



ONE LEVEL UP

FOUNDATION

PROVIDING HOUSING · RESTORING LIVES

■ **New Jersey**

■ **Tidewater Virginia**

■ **Charlotte & NC**

A Guide on Survival Tools

Water · Food · Free Coats · Phone & Prepaid Card · Warmth · Cooling Safe Plants · Growing Food ·
Emergency Resources

Published by ONE LEVEL UP FOUNDATION, INC.

Providing Housing. Restoring Lives. One Level Up.

onelevelupfoundation.org · contact@onelevelupfoundation.org

This guide is free. Share it freely. It may save a life.

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BEFORE WE BEGIN

This guide was written because we believe every person deserves to survive — and more than survive, to thrive. This guide is your bridge, your lifeline: **you have more power than you think.**

■ YOUR MOST IMPORTANT NUMBER

Save this number: **2-1-1**. Dial or text 211 — free, confidential, 24/7. Works in NJ, Virginia, and North Carolina including Charlotte.

Chapter 1



Finding Water

Locate, collect, and purify safe drinking water

- **Boiling:** 1 full minute rolling boil — most reliable method.

■ New Jersey

■ Tidewater VA

■ Charlotte & NC

■ NJ

Public Libraries — NJ

Water fountains, free WiFi. No ID. Warm in winter, cool in summer.

■ VA

Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center

104 N. Witchduck Rd. (757) 385-5167. Mon–Fri 8am–7pm.

■
Charlotte
NC

Roof Above — Charlotte NC

Water, meals, showers. roohabove.org · (704) 375-0182

■
Charlotte
NC

Crisis Assistance Ministry — Charlotte

500-A Spratt St. (704) 371-3001

■ NJ

Fire Stations — NJ

Any NJ fire station will provide water. Will not turn you away.

■ VA

Union Mission Ministries — Norfolk

Open 24/7. 1050 Tidewater Dr. (757) 627-8686

- **LifeStraw filter:** Under \$20 at Walmart. Filters 1,000 gallons.
- **Purification tablets:** \$5–\$8 at Walmart. Treats dozens of gallons.
- **Bleach:** 8 drops unscented bleach per gallon. Wait 30 minutes.

■■ IMPORTANT

NEVER drink from puddles near roads or storm drains.

Chapter 2



Finding Free Food

Free meals, food banks, pantries — all three regions

■ FASTEST WAY TO FIND FOOD

Call or text **211** and give your ZIP. Nearest free meal open right now.

■ New Jersey

■ Tidewater VA

■ Charlotte & NC

■ NJ

Community FoodBank of NJ

1,000+ locations. cfbnj.org · (908) 355-3663

■ VA

Foodbank of SE Virginia

Norfolk, VA Beach, Chesapeake. foodbankonline.org · (757) 627-6599

■
Charlotte
NC

Loaves & Fishes — Charlotte

Largest free pantry in Mecklenburg. loaves-fishes.org · (704) 376-5155

■
Charlotte
NC

Crisis Assistance Ministry — Charlotte

Food and Free Store. 500-A Spratt St. (704) 371-3001

■
Charlotte
NC

Second Harvest Food Bank — Charlotte

secondharvestmetrolina.org · (704) 376-1785

■ NJ

Salvation Army NJ

Free daily meals. No ID. salvationarmyusa.org

■ VA

PiN Ministry — Virginia Beach

Food, clothing, free medical. pinministry.org · (757) 340-9638

■ Charlotte NC	Salvation Army — Charlotte Free meals and emergency services. (704) 334-4669
■ NJ	SNAP Emergency — NJ myunemployment.nj.gov or 1-800-687-9512. Benefits in 7 days.
■ VA	SNAP Emergency — Virginia commonhelp.virginia.gov or 1-855-635-4370.
■ Charlotte NC	SNAP Emergency — Charlotte NC epass.nc.gov or 1-800-662-7030. Benefits in 7 days.

Chapter 3



Free Coats & Clothing

Who will give you a coat right now — no purchase

■■ IMPORTANT

Always call ahead to confirm hours and availability before traveling.

