

Universal Basic Income vs. Cura Annonae

Description



by **Lee Camp**

Basic income has been tried successfully countless times. So why the hell isn't the US government implementing it?

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Here's how the world should operate in simple terms: A certain country or region or city or township or Hobbit hole tries something in order to help their society or group or hovel – if it works, other places then do it. If it doesn't work, other places don't do it. It's like when you were a kid and you saw your brother slide down the banister and rack himself on the newel post – You then thought, “*Maybe that activity is not for me.*” But if he didn't nail himself in the jewels, you probably thought, “*I think I'll try that.*”

That's how the United States government should work, but it doesn't. For-profit healthcare, corporate personhood, the drug war, funding terrorists overseas that we call “moderate rebels,” etc. – all of these things have been tried, they fu***n' suck every time, and we keep doing them. The U.S. continually racks itself on the newel post all day long and then responds, “*I think I'll try that again.*”

But the reverse should be true also – if a city or country anywhere in the world tries something and it works great, we should do it.

This brings me to Universal Basic Income: everybody receiving money from a government simply for being a citizen, no questions asked. It's high time we try it in the US and see whether it works. Oh wait, I just remembered – it's been tried countless times and [worked every damn time](#). How do I know that? ... [Reading](#).

As Rutger Bregman details in his book “[Utopia For Realists](#),” UBI has been tried many times—in Canada, Alaska, Africa, the US, Europe, and more. Even backwards lawless lands like North Carolina have experimented with it.

There was a [study](#) in Britain where 13 men who had lived on the streets for years were given

Cura Annonae (“care of Annona”) was the term used in [ancient Rome](#), in honour of their goddess [Annona](#), to describe the import and distribution of grain to the residents of the cities of [Rome](#) and, after its foundation, [Constantinople](#). Rome imported most of the grain consumed by its population, estimated to number one million people by the second century AD. An important part of this was the **grain dole** or **corn dole**,^[a] a government program which gave out free or subsidized grain, and later bread, to the poorest residents of the city of Rome. The dole was given to about 200,000 people, and is an early and long-lasting example of a [social safety net](#).

A regular and predictable supply of grain and the grain dole were part of the Roman leadership's strategy of maintaining tranquility among a restive urban

