

Hosted Encampment Pilot

Introduction/History

The City of Longview authorized the use of city property for a temporary un-hosted encampment in early 2020. Prior to the planned end date of the temporary encampment, the Coronavirus pandemic impacted the ability to follow through with closing the temporary un-hosted encampment. At the same time, a multi-jurisdictional ad hoc committee was unable to come to a consensus regarding alternate locations for an encampment to rotate between. Due to the long duration of what was intended to be a temporary un-hosted encampment along with the continued effects of the pandemic that may increase homelessness in the community, there is a need to take steps towards addressing a growing situation.

Cowlitz County has an interest in partnering with the City of Longview to address this need through temporary housing that uses the model of a hosted encampment. This type of intervention connects with the County's 5 year plan to address homelessness through goal #4 that focusses on system capacity and addressing system capacity gaps. This situation has highlighted a need for additional temporary housing options that promote self-sufficiency, increase opportunities for households to be stably housed, and to demonstrate a managed encampment can mitigate impacts to nearby businesses and neighbors.

Short Term Goal

Develop a hosted encampment pilot that provides a clean and safe temporary housing environment for those experiencing homelessness to stay while engaging in services and being supported in taking steps to obtain stable housing. Hosted encampment will incorporate strategies to mitigate the impact for the surrounding community, including businesses and neighbors.

Long Term Goal

A hosted encampment is not a solution to homelessness, therefore, interventions that increase affordable housing and support stable housing opportunities should continue to be addressed.

Physical Space/On-site

Capacity

Hosted encampment site has the capacity for ___ tent spaces

Household space

Each household space will be a 10x10 space to place a tent, with 10 feet in between spaces. Each household space will have a designated spot to park a bicycle or vehicle. (Next to tent space or other parking area?)

Staff space

On-site host will have designated office space to meet with site participants, complete intakes, and have a presence on-site during the day.

Staff space will include additional office space designated for other community partners to have space to meet with site participants and engage in services - including but not limited to medical, behavioral health, employment services, etc.

Kitchen space? –where meal share groups or other volunteers could come prepare meals for those staying

Consider common area space that site participants could access potable water, microwave, internet, electricity (cell phone charging), and other things?

Basic hygiene services

Site will have space for basic hygiene services that include:

- Portable toilets (with feminine hygiene supplies)
- Hand washing stations
- Showers
- Potable water
- Garbage disposal bins

*May depend on availability of water, power, sewer on site

Management

On-site Host

The identified host agency will have two paid staff on-site at the encampment location during business hours. Staff will be responsible for managing all operations of the hosted encampment.

Staffing on weekends?

Community Engagement

On-site host will develop a Good Neighbor Agreement that will be reviewed with neighbors within a ___ block radius of the hosted encampment site. The Good Neighbor Agreement will include safety/security measures, staffing model, and outline a process for neighbors to express concerns. Host will hold a community forum for neighbors to review good neighbor agreement, receive feedback, and answer questions. Host will also hold a community forum 3 months after hosted encampment has been operating to check in with the neighborhood, review operations thus far, and receive feedback.

Safety and Security

On-site host will develop strategies to ensure safety and security for those staying at the hosted encampment as well as the surrounding neighborhood. Safety and Security plan will incorporate input from the county, the city, law enforcement, and surrounding neighbors. It will also describe safety and security strategies for any time paid staff are not on-site.

Intake

Each person requesting to stay at the site will be required to complete an intake. This process will include meeting with on-site host staff, reviewing/signing Code of Conduct, assessing needs.

Intake process will include a diversion conversation that explores other options the individual may have for housing including family/friends to stay with, family/friends out of the area, other natural supports or financial resources that can assist with housing.

Code of Conduct

For the safety and security of site participants and the surrounding area, a Code of Conduct will be reviewed and signed by all site participants during intake and includes the following expectations:

- No violent, aggressive, or verbally abusive behavior
- No drug or alcohol use
- No drug dealing
- No sex trafficking
- Individuals under the age of 18 are prohibited from the premises (families?)
- Animals must be on a leash while onsite
- No open flames in or out of tents
- One (1) household allowed per site location or limit the number of people per site?
- One (1) bike and/or one (1) vehicle is allowed per person
- Trash will be disposed of in authorized containers
- Personal items will be stored inside tents or within the site space; items outside of tents must be neat and orderly
- Visitors?

Community Contribution

Site participants will contribute to the upkeep of the site by participating in on-site chores identified with the on-site host. Participants will also engage in community clean up in the surrounding neighborhood with the on-site host.

Rent

Site participants will agree to a rent payment plan during intake. Individual payment plans will vary depending on household income.

Would rent go back into program? Or be saved for deposit/move in costs?

Housing Stability Plan

Site participants will engage with on-site host to develop a housing stability plan. Each plan will address barriers to housing including employment, substance use treatment, mental health treatment, physical health, financial goals, and any other identified barriers. The plan will have goals for each barrier and specific strategies to achieve those goals. Site participants will connect with on-site host weekly to provide updates on progress with their housing stability plan. On-site host will provide support and connect participants to resources that will help achieve their goals. If there is no progress on housing stability plan, participants may be at risk of being asked to leave. On-site host will develop procedure.

Cost

Hosted encampment may be funded with local Document Recording Fees. There will be start-up costs to develop and get the site ready. After start-up costs, the annual cost for the hosted encampment must fall within the annual budget for Document Recording Fees, unless other funding sources are identified.