

Preventing Crime & Disorder

Panhandling



When our neighborhoods are safe and thriving, our residents prosper, the local economy grows, and there is a sense of shared pride. We believe that a great neighborhood means opportunities for a diversity of people at all income levels to live and grow, neighbors knowing and supporting each other, and residents, business owners, and the City, working as partners to enhance the quality of life.



The growing homeless population is a tragic statement of our current economic environment but must also be balanced with a City's responsibility to provide a safe, clean and pleasant living environment for all.

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Dealing with Panhandling

There is rarely a time that we venture out in our vehicles without seeing panhandling activities. Most of us want to give. However, it just becomes a matter of how, when and will it matter.

1. Say NO to panhandling

Sometimes your well-intended spare change and cash is used for alcohol or drugs and not food or other basic needs. Offering food or money may even encourage more panhandling and enable their current lifestyle. There are alternative ways to make your generosity count.

Alternative Ways to Give

Sometimes you have to follow your kind heart and conscience. Give according to your conscience, but do so with a better understanding of the issues surrounding the problem. Instead of money, think about these alternative gifts:

- Keep fast food gift cards on hand to give out to those that may be hungry.
- Keep a supply of water, granola bars, and other snacks in your car to hand out.
- Give out a pair of socks to relieve blistered bare feet.
- Pack a little plastic sandwich bag with travel size toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.).

2. Acknowledge the person with respect

Maybe you don't have any items to give, a smile or a quick hello from a passerby is rare. Taking the time to be friendly and respectful gives others a sense of civility and dignity.

3. Encourage the homeless to get help

Carry and distribute pocket resource guides that list services available to them. It allows you to proactively approach a panhandler with a compassionate and sensible response that allows them to receive help while minimizing the adverse impact panhandlers may have on businesses and unsuspecting bystanders. The County of San Diego provides a [Pocket Resource Guide](#) and a [Quick Guide to Services](#).

4. Give to an organization and not a panhandler.

Contribute to local charities, missions, food banks or social service organizations that assist the needy and help them get back on their feet. The [Pocket Resource Guide](#) provided by the County of San Diego is a good place to start for some of our local organizations helping those in need.