



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Efforts to Address Homeless Camping

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City of Yakima Working to Address Homeless Camping

Now that Emergency Cold Weather Shelters are operating, the City of Yakima will begin encouraging homeless campers to take advantages of the services offered at the shelters, which are being run by Yakima Neighborhood Health Services. Any encampments, tents, or other temporary shelters will be moved and the people living there will be directed to one of the shelters.

Temporary shelters, such as those commonly used by homeless people, are not permitted under the City's zoning ordinance.

The City has also begun posting more than 120 vacant houses and other structures that are unsafe to live in. Recently, the City Codes Division and the Yakima Police Department have found homeless people living in some of those vacant houses and other structures claiming they have a lease on the property. The leases are not real. With those properties posted with the appropriate City Municipal Code citation, people living in them will be arrested for illegal unauthorized entry.

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services is operating three Emergency Cold Weather Shelters starting today through March 15th. Englewood Christian Church at 511 North 44th Avenue and Central Lutheran Church at 1604 West Yakima Avenue will house men this winter. The Unitarian Universalist Church at 225 North 2nd Street will serve as a women's shelter. All three shelters will be open from 4:00 pm to 7:00 am the next day.

Since its inception in 2005, the Emergency Cold Weather Shelter program was operated by the Homeless Network of Yakima County. This year Yakima Neighborhood Health Services will manage the program. Residents of the shelters will be picked up each day at 6:00 pm from Neighborhood Health's Depot building at 602 East Yakima Avenue and will be dropped off at 7:00 am the next day.

The Vineyard Christian Fellowship at 221 East MLK, Jr. Boulevard will also operate a soup kitchen at its location from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. No daytime or other shelter will operate at the Vineyard location.