

Camp Hope News update – Nov. 1

Good work and progress continues at Camp Hope as state agencies and local partners work to stabilize and close the encampment.

In the ongoing work to close Camp Hope state agencies and local providers and volunteers continue efforts to close the encampment by transitioning residents to safe, secure housing.

These efforts include a variety of work and services to help identify what is needed to safely and humanely close the encampment and to give the people living there chances to be successful. This has been found to be the most effective way to move people inside and into more permanent housing rather than just “sweeping” a site and dispersing the people living there to other outdoor locations.

The work began earlier this spring and summer includes a combination of state government, local non-profits and volunteers and includes:

- Individualized case management and housing navigation on site Mondays-Fridays
- Recovery services provided onsite
- Onsite medical clinics five days a week
- Spokane Regional Health District regularly providing services such as COVID testing and administering vaccines
- Health insurance agencies meeting with residents regularly to enroll them in health plans
- Services to help reunify people experiencing homelessness with family members – including ongoing support for both the Camp Hope residents and the family members.
- Skills building workshops each week to assist residents with housing readiness to help them be successful once they’ve moved into housing
- Food boxes and regular meal donations by a variety of faith-based and volunteer programs.
- Weekly assistance with legal and judicial processes and needs.
- Connect residents with employment opportunities and programs.

Regular meetings with city and county officials continue

State and local outreach partners have continued to meet at least weekly with city and county leaders about the progress at Camp Hope and the ways we hope they can help with on-the-ground efforts to close the encampment.

We are thankful to see city and county leaders in recent days supporting the exact same approach being used at this site and other sites that are part of the state’s Right of Way Safety Initiative – a thoughtful, coordinated and safe response that assesses each individual’s needs and connects them to safe, secure housing for a successful

transition. The state's experience in other encampments, as well as national best practices, has taught us this is best way to achieve everyone's goal of closing Camp Hope while also ending the cycle of homelessness and avoiding encampment residents from merely moving to another outdoor location.

Housing assessments underway, state working on new options

A methodical, on-the-ground census also is needed to allow service providers to fully understand the housing and service needs of the people living at Camp Hope. The most successful housing and homelessness efforts happening across the country and within Washington state include the availability of different housing options.

Commerce and its partners have been exploring options, including temporary rent assistance in private market units, leasing of hotel rooms, tiny homes, temporary shelters that could provide some level of privacy, and federal housing vouchers dedicated to people who are unsheltered.

- [Spokane's Camp Hope is the center of a political storm](#) (Crosscut)

Urgency of cold weather felt by all, addition of local shelter and housing options will improve timeline

The timeline for closing the encampment would be much faster if the city and county had more availability of safe, secure housing options for hundreds of people. Those options and the quantity needed simply don't exist today, but they are being brought online by state-funded options.

These options not only ensure people are less likely to simply relocate to other outdoor sites, they are legally required. When the Legislature approved funding for the right of way initiative, it required that an offer of housing that is "meaningfully better than their current living situation" must be made to each resident before the site is cleared.

DSHS mobile services unit comes to Camp Hope

Starting Tuesday, Nov. 1, the state Department of Social and Human Services will have one of their [Mobile Community Services Office](#) trucks at Camp Hope to work with the residents. The 40-foot truck and eight DSHS staff will help connect Camp Hope residents to a variety of services and programs, including Electronic Benefits Transfer cards (EBT cards are used like debit cards in stores for people receiving food or other financial assistance).

The team can also help enroll people in the programs, such as the Medicaid Savings Program (which helps cover some Medicaid costs such as deductibles, co-pays, etc.), review existing cases and connect people with other agencies and programs. The mobile unit will be on-site from Tuesday to Friday this week and will return the following week. Connecting residents with services is crucial to helping them be successful when they transition to housing and Camp Hope is closed.

DOH and DOL staff return to assist Camp Hope residents

In addition, the state Department of Health and Department of Licensing will also be back Wednesday, Nov. 2, to continue assisting Camp Hope residents obtain or replace birth certificates and identification – which are crucial for employment, obtaining permanent housing and applying for other assistance. To date 213 state identification cards and 78 birth certificates have already been issued to Camp Hope residents.

- [‘It’s like you belong again’: State agencies helping Camp Hope residents get critical ID cards](#) (Spokesman Review)
- [WA Department of Health helping people at Camp Hope get their birth certificates](#) (KXLY)

Hotline for East Central residents/businesses

A 24/7 hotline for East Central businesses and neighborhood residents has been established. This will be answered by Camp Hope staff, who can respond to the neighborhood concerns. The number is 509-666-9902.

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
You can find all updates online at: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/accountability/camp-hope>.

Camp Hope and the State Right of Way Safety Initiative

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 Camp Hope 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.

The most recent encampment successfully closed last week was off I-5 near Northgate.

- [Seattle homeless encampment near I-5 cleared through Gov. Inslee’s initiative](#) (KOMO)
- [Encampment Resolution](#) (King County Regional Homeless Authority blog)