

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Panhandler Action Plan

“Reducing the cause and effect of panhandlers at intersections with a comprehensive problem solving plan”

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Summary

SCAN: In July of 2010, the Community Policing Liaison Unit (CPLU) was selected to address the long term existing panhandling problem at major intersections throughout Palm Beach County.

ANALYSIS: A surveillance of the major intersections was completed following the SARA Model. From this it was decided to identify those intersections which presented the highest number of panhandlers in conjunction with an elevated traffic crash percentage. A statistical comparison of major intersections which suffered from a high level of panhandling was conducted and the top five (5) intersections were selected for this problem solving project. With no County Ordinance to enforce other means were needed to combat this issue. Past enforcement efforts have centered on the citing for Florida State Statute violations and arrest. In 2009 a total of 459 enforcement actions had been taken with no positive dispositions from the court. What was addressable was the motorist donating money to the panhandler. Utilizing this information the motorist was targeted with a combination of enforcement and public education by a selected group of Community Policing Deputies, the Homeless Advisory Board, and various other governmental agencies.

RESPONSE: Tasked with this highly political issue, the CPLU developed a Community Policing philosophy holistic approach to this problem. A long term comprehensive solution was implemented. By partnering with Non-Governmental Agencies (NGO) and other regulatory governmental agencies, the CPLU was able to keep everyone involved and informed, ensuring success of this initiative. Much like a Community Policing site which becomes “anti-crime” in location, victim, and offender design, these locations will follow a similar format. It will become simply more difficult for illegal “business as usual” to occur, thus guaranteeing that the resources expended on this problem project, were not in vain. Designing and utilizing an educational and informational component to this action plan, signage was placed informing the public of alternative donation avenues. Informational flyers were distributed throughout the areas and businesses with information on donation alternatives. A panhandler database was created to track the number of times panhandlers were encountered and offered services. Social service agency cards were created to supply to the panhandlers to obtain services. All intersections were outfitted with informational and regulatory signage.

ASSESSMENT: A severe decrease in panhandler presence in and around the targeted intersections occurred. The percentage of traffic crashes at the targeted intersections decreased 10.5%. Donations to the NGO increased through the use of the created new donation avenues, texting and internet options.

DESCRIPTION

SCANNING: The panhandling issue has been prevalent throughout the county for several years and has been exacerbated by the recent economic recession. Through casual observance, citizen complaints, and a call from the Board of County Commissioner's to address this issue, the Sheriff's Office took on this task.

Surveillance of intersections was completed and the panhandler problem was documented through video and still photography.

A review of calls for service at these locations was completed and the results confirmed a higher than average rate of Crashes, multiple car crashes, crashes involving pedestrians and crashes involving bicycles.

Previous attempts at addressing this problem were left to NGO's such as the Homeless Outreach Team and the Homeless Advisory Board. These agencies offer services but have no recourse should the panhandler refuse services. The Florida Department of Transportation, which regulates medians for State Roads, is a regulatory agency and will not engage in enforcement of any violation that occurs in the median.

Through surveillance it was observed that the vast majority of panhandlers occupy the median at the end adjacent to the stop bar at intersections with stop lights. All panhandlers observed used some type of signage advertising their plight, some ask for donations and some simply state "anything will help". The panhandlers leave the median and walk through stopped to collect money from motorists. Numerous times we observed traffic being infringed by the panhandler still being in the lanes of traffic after the stop light turns green and motorists stopping short impeding traffic in order to give money to the panhandler.

ANALYSIS: A review of the major intersections throughout the county identified numerous intersections that were known to have a severe panhandling problem. A statistical comparison of Traffic Crash incidents was conducted comparing these intersections with like traveled intersections which did not suffer the panhandling problem. This comparison revealed that intersections suffering from the panhandler problem experienced a Crash rate 44% higher than those intersections without the panhandling problem, and that pedestrian related Crash reports were eight (8) times, and bicycle related crashes five (5) times higher.

Throughout the year of 2009 the PBSO initiated 459 enforcement actions involving persons involved in panhandling. This number does not include non-enforcement actions. Of these actions the court system took no corrective or punitive actions against the defendants. From this outcome it was realized that a remedy to this problem could not be enforcement based.

No intersections are equipped with any signage that either prohibits panhandling or the use of the median for solicitation purposes. While there are governing Florida State Statutes the local States Attorney's Office has declined to prosecute for some of these violations.

The panhandling issue is prevalent during the daylight hours from approx. 0730 hours thru 1900 hours daily. Holidays are also big days for the panhandling population.

According to the 2000 census data Palm Beach County has approximately 1650 homeless persons that are potential panhandlers and an unknown number of panhandlers that are in fact not homeless but rather use this method of collecting money to sustain their life styles.

