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Small Investment Can Help Homeless Teen Parents Stay in School

By Kate Coventry

By making a modest investment in shelter beds and family reunification services, the DC Council can bring stability to homeless teens who are pregnant or parenting. These teens fall through the cracks of DC's homeless services, not qualifying for the kinds of help families with adult parents get. Establishing new services for teens can help them stay in school and put their families on the path to a stable future.

Currently, parents under the age of 18 cannot receive help in the adult family homeless system because they need more intensive supervision and support services, like counseling. As a result, parenting teens often have to couch surf until they turn 18 and qualify for adult shelter, meaning they move in with a different friend or family member every few days. This makes it difficult for parents to consistently get to school and can lead them to drop out.

With an investment of \$500,000 the District can provide 8-10 shelter beds and family reunification services for these teens. Most become homeless due to conflicts with their own parents. Shelter beds will offer a safe place for teens while they receive help from trained counselors to resolve the conflict. And for teens who can't return to their families, the shelter will give them a safe place to stay until a bed opens up in a youth housing program.

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HOMELESS SERVICES

