



HOMELESS
Share A Buck?
Anything will help!!

Thanks
and
GOD
BLESS



Creating Strategic Solutions for Panhandling
August 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Definition	1
Legality	1
Understanding Panhandling	1
Panhandling Patterns	1
Addressing Panhandling	1
Defining Our Challenges	2
Developing Strategies For Response	3
Measuring Our Challenges: An Example	4
Panhandling Challenges	5
Panhandling Information For Residents & Visitors	6
Community Anti-Panhandling Campaign Steps	7
Anti-Panhandling Programs in Other Cities	9
Fort Lauderdale, Florida	10
Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada	11
Bullhead City, Arizona	12
Palm Beach, Florida	13
City of Temecula, California	14
Salt Lake City, Utah	15
New Haven, Connecticut	16
Charlottetown, Toronto, Canada	17
Clarksville, Tennessee	18
Dublin, Ohio	19
Spokane, Washington	20
Kennewicke, Washington	21
Nashville, Tennessee	22
Dayton, Ohio	23
San Rafael, California	24
Pueblo, Colorado	25
Fort Worth, Texas	26

Panhandling in Savannah

Goal

To create a community-based initiative aimed at reducing crime, improving public safety, building awareness, and developing all Savannah's neighborhoods into safer places to live, work, and shop.

Definition

panhandle - verb

panhandled; panhandling \ 'pan-'han(d)-lin , -han-del-in \

intransitive verb

: to approach, accost or stop people on the street or in a public place and ask for food, money, or a thing of value : beg

transitive verb

1 : to accost on the street and beg from

2 : to get by panhandling

Legality

Panhandling, both vocal and written, is considered a form of free speech.

Understanding Panhandling

Panhandling is synonymous with begging and typically involves individuals, soliciting for cash. However, panhandlers may also solicit donations in exchange for nominal labor, such as cleaning windshields, helping to carry groceries, etc. While panhandlers are typically passive, some may become aggressive by soliciting in a coercive or threatening manner. Panhandling is often viewed as an indication of social deterioration that can lead to more serious crime.

LOCATION. Panhandlers strategically position themselves in areas where soliciting will yield a high return, areas with high pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Common locations include: freeway entrances or exits, busy roadway intersections, bus stops, grocery or convenience stores and crowded sidewalks. Areas that provide seating and easy access to restrooms and water also attract panhandlers.

TIME. Panhandlers migrate to areas like Savannah, where the climate is warmer during the winter months.

Panhandling Patterns

PANHANDLERS. Panhandlers are generally unmarried, unemployed men with limited family ties. Frequently associated with homeless populations, panhandlers may not be homeless. Likewise, panhandlers are not necessarily mentally ill. While many panhandlers have criminal records, they are also likely to have been victimized themselves. People who engage in panhandling commonly use the money for alcohol, drugs, and food.

PANHANDLING TARGETS.

Panhandlers frequently target individuals perceived to be sympathetic or generous, such as couples, tourists, students, women and shoppers.

Addressing Panhandling

Panhandling is legal in Savannah. However, even where it is not legal, police typically tolerate or give a low priority to passive panhandling activity. Police are more likely to intervene in cases of aggressive panhandling or when excessive panhandling causes apprehension among the public. Arrests are rare and enforcing laws against panhandling plays a relatively small role in controlling the problem. Public education to discourage donations, and providing adequate access and availability to social services are the most effective tactic in a comprehensive community response to panhandling.

QUICK TIPS

Below are a few suggestions that may assist in the creation of a plan to reduce panhandling in Savannah.

- Determine the actual scope of the panhandling problem in Savannah.
- Identify local business practices that may encourage panhandling.
- Develop a practical strategy to reduce panhandling and implement it for a predetermined period of time.
- Reassess the scope of panhandling to determine if the strategy has made an impact.
- If warranted, modify strategy or develop a new one.



