

Here is some info I try to share with anyone newly homeless. I am happy to answer any other questions you have. I have this saved in my phone so that I can copy/paste it and I update it from time to time with new things I learn. This is all based on the United States. It's a lot of info, but it's things I wish someone would have told me.

Apply for a library card. It will give you better benefits at the library. Most have free digital services, where you can get audiobooks and ebooks, and some even have movies you can watch.

Apply for Snap and Medicaid. Snap will keep you fed (although it's not a lot of money, it's better than nothing), and Medicaid will cover your health insurance needs. Just google your state and snap/ebt and your state Medicaid. In many cases, you can apply online. Foodbanks are great resources; just google foodbank and your location. Also, as a bonus, some Medicaid plans cover a gym membership, so you can shower and get your workout on.

Also, with your approval letter for SNAP/EBT (food stamps), you can get Amazon Prime for \$6.99 a month, which is very helpful for digital content. also, if you have Amazon lockers near you or a place where you can get packages, it saves you on shipping.

<https://www.amazon.com/58f8026f-0658-47d0-9752-f6fa2c69b2e2/qualify>

Depending on your financial situation, filing for bankruptcy can relieve one burden. If you have debt, check out <https://upsolve.org/> if you have other legal problems, most states offer free or discounted legal services.

You can get a free cell phone or plan through the Lifeline Program, which will save you on the cost of having a phone. <https://www.lifewireless.com/> Also, on the topic of cell phones, download every rewards app for restaurants and stores in your local area. They often have freebie offers or deep discounts. You can check out [/r/Freebies](#) or [/r/efreebies](#) for some other good freebie info. If you need wifi check out <https://www.wifimap.io/countries> to find free hotspots near you.

Check <https://benefitscheckup.org/> to see what else you may qualify for.

Check with your local post office to see if they support general delivery:

<https://faq.usps.com/s/article/What-is-General-Delivery>

Apps like Paypal, CashApp, and Venmo offer debit cards, and most allow direct deposit, etc so you can use that as a bank account.

Check out <https://www.coolworks.com> for jobs to get a job with room and board, if you are single, Cruise lines are also a great option. If you need a passport, you can file a fee waiver to get a free passport. SNAP/EBT usually qualifies you

<https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/additional-information-on-filing-a-fee-waiver>

If you don't already, make sure you have copies of your ID on your phone. If you don't have a copy of your social security card, you can get a replacement for free at <https://www.ssa.gov/number-card/replace-card>. Also, make sure you have a copy of your birth certificate. If you don't, just Google birth certificate and the county you were born in to find out how to get one. Keep those documents in a double-bagged ziplock bag. Consider getting a "money belt" they are like mini fanny packs that you wear under your clothes, and keep the documents in there along with ID, cash, and debit cards. It's helpful in case you get robbed. You can say, "Someone already stole my wallet I don't have one.". You can find them as cheap as \$10. I use this one <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01M594B5K>

211 can be a decent resource - but some people don't have great luck with it, it depends on your location. <https://www.211.org/>

Exercise is essential and also helps with mental health. YouTube is a treasure trove of things like yoga for hikers https://youtu.be/SdRv6l2BPi0?si=xwO0w3_Lwsmi4PZ3 , bodyweight workouts <https://youtu.be/5xu228yrTVo?si=sC9k2GWBzH2-q7RE> , positive affirmations <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efZFARmGyMs> , Survival skills and, well, honestly, just about anything you need to learn or fix you can find on YouTube.

Other random advice: Sell everything you can. You don't need to keep things in a storage unit or carry around a bunch of non-essential items, and the money will come in handy. Use tools like Craigslist, Facebook marketplace, etc.

Stay close to resources but not too close. Blending in and being anonymous is your friend. Stealth camping is the best way to go. Sleeping in encampments may provide a false sense of security. With the recent Supreme Court ruling upholding the elimination of homeless encampments, many cities are cracking down and scooping up people's belongings and tossing them. You need to camp in the woods, away from the general public, and have a camp you can quickly pick up and roll out of. This guy gives a lot of great examples of stealth camping, I learned a lot from him <https://www.youtube.com/@campingwithsteve>

Having a vehicle: Everyone's situation is different, but in my opinion, vehicles quickly drain your money. Between fuel, insurance, maintenance, tickets, and repairs, they will deplete your bank account. I get it provides a sense of security for some people. Mass transit (bus, train, etc..) is way cheaper. I can take a bus from the East Coast to the West Coast for about \$250.

Showers and Laundry: A lot of people recommend gyms. I had an issue with Planet Fitness and the ability to cancel when I didn't have enough to cover it. I recommend YMCA's or just google "homeless showers" and whatever area you are in. Sometimes it comes down to washing yourself with a bottle of water or in a gas station sink Truck stops can be a great resource, too, fly a sign asking for shower tokens, and many truckers have more than they can use from fuel rewards and are happy to help. For laundry some homeless shelters offer laundry; otherwise, it's a laundromat. Some cities have mobile showers and laundry for the homeless, but that is hard to come by sometimes.

Clothing: Yard / garage sales, thrift shops (you can sometimes bargain with them for lower prices), and dumpster diving can sometimes yield results not only for clothes but also for food and other essentials like deodorant or toothpaste, etc. Check out /r/dumpsterdiving. Just be smart about it, do it after hours, and leave if you are told to.

Police: Not all cops are bad, but also not all cops are good. Under no circumstances should you talk to the police unless you absolutely have to. Do everything you can to avoid an interaction with them. They can legally lie to you, but if you do it to them, it's a crime. There is an excellent video on YouTube about how the most minor thing you say they can turn against you:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-7o9xYp7eE>

Get a water sillcock key, they are as cheap as \$8 on Amazon and get a reusable water bottle. You can go without food for a while but not water. This will give you access to water at places after hours if you need it.

Find a few things that make you happy and take some time out each day to do them. For me, and it sounds silly, I pet a dog, and sometimes I play Yahtzee with a random person or by myself. I also listen to a lot of podcasts; comedy keeps me going. Journaling also helps. It sounds crazy, but getting your thoughts out on paper or your phone's notes app can be therapeutic.

Often, we end up in this lifestyle and punish ourselves like we don't deserve fun things, but it is so important for our mental health.

Best of luck to you. Be humble and kind, keep to yourself, and always be aware of your surroundings. Be skeptical of people. Trust but verify. Never go by your real name unless you are legally obligated to give it (seeking state or federal assistance, the police demand it, etc). It's going to be real, and it's not going to be fun, but make the most of it. Approach every day like it's the first day of the rest of your life, and make it count. It is only up from here!