



## **COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE – JAN. 6, 2022**

Please see this week's Community, Housing, and Human Services department update. The next update will be distributed Jan. 20.

### **Operational.**

#### **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 population survey results. The count starts the evening of Jan. 27 with the sheltered count and continues for up to five days after with the unsheltered count. Volunteers are needed and a signup portal will be posted [online](#) soon. In the meantime, if you are interested in volunteering or have questions, contact PIT Coordinator Amira Djulovic at [adjulovic@spokanecity.org](mailto:adjulovic@spokanecity.org).
- The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Spokane Homeless Connect will be held in conjunction with the PIT Count on Jan. 27 at the Spokane Convention Center, 202 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a free hot meal; vaccine clinic; behavioral health, family, veteran, medical and dental services; clothing; food; housing services; haircuts, showers; veterinary care, warrant quashing and legal services. Wearing a mask will be required.
- The City extended the operation of a temporary, short-term, co-ed center at the Convention Center until Sunday, Jan. 9, while additional enhancements are completed to the permanent shelter system. The action utilizes a partnership with the Public Facilities District and The Guardians Foundation that started Dec. 26 ahead of an arctic storm. Three meals per day are provided and animals are accepted. It is intended to supplement during the extreme cold snap the enhancements embedded into the system over the past several months.
- The attached daily shelter capacity report continues to monitor usage and available space at locations citywide. Shelter contact information is also listed.
- Operation of the temporary drop-in center is projected to cost \$200,000 per week. Financial accountability measures are in place to monitor costs and overall impact to the sheltering system.
- The Guardians continues to accept donations of blankets, non-perishable food, socks, hats, gloves, hand warmers, and undergarments for the Convention Center operation. Those items should be delivered to the Cannon Street Shelter at 527 S. Cannon St.
- The City has worked with the shelter provider network to expand and standardize check-in times, create additional space and capacity within the permanent sheltering system and add more transportation options to and between shelters.
- The Spokane Fire Department continues wellness checks of vulnerable individuals throughout the community who are out in the weather. The Spokane fire and police departments have also been handing out bus passes to help individuals get to shelters.
- CHHS has been notified it has been awarded \$234,629.26 in additional ERA1 funds for the Emergency Rent Assistance Program. CHHS submitted its request on Nov. 30 for reallocated funds from the Department of Treasury, certifying that the City had obligated at least 65% of its

ERA1 award (100% was obligated at that time) for the Emergency Rent Assistance Program and demonstrating the need for the additional funds. The funding helps keep people in their homes and helps landlords and tenants avoid evictions. Existing rent assistance funds are quickly being exhausted due to an increase in recent distributions. There may not be sufficient funds to fulfill applications after Jan. 5 due to the number of applications in the cue. 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. About \$12 million total in funding had been distributed from the program since it began last summer as of Dec. 31.

- 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.
- 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 and an LED community center sign at the MLK Community Center are being renewed.
- Collaborations with homeless outreach teams continue to find future shelter solutions and transportation options.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Spokane Regional Health District expects the Omicron variant will be impacting shelters, so screening shelter clients and along with masking and social distancing is urged.

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

#### Status:

- Jenn Cerecedes started as CHHS Director on Jan. 3. She previously managed homelessness and transitional housing programs for SNAP. She most recently worked for Clearwater Paper doing strategic project management and marketing for the company's social responsibility, sustainability reporting, and stakeholder engagement priorities. Welcome Jenn!
- Barry Barfield was voted as the next chair of the CHHS Board, while Bob Hutchinson and Kathryn Alexander will serve as co-vice chairs.
- Applications are being accepted for two [Program Manager](#) positions in CHHS through Jan. 10.

- Five full-time employees were added to CHHS recently in addition to three temporary/seasonal employees, two contractors and a contract writing firm. A total of six vacancies remain in CHHS.
- The City of Spokane/Spokane County Regional Continuum of Care (CoC) is seeking applications for four board positions representing Education (K-12); Law and Justice systems; Nonprofit (Temporary Housing); and Business. Applications and instruction are [online](#). Applications are due Feb. 7 at 5 p.m. The time commitment ranges between 5-10 hours a month. Board members serve five-year terms. The CoC's mission is to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-reoccurring in our area by fostering shared responsibility among stakeholders and coordinating resources essential to the success of local plans to end homelessness.

### **Policy and Planning.**

#### Status:

- Request for proposals to administer upcoming emergency rent and utility assistance (ERA2) were accepted through Jan. 3. The City Council will vote on a recommendation from the CHHS Board on Monday.
- Among the overall current CHHS priorities are: the warming center location and sustainability, the Jan. 27 Point-in-Time Count, shelter coordination and transportation, homeless outreach, RFPs and contracts, and Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) planning and coordination.
- 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:

- Communication to community groups about homeless and housing programs continues, including to the Exchange Club service organization and Homeless Coalition this week.
- A [press release](#) extending the temporary, short-term shelter at the Convention Center was issued last week.
- 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.
- Awareness of the [Emergency Rent Assistance Program](#) continues to be shared through various communication channels, including [social media](#) and [video](#). Recent distributions are quickly exhausting funds.
- 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:

**Providers – PLEASE send information to the [CHHSreports@spokanecity.org](mailto: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](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