Defining Our Challenges

Before implementing a panhandling strategy it is important to define the nature of the panhandling problem in our area. Many methods may be used but community-wide involvement, including area businesses, local agencies/organizations, and public services, may best help identify any underlying community resource needs related to panhandling. Consider asking the questions listed below. The answers you receive may help in understanding the panhandling issues, and how best to design a strategy.

Questions to Ask:

Example Response:

Are customers reluctant to patronize your business because of panhandlers?

Sometimes. On occasion customers have complained to management about the panhandlers.

Are other area businesses having problems similar to yours?

Yes, businesses located along the same block have the same issues.

What are panhandlers doing to solicit donations?

Most panhandlers will ask a passerby for change.

Is panhandling particularly pronounced during certain times of the day, day of week, month, or season?

There are more panhandlers on the weekends, when it is the busiest, and when the weather is nice.

Are there specific locations that pose continuous problems?

They mostly loiter on the sidewalk in front of the buildings near restaurants and shops.

Are the panhandlers transients or “regulars”?

Typically we see the same people over and over.

What reasons do they give for panhandling? Are they ill or unemployed, or are they “professionals”?

We asked the regular panhandlers and they say they can make more money panhandling than working a minimum wage job.

How do the police respond to reports of panhandling?

I’ve called the police but they can’t do anything unless the panhandlers are acting aggressive.

What social services or agencies do you recommend to panhandlers in need of support?

I requested a list of social service providers from the City and have learned about food/shelter providers and well as other services.

Developing Strategies For Response

Once panhandling data has been compiled and reviewed develop a response strategy to prevent it. Listed below are strategies that may be used for common panhandling scenarios. Situations vary and a tailored response may be required.

Measuring the panhandling problem before and after strategy implementation is critical. Proof of an effective strategy may be used to enlist other businesses and organizations to join in the effort.

Measurements may also indicate that a strategy is not giving the expected results and that an adjustment or

change in strategy is needed. It is best to wait at least a few months after initiating a response to measure its effectiveness and whether it has been impactful. The table below gives ways to measure Savannah's panhandling problem, results that indicate if the panhandling problem has improved, and possible data sources.

It is important to keep in mind that there may be a temporary increase in reporting of panhandling due to media exposure. This may indicate residents are paying closer attention to panhandling. The number of reported incidents should decline over time as the number of panhandlers decrease.

Measurement	Data Source	Strategic Response	Outcome
"Regular" panhandlers			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of known panhandlers Number of complaints Number of calls for service Level of concern about panhandling Number of customers avoiding businesses Volume of litter and number of public urination incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local police Business records Survey of customers Personal observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourage everyone from giving to panhandlers by handing out educational brochures or posting educational signs Require panhandlers to obtain solicitation permits through a city ordinance Prohibit panhandling in specific locations (such as within 50 feet of stores or in a particularly popular panhandling areas) through a city ordinance Modify environment to discourage loitering or panhandling, for example remove benches or install "no loitering" signs Provide informational brochures about available social services to panhandlers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer known panhandlers Fewer complaints Fewer calls for service Less concern about panhandling Fewer customers avoiding business Reduced litter and signs of disorder in panhandling locations
Individuals offering nominal services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of complaints Number of calls for service Number of known offenders Level of concern about offenders Type of serious offenses related to services Number of customers avoiding businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local police Business records Survey of customers Personal observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control access to windshield washing materials, such as water or areas to store buckets Require all "vendors" to have permits Initiate civilian patrols to monitor and discourage activity Prohibit interference with vehicles or pedestrians through city ordinance Prohibit activity in specific locations, such as within 20 feet of intersections through city ordinance or in specific commercial corridors or parking lots through private property owner regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer complaints Fewer calls for service Fewer known offenders Less concern about offenders Less serious offenses Increased number of customers Fewer customers avoiding business
Chronically intoxicated individuals			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of complaints Number of calls for service Number of known offenders Level of concern about offenders Type of serious offenses related to services Number of customers avoiding businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local police Business records Survey of customers Personal observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit alcohol sales of single serving containers of beer or wine through city ordinance Initiate civilian patrols to monitor and discourage activity Modify environment to discourage loitering or panhandling, such as removing benches Provide informational brochures about available social services and substance abuse treatment to panhandlers with suspected alcohol or drug addition problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer complaints Fewer calls for service Fewer intoxicated individuals Less concern about individuals Reduced litter and signs of disorder



