

DRAFT PROPOSAL
TENTS 4.10
MARCH 17, 2016

THE PROBLEM: Homelessness is continuing to be a growing problem in the Eugene/Springfield area. The population of people without homes in Lane County is conservatively estimated to be about 5,000. There are too few authorized programs that offer overnight accommodations, and those who are not part of these programs are putting up shelters in fields, wetlands and other open spaces. While these brave individuals are just trying to survive, they are often cited or evicted soon after they set up camp. They are forced to be on the move as often as every three to five days, which makes it impossible for them to find jobs, maintain their physical and mental health, and get the services they need. We feel that new and innovative programs are needed to shelter more people. One such program might be called "Tents 4.10." The name is not important, but the concept is.

THE SOLUTION: Tents 4.10 is designed to provide sanctioned safe camping spots for 10 or fewer persons. As envisioned, the program would be a partnership between the business community, homeless advocates, the city and county, and local churches and nonprofit organizations. St. Vincent DePaul can offer its assistance and experience in this endeavor. SVDP's practice of providing sanitation and trash removal, as well as other time-gathered expertise, will ensure the safety and health of the camps. The benefits to the participating businesses would be as follows:

1. The people living on the sites would provide 24-hour security for participating businesses. The recent fire at Civic Stadium is a reminder of what can happen when property is left unattended.
2. The residents can offer basic groundskeeping, litter removal and other simple maintenance at no charge.
3. The county would provide a tax credit to participating businesses based on a formula to be determined by the county assessment department.
4. The reputation and public relations of participating businesses would be enhanced by their their enrollment and effort.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

1. Vetting: We suggest that background checks and drug tests be administered to applicants.
2. Group leaders are recommended by a committee consisting of both housed and unhoused people who are familiar with the scope and tasks of leading and maintaining a small camp. Prospective leaders must attend a 3-4 hour orientation prior to taking that position.
3. Camp rules and policies will be similar to those used by the SVDP Overnight Camping Program and the Safe Spot Rest Stops.
4. Length of site-stay for the Tents 4.10 program will be mutually agreed upon by the participating business and the campers on the site.

SUMMARY: Difficult community challenges like homelessness call for innovative solutions and outside-the-box thinking. We believe Tents 4.10, or its equivalent, can be part of the bigger picture. We are seeking open discussion and response to the above proposal, and will welcome any suggestions you may have. Thank you for your thoughtful review of this draft.

INITIAL CONSULTING TEAM: Rev. Wayne Martin, Pat Farr, Mia Cariaga, Mike Canfield, Laura Maricle, Keith Heath, Terry McDonald, Garrett Dunleavy, Chris Cunningham, Sabra Marcroft, Ken Neubeck, Michael Kinnison