Washington D.C. provides a unique context for recycling. Without a state or regional body, waste management is left entirely to the city. The city provides trash and recycling collection to single-family homes and also runs a yard waste program. Although commercial establishments are required to submit recycling plans to the city, funding and capacity issues have made enforcement challenging. While overcoming the budgetary issues is the primary obstacle to building a sustainable recycling system in Washington D.C. other opportunities to improve include: transitioning to a stronger commercial management system that would increase participation, developing construction and demolition programs, strengthening reporting systems for residential and commercial collection, and applying the city’s existing living wage and local hire policies to private waste companies.

Sources:
Interview with Department of Public Works, Division of Solid Waste Management
Green DC Agenda
Sustainable DC Plan