

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: Working Together
Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 4:00:32 PM



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

The City of Spokane

COVID-19 News Update for Dec. 8

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

A year of determination, resilience, and struggle has most of us searching for a little relief from the weight of all that has come our way. We find joy in the simplest pleasures that serve as a momentary distraction. At the same time, the challenges we face weigh heavy on our minds.

We are experiencing that as an organization as we settle on next year's budget. We are seeing it in our regional discussion about the homelessness system and how to best meet the unique needs of those at different stages of their experiences.

Both are challenges we are working through. Neither is insurmountable, but each requires intentional discussion, understanding of multiple viewpoints, and a willingness to compromise to achieve what is best for the whole community.

The importance of partnerships and collaboration have never been more important for us as a city organization and for all of us as community members. Working together is the only way to achieve the goals we all share: sustained community health, quick economic recovery, and more of the things we took for granted just a year ago, even if doing them includes a little more awareness of our surroundings.

Getting there requires a steadfast focus on what we have in common and working together from that starting point. It's a simple formula and one that gets tested regularly throughout the journey.

Think about the really important things in your life. Family. Friendship. Community. These are all things we cherish because of the moments we share, both joyous and challenging. Together.

There is an inherent satisfaction in achieving something significant and sharing that accomplishment with the people and community you care about. As you move through your daily routine, look beyond the obstacles before you, focus on what you want to achieve and who you need to work with to get there.

Partnership and collaboration have never been more important.

Governor Extends Current Restrictions to Jan. 4

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee extended the current restrictions to manage the spread of COVID-19 for three weeks, ending Jan. 4. The Governor cited increasing hospitalizations as a driver for the decision. Currently, the state is at 80% ICU capacity, and there is concern that our hospitals could be overrun with cases if current trends continue. The Governor also announced an additional \$50 million in grants available for businesses impacted by the current safety measures, and that pandemic unemployment support would not expire for Washington residents. More information is found on [the Governor's web site](#) and [blog post](#).

Improving Employee Access to Health Care

As the pandemic continues, the City is working to help ensure access to health care for our employees.

Here's what's new:

- We have extended the benefit of no co-pays for COVID testing and treatment through **March 31, 2021**. That benefit was set to expire at the end of the year.
- Access to tele-health services and appointments through [Premera](#) is now extended through **Dec. 31, 2021**! That benefit also was set to expire at the end of this year. Access to tele-health services through [Kaiser Permanente](#) is ongoing.

Manito Park Holiday Lights start on Friday, Dec. 11

The Friends of Manito and Parks & Recreation are partnering with several sponsors to bring the community a socially distant drive-thru holiday light show at Manito Park. The **Enchanted Garden Drive-Thru Holiday Lights at Manito** transforms a decades-long Spokane tradition into a COVID-friendly experience to lift spirits and brighten the season. Typically held indoors at Manito's Gaiser Conservatory, the show has been moved outdoors to allow for physical distancing.

The show will be available from Friday, Dec. 11, through Sunday, Dec. 20; 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday. See more information on the [Friends of Manito web site](#).

Skate Ribbon and other fun at Riverfront!

Riverfront Park's [Numerica Skate Ribbon](#) opened for ice skating on Saturday, Dec. 5, under revised COVID-19 protocols. With safety at the forefront, skaters will be required to reserve a date/time and purchase tickets online to ensure we limit the number of skaters and provide a great experience this holiday season.

Riverfront will follow the Professional Sports & Other Sporting Activities guidelines for COVID-19, and also exceed previous Indoor Fitness and Training guidelines. Riverfront will provide 400 square feet per person; the Numerica Skate Ribbon is 14,860 square feet and capable of supporting 37 people under this standard. Tickets will be good for one hour of skating, to regulate the number of skaters on the ice and serve more people in the community.

Meanwhile, the Night Holiday Tree Walk continues at Riverfront Park daily in December, as does the Riverfront Winter Farmers Market locate in the Pavilion Central Plaza on Wednesdays from 3 to 7 p.m. through through January. [Find more information here.](#)

SPD Seeks Input

The Spokane Police Department is seeking input on its service to the community regarding trust, professionalism, community outreach and more. The results of this survey will be used in an ongoing effort to assess and improve SPD training and practices.

The survey is similar to other surveys SPD has put out since 2015, with Department of Justice

assistance.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this short (approx. 5 minutes) online survey. Please do so before the end of the year. You can go [here](#) to access the survey.

State's New COVID Tracking App Attracts Many Users

More than 1 million people have signed up for Washington Exposure Notifications (also known as WA Notify), a new tool that works through smartphones, without sharing any personal information, to alert users if they may have been exposed to COVID-19. It is completely private, and doesn't know or track who you are or where you go.

More information on the app, including instructions on how to add it to your smart phone is found on the [Washington State Department of Health web page](#).

Tracking City Work Time Spent on COVID-19 Concerns!

One more reminder: As the City continues to respond to COVID-19 in our community, it is as important as ever for our employees to track the time they spend working on this issue in the HRMS system. Employees should be using the Activity Code 0096 on hours spend on such activities.

Keeping track allows the Finance team to seek reimbursement for that work, easing the strain on our local citizens. Revenues to the City are down, as you know, so the *time tracking is critical*.

More Information to Assist Our Employees

From Mental Health America:

- Coping with the holidays during the COVID-19 pandemic will require flexibility and change expectations. [This article](#) from **Mental Health America** provides some practical advice around acknowledging what you're feeling and how to move forward.

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

Employee Information Portal (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.