

## **DRAFT -- Camp Hope update 1-11-23**

### **Work continues to shrink the site of Camp Hope encampment**

Work is underway to shrink both the physical and resident size of the Camp Hope encampment in Spokane as part of the effort to permanently close the site. An in-person count will take place this week with a new update expected next week on how many people remain at the site as more residents are offered housing/shelter options. Planning is also underway to physically shrink the site by moving fencing to reflect cleared sites that are vacant after previous residents moved. No one new is allowed to move on to the site as the work to stabilize and close the encampment continues. In addition to the Right of Way Safety Initiative work to close Camp Hope, WSDOT also works with partners in other areas along highways to clear sites as needed for safety.

### **Outreach and services continue as part of work to close encampment**

State agencies, WSDOT, the state Department of Commerce and the Washington State Patrol, and local partners continue their work close the Camp Hope encampment and find safe, stable housing for the people living there. As part of that work, people at the encampment are receiving a variety of services from state agencies, local providers and several volunteer groups to help each resident stabilize and find the best fit for long-term housing based on available options.

This work has been going on for months and intensified in the fall as encampment stabilization allowed residents to undergo assessments to identify their particular needs. This support and services approach is time- and labor-intensive but has shown to help people living outside have the best chance of breaking the cycle of homelessness and find permanent, safe housing. Examples of the type of assistance by state government, local non-profits and volunteers include:

- Individualized case management and housing navigation
- Recovery services provided onsite
- Onsite medical clinics, including services such as COVID testing and administering vaccines
- Health insurance information and enrollment
- Services to help reunify people experiencing homelessness with family members
- Skills-building workshops 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.
- Assistance with legal and judicial processes and needs
- Connecting residents with employment opportunities and programs.

### **State agency assistance**

In addition to local nonprofits and outreach groups and volunteers, several state agencies also assisted WSDOT, Commerce and WSP with the work to close Camp Hope.

The state departments of Health and Licensing visited the site for several weeks helping residents get or replace crucial documents such as birth certificates and state identification cards. All told DOH staff issued 106 birth certificates and DOL issued 400 identification cards to people at Camp Hope. These documents are often required to receive other services, seek employment or find permanent housing.

Department of Social and Health Services staff also provided services, including identifying and signing people up for qualified services. The total number of people helped in the Spokane area Rights of Way Safety Initiative for 2022 was 268, which includes 161 people in November at Camp Hope and 107 people in December at Trent Resource and Assistance Center.

### **Debris removal at site**

WSDOT crews removed 48,000 pounds of debris and trash from the Camp Hope site the past two months as part of the continuing work to shrink and close the encampment. This work was done to help reduce the size of the encampment by removing debris, discarded tents and other items left behind as people transition out of Camp Hope to shelter/housing.

### **RV removals continue**

In December, nine vacant RVs were removed from Camp Hope. As people living in RVs at the encampment transition into shelters or housing, those vacated RVs are removed from Camp Hope onto the north lot and then towed. Removing the RVs from Camp Hope before being towed keeps them from becoming reoccupied during that period. In total, 16 RVs have been removed from the site since October 2022.

### **Winter weather response continues**

With winter here, state agencies and local providers continue focusing on ensuring people at Camp Hope have what they need: warmth, shelter and water while the overall work to close the encampment continues. Potable water is being delivered and tanks on site will be insulated and heated so drinking water does not freeze. Warming tents are on site to help people stay warm. State and local outreach partners also continue to offer information on all shelter options, including the city's Trent Shelter, including transportation.

### **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](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOT/subscriber/new?topic_id=WADOT_706)

. All updates are online at: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/accountability/camp-hope-newsupdate>

### **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.