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## Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention Hopes To Raise Sales Tax To End Homelessness



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An Indianapolis coalition helped slash the number of homeless people in half since 2002, but is determined to wipe the problem out altogether with its innovative retail initiatives.

The [Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention](#) -- or CHIP -- released a new draft of its "[Blueprint to End Homelessness](#)" in Indianapolis. The 10-year-plan calls for a number of sweeping changes, including an increase on sale taxes. The organization proposes a new taxation in the range of one-eighth of a cent to one-quarter.

The move could generate between \$9.6 and \$19.3 million a year, and would only change the current sales tax slightly. [Fox 59 reported](#) that customers making a purchase of \$100 would pay between \$7.13 and \$7.25, versus the current \$7 in taxes.

CHIP representatives estimate 4,500 to 7,700 people are homeless in Indianapolis, with about 1,500 sleeping on the streets each night. They have called the proposal a "Common Cents" initiative because of its possibility for homelessness alleviation [according to \*The Indianapolis Business Journal\*](#).

The tax increase would provide a permanent -- and immediate -- stream of money to combat the problem without having to wait to see the fruits of the fundraising efforts.

"For mere pennies per household, our community can provide housing and services for thousands of our neighbors," [the authors of the Blueprint noted](#). "Neighborhoods will be safer when empty houses become occupied and are put back on the tax rolls. Lives will be saved."

Michael Hurst, program director for CHIP, [told Fox 59](#) that an advisory board will oversee the money and nonprofits whose missions align with CHIP's efforts could apply for grants.

Still, the decision is up to those who might get taxed. CHIP is hosting open forums and accepting feedback on whether or not taxation is the best route in solving homelessness in Indianapolis.

"That's out there for a conversation," [Hurst told the \*Indianapolis Business Journal\*](#). "We'll see what the conversation brings."

Should the public feedback and conversation go well, CHIP leaders plans to lobby state lawmakers in 2013 for a referendum in the 2014 general election, [according to WIBC.com](#).