

Principles for Homeless Camps

Land Management Agencies in Central Oregon

Background:

Government agencies with land management as one of their responsibilities have struggled with the issue of homeless encampments on their property as the number of people experiencing with homelessness has grown in Central Oregon.

Furthermore, the pandemic has created another layer of concern as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has issued guidance that currently recommends that homeless camps should not be disturbed so as not to increase the spread of the COVID-19 virus and break connections with social service providers.

Agencies would prefer people not set up long-term encampments on their land for a number of reasons including:

- Public safety concerns due to camps near highway speed roadways or canals
- Employee safety
- Environmental impact
- Damage to infrastructure
- Fire danger
- Public health impacts from inadequate sanitation facilities
- Criminal activity
- Open air drug use
- Impacts to nearby neighbors

However, all agencies involved recognize that in many cases individuals who are camping long-term on public lands have few other options for where to go if the camp is removed due to land management regulations or safety hazards, and that removal of camps is highly impactful to those residents.

Agencies have a variety of laws, rules and agency policies to follow when removing camps from public lands. Given the different level of agencies involved (federal, state, county, city as well other municipal agencies) it would be impossible to develop a standard practice for removing camps. Rather, we have tried to develop a set of principles for how land management staff will engage with community partners when removing camps so that the impact to the residents is minimized and affected people will have the opportunity to engage with social services before and during the move.

Some principles are:

- Prior to providing notice of camp closures, agencies will provide resources and referrals to individuals and families prior to camp closures.

- Absent of criminal behavior or emergent public safety risk, agencies will make concerted efforts not to displace or remove camps immediately prior to or during the annual homeless census in January led by the Homeless Leadership Coalition (HLC).
- When an agency closes an area to overnight camping, they will connect with social service providers to deploy services in the area. See Appendix A for the list of social service contacts for both service engagement and notification after a camp has been noticed. Engagement with social service providers is vital and should occur as early as possible.
- When camps are allowed to remain in place by the property owner/agency, that agency may coordinate and collaborate with other agencies that may share jurisdiction and/or provide resources to the impacted area. See Appendix A for a list of public agencies and their primary contacts.

Appendix A

The following are public agencies and their contacts for the purposes of the collaborative. Any/all communication about upcoming or current camp engagements (noticing, property management (removing debris), or removals, should be directed to the contact(s) listed below.

Public Agency	Contact Names/Information
Deschutes County	Kristie Bollinger (Kristie.Bollinger@deschutes.org) and Erik Kropp (Erik.Kropp@deschutes.org)
DC Sheriff's Office	Jayson Janes (Jayson.janes@deschutes.org) (Public Information Officer)
City of Bend	Shelly Smith (shsmith@bendoregon.gov)
Bend Police Dept.	Brian Kindel (bkindel@bendoregon.gov) and Liz Lawrence (llawrence@bendoregon.gov)
ODOT	MCCARROLL Joel R < Joel.R.MCCARROLL@odot.state.or.us >;
Bend Parks & Rec	Jeff Hagler, Parks Steward JeffH@bendparksandrec.org
Oregon State Parks	Joseph Wanamaker (Joseph.Wanamaker@oregon.gov), Park Manager (Tumalo Management Unit)
BLM	Jeff Kitchens, jhkitch@blm.gov .
COID	KelleyHamby < Khamby@coid.org >;
U.S. Forest Service	Kevin Larkin (kevin.larkin@usda.gov);
COIC	Morgan Greenwood (mgreenwood@coic.org)
BNSF	Paul Brewster (Paul.Brewster@BNSF.com)

Social Service Providers: Contact the following for engagement with individuals at a specific site
The following agencies can assist with case management and services for individuals at the camps in Deschutes County.

Deschutes County: Homeless Services	Colleen Thomas, Homeless Services Coordinator (Colleen.Thomas@deschutes.org , or Tel: (541) 317-3153 Cell: (458) 292-6397)
REACH Out Central Oregon	Stacey Witte, Executive Director (reachoutcentraloregon@gmail.com , or Tel: (425) 765-1782)
Shepherd's House/S.H.A.R.E. Project	Evan Hendrix, Project S.H.A.R.E. Coordinator, evanh@shministries.org or (541) 388-2096 ext. 206

Service Agencies: Contact with property updates (as appropriate)

Agency	Contact Name and Information
Deschutes County: Homeless Services	Colleen Thomas, Homeless Services Coordinator (Colleen.Thomas@deschutes.org , or Tel: (541) 317-3153 Cell: (458) 292-6397)
REACH Out Central Oregon	Stacey Witte, Executive Director (reachoutcentraloregon@gmail.com , or Tel: (425) 765-1782)
Shepherd's House/S.H.A.R.E. Project	Evan Hendrix, Project S.H.A.R.E. Coordinator, evanh@shministries.org or (541) 388-2096 ext. 206
Central Oregon Veterans Outreach	Kathy Skidmore and JW Terry - Kathy Skidmore <kathy.skidmore@covo-us.org> ; JW Terry <jw.terry@covo-us.org> ;

Mosaic Medical	Lindsey Stailing - lindsey.stailing@mosaicmedical.org
J Bar J/Loft (Youth)	Meggie Wells (mwells@jbarj.org); Liz Langmas (elizabethl@jbarj.org); Mashael Brown (mbrown@jbarj.org)
Family Kitchen	Donna Burklo - donna@familykitchen.org