

Camp Hope news update Nov. 22

Numbers moving in the right direction

While Camp Hope was estimated to have 600+ residents this summer, ongoing efforts toward closing the site have already reduced those numbers.

Every resident was required to sign a rules and good neighbor agreement by Nov. 4 to remain on site and at that time the official census had dropped to 467. No new residents are allowed to move in since then. On Nov. 11, the number was 445, with 22 people permanently moving out of the encampment.

Of the 22 people who have permanently moved out of Camp Hope:

- 8 transitioned into temporary housing/shelter
- 2 moved into permanent supportive housing
- 1 received a Homeward Bound gas voucher for \$500 to return to family out of state
- Others unknown reason/destination

The individualized assessment process is labor- and time-intensive but has been found to be the best way to stop the cycle of homelessness and find real and lasting solutions for both the people living unhoused and their communities. It is the same process used elsewhere across the state as part of the state Right of Way Safety Initiative in King, Thurston, Pierce and Snohomish counties. Assessments, services and assistance continue as part of the work to close the encampment as suitable housing becomes available.

New demographic information about Camp Hope residents – 83.3 percent from Greater Spokane area

As part of the work to close Camp Hope, new demographic information has been gathered during assessments with the people living there. Of the 445 people living in the Camp Hope encampment in Spokane, 83.3 percent (389) are from the Greater Spokane area (within 20 miles of the encampment) and 70.7 percent (315) are from the city of Spokane, according to new details from on-going needs assessments. The assessments were tabulated by the Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium in partnership with Empire Health Foundation, the service provider under contract with the state Department of Commerce for outreach to help close the encampment.

Some local leaders have speculated that most Camp Hope residents were from out of town or out of state; this on-the-ground data from resident assessments provides better understanding of the housing needs as work continues to close the encampment.

The breakdown of last residence of those from the greater Spokane area includes:

- City of Spokane – 315

- City of Spokane Valley – 20
- Spokane County – 9
- Northeast Washington – 16
- Northern Idaho – 22
- Spokane Indian Reservation – 4
- Never been housed – 3

DOL, DOH and DSHS services continue

Fellow state agencies continued their work last week to provide assistance and support to Camp Hope residents as part of the overall efforts to close the encampment. Last week that included working off-site – to reach former Camp Hope residents who have moved to shelters or other locations. Lost or damaged identification is often a barrier to finding housing, employment or assistance, so this work is crucial to finding long-term solutions for those experiencing homelessness.

To date, the state Department of Health has issued 106 birth certificates to Camp Hope residents and the state Department of Licensing has issued 400 identification cards.

The Department of Social and Health Services [Mobile Community Services Office](#) truck was not on site last week but will be there Wednesday, Nov. 23, as well as the following week. DSHS staff are issuing EBT cards and updating encampment residents' existing benefit accounts or helping them sign up for other services. To date they've assisted a total of 146 people.

Additional services and outreach continue

In addition to state agencies, a number of local service providers, non-profits, faith groups and volunteers continue their work at Camp Hope, providing services, food, clothing and other assistance while we work to close the encampment.

Housing key to closing the encampment

As work to close the encampment continues, the timeline is contingent on the availability of multiple safe, secure housing options for hundreds of people. There are not enough of these housing options available in the city or county at this time. Camp Hope residents are regularly offered the city's Trent Resource and Assistance Center shelter, and some have moved there, but many encampment residents say they have concerns about that congregate facility, including facility/sanitation concerns as well as some who say local law enforcement's comments about arresting people at Camp Hope is concerning.

Overall Spokane housing needs

While it is the most visible evidence of homelessness in Spokane, Camp Hope is not the totality of the challenge facing the community. The most recent point-in-time count by the city of Spokane counted 1,757 people experiencing homelessness throughout

Spokane County on a single night in February, with 823 individuals living outside. To supplement this important but imperfect point-in-time data, Washington state maintains a nationally recognized system for cross-matching homeless data from multiple assistance systems, including food assistance, Temporary Aid to Needy Families and Medicaid. This more comprehensive data shows over 5,200 people in Spokane County experiencing homelessness (living in a shelter or living unsheltered) at a point in time.

Hotline for East Central residents/businesses

A 24/7 hotline – 509-666-9902 – for East Central businesses and neighborhood residents will be answered by Camp Hope staff, who can respond to the neighborhood concerns.

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.