

Deseret Defiant *Initiative*

The Deseret Defiant Initiative is a political movement with the intent to attempt to wake up local cities, and make them aware of their part, in causing homelessness, and to try and get them to actively participate in EFFECTIVELY solving the problem in a positive and more permanent way, which will allow those who are homeless, to participate in their own transition, and recovery, from homeless to housed, while supporting themselves legally and effectively without anymore dependence on government, and charitable organizations, than is absolutely necessary for each individual, based on their capability, to manage their own life, in their own home, in whatever form that home may reasonable be at the time.

First, and so far only charter member ;

Lawrence Horman

To: the Mayors of the cities,
of Salt Lake County, in the
state of Utah,

The following is as stated above, an open letter to the Mayors of the cities within the county of Salt Lake, in the state of Utah, but also to all city, county, and state officials everywhere, currently dealing with the issue of unwanted homeless people with in their communities, of whatever size and type.

My Name is Lawrence Horman and depending on your perspective, I am homeless. In general I don't see myself as homeless but if things in my life continue to go in the direction they are going currently, I very soon will be completely homeless, and dependent on the generosity of others (i.e.; friends, family government and church) for my daily sustenance and housing, something which I have struggled for years to avoid, not for the sake of pride, or even just for my own self-esteem, but to keep from being a burden on those that I care about, and society in general.

Such, is as I understand it, the desire of MOST people in today's society, and I am no different in that regard.

I am writing this letter because a notable sized portion of the population of this country (including myself), are being treated like criminals for no more reason than the fact that we exist, and get along in life by doing things outside the range of what is considered "Normal" by most people. This means that we find ways to house, feed and clothe ourselves in some fashion or other, that most people consider either odd, uncomfortable, or outright disgusting, from THEIR perspective.

It's not that we do anything illegal like stealing, selling drugs, or working other black market businesses, (and that's not to say that such things don't go on), but we're perfectly content to live in whatever housing we can afford to rent or purchase, or construct while we work to improve our situation, even if it's not the conventional house or apartment. We don't mind shipping containers, commercial trailers, old used motor homes and RV trailers. We're happy if we can build lean-tos' between sheds or even make our own tiny homes out of the shed itself. We scavenge bits and pieces, and salvage old equipment to make whatever we've made in to our home comfortable, and we do it out of what the rest of the society around us has thrown out while they scream and holler about how we shouldn't waste so much, and need to recycle as much as possible.

We want nothing more than what everyone else wants, to be allowed to get along in life without being harassed just for being there when we have committed **NO** crime.

Because of our economic status, frequently the only place we can find to live, is in an otherwise empty field or abandoned building, (admittedly some not as stable or otherwise safe as others), or commercial lot where we rent space on a lot, or the floor or simply squat because we can find no other place to be.

I have found that when people in an official position talk about doing something about homelessness, they *frequently* make plans without bothering to ask the people they say they're

trying to help, and it has been my personal experience, (which I find echoed in the commentary of others in similar situations,) that the most common resolution that most cities employ to remove the homeless from their midst is to rush into the property where the homeless are, and fine, arrest, or run off those who they think are living on a property even if that person, or people pay rent for, or own, what they are living in. They don't ask what we think we might need to change our circumstances, and make a more PERMANENT change not only for us but to help prevent the problem from continuing, or growing bigger in the future.

Just about the only time the homeless get any attention is when they commit a crime, or kill themselves, or do something else that disturbs the lives of those living in a more permanent form of housing.

If you really want to help the homeless, try helping those who don't do drugs, or steal, or pitch tents in public parks, who go to work every day and try and improve their situation without taking from the government funding more than they absolutely have to, but get chased out of city after city after city simply for being there. These are people who know what they need but can't get help because they aren't getting on their feet the way everyone else thinks they should do it. They get turned down for help again and again and again because they don't fall within the rules of some *set* program, put together by a government agency or a "charitable non-profit" organization. Help us the way we'd need it and you'll reduce the homeless problem around you drastically.

