

DEALING WITH PANHANDLING AND VAGRANCY

Every year, downtown workers, patrons and visitors give thousands of dollars to panhandlers. Unfortunately, giving directly to panhandlers does not provide long-term solutions to homelessness. Instead, panhandlers negatively impact the economic development and quality of life of those living, working and visiting the core of our city.



In El Paso County, a \$5 handout can cost more than \$2900 in emergency services from police, fire, and medical response when that handout is used for drugs or alcohol.

Many panhandlers:

- are not homeless; panhandling is their profession
- claim to be veterans but are not
- prey upon our sympathies
- use money for drugs or alcohol and not basic needs

Guidelines for dealing with panhandlers

- DO** answer requests for money with a firm NO
- DO** treat homeless with respect, realizing that only a small portion of panhandlers are actually homeless
- DO** offer information on where they can get help, including the Springs Rescue Mission, Marian House, Urban Peak and ESM
- DO** make donations to organizations that have a proven track record of helping the homeless
- DO** contact your City Council representative with your concerns

- DON'T** give money or food
- DON'T** allow anyone to camp or loiter on your property
- DON'T** allow anyone to store shopping carts, bedding or other personal belongings on your property
- DON'T** assume you're making a difference when you give to panhandlers

Additional resources

Find the following information and more on the *Safety and Anti-Panhandling Efforts* page at www.downtowncs.com/BID.

- What is an is not allowed in the city limits of Colorado Springs
- Organizations who help the homeless
- Contact the CSPD Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) at 444-7666 or CSPDHOT@springsgov.com