

# Downtown Phoenix HOMELESS OUTREACH

INFORMATION FOR  
BUSINESS & PROPERTY  
OWNERS



## OVERVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS DOWNTOWN

Every day, a number of homeless individuals and panhandlers move through the Downtown Core. This is partially due to its proximity to the Human Services Campus – which provides shelter and support – in addition to nearby government assistance offices, county healthcare and transportation options. Relative to other major cities, a small number choose to sleep on city streets at night. Based on a one-night survey in January 2016, approximately 50 people were identified as unsheltered in Greater Downtown Phoenix.

In general, the largest population of individuals experiencing homelessness in Arizona are in the most urban areas of Maricopa County – like central Phoenix – accounting for 71 percent of the state’s homeless population. In 2015, more than 25,000 people experienced homelessness for one or more nights across the county. That number includes children, families, seniors and people with disabilities.

The Human Services Campus, located just a couple blocks west of the Downtown Core, represents some of the challenges facing nonprofits, churches, private and public organizations serving the local homeless population. More than 1,300 individuals visit the campus every day, but only about 400 of them can access an emergency bed. During the past decade, a series of emergency overflow shelters cropped up in nearby charity dining rooms, parking lots and warehouses, which helped house several hundred more. Eventually, the overflows will be phased out in favor of more affordable, long-term housing options. When that happens, the number of unsheltered individuals in Greater Downtown Phoenix may increase.

As the number of residents, visitors, employees and businesses grows, so do concerns about homelessness in the area. In order to address this issue, Downtown Phoenix Inc. (DPI) launched a Homeless Outreach program in December 2016. As an organization, DPI and its Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors work tirelessly to improve the experience of everyone living, working and visiting the urban center. The Ambassadors are committed to improving the quality of life for everyone in the downtown community, and with a new outreach team in place, they can now help individuals experiencing homelessness connect to vital assistance programs.

### PANHANDLING FACTS:

- Not all panhandlers are homeless
- Panhandling is legal and protected by the freedom of speech
- The money donated may contribute to a life-threatening addiction.
- Your gift could help or harm — there is no way of knowing

If you're looking for ways to give responsibly, please visit [dtphx.org/outreach](http://dtphx.org/outreach)

Call or text: 602-495-1500

Email: [ambassadors@dtphx.org](mailto:ambassadors@dtphx.org)

Hours: Monday-Thursday 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m.

Friday 6:30 a.m.-11 p.m. • Saturday 8 a.m.-11 p.m.

Sunday 8 a.m.- 10 p.m.

## WHAT DOWNTOWN PHOENIX INC. DOES

Through a partnership with Community Bridges Inc., the Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors help connect those in-need to an array of services including substance abuse treatment, shelters, housing, meal assistance, job-training and healthcare.

By collaborating with local governments, nonprofits, private organizations and the faith-based community, the goal is to reduce homelessness in Downtown Phoenix.

## HOW TO ADDRESS COMMON ISSUES

### **Blocking Doorways:**

Business owners or staff should ask the person to move. If the situation persists, call the Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors or the non-emergency Phoenix Police line at 602-262-6151. If an individual seems threatening or needs immediate medical attention, call 911.

### **Extreme Weather:**

The City of Phoenix Human Services department operates a variety of programs including Summer Respite, Winter Respite and the Phoenix Heat Relief Network. The city collects donations and works with local organizations to provide health checks and distribute items like water, blankets and shoes. For more information, contact the Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors or City of Phoenix Human Services at 602-256-4302.

### **Panhandling:**

Asking for money, even repeatedly, is legal and protected by the freedom of speech.

### **Public Intoxication and Disorderly Conduct:**

If someone needs immediate medical attention, call 911. For non-violent, non-life-threatening situations, call the Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors or Phoenix Police at 602-262-6151.

### **Trespassing:**

For business owners, it's helpful to have an "authority to arrest" form on file with police, which is available on the phoenix.gov website, and bilingual "no trespassing" signs. In non-emergency situations, the Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors can assist in asking someone to leave peacefully from private property.

### **Unattended Belongings:**

If personal items are left or abandoned on private property, please call the Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors.

### **Encampment:**

Instead of making arrests, the city's Encampment Engagement Project engages homeless individuals living outside and encourages them to enter into housing services. Encampments can be reported to Phoenix Police or the Downtown Phoenix Ambassadors.