

## **Camp Hope news update March 22**

### **Pre-Employment Preparation Program for Camp Hope residents enters final week and graduation**

The pre-apprenticeship employment classes for Camp Hope residents entered its final week of classes this week.

During the final week of classes, students will identify their short- and long-term employment interests, purchase clothing required for future employment through a stipend and students will receive the training and testing for their Traffic Control (flagging) certification.

Happening this Friday, March 24, from 12 to 2 p.m. a special graduation ceremony for students will be held at the Northeast Community Center. After graduation students will continue to receive support through case management services and any additional help addressing specific barriers to stable employment.

This is one of several services designed to close the encampment by assisting residents in finding housing and more stable living situations. WSDOT has partnered with a nonprofit Pre-Employment Preparation Program to conduct the training.

The PEPP program is a four-week pre-apprentice course that provides classroom and hands-on training to 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 and apprenticeships – and they can begin using their traffic control certification for flagging immediately.

The training and ability to apply for new types of jobs will hopefully lead to participants earning a livable wage, improving their overall well-being and setting themselves up for long-term success.

### **Planning for second fence move underway**

Staff on site are beginning to prepare to move the fencing surrounding the perimeter inward for the second time – another sign of the continued effort toward downsizing and eventually closing Camp Hope. Crews are notifying residents still living at the site to begin moving structures and RV's away from fencing at both the east and west ends of the camp. Once residents have been relocated away from the fencing, contractor crews will begin shrinking the fencing inward in early April.

### **More Camp Hope residents transition to Catalyst program**

By the end of the day on March 21, there were 79 participants enrolled at Catalyst reflecting individuals that have moved from Camp Hope into the new Catalyst emergency supportive housing program. The final set of referrals from Camp Hope are being sorted through and move ins are being coordinated.

People from Camp Hope who have been referred to Catalyst are being gradually moved into the building to allow for smooth transitions.

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 to close the encampment, 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](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.