



COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE – May 26, 2022

Please see this week's Community, Housing, and Human Services department update. The next update will be distributed June 9.

Operational.

Status:

- The City Council on May 16 voted 6-0 (Council President Breean Beggs was absent) to [approve an emergency interim zoning ordinance](#) allowing emergency shelters in heavy industrial zones. The change is among three **steps needed to open a new shelter** with supportive services on East Trent Avenue. A lease is being finalized with the property owner to open a shelter and proposals from potential operators are being evaluated. The zoning ordinance will be in effect until Nov. 7, 2022, unless extended or canceled at a Council public hearing. A public hearing will be held during Council's regular Legislative Session at 6 p.m. on July 11. Mayor Nadine Woodward [praised the zoning decision](#) because it provides the City additional flexibility to offer people a safe place to sleep indoors and support individuals in the next steps of their journey.
- Upcoming **Point-in-Time Count presentations** to community groups will leverage experts in technology and analysis from the City of Spokane's Innovation Technology and Services Division, as well as input from community experts into a story map format that will incorporate local housing affordability data, geographic information and other information on regional conditions to provide context to this year's count. The PIT Count, a snapshot of Spokane County's homeless population required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, revealed a [two-year increase](#) of 13 percent across all populations. A total of 1,757 people from 1,513 households were counted this year compared to the 1,559 people in 1,244 households counted in 2020, the last time a complete count was conducted due to public health limitations related to the global pandemic.
- City residents will be able to apply for \$5.59 million through the Emergency Rent Assistance Program when applications open [after the City Council confirms the providers](#) that will distribute the funds. Funds are expected to be accessible near the end of June. The **funding is intended to prevent evictions** by paying past due and future rent and utilities that have resulted during the pandemic. Funds will be distributed equitably based on population demographics. More than 2,470 households in the City have benefitted from the program that started June 1, 2021.
- CHHS is seeking proposals for about [\\$10 million from three different funding sources](#) through June 10 to help address the housing crisis. The [Request for Proposals for housing and housing-related supportive services](#) combines funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the local Sales and Use Tax for Affordable and Supportive Housing, and the local and state Sales and Use Tax for Housing and Housing-Related Supportive Services. Of the total amount, \$6 million is ARPA funds that provide governments resources to respond to the pandemic and its economic effects.
- The latest **Shelter Capacity Report** is attached.

- The City expects to administer \$4.4 million and the County \$2.6 million in one-time **HOME-American Rescue Plan** (not to be confused with ARPA) planning funds from HUD. While the City and County are conducting [a regional planning effort](#) for consistency and efficiency, each has its own citizen participation and approval process for the plans they develop. A confidential [survey](#) asking for input from local affordable housing developers, homeless housing and service providers and citizens to guide fund usage is online. Each jurisdiction will offer HOME-ARP fund through requests for proposals (RFPs) for activities found to be of the highest and best use according to funding guidelines, community needs and feedback, and consideration of realistic timelines and development limitations.
- A group featuring the City, providers and other partners are working on improving the **coordinated entry system** with policies and procedures.
- Staff is starting to work on the annual HUD **Notice of Funding Opportunity** (NOFO).
- Mayor Nadine Woodward and Council Member Michael Cathcart are proposing to [co-locate police and behavioral health services](#) in the former East Central Library location as an extension of similar programs in other neighborhoods. [Members of the East Central neighborhood joined Woodward and Cathcart](#) last week in proposing that the 6,000-square-foot library location, which relocated to a newly constructed branch at Liberty Park, be used as [a neighborhood policing location with on-site behavioral health resources in the same building](#). The Spokane Police Department currently partners with behavioral health professionals at its downtown precinct to bring critical services to people in crisis and free up police resources for other calls.
- The City Council's **2021-2022 Strategic Housing and Homelessness Actions** are outlined [online](#).
- The Department of Commerce has a new **funding opportunity for affordable multifamily/rental housing projects**. The funding is intended for applicants at risk of losing affordability due to expiration of use restrictions that otherwise require affordability for low-income households. The legislature appropriated \$10 million to the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) during the 2021-23 legislative session ([SHB 1080 § 1072](#)) to preserve affordability. The [Notice of Funding Availability](#) (NOFA) outlines specific information regarding eligibility, funding requirements and priorities, the process for submission and dates of significance. The application period opened May 12. Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis until all funds are exhausted.
- Additional funding for the Volunteers of America young adult shelter and City Council, staff and RFP updates were among the topics discussed in the [May CHHS Board meeting](#).
- The Washington State Department of Commerce is [soliciting proposals](#) to produce a **report on the behavioral health and long-term care facilities**, and residential settings providing services within the continuum of care for individuals discharged from state psychiatric hospitals. The produced report must map the geographic location of each facility or residential setting and highlight geographic gaps in service availability. Proposals are due at 3 p.m. on Friday, June 1. The estimated contract period is July 8, 2022, through March 31, 2023. For more information or questions, contact Cary Retlin at Cary.Retlin@commerce.wa.gov.
- Spokane County has seen a 16% **increase in COVID-19 cases** week over week. At the end of last week, 419 cases were reported compared to 350 the week before. Overall, it's a moderate increase in cases without significant impact on hospital capacity. The Spokane County case rates and hospitalizations are lower than the state's averages, as well as much lower than the western part of the state. There have been multiple outbreaks in the Spokane shelter system.

