

Exit Homelessness

Walla Walla, Washington, USA

Project Description: Exit Homelessness is a 2018 pilot program designed to guide individuals through practical steps towards housing. It is predominately geared towards individuals residing in the Sleeping Centre, and focuses on the necessary basics: clean clothes, grooming, skills training, and job application support.

Distinguishing Features: This program focuses on changing community perceptions of temporarily sheltered individuals. The Exit Homelessness program includes a volunteer-based Community Beautification Team, allowing individuals to earn volunteer reference letters and positively interact with the community.

Population Served: Emergency Sheltered & Provisionally Sheltered Adults

Website: www.wwallianceforthehomeless.com/exit-homelessness

News Story: www.union-bulletin.com/news/exit-homelessness-project-launches-in-walla-walla

SUMMARY

The Exit Homelessness program focuses on removing obstacles that may be keeping individuals from stable shelter. Many of the program participants reside in Conestoga Huts at the Sleeping Centre hosted by Walla Walla's Alliance for the Homeless. The goal is to support individuals into the next stage of housing. A wide range of practical services are offered, including assistance with identification paperwork, finding healthcare, resolving legal issues, and educational opportunities.

This service is hosted at the city hall, with drop in hours every day. Walla Walla is one of two cities in the Pacific Northwest USA that has embraced a community-wide approach to solving housing issues. Program participants are strongly encouraged to join the Community Beautification Team, a group that works with the city's Parks and Recreation department to clean up parks, sidewalks, and other public spaces. Membership with the Community Beautification Team allows alienated individuals to reconnect with their community in a positive manner, and members are given reference letters to aid in their job search.

Homelessness in the Pacific Northwest, USA

Walla Walla, Washington and Eugene, Oregon

These two cities in the Pacific Northwest have embraced a uniquely open, community centric view of homelessness. Their programs are inclusive, and highly visible; a stark contrast from the traditional approach focused on keeping housing struggles out of sight. Both cities have amended city laws regarding "camping" to allow homeless individuals to legally reside in temporary shelters in public spaces. The Community Beautification Team is one endeavor meant to connect the homeless population with the wider community in a positive way that benefits all involved.

Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless

The Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless is a non-profit organization formed in 2015 that is focused on recognizing and resolving the unmet needs of the community's homeless population. They work to bridge the gap between street homelessness and permanent housing with temporary shelter at their Sleeping Center, and practical support through their Exit Homelessness program. The Alliance is dedicated to expanding partnerships and working with other organizations to foster positive, constructive environments that benefit the community as a whole.

www.wwallianceforthehomeless.com

CONNECTED ORGANIZATIONS

Community Supported Shelters

Community Supported Shelters out of Eugene, Oregon pioneered the development of Conestoga Huts [see Conestoga Huts PDF], which are the primary form of shelters within the Sleeping Center hosted by Walla Walla's Alliance for the Homeless. The huts have been adopted by the organization, and many of the Exit Homelessness participants benefit from these temporary shelters in the Sleeping Center

communitysupportedshelters.org