In reference to my previous statement, no I'm not going to kill myself, and the only "CRIME" I'm committing is parking overnight where I'm not wanted because *I have nowhere else to go, after being chased out of the home, which I own*, by city officials who were "Just doing their job." not because I did anything criminal, but simply because I was in the only place I could find, where I could afford to put my home.

The fact that I'm not intent on some desperate criminal act, or on killing myself, doesn't mean I'm not desperate. Like so many other people, I've calmly and politely asked for the help I need more times than I can count, just the way everyone says you're supposed to, and for my effort, with few exceptions, I've gotten nothing but apologies for what they can't do to help me. So I've been trying to get other people's attention and been put off and ignored.

There's a gap in the government and charity non-profit programs, and those in that gap are being ignored or treated as criminals because they don't fit in to the pre-determined cookie cutter programs, WE are in that gap and getting left further behind to drop deeper, in to that gap and further from help every day.

Please help us before anyone else gives up and quits, or kills themselves. Look past your local ordinances your company policies, and your private and public "program" rules. See the real need. Stop blaming a rule, or a policy, and telling us what you can't do. This country was built on the concept of government for, by, and of, the people, and it takes people willing to work together and bend a little despite their fear of upsetting the noisy minority who want nothing more than to sit happily in their comfort zone and fill the letter of the law without remembering it's true spirit and intent.

For those slowly slipping down the chasm between laws, official programs, ordinances and rules, as we desperately hang on to the edge of the cliff for dear life, I beg of, and implore you, to PLEASE help us before it's too late for one more good person.

Thank you for your time,
Sincerely,

Lawrence D. Horman,

Just one of your MANY homeless constituents,

P.S. I dare the mayors of the cities, within Salt Lake County, to take on the same challenge that county mayor Ben McAdams put himself to, and spend a week living the same way the homeless in your own community live, and get a just a vague understanding of what they go through everyday just to get along.

ADDRESSING THE MYTHS OF HOMELESSNES

1. The cities and other government, and private entities, are making us homeless as much as any mental health or job loss issues,

2. We don't want to be homeless and have worked hard not to be,

3. The homeless are left with no choice but to associate with criminals; because A. we are treated like criminals automatically just for being where we are, & B. no one else will listen to us when we need something, (that's not to say there aren't the well intended, who listen and try to help, but we need both those in official, and unofficial, positions to not only listen, but be more open minded in doing so.)

4. Most of society doesn't see us as human beings, but as stray feral animals, that need to be avoided for fear of being attacked. If that were true, there would be many more dead and injured people in the world today,

5. Despite popular opinion, most homeless people are NOT criminals, drunks, and drug addicts, and many of those who are such, are trying to go on the straight and narrow, but keep on getting turned away from programs that would help us do so, (however many are addicts by choice),

6. Far more of us work for a living to get by than most of society thinks, and aside from announcing ourselves as homeless you couldn't pick us out of a crowd as such,

7. We live in boxes, tents, trees, abandoned buildings, shipping containers, commercial trailers, campers & R.V.'s as well as most other alternative forms of shelter because we have no other place to be, because, and I QUOTE "We don't want them in our back yard."

8. That's ok with us because BELIEVE ME, we don't want to be in your back yard any more than you want us to be, that's why we live where we do as, stated above,

9. Most of us don't live in or go to homeless shelters unless we have to because we don't like being around the drugs, crime, and fighting you hear about any more than you do,

10. We are the ultimate recyclers and don't appreciate the looks of scorn and disgust throw our way for scavenging, and dumpster diving, to find what others have thrown away unused, or repairable, that we can't afford to buy, but need, (or want) as much as anyone else,

11. We are NOT criminals just because we are homeless, and treating us as such when we aren't, tends to force us into a position of feeling like we need to become one, as we are left no other choice to get along on a daily basis.

