

Reducing Homelessness Through Employment Opportunities



Researched by The Newmarket Business Association for the City of
Boston

An Experimental Initiative

- Newmarket Business Association delivered trash bags, gloves, and vests to the Engagement Center
- When homeless/addicted were approached at the gas station about picking up trash, they were interested and requested more bags and gloves
- The group collected multiple large bags of trash and gathered a bucket of over 2,400 used needles
 - Homeless individual brought needles to AHOPE
 - NBA paid those who helped with the cleanup
- A group has continued to collect bags of trash and expressed interest in regular cleanup opportunities
 - Again, NBA handed out CVS gift cards and cash to those who helped
- Since then, the NBA and the City have discussed the possibility of a potential pilot program

An Experimental Initiative

- Mario Chaparo of The Engagement Center, launching a program to employ homeless/ addicted to do regular clean-up in exchange for stipend
 - Approach people living on the streets to see if they would like to take part
 - Encourage participants to take advantage of services for homelessness and addiction
- Jen Tracey, Mayor's Office of Recovery Services, expressed interest in making this an actual pilot program
- Boston can look to successful elements of other cities' work programs in creating the pilot

Albuquerque, New Mexico (2015)

- “There’s a Better way Campaign” founded by Mayor Richard Berry in September, 2015
 - Mayor Berry’s Ted Talk on the campaign
https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_j_berry_a_practical_way_to_help_the_homeless_find_work_and_safety
- Two vans drive to homeless settlements and offer day jobs including landscape beautification and garbage removal
- Workers are paid \$10 per hour and provided with lunch, snacks, water
- City of Albuquerque’s Solid Waste Department funds the program
 - van, driver, wages, food for workers
- Nonprofit organization, Hope Works, carries out the operations
 - <https://www.hopeworksnm.org>
- Hope Works connects workers with St. Martin’s Hospitality Center for various services and overnight shelter

Albuquerque

- City of Albuquerque originally designated \$50,000 for the homeless outreach program in 2015
- Funding has more than tripled, to over \$180,000 by 2017
- 2 vans pick up about 20 workers per day, 5 days per week
- Individual can work up to 4 days per week
- Each shift is 6 hours
 - Participant earns about \$54 per day

Albuquerque's Outcomes

In the 3 years it has been running...

- 3,498 homeless took part in the program
- 368 have been connected to permanent employment
- Over 175, 200 pounds of trash has been removed and 600 blocks cleaned
- 202 workers have been treated for substance abuse and mental health
- \$63,807 raised in community donations for the program

Denver, Colorado (2016)

- City launched the pilot “Denver Day Works”, a supported work program, in November 2016
- “Denver Day Works” offers the homeless day jobs such as cleanup and beautification of Denver sites
- Participants paid \$12.59 per hour, and given lunch
 - To lower barrier to entry, those without ID or other records necessary for employment are paid with gift cards
- Nonprofit organization, Bayaud Enterprises, carries out the operations
 - <https://www.bayaudenterprises.org/social-impact-services/denver-day-works>
- Bayaud outreach teams assesses an individual to see if they are job-ready before giving them the day job
 - Those that are not job-ready, are provided with job training until they can participate
- Participants are connected to food, shelter, and other services

Denver

- Bayaud provides various services to connect participants with full-time employment and ensure future success
 - Resume workshops, job training, financial planning, etc.
- Participants can work one day per week
- Full day and half day shifts are available
- City put forward a \$400,000 one year budget
- Funded through a partnership between Denver's Road Home, Denver Public Works, Denver Parks and Recreation, and Denver Human Services

Denver Outcomes

One year after the program began...

- 331 participants
- 122 participants have found permanent employment
 - With 82 employers
 - 15 participants found employment with City and County of Denver
- 13 permanently housed
- Over 10,138 hours of work put in
- \$109,000 in wages paid to participants
- Pilot found one day per week was not enough; difficult for participants to go from one day per week of work to five

San Diego, California (2018)

- Began February, 2018
- Lacks government funding
- Non-profit providing homeless services, the Alpha Project, began the clean up program “Wheels for Change”
- Van picks up homeless individuals willing to contribute and brings them to community sites for litter pick up, weed and brush pulling, and other beautification projects
- Workers connected to Alpha Project Housing for a place to sleep and services
 - <https://www.alphaproject.org>
- Wheels for Change employs 30-50 people per day, with one 5 hour daily shift, 3 days per week
- Workers are paid \$11.50 per hour

San Diego

- Funded with a \$70,000 donation from a physician who did private fundraising
 - This covers the van and 6 months of workers wages
- San Diego Mayor Faulconer is supporting the project but not providing funding
- Program is not yet sustainable and is limited in the number of workers it can hire due to amount of funding
 - Over 150 individuals are on the waitlist to work
- No results at the moment on the success of the program

Chicago, Illinois (2016)