Ordinances and laws from over 30 different state, local, and national jurisdictions were researched. Current case law was referenced in the decision making of this approach to combat this issue.

Partnering with the HAB and NGO agencies that service this population and coming to a consensus on our approach and message would negate any negative press and show a unified front to the public that all agencies are working together on this problem.

RESPONSE:

PBSO Community Policing Liaison Unit – Cpl. Trombley

Coordinate PBSO responses and personnel assisting on this project; develop partners with NGO's, and liaison between governmental agencies.

Set and attend meetings to monitor progress of plan

Monthly COPA meeting - Trombley

Monthly updates through chain of Command - Trombley

Compile statistics and data related to plan - Trombley

Gather statistics through CADS on crash activity - Trombley

Conduct surveillance - Trombley

Surveillance in unmarked unit to obtain photographs and video

Create anti-panhandling signage – Trombley, M. Elfring

Designed two educational signs for placement at intersections

Get signs fabricated – PBSO graphic department – M Elfring

Get signs put up – PBC Traffic Engineering

Enlist media outlets for PSA

All three local cable stations – PIO Terri Barbera

All municipal cable television stations - Trombley

Collect still and video photography of problem

Document panhandling at target intersections - Trombley

Solicited business partners to assist in sign placement - Trombley

Local businesses displaying anti-panhandling signs

Park Avenue BBQ

Renegades

Duffy's Sports Bar - chain (pending)

Alehouse – Chain (pending)

Publix grocery Stores (pending)

Winn Dixie grocery Stores (pending)

Liaison with FDOT on sign placement

Mark Plass - FDOT supervisor

Liaison with Palm Beach County Traffic Engineering for sign placement

Dan Weisberg – PBC Traffic Engineering

Create panhandler database for logging contacts

PBSO IS Department – John Young

Develop training power point for database for road patrol training

Created training power point for volunteer unit and road patrol -
Trombley

Homeless Advisory Board (HAB)

The COPA team of the HAB has partnered with PBSO on this project. As the lead agency in PBC in dealing with homeless issues the HAB acts as a liaison between PBSO and the social services of PBC.

Develop alternative donation method utilizing text messaging – M. Munoz

Develop alternative donation method utilizing internet – M. Munoz

Provide volunteers for events – E. Kreig

Conduct public education of project – E. Kreig

Hosted campaign kickoff in conjunction with their November End Homeless Week event

Palm Beach County Traffic Engineering

Dan Weisberg – 684 - 4530

Traffic studies – D. Weisberg

Sign applications - D. Weisberg

Sign placement and erection - D. Weisberg

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Mark Plass – [561.727.9825](tel:561.727.9825)

FDOT is the regulatory agency for state road medians and rights of way and have partnered with PBSO on this project to erect educational signs at target intersections locations. FDOT has reviewed signs and made suggestions for newer different signs for state roads.

Board of County Commissioners of Palm Beach County (BCC)

The BCC directed Sheriff Bradshaw to address the panhandler issue throughout the county. The BCC attended the kick off campaign and gave a speech relating to the panhandling issue. Commissioner Pricilla Taylor attended and lent her support to the project. The BCC has provided leadership and guidance in trouble areas to assure project success.

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO)

Road Patrol units participated in this project as an operational asset in this project making contact with the panhandler's, educating them as to the F.S.S. violations they were committing and offering them services via 211 by providing them with a 211 business card and an offer to contact 211 on their behalf.

Road units enter panhandler information into the Panhandler database, these numbers are used for the HAB to direct services to those in particular areas by giving them the size and depth of the problem at any given location.

PBSO Reserve units participated as an operational asset in this project by mirroring the road patrol functions.

PBSO Graphics Department assisted in logistical support by fabricating signs, printing flyer and poster materials. M. Elfring

The goals of this project is to reduce the number of Traffic Crashes at the target locations by 30%, reduce the number of panhandlers by directing them to receive services, and to increase the amount of public donations to the HAB for services. Through these efforts it is believed that the Traffic Crash increase is directly tied to the panhandler presence at the intersections and will be reduced accordingly. Directing and assisting the homeless panhandler to receive services will not only benefit the service receiver but the community as a whole by removing the panhandler from the intersections.

This pilot will run from 010111 thru 063011. A statistical comparison will be conducted of reported Traffic Crashes at the conclusion of the pilot time period. Donations received for this time period will be compared to the same period of 2010 to determine whether or not there is an increase.

