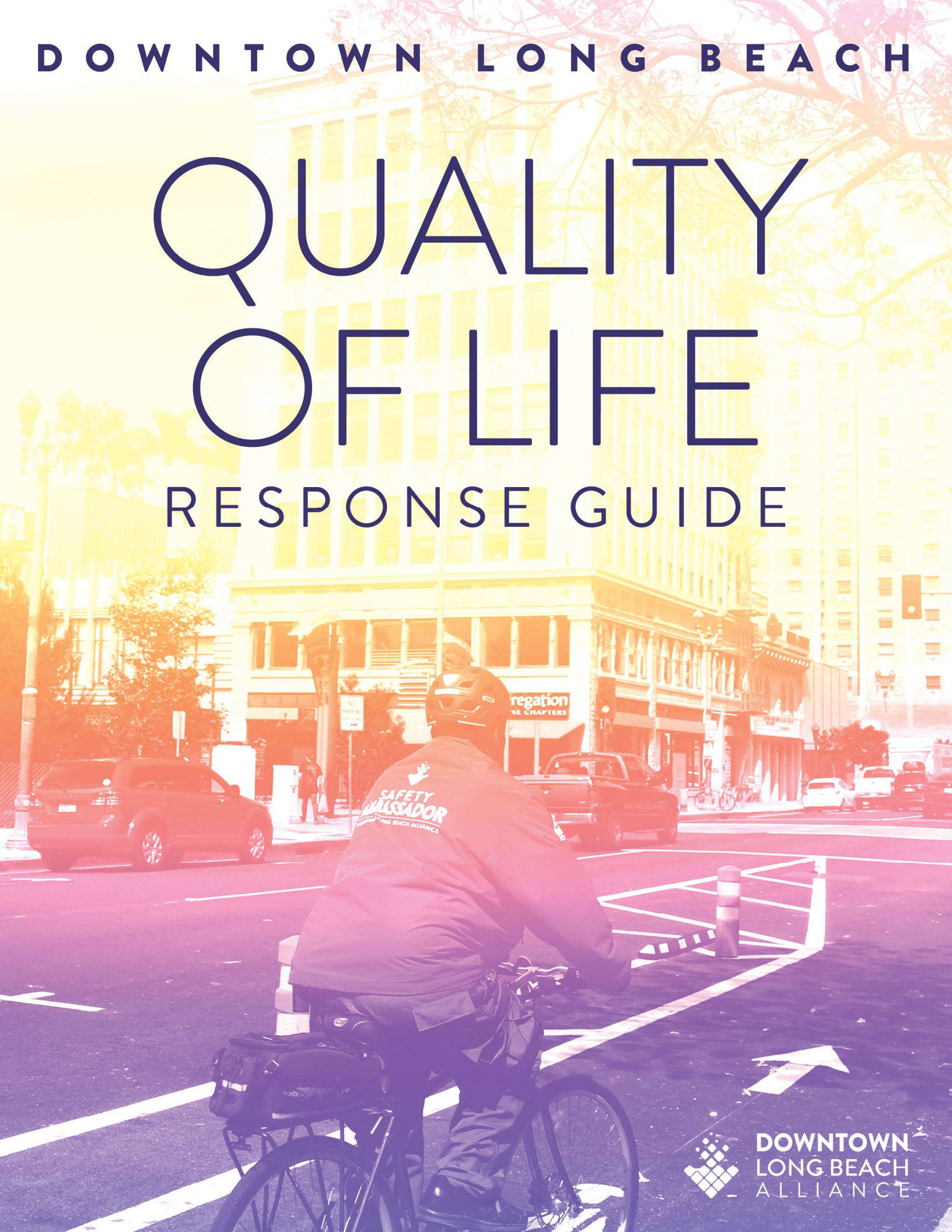


DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH

QUALITY OF LIFE

RESPONSE GUIDE



DOWNTOWN
LONG BEACH
ALLIANCE

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QUALITY OF LIFE RESPONSE GUIDE OVERVIEW

(Business Owners, Property Owners/Managers and Residents)

Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) believes Quality of Life issues that may extend from persons experiencing homelessness, and/or those with mental health and substance abuse disorders can sometimes be a matter of concern for Downtown stakeholders. Addressing Quality of Life issues requires sustained awareness, engagement, and partnerships across public and private sectors to provide a healthy, safe, and prosperous Downtown for all. DLBA is committed to doing its part to meet this challenge.

