



COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE – DEC. 23, 2021

Please see this week's Community, Housing, and Human Services department update. The next update will be Jan. 6. Happy holidays and thank you for partnering with CHHS in many ways in 2021. We look forward to continuing the momentum in 2022!

****SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: MAYOR DIRECTS CITY TO OPEN SHORT-TERM CENTER****

With extreme cold weather in the forecast after Christmas, Mayor Woodward has directed that the City open a temporary, short-term center and remind the public of the services available for those experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable citizens.

Here's what people need to know:

- The City, in partnership with the Public Facilities District and The Guardians Foundation, will open a temporary 24-hour drop-in center at the Convention Center beginning Sunday at noon.
- Operation is scheduled to run through Jan. 2 at noon depending on the weather.
- Space is being planned for 150 people and is scalable.
- The location will be co-ed and accept animals.
- Meals will be provided.
- Masking and current COVID protocols for sheltering will be followed.
- Cost is expected to be as much as \$100,000.

The temporary, short-term space is intended to supplement during the extreme cold snap the enhancements already embedded into the system over the past several months. Mayor Woodward presented a plan in July 2020 to the City Council to move the City toward a regional model of meeting homelessness needs, introduce greater system consistency and predictability, and flex for short-term surge capacity as needed. In recent months, with the partnership of the Council, the City:

- Entered into long-term contracts with Truth Ministries (40 new spaces) and the Guardians Foundation (added day-use space) to secure year-round space that had historically been operated seasonally
- Partnered with Spokane County and Spokane Valley to [open the co-ed Young Adult Shelter](#) (44 new spaces) for individuals 18-24 years old and [The Way Out Center](#) (60 new spaces) as a service-intensive, referral-based bridge housing program to transition individuals out of homelessness, meeting two specific system needs
- Partnered with Spokane County and Spokane Valley to support the opening of Hope House, which expanded to 100 spaces for women
- Provided [funding to Family Promise](#) for 19 additional spaces for families
- Added hoteling as flex capacity with up to 40 spaces prioritizing the need for women
- Added 190 hours of space for victims of domestic violence

- Worked with the Guardians Foundation to offer early check-in for women from 3-5 p.m. to make more efficient use of unutilized space for men

During the winter months, community members warm up at the [City libraries](#) during the day.

We will be communicating this information publicly throughout the day today and appreciate your assistance in spreading the word. Please let us know if you have questions.

Eric Finch
Neighborhoods, Housing, and Human Services (NHHS) Director

Operational.

Status:

- As of Dec. 15, \$10.8 million in funding had been distributed to landlords and tenants who applied for the emergency rent assistance program during the first six months and have been impacted by the pandemic. Of that amount, the City administered \$3.77 million (35 percent) in the past 30 days. A request for proposals to administer upcoming emergency rent and utility assistance (ERA2) is [online](#) and will be open through Jan. 3. The funds are intended to prevent evictions. Questions can be sent to chhsrpf@spokanecity.org. Funding distribution updates for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program have been posted on the [City's website](#) twice a month along with how to apply.
- Spokane Functional Zero Initiatives were surprised by STCU's Season of Giving campaign with a \$35,000 total contribution to the work that the Anchor Community Initiative and Built for Zero are doing in the community. Checks of \$15,000 each went to initiatives of the Centralized Diversion Fund administered by SNAP and Volunteers of America to fight homelessness. A \$5,000 check will go toward Spokane County United Way's Anchor Communities Compensation Fund to stipend people with lived experience who are part of the group's advisory boards and inform the work and interventions the program does. A video of the check presentations is [here](#).
- Family Promise Open Doors Shelter was selected by Priority Spokane as one of this year's Lyndia Wilson Collaboration Award recipients. A [video](#) was produced by City Cable 5 to accompany the announcement of the award.
- A shelter capacity report for each night is being produced to monitor data over the winter. The report for today is attached. Shelters report for the night before since they don't know their numbers until after check-in in the evenings. Numbers reported are beds remaining open. Shelter contact information is also listed.
- Collaborations with homeless outreach teams continue to find future shelter solutions and transportation options.
- The City is applying for Washington State Commerce funds to support affordable housing development. K&H is representing property owner Proclaim Liberty to build 47 new units of affordable housing in the Perry District. This grant would help offset the infrastructure costs with developing on a rocky surface.
- Area cities and service providers are reviewing the coordinated entry prioritization process for permanent supportive housing (PSH) and will provide feedback to the CoC on possible ways to improve the system both short- and long-term.
- For key partners, the CMIS team continues to test the new Coordinated Entry Annual Performance Report. Working closely with community leads and HUD to finalize the report. This will take the team toward submitting the data for the CoC's UFA APR. The CMIS Team continues