Measuring Our Challenges: An Example

Below is an example of how one community, wanting to address increasing concerns of panhandling along their main street's commercial corridor, sought input from their residents and businesses. Then, utilizing the feedback, created a strategy to address panhandling.

Businesses along this city's main street corridor were comprised of retail businesses and a few community service agencies. The community had a variety of concerns so it was decided that the best place to start was to create a survey asking the general public to express their concerns. The survey included questions about a variety of issues not just panhandling.

Customers of the main street businesses were surveyed as well as 500 randomly selected residents who lived in close proximity to the main street. The survey responses were tabulated and the greatest concern among the respondents was determined to be panhandling. In light of this result, the community confirmed that panhandling had the greatest negative impact on businesses and residents and thus warranted further action.

The community then implemented the following:

- Created posters and campaign brochures with a message dissuading customers from donating cash to panhandlers
- Created and posted "no panhandling" signs at each main street corridor business
- Established a civilian patrol to monitor panhandling activity along the corridor

The city's town council was asked to strengthen local alcohol regulations and pass a resolution prohibiting panhandlers from specific areas. Additionally, a committee was created to speak directly with panhandlers to question why they panhandle and what, if any help they might need. Another committee was organized to gather information about all local social service agencies that could provide services for panhandlers. This information was compiled and shared with both the panhandlers and the main street corridor businesses.

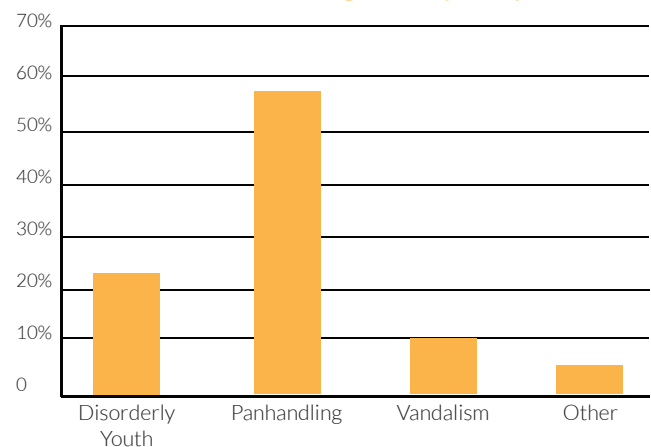
After six months of interaction with panhandlers and businesses, the city decided to re-survey the community to determine if the campaign had been effective in making perceived improvements to panhandling concerns for customers, businesses and residents.

Initial Panhandling Survey

How concerned are you about each of the following crimes?

	Very	Somewhat	Not at all
Disorderly Youth			
Panhandling			
Vandalism			
Other			

Greatest Concern Among Survey Respondents



Panhandling Re-Survey

During the past 6 months, how has the frequency of each crime changed?

	Increased	Decreased	Same
Disorderly Youth			
Panhandling			
Vandalism			
Other			

Panhandling Challenges

Aggressive panhandling and solicitation of pedestrians or motorists can affect public safety.

Panhandling is protected speech under the First Amendment and is legal in Savannah. However, should a panhandler's conduct constitute an offense under the City Code or state law, such as disorderly conduct or assault, he/she may be charged accordingly.

HOW CAN WE HELP PANHANDLERS?

