



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEMPHIS, TN—Today, the City of Memphis announced one year of funding toward a new Hospitality HUB job access and blight reduction program, entitled “Work Local.”

Work Local will transport job-seeking panhandlers to cleanup sites twice a week, where they will work to reduce urban blight throughout the city of Memphis. Workers are provided with food, a day’s wages, and additional services and counseling as needed.

Work Local focuses on three goals: providing a safer way to earn more than panhandling, connecting people who panhandle with available services and resources to move them toward brighter futures, and contributing to the beautification of Memphis by cleaning up blighted areas of our city.

“Our mission at the HUB is to connect individuals with the resources they need to begin their journey out of homelessness,” said Hospitality HUB Associate Director Kelcey Johnson. “Work Local is yet another service along with The Breakfast Club, counseling, computer access, and other services we offer to fulfill our mission.”

Projected impact of Work Local’s inaugural year estimates 1,040 daily jobs provided, 104 blight abatement projects completed, and 80 clients moved into permanent jobs.

“My hope is that through the Work Local program, we will be able to introduce ourselves and offer our services to those who may be in need of resources we can connect them with such as establishing proper identification cards, access to computers, and referral to other resources,” said Johnson.

The pilot program, managed by the Hospitality HUB, is working closely with partners including the Downtown Memphis Commission, Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau, First Presbyterian Church, and Calvary Episcopal Church. The City of Memphis will fund year one of the Work Local program’s operations.

“We appreciate the City of Memphis’ commitment,” said Johnson. “Our job is to create a productive program; part of that is to find sustainable funding into the future. We’ve already partnered with great organizations including Charlie Vergos’ Rendezvous, who will feed lunch to all Work Local workers, and we welcome more partners who can fulfill our mission.”

Those who wish to support Work Local can financially contribute to ioby.org/project/worklocal.

“Panhandling and homelessness take all forms; **and while this program most certainly will not be the answer for everyone, it potentially is the answer for someone,**” said Johnson. “Our job is to provide opportunity, hope and direction for those who lack it.”

ABOUT WORK LOCAL. Work Local, an initiative of the Hospitality HUB, is an innovative local program to improve the Memphis community through job access and blight reduction. Work Local strives to engage local businesses and agencies who have a vested interest in their communities and are motivated to assist with creating a more livable city. Funded by the City of Memphis for its inaugural year, Work Local is actively seeking long-term sustainability through an ioby campaign. For more information, visit ioby.org/project/worklocal.



ABOUT THE HOSPITALITY HUB. The Hospitality HUB is a hospitality, counseling, and resource center for homeless persons and those imminently homeless located in downtown Memphis. The HUB was founded by the Downtown Churches Association (DCA) out of a desire to establish a centralized hub of information and services for homeless persons in Memphis and Shelby County. The HUB is unique in that it serves as a point of entry into the larger network of services offered to the homeless throughout the city. For more information, visit hospitalityhub.org.

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