12. Despite popular opinion, you CAN, and SHOULD, ask US what we need, to change our situation, and become MORE productive, FUNCTIONAL, members of society, because despite the well known mental health issues that some of us have, even the most mentally unbalanced of us knows what we need to fix our problems, and most of us would do what needs to be done, if we felt we could trust others, who are in a position to help us, not to pull the rug out from under us, just as we're getting on our feet, (Stop making it necessary to kill ourselves or commit crimes to get your attention.)

13. I call on all city, county, and state, officials to stop "JUST doing their jobs." and start looking for ways they can fill the spirit of the laws intended to keep ALL OF THEIR CITIZENS safe, and find ways to use or change, their current laws, or put in to force, new laws to allow them to use the honest, willing, homeless CONSTITUANT citizens to reduce crime and make their local communities safer for everyone, NOT JUST HOMEOWNERS AND RENTERS. STOP apologizing for what you can't do and start doing what you can, using all your influence to push others to do what they can. The more trustworthy cooperation from those in authority we get, the more we'll get done, and the faster it will go for everyone.

14. Stop making it too expensive for us to go through the legal process needed, to make suggestions for changes to laws, or city ordinances, or to get permits to make the good things we do and the good ideas we have work, to fix the problems we are BOTH, trying to cure.

15. Despite the popular cliché saying..... beggars have to be choosers, for the simple reason that we are rarely able to afford to buy even the most BASIC necessities of life, and therefore, are forced to accept whatever the rest of society leaves behind, or deigns to give us when they see a need. Like everyone else in society we, sometimes more than most, need to get the most out of what we have, and we understand much more than others, how much it costs to have to replace something, that was insufficient to do the job right the first time, and be forced to start over again, and have to take time catching up, just to have our simplest NEEDS met, never mind simple conveniences, that others take for granted..... Simple things like food storage and refrigeration become desperately needed convenience privileges, that we desperately want but often aren't able to have.

(Author , Lawrence D. Horman)

To: the Mayors of the cities,
of Salt Lake County,
in the state of Utah,

Hello again,

My name is Lawrence Horman, and this is my second open letter to the mayors of the incorporated cities of Salt Lake county. When I wrote you before I let you know about what I have seen as the cause of many people becoming not only homeless, but feeling extremely hopeless in their attempts to get back on their feet after becoming homeless, and I suspect many, if not all of those that saw, and read, my previous letter thought to themselves, "We're tired of hearing complaints without someone offering some sort of potential solution".

To that end, I offer the following as at least a part of the potential solution. This if done correctly, should help accomplish a few specific things that will help not only the homeless involved, but the cities that participate as well.

If you look you will find attached, a copy of an ordinance proposal that will allow the police and code enforcement, to make use of a resource that up till now, they have been forced to drive out of their area, and it will have the potential to gather most if not all of the homeless people who are willing to change their situation in to specific areas of the cities, where they will be a known quantity who are likely to do a lot of their own policing and drive out most of the criminal element among themselves, in order to preserve their opportunity to make their lives better.

The most succinct statement of how this would work is to state the following, Both public and private storage lot owners would be allowed to have 1 or 2 people for every three acres or so, to bring in their own portable shelter of what ever type they chose and use it as a guard shack/residence in a carry in carry out camp ground fashion thus providing some security for the property owner, and allowing the resident the security to report any known criminal activity without fear of being fined, cited, or jailed for doing so.

The property owner could charge rent, for the use of the space for as a residence, offer a paycheck, for security work, or both, and the police would have an extra set of eyes in that area to help in a neighborhood watch fashion.

Private and public property owners who have empty lots, could offer empty relatively unimproved, lots in commercial areas, for what would essentially be a rent controlled carry in carry out, long term residence, camp ground, where people could bring what ever they can afford to live in such as tents, R.V.s, commercial trailers, tiny homes, work and tool sheds, shipping containers, (I don't mean cardboard boxes when I say shipping containers), etc. and live in them until they can improve their situation or at least be somewhere they can have confidence that they can maintain what they have, relatively independently without a fear of their rent sky rocketing to a level they can't afford.