Encourage panhandlers to seek long-term resources, giving them money is only short-term help. The prevalence of panhandling is a symptom of a lack of opportunity for many individuals. The most common reasons given for panhandling are:

- Inadequate employment
- Inability to find affordable housing
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse

Numerous community-based organizations offer social services programs to address these issues. Donating to one of our local community organizations or nonprofits may help ensure they have the resources available to provide services to these clients and help them to find stable housing, health care, behavioral health treatments, and job training and opportunities

When encountering a panhandler or a stranger asking for financial help, it's important to assess the situation and choose actions carefully. Following these guidelines can help you make changes in our community, to truly transform the lives of those in need:

• ***Never give cash***

Much of the time, well-intentioned cash gifts are used to feed drug and alcohol addictions, or for other unanticipated purposes. Even when a panhandler's "hard luck" story is true, he or she may not be telling you the whole story – and what they're not telling you is often at the heart of their request.

Because money is susceptible to abuse, it's important to give in small quantities, and give only what is immediately necessary. If a person is hungry, buy them a sandwich and a beverage. If they say they need shelter, give them a Community Resource Guide that directs them to agencies that can help.

• ***Speak with respect***

Treating a stranger with respect and kindness, and taking time to talk to them in a friendly manner can mean a lot – and help restore their sense of pride and dignity. For someone struggling with isolation, depression or paranoia, a positive interaction can also provide a much-needed moment of peace.

• ***Think carefully***

Understanding the truth about panhandling is important when assessing a stranger's request. You may be surprised at what is really behind a panhandler's "hard luck" story. When it comes down to it, your single act of generosity is unlikely to make a long-term difference in someone's life. Meeting a chronic need (such as poverty) with an emergency, knee-jerk response (like giving spare change) often does more harm than good.

• ***Offer real assistance***

As the saying goes, it's better to teach a man to fish than to give him a fish. Real assistance means helping people get back on their feet, become rehabilitated and gain education and skills – so that they can eventually support themselves. Local programs and organizations are specifically designed to do just that.

In the moment, someone may be asking for money, but what they really need is a chance to transform their future. Directing panhandlers or homeless individuals to a shelter by giving them a Resource Guide connects them with agencies that can help them rebuild their lives.



Panhandling Information For Residents & Visitors

WHAT TO DO...

If approached by a panhandler on foot

- If a person panhandling becomes aggressive or if you feel threatened, call 911 immediately
- Keep some distance and be aware of your surroundings
- Walk with confidence - keep moving towards a public area
- Don't open your purse or wallet
- It's okay to say "NO"
- Try not to engage
- Keep your head upward and don't look at your cellphone or watch

If approached by a panhandler while you're in a vehicle

- If a person panhandling becomes aggressive or if you feel threatened, call 911 immediately
- Don't lower your window
- It's okay to make eye contact and say "NO"
- Keep some distance and be aware of your surroundings
- Move along safely in your travel

WHO TO CALL...

911 Emergency

If you feel threatened or harassed by a person panhandling, call 911

If you witness a situation where someone else is threatened or harassed by a person panhandling, call 911

311

If approached by a person panhandling in a non-emergency situation, you can report using the free City of Savannah 311 app, by calling 311 or (912) 651-6565

Community Anti-Panhandling Campaign Steps

PROPOSAL

1. Review programs other cities across the nation have developed to address panhandling
2. Decide on a either a strictly educational campaign or an educational campaign with a donation collection component. If donation collection component is included:
 - Determine a method for collection and make arrangements for
 - Establish a secure collection and distribution method for donated funds
 - Determine which local resource providers will receive funds. Who, how, where, etc. must be determined BEFORE proceeding with developing materials and signs
 - Educate chosen local resource providers on Anti-panhandling campaign program and the City's expectation of receiving an accounting for how donation funds were used
3. Enlist the help of SPD and/or other City departments to document locations and intersection addresses where panhandlers routinely operate
4. Design, produce and install signs at panhandler location intersections encouraging the public NOT to give to panhandlers (with donation method information if included) making sure signs conform to all DOT and City sign requirements.
 - If a donation component is included, all donation links, payment mechanisms, etc. must be up, running, and available to accept donations BEFORE signs are installed
5. Design and produce a local resources guide for distribution to panhandlers, homeless, business owners, etc.
6. Distribute local resources guide to panhandlers, provide supply to SPD and other City departments and resource providers that come in contact with panhandlers.
7. Design, produce and distribute panhandling informational material to residents and visitors