As part of our ongoing efforts to serve Downtown's stakeholders, DLBA helps small business owners, residents and property managers navigate the challenges sometimes posed when engaging persons experiencing homelessness and/or suffering from mental health issues. Understandably, it can be an uncomfortable and sometimes intimidating experience, but it is essential for our community not to turn a blind eye to homelessness or people who may need extra support. It is also important to remember that simply being homeless is not illegal and we cannot arrest or enforce our way to a safer City, we all play a part in contributing to solutions. At DLBA, we make every effort to connect our local unhoused population to service providers in hopes of helping them receive medical treatment and/or transition into permanent housing.

The 17 scenarios and responses in this Quality-of-Life Response Guide are intended to provide businesses, residents, property managers and others some basic guidance when engaging individuals who are experiencing homelessness or mental stress, but this is by no means an exhaustive list. If you feel threatened or unsafe at any point in time, your best option is to call 9-1-1 for the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD).

DLBA Safety Ambassadors are trained to engage with individuals experiencing homelessness to de-escalate situations and build a level of trust that supports ongoing dialogue and problem-solving on behalf of stakeholders in the [Property Based Improvement District](#) (PBID). They are not a security force with the authority to arrest individuals engaged in criminal activity. However, they work closely with police, fire, and homeless outreach partners to address quality of life issues before they escalate into larger problems.

DLBA's wishes to thank LBPD, Long Beach Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Communications and Long Beach's City Manager for their contributions to this resource guide. Please contact DLBA's Senior Vice President & Deputy CEO, James Ahumada, at (562) 436-4259 should you have any questions about our various programs.

Disclaimer: This guide is not intended to provide professional medical advice. The suggestions and scenarios, including any text, graphics and images, are for informational purposes only. For more specific questions, please contact one of the professional service organizations outlined in the guide. Safety Ambassadors and Clean Team only service the [Property Based Improvement District](#) (PBID).

QUALITY OF LIFE SCENARIOS

Guidelines for Reporting Engagements, Calling for Backup, and Requesting Assistance

- **Call a DLBA Safety Ambassador at (562) 244-1365** – Anytime you engage an individual on the street that needs assistance with activities of daily living but is not threatening or breaking a law. ([PBID service area only](#))
- **Call 911** - When a crime of any kind is found to be in progress. This includes fighting, violent behavior, a suspicious package, a person wielding a weapon, and many other scenarios.
- **Call 911** - For assistance anytime an individual is found unconscious, unresponsive, complaining of illness or requesting medical attention.

Whether calling to report a safety, medical or quality of life concern, use the following identifiers to assist authorities with locating and immediately engaging the person:

- Type of activity observed.
- Location: exact street address or nearest cross street.
- Characteristics: Race, gender, approximate age, height, weight, hair color, hair length and style, eye color, facial hair, clothing type and color, or other (e.g., tattoos, missing teeth, scars, glasses, etc.)
- If the person leaves the location, note the direction of travel.

UNRESPONSIVE OR UNCONSCIOUS PERSON

Scenario 1: A person is unresponsive or unable to perform normal activities such as speaking or walking.

A person has been sitting or lying down with a blanket over their head for many hours and has not moved.

Action: Call 911 for the Long Beach Fire Department to perform a health check. Next, call DLBA Safety Ambassadors at (562) 244-1365 (PBID service area only).

Scenario 2: You are worried about the general mental or physical health of a person who is unresponsive to verbal cues and commands.

Action: Call LBPD Non-Emergency at (562) 435-6711 and request a welfare check.

PERSON DISPLAYS UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR

Scenario 3: Person appears to be having a mental health crisis or their actions are endangering themselves and/or other persons.

Action: Call 911.

Scenario 4: Person is agitated, constantly yelling at pedestrians or walking into oncoming traffic.

Action: Call 911. Their behavior warrants immediate attention before their safety or another person's safety is further jeopardized.

Scenario 5: Person appears very angry or agitated, walking up and down the same block yelling and moving erratically.

Action: Call 911 and ask for the Mental Evaluation Team. Even though the person may not be an immediate threat, the behavior may require intervention from a mental health professional.

Scenario 6: Suspicious person appears to be following you on your way to work, home, or performing errands.

Action: Step into the nearest business to allow the person to pass and gather your thoughts; call DLBA Safety Ambassadors at (562) 244-1365 for a safety escort. (PBID service area only)

PERSON ASKS FOR BASIC AMENITIES

Scenario 7: A person experiencing homelessness asks for assistance with resources (could range from basic needs like showers/food resources to shelter/housing).