- In October, 2016, the City of Chicago initiated the “Day for a Change” pilot program to reduce homelessness and panhandling by employing the homeless
 - <https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/emerg/news/2017/march/mayor-emanuel-doubles-day-for-change-homeless-pilot-program-.html>
- “Day for Change” sends vans to homeless settlements and offers them a community beautification employment opportunity
- Participants work on projects such as trash collection or cleanup and maintenance of vacant lots and properties
- Workers are paid \$55-\$65 for a day of work, in addition to a meal
- Nonprofit, Safe Haven Agency, runs the program and provides services
 - <http://www.asafehaven.org>
- Safe Haven provides services such as
 - Interim housing, hygiene care, healthcare screenings, job training, behavioral health services

Chicago

- The City of Chicago implemented a 4% surcharge on Airbnb and home sharing services that would be reserved for homeless agencies and services.
 - This helped fund the cost of the program
- Hires about 14-16 workers for the day
- Shifts are 5 hours
- Participants limited to work 11 times per year
- Program was designed for 100 people but reached 225 in the first three months

Chicago's Outcomes

After only 3 months...

- Over 225 homeless individuals participated
- Earned \$12,000-15,000 combined in wages
- 25 participants in workforce development programs
- 2 found permanent employment
- 3 participants are in job training programs
- Based on the pilot's success, Chicago's mayor doubled the size of the program after 2017
- Program will be expanded city-wide

Fort Worth, Texas (2017)

- City of Fort Worth began the “Clean Slate Program”, employing 40 homeless individuals to clean up streets or do custodial work for local businesses
- The nonprofit, Presbyterian Night Shelter, runs the program and offers the workers a place to sleep after work
 - The Shelter also provides them with case management support and job skill development
 - <https://www.journeyhome.org>
- Workers are given full time work, 5 days a week, paid \$10 per hour and given benefits and paid vacation time
- Participants can continue to work for Clean Slate until they transition into the workforce
- The City of Fort Worth has put forward \$48,000 per year for the program to operate

Fort Worth Outcomes

After the 1 year pilot....

- Approximately 3,856 tons of trash was collected by Clean Slate Workers last year
- 40 homeless individuals participated
- Although no exact number exists, multiple workers have received full time jobs and/or housing after participating in the program
- 50% of employees found housing after 4 months of employment
- Program boosted in 2018 with an additional \$150,000 due to its' success

San Jose, California (2014)

- Since July 2014, San Jose has put the homeless to work picking up trash and sweeping leaves
- In exchange for their time, the city offers them free services
 - Housing and job placement
 - Food
 - Background Checks
- Run by a partnership between the City Downtown Street Teams, which works to reduce panhandling and homelessness, and Groundwerx, which provides cleaning services to the city
 - Groundwerx handles trash pick-up services
 - City Downtown Street Teams connects individuals to services
- Runs 5 days per week, 8 hours per day
 - with a 4 hour morning shift and 4 hour afternoon shift

San Jose Outcomes

- No official information on funding
- 50 homeless individuals moved into permanent housing
- Although no exact number exists, dozens have been reported to receive full time jobs after participating in the program

Portland, Maine (2017)

- The “Portland Opportunity Crew” employs homeless individuals in cleanup projects for various Portland businesses
- Participants are paid \$10.68 per hour, receive on-the-job training, and a meal
- The program is operated and funded directly by the City (Social Services and Parks Division) without any support from non-profits
 - The program connects homeless individuals to shelter and addiction and mental health services
- City partners with Workforce Solutions and Complete Labor to link participants with job training and employment support
- Portland businesses can hire the Portland Opportunity Crew to clean up their property for a week
 - Cost to business; \$1300 for a week of work
- On each day, 5 to 6 people are hired for a job
- Participants work 6 hour days, 2 or 3 days per week
- City of Denver budgeted \$42,000 for the year long program

Portland Outcomes

2017 Year-End Statistics

- Only 5 out of 64 workers were able to find long-term employment through the program
- 310 Bags of trash collected
- 287 hours, 51 days in the field, 114 sites visited
- In works to expand the program's budget to allow for five days per week of work
- Seeking funding from the Federal Government's \$3 Billion Community Development Block Grant Program

Other Cities Implementing this model (implemented or in works)

- Amarillo, Texas
- Tucson, Arizona
- Anchorage, Alaska
- Columbus, Ohio
- Austin, Texas
- Seattle, Washington
- Honolulu, Hawaii
- Lexington, Kentucky
- Palo Alto, California
- Sunnyvale, California
- San Rafael, California
- Los Angeles, California

General Conclusions

1. Programs appear to work best when the City partners with a local non-profit to run the operations
2. Programs appear to run best when there is appropriate and consistent funding
3. Programs appear to run best when partnered with transformative housing and other services designed for homeless individuals
4. Programs appear to work best when City Departments are willing to hire workers after taking part in the program (i.e Parks and Recreation Department)

Suggestions and Proposals

1. The City should look to find a nonprofit partner for this effort (such as Block by Block, Project Place, etc.).
2. Allocating a proportion of the host community's marijuana tax could provide funding for the program.
3. The City should investigate ways to provide transitional housing to further assist homeless workers.
4. The City should commit to hiring the most appropriate, productive and reliable workers in the program to full-time positions.