

ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN KANSAS CITY

Michael J. Stellern, Rockhurst University
Kelly A. Phipps, Rockhurst University

SYNOPSIS

Charles German was recently elected as Chair of the Homelessness Task Force for Kansas City. Kansas City currently had no strategy for dealing with the homeless. The task force studied the approach taken by Jamie Van Leeuwen, Ph. D. who led the city of Denver to address the challenge of the homeless with its Denver's Road Home. The study analyzed the costs of allowing homeless people to remain on the streets, as compared to pursuing a strategy that would provide them some assistance. A survey of the homeless was administered for the Kansas City area, and now German had to put together a plan for dealing with homelessness in Kansas City.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this case are to:

1. Think critically about society's obligation to the homeless.
2. Understand the diverse causes and circumstances of homelessness.
3. Critique the key elements of a successful program to reduce homelessness.
4. Analyze how social capital and issue framing could assist those working to address homelessness.

APPLICATION

This case is intended for use in introductory economics classes and public policy, as well as leadership and introductory management classes, and of course, non-profit leadership classes. It is applicable as well for criminal justice and government courses. The student should understand the causes and challenges of homelessness in Kansas City and offer suggestions on how Charles German should treat the problem in Kansas City.

KEY WORDS homeless, Denver Road Home, non-profit leadership, public policy, economics

CONTACT Michael Stellern, Helzberg School of Management, Rockhurst University, 1100 Rockhurst Road, Kansas City, Missouri 64110. (816) 501-4153. Michael.Stellern@Rockhurst.edu.