

Camp Hope news update Dec. 21

Update on Camp Hope site numbers and residents

The number of people living at the Camp Hope encampment continues to decline and a new on-site snapshot is giving outreach workers better details about what types of services are needed to permanently close the site.

An on-site snapshot count taken the week of Dec. 12 tallied:

- An estimated 198 people *
- 120 tents/structures
- 27 RVs
- 5 vehicles
- 13 vacant/abandoned tents (these were posted with a 7-day notice that will be removed)

** Some people may be off site working, receiving treatment, etc. and were not counted (residents may return within 7 days), so this number could increase slightly. With the recent spate of cold temperatures, it is possible that some people temporarily left the site to stay warm. Those individuals will still receive the services they need to secure more permanent, improved housing options and services.*

The initial census taken in late October/early November had 467 people who received badges and qualified for services. This new on-site snapshot was conducted by i2-Strategies, working with Empire Health Foundation, who has a contract with the state Department of Commerce to conduct outreach at Camp Hope. For more details, read Empire Health Foundation's news release:

https://www.empirehealthfoundation.org/assets/news/Camp-Hope-Progress-Press-Release_122122.pdf

While work continues to develop housing options, information about all shelter/housing options – and transportation to these sites is shared daily with Camp Hope residents. This includes the city's Trent Shelter.

The Right of Way Safety Initiative funding requires that an offer of shelter/housing that is “meaningfully better” than their current situation be made to everyone at the encampment as part of the work to close the site. The most successful housing and homelessness efforts – nationally and elsewhere in Washington – include the availability of different housing options. A variety of available housing options is ideal for moving a large encampment because of mental health, domestic violence security, privacy and other concerns that prevent some residents from functioning in a congregate shelter.

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.

Encampment photos show successes reducing encampment size

A series of WSDOT-taken drone shots of the Camp Hope encampment site shows how the encampment has continued to shrink as state agencies and local outreach groups work to close the site. In addition to fencing to help secure and control the site, the area inside the fences has been better organized and mapped and debris and abandoned tents are removed as people leave the site.

As part of the work to close the encampment site, state agencies along with local outreach groups continue working with encampment residents to identify and offer housing options and other services to help move them inside and break the cycle of homelessness.

Debris removal

WSDOT crews removed 36,680 pounds of debris and trash from the Camp Hope site the week of Dec. 12 as part of the continuing work to shrink and close the encampment. Monday, Dec. 12, 15,000 pounds of trash, debris and discarded tents were removed from the site, with another 21,680 pounds removed on Tuesday, Dec. 13.

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.

Catalyst transitions

As of Monday, Dec. 19, 26 people have moved from Camp Hope into the new Catalyst emergency supportive housing facility. People from Camp Hope are being gradually moved into the building at about 4 per day during several 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.

Additional services and outreach continue at Camp Hope site

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.

Housing availability key closing encampment

Spokane's homeless need extends beyond Camp Hope and will ultimately determine the timing of closing the site. There simply aren'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

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