to extend access to the CMIS database by onboarding new community partners and training new staff at current participating agencies. The team continues to look for ways to innovate and improve its internal and external data processing to better serve our partners. It has two projects underway, MDQR and Rental Assistance, with the goal to improve stability, consistency, reporting capability, and lower the time spent on manual data manipulation.

- Annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant contracts to provide funds for basic operation and administration salaries at four community centers and to purchase parking lot surveillance cameras at Northeast Community Center are being renewed.
- Built for Zero case conferencing meetings with providers continue and are on track for Jan.-Feb. for by-name list launch for single adults. Single adults case conferencing meets every two weeks with CMIS-participating providers to discuss clients who are in one of two priority areas, chronic unsheltered and chronic sheltered, and steps will be taken to move them toward housing. A similar meeting occurs for veterans on the opposite weeks of the month and for youth every Thursday. United Way will form in January a new lived experience advisory group similar for youth to advise Built for Zero. A similar group for veterans is also being explored.
- Better Health Together has activated its COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program. Agreements are in place with multiple organizations to assist households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Training and Team Building.

Status:

- Jenn Cerecedes, [hired by Mayor Nadine Woodward](#) and unanimously confirmed by City Council as the CHHS Director, starts Jan. 3. She previously managed homelessness and transitional housing programs for SNAP.
- Applications are being accepted for two [Program Manager](#) positions through Jan. 10.
- Five full-time employees have been added to the department in the past month in addition to three temporary/seasonal employees, two contractors and a contract writing firm. A total of six vacancies remain in CHHS.

Policy and Planning.

Status:

- Point-in-Time Count planning continues for the annual event in Spokane County required by HUD that determines funding for homelessness services based on survey results. The count starts Jan. 27. Volunteers will be needed and a signup portal will be established soon.
- CHHS staff, in collaboration with the County and other regional organizations, is evaluating options to identify a sustainable solution for grant funding to cover ongoing operational needs.
- Leadership is exploring ways to proactively collaborate with all local groups and boards working on regional homelessness topics.

Communication.

Status:

- A [news release](#), [blog](#) and City Cable 5 [video](#) featuring the emergency rent assistance program's thankful recipients and distributions were posted. Please consider sharing the video to increase awareness about the program.
- Communications team is planning housing success stories pertaining to the Community Development Block Grant, HOME and Head Start to Construction Trades programs.
- Continuing meetings with stakeholders to ensure communication is better, concerns are heard directly, and answers are provided to specific questions or concerns.
- These weekly CHHS updates are archived and posted on the City's [website](#).

Reaching out.

To help us communicate better and more efficiently, especially with the staff transitions, we would ask you to use email distribution lists created to ensure the right individuals get the email and can respond quickly:

Providers – PLEASE send information to the CHHSreports@spokanecity.org email if you have been sending them to Cassi directly. They will be received and processed.

For leadership, status, or program level questions: CHHS Leadership (chhsleadership@spokanecity.org)

For contracts or financial related questions: CHHS Accounting (chhsaccounting@spokanecity.org)

For grant related questions: CHHS Grants (chhsgrants@spokanecity.org)

For RFP submittals or questions: CHHS RFP (chhsrfp@spokanecity.org)

For CMIS/HMIS related questions: CHHS CMIS (cmis@spokanecity.org)

Thank you for your continued interest and investment in the body of work the CHHS department provides our community. We are always open to questions and input.

CHHS Leadership Team and Staff