

Camp Hope news update 12-12

Camp Hope census numbers continue to decline; new census count is 377

The size of the Camp Hope encampment continues to shrink as work continues to permanently close the site. The latest encampment tally – the number of people who have received badges and signed rules agreements – is **377 as of Friday, Dec. 9, a 19 percent overall decrease** in little over a month.

This summer 600+ people were estimated to be living in the encampment. The first official census on Nov. 4 counted 467 people who agreed to the encampment rules in order to stay on site while shelter/housing options are identified. On the Dec. 5 count, there were 416 badged encampment residents.

Since the first census, 90 people have left Camp Hope in a number of ways, including moving to shelter/housing, moving in with family for other accommodations on their own or simply not returning to the site. Any badged resident of Camp Hope who has not returned in 7 days is not allowed to re-enter the site and is stricken from the census numbers. No new residents have been allowed since Nov. 4.

It's important to note that people leaving Camp Hope are not required to give notice or provide a forwarding location. The fencing, badging and other stabilization methods underway, though, allow outreach workers to remove people who have permanently moved away from the resident list.

First Camp Hope residents move into Catalyst project building

Included in the 90 people who have left Camp Hope are the initial three people who moved into the new Catalyst emergency supportive housing facility last week. People from Camp Hope are being gradually moved into the building during the next few weeks to allow for smooth transitions; it can house at least 100 people at full capacity.

In addition to emergency housing, Catalyst participants receive case management, employment and behavioral health services, all aimed at creating pathways to stable housing after their stay at Catalyst.

The Catalyst project is run by Catholic Charities Eastern Washington and was funded with \$15 million in state [Right of Way Safety Initiative](#) dollars as part of efforts to close the encampment site.

Debris and trash removed from site

WSDOT crews using front-loader bull dozers and large dump trucks removed of trash, debris and abandoned tents from the site Monday, Dec. 12, as part of the ongoing work to stabilize, shrink and permanently close the encampment.

The debris includes trash gathered as the site is reduced in size as well as tents and other items left behind by people who have moved out of Camp Hope. This is part of the ongoing work to close the encampment as shelter/housing options are identified.

State agency outreach continues

Staff from the state Department of Social and Health Services continued outreach with Camp Hope residents to help support their transition to shelter and long-term housing. DSHS staff from the Trent and Maple Community Services Offices worked at the Trent shelter (also known as the Trent Resource and Assistance Center) on Tuesday and Friday last week, assisting people with services such as EBT food cards, signing them up for new assistance or helping update existing service program registrations. Staff will be on site at the Trent shelter weekly.

Restraining order issued blocking sweep of Camp Hope

On Monday a federal court judge issued a temporary restraining order blocking any law enforcement sweep of Camp Hope until a Dec. 28 court hearing. Recent comments and actions by local law enforcement about an eminent sweep had been disruptive and harmful for the outreach and transition work already underway at the site.

The state was not party to this temporary restraining order request, but the ruling does provide more clarity about next steps and outreach to Camp Hope residents. Work already underway to close the site will continue; the restraining order merely allows it to do so in a thoughtful, humane way.

Housing options availability key closing encampment

Spokane's homeless need extends beyond Camp Hope and will ultimately determine the timing of closing the site. There simply isn't enough housing options to meet either the encampment or overall need at this time:

- The city's February point-in-time count: 1,757 people experiencing homelessness in Spokane County; 823 living outside.
- State comprehensive data (including info from several assistance systems): Over 5,200 people experiencing homelessness (either in a shelter or unsheltered) in Spokane County.
- The city's own shelter tracker, <https://sheltermespokane.org/>, regularly shows many of Spokane's shelters already near or at capacity and none with the ability to house everyone at Camp Hope.

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