



## TESTIMONY

Testimony of Adam Tenner, Executive Director, Metro TeenAIDS  
Budget Hearing  
DC Department of Employment Services  
April 22, 2008

Good afternoon, Council-members and distinguished guests.

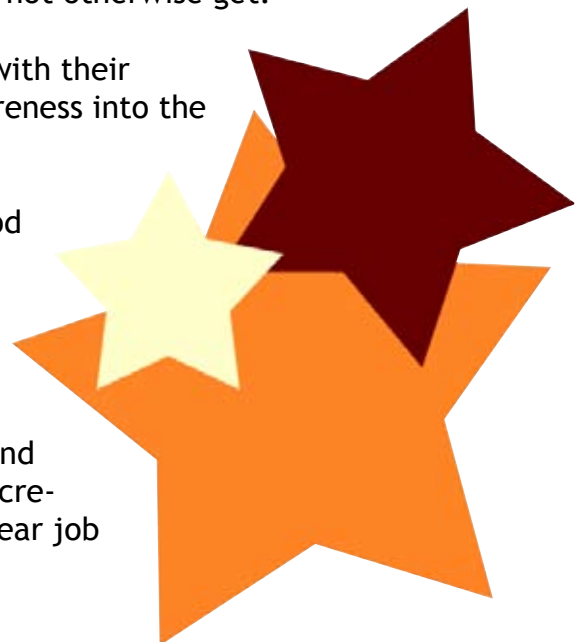
My name is Adam Tenner and I am the executive director of Metro TeenAIDS, a member of the DC Alliance of Youth Advocates and the DC Healthy Youth Coalition. Metro TeenAIDS is the only local organization whose sole purpose is to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic by, for, and with young people in Washington, DC.

The HIV epidemic in DC is well documented. As we all know, DC has the highest rate of new AIDS cases in the entire country. Not as well known is the fact that in the last five years, HIV infection rates among young people have tripled compared with the five years before that. Now, ten percent of all new HIV infections in our city are among young people aged 13 to 24.

Our city's most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that there has been a steady decline in the number of students who report receiving HIV/AIDS education in school. For this reason, we believe that the Summer Youth Employment Program is an excellent opportunity to reach 15,000-plus DC youth with this critical HIV/AIDS information that they might not otherwise get.

In our conversations with DOES staff, we have been very happy with their responsiveness on including modules on HIV prevention and awareness into the orientation. Creating a more comprehensive SYEP orientation is something that all DCAYA members agree on and Metro TeenAIDS believes specifically that including HIV education would be a good start.

In addition to an improved orientation, we believe that DOES could better support the many youth providers that offer job placement sites for youth in our city. Many of these providers would like to see strengthened partnerships between DOES and youth-serving community-based organizations - helping them to create more clear standards defining job quality and establishing clear job placement goals and outcomes.



And to support the many CBOs to accomplish these goals, we also recommend that they be given sufficient technical and financial support.

In addition to support, we believe that the many CBOs that already partner with DOES can be more than simply employment sites: they can be an extension of DOES services. ADAM...

Many DCAYA member organizations use a youth development model in their programming, and MTA is no exception. We support a DOES budget that prioritizes incorporating youth development principles into all youth programs. Although we don't know the particulars, we are pleased to see a \$250,000 budget enhancement specifically reflecting this.

The DOES budget is increasing in local funding by 28% over last yr's budget and the line item for Youth Programs by over \$7 million. In a time when the city's budget is tightening, we are also supportive of this growth and would hope that these new resources are spent in productive ways.

A young person having a vision for their future is an antidote to HIV infection and a job and career path are great ways to provide this vision. To that end, we support DOES' efforts to expand job placements for youth in our city that are meaningful and goal-oriented. Metro TeenAIDS is willing to help in any way that we can.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before your committee today.

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