

WEST VIRGINIA CITY PROVIDES RIDES FOR HOMELESS TO FAMILIES

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — The city of Charleston is giving bus or train fare for free to homeless people to live with friends or relatives, and in some cases the trips are provided in exchange for criminal charges being dropped.

The Charleston Gazette-Mail reports the city's family reunification program has provided trips to 70 people to 17 states since August.

Charleston Police Chief Steve Cooper says behavioral health workers make sure the homeless people have places to live in the towns where they will end up.

Cooper says the program is a less expensive response to the city's homeless problem compared with jail costs and resources spent by local service providers.

He says those using the program have been eager to do so, and the police department forces no one to leave.