

BEST PRACTICE FOR A TINY HOUSE VILLAGE MINISTRY TO THE UNHOUSED

INTRODUCTION:

Support for establishment of a tiny house village for the un-housed, preferably as an ecumenical group of churches in your area or as a single church. It should be sanctioned by the city/jurisdiction in which it is located. The period of time to establish a tiny house village should be based on the area in which it is located and depending upon the urgency of the jurisdiction and availability of funding could take months to years to establish. The life expectancy of the tiny house village will depend upon funding and the willingness of the community/jurisdiction to continue its operation.

PURPOSE:

As part of the body of Christ, we are called to love and serve our neighbors and to respect the dignity of every human being. We will use our resources to join with other religious groups to form an ecumenical group to support the tiny house village and we will advocate for the village with governmental and non-governmental agencies.

INITIAL STEPS:

- Determine interest and support in your congregation
- Determine interest by neighboring churches and religious groups to establish and/or support a tiny house village
- If there is adequate interest, form an ecumenical group to coordinate donations, volunteers, others
- Determine funding sources for hiring a non-profit tiny house village management company
- Identify at least 2-3 leaders early on who will champion and lead the effort
- Questions to answer:
 - How will the village be funded and for how long (identify sources of funds and conditions attached to those funds such as period of availability or other conditions that could affect the funding)?
 - Who will the management company's contract be with? The city? Your church? The ecumenical group?
 - How will others interact? The business community? Other non-profits? Local colleges/universities and schools? Others?
 - Can a "Community Advisory Council" be formed to further communications with and advocate for the village? (made up of representatives from the churches involved/ecumenical group, local businesses, neighborhood community councils, local colleges with MSW degrees, the city and others)

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

Facilities:

- Parcel owned by the church or a governmental or non-governmental agency with good access to bus routes, food sources and jobs (size of area will determine number of tiny houses and number of people provided for)
- Donations or supplies of lumber to construct tiny houses and a common kitchen facility

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- Labor to construct tiny houses and kitchen facility
- Access to sewer and water facilities at the site
- Fencing around the tiny house village

People:

- People with carpentry skills to lead voluntary carpenters to construct the tiny houses and kitchen facility
- People from nearby churches or religious facilities, whether part of an ecumenical group or not, to volunteer for construction
- Non-profit agency with skills in managing tiny house villages to manage the village
- People to donate hot meals and other food on a monthly basis
- People to donate clothing and other critical needs on a regular basis

Budget:

- Funds to purchase construction lumber and paint for the tiny houses
- Funds for sewer and water connections
- Funds to purchase equipment for the kitchen facility (refrigerator, microwave, tables and chairs, others)
- Funds for sanitation and hygiene (bathrooms/porta-potties, showers, washer/dryer etc.)
- Funds for fencing around the village
- Funds to hire a non-profit management agency

Community:

- Check with jurisdiction regarding zoning and development regulations on what is allowed on-site
- Execute a Memorandum of Agreement with jurisdiction for tiny village
- Notify Police and Fire
- Obtain preliminary support from the community or neighborhood association; be upfront and honest
- Hold community meeting(s) with neighbors
- Solicit/enlist community volunteers to help with construction of tiny houses
- Solicit/enlist volunteers to make food and critical needs donations to village

OPERATIONS:

Facilities:

- On-site registration/security cabin at gate to monitor who comes in/goes out
- Porta-potties, if unable to hook-up to sewer initially for bathrooms and hygiene facilities
- Drainage areas for sinks, if unable to hook up to sewer initially
- Cabin for on-site manager

People:

- Parishioners to lead this ministry
- Parishioners from other nearby churches or religious groups, if an ecumenical group is formed
- On-site manager, from a non-profit agency with skills in managing a tiny house village

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Community:

- Establish a 24/7 telephone number to the church for community members to call if questions
- Periodic newsletter or other communication to those who sign up
- Activities with villagers (community BBQ; beautification/trash pick-up days; village tours; others) throughout the year
- A Community Advisory Council support group is a best practice to support the non-profit manager and the village residents

Other:

- Day to day management should be through the contracted non-profit manager for the Tiny House Village
- The tiny house village must have designated services to support and guide residents through the process of obtaining permanent jobs and housing
- Support for villagers leaving and integrating into their future neighborhoods

SECURITY/SAFETY:

- How villagers (people who live at the village) are vetted and identified as valid tenants
 - Background checks
 - Code of conduct (signed by applicant and manager)
 - Vehicle identification, if any
- How guests to the village are vetted and identified
- One to two people on security patrol 24 hours/day (sit in cabin at gate)
- Village is registered with local police and fire
- 3-4 people trained in de-escalation for when stressful situations arise
- Emergency aid supplies located in village
- In the event of a life-threatening problem, dial 911 to report it; non-profit manager to notify other times