

**From:** [Mayor](#)  
**To:** [Mayor](#)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Update: Back to School - virtually!  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 4, 2020 6:26:06 PM

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

## The City of Spokane

# COVID-19 News Update for Aug. 4

*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 Mayor Woodward**

We are faced with another difficult challenge. There is no other way to describe a situation that will impact how students learn for the second time in just a few months.

Starting the school year as a distance-learning experience brought back the rush of uneasiness, frustration, and disappointment that punctuated the abrupt end of the school year in the spring. It raises questions – and anxiety – for parents about how they will juggle the demands of supporting a family and helping their students grow and advance as a learner.

Our students need us now more than ever. They need our support and reassurance. Most of all, they need us to resist the temptation to transfer our insecurities to them. Sometimes as parents, it takes a little longer for us to adapt. Kids are resilient and regularly surprise.

Even though it is taking longer than anyone wants to move forward, there is hope. We are progressing. Slowly. Surely. Steadily toward getting on the other side of this illness.

While there is no replacement for in-person, face-to-face support and interaction from a teacher, students will embrace technology in ways we as parents can sometimes only imagine. They have grown up with technology, are comfortable with it, and already use it to communicate as anyone with tweens and teens knows all too well. Our younger learners soak up new information and will also adjust quickly as they sense how we approach the challenge.

***Our Human Resources Department is taking a fresh look at how our employees with school-aged children will be impacted by the decision to begin the new school year online. Watch for more information soon.***

While the school year will not bring the first day of kindergarten parents imagine – and fear. Nor is it the start to senior year your teenager dreamed about. Kids will find a way to adapt and overcome, to make the best of this distance learning experience. They will bond, explore, and imagine in new virtual ways.

We as adults have the ability to help shape that experience.

### **Remember that Unemployment Fraud?**

The Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) report that in May, criminals using stolen identities filed **86,449 fraudulent Washington unemployment claims, stealing roughly \$576 million**. A number of City employees were among the fraud victims.

By the first week of March, fraudulent claims shot up from 50 to 700 with fraudulent payouts rising from \$389,000 to \$4.8 million by mid-April, Levine said. Fraudulent claims peaked the first week of May when approximately \$410 million went straight to criminal claimers, the ESD reported.

Fraudulent claims fell steadily after the department temporarily blocking payments and stopped another \$200 million from going to scammers on top of the more than \$576 million in claim payouts stolen by criminal filers, ESD data shows. Roughly \$340 million in stolen funds were recovered since then.

### **Keeping the City moving!**

Until your job involves **chasing a rolling oven down the street, it's hard to appreciate what it's like to work with asphalt**. Our City of Spokane Street crews are scheduled to complete grind and overlay work on 15 lane miles of streets this summer. On hot days, the grueling work is even more challenging.

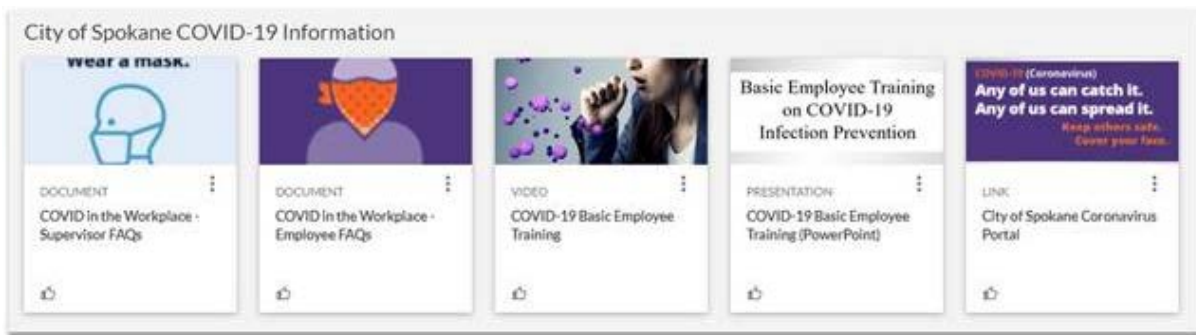
We want to thank them and all of our essential employees who have been working to keep the City running. Check out [this CityCable 5 video on our Street team](#).

### **City Employee COVID-19 Training**

Employee education on COVID-19 is essential to preventing the spread of the illness and keeping employees safe. In addition to the **Coronavirus Help and Information** portal, the [Covid-19 Basic Employee Training](#) video is now also available on SharePoint:



Also available is our featured City of Spokane COVID-19 channel in our Skillsoft Percipio platform. Here, employees can access training, policy and FAQs related to COVID-19 in the workplace:



New to e-Learning? Login at <https://spokanecity.percipio.com/login.html#/> or contact your Skillsoft Administrator at [erahrsa@spokanecity.org](mailto:erahrsa@spokanecity.org) for assistance.

### **More Information to Assist Our Employees**

*Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:*

- [Coping with Stress Without Smoking](#)  
Stress is a normal part of life in moderation, it can help you reach your goals, but too much pressure creates more problems. Managing stress is a crucial part of quitting smoking. You may have learned to deal with stress by smoking, but there are ways to handle stress without smoking. Here are a few ideas you might find helpful. Some of these tips may take practice, but others you can do right away.
- [Stress and Your Health](#)  
Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Fear is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. In quick bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline. But when stress lasts for a long time, it may harm your health.

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: [EAPHelpLink.com](http://EAPHelpLink.com), using company code: **CITSPO**

### **Employee Information Portal ([covid19.spokanecity.org/](http://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](http://covid19.spokanecity.org/) 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.