ASSESSMENT:

Problem Description:

12/04/10

Cpl. Trombley was tasked with fabricating signage for anti-panhandling project. Signs completed and t.o.t. PBC Traffic. FDOT rejects pictorial signs for median placement. Signs diverted to county roads at newly identified locations and new "No Soliciting" signs made for State Roads at targeted locations. Due to FDOT restrictions and delays in sign posting three of the five target locations did not receive the signage and the new text signs had to be ordered. New locations for the pictorial signs were chosen and erected in June of 2011.

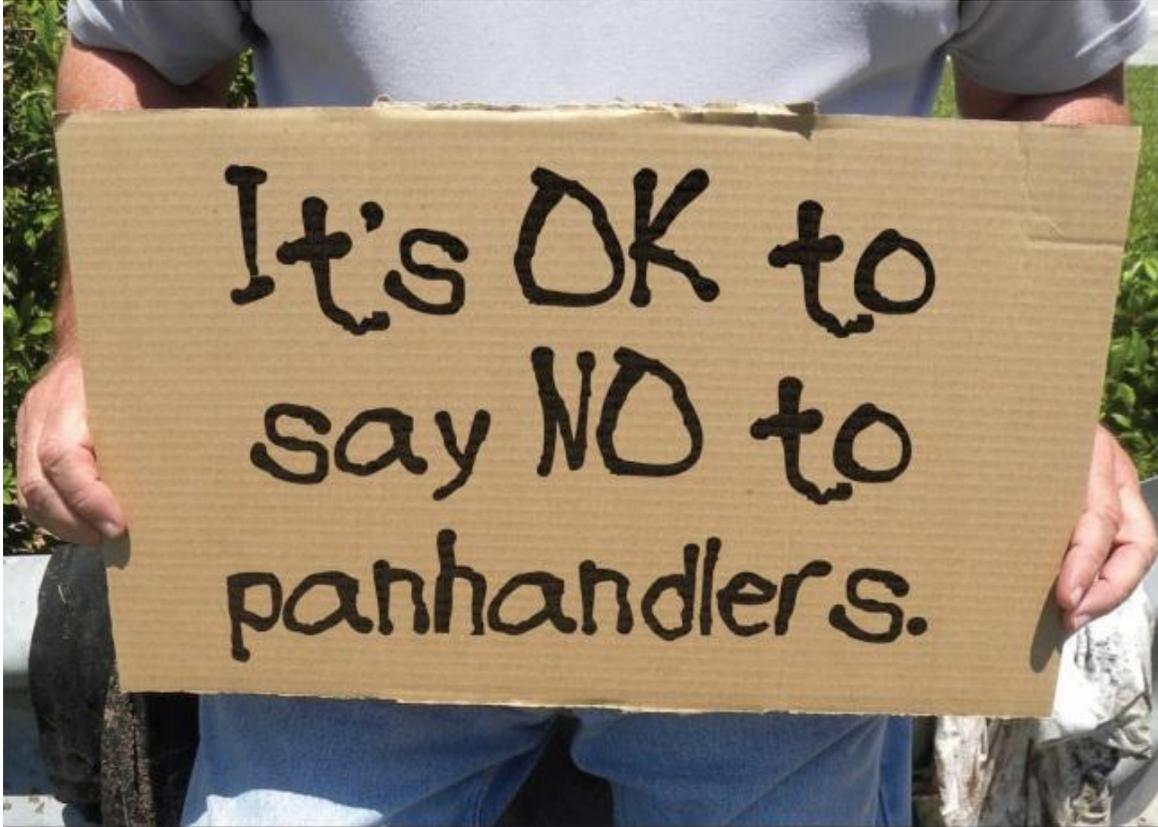
An adjustment was made to the plan by keeping the pictorial signs to county roads and fabricating new text only signs for state road medians.

Traffic Crash statistic totals for comparisons are an extrapolated average for 2011 as compared to 2010 as there was not a full year of the project completed by the submission date. The 2010 Crash average was 9.6 crashes per month as compared to 8.6 crashes per month during the project period for 2011.

There have been a total of 42 panhandler contacts at 3 of the targeted locations where services have been offered to the panhandler.

Public response has been positive with requests for additional signage and enforcement in other areas of the county.

EDUCATIONAL PICTORIAL SIGNAGE FOR INTERSECTIONS



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.



PHOTO: KEVIN MAZUR



IT'S OK TO SAY NO



TO

PANHANDLERS

PALM BEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



316.130 Pedestrians; Traffic Regulations-(5) No persons shall stand in the portion of the roadway paved for vehicular traffic for the purpose of soliciting a ride, employment, or business from the occupant of any vehicle.



