



## **COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE – JAN. 21, 2022**

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

### **Operational.**

#### **Status:**

- The 2022 Point-in-Time Count that provides an annual snapshot estimate of the homeless population in Spokane County [has been rescheduled for Feb. 24-March 1](#), due to the spike in COVID-19 cases. The count was originally scheduled for Jan. 27-Feb. 1. The sheltered count is now set for Feb. 24, followed by the unsheltered count Feb. 25-March 1. About 100 volunteers for the count will be needed. Volunteer signups and more information are on the [City's website](#). 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 point for the count, has been rescheduled to March 1 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Spokane Convention Center, 202 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. The Spokane Homeless Connect is a subcommittee of the Spokane Homeless Coalition, a community Coalition of more than 1,400 individuals and 100 agencies, ministries, and churches serving the homeless and marginalized throughout Spokane County.
- 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; distinct distance from a school, daycare, retail, and business concentrations; and equitable access to public transportation.
- The City Council, after a [5-2 vote](#), agreed to send a letter to the Administration defining the responsibilities of the City Council and Administration when it comes to working on homelessness services.
- A planning retreat between CHHS and the Continuum of Care to explore ways to improve regional collaboration between homelessness partners is in the works.
- The attached daily shelter capacity report continues to monitor usage and available space at locations citywide. Shelter contact information is also listed.
- 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.
- Year-end invoices from providers to CHHS were due Jan. 15. Please send your invoices ASAP if you haven't done so.

- Existing Emergency Rent Assistance Program funds are quickly being exhausted due to an increase in 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 will be available to apply for starting today. 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Requests for the Youth Centralized Diversion Fund have sharply increased from last year, demonstrating the program's success. Centralized Diversion Funds are pots of flexible funding that can be leveraged to divert individuals from the Homeless Crisis Response System through client-driven, creative housing solutions. In July 2020 the Anchor Community Initiative launched a Centralized Diversion Fund through private funding secured by A Way Home WA.
- 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 similar group for veterans is also being explored.
- Financial analysis updates of CHHS programs are being performed to help future decisions.
- A [request for proposals](#) for organizations to coordinate the Spokane City/County Continuum of Care's participation in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is out for applications through Jan. 23. Data is being analyzed to shape a coordinated community plan for the YHDP grant from HUD.

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

Status:

- Applications for two Program Manager positions in CHHS are being reviewed.
- 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 instructions 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:

- 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 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 and the media about homeless and housing programs continues. Interviews with Spokane Radio and the Association of Washington Cities magazine have been requested.
- 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

