

From: [Feist, Marlene](#)
To: [Feist, Marlene](#)
Subject: Employee Update: Welcome Phase 3!
Date: Friday, March 19, 2021 4:34:16 PM



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

The City of Spokane

Weekly News Update for March 16

Information about Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) is evolving rapidly, and our important work as a City is continuing. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information on both COVID and employee news. 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 about to take an important next step in the safe, measured reopening of our community. In most regards, this will be the furthest we have advanced in our fight against the pandemic outbreak. The news is welcome relief for the collective psyche of our region and a critical boost to our mental health, which has been challenged time and again over the past year.

While there is considerable hope and optimism, this is also a time to exercise care and caution. Our community has fought long and hard to limit the spread of the virus and protect our healthcare system. That discipline and dedication is paying off as case counts are as low as they have been since mid-September and the burden on our healthcare system is down from the holiday highs.

This measured reopening step safely balances the need for continued public health caution and economic health considerations. More than 150,000 vaccine doses have been given in Spokane County. That number grows by thousands each week as we move into the next tier of vaccine eligibility.

All of that news has earned us the ability to carefully, cautiously loosen some of the restrictions that have been in place for months. It also has many people peeking toward a potential phase 4 and wondering what that might look like.

That conversation is under way at the state level, and as a region, we will provide our input. Based on the receptivity to our previous suggestions and the resulting guidance, we have every reason to believe we will continue to be part of the discussion.

However, we have to keep doing our part to keep us on track for continued dialogue and advancement. That means honoring health and safety guidance when you support your favorite neighborhood business, wear a mask, take the vaccine when you are eligible, and watch your distance and gatherings.

These are the things that will ensure we continue to be heard.

Annual State of the City Address is March 17

Join Mayor Nadine Woodward on Wednesday, March 17 at noon for the [annual State of the City Address](#). She will look back at the remarkable resiliency of our community and ahead to renewed hope beginning to work its way back into our lives. This year's conversation will be virtual and give you a behind the scenes look inside an exciting new venue. You can [sign up at GreaterSpokaneInc.com](#). You can also join the conversation on the City's Facebook page.

Spring Activities Begin in Riverfront Park

Riverfront Park is gearing up for spring with [new activities for all ages](#), including an outdoor market, an interactive puzzle that encourages kids to explore downtown to find clues, and a variety of health and fitness programs.

Building on the success of the Winter Market at the Pavilion, Riverfront is kicking off a Spring Market with local vendors every Wednesday from April 7 through May 12 from 3 – 7 P.M. Vendors will be announced as the market opening date nears.

Washington Headed to Phase 3

Effective March 22, the [entire state of Washington will enter Phase 3](#) of the Healthy Washington: Roadmap to Recovery Plan, the governor announced on Thursday, March 11. The state also will move from a regional approach to a county-by-county evaluation process. The new phase will allow for 50% occupancy in indoor spaces, including restaurants, and the return for in-person spectators at professional and high school sports and other activities in outdoor venues. More guidance on what's allow in Phase 3 is expected soon.

More Workers to be Eligible for Vaccines

In Washington state, starting on March 17, people in Phase 1B of tier 2 vaccine distribution will be eligible for vaccines. That adds workers in agriculture, food processing, grocery stores, public transit and more to the groups that have already been eligible. Anyone 65 and older, and all people 50 and older who also live in a multigenerational household, can receive vaccines as can teachers and staff in K-12 education, child care workers and first responders. The City is continuing to evaluate when more City employees will be eligible.

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](#). 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:

- [Avoid Tobacco-Use Relapse During COVID-19](#)

Take a break and breathe. When you feel yourself getting stressed, it is essential that you take a step back and allow yourself time to relax. Deep breathing techniques are helpful to refocus and release some of the stress you're carrying. Also, avoid watching news sources or looking at social media. Take some time to do an activity you enjoy, whether it's going for a walk, reading a book, listening to music, or playing a game. Make time for you.

- [10,000 steps a day: Too low? Too high?](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking. But you don't have to jump feet-first into the 150-minute goal. Start where you are and gradually increase your activity week by week. Those 150 minutes a week can be divided in many different ways.

If your pace isn't speedy enough to qualify as moderate-intensity exercise, those steps still help prevent problems that occur from sitting too much. Adding regular activity is beneficial.

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.