■ New Jersey

■ Tidewater VA

■ Charlotte & NC

■ NJ

Salvation Army — NJ

Free coats and clothing. Walk in. salvationarmyusa.org

■ VA

Salvation Army — Hampton Roads

Free coats at Norfolk, VA Beach, Hampton. Walk in. (757) 543-8326

■
Charlotte
NC

Salvation Army — Charlotte NC

Free coats. Walk in and ask for emergency clothing. (704) 334-4669

■ NJ

St. Vincent de Paul — NJ

Free coats at NJ parishes. No faith required. svdpusa.org

■ VA

Judeo-Christian Outreach — VA Beach

Free coats and clothing. 1053 19th St, Virginia Beach. (757) 422-0064

■
Charlotte
NC

Crisis Assistance Ministry Free Store

Free coats year-round. 500-A Spratt St. (704) 371-3001

■
Charlotte
NC

Roof Above — Charlotte NC

Free clothing and coats. roofabove.org · (704) 375-0182

■ NJ

NJ 211 — Clothing Help

Call 211, say you need a coat. They find what is open right now.

■ VA	VA 211 — Clothing Help Call 211 for nearest free clothing in Virginia today.
■ Charlotte NC	NC 211 — Charlotte Clothing Call 211 from Charlotte for nearest free coat today.

Chapter 4



Free Phone & Prepaid Card

How to get a free phone — all three regions

A phone is a lifeline — not a luxury. You cannot call 211, answer a shelter callback, or call 911 without one.

■ LIFELINE — FREE GOVERNMENT PHONE

The **Lifeline Program** gives eligible low-income individuals a free phone. You qualify if you receive SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, or Veterans Pension. Apply at lifelinesupport.org — free, 10 minutes.

■ New Jersey

■ Tidewater VA

■ Charlotte & NC

■ NJ

Q Link Wireless — NJ

Free Lifeline phone and data. qlinkwireless.com

■ NJ

SafeLink Wireless — NJ

Free Lifeline phone. safelinkwireless.com

■ VA

Life Wireless — Hampton Roads

Free Lifeline phone. lifewireless.com

■ VA

Q Link Wireless — Virginia

Free Lifeline phone and data. qlinkwireless.com

■ Charlotte NC

Lifeline Landing — Charlotte NC

Charlotte Lifeline provider. Free phone + minutes. lifelinelanding.com

■ Charlotte NC

Life Wireless — Charlotte NC

Free Lifeline phone for Mecklenburg County. lifewireless.com

■ Charlotte NC	Q Link Wireless — Charlotte NC Free Lifeline phone. Serves Charlotte and all NC. qlinkwireless.com
■ Charlotte NC	Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Free WiFi and computers. Use Google Voice for free calls. cmlibrary.org
■ NJ	NJ 211 — Phone Assistance Call 211, ask for phone assistance — they find free phone programs near you.
■ VA	VA 211 — Phone Assistance Call 211 for Lifeline enrollment help in Hampton Roads.
■ Charlotte NC	NC 211 — Charlotte Phone Help Call 211 from Charlotte for free phone programs. Free, 24/7.

- Dollar stores sell basic prepaid phones for \$10–\$20 with starter minutes
- Walmart: Tracfone and Straight Talk cards from \$10 for 30 days
- Food pantries and churches sometimes give free prepaid phone cards — always ask

■ WIFI CALLING — NO SERVICE NEEDED

No service? Connect to library WiFi and download Google Voice (free). Make calls using just WiFi — no plan needed.

Chapter 5



Staying Warm in Winter

Protect yourself from cold and hypothermia

Winter in NJ, Virginia, and Charlotte NC can all be dangerous without adequate shelter.

- Layer thin clothing — multiple thin layers trap more heat than one thick
- Keep head, hands, feet covered — 40% of body heat leaves through your head
- Stay dry — wet clothing causes hypothermia faster than cold air
- Never sleep on cold ground — use cardboard as insulation under you
- Mylar blanket (\$1–\$2) reflects 90% of body heat back

Hypothermia Signs — Call 911

- Uncontrollable shivering — get warm immediately
- Confusion or slurred speech — call 911
- Shivering STOPS but still cold — fatal emergency — call 911 NOW

■ New Jersey		■ Tidewater VA		■ Charlotte & NC	
■ NJ	NJ 211 Warming Centers				
	Call 211 when temps below 25°F. Free, no ID.				
■ VA	VA 211 Warming Centers				
	Call 211 for Hampton Roads warming centers.				
■ Charlotte NC	NC 211 — Charlotte Warming				
	Call 211. Mecklenburg opens warming sites. Free, no ID.				
■ Charlotte NC	Roof Above — Charlotte				
	Emergency cold weather shelter. (704) 375-0182				



Norfolk The Center

1050 Tidewater Dr. 100-bed shelter. (757) 664-6510



Chapter 6

Staying Cool in Summer

*Beat the heat — Charlotte NC & all regions*

Charlotte NC and Tidewater Virginia have dangerous summer heat and humidity combinations.

