



COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE – MARCH 17, 2022

Please see this week's Community, Housing, and Human Services department update. The next update will be distributed March 31.

Operational.

Status:

- The City is [seeking proposals from potential operators](#) of a night-by-night emergency shelter that would be activated at its discretion, including to meet weather and air quality needs. Those seeking a safe place to stay would be able to drop in 24 hours a day. The request-for-proposal process is being run concurrent to the location search. Proposals from prospective operators are due by March 24. Providers are encouraged to partner to meet the needs of multiple demographics. The request for proposals specifically seeks ideas for managing service connectivity for individuals who would use the space. The City is actively engaged in conversations with potential shelter location partners for the emergency activation center.
- The City is exploring potential partnerships to locate a new permanent shelter outside of the downtown core. Stakeholder and neighborhood engagement would coincide with securing the site.
- City Council has re-started in-person meetings at City Hall due to the end of the Washington state mask mandate. Council's Monday standing committee meetings, Briefing Sessions, Legislative Sessions, and Thursday study sessions will be held in-person in City Council Chambers – Lower Level of City Hall, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. All meetings will continue to have a virtual option for attendees and stream live on Channel 5 and online at <https://my.spokanecity.org/citycable5/live> and <https://www.facebook.com/spokanecitycouncil>. Members of the public who wish to testify testimony during the Legislative Session and open forum will have the option to do so in-person or via WebEx by signing up in the hour before each meeting either in person outside of Council Chambers or online <https://forms.gle/Vd7n381x3seaL1NW6>. More information, including instructions for participating in Council meetings, can be found on the meeting agendas at <https://my.spokanecity.org/citycouncil/meetings/>.
- The City Council last week decided how to spend \$12.1 million of the American Rescue Plan funds. Amounts and purposes include: \$3.5 million, low-barrier shelter; \$1.2 million, mobile medical clinics; \$1.5 million, reimburse building permit fees for homebuyers; \$3 million, behavioral health services and resources for low-income and at-risk youth; \$2 million, projects of city-wide significance; and \$900,000, spread across three years to help reimburse costs for downtown cultural events and parades. An RFP process will be conducted to get the funds distributed. A total of about \$25 million in such funds have been approved.
- A proposal to have the City participate in a federal initiative called "House America: An All-Hands-on-Deck Effort to Address the Nation's Homelessness Crisis" was presented to the Urban Experience Committee. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) are inviting mayors, city and county leaders,

tribal nation leaders and governors into a national partnership that would provide technical support. House America will utilize [the historic investments provided through the American Rescue Plan](#) to address the crisis of homelessness through a Housing First approach.

- The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count required by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development has moved from the survey phase to the data organization and analysis phase. The City thanks all volunteers, providers, jurisdictions and other community partners for making the countywide count a success despite cold weather and rain during a portion of the six-day survey process. The housing inventory count (HIC) is being conducted to complement the PIT Count.
- The latest daily shelter capacity report is attached.
- A policies and procedures document for the single-family home rehabilitation program is being developed.
- Hoteling for 36 to 38 homeless individuals per night will continue through March 31.
- The Salvation Army's Way Out Shelter is accepting applications its family resources center on 204 E. Indiana Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Referrals can be self-referrals or referrals placed by providers. There will be a referral system in CMIS.
- 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 awarded additional funds that are available to apply for.
- 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.
- Per the Spokane Regional Health District, COVID-19 rates and hospitalizations continue to decrease.
- As of Monday, the COVID-10 outbreak statuses Truth Ministries, House of Charity, Hope House, and Cannon had ended. UGM Men's shelter and Rising Strong were still considered active in outbreak status.
- Spokane Regional Health District will continue to provide free over-the-counter COVID rapid tests to programs as long as the free state program continues.
- Dr. Bob Lutz will be join the CHAS Health Street Medicine Team on Mondays which will have the program running Monday-Friday.
- 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.
- 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.

Training and Team Building.

Status:

- Applications for the Neighborhoods, Housing and Human Services Director position are under review. Interviews are expected be scheduled in the near future.

- The search continues for the CHHS housing and human services program manager positions.
- Applications for the Project Employee position of [COVID-19 Program Specialist](#) are being sought through April 3.
- The City is seeking applications for [Manager of Housing and Homeless Initiatives](#) through March 28.
- 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.
- Regarding the Built for Zero Initiative under the United Way of Spokane County, diversion training for the community is being held this week. Built for Zero case conferencing meetings with providers continue. 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 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 has formed new lived experience advisory group similar for youth to advise Built for Zero.
- Graduates of New Leaf Café, a Transitions program, will be celebrated at the YWCA, 930 N. Monroe St., on Friday, March 25, at 1:30 p.m. Everyone is invited. New Leaf provides job training in the food services industry for women with barriers to traditional employment. New Leaf's programs blend education, hands-on work experience and supportive services designed to help women gain the self-confidence and professional skills necessary for self-sufficiency.

Policy and Planning.

Status:

- The state indoor mask mandate and outdoor mask mandate, which covered large outdoor gatherings, have both ended. Regarding inside City facilities, employees and visitors are no longer required to wear masks inside City facilities. Social distancing remains in effect in the workplace. Employees and visitors who prefer to wear a mask are encouraged to continue that practice. Individual needs, comforts, and choices of City employees will continue to be respected. Additional guidance from the state Department of Labor and Industries and potentially the state Department of Health could cause future adjustments to the policy. For additional guidance visit, [L&I Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19](#). There are still places where masks are required, including public transportation, airports, healthcare settings, correctional facilities and some private businesses. Congregate shelters are no longer required to mask up. SRHD is upholding the recommendation except if the facility has areas designated for health care, respite or isolation. Those areas require masks. Programs should be prepared to pivot should anything change regarding COVID numbers.
- An informal poll of partners during a Monday meeting this week revealed provider program intentions for masking. Masks will still be required for all staff and clients at all Transition programs and at Hope House. Masks will not be required unless individuals are symptomatic at Open Doors, Cannon, House of Charity and The Way Out.
- The City Council accepted a \$134,881 planning grant that will be used to create a coordinated community plan for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and to support ongoing implementation. Of that amount, \$99,881 was awarded Better Health Together (Spokane) after an RFP process to cover costs associated with being the host organization for

the YHDP Coordinator role and \$35,000 to Volunteers of America (Spokane) to compensate young people with lived experience on the Youth Advisory Board.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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:

- A City Cable5 [video](#) on a man who was formerly living on the streets before landing a welding job as a result of a bridge housing program at The Way Out was produced.
- A [press release](#) on the City seeking proposals through March 24 from potential operators of an emergency shelter was issued.
- A [press release](#) on the City Council re-starting in-person meetings was issued.
- Mayor Woodward [spoke](#) with the Chase Youth Commission about mental health and homelessness.
- The PIT Count volunteers were profiled in a "[Walking with Woodward](#)" video segment.
- The app used during the Point-in-Time Count was featured in [Wired Magazine](#).
- 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](#).
- Communication materials are being developed for the State of the City address in late April. The first State of Downtown will be May 11 at 3:30 p.m. at the Riverfront Park pavilion.
- 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