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FCC LICENSING LOW POWER FM RADIO COMMENT
MM Docket 95-25

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I am writing on behalf of Visions in Action. We are a group for the homeless with the goal of community organizing and fellowship. Visions in Action conducted a survey of homeless people. In this survey homeless people identified being invisible as the greatest single obstacle they face. With increased visibility as the goal; Visions in Action applied for and got a Multnomah County community organizing grant to buy micro power radio transmission equipment. We aim to run a non-profit FM radio station (104.1 FM). Visions In Action is committed to ending the suffering caused by hunger and poverty through economic analysis and action. We are an organization dedicated to building systems that develop leadership and involve people who are directly affected by poverty and hunger.

Having a voice on the airwaves would be a valuable vehicle of communication for the homeless community. The spectrum is being used for profit by radios, cell phones, and internet exchanges all around us and not one frequency is made available for the people's voices. We want to use our radio station to have homeless people tell their stories. We also will have shelter announcements and personal development information. With much of the homeless community illiterate, having a mode of mass communication is vital. Even with this handicap, homeless newspapers are attempting to fill this void. The communication of a person with his peers is a right included in the First Amendment.

Our preference is for only non -profit community radio stations to be licensed for low power FM and set aside a frequency range for the exclusive use of these stations. Low power we would consider 10-100 watts. There are technical aspects of low power FM radio that make this media suitable for very local communication. These include the low cost of radio receivers (e.g. transistor radios) and the reasonable cost of transmission equipment. A radio station with enough power to liscensed under the current regulations would be prohibitively expensive to all but the very wealthy. Low power FM radio is the only effective low cost means of communication for the homeless community. To deny this mode of communication is to block their first amendment rights. The most important point is that having absolutely local ownership is the only way to get local programming. Local ownership is vital to giving the airwaves back to their rightful owners, the people. With the corporate giveaway of the airwaves it would be a small solace if channel 6 could be removed from the TV spectrum with the transition to HDTV and this frequency space opened up for community radio.

Insisting on only absolutely local ownership is the only way to protect the donation base of community radio stations currently on the air. In our community the same religious programming is being repeated on two carriers in Portland. The communities of non-English speaker should be allowed to use the airwaves for communication within their communities. I know of Spanish speakers in transitional housing spending money that needed to be saved for a apartment deposit on cable TV just to have news in their own language available. In the heterogeneous community that is America -our radio all sounds the same!

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