



Complexities in Dismantling Encampments

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

Following the recent **City of Grants Pass v. Johnson U.S. Supreme Court ruling**, cities across the nation are re-evaluating how they respond to public camping and homelessness. This decision, discussed in Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.'s (AHP's) recent **Complexities in Dismantling Encampments** webinar (November 2024), has raised questions about the balance between supporting public safety and respecting the needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

In this brief, we explore key takeaways from the AHP webinar and actionable recommendations to guide compassionate, equitable encampment responses that protect the well-being of individuals while addressing communities' health and safety.



Key Takeaways

- **Homelessness Policy Impacts:** The ruling affects local ordinances that regulate public camping and challenges cities to develop balanced homelessness policies.
- **Municipal Responsibilities:** Cities may need to reassess their approaches to ensure they comply with constitutional protections while addressing community needs.
- **Mental Health and Stability:** Encampment sweeps often destabilize individuals, leading to disconnection from services and essential belongings.
- **The Importance of Culturally Responsive Services:** Providing language and culturally appropriate support is essential to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- **Train Professionals:** Ensuring that staff are trained to engage individuals means educating them on trauma-informed care, harm reduction, Motivational Interviewing, and more.
- **Persons Experiencing Homelessness:** It's important to hear and understand individual needs, across all aspects of life and including the importance of pets as family members.



Recommendations

Cities across the nation are adopting strategies that address the challenges of encampment management in an equitable and humane way. Recommended actions include the following:

Effectively Engaging Stakeholders:

- **Establish Cross-Agency Teams:** Form unified teams that include homeless services, housing, law enforcement, and crisis response to coordinate efforts effectively.
- **Facilitate Clear Communication:** Provide written or verbal notices before encampments are dismantled, along with information on available resources.
- **Partner with Street Medicine Teams:** Collaborate with medical teams to ensure individuals with a high level of need in encampments receive essential healthcare support.

Building Provider Capacity:

- **Empower Outreach Teams:** Equip outreach workers with trauma-informed training and resources, empowering them to lead positive interactions with encampment residents.
- **Meet People Where They Are:** Deliver services directly to encampments to provide immediate access to mental health, medical, and housing support.

Building Effective Systems of Care:

- **Provide Essential Access Points:** Set up dedicated phone lines or emails monitored by outreach teams to facilitate connections to services.
- **Establish Temporary Housing for Individuals with a High Level of Need:** Secure hotel blocks or create safe outdoor spaces to accommodate individuals with complex needs.

We're here to support you in building these strategies and partnerships to help you achieve your goals.



Continue the Conversation

Visit our Contact Us page or email us at contact@ahpnet.com to learn more about equitable strategies for encampment response.