

Update – Activity and progress continue at Camp Hope as official census is completed, encampment closes to new residents and continued assessments and outreach take place

As part of continued work to close the Camp Hope encampment, WSDOT and its state, local and nonprofit partners continue to make visible progress stabilizing the site as part of the state [Right of Way Safety Initiative](#). This joint effort includes work from WSDOT, the state Department of Commerce, the Washington State Patrol and on-the-ground resource provider Empire Health Foundation (working under a contract with Commerce) and other partners, who are all working toward the shared community goal of closing the encampment.

Badging, census and encampment stabilization

As of Monday, Oct. 24, **442** people underwent initial assessments, signed the [rules and good neighbor agreement](#) and received a [Camp Hope identification badge](#). The badges and agreements are required for people to remain in the encampment while outreach groups work to transition them into shelter/housing and everyone on site signed the agreements. New people are no longer allowed to move onto the site.

The official, by-name census that comes from issuing badges allows outreach groups to fully understand exactly how many people need housing and begin the important work of matching residents with services and housing options while gradually drawing down and then closing the encampment. While this census number is lower than some earlier estimates, it's still important to note this is a large encampment that requires extensive shelter and housing options to fully close.

Assessments underway

An initial needs assessment was conducted on each Camp Hope resident as part of the badging requirements and now more in-depth work begins to put residents on a productive road to long-term housing. This labor-intensive work takes time, but it has been found to be the key to long-term success and breaking the cycle of homelessness [at other sites in the state](#).

Several service providers are assisting with this critical work, including matching residents with treatment, assistance and other services to help make a successful transition to housing. State agencies are also assisting as needed.

Ongoing assistance

A number of services have been and continue to be provided to people living in Camp Hope to help prepare for transition to housing and success going forward. Those include the:

- Programs seeking to reunify unsheltered individuals with their families, with ongoing assistance.

- Skills building workshops are conducted each week onsite to assist residents of with housing readiness.
- Meals and food provided a network of more than 100 Spokane County church and faith groups.
- Community donations of supplies and clothing.
- Transportation to and from necessary appoints is currently being provided to residents.
- Peer navigators connecting Camp Hope residents with employment opportunities.
- Assistance with substance abuse issues.

Housing offers

The Right of Way Safety Initiative funding requires that an offer of shelter/housing be made to everyone at the encampment (those who have received badges) as part of the work to close the encampment. This has also been found to be the best long-term approach to moving people toward permanent housing rather than displacing people within an encampment to other outside areas within the community. Outreach workers and service providers are working to match residents based on needs as shelter and housing space becomes available – this process takes time and is dependent on options available within the community.

Birth certificates/Identification

As of Wednesday, Oct. 19, workers from the state Department of Health and Department of Licensing issued 46 birth certificates and 81 state IDs as part of the outreach work within Camp Hope.

This work is vital, because lack of official identification is often a barrier to finding work or permanent housing. DOL and DOH will continue this work at Camp Hope in the coming weeks.

Security

WSDOT has increased the number of security guards from three to four on site 24/7, which allows for an increase in security guard safety to work in teams, especially during overnight house, retain coverage during breaks and to more easily cover the encampment. Security helps control access to the site and improves safety both within the encampment and the surrounding neighborhood. It is one of the steps taken as part of the work to ultimately close the encampment. The guards are not law enforcement and – as elsewhere in the city – anyone experiencing an emergency should call 911.

Sign-up for future email updates

If you would like to receive regular communication about what's happening at Camp Hope, please sign up for our email listserv:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOT/subscriber/new?topic_id=WADOT_706

Early work and partnerships key to today's progress

It's important to highlight the shared cooperation between those living homeless within Camp Hope, our service providers and WSDOT, Commerce and WSP to improve conditions for those within and outside of Camp Hope. We continue to collaborate with the city and local partners to identify viable housing solutions for all of those living homeless within Camp Hope.

This work doesn't happen overnight, and it is because of the discussions and funding that began this spring that we're at these new milestones. We look forward to more productive meetings with all willing local leaders to continue these efforts.

Please refer to our [blog](#) for more details on the state's Right of Way Safety Initiative.