkit is a joint project of the League of Women Voters Education Fund and the League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia, thanks to a generous grant from the government of the District of Columbia.