



OUTSIDE.

How to stay alive, fed, clean, and safe on the street in Northwest Arkansas until we get you in. The system is slow. You are not. This is the plan for the gap.

IN CRISIS RIGHT NOW?

Dial 988, press 1

Text 838255

HOMELESS TONIGHT?

877-424-3838

§ 1 PRIORITIES

- 1-1 **Order of work.** Three hours in bad weather, three days without water, three weeks without food. Work the list in this order, every day:
- ▶ Get out of the weather.
 - ▶ Water.
 - ▶ Charge the phone. Call us.
 - ▶ Eat.
 - ▶ Sleep somewhere safe.
- 1-2 **Don't make it worse.** No alcohol in the cold. Don't lose your papers. Don't take a ride from a stranger. Don't sign anything you didn't ask for.
- 1-3 **You are working, not waiting.** Housing, the VA, and your claim move slow. Your job is to stay healthy enough to walk through the door when it opens. That's the mission.

§ 2 WATER & FOOD

- 2-1 **Water first.** A bottle on you at all times. Refill at any library, the VA lobby, park fountains, gas stations (ask — most say yes). Two to three liters a day, more in summer. Dark urine means drink now.

- 2-2 **Free hot meals, NWA.** No ID, no questions, no check-in.

WHERE	WHEN • PHONE
Salvation Army — Fayetteville 219 W 15th St	Dinner 5 PM daily 479-521-2151
Salvation Army — Bentonville 3305 SW I St	Dinner 5 PM daily 479-521-2151
Samaritan Community Center — Springdale 1520 W Huntsville Ave • hot meals + food pantry	Call for hours 479-872-1115
Samaritan Community Center — Rogers 2910 S 8th St • hot meals + food pantry	Call for hours 479-636-4198
7hills Day Center — Fayetteville 1832 S School Ave • food bags, showers, mail	Weekdays 479-966-4378
This week's full list Church meals change by day. 211 knows them all.	Dial 2-1-1

- 2-3 **SNAP this week.** Food stamps come on a card and work at Walmart, Harps, Aldi. Apply at Arkansas DHS or dial 2-1-1. Cold deli food counts; hot food doesn't. 7hills and Samaritan will help you fill it out.
- 2-4 **Asking beats digging.** Bakeries, pizza places, grocery delis, and donut shops throw food out at close. Go in fifteen minutes before closing, be clean, ask the manager politely. A lot of them say yes. Churches with a sign out front mean it.

- 2-5 **If you have five dollars:** peanut butter, tortillas, canned beans, oatmeal (gas-station hot water), bananas. Fat and protein keep you warm. Sugar doesn't.
- 2-6 **Never skip a free meal to save face.** Calories are heat. Pride doesn't keep you warm at 3 AM.

CAUTION

Anything with mayo, meat, or dairy that's been sitting out: **don't.** Food poisoning on the street is a hospital trip. If you can't tell what it is or how long it's been there, leave it.

§ 3 SHELTER & THE ELEMENTS

- 3-1 **Cold is the killer.** Hypothermia starts at 50°F if you're wet or in wind. Layers, not one thick coat. No cotton next to skin once it's wet — wool or synthetic. **Cardboard under you beats a blanket over you:** the ground pulls the heat out. Get out of the wind — a wall, a stairwell, a hedge line. Keep a Mylar emergency blanket in your pocket. It's a dollar.

WARNING

Alcohol feels warm and drops your core temperature. Drinking in the cold is how veterans die in parking lots in January. If you drink, do it inside and not alone.

- 3-2 **32°F and below:** the Salvation Army in Fayetteville and Bentonville opens to **everyone**, every night, cots and blankets, no bed-count excuse. Daytime warming: 7hills (weekdays) and Salvation Army (weekends/holidays). Check in 6-9 PM; dinner is at 5.
- 3-3 **Heat.** NWA hits 100°+. Shade, water, a wet rag on the neck. Libraries, Walmart, the VA lobby are cooling. Heat index 100°+: Salvation Army opens cooling centers. **Stopped sweating and confused = heat stroke. 911.**
- 3-4 **Storms.** Arkansas weather comes in fast. **Never camp in a creek bed, drainage ditch, culvert, or under a bridge over water** — flash floods take people at night. Tornado warning outdoors: lowest ground, lie flat, cover your head, **not** under an overpass. Lightning: off the ridge, out of the open.
- 3-5 **Sleeping outside.** Where other people sleep is safer than alone. Out of sight but near people. Back to a wall, feet toward the way out, boots on or tied to you. **Not railroad property** — it's a federal charge and trains kill. Not posted private property — a trespass arrest sets your claim back months.
- 3-6 **Warm, dry, indoor hours.** Public libraries (Fayetteville's is open seven days; Springdale, Rogers, Bentonville too), 24-hour laundromats, hospital waiting rooms, the VA lobby, Walmart. Be clean, be quiet, buy a coffee if you can. They'll leave you alone.