NONHANDICAPPED PANHANDLERS/HOMELESS



PANHANDLER



DEBRIS LEFT BY PANHANDLERS



PANHANDLER/HOMELESS CAMP



DEBRIS LEFT BY PANHANDLERS



DEBRIS LEFT BY PANHANDLERS



HOMELESS PANHANDLER



PANHANDLER



PANHANDLER



PANHANDLER



MEDIAN SIGNS FOR STATE ROADS



MEDIAN SIGNS FOR STATE ROADS





211 Cards

Napkin Holder Flyer



Smaller signs were made for display on restaurant and sports bar table tops





PANHANDLER CONTACTS



Purpose

- **The purpose of this campaign is to educate the public into redirecting their donations to those agencies that can actually effect positive change for the homeless people in our community and to educate the panhandlers and homeless of the other alternatives to obtaining assistance.**

Targeted Intersections

- We have targeted five (5) intersections throughout the central county area to begin this project. They are:
 - **Okeechobee Road and North Military Trail**
 - **Lake Worth Road and South Military Trail**
 - **Lake Worth Road and South Congress Avenue**
 - **6th Avenue South and South Congress Avenue**
 - **Lantana Road and South Congress Avenue**

Consensual Encounter

- Unless a violation of the law is witnessed, any contact with persons in the median should be treated as a consensual encounter
- If the person is holding a sign declaring their homelessness and requesting help they are not violating any law or ordinance
- The courts have held that this is an expression of free speech and is a constitutionally protected right.
- Standing, sitting, or walking in the roadway is violation of F.S.S.
- Soliciting rides, employment, or business is also a violation of F.S.S.

Sheriff's Message

- Sheriff Bradshaw has stated, "We cannot arrest ourselves out of this problem, other measures need to be employed."
- This education and service based project is at the direction of the Sheriff as an alternative to arrest
- In 2009 there were 459 enforcement actions taken against panhandlers with no court sanctions imposed
- "This office (States Attorney's Office) will not prosecute cases in which defendants are arrested or cited for panhandling under the current version of **F.S.S. 316.2045.**" **Accordingly, based on this SAO opinion, do not make any further arrests under this statute. This does not preclude using this statute for a legal stop.**

Florida State Statutes

- **Reasons for legal contact and detention**
- **Standing in the roadway**
(Section 316.130, F.S.)
No person shall stand in the portion of a roadway paved for vehicular traffic for the purpose of soliciting a ride, employment, or business from the occupant of any vehicle
- **Pedestrian use of streets and highways**
(Sections 316.130(3), (5), and (18))
Where sidewalks are provided, no pedestrian shall, unless required by other circumstances, walk along and upon the portion of a roadway paved for vehicular traffic.

