

**From:** [Mayor](#)  
**To:** [Mayor](#)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Update: Budget Season!  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 6, 2020 5:32:27 PM

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

## The City of Spokane **COVID-19 News Update for Oct. 6**

*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**

As you know, it's City budget season. Things look a little different this year, and not just because of COVID, although the virus is also impacting the City's budget.

The City has shifted to a priority-based budget to reinforce the need to keep expenses within revenue limitations. That has been an important theme as we have collaborated much earlier and more formally with the City Council on a draft budget. Declining revenues due to COVID impacts on sales tax, utility tax, and other economically dependent revenues have been a large topic of discussion. General Fund revenues are projected to be down \$3.2 million in 2021. For comparison, they were up \$8.7 million to close 2019.

That has put a sharp focus on how the City spends taxpayer dollars in 2021. Many great ideas have surfaced as we have discussed needs with the City Council. Decisions will come down to how we prioritize those needs against equally important competing needs over the next few months.

We are also talking about the right amount of reserves to use to meet current challenges. The City is fortunate to be in a position of having a healthy reserve, thanks to the commitment to save for a rainy day, which is now upon us.

The budget discussion also is inevitably linked to the impacts of the global pandemic on our community. Most of you are having similar discussions at home about how to prioritize your expenses and how comfortable you are dipping into your savings accounts. Small business owners, too, are doing whatever they can to survive. We are also still advocating for those businesses and Spokane with the Governor's Office to find ways to safely ease restrictions to aid our economic recovery.

These are difficult times. Our ability to move forward is dependent upon on our ability to work together to find solutions.

### **Changes coming related to COVID guidance**

Gov. Jay Inslee today announced new guidance, easing some restrictions across the state. New guidance relates to movie theaters, restaurants, and outdoor recreation, among other things. Spokane

County remains in phase 2 of the state's reopening plan.

For counties in the second phase of the plan, movie theaters will be able to operate at 25% capacity, and in the third phase, at 50% capacity. Facial coverings and 6 feet of distance between households will be required. Restaurants in second- or third-phase counties can serve alcohol now up to 11 p.m. Those establishments will be able to boost their table size to six in the second phase, and to eight in the third phase. Real estate open houses are allowable with size limits.

Meanwhile, more guidance is expected for outdoor group sports with more than a dozen participants. And some water recreation facilities will be able to open on a limited basis. More details are expected.

### **Flu Shots Available Now**

Annual flu shot clinics for City employees start Oct. 6 and run through Oct. 15. The shots are available at no cost to any employee eligible for health benefits. If employees are currently in a telework or remote work status, they can visit any City facility for a flu shot clinic. Employees may participate in City flu shot clinics during regular work, including those on telework or remote working. Access flu shots through non-City flu clinics is subject to the normal rules and conditions for sick leave. [Here is the full list of flu clinics available.](#)

The Washington state Department of Health says that people should consider [a flu vaccine "essential"](#) this year. With the ongoing COVID pandemic, getting a flu shot will help reduce strain on Washington's health care system, the DOH says.

### **Planning for a Safe Halloween**

Halloween is a great tradition, but it will require some additional thought and creativity to celebrate safely during the pandemic. The Spokane Regional Health District, the CDC, and other health professionals have put out ideas and tips. Our City team has compiled the information and put out some [great information in a blog post on the City's web site.](#)

### **Ballots for the November election coming soon!**

[Ballots for Spokane County voters will soon arrive in mailboxes.](#) In some areas, ballots will arrive around Oct. 10; in other areas, ballots will arrive around Oct. 17. All voters should receive their ballots by Oct. 22. Be sure to vote.

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

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

- [Coping With Change](#)

*"Nothing endures but change."—Heraclitus*

Heraclitus had it right: Change is a fact of life.

In the Greek philosopher's time, the change gradually unfolded, but today's world changes at an alarmingly rapid pace. Thanks to television and social media, images and information zip around the globe in seconds, and people are expected to respond just as quickly. It occurs in your family, work, social life, and well-being. Changes involve additions, such as births, new friends or relationships, and new possessions.

- **Germs**

How many times did you hear that as a child? And truthfully, people don't always heed that remarkably sound admonishment, even as adults. Sure, it's easy to remember when you've been in the garden, and they're dirty, but what about after you've exchanged money, grasped doorknobs, picked up a phone, or shaken someone's hand?

The truth is that germs are everywhere, both inside and outside people's bodies. Your skin, mouth, nose, and intestines are home to billions of germs. These microorganisms don't hurt you. Some, such as those in the intestines, even help in the production of vitamins. But others contribute to infection as they attack you through the air, food, or water, or by direct contact.

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

**Employee Information Portal** ([covid19.spokanecity.org/](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](https://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.