

Camp Hope news update Feb. 23

Connecting Camp Hope residents to employment opportunities

A new program starting next week called the Pre-Employment Preparation Program or PEPP kicks off with its first cohort. PEPP is for individuals experiencing homelessness and includes residents from Camp Hope.

The PEPP program is a 4-week pre-apprentice course that guides individuals through in-class education and hands-on training. Individuals who complete the PEPP program will earn certificates in OSHA 10, First Aid and CPR with an AED, Traffic Control (flagging), and forklift qualification credentials.

Completion of the course and earning these certificates will allow participants who have experienced homelessness to connect with interviews, apprenticeships and can begin using their traffic control certification for flagging immediately.

Connecting with jobs and providing training will hopefully lead to participants earning a livable wage, improve overall well-being and set individuals up for long-term success.

Throughout, case management services will be provided to individuals to address any barriers they may have to employment, including support accessing documents, such as ID's, driver licenses and social security cards.

Debris removal

A contract with a private contractor was finalized to remove additional debris from the site. Maintenance crews from WSDOT had removed more than 48,000 pounds last month from the site but will now transition to a private contractor to continue the efforts. The new contractor will be on site once a week, or as needed, to remove any additional debris from within Camp Hope.

More Camp Hope residents transition to Catalyst program

By the end of the day on Feb. 21, there were 63 participants enrolled at Catalyst reflecting individuals that have moved from Camp Hope into the new Catalyst emergency supportive housing program. An additional nine participants are expected to move in 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 2022, 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.