

T.E.A.M.S

Trauma Education And Mentoring Services



As many as **9 out of 10** young people in the juvenile system have indicators that they've experienced trauma.

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE PROGRAMS CAN REDUCE RECIDIVISM BY UP TO

80%

Research shows that a young person who has experienced trauma faces a 35% to 144% increased risk of violent behavior. By contrast, young people diverted from the justice system to trauma-informed care programs run in DC were 75% to 80% less likely to commit a new crime.

Tariq Herencia

Children are being criminalized and demonized for behavior that is a direct result of the environmental and social trauma surrounding them daily.



50% of Black and **42%** of Latino young people in DC had an ACE, compared with **14%** of white students.

Disproportionately Black and Brown young people are not being treated, instead, they are tried and sentenced as adults.

THE SOLUTION

Educating young people about how to identify trauma, recognize triggers, and develop proven strategies to navigate life without entering the justice system.

DC Should:

- Train and hire trauma-informed mentors.
- Establish a trauma information center in DCPS and DYRS.
- Treat childhood trauma as a public health and safety issue.

Liability for Lives

“LIVE MOE PROJECT”

**Easy access to
firearms leads to
gun violence and
death.**

Despite DC’s gun control laws, too many guns are coming into our communities from other states, requiring different approaches.

**Most of the guns used
in DC for an illegal act
come from other
states with weaker
gun laws.**

The federal government traced the location and source of 2,138 guns seized by the Metropolitan Police Department in a crime in DC in 2019: nine times as many guns used in crimes were purchased in Virginia (667) as in Washington, DC (72), showing that interstate trafficking fuels local violence.



**Individuals in the
District of Columbia
have experienced gun
violence, through
injury or loss of loved
ones. It leads to long-
term physical health
issues, including PTSD
and Depression.**

In 2021, Washington DC recorded 226 gun-related homicides and 990 non-fatal shootings. Ward 8 has the highest rates of gun violence in DC.

**DC must pass and fully implement the
“Establishment of Reasonable Controls
for the Firearm Industry Amendment
Act” to hold firearm manufacturers
and dealers accountable for the flow of
illegal guns into the city.**

Allow civil lawsuits against firearm manufacturers for the harm caused and mandate firearms makers to enforce reasonable measures to prevent firearm trafficking, loss, or theft. Increase the number and quality of comprehensive preventative programs for victims to get services, including holistic healing and restorative justice, to reduce retaliation.

To allow the previously introduced “Establishment of Reasonable Controls for the Firearm Industry Amendment Act of 2023” to get passed and implemented so that the communities that are affected can hold the agencies accountable for institutional and systemic racial plots against black and brown communities. Guns are coming into DC communities unconstitutionally from the dealers of all the guns found in DC. We must hold them accountable to ensure all DC residents are safe.



Rylinda Rhodes

Close the Record open the future

DC's juvenile record sealing statute is not automatic, not immediate/timely, and provides insufficient relief, which can severely limit young people's opportunities at the very moment that they are entering adulthood.

1,000 young people

per year could benefit from automatic sealing, the vast majority of whom are Black and Latino.

If we embrace the premise that the juvenile justice system is rehabilitative, then we need policy to align with that belief.

Let youth move beyond their past poor decisions.

DC Should make juvenile record expungement automatic and immediate one year after disposition (aka sentencing) if the child has not been readjudicated or reconvicted.

- The Superior Court needs to expunge the records and send notice to other public safety institutions holding the records, such as MPD.
- If the new adult record sealing law mandates that the court automatically seal some adult records, then the court has similar capacity to automatically seal juvenile records.

Lasting impact



Young people's juvenile records often limit their educational, vocational, and employment opportunities, such as attending Job Corps, joining the military, entering police or firefighting cadet academies, or obtaining vocational certifications.



Unexpunged juvenile felony convictions contribute to significantly longer prison sentences for DC residents if they later touch the adult criminal justice system.

contact

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OFFICER LOCATOR 12

COMMUNITY CONTROL OVER POLICING DATA

\$500,000,000

DC residents witness police deployment every day and we don't understand why they police in the fashion they do. To the public it appears to be blatant redundancy in practice, causing misappropriation of time & resources.