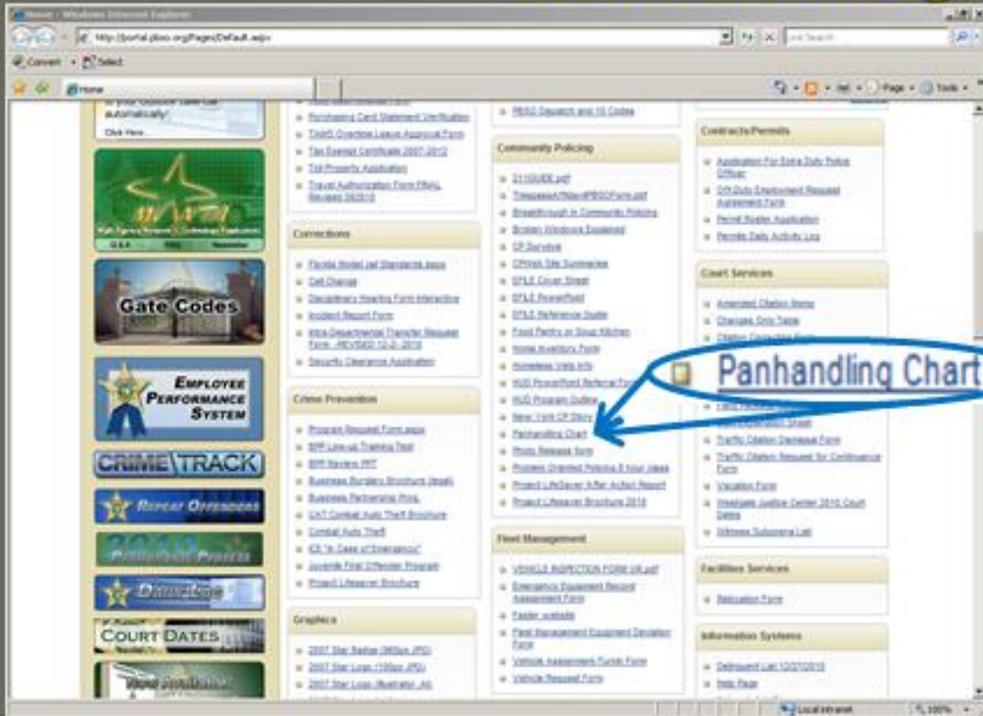
211 Cards

- All Deputies should have 2-1-1 information cards to provide to the panhandler or homeless person. These can be obtained from your districts. Also under the Community Policing header on the Portal Page is a list of 2-1-1 services, with phone numbers, and a listing of all food bank and soup kitchen locations broken down by geographic area. Our goal is to provide the homeless person or panhandler with alternatives to meet their most basic need of food and shelter so that they can then get the assistance to become self-reliant. We understand that you will encounter the same people over and over, it is important to track how many contacts we have with each individual and at what locations they are frequenting so that we can deploy other services to these areas.

Database

- Deputies are requested to make contact with panhandlers, vendors, or solicitors located in these intersections and educate them that this type of action is not tolerated in Palm Beach County. The intersections will be posted with various signs warning against these practices. Anyone contacted should have their name entered into the Panhandling Charting Table located on the Portal Page under the Community Policing header. This chart requires only name, DOB, and location of contact. This also allows for, but not required, the uploading of photographs of the person to the chart. The photo can be of the person or of them engaging in panhandling.
- An FIR should be completed, citing reason of stop, and turned in with daily paperwork.

Main Portal Page



Enter Data

Panhandling: New Item

Attach File | Spelling... * indicates a required field

OK Cancel

Last Name

First Name

Date of Birth

Date of Contact

211 Info Check if info given.

Count * **AUTOMATIC**

Intersection

OK Cancel

Example

Panhandling: New Item

OK Cancel

Attach File | Spelling... * indicates a required field

Last Name	Doe
First Name	John
Date of Birth	12/25/2050
Date of Contact	12/28/2010
211 Info	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check if info given.
Count *	1
Intersection	6th Avenue / Congress

OK Cancel

Check if 211 Card Given

Need **HELP?**
Don't know where to **CALL?**
Do you just **NEED** someone who will listen?
CALL 2-1-1 FOR HELP

CALL 2-1-1 FOR HELP
Sheriff **W. L. Bradford** and the staff and deputies of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office are proud to have an award-winning Palm Beach County 211 Center and believe when 2-1-1 can listen, what else can you do? You are not alone, call 2-1-1 if you are:
- Disoriented
- Suffering from substance abuse
- In need of health services
- Need food or shelter
- Homeless
- Have family problems or relationship issues
Call us at 2-1-1 and we'll connect you to the services you need. www.211palmbeach.org

Select Intersection

Panhandling: New Item

Attach File | Spelling... * indicates a required field

Last Name

First Name

Date of Birth

Date of Contact: 12/28/2010

211 Info
Check if info given.

Count *

Intersection: (None) | (None) | 6th Avenue / Congress | Lantana Rd. / Congress | LW / Congress | LW / Military | Cheechee Rd. / Military

OK Cancel

Panhandling: N

Attach File | Spelling

Last Name

First Name

Date of Birth

Date of Contact: 12/28/2010

211 Info
Check if info given.

Count *

Intersection: (None) | (None) | 6th Avenue / Congress | Lantana Rd. / Congress | LW / Congress | LW / Military | Cheechee Rd. / Military

OK Cancel

file

PRESS OK



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.



PANHANDLING PROJECT



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Palm Beach County

The Homeless Advisory Board



The Problem



The target intersections with a panhandling problem have a 29% increase in traffic crashes over like intersections with no panhandling issue



ACCIDENT STATISTICS

Intersections with panhandling problems as compared to similar intersections with little to no panhandling activity.

Without Panhandling		With Panhandling	
Malheur & Jog Rd	27	6th Avenue S / S Congress Ave	58
Lantana / Congress	63	Lake Worth Rd / Congress Ave	58
Hypoluxo / Military	64	Lake Worth Rd / Military Trail	100
Lantana / Military	68	Okonobos / Military Trail	120
Lantana / Jog	73	Okonobos / Turnpike	45
Total	277	Total	399

This represents a **+44%** increase at intersections with a panhandling problem. Pedestrian and Bike involved crashes are **+400%** at these same intersections. Crashes with 3 or more vehicles increase proportionately.