Action: Refer to City Multi-Service Center, where several resource providers are co-located and ready to help.

Long Beach Multi-Service Center, 1301 W 12th St, Long Beach, CA 90813 (562) 570-4500

Monday to Wednesday, Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Closed daily 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Scenario 8: The person asks for money or food.

Action: A respectful way to help without giving money is to acknowledge the person and ask how they are doing. You can say “I have resource information if you are interested” and direct them to the Multi-Service Center or offer a Homeless Resources Pocket Guide instead of money. Our Safety Ambassadors would be happy to deliver Pocket Guides and other related collateral to a business or residential building – call (562) 244-1365 to request information related to persons experiencing homelessness and/or mental health issues. Copies are also available at the Long Beach Health Department, Multi-Service Center, Mental Health America of Los Angeles and DLBA’s office.

The following organizations also provide meals:

- Long Beach Rescue Mission Kitchen, 1430 Pacific Ave, Long Beach, CA 90813
- Christian Outreach in Action, 515 E 3rd St, Long Beach, CA 90802

Scenario 9: A person who you recognize as experiencing homelessness enters a business asking for water...

Action: Provide the individual with a place in Downtown to obtain water:

- Long Beach Transit Visitors Information Center, Pine Ave and First Street
- Long Beach Multi-Service Center, 1301 W 12th St, Long Beach, CA 90813
- Christian Outreach in Action (COA) 515 E 3rd St, Long Beach, CA 90802
- Lincoln Park (Ocean Blvd and Pacific Avenue)

Scenario 10: You observe an encampment of 4 or more individuals in a location for more than 24 hours

Action: Call the Homeless Services Street Outreach hotline at (562) 570-4672 or email HomelessServices@longbeach.com and provide the location, and description of the individuals.

SCENARIOS INVOLVING PRIVATE PROPERTY

Scenario 11: Upon arrival at your business, you discover a person lying in front of your door or business.

Action: Inform the individual that you are opening your business for the day and ask them to vacate the space. If they refuse to leave, call DLBA’s Clean and Safe Hotline at (562) 244-1365 (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. on Friday/Saturday-PBID service area only). For additional assistance, call LCPD’s non-emergency number at (562) 435-6711.

Scenario 12: Person enters your business acting strangely and refuses to leave.

Action: Ask the individual if they would like you to call emergency services. If the person does not respond, ask them to leave. If they remain, inform them you are calling the Long Beach Police Department. Call 911.

Scenario 13: From time to time, a person appears agitated and pounds on storefront windows.

Action: Call 911 and describe the person and activity in detail. Even if LBPD speaks to the individual and does not cite them for this low-level offense, there is a connection of the behavior to the person should police be called again for the same offense or something more serious. Next, call DLBA Safety Ambassadors to inform them of the activity.

Scenario 14: As you prepare to lock up for the night, you observe a suspicious person nearby without any discernable purpose.

Action: Lock the door. If this happens during DLBA Safety Ambassador operating hours (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. on Friday/Saturday), call and ask for a safety escort when you are ready to leave (PBID service area only). You may also contact LBPD at their non-emergency number at (562) 435-6711 or 911.

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS

Scenario 15: Person is standing on the sidewalk mostly unclothed, exposing themselves to passersby.

Action: Call 911 for immediate police response. Next, contact DLBA's Safety Ambassadors at (562) 244-1365.

Scenario 16: Person urinates or defecates in public.

Action: While these situations can be frustrating from a public order and civic pride standpoint, they are low-level offenses. Contact DLBA's Clean and Safe Team at (562) 244-1365 with the location for follow up on public property only (PBID service area only).

Scenario 17: A person with a cardboard sign is panhandling in the public space.

Action: Panhandling is not illegal unless it's aggressive. Offer the person a Pocket Guide or tell them where they can get food and clothing. Giving money only perpetuates the activity. The Long Beach Multi-Service Center (MSC) can refer the person to various resources, including Veteran focused services. Aggressive panhandling that includes physical or verbal abuse or restricts path of travel is illegal and should be reported to LBPD immediately by calling 911 with a location and description of the person.



TEN TIPS FOR DE-ESCALATION

1. Be Empathic and Nonjudgmental

Do not judge or be dismissive of the feelings of the person in distress. Remember that the person's feelings are real, whether you think those feelings are justified or not. Respect those feelings, keeping in mind that whatever the person is going through could be the most important event in their life at the moment.