DC spends over \$500,000,000 yearly on the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), but provides very little information on what this money is spent on or its outcomes. When the Council of the District of Columbia instituted the Police Reform Commission (PRC) to study policing, over 50 percent of the information they requested from MPD was not provided. The PRC and other government agencies have noted that there are significant challenges in understanding how MPD spends its resources in deployment.

MPD “DOES NOT HAVE A CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY”

-POLICE REFORM COMMISSION

MPD's lack of transparency contributes to the problem of not knowing the cost of a police interaction—we waste millions on redundancy and ineffective action. By automating a digital platform to track and monitor engagement, we create an audit of resources that currently doesn't exist.

3,860 HOURS



spent on stops that did not result in a warning, ticket, or arrest.

ACLU

Robert Harvey III

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LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY



Creating an app will allow us to track data about the costs of policing from other sources (like vehicles purchases & maintenance & weapons being used on duty) this will bring transparency to policing. The application would create a clear and transparent record of police engagement. 1% of the annual policing budget over the next 3 years needs to be redirected to the development, implementation, and marketing of the app.

The application would create transparency & accountability of officers on duty and tracks resources used in deployment.

Justice with Dignity, Safety with Support

Addressing the Mental Health Crisis Among Returning Citizens



Unspoken Trauma

Each year, hundreds of men and women return to Washington, DC, after incarceration, often carrying deep, unspoken trauma. Incarceration is not just physical confinement; it is a psychological wound that compounds trauma caused by poverty, racism, violence, and systemic neglect. **Yet, mental health is rarely prioritized in reentry.**

44%

of people in jails
have a history of
mental illness

Making sure that our returning citizens get the proper mental health treatment and healthcare allows for more inclusive and equitable treatment. This lack of access to culturally competent mental health care for returning citizens creates barriers to secure housing and employment while silently suffering.

Over half (52%) of people arrested have serious psychological distress, and those with multiple arrests are nearly three times more likely to have a serious mental illness.

There has been an exponential growth in the number of people incarcerated presenting with mental illness, causing correctional institutions to become the “de facto” mental health setting for people with these health challenges.

1,516

individuals were
diagnosed with a
serious mental illness in
the DC jail in FY 2016
alone.

When we invest in the mental health of returning citizens, we heal families, rebuild communities, and reduce recidivism. This is not just reentry—it's transformation.

A Path Toward Healing and Crime Reduction in Washington, D.C.

Providing community-based
mental health care to an
individual can reduce
someone's risk of recidivism by
as much as

64%

- Establish continuity by connecting individuals to community-based providers and organizations before release and having them continue seeing them after release.
- Ensure that mental health services for returning citizens operate outside of the Department of Corrections, focusing on measures that are not seen as punitive but instead promote rehabilitation, restoration, and reintegration.

Umar Muhammad

HELP US Help Ourselves

Housing For IRAA

Housing REDUCES Recidivism

Research shows that housing is key to successful reentry and has a **direct, positive relationship** with reducing recidivism.

Proven Results

Montgomery County, Maryland and its Housing Authority, known as the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) social housing model has shown that with a minimal up-front investment, a government agency operating in the DMV housing market can stand-up a network of social housing that is replicable and scalable. Recently, HOC created a \$50 million revolving Housing Production Fund (HPF) that is projected to create around 750 units of municipally owned social housing in its first 4 years.

Center for Social Housing & public Investment

RIISING COSTS



\$73,520

annual household income needed to pay for a two-bedroom home in DC

HUD

Housing has become extremely costly in DC since the 1990s and early 2000s, which is when a lot of the individuals coming home on IRAA were convicted and incarcerated.

These individuals were between the ages of 16 and 25 and are now returning to the city after serving over 15 years in prison, now mature adults looking to secure stability and give back to their community.

ON THE WAY HOME

Over 170 individuals released on IRAA since 2017

170

Over 500 individuals now eligible under DC's 2021 expansion

500

The number of people returning to DC on IRAA is constantly growing. Many are coming home to a city that has changed drastically.

Rent has increased tremendously and stable housing has become much harder to obtain, especially the lack of skills and work history they possess due to incarceration.

Housing for IRAA will improve public safety, build and strengthen communities, decrease homelessness, and reduce recidivism.

- The DC Government should create 6 apartment buildings to provide temporary 1-year housing for this population, which will include a combination of one-bedroom and efficiency units per building.
- Residents will pay into an escrow account where the government will match what they deposit. This will help with their first month rent, security deposit, and credible rental history. The first month escrow payment can be waived if the employment has not been secured, an additional 30 day extension may be granted on a case by case basis.

