

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: Rallying to Meet the Need
Date: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 5:14:38 PM



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Woodward".

The City of Spokane

COVID-19 News Update for Feb. 16

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

The harshness of the bitter winter weather brought out the best in the Spokane community. Numerous people and organizations who assist houseless individuals and families rallied over the past week to develop a strategy to handle the elements, execute the plan, and evolve to meet additional needs as they emerged.

City staff worked with its contracted and private regional partners to add temporary capacity to the regional shelter system and protect the health of those without a place to stay inside. Planning began nearly two weeks ago and considered COVID-related health guidance and the impact the bitter cold would have on nightly demand.

The strategy was multi-faceted, relied on the expertise of those who work closely with unhoused members of our community, and leveraged available system resources by:

- Working with partners to flex space in existing congregate shelters.
- Removing barriers for entry.
- Securing hotel space to temporarily move those most at risk of contracting COVID from crowded congregate spaces and creating additional room for others at group shelters.
- Developing a transportation plan that used shelter providers and free bus passes and ride shares to get people to a warm space.
- Adding federal COVID funding to meet CDC guidance and using locally generated support.
- Coordinating with community members who donated and raised money for meals for individuals and families temporarily staying in hotels.

The results? Low-barrier space was consistently available for those who sought a warm space even as temperatures dropped sharply early last week. Emergency responders treated some cases of exposure and connected people to services, but no deaths were reported.

From Tuesday through Monday, 258 individuals and 32 families stayed in 200 hotel rooms. That kept more than two dozen low-barrier spaces available on average during that time and capacity never dropped below 10 spaces. And the effort is continuing.

That is the power of committed, dedicated staff and community members rallying to meet the need.

Improve your Microsoft Teams Skills!

The City has selected Microsoft Teams as its preferred virtual meetings and connectivity tool. To get the most out of this powerful program, IT is asking employees who use Microsoft Office programs as part of their jobs to attend training. There are a three more, hour-long sessions coming up. You don't have to register; just click the link below a little before the start time for the training. A camera isn't necessary for this training. More training sessions will be coming up in March.

Training Date	Time	Topic	Teams Live Event Attendee Link
Wednesday, Feb. 17	1 p.m.	Teams 100	Attendee Join Link
Thursday, Feb. 18	12 p.m.	Teams 100	Attendee Join Link
Wednesday, Feb. 24	10 a.m.	Teams Chats & Meetings*	Attendee Join Link

*Teams Chats & Meetings is for those who have completed the Teams 100 class.

East Region (including Spokane) moves to Phase 2

Starting Sunday, Feb. 14, the East Region, including Spokane County, moved officially into Phase 2 of the Healthy Washington reopening plan. Phase 2 allows for increased indoor activities including dining, weddings and funerals, and fitness activities. See information about [Phase 2 Activities](#).

Last week, the Mayor had this to say, the move to Phase 2 "is really about the community and the commitment our region has made to putting public health first. Our region has done a tremendous amount of selfless work to put us in a position to advance. That includes many, many businesses that have struggled, sacrificed, and carefully followed the public health guidance for the benefit of others."

Where to Get a Vaccine

In Washington state, we are currently in Phase 1B tier 1 of vaccine distribution. Anyone 65 and older, and all people 50 and older who also live in a multigenerational household, are now eligible to receive the vaccine.

A great way to find out when you are eligible to get the vaccine is to use the [state's "Phase Finder" tool](#). Use of the tool also is now **required** when seeking a vaccine through the mass vaccination clinics, like the one at the Spokane Arena. Here is [information on that clinic](#). Online self-scheduling will be open when there are vaccine appointments available. Check the [CHAS Facebook page](#) for updates.

The Arena clinic is far from the only place to receive a vaccine in Spokane. Check out [this list](#) on the Washington State Department of Health's site that lists a number of locations with links on how to schedule appointments.

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [25 Ways to Take Part in Heart Month](#)

Check out these ideas to honor American Heart Month. There are dozens of ways to spread heart health messages during February and beyond. Here are a few:

- **Join the #OurHearts movement** by sharing on social media how you work together with friends or family to be heart healthy. Encourage your friends and family to as well. Be sure to

use the hashtag!

- **Set up an online support group with friends far and wide** to encourage each other in your goals to manage your weight, eat healthier, quit smoking, or work out.
- [How to Help Yourself or Others Who Are Depressed](#)
How can I help myself if I am depressed? The most important thing is to see a mental health professional seek appropriate treatment. This may be in the form of medication, therapy, or both. The first step may be visiting your family doctor or calling the employee assistance program (EAP). Find out more in the article.

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.