§ 4 HYGIENE & HEALTH

- 4-1 **Showers.** 7hills Day Center, Fayetteville — free, weekdays. Samaritan Community Center — ask. Truck stops on I-49 sell showers (\$12-15); ask a driver at the counter — many have free shower credits and will give you one. Gyms run free trial weeks.
- 4-2 **Field bath.** Baby wipes: face, pits, crotch, feet — in that order, new wipe each. Hand sanitizer before you eat, every time. Brush your teeth daily; a dollar-store brush and paste. An abscessed tooth is an ER visit and a week of fever.
- 4-3 **Feet. You know this.** Dry socks every single day. Wool if you can get it. Air your feet out at every stop. Powder. Change socks before you change anything else. Trench foot and blisters take you out of the fight faster than hunger.
- 4-4 **Laundry.** Laundromat with quarters; 7hills; some churches. Socks and underwear wash in a sink with hand soap and dry on a fence in an hour of sun.

WARNING

Do not stop blood pressure, insulin, seizure, heart, or psych meds cold. Call the Fayetteville VA at 479-443-4301, say "I'm a homeless veteran and I'm out of my medication." If you're enrolled they will fill it. If you're not, that call starts enrollment. Washington Regional and Mercy ERs **cannot turn you away**, paid or not.

- 4-5 **Wounds.** Clean with water, cover, keep dry, change the cover daily. Red streaks, heat, swelling, pus, or fever = get seen **today**. On the street a small infection becomes sepsis in days.
- 4-6 **Your head.** 988, press 1 — any hour. The Vet Center at 1416 N College Ave (479-582-7152) will see a combat vet with no VA enrollment, no appointment. You don't have to talk. You can sit in a chair in a warm room with people who get it.

§ 5 SECURITY

- 5-1 **Papers on your body, not in your bag.** DD-214, ID, Social Security card, VA card in a ziplock inside your clothes. Photograph every one with your phone. Bags get stolen while you sleep. Bodies don't.
- 5-2 **Money.** Split it — some in the shoe, some in the pocket. Never count it where anyone can see. Don't flash the phone.
- 5-3 **Move by day.** At night stay where it's lit and people are passing. Trust slow. The guy with a "place to crash" wants something. Nobody gives a stranger a bed for free.
- 5-4 **Predators. Walk away from:**
- ▶ Anyone who needs your ID or Social Security card for a "job."
 - ▶ Anyone who'll "help with your VA claim" for a cut of your back pay.
 - ▶ Anyone offering a bed for "favors."
 - ▶ Anyone selling you a ride to a "program" out of state.
- 5-5 **Police.** Hands visible. Calm. "I'm a veteran, I'm homeless, I'm working with Still Serves." Ask for the VA's **Veterans Justice Outreach**. Washington County runs a Veterans Treatment Court — a charge can go through it instead of jail. A trespass or open-container ticket is a setback, not the end. **Tell your advocate the same day.**

- 5-6 **Don't carry what gets you a felony.** A bright flashlight and a loud whistle end more trouble than a knife starts. A weapons charge ends your housing voucher.
- 5-7 **Dogs.** Don't run. Turn sideways, don't stare, back away slow, put a bag between you.

WARNING

No open flame in a tent, under a tarp, or in a car. No propane heaters, no charcoal, no candles in an enclosed space. Carbon monoxide and tent fires kill people every winter in this state. Body heat, layers, and cardboard.

§ 6 PHONE, MAIL, GETTING AROUND

- 6-1 **Charge.** Library, VA lobby, McDonald's, Walmart (outlets by the front benches), hospital waiting rooms. A \$15 battery bank is the best money you'll spend.
- 6-2 **Free phone.** Lifeline program — Assurance Wireless or SafeLink. Say "Lifeline" and that you get SNAP, Medicaid, or VA pension. 7hills can help you apply.
- 6-3 **Mail.** 7hills Day Center holds mail for you. Or ask the main post office in your town for **General Delivery** — free, you pick it up with ID. The VA and Social Security both need an address that works.
- 6-4 **Bus. Razorback Transit is free for everyone** — not just students — and runs College Avenue in Fayetteville, past the VA at 1100 N College. Springdale, Rogers, Bentonville: Ozark Regional Transit, 479-756-5901. Your advocate can drive you to appointments; ask.
- 6-5 **Wi-Fi and email.** Libraries, McDonald's, Walmart. Set up a free email at the library. Everything from the VA comes by email now.

§ 7 STAYING IN THE FIGHT

- 7-1 **Routine beats everything.** Wake. Water. Wipe. Socks. Charge. Meal. Call. Same order, every day. Routine is what keeps a person a person out here.
- 7-2 **Call your advocate every week.** Don't have one? **stillserves.org**, or ask 7hills or the Vet Center to connect you to Still Serves.
- 7-3 **Keep every appointment.** Phone alarm the day before and the morning of. A missed C&P exam resets your claim by months. If you can't get there, call your advocate the day before — we drive.
- 7-4 **Write it down.** Who you talked to, when, what they said. A notebook in the ziplock with your papers. The system loses things. You won't.
- 7-5 **The one rule.** Don't go quiet. If a week passes and nobody's heard from you, we start looking. Answer the phone. Text back. That's the whole deal.

NOTE

Still Serves is veterans. Not the VA, not the county, not a program. We don't charge, we don't report, and we don't quit. Hand this to anyone who served. **stillserves.org**