NEVER OFF DUTY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 – 2027

FLORIDA

Atlantic Coast: Jacksonville to Palm Beach



NeverOffDuty.org

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BACKGROUND



Never Off Duty (NOD) is a nonprofit organization that was incorporated in Hawaii in 2017 and moved operations to New Jersey in 2023. By the time of its 2024–2027 plan, NOD had trained and secured employment for over 400 lifeguards.

NOD is now expanding to Florida's Atlantic coast, from Jacksonville through Palm Beach. Florida is a new market for NOD, and 2026–2027 is our launch period.

In Florida, NOD plans to deliver American Red Cross CPR, First Aid, BLS, and Lifeguard training, beach and pool club lifeguard services, university aquatics audits, and the free Barefoot Brigade school program. This plan keeps NOD's five strategic priorities and makes them specific to the Florida launch.



OUR LEADERSHIP

Jason Bitzer

Founder, President and Chief Marketing Officer

Jason Bitzer is a retired professional bodyboarder with decades of lifeguard and training experience in New Jersey and Hawaii. He serves on advisory boards for the American Red Cross and multiple international water safety programs. In 2019, he was awarded the American Red Cross' National Lifesaving Merit Award for his rescue of professional surfer Jamie O'Brien at Pipeline, Hawaii. He has been featured in the publication *Surfline* as well as the television program HBO's *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel*. Jason is also a certified Emergency Medical Technician and experienced safety manager for large-scale athletic events.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

Vision

To become a nationally-recognized model for best practices in water safety education and emergency response job training.

Mission: Florida

To improve access and safety measures at the beaches and pools of Florida's Atlantic coast, from Jacksonville to Palm Beach, by educating swimmers and delivering quality training and career coaching to lifeguards.



OUR VALUES

Core Values

Integrity We carry out our mission with honesty, responsibility, and respect.

Resilience We approach challenges with determination and a positive attitude.

Innovation We use creative methods to continually enhance our programs to meet the changing needs of our stakeholders.

Collaboration We welcome opportunities to share our knowledge and resources with community and industry partners.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

It is our conviction that safe swimming environments and effective water safety education are essential for all Florida residents and visitors, and we are committed to taking the necessary steps to support historically underserved populations along the Atlantic coast. We strongly believe that an organization is strengthened by meaningful input and contributions from individuals of all backgrounds and identities who bring with them a diverse range of perspectives and lived experiences. We foster an organizational culture of acceptance and belonging.

CURRENT DROWNING DATA, NATIONAL AND FLORIDA

THE NEED

UNITED STATES

4,509

unintentional drowning deaths in the United States in 2022, an age-adjusted rate of 1.3 per 100,000 people.

Data year: 2022. Source: CDC, MMWR Vital Signs: Drowning Death Rates … United States, 2019–2023 (May 2024), National Vital Statistics System data.

#1

Drowning kills more children ages 1–4 than any other cause of death in the U.S.

CDC page updated 2026. Source: CDC, Drowning Facts (page updated Jan 27, 2026; WISQARS data).

54.7%

of U.S. adults reported never having taken a swimming lesson.

Survey year: 2023. Source: CDC, MMWR Vital Signs: Drowning Death Rates … United States, 2019–2023 (May 2024), National Vital Statistics System data.

FLORIDA

444

Florida residents died from unintentional drowning in 2025, an age-adjusted rate of 1.8 per 100,000 (452 deaths and 1.9 in 2024).

Data years: 2025 and 2024; excludes water-transport drownings. Source: Florida Department of Health, FLHealthCHARTS, Deaths From Unintentional Drowning (Bureau of Vital Statistics).

Ages 1–4

In Florida, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death for children ages 1–4.

Florida DOH, current page. Source: Florida Department of Health, Drowning Prevention.

5th

Florida ranks 5th in the nation for drowning deaths, per the Florida Department of Health.

Florida DOH, current page (citing CDC). Source: Florida Department of Health, Drowning Prevention.

County counts are by county of residence. Rates based on fewer than 20 deaths may be unstable (FLHealthCHARTS note). Figures are reported as published; none are estimated. Full URLs are listed on the Sources page.

FROM NEED TO SOLUTIONS

Drowning is preventable. Layers of protection work: trained lifeguards, water safety education, swimming skills, and people ready to give CPR. NOD's programs in Florida build each of these layers.