If the cities wanted to, they could require minor improvements to the lot that wouldn't cost much for the land owner but would alleviate city concerns about sanitation and safety. Such minor improvements might include such things as a shower house similar to what truck stops have, as well as an on site laundry, garbage dumpster, and water spicket as a potable water source.

Each resident would pay a minimal rent to help maintain the cost of such a property, and would be required, to some degree, to help onsite management with property maintenance.

Please take a look at the attached proposal and give it serious consideration. The unfortunate fact is that, like so many other "homeless" people do not have the \$500.00 more or less, that the cities charge to put this idea before any of the city councils or zoning boards, so I am hoping that the mayors and city councils of the Salt Lake valley will have the open minded wisdom to give serious consideration to an idea that may help a lot of people including themselves.

Thank you, your time and patience in hearing me out, it is greatly, and sincerely appreciated.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Lawrence Horman

T0: Karen Crompton
Director Human Services
Salt Lake County
State of Utah
cc;
Karen Hale
Deputy Mayor
Salt County

Dear Ms. Crompton,

This letter is being written to propose a possible solution, to several problems currently being faced by all municipalities in the Salt Lake County area and many other cities in the state and around the country. Please don't misunderstand me, I am aware that we can only deal directly with our own community and it's issues, however I believe that if we find a reasonable solution here, we may be able to pass it on through our own local example as well as proactive communication with other communities locally and nationally.

My name is Lawrence Horman and depending on your perspective I am homeless. In speaking with various members of the Salt Lake County administration I have been asked what they might do to help with my particular situation without interfering with the local municipalities.

Karen Hale is fairly aware of my current situation and you are welcome to speak with her about it, in the mean time, I will attempt to be brief with a short explanation.

I own three commercial trailers, a big rig truck, a mini van, and a 15 foot camper, all of which I pay rent on a commercial lot, for a space to store them. I bought the first trailer I own, for the purpose of having a place to live that I could afford even in my worst case scenario, such as being forced by circumstances to stay on disability as my sole source of income for the rest of my life, (something which I am desperately attempting to avoid doing).

My idea is to propose an ordinance that would allow people who own properties like the one I have my trailers parked on and R.V. and other storage lots to have one person or more, (depending on the size of the lot) living on the lot full time as security and and or lot maintenance in an R.V., small camper, commercial trailer or some other reasonable permanent or temporary lodging/office/ security shack.

This would be a "carry in carry out campground" ordinance that would allow the property owner to have useful inexpensive security on site, give the local law enforcement someone they could count on to help see possible criminal activity that wouldn't be afraid to report to the police, and give one more homeless person a place to live and be useful while trying to get on their feet as well.

If the ordinance were structured correctly it could also allow for simple low cost "carry in, carry out" campgrounds run either publicly, privately, or cooperatively by both the public and private sectors to help out other homeless people who are genuinely interested in making their situation better with as little assistance as possible.

Such a property would be inspected at least annually if not monthly, by a health inspector just like a restaurant or other potential health hazard, and would stay open or closed according to their ability

to follow local health ordinances and requirements for potential bio-hazards and safety issues. Each resident would have to show the property owner/manager that they have appropriate portable waste disposal equipment and an appropriate place to dispose of that, and regular house hold garbage as well as the ability to transport, prepare and store sufficient water and food for thier daily needs.

Such a property would be something they could identify as their "permanant address" for the duration of the time they stay there and they would be able to use that address to send and recieve mail at through either individual mail boxes or a small general delivey location on the property for that purpose.

There wouldn't be much beyond what already exists to writing such an ordinace because most of the requirements are already in existing laws and ordinances and would at most simply have to be gathered in to one uniting ordinance wich refered to the other existing ones for detailed information as to how to handle things not otherwise speciafied in the new law.

I know there are propeties, property owners, and homeless or nearly homeless people in cities around the county that could use such an ordinance and it would give property owners more leeway to help remove criminal elements from their properties by letting the police know when something more than someone just living quietly on their propert y is going on.

