

# **Proposal to the City of Ashland Ad Hoc Homelessness Committee Provide Business Licenses**

## **What is the issue/Problem?**

The homeless and impoverished are in positions where they desperately need to be able to support themselves under adverse conditions, yet in a economy where jobs are few and far between the possibility of those in desperate situations supporting themselves under their own initiative, using their own skill sets is blocked by business laws which bar them from selling their services or products without a business license. For many these skills are all that they have left.

As it now stands the homeless and poor are told to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” and then penalized if they try to do so. This trap must be disarmed.

## **Proposed Action:**

Towards the end not unethically trapping and chaining members of our community in poverty we propose that free business vouchers be given out by the city to those too desperate to buy a traditional business license but who still desire to better themselves under their own power by selling their skills and products. This action would achieve a number of progressive steps including:

- It would allow the impoverished to improve their status by giving their abilities back to the community they have decided to live in.
- It would lessen panhandling by allowing the impoverished the opportunity to conduct exchanges rather than being forced into asking for handouts.
- It would give the impoverished, who have been morally beaten down by our society, a sense of self worth and self reliance knowing that the community wants the skills they have to offer and that they are capable of improving their own state.

## **Details and Logistics:**

There are two main options which present themselves as to how to run this program.

One would be for the city to hand out the vouchers to a person who was determined to be in need and if they presented a viable business plan. The voucher would be handed out on a deferred payment plan, it would be given for free with the expectation of it being payed off at the end of a thirty day period once the recipient begins to make money for himself. If the payment is not made by the end of a thirty day period the individual could attempt to apply for a further deferral if it seemed like he could still make money off of his business plan, if not, the voucher would be canceled.

A second option would be to set up a program which itself has a business license. Those who were in need and presented a proper business plan would be allowed to function under the auspices of this program for as long as they were still unable to establish themselves on their own.

The program could be run through the infrastructure which is already in place at DHS, using the same office to house the applications and the case workers. In addition, in the first option some of the program costs could be covered by the eventually payed off business licenses.

**Proposal Submitted by:**

Phronesis – a community organization which has been involved with the poor and homeless community since its inception in October of last year.

Email: [Phronesisorg@gmail.com](mailto:Phronesisorg@gmail.com)

Phone: Emery K. Way (541) 210-4140