

Urban Campground FAQs

April 2022

1. **What is an urban campground?** An urban campground is a city sanctioned campground with regulations, supervision and mandated case management services. It is the first and most important step to getting people out of the parks in our community.
2. **What would this campground look like?** It would be a fenced and gated facility of rows of tents covered by canopies. Potentially it will have an area for vehicle camping as well. Afterhours access would be restricted (closed gate). Each participant has a secure 10 x 10 area for themselves and their belongings. It will have a minimum of: case management area(offices), community eating area, bathrooms, and showers. Current staffing plans limit the number of sites to 70. Each site can have a max of 2 persons per with a max of 140 persons at the facility.
3. **Why is a campground needed?** Court rulings have said because of the dire housing shortage, cities cannot make sleeping in public places illegal if there is no low barrier alternative. Urban campgrounds provide a legal and moral alternative.
4. **Why does Oregon have a homeless population?** Historically there has been a large “in” migration to the West Coast because of our economy, weather, politics and culture. However, stagnate low wages and lack of affordable housing has caused a crisis across all states. Also, in the past decade, Oregon has been building housing at 65% of the recommend rate for it’s growth in population. This combined with a steady influx of people with net worth much higher than long-time residents has pushed housing costs and cost of living increases dramatically higher. The fact that rentals or houses are now so expensive is simply the outcome of the supply and demand problem. The economically homeless, represent the majority of people experiencing homelessness in Oregon.
5. **Have urban campgrounds been successful any place else?** By any measure, Medford’s urban campground operated by Rogue Retreat has been an enormous success. Grants Pass Campground will be using proven practices. Of course, the facility will be adapted for the Grants Pass community.
6. **Will there be vehicle camping allowed?** Yes, if the location has enough space. The city council has directed us to try and create space for the people who live throughout the city in their vehicles.
7. **How do people get admitted to the camp?** Participants are referred by various participating agencies. The lead group doing this will be the Grants Pass City police’s very successful Community Response Team.
8. **What is the success rate and how is this success rate determined?** Roughly 60% of those who participate in the various Rogue Retreat case management-based programs graduate to finding jobs, housing and being able to support themselves. The goal is moving people up and out, “restoring lives” not housing people. (Note: Facilities are limited so there are long waiting lists)
9. **What are Case Management Services?** All Participants will be required to participate in case management services, which are geared to help the person restore their lives to a level of

normalcy. The goal is for a person to move up and out. This site is not designed to just house people. Case management can include drug and alcohol treatment, reestablishment of legal status paperwork, finding jobs, reestablishing family connections, mental health services, and other help in becoming healthy.

10. **Are other services provided?** Yes, various partner organizations will provide necessary / secondary services, with the goal of helping a person become healthy and reestablished in our community. Partnership with churches can help to provide meals and offer ministry services
11. **Are these facilities temporary or permanent?** The goal is that this is a temporary facility (roughly 20 years). Hopefully, by then the housing crisis will be greatly diminished. Work is being done with a variety of organizations to find solutions to the housing crisis in Grants Pass, which is the cause of most of the homelessness in our area.
12. **How are the issues of Sex Offenders / neighborhood safety dealt with?** The safety of the neighborhood is extremely important and staff work closely with the police to ensure the neighborhood is safe. Any issue that comes up is dealt with quickly and effectively. The site of the campground will be no less than 1000 ft from any public schools. Rules are clearly established. The staff will respond to suggestions and seek guidance from local police and the parole and probation dept regarding participants, especially sex offenders.
13. **Do people choose to be homeless?** The great majority of homeless in our area are the unseen economically homeless, they live in cars, tents in campgrounds, tents in the woods, couch surf or live in unseen corners of our community. When given a hand up these people quickly find their way out of homelessness. However, people experiencing homelessness that are on the street corners, or in parks with obvious mental health / addiction issues do at times say *“leave me alone—this is what I want”* But when they are helped in small continuous incremental ways by professionals these chronic homeless get healthy and move off the streets. There are communities in America who claim to have solved homelessness by way of strong professional social services and providing housing.
14. **Do addiction and mental health issues cause homelessness?** Again, the enormous housing shortage on the west coast has created most of the homeless crisis. There are communities in America who claim to have solved homelessness by way of strong professional social services and having vacant housing to move people into. It is not because they eliminated addiction / mental health issues. These problems don't cause homelessness but they do make it much more likely someone will become homeless.
15. **Where does funding come from for sustained operation of the campground?** Initial or startup funding is from grants and community fundraising. Once established funding comes from many sources;
 - Nearly all the facilities charge rents or participation fees, these fees create a sense of responsibility and it conditions participants to the reality of paying rents (moving up and out)
 - Medicare reimbursements
 - Local, State and Federal grants
 - Foundation Grants
 - Donations --please consider helping