Can home visiting impact family homelessness?

Summary of Healthy Families Massachusetts Home Visiting Program Evaluation

This report summarizes “Home visiting program impacts on reducing homelessness among young mothers,” a study published in 2018 and written by Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research (TIER) and Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University.

PEC summarized the report to inform Pennsylvania’s community involved in family homelessness and home visiting.

Data Source: The source document can be found http://bit.ly/30ULrTG. All findings, conclusions and recommendations are those of the researchers who conducted the study.

Key findings:

- Compared to the control group, mothers in the program were less likely to be homeless, particularly during the child’s preschool and early school age years.

- Overall, 33% of mothers reported experiencing homelessness at some point after program enrollment.

- 21.7% reported “early” homelessness when their child was less than 3 years old, and 15.8% reported “later” homelessness when their child was 3 years of age or older.
As the number of home visits increased, the likelihood of homelessness decreased: Mothers who received fewer than 5 home visits were 1.3 times more likely to experience homelessness than mothers with 27 home visits.

“...upon program completion, mothers were more economically, educationally, and/or occupationally independent (Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research, 2015) in turn, supporting a more stable housing environment.”

Healthy Families Massachusetts (HFM) provides home visiting services to young parents (< 21 years old) across Massachusetts.

For this study, researchers interviewed 443 young mothers who received home visiting services six years prior about their experiences of homelessness.

On average, mothers received 27 home visits over approximately 16 months.

At the time of interview, mothers and children were, on average, 25 years old and 6 years old, respectively.

Conclusion: Home visiting services had a significant effect on overall homelessness among young mothers and their children.

What is home visiting?

HFM’s home visiting services include:

- Help with housing applications
- Referrals to shelters
- Help with job searches & resume writing
- Linking mothers to cash assistance