



## **COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE – FEB. 17, 2022**

Please see this week's Community, Housing, and Human Services department update. The next update will be distributed March 3.

### **Operational.**

#### **Status:**



- A planning retreat between CHHS, the Continuum of Care, County, providers, other cities, the and nonprofits to improve regional collaboration and update the community's five-year plan to address homelessness was held on Monday, Feb. 14, at the Convention Center. Topics included: the local homeless ecosystem; diversion and coordinated assessment; and identifying successes and gaps in the system to make improvements. Breakout topics were: Rapid Rehousing, Long-Term Medical Care, Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Outreach, Youth, Families Veterans, The Way Out, Singles, Shelters and Senior Care. The retreat kicked off a six-month plan update process.

- The 2022 Point-in-Time Count that provides an annual snapshot estimate of the homeless population in Spokane County [will be Feb. 24-March 1](#). A total of 140 volunteers signed up before the online registration closed on Monday, Feb. 14. Information, including volunteer resources, is on the [City's website](#). Thank you to all the volunteers and partners! If you have questions, email [adjulovic@spokanecity.org](mailto:adjulovic@spokanecity.org).



- The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Spokane Homeless Connect, a community-led outreach event associated with the PIT Count that provides services to the homeless and serves as a central census-taking site for the count, will be March 1 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Spokane Convention Center, 202 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
- The City was awarded an affordable housing grant for \$680,460 from the Washington State Department of Commerce to help fund infrastructure improvements for a housing campus in the Perry District.
- The [search](#) for a temporary warming shelter to supplement the existing provider network continues. The City is searching for property has approximately 20,000 square feet available to accommodate human habitation; an ability to accommodate restroom facilities, either

permanent or temporary, on-site; distance from a school, daycare, retail, and business concentrations; and equitable access to public transportation. At least 50 sites have been considered.

- Existing Emergency Rent Assistance Program funds are being exhausted due to recent distributions. [Two online application portals have been paused due to distributions and allocations](#). Meanwhile, [The Carl Maxey Center](#), which prioritizes assistance to African American and BIPOC households, was recently awarded additional funds that are available to apply for. Funding distribution updates for the program have been posted on the [City's website](#) twice a month along with how to apply. The funding helps keep people in their homes and helps landlords and tenants avoid evictions. The City will continue to search for future funding for the program.
- CHHS staff are meeting with community partners and nonprofits for program development.
- A new pilot system change to the coordinated entry prioritization process for permanent supportive housing (PSH) after a work group identified a need to address PSH projects serving a narrow age group will be analyzed over the next 18 months. All PSH referrals are now being offered to individuals in the waiting pool from the 62-and-older and 18-24 age groups until their respective unit allotments are filled or the waiting pool has no remaining eligible participants. If the wait pool of eligible individuals is depleted before the percentage allotment is filled, the evaluation team can recommend that the age range is expanded.
- Annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant contracts to purchase parking lot surveillance cameras at Northeast Community Center and an LED community center sign at the MLK Community Center are in the approval process.
- A contract between the City and Washington State Department of Commerce for a \$1.352M grant will fund improvements to the MLK Community Center. The project will include an asbestos survey and abatement if necessary, and a complete tear off and replacement of the roof. Construction is planned for this spring with completion around September. The grant was awarded to the City last June after a capital needs assessment on the building was performed.
- 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. 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.
- Built for Zero case conferencing meetings with providers continue and are on track for by-name list launch for single adults in the near future. 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 is forming a new lived experience advisory group similar for youth to advise Built for Zero. A lived experience coordinator should be on board by March. A similar group for veterans is also being explored.
- Financial analysis updates of CHHS programs are being performed to help future decisions.
- A coordinated community plan for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grant from HUD is being developed.

- There are Resident Assistance programs for emergency help to pay for City utility bills, which include charges for water, wastewater, stormwater and garbage collection. Interest-free payment plans are also available for residential and commercial customers.

### **Training and Team Building.**

#### Status:

- Applications for [Neighborhoods, Housing and Human Services Director](#) are being accepted through Feb. 20.
- A new employee started in the CHHS grants department this week. The search to fill CHHS Program Manager positions continues.
- Four applicants for CHHS Board will be interviewed by the Executive Committee today, Feb. 17.
- Free Narcan kits and training are available West Spokane Wellness Partnership. Narcan, or Naloxone, is an injection or nasal spray to quickly reverse opioid overdoses. Information: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3XVPPXV>; Sarah McNew, [smcnew@esd101.net](mailto:smcnew@esd101.net); <http://westspokanewellness.com/>.
- Drive-up and walk-up [COVID-19 testing sites](#) are open to the community. These testing sites offer free testing and are open to anyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or has recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

### **Policy and Planning.**

#### Status:

- AARP invites applications for tangible improvement projects that can help our community become more livable. Applications are being accepted through March 22 for grants to improve public places; housing; transportation; civic engagement; diversity, equity and inclusion; support efforts to build engagement and build-on programs under new federal laws; and other innovative ideas. Since 2017, AARP has funded more than 800 projects across the country. Visit [www.AARP.org/CommunityChallenge](http://www.AARP.org/CommunityChallenge) to learn more and apply if eligible.
- The Department of Commerce is convening an advisory committee to help design the process for engagement of homeless services providers in Washington state. This work will inform how the state proceeds with supporting homeless services providers. All advisory committee members will be compensated at least \$150 per session, with the expectation of 4 sessions throughout the process. Commerce is seeking members for the committee, which will start meeting late this month. The department will develop recommendations and potential interventions to support homeless service providers who work in traumatizing environments, to better manage and address workplace stress and trauma. A series of interviews, focus groups, and conversations with frontline homeless service providers around the state will be held. Interested parties can apply [here](#).
- Among the overall current CHHS priorities are: the warming center location and sustainability, the Point-in-Time Count, shelter coordination and transportation, homeless outreach, RFPs and contracts, and Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) planning.
- 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.

- Washington State's outdoor mask mandate will be lifted Friday, Feb. 18, Gov. Jay Inslee announced Wednesday. There is no date for when the universal indoor mask mandate will be lifted.
- For the most recent and local data on COVID-19 cases and outcomes, visit [SRHD.org](https://www.srhd.org). Track State of Washington information with these interactive [dashboards](#) for updates.

## **Communication.**

### Status:

- A [press release](#) on the City receiving a grant for infrastructure for an affordable housing project in the Perry District in the East Central neighborhood resulted in stories on KXLY, KHQ, The Spokesman-Review and KXLY Radio.
- A [press release](#) and [video](#) were produced on the Browne Street viaduct project aimed at improving health and safety.
- A CityCable 5 [video](#) was produced on Mayor Nadine Woodward keeping her pledge to reduce litter downtown with the installation 12 more smart trash cans at busy intersection.
- An interview with The Spokesman-Review on the upcoming PIT Count was held today.
- The [Homeless Pocket Resource Guide](#) that lists shelters, drop-in day centers, general resources, mental health contacts and free meal sites has been updated, is posted on multiple City websites and can be shared.
- 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 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:

Grantees – please send invoices and reports to the [chhsreports@spokanecity.org](mailto:chhsreports@spokanecity.org) email instead of sending items to specific staff members. They will be received and processed.

For general CHHS inquiries (not billing- or reporting-related), please send an email to [spokanechhs@spokanecity.org](mailto:spokanechhs@spokanecity.org) for assistance.

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

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

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

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

For CMIS/HMIS related questions: CHHS CMIS ([cmis@spokanecity.org](mailto: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