- Stay in shade between 10 AM and 4 PM — peak heat hours
- Wet a cloth and put on neck and wrists — cooling pulse points
- Drink water before feeling thirsty — thirst means already dehydrated
- Fans alone do not protect above 95°F — you need air conditioning

Heat Stroke Signs — Call 911

- Hot, red, dry skin with NO sweating · Temperature above 103°F
- Confusion or loss of consciousness — call 911 immediately

■ New Jersey		■ Tidewater VA		■ Charlotte & NC	
■ NJ	NJ 211 Cooling Centers				
	Call 211 when heat index hits 105°F. Counties open centers. Free.				
■ VA	VA 211 Cooling Centers				
	Call 211 for Hampton Roads cooling centers.				
■ Charlotte NC	NC 211 — Charlotte Cooling				
	Call 211. Mecklenburg County opens cooling sites. Free, no ID.				
■ Charlotte NC	Charlotte Mecklenburg Library				
	Air-conditioned branches. Free, open to all. cmlibrary.org				



Virginia Beach Libraries

Air-conditioned, free, open to all. vbgov.com/libraries

Chapter 7



Safe Plants to Eat

Edible wild plants in the Mid-Atlantic & Southeast

■■ IMPORTANT

NEVER eat a plant you cannot identify with 100% certainty. Use iNaturalist or PlantNet (free apps). When in doubt — do not eat it.

flowers, roots roasted — entire plant edible

Where to find: Everywhere — lawns, parks, roadsides. All three regions

— raw or cooked. High in protein.

Where to find: Lawns, fields, roadsides in all three regions.

Edible parts: Young leaves raw, older cooked like spinach.

Where to find:

like asparagus, pollen as flour, roots starchy cooked

Where to find: Wetlands, ponds, marshes. Brown sausage-shaped top.

res as tea.

Where to find: Forest edges, roadsides in all three regions in summer. T

reet.

Where to find: Virginia and NC forests including Charlotte area. Round

Edible parts: Leaves and flowers raw or cooked. High in Vitamins A and C.

Where to find:

Edible parts: Entire plant raw or cooked. Mild flavor, nutritious.

Where to find:

■■ IMPORTANT

NEVER eat: Pokeweed (purple berries — toxic), Jimsonweed (white trumpet flowers — deadly), Water Hemlock (white flowers near water — fatal).

Chapter 8



Growing Your Own Garden

Grow food with little space, money, or experience

A single 5-gallon bucket can produce pounds of food anywhere there is sunlight.

- **Container:** Any bucket or pot with drainage holes. Free at restaurants.
- **Potting soil:** \$5–\$8 at Walmart. Do NOT use ground dirt.
- **Seeds:** Free at seed libraries or \$1–\$2 at dollar stores.
- **Sunlight:** 6+ hours. A windowsill or sidewalk works.

Best Beginner Plants

- Lettuce — ready in 30–45 days, grows in shade, regrows after cutting
- Radishes — ready in 25 days, fastest vegetable
- Cherry Tomatoes — fruit in 60–70 days, one bucket produces pounds
- Kale & Spinach — very nutritious, regrows after cutting
- Green Onions — regrow from store-bought root ends in just water

■ New Jersey

■ Tidewater VA

■ Charlotte & NC

■ NJ

NJ Library Seed Libraries

Free seeds. Ask at your local branch.

■ VA

Virginia Beach Master Gardeners

Free advice and garden connections. vbmng.org

■
Charlotte
NC

Mecklenburg County Community Gardens

Free or low-cost plots. charlottenc.gov · (704) 336-3854

■ Charlotte NC	NC State Extension — Mecklenburg Free seeds and help for Charlotte area. extension.ncsu.edu
■ NJ	One Level Up Foundation Garden Program Free seed kits at our events. onelevelupfoundation.org

Chapter 9



Emergency Resources

211, shelters, hotlines — all three regions

■ 211 WORKS IN ALL THREE REGIONS

211 works in NJ, Virginia, AND North Carolina including Charlotte. Free, confidential, 24/7.

