



COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE – MARCH 2, 2022

Please see this week's Community, Housing, and Human Services department update. The next update will be distributed March 17.

Operational.

Status:



- The six-day Point-in-Time Count (photos above) ended on Tuesday in conjunction with the community-led Homeless Connect at the Spokane Convention Center. The City thanks all 140 volunteers, providers, nonprofits, partners and others for their time and tremendous support despite cold weather and rain a portion of the time. Volunteers and project staff were featured in this week's "[Walking with Woodward](#)" video. The volunteer crew included Washington State Department of Commerce Director Lisa Brown (in upper left photo in the middle right). "As the primary administrator of public funding for homelessness and affordable housing programs across Washington state, this work is a key priority for the Department of Commerce," Brown said. "Personally, this is my community. I live here, and I want to do my part to see that all of the people in our city are safe and warm." Stories during the PIT Count were published in The Spokesman-Review, KHQ, KREM and KXLY.
- Mayor Nadine Woodward [discussed a temporary shelter idea](#) for City-owned property at 5205 N. Florida Road. However, after discussion with council members and neighbors it became clear



that the concerns about using that location, even for a defined length of time like had been done with the downtown library, Spokane Arena, and the Mission Avenue property during the early months of the pandemic, outweighed the benefits. A decision was then made to not pursue the idea further and refocus on the bigger-picture priorities, which include a new temporary shelter location to meet emergent needs on short notice and a separate permanent shelter with day-use space and ready access to services.

- The City added temporary shelter capacity during the recent cold snap through a combination of hoteling and expansion strategies.
- The new bridge housing program, which began operating at the end of the year, has started to reduce the demand on drop-in space. The Way Out Center has accepted 41 individuals into its intensive bridge housing program from the night-by-night system. Two individuals have already graduated from the program and into permanent housing since Christmas. Program completion can take several weeks to several months.
- Mayor Woodward has been active with the state Legislature supporting funding for housing and homelessness.
- Existing Emergency Rent Assistance Program funds are being exhausted due to recent distributions and allocations. 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 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, Monthly Daily Quality Report and Rental Assistance, with the goal to improve stability, consistency, reporting capability, and lower the time spent on manual data manipulation.
- 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.
- 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 this month. A similar group for veterans is also being explored.

- 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.
- 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.

Training and Team Building.

Status:

- Applications for the Neighborhoods, Housing and Human Services Director positions are under review.
- An offer is being prepped for a candidate for a program manager position in CHHS human services. The search will continue for a CHHS housing program manager position.
- Gov. Jay Inslee appointed Spokane senior housing developer Paul Trautman as chair of the state's Affordable Housing Advisory Board. Trautman started his term on March 2.
- 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; <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:

- Work groups will help update the community's five-year plan to address homelessness after a planning retreat kicked off the six-month process in February.
- The City Council committed \$500,000 for a new behavioral health clinic at the former Hillyard library. It was proposed by the Northeast Community Center and MultiCare.
- CHHS staff are meeting with community partners and nonprofits for program development.
- Financial analysis updates of CHHS programs are being performed to help future decisions.
- The state indoor mask mandate ends at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 11. The governor announced that masks will no longer be required in most public places, which includes City facilities. Further definition and guidance is anticipated over the next four weeks from state Labor and Industries and potentially the state Department of Health regarding updated workplace rules.
- The state outdoor mask mandate, which covered large outdoor gatherings, has ended. However, masks are still required in the workplace, which includes field worksites, unless physical distancing is possible.
- 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 to learn more and apply if eligible.

Communication.

Status:

- The PIT Count was featured during the six-day survey on [KREM](#), [The Spokesman-Review](#), [KHQ](#) and [KXLY](#). It was also profiled on KXLY Radio and the weekly “[Walking with Woodward](#)” video segment.
- A story on what Spokane is doing to reduce homelessness will be featured in Washington Association of Cities’ Cityvision magazine.
- Press releases were issued on [added temporary shelter capacity](#) and [a temporary shelter idea](#) that is no longer being pursued due to neighbor concerns.
- Citizens and organizations are invited to [subscribe](#) to the City’s Community Update newsletter that will be in your inbox every Tuesday night. The weekly update features City news and events, a positive news story, coronavirus information, volunteer opportunities, rental assistance, and more. To read the latest newsletter [click here](#).
- 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 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 for assistance.

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

