

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: A Message from the Mayor!
Date: Friday, April 10, 2020 6:31:14 PM



A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Valerie Hoard".

The City of Spokane

COVID-19 News Update for April 10

Information about Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) is evolving rapidly. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information. We will provide this update, as needed, to communicate what you need to know, while we work to reduce the spread of this disease in our community and continue to provide critical public services.

A Message from the Mayor

We have been blessed this week with some beautiful, sunny days. Flowers are peeking up in our gardens, and we celebrate Easter this weekend. This time of year is about new beginnings—and that's what I've been thinking about lately.

We don't know for sure, yet, when our "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order will be lifted or exactly how that will work when it does. But what we get at that point is a new beginning.

Many of our businesses and families are hurting right now. Through all layers of government, we have worked to create business loan programs, utility assistance, added unemployment assistance, and more. Those program are designed to help our communities now and into the future.

Today, we [announced a new program to help navigate the myriad of programs available](#). The City, along with Spokane Public Library, created a new **Financial Helpline** to help businesses and individuals countywide access the COVID-19 financial recovery programs. Helpline assistance is available between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at (509) 625-6650. And we hope this will help people get on a better path for tomorrow.

For our City organization, we must take a close look at how this crisis is impacting our City operations for now, but also our **City finances for the future**. The Finance Division presented information to the City Council this week about an anticipated drop in sales tax and other revenue as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Currently, the Finance team says we could see a total reduction in General Fund resources of about 6.2 percent—or \$12.9 million. That prediction will change over time.

Initially, we've implemented a hiring freeze and are evaluating every expenditure to make sure it still makes sense. We have reserves, and we will seek any reimbursement that might be available for our COVID response. But ultimately, we need to plan and look ahead. What should we be doing to address our needs three, six, and 12 months from now?

The challenges we face at the City, at home, and throughout the community really require us to think out a ways, to get creative, and to make the most of our new beginning. I know we are up to that challenge, as we have been up to the challenge of responding to the initial crisis. Thank you for everything you do!

Tips for Easter during Stay Home, Stay Healthy

Easter 2020 will be memorable for most everyone as we continue to flatten the curve of COVID-19. Here are a few tips to consider as you head into the weekend. This [article in USA Today](#) outlines some great ways to adjust your celebration!

- 1.) Keep Grandparents Involved, Safely
- 2.) Keep the Egg Hunt Alive

- 3.) Meet the Easter Bunny on Tech
- 4.) Enjoy Brunch over Video
- 5.) Let the Kids Decorate
- 6.) Watch Easter Services Online
- 7.) Start a New Easter Tradition

Survey on Extended School Closure

Thanks to all of our employees who filled out the Human Resources survey on the impact of the extension of school closures through the end of the school year in June. Watch for information from HR next week once the results of the survey are evaluated.

Here's our Next Video

Alliant, the City's insurance broker for medical benefits, has put together a little series of videos for the organizations they work with. The goal of their program was to create very simple-to-understand videos to help promote taking smart and simple actions to get through this time. We'll be sharing those videos with you over the next couple of days. Today's video is designed to explain a graph that we've seen a lot: [Flattening the Curve: That Graph Explained](#).

Employee Information Portal (<https://covid19.spokanecity.org/>)

Remember, this Employee Information Portal is a great resource for employees to stay current on what's happening with the COVID-19 response. The [Employee Information Portal](#) can be accessed from work or home, using a computer or mobile device. All of the emailed information we have sent to employees is archived here.