

ALL ABOUT ACCEPTING VOUCHERS



Are you looking for an easy way to help out the Chicago community but do not have the money in your budget? You can help make a difference in the lives of many of Chicago's hungriest by signing up your business to accept Chicago Shares vouchers!

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. People purchase the vouchers from various vendors who sell them in packets of 5. One voucher=\$1.
2. Those vouchers are shared with those in need.
3. The vouchers are then used at your business as a replacement for cash. Only food and personal care items are available through the use of the vouchers. (Vouchers not valid for tobacco products or alcohol).
4. We reimburse you with a monthly check for the vouchers you have redeemed that same month.

WHAT WOULD I NEED TO DO?

You need to fill out the form on the back of this sheet and sign an agreement to the conditions of Chicago Shares which we will provide.

WHY SHOULD I ACCEPT CHICAGO SHARES VOUCHERS?

- 1) **FREE PUBLICITY** Your logo will appear on the Chicago Shares website, some print materials and in Twitter posts all at no cost.
- 2) **NO COST TO YOU** Chicago Shares reimburses you in cash at the end of each month ensuring you will not lose a dime of business.
- 3) **IT IS EASY** The process is simple and we take care of all the footwork and publicity. Your only job is to redeem the vouchers at checkout.
- 4) **HELPING THE COMMUNITY** Your simple gesture of accepting these vouchers will help hungry Chicagoans find a place to eat. No one deserves to go hungry.

WHERE DO I SIGN UP?

To sign up to be a Chicago Shares merchant, you can sign the merchant agreement postcard and send it along with a business card to:

730 N. WABASH AVE. CHICAGO, IL 60611

CALL 312-573-4494 OR E-MAIL US VIA WWW.CHICAGOSHARES.ORG FOR MORE INFO

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPATING MERCHANTS

What is Chicago Shares?

Chicago Shares is a voucher program that provides an opportunity for the community to aid homeless people in a constructive way. Often people don't want to give cash when approached on the street, but do wish to provide meals for the hungry. The vouchers, in \$1.00 increments, are redeemable for food and personal care items by area merchants. They may be purchased at various selling points.

Chicago Shares sells books of five \$1 vouchers at participating churches, stores, by mail and on our web site. A "share" represents a \$1 coupon that can be redeemed at over a dozen participating restaurants and stores. Shares cannot be redeemed for alcohol or tobacco. Chicago Shares is based off of a voucher concept that originated in Berkeley, California, and has been in existence since 1993. The program is staffed totally by volunteers and has no overhead. Shares are reimbursed monthly at 100 percent their face value and purchased without surcharge.

What is required to be a participating merchant?

As an accepting merchant, you will accept Chicago Shares, at face value, in place of cash for goods and services. You will provide change that is due back to the customer if the value of the purchase is less than the value of the shares presented. You will not allow shares to be redeemed for alcohol or tobacco products.

You will also be provided with a Chicago Shares sign to be hung in the window of your establishment. This sign lets individuals know that Shares are redeemable at your establishment.

Am I reimbursed for the shares that I accept as a participating merchant?

Yes. Shares that you accept are reimbursed to you at 100% of face value. A Chicago Shares volunteer will be assigned to your business and a pick-up schedule will be established (usually monthly). The volunteer will come to your establishment, count the shares you've accepted, complete a redemption form, and leave a copy with you. The volunteer will then submit the shares to the executive director, who then in turn will issue a check, in the full amount, to the participating merchant. The process from share pick-up to check drop-off usually takes a few days.

Do I need to offer a discount to persons using Chicago Shares?

No. Chicago Shares does not require participating merchants to donate goods or lower prices. The only requirement is that the merchant accepts a share in place of cash. Accumulated shares will be reimbursed at full value on regular basis. Merchants can, if they wish, offer any discount they want to Chicago Shares redeemers.

How long am I required to accept shares?

There is no preset time period for accepting shares. The majority of the current participating merchants have been a part of the program for many years. However, the participating merchant has the right to stop its relationship with Chicago Shares at any time. In addition, Chicago Shares reserves the right to cancel the agreement at any time as well.

Why should I accept Chicago Shares?

Chicago Shares provides an answer to homelessness, and an easy way for area businesses to help with that answer. Although Chicago Shares is not the total solution to ending hunger, it is a way that everyday citizens and businesses can contribute to a solution.

How can I learn more about Chicago Shares?

Our website is a great source of information: www.chicagoshares.org