How Other Communities Address Panhandling

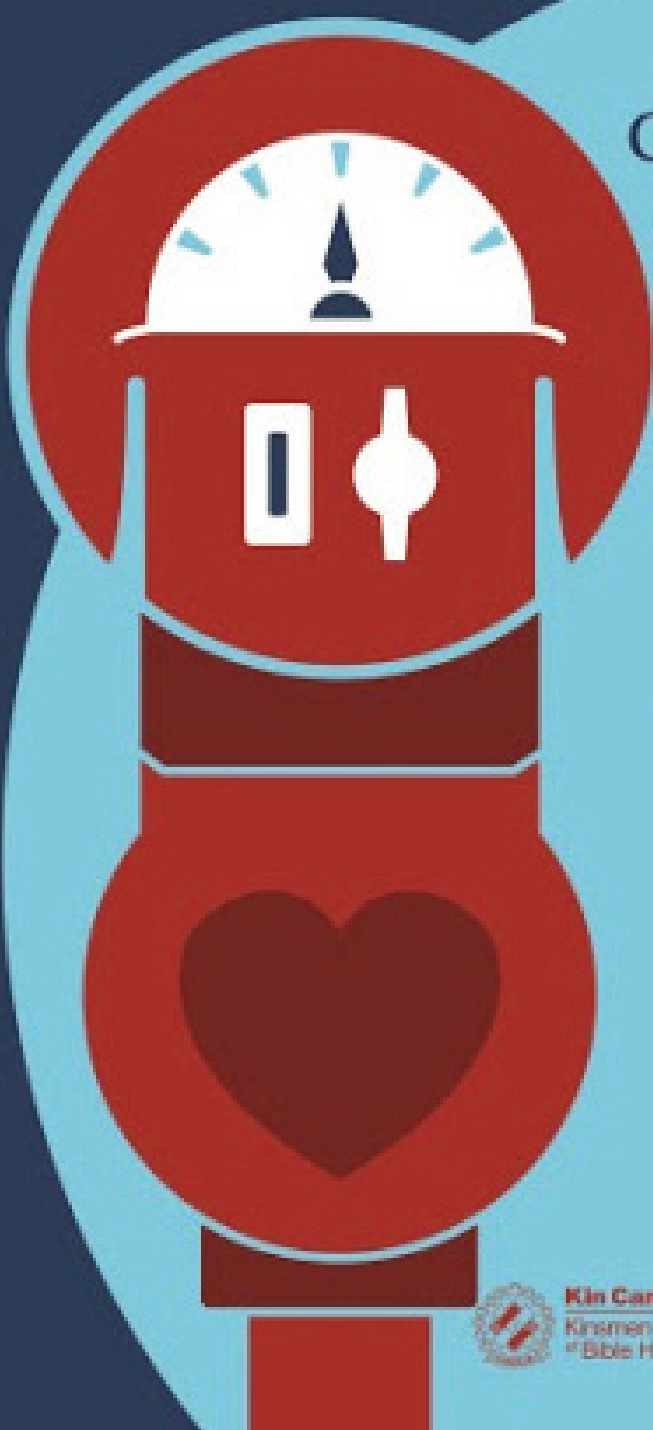
PANHANDLING



**DON'T CONTRIBUTE
TO THE PROBLEM**

**CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION
WWW.FORTLAUDERDALE.GOV/GIVE**

KINDNESS METER



Make a
CHANGE
in someone's
Life.

Donate your spare change to this kindness meter and make a difference. Money collected in this meter will support local community groups assisting those in need.