- **Guarded water.** Contracting trained lifeguards for beach and pool clubs puts qualified responders where families swim.
- **Caregivers who can respond.** American Red Cross CPR and First Aid training prepares parents, staff, and caregivers of young children.
- **Early education and safe campuses.** Barefoot Brigade reaches young children in school, and university aquatics audits (UNF, Flagler College) support safe campus pools.

County (2025)	Deaths	Age-adj. rate
Duval	16	1.5
St. Johns	4	1.1
Flagler	0	0.0
Volusia	15	2.1
Brevard	19	2.9
Indian River	3	2.0
St. Lucie	9	2.3
Martin	8	5.7
Palm Beach	27	1.8
Corridor total (sum of counties)	**101**	–

Unintentional drowning deaths by county of residence, Jacksonville (Duval) to Palm Beach, 2025. Rate per 100,000, age-adjusted. Source: Florida Department of Health, FLHealthCHARTS, Deaths From Unintentional Drowning (Bureau of Vital Statistics), accessed Nov 15, 2026. County counts are by county of residence. Rates based on fewer than 20 deaths may be unstable (FLHealthCHARTS note).

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

Priority 1	Expand Board of Directors and Advisory Council	• Recruit founding Florida advisors • Add Florida board representation • Form a Florida launch committee
Priority 2	Establish Local Partnerships with a Focus on Disadvantaged Communities	• Assess needs in 9 Atlantic coast counties • Propose UNF and Flagler College aquatics audits • Pilot Barefoot Brigade in Florida schools
Priority 3	Reinforce the Organization's Financial Health	• Launch lifeguard services at 25%+ margin • Medline, PRESTAN, Heartstream sponsorships • Florida grant research
Priority 4	Streamline Branding, Communications, and Social Media Presence	• Announce the Florida launch • Build a Florida web section • Market to beach and pool clubs
Priority 5	Focus and Refine the Program Portfolio	• Choose Florida launch programs • Adapt curricula to Florida • Measure and refine

PRIORITY

1

Expand Board of Directors and Advisory Council

Florida – Atlantic Coast: Jacksonville to Palm Beach

REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Recruit founding Florida advisors and board members from the Jacksonville to Palm Beach corridor.
- Bring Florida perspective into board governance as NOD becomes a three-region organization.
- Establish a Florida Advisory Council of subject matter experts in aquatics, lifeguarding, and workforce training.

STRATEGIES

- Recruit from aquatics, hospitality, education, healthcare, and workforce communities in the corridor.
- Create a Florida launch committee with defined objectives and action items.
- Update bylaws and committee structure to include Florida.

PARTNERS AND MARKETS

- Beach and pool club leaders
- University aquatics professionals
- Florida workforce and education leaders



TARGET KPIs, 2026–2027

All figures below are goals, not results.

Florida launch committee
Target: formed by Dec 31, 2026

Florida Advisory Council
Target: 5+ members by Q2 2027

Florida board members
Target: 1–2 by Q4 2027

Bylaws updated for Florida
Target: by Q1 2027

PRIORITY

2

Establish Local Partnerships with a Focus on Disadvantaged Communities

Florida – Atlantic Coast: Jacksonville to Palm Beach

REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Research corridor communities that have historically been underserved and underrepresented.
- Meet with leaders and advocates to determine the greatest needs of residents.
- Form partnerships with universities, schools, and clubs that reflect the communities we serve.

STRATEGIES

- Complete a needs and market assessment of Duval, St. Johns, Flagler, Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and Palm Beach counties using FLHealthCHARTS data.
- Propose aquatics audits to the University of North Florida (UNF) and Flagler College.
- Pilot the free Barefoot Brigade program in Florida elementary schools.

PARTNERS AND MARKETS

- University of North Florida (UNF)
- Flagler College
- Corridor elementary schools
- Beach and pool clubs
- Community organizations



TARGET KPIs, 2026–2027

All figures below are goals, not results.

Needs and market assessment
Target: complete by Q1 2027

UNF and Flagler College proposals
Target: both delivered by Q2 2027

Barefoot Brigade pilot schools
Target: 5 by June 2027

Community leader meetings
Target: 10 by Q2 2027

PRIORITY

3

Reinforce the Organization's Financial Health

Florida – Atlantic Coast: Jacksonville to Palm Beach

REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Create a Florida launch budget and staffing plan.
- Build earned revenue from lifeguard services and training from the start.
- Research and engage Florida grantmakers and corporate sponsors with shared values.