PALM BEACH COUNTY STATISTICS

2009 Intersection Accidents

Data Source: Palm Beach County Traffic Division

Location Without frequent Panhandling / Soliciting	Accident Total Count	Pedestrian Count	Bicycle Count	Vehicle Count
Melaleuca & Jog Rd	27	0	1	68
Okeechobee / Pike	46	0	0	82
Lantana / Jog	73	0	1	146
Lantana / Military	88	0	1	140
Hypoluxo / Military	84	0	0	128
Total	277	0	3	682
Location With frequent Panhandling / Soliciting	Accident Total Count	Pedestrian Count	Bicycle Count	Vehicle Count
6th Avenue S / S Congress Ave	58	1	1	120
Lake Worth Rd / Congress Ave	58	0	0	125
Lake Worth Rd / Military Trail	100	0	3	200
Okeechobee / Military Trail	120	4	4	237
Lantana / Congress	63	0	1	130
Total	399	5	9	812
	+44%	+5	+300%	+44%

Enforcement Issues

336.2045-4344 PUBLIC ORDER CRIMES-OBSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC STREETS W/O PERMIT

BOND (SURETY/CASH/PROPERTY)	1
CASE DISMISSED	1
NO FILE	1
NOLLE PROSSE	2
OWN RECOGNIZANCE	27
TIME SERVED	83

337.406-626 NONMOVING TRAFFIC VIOL-VIOL USE OF STATE RIGHT OF WAY

CASE DISMISSED	2
COURT ORDER RELEASE	1
NO FILE	2
NOLLE PROSSE	1
OWN RECOGNIZANCE	32
TIME SERVED	96

Total 2009 STATISTICS (per PBSO Corrections) - 250

In Addition - Westgate Community Justice Center - 209 (unknown breakdown)

TOTAL - 459

Quality of Life Issues

Panhandlers are often homeless and loiter on public use facilities, rendering them inaccessible to the general public



Contributing Causes

Good people with the best intentions give spare change to panhandlers. This money is often used to buy drugs and alcohol furthering the cycle of homelessness and addiction



LAWS

Fake soldiers: People who don military uniforms to collect donations from the public, usually in camouflage at busy intersections, must now disclose their identity and where the solicited money will go. Should they misrepresent themselves as members of any U.S. military branch by uniform or statement, they could be convicted of a third-degree felony.



NOT THIS....



OR THIS.

But this....



Hello!
I am collecting donations for a military or veterans cause of unspecified origin. I have no paperwork or documentation affiliating me with a legitimate Veterans or Military organization.

LAWS

316.2045 Obstruction of public streets, highways, and roads.-- *the State concludes that enough doubt exists in the enforceability of Fl. Stat. 316.2045 to dismiss the charges in this matter. Further, this office will not prosecute cases in which defendants are arrested or cited for panhandling under the current version of Fl.Stat 316.2045."* Accordingly, based on this SAO opinion, do not make any further arrests under this statute.

316.130 Pedestrians; traffic regulations

(5) No person shall stand in the portion of a roadway paved for vehicular traffic for the purpose of soliciting a ride, employment, or business from the occupant of any vehicle.

In 2009 PBSO took 459 enforcement actions directed towards this issue, the court concluded all cases with no punishment imposed. Cases were closed as time served, nolle prosequere or no filed.

At a cost of \$133 per day per inmate this action cost PBSO \$61,047 in Corrections costs plus road deputy time of 30 minutes per case for a total cost of \$6,885 with no positive return.

RESPONSE



EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC

EDUCATION OF THE OFFENDER



PARTNER WITH THE COMMUNITY

RESPONSE ACTIONS

Signage at target intersections



Public Service Announcement

All County and Municipal t.v. stations

Major local cable stations

Educational posters in store windows

Texting and Web page options for donating

RESPONSE ACTIONS

- Hand out 211 cards for homeless
- Hand out food bank and soup kitchen cards with locations
- Flyers for partnering businesses
- Moving panhandlers off medians with warning, FIR, or citation but only after warning
- Bus shelter signage, FIR, and enter into Business Partnership
- Program database. All shelters are entered
- Posting of bus shelters with stenciled No Trespassing

Our Message

Educate the public to donate to agencies that offer assistance to the homeless not to panhandlers.

That panhandling is no longer tolerated by our agency or the community.

To assist those in need to get the help they require.

Our willingness to partner with the community to solve problems and quality of life issues that affect everyone equally.