(insert charity info here)



Kin Canada
Kinmen Club
of Bible Hill



Truro
Partnership



Truro

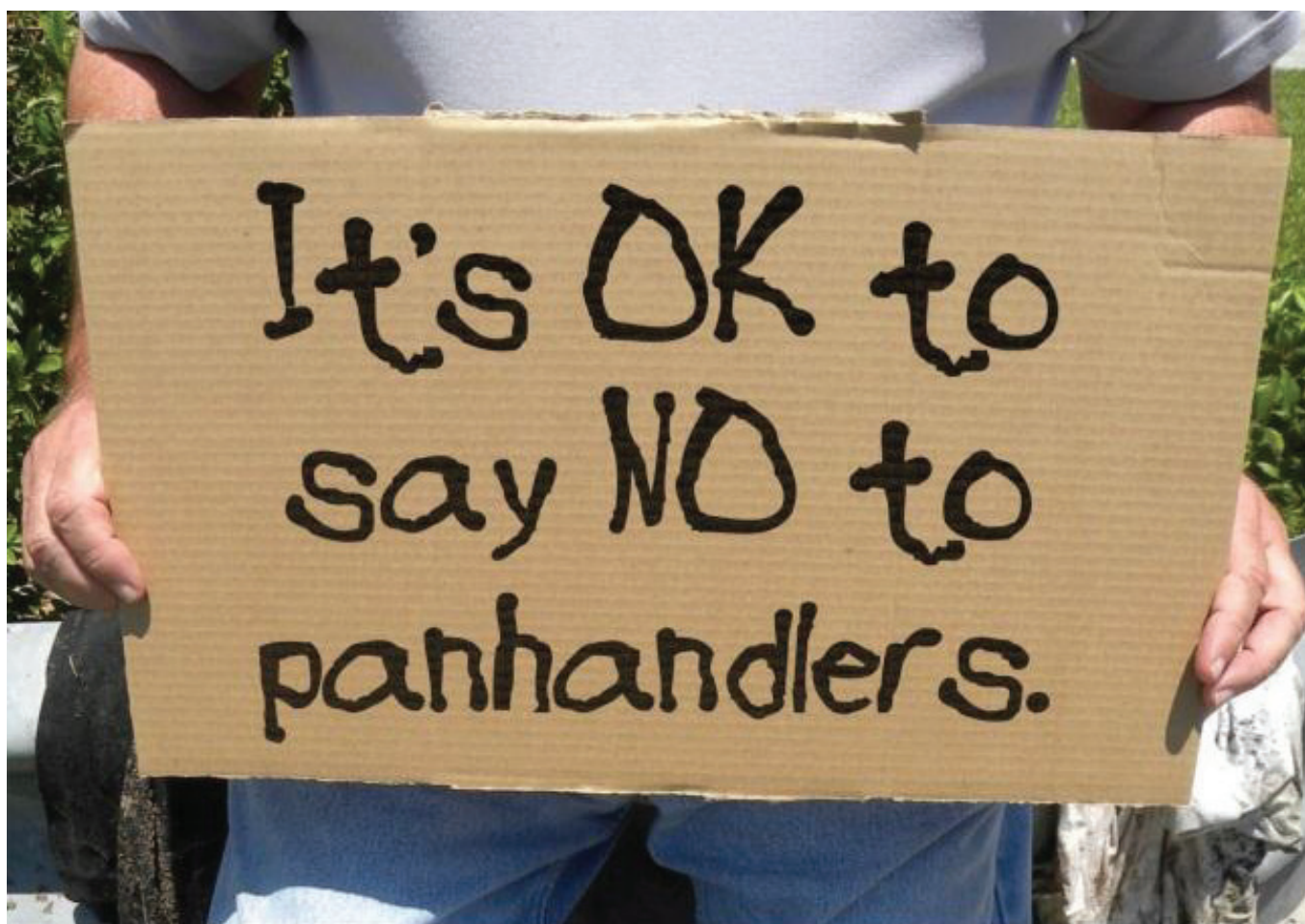
**Most people
don't give money
to panhandlers.**

It's OK to say no.