STRATEGIES

- Price every beach and pool club lifeguard services contract for a margin of 25% or more.
- Present Florida sponsorship proposals to Medline, PRESTAN, and Heartstream.
- Offer Barefoot Brigade as a sponsorable item for Florida schools.
- Build a pipeline of Florida grant opportunities aligned with drowning prevention and youth jobs.

PARTNERS AND MARKETS

- Medline, PRESTAN, Heartstream
- Beach and pool clubs
- Florida grantmakers (to be researched)



TARGET KPIs, 2026–2027

All figures below are goals, not results.

Lifeguard services margin
Target: 25% or more on every contract

Club service agreements
Target: 3 signed for summer 2027

Sponsor proposals
Target: 3 delivered by Q1 2027

Grant opportunities researched
Target: 5, with 2 applications in 2027

Florida launch budget
Target: approved by Dec 31, 2026

PRIORITY

4

Streamline Branding, Communications, and Social Media Presence

Florida – Atlantic Coast: Jacksonville to Palm Beach

REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Apply the organization-wide style guide to all Florida launch materials.
- Develop a Florida communication plan across web, email, and social media.
- Build awareness of NOD and its mission in a new market.

STRATEGIES

- Announce the Florida launch to clubs, universities, schools, and media.
- Add a Florida section to neveroffduty.org with courses and lifeguard services.
- Run a beach and pool club outreach campaign ahead of summer 2027.
- Feature sponsors on Barefoot Brigade materials.

PARTNERS AND MARKETS

- Beach and pool clubs
- Universities and schools
- Local media



TARGET KPIs, 2026–2027

All figures below are goals, not results.

Florida launch announcement
Target: by Q1 2027

Florida web section
Target: live by Q1 2027

Club outreach contacts
Target: 25 clubs by Q2 2027

Florida social posts
Target: 8 per month after launch

PRIORITY

5

Focus and Refine the Program Portfolio

Florida – Atlantic Coast: Jacksonville to Palm Beach

REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Choose the signature programs for the Florida launch.
- Document curricula and service standards for Florida operations.
- Gather feedback from program partners and participants.

STRATEGIES

- Launch programs: American Red Cross CPR, First Aid, BLS, and Lifeguard training; beach and pool club lifeguard services; university aquatics audits; Barefoot Brigade.
- Assess Junior Lifeguards and open water training for a later phase.
- Hire an independent external evaluator, and revise programs based on feedback.

PARTNERS AND MARKETS

- American Red Cross (training provider)
- UNF and Flagler College
- Beach and pool clubs
- External evaluator (to be selected)



TARGET KPIs, 2026–2027

All figures below are goals, not results.

Corridor markets with ARC courses
Target: 2 (Jacksonville and Palm Beach) by Q2 2027

Participant satisfaction
Target: 90%+ rate courses good or excellent

Certification pass rate
Target: 90%+

Junior Lifeguards assessment
Target: complete by Q4 2027

ACTION PLAN

Q4 2026

Form Florida launch committee

Approve launch budget

Begin advisor recruitment

Start needs and market assessment

Q1 2027

Announce Florida launch

Launch Florida web section

Deliver sponsor proposals

Begin club outreach

Q2 2027

Deliver UNF and Flagler College proposals

Barefoot Brigade pilot in 5 schools

First ARC courses in 2 markets

Seat Advisory Council

Q3–Q4 2027

Staff summer club contracts

Review margins and results

Assess Junior Lifeguards

Document successes and lessons learned

Dates are targets and will be reviewed by the board each quarter.

DATA FOR “THE NEED”, ACCESSED NOV 15, 2026

SOURCES

CDC, MMWR Vital Signs: Drowning Death Rates … United States, 2019–2023 (May 2024), National Vital Statistics System data
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7320e1.htm

CDC, Drowning Facts (page updated Jan 27, 2026; WISQARS data)
https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/data-research/facts/index.html

Florida Department of Health, FLHealthCHARTS, Deaths From Unintentional Drowning (Bureau of Vital Statistics)
https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsDashboards/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Death.DataViewer&cid;=0105

Florida Department of Health, Drowning Prevention
https://www.floridahealth.gov/individual-family-health/child-infant-youth/drowning-prevention/

All figures are reported as published by the source, with the data year shown. No figures were estimated. Where a regional figure could not be found, this plan says so. Photos: Never Off Duty.





CONTACTS

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