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Spokane Public Library forming Social Work Welcome Team

Spokane, WA - When the Central Library reopens after renovation later this year, it will include a recording studio, a business lab, the Inland Northwest Special Collections, a radio station, a café, a River Rumpus children's playspace, and several event spaces packed with programming, including a social stair and the 300-person capacity *nx^wyx^wyetk^w* Hall. It will also be managed by a Social Worker leading a team of social work interns from Eastern Washington University, along with traditional library staff.

Spokane Public Library is joining a growing number of libraries nationwide—from Denver to Indianapolis—in adding a Master's in Social Work to the staff.

"We've seen an increasing need for additional support for some of our customers that is outside the expertise of traditional library staff," said Andrew Chanse, Executive Director, Spokane Public Library. "By hiring a social worker at Central, we will be able to better serve the unique needs of some of our customers who may be experiencing life challenges."

The Library is building a Welcome Team to address the social needs of our customers without creating an additional burden for front-line staff. Modeled after the highly successful [CARES Team at the Spokane Fire Department](#), the Welcome Team will put interns from Eastern Washington University's social work program into Spokane Public Library to help connect individuals with the resources they need. A newly created position with a Master's degree in Social Work will supervise the internship hours.

"By making this staffing change, we can synergize with EWU and make a real difference in our community and ensure that the Central Library is a welcoming place for all," said Paul Chapin, Operations and Public Service Manager at Spokane Public Library who developed the program and partnership. "By adding a social worker to our team, we will be able to better serve the unique needs of all our customers. The Welcome Team will not only help people who are experiencing homelessness, but will also serve any population that may be facing life challenges."

"Eastern Washington University's mission is to expand opportunities for personal transformation," said Dr. Jonathan Anderson, Eastern Washington University Provost. "This partnership highlights an important investment by Spokane Public Libraries and Eastern Washington University that positively impacts our downtown community."



“The need is there, we can’t ignore it, so we can adapt to meet the needs of all customers as well as continue to offer traditional library services,” said Lara Hemingway, Chair of Spokane Public Library Board of Trustees.

The position for the Branch & Social Services Manager is now open. Qualified applicants are encouraged to apply.

https://www.spokanelibrary.org/aboutus_libraryinformation_employmentopportunities/

About Spokane Public Library

Spokane Public Library aims to inspire a thriving city through cultural and educational opportunities. An award-winning library that spans six branches and houses nearly half-a-million items, Spokane Public Library circulates nearly two million items and welcomes one million visitors annually. Customers can enjoy traditional library media and can also access digital downloads, databases, historical collections, art exhibits and interesting free programming. For general information about the library, please visit spokanelibrary.org or call 509-444-5300.

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