



Kitsap County Department of Human Services Housing and Homelessness Division

HEART Program 2023 Year End Review

The HEART (Homeless Encampment Action Response and Transitions) Program is designed to ensure that the county government has a consistent, coordinated, and compassionate response to unauthorized homeless encampments on Kitsap County property. The HEART Program's goal is to lead with compassion, and to provide a person-centered approach by focusing on connecting individuals with resources while mitigating the impacts of unauthorized encampments on our community. This document is a summary of the program's work through the end of 2023.

Development of the HEART Program

The HEART Program is governed by the Unauthorized Encampment Response Policy on County Property, which was approved by the Board of County Commissioner in November of 2021. The policy provides clear, consistent, and uniform guidelines regarding responses to encampments on Kitsap County property. The policy outlines the role of a full-time position, the HEART Coordinator, to implement the policy and coordinate the county's response across departments and community partner organizations, working with the HEART Advisory Group.

HEART Outreach Team

Kitsap County is also funding a dedicated encampment outreach team through a contract with Kitsap Community Resources' Housing Solutions Center program. The HEART Outreach Team is a two-person team, whose role is to connect those experiencing homelessness in encampments with services through the county's housing coordinated entry program, the Housing Solutions Center (HSC). The HSC provides intake, assessment, vulnerability scoring, and referrals to shelter and housing programs. The HEART Outreach Team is consistently connecting and utilizing other service providers in the county that provide outreach, healthcare, treatment, emergency and protective services, transportation, food, shelter, and much coordination of human needs. The following are some of the program responses.

- 247 scheduled visits and 286 visits from reported responses to encampments on county property and county open rights-of-way. Many of these visits were duplicated.
- 226 Housing Solutions Center Applications were completed by encampment campers.
- Three people were referred into the Kitsap Community Resources, Quality Inn Shelter with Case Management.
- 26 people were enrolled into the Kitsap Rescue Mission Shelter program.
- Three people were enrolled into the Benedict House Shelter program.
- Three people were referred into Pendleton Place
- Two people were referred into St. Vincent de Paul's Women's Shelter
- Three 911 calls were made to assist people in encampments due to emergency situations.

- Seven people were taken to St. Michael Medical Center for emergent health services.
- 32 people were connected to the R.E.A.L. team for mental health and substance use resources.
- 15 people were connected to Kitsap Recovery Centers Person In Need (PIN) Program and of those individuals referred five of them completed treatment successfully and went in to stable housing.
- Two people were referred to Eagles Wings.

Other Jurisdictions and Community Partners

City of Port Orchard, City of Bremerton, Department of Natural Resources, City of Poulsbo, Greater Peninsula Conservancy, Clear Creak Taskforce, Washington State Department of Transportation, and the Kitsap Housing Authority in efforts to clean up encampments.

- Facilitated over 19.3 tons of refuse being cleaned up from encampments through partnership with Kitsap County Solid Waste Division
- Worked with Catholic Community Services Seattle Community Outreach Program and Engagement (SCOPE) to connect people with basic needs assistance.
- Worked with the Mobile Crisis Outreach to connect six people with mental health assistance.

State Service Referrals

- 9 referrals to Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Three referrals to Developmental Disabilities Administration, (DDA)
- Nine referrals for state services for food assistance

Community Engagement

The HEART Program Coordinator has spent time speaking and educating the community. In 2023 the Program Coordinator participated in 8 community engagement events speaking with community members and specific neighborhoods regarding encampments and educating about the HEART Program. The county is committed to continued engagement with the community.

More information on the HEART Program can be found at the following website.

HEART program: <https://kcowa.us/HEART>

Mickleberry (Behind Costco in Silverdale)



Mile Hill and Alaska encampment



Hospital Hill



Silverdale RV and Tent Encampment





NEWS

In Silverdale, a county team continues to address encampments in compassionate way

NEWS

County testing new 'Point in Time' strategy to better understand homeless population

NEWS

Cleanup of Pacific Building preps for 75-bed Port Orchard homeless shelter's opening

NEWS

County clears the last residents from long-running Veterans Memorial Park encampment