GIVING CHANGE TO PANHANDLERS DOES NOT HELP THEM!

The Best Answer is a firm NO.

In the vast majority of cases, when you give change to panhandlers, you’re not helping them. The spare change you give to a panhandler usually goes towards cigarettes, alcohol and/or drugs.

1. Don’t Encourage Panhandlers. Simply say “NO” and continue on your way. If a panhandler is persistent or if you feel harassed or threatened, contact Burlington Police Department at 658-2700.
   Aggressive Begging, Solicitation or Panhandling is prohibited in the City of Burlington.

2. Share This Information with Friends and Co-Workers. As more people understand the dynamics of panhandling, panhandlers will get the help they really need.

3. Give Your Spare Change to Non-Profit Organizations in our community, dedicated to helping those in need. Food, clothing, shelter and other critical services are provided by these organizations:

SHELTER/HOMELESS SERVICES
- COTS Waystation: 862-7776
- COTS Daystation: 862-5418
- Spectrum One Stop (Youth – 21): 862-5396
- Homeless Healthcare Project: 862-5418

FOOD
- Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf: 658-7939
- Salvation Army: 864-6991

CRISIS SERVICES
- Spectrum One Stop (Youth – 21): 862-5396
- Women Helping Battered Women: 658-1996
- Women’s Rape Crisis Center: 863-1236
- Howard Center for Human Services
  • Adult Crisis Line: 863-2400
  • Act 1/Bridge Program: 654-1067
  • First Call for Children & Families: 864-7777

MEDICAL HELP
- Community Health Center: 864-6309
- Fletcher Allen Health Care Emergency: 656-2434

PLEASE SEE OTHER SIDE
That means, IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO:

- Approach, speak or follow a person before, during or after soliciting if that conduct is intended or likely to cause a person to fear bodily harm or damage to or loss of property ... or otherwise be intimidated into giving money or other things of value
- Continue to solicit after the person has said no.
- Intentionally or recklessly touch another person or person's property without consent.
- Intentionally or recklessly block or interfere with the safe or free passage of a pedestrian or vehicle.
- Use violent, obscene or threatening gestures toward a person solicited.
- Follow a person being solicited, with the intent of asking that person for money or other things of value
- Speak in a volume reasonably loud under the circumstances.
- Solicit from anyone waiting in line.

IN THE CITY OF BURLINGTON, SOLICITATION IS NOT PERMITTED ...

- within 15 feet of an entrance to a building
- within 15 feet from public toilets
- within 15 feet from an entrance or exit to a financial institution
- within 15 feet of an Automated Teller Machine
- within 15 feet of a handicapped space, public parking lot or structure dedicated walkway to a parking structure.
- within 15 feet of any valid vendor location
- within 15 feet from a pay telephone, or public information booth.
- by a person under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- in any public transportation vehicle
- in a poorly lit area
- on private or residential property

PENALTIES: Any violation of this law constitutes a civil offense and is punishable by a fine from $50 to $500.

See Chapter 21, Offenses, Miscellaneous Provisions, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Burlington, Section 21-8:

PLEASE SEE OTHER SIDE