2. Respect Personal Space

Be aware of your position, posture, and proximity when interacting with a person in distress. Allowing personal space shows respect, keeps you safer, and tends to decrease a person's anxiety. If you must enter someone's personal space to provide care, explain what you're doing so the person feels less confused and frightened.

3. Use Nonthreatening Nonverbals

The more a person is in distress, the less they hear your words—and the more they react to your nonverbal communication. Be mindful of your gestures, facial expressions, movements, and tone of voice. Keeping your tone and body language neutral will go a long way toward defusing a situation.

4. Keep Your Emotional Brain in Check

Remain calm, rational, and professional. While you can't control the person's behavior, how you respond to their behavior will have a direct effect on whether the situation escalates or defuses. Positive thoughts like "I can handle this" and "I know what to do" will help you maintain your own rationality and calm the person down.

5. Focus on Feelings

Facts are important, but how a person feels is the heart of the matter. Yet some people have trouble identifying how they feel about what's happening to them. Watch and listen carefully for the person's real message. Try saying something like "That must be scary." Supportive words like these will let the person know that you understand what's happening—and you may get a positive response.

6. Ignore Challenging Questions

Engaging with people who ask challenging questions is rarely productive. When a person challenges your authority, redirect their attention to the issue at hand. Ignore the challenge, but not the person. Bring their focus back to how you can work together to solve the problem.

7. Set Limits

As a person progresses through a crisis, give them respectful, simple, and reasonable limits. Offer concise and respectful choices and consequences. A person who's upset may not be able to focus on everything you say. Be clear, speak simply, and offer the positive choice first.

8. Choose Wisely What You Insist Upon

It's important to be thoughtful in deciding which rules are negotiable and which are not. For example, if a person doesn't want to shower in the morning, can you allow them to choose the time of day that feels best for them? If you can offer a person options and flexibility, you may be able to avoid unnecessary altercations.

9. Allow Silence for Reflection

We've all experienced awkward silences. While it may seem counterintuitive to let moments of silence occur, sometimes it's the best choice. It can give a person a chance to reflect on what's happening, and how they need to proceed. Silence can be a powerful communication tool.

10. Allow Time for Decisions

When a person is upset, they may not be able to think clearly. Give them a few moments to think through what you've said. A person's stress rises when they feel rushed. Allowing time brings calm.

EXTRA SAFETY TIPS WHEN ENGAGING

- Have an exit strategy at all times, it can and might have change during the conversation.
- Keep your hands visible, hidden hands might make the other person nervous.
- Look for any potential weapons in their hands, waistband or at their reach.
- Safety in numbers. If there is another person with you, they can stand a few feet behind you.
- Try not to have jewelry exposed (large hoop earrings, necklaces), earbuds/headphones or loose clothing when approaching. They can impede your exit strategy.
- If possible, keep your hand free in case you need to grab onto something or open a door quickly.

RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

Resources mentioned above:

Long Beach Police Department Non-Emergency	(562) 435-6711
Long Beach Multi-Service Center	(562) 570-4500
Homeless Services Street Outreach Hotline	(562) 570-4672
LBPD Mental Evaluation Team (MET)	(562) 435-6711
DLBA Clean and Safe Hotline (PBID)	(562) 244-1365

Additional ways to assist persons experiencing Homelessness

Urban Community Outreach	(562) 582-1000
Christian Outreach in Action	(562) 432-1440
St. Luke's Episcopal Church	(562) 436-4047
Long Beach Rescue Mission	(562) 591-1292
Catholic Charities Project Achieve	(562) 218-9864
Mental Health America of Los Angeles	(562) 437-6717
Food Finders (donate canned, non-perishable goods:	(562) 598-3003

Join DLBA's Empower People Campaign

DLBA has partnered with local service providers and businesses to provide a more effective alternative for Downtown stakeholders and community members to express their generosity than offering spare change, which only contributes to the practice of panhandling.

DLBA is using social media, brochures and signage to raise awareness and provide direct donation links to local service providers that offer impactful and lasting assistance to those in need. These non-profit organizations depend on donations in order to keep their comprehensive and compassionate programs up and running. The Empower People Campaign is an example of giving someone a hand up instead of a handout.

DID YOU KNOW?

Businesses can request an Empower People sidewalk A-Frame sign or Tabletop Sign Holder near their cash register to help bring awareness to their customers and offer a constructive alternative to panhandling. Call (562) 436-4259.