I would ask at this time for you to consider the possability of such an ordinance as a resonable solution to many current and possible problems.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Lawrence Horman

Low income carry in carry out campground concept

The following lays out the basic ideas and concepts for a long term, low cost, carry in carry out campground for the homeless and low income.

The first four basic concepts that have to be included in each one are as follows.

1. It has, in most cases to be in an industrial or commercial area so that there are no local residents to complain about imagined increases in actual or potential criminal activity, or decrease in their personal private property values.
2. It's management must be willing to welcome all who are either homeless or nearly homeless regardless of what they bring in to live in (ie. cars, rv's, campers, motor homes, tuff sheds, tents, tiny homes, commercial trailers, shipping containers, etc.) so long as they are not bringing criminal activity with them. (this is NOT about whether or not they have a past criminal record, but about if they are currently participating in criminal activity). including and especially on an emergency situation basis.
3. It must be done at an affordable cost to the people wanting to live there on the property, rent controls must be put in place to guarantee that those living on the property can afford to live there. no-one living there should be required to pay more than a $1/4 - 1/3$ of their total income to live there ever. This can NOT be operated like a \$400.00 a week hotel that makes it so that the resident can't afford to save up money in order to get in to a better living situation, and in some cases will require that the renter will pay less than $1/4$ of their income if they have an income at all.
4. It must be possible for residents on the property to live there long term, this is NOT a homeless camp OR shelter or a KOA short term campground people are going to need to live there and use it as their address for more than 30 days, and sometimes more than a year or two in order to get on their feet financially, and they will need to do so without fear of being kicked out every week or thirty days like they currently have to deal with now in most public and private shelters and emergency housing programs.

These camp grounds would be set up with one of three levels of amenities to accomodate the needs of the residents living on the property:

1. A relatively unimproved empty fenced lot, set up with spaces available for full size, 53" commercial trailers that can be divided into as many as 4 spaces each, for people who might be bringing in something as small as a two man camping tent all the way up to a a mobile home or full size 53 " commercial trailer to live in,

Each such property will be clean and garbage and junk free, and properly leveled with at least a layer of $1/2$ to $3/4$ inch size gravel layed down, before moving any residents on the property, and with the help of the residents will be kept that way, (clean and well maintained) if they want to be allowed to continue living there. Each property will have at a bare minimum, either an outgoing sewer line atatched to an R.V. dump site that has an adapter to allow for dumping from a personal por-a-pot or it will a honey bucket style port-a-john that is emptied on a weekly basis fo the use of the residents to safely dispose of biohazard waste. they will also have at least 1 incoming potable water source as well, and all residents would be allowed to bring in their own source of heat and elctricity as long as it can be operated and stored safely by the person using it.

Depending on the government or private organization operating the property, the necessary amenities could be upgraded beyond this basic minimum to one of the following levels;

2. The next level up, property would have several port-a-johns along with the R.V. dump and a source of electricity that the residents could tap into for bare minimum use to charge phones and computers and some lighting. Such a property would have a minimum of 6 -10 outdoor outlets with four sockets each, placed around the perimeter of the property for use by the residents, and several incoming potable water spickets for use by the residents.

3. The highest level of accommodations would actually have onsite shower rooms similar to the ones at truck stops with toilets, showers, sinks and outlets in each shower room. They would have an R.V. dump hookup for each 53' space, and a 240v electrical hookup as well just like a most modern R.V. park.

Each resident would pay a small fee for electricity in each of the last two upgraded lots if they wanted to use those services but would not be required to use them if they chose not to do so.

Each of these three different types of lots could, if they chose to, upgrade their ground cover to a full cover concrete slab either for each space, or for the entire property.

Such properties could be designated for specific groups of people where it might seem appropriate or necessary, (i.e. veterans, abused women, families with children, etc.) and all such properties would have transportation, to or be placed within, walking distance of local public transportation in order to accommodate the residents' need, and ability to get to work, Dr.'s appointments and grocery and other needed shopping resources in the local community.