What the Future Holds

In Washington, D.C., a growing number of youth and young adults, particularly those who are neurodivergent, are left without direction, opportunity, or the support systems necessary to thrive after high school.



1 IN 5 STUDENTS IN DCPS HAVE A DOCUMENTED DISABILITY AND THE RATE IS HIGHER FOR BLACK STUDENTS.

The lack of accessible, tailored pathways, especially for Black and neurodivergent residents, leads to increased dropout rates, unemployment, and disengagement from civic and economic life, ultimately weakening morale and deepening systemic inequities in our communities.

The Impact

Autistic individuals become suicidal when they feel worthless during the time of trying to fit into an academic world that penalizes them, as well as the workforce. I know that many parents feel this way. By failing Black and neurodivergent residents, we are continuing to fail as a society.



20% of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder will interact with and be questioned by police.



The unemployment rate for neurodivergent adults is up to to 40 %, roughly 8x the rate for adults without disabilities.

Young people who are neurodivergent are much more likely to experience depression and anxiety. These conditions make it more likely they will face challenges with work, school and planning for their futures.

DC should adopt inclusive policies modeled after countries like Sweden and Denmark to support neurodivergent youth in school, work, and life. This includes individualized support plans, accessible job training, expanded post-secondary options, and mental health services, especially for Black and low-income students. By centering neurodivergent needs in education and employment systems, DC can create real pathways to success and stability.

What young folks need - neurodivergent or otherwise - is what they get when income isn't a factor. Every Black and Brown unprivileged adult in DC should have access to free college and university, housing and jobs that are developmentally appropriate and meet their future goals.

We need the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program plus more: gets them jobs, but what we need additionally is something to help a young person train, and plan for more intentional career goals. We need the equivalent of a privileged parent who can plan out an internship or job experience for family, which low-income parents can't access.

Rebuild Reconnect Rise

“60 percent of residents are not in school, and no one is checking on them... returning youth citizens are returning to environments that led to their being put in the justice system in the first place.”

Jawana Hardy, Guns Down Friday

Our youth are being released from DYRS and youth service centers without a meaningful or effective aftercare program in place. These programs are supposed to support their transition, helping them ease back into their communities. Without proper guidance, structure, and resources, many of these young people are left to navigate the same environments and challenges that led them into the system in the first place—setting them up to fail.

We need new strong mentor/Aftercare programs for our youth that's reentering back in to our communities. Yes, DYRS has programs in place that are supposed to help the youth to become productive young adults. But these programs do not work due to the **“lack of planning, motivation, empathy and urgency.”**



nearly **93 percent** of youth committed to DYRS are rearrested and 50 percent are locked up for a new crime within a few years or less after leaving DYRS.

The next step is holding DYRS and other organizations accountable for failing our youth by reducing funding every time they don't meet the goals set by the Council. Also, change the hiring process to increase the hiring of mentors and leaders who are already in these communities helping the youth on their own time.

This issue poses a serious threat to both our youth and the communities they return to. When young people are released from DYRS without real support, they're often pushed right back into the same environments and behaviors that led them into the system in the first place. This isn't just a failure of rehabilitation—it's a pipeline back to incarceration, violence, and generational trauma. We must break this with urgency, intention, and investment in real solutions—not band-aid programs or performative efforts. This issue affects the youth and the community because if they come back outside doing the same thing over again, it impacts their lives and community.

Hands-on Mentorship

We need a strong, hands-on mentorship program that listens to and understands youth released from DYRS. This program should help parents and children access mental health resources when needed, and include wraparound services like transportation, life skills training (e.g., obtaining IDs, social security cards, job applications), and workforce development. Most importantly, it must focus on reconnecting families and setting these youth up for lasting success.

Data has shown that with credible messengers and mentors, there have been a decrease in incarceration and increase in school enrollment and workforce development.

Davon Benton



Dalaneo Martin

WRONGFUL DEATH ACT

BARRIERS TO JUSTICE

DC's current wrongful death law requires personal representative status. Parents can not easily file wrongful death claims for their children. For instance, even when the deceased is a child, the law does not allow parents and siblings to file wrongful death suits.

