

Camp Hope news update Feb. 1

New encampment count numbers show site continues to shrink

As part of work to permanently close the Camp Hope encampment, a new on-site snapshot count shows continued progress in shrinking the site. The previous count was conducted the week of Jan. 9. The new count completed the week of Jan. 23 tallied:

- 124 estimated* people (compared to 138 people the week of Jan. 9)
- 78 tents/structures (compared to 93 the week of Jan. 9)
- 17 RVs* (compared to 20 the week of Jan. 9)
- 2 vehicles (compared to 4 the week of Jan. 9)
- 4 sites tagged for removal (8 sites were tagged the week of Jan. 9)

** 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. Those individuals will still receive the services they need to secure more permanent, improved housing options and services.*

This most recent count shows a slower decline in the number of people at Camp Hope due to the longer interval of time between the first and second counts compared to this third count. However, this is still significant progress compared to an initial 467-person count this fall and from when an estimated 600+ people were living on site this summer.

This is the third independent count 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.

The first count identified 198 residents, 120 tents/structures, 27 RVs and 5 vehicles in the encampment during the week of Dec. 16. New counts will take place bi-weekly going forward to track progress.

While this is encouraging news, more work lies ahead to ensure residents get the support and best chance to be successful moving inside. Some of the more easily placed residents have moved off site or found other lodging options, while some of those remaining may have multiple challenges or barriers to permanent housing. Outreach groups will do intensive work to find the best options among the available housing for these high acuity individuals.

A new series of drone photos of the site also shows fewer tents and people on the property. Those viewing the images should note that the encampment looks different due to shifting residents, RVs and tents in preparation to move the fencing from 2nd Avenue inward roughly 30 feet in the coming weeks.

Fencing around Camp Hope to be shrunk in coming weeks

Preparations are underway to begin moving the fence that surrounds Camp Hope in the coming weeks. Staff from Jewels Helping Hands have been notifying residents and helping move those away from the southern fence line near 2nd Avenue. The goal is to move the fencing inward to continue to downsize Camp Hope.

Coordination of moving residents is ongoing while moving the fence inward has been tentatively scheduled for the week of Feb. 6. Please note this could change depending on conditions and contractor availability.

Bitter cold returns to the region

With the return of winter, staff with Jewels Helping Hands have re-implemented the 24/7 warming tents within Camp Hope. Residents can access the tents within the camp to warm up.

Transportation will also be provided to the city of Spokane's - Trent Resource and Navigation Center (TRAC) if they wish to seek warmth. Residents have up to seven days to return to Camp Hope.

More Camp Hope residents transition to Catalyst program

By the end of the day on Jan. 30, there were 50 participants enrolled at Catalyst reflecting individuals that have moved from Camp Hope into the new Catalyst emergency supportive housing program. An additional five intakes are expected to take place this week.

People from Camp Hope who have been referred to Catalyst are being gradually moved into the building to allow for smooth transitions; the project can house at least 100 people at full capacity. Participant move-ins were slowed slightly due to construction on the first two floors; one floor remains under construction while the other has been completed and is beginning intakes.

In addition to emergency housing, Catalyst participants receive meal and laundry services, case management, employment and behavioral health services, all aimed at creating pathways to stable housing after their stay at Catalyst. Medical providers are on-site weekly helping participants address emergent health needs, and project staff are working with participants to plan for longer range wellness. Recovery groups and addiction education sessions are also being facilitated on-site each week, in addition to provision of outpatient substance use disorder treatment services.

Catalyst 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, which funded site acquisition, building rehab, and year 1 program operations.

Many types of housing options still a key need

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. The Right of Way Safety Initiative funding requires 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.

The housing need also exceeds just the Camp Hope encampment making the housing need even more critical. 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. A nationally recognized supplemental state system that cross matches homeless data from multiple assistance programs finds a comprehensive count of more than 5,200 people experiencing homelessness (living in a shelter or unsheltered) in Spokane County.

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

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.