REENTRY SPECIFIC SERVICES

OFFENDER REENTRY SERVICES

Exodus Prison Reentry Ministry Program	(561) 249-1057
Florida Community Alliance (Youth)	(561) 904-6514
Gulfstream Goodwill Comm. Re-Entry Program	(561) 848-7200
Knowledge Is Power	(561) 249-1023
Office of Public Defender – Project REAP Success	(561) 355-7603
Prison Fellowship	www.prisonfellowship.org
Riviera Beach Justice Service Center	(561) 840-3124
The Lord’s Place	(561) 494-0125
Veterans Reentry and Healthcare	(561) 422-8223

EDUCATION

Adult Education Center	(561) 616-7800
Glades Family Education Program (GED)	(561) 992-8068
Inlet Grove High School	(561) 881-4600
Lincoln College of Technology	(561) 842-2433
Literacy Coalition of PB County Hotline	(800) 273-1030
Palm Beach State College	(561) 868-3350
South Technical Academy	(561) 369-7004

EMPLOYMENT

Florida DOE Vocational Rehab (West Palm Beach)	(561) 650-6804
Workforce Alliance Central Career Center (WPB)	(800) 556-5627

HOMELESS/SHELTER

Center of Hope	(561) 682-1118
Homeless Residential Assessment Program (CARP)	(561) 844-6400
Jesus and You Outreach Ministries	(561) 842-4276
Matthew 25 Ministries Miracle Village	(561) 432-9072
Partners for Change	(561) 478-5852
Safelink (free cell phone and airtime)	(800) 977-3768
St. Ann Place	(561) 805-7708
The Lord’s Place	(561) 494-0125

GENERAL SERVICES

ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE

AA Palm Beach County Intergroup	(561) 655-5700
Central Florida Treatment Center	(561) 439-8440
Comprehensive Alcoholism Rehab Programs	(561) 844-6400
Drug Abuse Foundation of Palm Beach County	(561) 278-0000
Drug Abuse Treatment Association (Youth)	(561) 743-1034
Hanley Center (Fee-Based)	(866) 442-6539
Palm Beach County CoDA Intergroup	(888) 444-2359
West Palm Beach Metro Treatment Center	(561) 433-5687

CLINIC – MEDICAL

Caridad Center, Inc.	(561) 737-6336
Community Health Center of West Palm Beach	(561) 840-8681
FoundCare Health Center	(561) 432-5849
Palm Beach County Health Department	(561) 840-4500

CLOTHING

Families That Care	(561) 845-5162
Salvation Army Social Services WPB	(561) 686-3530
St. John’s First Missionary Baptist	(561) 996-1474
True Fast Outreach Ministry	(561) 856-6273

COUNSELING/MENTAL HEALTH

Alpert Jewish Family & Children’s Service	(561) 684-1991
AMIGOS Drop-In Center	(561) 582-7424
Association for Community Counseling	(561) 638-0908
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Palm Beach	(561) 254-6558
Center for Family Services of Palm Beach County	(800) 404-7960
Center for Group Counseling	(561) 483-5300
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance	(561) 427-0840
Depressive/Manic-Depr. Assoc. of the P. Beaches	(561) 495-0522
Glades Crisis Stabilization Unit	(561) 993-8022
Multicultural Community Mental Health Center	(561) 653-6292
National Alliance on Mental Illness of PBC	(561) 588-3477
Oakwood Center of the Palm Beaches, Inc.	(561) 383-8000
Peer Place Drop-In Center (Mental Health Assoc.)	(561) 712-0584
Ruth Rales Jewish Family Service	(561) 852-3333
South County Mental Health	(561) 737-8400



(Continued on back of page)

SIGNING AMERICA CORP.

WARNING!



NO TRESPASSING
PROHIBIDO LA ENTRADA

PALM BEACH COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
F.S.S. 810.09



Shift the compassion

SYNDICATED COLUMNISTS

Think of it this way. When you stop at a busy intersection and see the sign "Will work for food," you can display one that says: "Have donated to a better cause."

That's the idea behind Palm Beach County's new anti-panhandling campaign, which begins today with public service announcements that will run through March and is part of the wider effort to end homelessness. Organizers want residents not to give money to panhandlers who position themselves at high-traffic areas but to donate that money, and preferably more, to the Homeless Advisory Board to help the county finance the 10-year program that was approved in September 2008. (To learn more about the program, visit www.TheHomelessPlan.org.)

The hope is that by the fall of 2018, Palm Beach County will have facilities in West Palm Beach, south county and the Glades, and a food delivery system. The West Palm Beach building has been purchased, and is scheduled to open next October. Claudia Tuck, the county's director of human services, estimates that the cost of the whole operation would be about \$30 million a year.

There's no way to tell how much goes from wallet through car window to outstretched hand each month, but the pitch to the non-homeless is that these facilities can deal with root problems rather than provide a quick dollar or two. Palm Beach County discussed a ban on panhandlers, but there were two problems. As Sheriff Ric Bradshaw says, "You can't arrest your way out of this." Also, the politically powerful firefighters want to keep soliciting at intersections.

Brent Ion, a member of the Homeless Advisory Board, gets to the larger point when he says: "You can't change a life at an intersection. We'd like people to direct those dollars to other resources."