Training and Team Building.

Status:

- Final candidate interviews for the **Neighborhoods, Housing and Human Services Director** position are being scheduled. A new CHHS program manager will start work on June 20. Applications for a program professional position are being reviewed.
- Twelve applications were received for three **CHHS Board openings**. Candidates will be interviewed.
- Visit [VolunteerSpokane.org](https://www.volunteerspokane.org) for community volunteer opportunities, including a downtown graffiti cleanup at High Bridge Park on June 2 and more.
- 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 partners.

Policy and Planning.

Status:

- Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC), in partnership with Spokane Transit, is working on the 2022 update to the **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP)** for Spokane County. The planning process is evaluating special public transportation needs in the Spokane County planning area and will take place through early fall 2022. A **CPT-HSTP Project Page** has been established for public transportation users, service providers, and community members. A survey for public input is open through June. For more information, email contact.srtc@srtc.org or call 509-343-6370.
- Empire Health Foundation is leading a two-month **funding prioritization process for housing and human services needs**. The first planning meeting was April 13. The funding prioritization process comes after several agencies attended a planning retreat organized by the CoC in February to start the six-month process of updating the community's five-year plan on homelessness.

Communication.

Status:

- A City Cable 5 video called [“A Place I Can Call Home”](#) features a Spokane man who escaped homelessness through a regional bridge housing project.
- The [press release](#) and [City Cable 5 video](#) were released on the pilot Spokane Neighborhood Leadership Academy, a partnership between the Office of Neighborhood Services and Gonzaga University.
- [City closures](#) are planned for Memorial Day.
- Council Member Lori Kinnear recapped the [May 16 Council meeting](#) that included approval of an interim zoning ordinance that allows emergency shelters in heavy industrial zones.
- A [press release](#) on the **re-start of the shelter operator RFP process** was issued.
- Chris Patterson, of the Hello for Good business group, described [business' role in addressing homelessness](#) in the Journal of Business monthly webcast series “Elevating the Conversation.”
- A [press release](#) was distributed on the **Request for Proposals for housing and housing-related supportive services** that combines about \$10 million funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the local Sales and Use Tax for Affordable and Supportive Housing, and the local and state Sales and Use Tax for Housing and Housing-Related Supportive Services.
- A [press release](#) on **new Emergency Rent Assistance Program funding** from the Washington State Department of Commerce was issued.

- The **State of the City Address** can be viewed [here](#). Woodward emphasized collaboration as critical to recent successes and how the City will overcome its current challenges to reinvigorate the region's economic engine coming out of the pandemic. She added mental health and operational sustainability to her initiative areas of public safety, housing, homelessness, and economic development.
- Citizens and organizations are invited to [subscribe](#) to the City's **Community Update newsletter**. To read the latest newsletter, click [here](#).
- The **Homeless Pocket Resource Guide** lists shelters, drop-in day centers, general resources, mental health contacts and free meal sites.
- These **CHHS updates** are archived and posted on the City's [website](#).

Reaching out.

To help us communicate better and more efficiently, please 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