DC has additional barriers to filing a wrongful death suit, such as the 2-year statute of limitations and the 6-month notice requirement and Personal representative when the deceased is a child. These barriers do not leave time for families to grieve or understand the legal process.

Current DC law does not provide a way for every family member who is a victim of police violence to find a pathway to be made whole because DC residents are not guaranteed the right to file a wrongful death lawsuit, even in the case of a child being killed.

I'm not able to file a wrongful death suit for my son, but in other states parents are able to file a wrongful death suit if they are not the personal representative.

This problem affects my family and other families.

MOTHERS AND FATHERS MOURNING THEIR CHILDREN. FAMILIES DENIED A VOICE IN COURT. CHILDREN WHOSE STORIES ARE NEVER TOLD. FAMILIES LIKE THE MARTINS, PARENTS NAVIGATING TRAUMA AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM ALONE. BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE.

STATES WHERE PARENTS CAN FILE WRONGFUL DEATH LAWSUITS EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE INCLUDE:

Maryland, Virginia, Arizona, Delaware, Hawaii, Missouri, and Texas. Arizona and Virginia have specific laws to ensure that parents of minor children can file these claims.

Before 2013, Wyoming's wrongful death law had a similar lack of clarity to DC's, so they passed legislation to address this issue.

DC COUNCIL SHOULD INTRODUCE THE DALANEO MARTIN WRONGFUL DEATH ACT:

- Honor victims by removing unjust legal barriers
- Up the filing time to 3 years

The DC Council should pass a bill to fix the law to clarify who can sue and who can benefit in wrongful death suits. Parents should always be able to file a wrongful death suit, but especially when their child is a minor.

The Dalaneo Martin Wrongful Death Act will remove the barriers to wrongful death suits for parents and provide a little bit of accountability for parents who feel they have lost everything.

GENERATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Empower a generation by providing stability through
stable affordable housing.

Returning citizens are facing challenges securing housing upon release from prison, and one of the key issues is a lack of affordable housing for this community.

Formerly incarcerated people are almost
10x

more likely to be
homeless, especially in
the period shortly after
their release.

With about 1,000 people returning to DC each year from a federal prison, as many as **430 people (44%) will experience difficulties getting housing.**

CSOSA says over 10 percent of the supervised population resides in unstable housing, which represents about 1,000 people.

HOUSING IS A KEY FACTOR

Research shows that unstable housing has a relationship to family conflict and crime. During reentry, housing instability and conflict with family members are common challenges, often stemming from strained relationships, financial constraints, and the difficulties of reintegrating into a family dynamic after incarceration.

A study found that returning citizens who had secured long-term housing within one year of release were less likely to be reincarcerated; housing is identified as a key factor in determining rates of reincarceration.

44% of returning
citizens struggle
with housing.

The IZ program allows for the class diversification of neighborhoods and allows for lower-income DC residents to have access to the high-quality housing units that large developers build on DC land. The key benefit is that returning citizens would integrate into communities - they naturally become neighbors to everyone in an expanding world of more housing.

INCREASING ACCESS

Increasing the inclusionary zoning (IZ) set aside units from 10 percent to 20 percent with new units going to returning citizens would reduce the likelihood of recidivism. This expansion of housing for returning citizens would also address the generational traumatic impact of displacement and homelessness. Some people would also need a case manager matched with them to help identify other resources they might need beyond housing, and that can individualize the help needed. Setting aside IZ units for returning citizens would ensure that DC has a dedicated supply of new affordable housing for them.

We need to remove barriers with the Inclusionary Zoning application process that may be an issue for a returning citizen. This includes changing rules around having to provide:

- A driver's license.
- An employer verification form.
- The person's last eight most recent pay stubs.
- The person's tax returns from the last 2 years.



M . A . D . E

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From Parental Incarceration to Family Preservation

Incarceration destroys families, alternative sentencing preserves them.

Parental incarceration increases a child's likelihood of:



**DEVELOPING
SUBSTANCE USE
DISORDERS**



**EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS**



**CRIMINAL LEGAL
SYSTEM
INVOLVEMENT**

Kids Pay the Price

Parental incarceration affects children and special needs adults in underserved communities, black and brown children, children and families in low-income neighborhoods, and justice-impacted parents.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, parental incarceration can have lasting effects on children into adulthood. Childhood development experts consider a child's household member becoming incarcerated an "Adverse Childhood Experience," which can lead to challenges throughout childhood, negative effects on health, and adverse impacts on their employment and educational outcomes.