Key Numbers — Save These Now

- **211** — Food, shelter, clothing, phones, housing. All regions. Free. 24/7.
- **988** — Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call or text. Free, 24/7.
- **911** — Life-threatening emergency. All regions.
- **704-284-9665** — Charlotte Coordinated Entry (homeless/at risk in Mecklenburg)
- **704-371-3001** — Crisis Assistance Ministry Charlotte
- **988, press 1** — Veterans Crisis Line. All regions. Free. 24/7.
- **866-219-5262** — Legal Aid of NC — Charlotte and statewide

■ New Jersey

■ Tidewater VA

■ Charlotte & NC

■ NJ

NJ 211

Food, shelter, clothing, phones, housing. Call or text 211. Free, 24/7.

■ VA

Virginia 211

All Hampton Roads resources. Call or text 211. Free, 24/7.

■ Charlotte NC

NC 211 — Charlotte

All Charlotte and Mecklenburg resources. Call or text 211. Free, 24/7.

■ Charlotte NC

Charlotte Coordinated Entry

Homeless or at imminent risk. (704) 284-9665

■ Charlotte NC	Roof Above — Charlotte Largest homeless services. roohabove.org · (704) 375-0182
■ Charlotte NC	Crisis Assistance Ministry Rent, food, utilities, Free Store. 500-A Spratt St. (704) 371-3001
■ VA	Norfolk The Center 1050 Tidewater Dr. 100-bed shelter. (757) 664-6510
■ VA	Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center 104 N. Witchduck Rd. Crisis Hotline: (757) 227-5932.
■ NJ	NJ Emergency Shelters Call 211 for nearest shelter. Cannot turn away in weather emergencies.

Chapter 10



Your Survival Go-Bag

What to carry with you every day

A go-bag is a bag you keep with you at all times. Everything here is free or very low cost.

■ Water

- Reusable bottle · Purification tablets (\$5–\$8) · LifeStraw filter (under \$20)

■ Food

- Peanut butter packets · Granola bars (3–5 day supply) · Instant oatmeal

■ Warmth

- Extra wool socks · Mylar blanket (\$1–\$2) · Rain poncho · Hat and gloves

■ Phone

- Charged phone (charge free at libraries/shelters) · Portable power bank · Written emergency numbers

■ First Aid

- Bandages · Antiseptic wipes · Pain reliever · All prescription medications

■ Hygiene

- Travel soap and toothbrush (free at shelters) · Hand sanitizer

■ Tools

- Flashlight with batteries · Lighter in waterproof bag · Garbage bags

■ KEEP THIS GUIDE WITH YOU

Keep this book in your go-bag. Print free at any public library.



Chapter 11

You Are Not Alone

One Level Up Foundation walks with you

This guide was written because we believe in you — as a whole person with gifts, purpose, and a future not defined by where you are sleeping tonight.

■ NJ	Housing Navigation — NJ Connect with NJ housing assistance. contact@onelevelupfoundation.org
■ VA	One Level Up Podcast — All Regions Free weekly episodes. YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts. Search 'One Level Up Podcast'.
■ Charlotte NC	Digital Training & Workshops — Charlotte Free virtual workshops available to Charlotte and all NC. onelevelupfoundation.org
■ Charlotte NC	Teach Them How to Fish Events Free one-day survival training. Seed kits, water training, phone resources. onelevelupfoundation.org
■ VA	Faith Action Network (FAN) Partnership with Lt. Governor Dale G. Caldwell — faith communities statewide.
■ Charlotte NC	Donate givebutter.com/onelevelup — your gift funds this guide and programs.

CONTACT ONE LEVEL UP FOUNDATION

Website: onelevelupfoundation.org Email: contact@onelevelupfoundation.org Podcast: Search 'One Level Up Podcast' on YouTube or Spotify Donate: givebutter.com/onelevelup Help: Call 211 — NJ, Virginia, or Charlotte NC

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

One Level Up Foundation teaches people to fish. ■■

This guide is free. Print it. Share it. Give it to anyone who needs it.

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