

YOU DON'T NEED ALL OF THE ITEMS LISTED TO MAKE CARE PACKAGES.

Getting together with a group of people to package a few clothing/hygiene/food-related items into zip-lock bags will go a long way!

Every person has different needs & tastes.

The person on the receiving end may not need/want some of the items in the care package or might request something specific. Have different options to choose from. Check in with unhoused folks in your area & ask what they need.

A good idea is to have printed copies of important local resources such as food kitchens, shelters, free clinics, free stores, or any other mutual aid events happening soon.



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HOW TO MAKE CARE PACKAGES FOR UNSHELTERED FOLKS

Content by @polititexts



HELPFUL CARE PACKAGE ITEMS

- Socks: thermal or wool socks
- Gloves: gloves you can layer, waterproof, or skiing ones are ideal
- Tarp: **10x10 is ideal**
- Emergency Rain Poncho
- Hand + Foot Warmers
- Sleeping Bag or Mat
- Blankets: emergency or cloth ones are good
- Beanie & Scarf
- Umbrella
- Underwear
- Thermal clothes: base layers, long-sleeve T-shirts, leggings, etc.
- Coats or Jackets: wool, sherpa, fleece, puffer & waterproof are keywords
- Wash Cloth/Towel
- Pants + Shoes
- No-rinse Bathing Wipes
- Menstrual Products
- First Aid kit: big bandaids are helpful
- Adult Diapers/Incontinence Briefs
- Medicine/Pain Killers
- Deodorant
- Lip Balm
- Lotion+ Sunscreen
- Floss/Mouth Wash
- Soap/Shampoo + Conditioner
- Tissues
- Toothbrush+ Toothpaste: brush covers are nice
- Nail clipper
- Razor + Shaving Cream
- Comb/brush
- Hand Sanitizer
- Face Masks
- Other Wipes: hand, disinfectant, or baby ones

CLOTHING-RELATED ITEMS

- Beef Jerky/Dried Meat
- Peanut Butter Crackers
- Apple Sauce + Pudding (packets are good)
- Breakfast/Cereal Bars (avoid granola bars/trail mix/crunchy or sticky foods)
- Chocolate
- Cheese + Meat Snack Trays
- Mints (avoid gum & hard to chew foods)
- Raisins/Cranberries/Dried Fruit
- Tuna or Chicken Salad Cracker kits
- Water + Electrolytes (dehydration is a big issue!)
- Juice/Milk/Protein Shakes
- Pop-top Food Cans
- Teabags + Instant Coffee (many places give out free hot water cups)
- Infant formula
- Emergen-C, Airborne + Chewable Vitamins
- Flameless Heater Packs
- Reusable cup
- Can opener

FOOD-RELATED ITEMS

- Trolley/Bus Pass
- Pay-as-you-go cell phone + minutes
- Day-pass to a gym, campground, or truck stop for a shower
- A paid night/week in a hotel
- PO box to receive mail

Supporting small vendors or businesses in your area is always a good idea. You can also buy a lot of items at discount, outlet or big box stores. Here are some well-known stores:

- Dollar Tree
- dd's Discounts
- 99 Cent Store
- Food 4 Less
- GTM Stores
- Grocery Outlet
- Dave's Wholesale
- Costco
- Walmart
- 7-11
- Big Lots
- DAISO
- ALDI
- ROSS

 Remember to include plus sizes if you are going to buy, donate, or distribute clothes!

HYGIENE-RELATED ITEMS

MORE HELPFUL STUFF

- Cash
- Headlamp or Flashlight (waterproof is best)
- Quarters for Laundromat
- Powdered Laundry Soap
- Sewing Kit
- Zip-lock bags in different sizes
- Drybag
- Sturdy reusable/grocery bags
- Backpack or gym bag
- Pet Food
- Gas/Gas Card
- Baby diapers
- Lighter, Matches & Pillar Candles
- Stamps
- Tent
- Self-defense Supplies

THINGS TO AVOID

- Low-quality/thin or used socks
- Opened/used items in general! Some exceptions are sanitized + gently used items like outwear, tents, blankets, etc.
- Large bottles of anything
- Heavily scented toiletries
- Gift cards

SAFETY TIPS

- Wear a face mask & gloves
- Distribute packages outdoors
- Practice social distancing
- Bring hand sanitizer
- Get tested for COVID-19 regularly
- Don't volunteer if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19

Making care packages/hygiene kits is a simple way to support unsheltered folks directly. You can organize yourself with a group of comrades or you can reach out to a local mutual aid or non-profit organization that already does distributions and is accepting new volunteers.

Giving funds directly to folks who are struggling financially will always be the best option but it's not the only way to help. Planning donation or distribution drives, re-posting calls for mutual aid, crowdfunding, creating or distributing flyers, buying supplies, and allowing your car to be used for events are other ways to help.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Do I have a few bucks to spare every so often?
- Do I have free time that I could use to volunteer?
- Do I have extra items that are in a new or great condition & could be useful to someone else?
- Could I use my social capital to bring awareness, crowdfund, or collect donations?
- Am I good at finding affordable quality items?