The state's typical responses to parental incarceration often worsen this crisis, permanently changing a family's relationship by placing children in foster care or terminating parental rights.

Positive Results

Community sentencing programs in Tennessee have seen **positive results in improving parenting skills and reducing substance abuse.**

Tamika Bruce

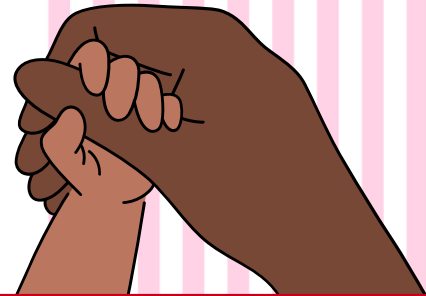
10,000

children in the District are not thriving due to one or both parents being incarcerated.

When a parent is incarcerated, it also affects their adult children who have special needs. When a caregiver is sentenced to incarceration and removed from the home, research findings suggest that children experience significant loss of support following their sentencing.

Our community is weakened by separation through incarceration. Children are maladjusted and suffer conditions like: RAD (reactive attachment disorder) and separation anxiety while parents have a harder time reacclimating to society and maintaining family ties.

Breaking down the family unit breaks down the community.



Policy to Protect

We need a policy that focuses on children of incarcerated parents: once convicted, alternatives to incarceration will be exhausted before removing the primary caregiver from the home when children or special needs adult children are present. 12 states currently have similar laws.

We are talking about children, it's not only about cash, it's about care!!!

SECOND CHANCES, FULL PLATES

**JOBS FOR RETURNING
CITIZENS. GROCERIES
FOR FAMILIES. WINS
FOR EVERYONE.**

2 PROBLEMS, 1 SOLUTION



75%

of D.C.'s food deserts
are in wards 7 and 8.

Many D.C. neighborhoods, particularly east of the river, are food deserts, while their returning citizen residents face significant barriers to stable employment. **With the right incentives, grocery stores can help address both issues.**

Over

60%

of returning
citizens in D.C.
remain
unemployed a
year after release.



**Food insecurity and
poverty increase the
likelihood of criminality.**

Food insecurity disproportionately affects low-income communities, especially those in Wards 7 and 8, which struggle with limited access to healthy food and high incarceration rates. Families in these areas also face food insecurity and lack transportation to affordable groceries, which exacerbates health disparities.

**DELIVERING
SECOND CHANCES,**
**one grocery bag
at a time.**

DC should implement a policy that **incentivizes supermarkets to hire returning citizens and covers grocery delivery costs for SNAP recipients.** This initiative addresses the dual problem of food insecurity and returning citizen unemployment, while simultaneously supporting local businesses by driving more sales.

**CUT RECIDIVISM
in half**



Recidivism **drops from 41% to 18%** for people who were unemployed before incarceration but found a job afterward.

Get Grocery Stores On Board:

Build partnerships with supermarkets to support returning citizen hiring.

Push D.C. Council to Act:

Advocate for legislation that funds delivery subsidies.

Mobilize Public Support:

Drive awareness to build momentum and ensure strong community backing.

ZACHARY RAGONE

WHEN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE **SOCIETY WINS**

The Missing Link

Our justice system doesn't adequately afford young adults the supportive spaces needed for their successful reentry back into society or to extricate themselves from a life of gun violence/culture.



Connecting someone to housing and supportive housing services has been shown to reduce recidivism by as much as

40%

DC's Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan called for building out DC's intensive life coaching, and building connections to needed support for young adults, and Case management to connect someone to services is part of the evidenced-based approach to helping someone succeed.

DC should implement the success of the Young Men Emerging (YME) unit's holistic approach to rehabilitation in the community. The solution includes employment, housing, education and treatment to give these young people the space and wrap-around services they need for successful reentry. For example, combine aspects of Thrive Academy in Maryland with those of the YME, with housing where they can receive these services, achieve their goals, and avoid future crime. DC should Implement the Youth Rehabilitation Act Strategic Plan focused on the community, and establish a program like Maryland's Thrive Academy through it.

Success in one year

One year of data on the Thrive program in Maryland showed that recidivism for young people served in the program was **half** of what the recidivism is for all justice-involved young people.



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