Critics have complained that such programs are just a way to get the homeless out of sight. Our response would be that if you keep seeing them at the same intersection, their lives aren't getting any better.

- Randy Schultz,

for The Palm Beach Post Editorial Board

Social service agencies seek spare change given to panhandlers

Money would be better spent by agencies that help the homeless, sheriff says

[Share](#)



WEST PALM BEACH —

The [Palm Beach County](#) Homeless Advisory Board and the Sheriff's Office are launching a campaign next week to discourage people from giving spare change to the homeless.

The kick-off coincides with 'National Ending Hunger and Homelessness Week' that runs Nov. 14-20.

A three-month 'media blitz' will recruit local television and radio stations to play 30-second public service announcements featuring [Palm Beach County](#) Sheriff [Ric Bradshaw](#) assuring well-meaning motorists that "It's OK to say NO to Panhandlers."

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New street signs, also paid for with money from the criminal forfeiture fund, will pop up around intersections where panhandling is most prevalent and where accident rates were 29 percent higher than intersections where there were no panhandlers, according to the [Palm Beach County](#) Traffic Division's 2009 statistics.

Sheriff Bradshaw says the spare change would be better spent by agencies and organizations that help the homeless.

"We know that we can't arrest our way out of this situation because all the people we take off the street corners are merely passing through the system and are back out on the street and they're not getting the help that they need," Sheriff Bradshaw said.

Rather than arrest panhandlers, deputies will be handing them business cards informing them where they can get food, shelter and whatever treatment they need to re-enter mainstream society.

"Panhandling will only end when it's no longer economically viable," Sheriff's Office Cpl. Barry Trombley said.

If drivers just can't resist the impulse to give, the Homeless Advisory Board is urging them to make a \$5 donation through [TheHomelessPlan.org](#) by texting IGAVE to 20222, according to Board member Ezra Krieg.

"That money will be distributed to agencies that are truly helping people in need in the community," Krieg said.

[Palm Beach County](#) Commissioner Priscilla Taylor chairs the Homeless Advisory Board and says more and more middle-income families are joining the ranks of the homeless.

"The public often perceives the panhandler to be the face of the homeless in [Palm Beach County](#) which, as we all know, is not the case," Taylor said.

South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

Police, county reach out to homeless man who sets up camp in West Boca

Marci Shatzman mshatzman@tribune.com

February 23, 2011

Advertisement

Although he's been living on the streets for at least six months, Filipe Chico, 72, looks neat and clean, like somebody's white-haired grandfather in a T-shirt and chinos.

He greets visitors warmly at his encampment on U.S. Highway 441, across from the Shoppes at Boca Greens just north of Kimberly Road. Although he moves around [West Boca](#) - last week he was on Glades Road at 95th Avenue South behind the Glades Road Branch Library - he makes no effort to hide. An 8-foot totem pole made of orange and white buckets marks his location behind a palm tree.

"That's so someone can find me if they want to offer me a job," he explained.

Chico is sitting on the ground by a folded cot with a clean mattress, and a shopping cart with a large umbrella and coat on top of neatly arranged bags with his other belongings.

"I don't feel good today," he said in Spanish. "My chest hurts."

He was born in Pennsylvania in 1939 and worked the fields, he said. He wasn't up to explaining how he ended up here on the streets, or why he has refused all efforts to help him by concerned law enforcement and the county's homeless outreach. As public complaints about him mount, there's little government can do without his permission.

In fact, Chico is only one of 2,147 people living on the streets in [Palm Beach County](#), according to last year's homeless count, said Claudia Tuck, director of Human Services. "There's a difference between the voluntary homeless who choose that lifestyle," and people who lose their housing, she said. "There's a high degree of substance abuse" among the voluntary homeless. But no one interviewed thinks Chico is using, and Tuck said the county does have services for him, but he continues to refuse them.

PSA Distribution List

Channel 20 – County	355-4573	Lester Williams
Channel 18 – West Palm Beach	822-1864	Derek Morrow
Channel 20 - Boca Raton	393-7901	Mark Witson
Channel 95 – Boynton Beach	742-6000	Wayne Siegal
Channel 18 – Jupiter	746-5134	Kate Moreto
Channel 18 – Wellington	741-4000	Steve Gilbert
Channel 18 – Royal Palm Beach	904-8241	Diane Smith

The Public Service Announcement was aired for a 90 day period on all local cable channels throughout Palm Beach County and on the above listed local and municipal government television channels.

Agency and Officer Information

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Captain Jeffrey Lindskoog: Community Services

Lt. David Dameron: Community Services

Sgt. George Searing: Community Services

Cpl. Barry Trombley: Community Policing Liaison