**Give instead to
agencies that help
those in need.**

**Bullheadcity.com, search
"panhandling"**





There's a better way to help.

Text **IGAVE** to **20222** to make a \$5 donation*

OR VISIT

TheHomelessPlan.org

**Need help?
Call 2-1-1.**

*Messaging and data rates may apply.



Please
**DON'T GIVE TO
PANHANDLERS**



GIVE TO A CHARITY

RESPONSIBLECOMPASSION.ORG/GIVE

 **@HOMELESS_OUTREACH_TEMECULA**

 **@RESPONSIBLECOMPASSION**

TEMECULA HELP CENTER (951) 240-4242

Don't.
give to
panhandlers.



Help.
them more by
giving to service
providers.

HelpSLG.org







You Can Give



REAL CHANGE

Not **SPARE CHANGE**

Panhandling is Not the Answer

REDIRECT YOUR GENEROSITY

Text to Give: **41444**
and enter **GIVECHANGE**

cityofclarksville.com/givechange



Real Change. Not Spare Change is a collaborative Clarksville community program that promotes alternative giving to community service providers who can provide a more lasting impact than simply giving money to people who are panhandling.

A Donation to Real Change is an Investment in Long-Term Solutions.



**SAY NO TO
PANHANDLING**

**THERE'S A
BETTER WAY
TO GIVE**

RealChangeDublin.org





• STOP PANHANDLING •

give
REAL
change

Giving to the homeless feels good in the moment, but doesn't create long-term results. True change starts with local services that make a measurable difference.

**SUPPORT
ORGANIZATIONS
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE**

**LOOK FOR SPECIAL
METERS AROUND
DOWNTOWN AND
give REAL change**

PANHANDLING

SAY NO TO PANHANDLING



CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION

GIVE TO LOCAL CHARITIES

GIVE REAL
CHANGE



PANHANDLING IS
NOT THE ANSWER

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE:
nashvilledowntown.com/realchange



REAL CHANGE DAYTON

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP?

- Donate to or volunteer at social services organizations dedicated to helping those in need. A full list of partnering organizations is available at realchangedayton.org.
- Become more knowledgeable about panhandling by visiting local service agencies to learn of other ways you can help.
- Educate others about alternatives to giving directly to panhandlers.

PROJECT PARTNERS & SUPPORTING AGENCIES:



GOODWILL/EASTER SEALS OF THE MIAMI VALLEY

THE FOOD BANK

HOMEFULL

MIAMI VALLEY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION
AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (ADAMHS)

PATH PROGRAM STREET OUTREACH
(PROJECTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN TRANSITION
FROM HOMELESSNESS)

ST. VINCENT DEPAUL



THERE'S A BETTER WAY TO GIVE

TEXT "REALCHANGE" TO 71777
OR FOR MORE INFO GO TO
REALCHANGEDAYTON.ORG

WWW.REALCHANGEDAYTON.ORG

**PANHANDLING IS
NOT THE ANSWER.**

**GIVE WHERE IT
COUNTS.**

*Feed the
meter*



**IDOWNTOWN
STREETS
TEAM**



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Donation meters are installed in downtown San Rafael.
Proceeds benefit Downtown Streets Team.
In cooperation with the City of San Rafael.

GIVE A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT.

PANHANDLING

**Negatively affects safety, traffic,
and local business.**

EVERY \$1 DONATED

**Equals ten meals for homeless
families and individuals.**

JOIN US NOW

Be part of the solution!

**MESSAGE FROM: PUEBLO'S COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON
HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

**DONATE \$3
TO LOCAL
HOMELESS
SERVICE
PROVIDERS**

Text XXXXX to XXXXX





— Don't —
ENABLE
Panhandlers.

There's a better
way to offer
CHANGE

Text "FWCHANGE" to 41444

Donations benefit the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition.

