
Indigenous Peoples' Day Official City Holiday

Council Bill 25-0261
FinGov Committee
March 4, 2025



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Indigenous Peoples' Day History

- Indigenous Peoples' Day was first proposed in 1977 at the United Nations' International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas.



Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebrations

- Held on the second Monday of October to honor Indigenous American peoples and commemorate their histories and cultures
- It began as a counter-celebration held on the same day as Columbus Day, citing the lasting harm Indigenous peoples suffered because of European colonization of the Americas
- Many cities, states, and the federal government now commemorate Indigenous Peoples' Day in some way. However, Indigenous Peoples' Day is not an officially recognized or paid holiday at the local, state, or federal level



Denver Indigenous Peoples' Day

- In 2016, Denver City Council unanimously voted to recognize October 12 as Indigenous Peoples' Day with a commemorative holiday in city code, stating that Colorado is the ancestral homeland of 48 tribes, that the Denver metro area is home to the descendants of about 100 tribal nations and that Denver will “continue to promote racial equity and justice for all people and oppose discrimination towards indigenous peoples.”



Denver Indigenous Peoples' Day

- In 2021, President Joe Biden became the first president to issue a presidential proclamation recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Following these actions, Denver began necessary work to consider making Indigenous Peoples' Day an official city holiday



Holidays

- Denver currently has 12 paid holidays for CSA employees. In 2024, employees were also granted 1 Wellness Day
- The last change to Denver's legal holidays was in 2022 when Juneteenth was added
- Prior to that, Cesar Chavez Day replaced Election Day (2001), the Personal Holiday was added in lieu of a previous Birthday Holiday (1990), and MLK Day was added in 1985



Considerations

- Overtime Costs
 - Each holiday costs the city approximately \$1.3 million in overtime pay for those who must work on the holiday
 - Total compensation for 1 day for all City employees is approximately \$5.2 million (\$3.2 million for all non-uniform employees and \$1.9 million for all uniform employees)
- Timelines for Elections
- Collective bargaining agreements
- Potential service impacts to residents
- Generally prevailing practice for benefits



Prevailing Practice

- Charter dictates that “the policy of the City and County of Denver shall be to provide generally prevailing compensation to employees in the Career Service personnel system”
- OHR conducted a survey of other jurisdictions to assist in determining generally prevailing practice around holidays
- Asked how many paid holidays each city had, whether the city included Indigenous Peoples’ Day as a holiday, and whether they were considering adding Indigenous Peoples’ Day



Survey Results

Participation Summary:	
Total Number of Recipients	121
Total Number of Responses	79
Percentage of Responses	65.3%
Average Number of Paid Holidays	11.5
Total Number of Respondents That Observe Indigenous Peoples' Day	16
Percentage of Respondents That Observe Indigenous Peoples' Day	20.3%
Total Number of Respondents That Are Considering Observing Indigenous Peoples' Day	1
Percentage of Respondents That Are Considering Observing Indigenous Peoples' Day	1.3%



Other Cities

- Boulder County recently added Indigenous Peoples' Day as a holiday
- Golden and Pueblo previously added the holiday
- No other Colorado cities have indicated they are considering the holiday
- Peer cities that have added this holiday: Minneapolis, Phoenix, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, and Philadelphia



Action to Designate Holiday

- Based on survey results, we recommend adopting Indigenous Peoples' Day as an official city holiday
- Sponsors: Council President Sandoval, Council President Pro Tem Romero Campbell, Councilwoman Alvidrez, Councilmember Gilmore, Councilwoman Gonzales-Gutierrez, and Councilwoman Torres are bringing this forward to honor Indigenous Peoples and commemorate their histories and cultures

Bill 25-0261 for Indigenous Peoples' Day holiday

- Designates the second Monday in October as an official holiday for City & County of Denver
- Repeals the commemorative holiday to avoid confusion and promote the official holiday



Schedule

- FinGov: March 4
- Mayor-Council: March 11
- First Reading: March 17
- Final Reading: March 24
- This holiday would apply in 2025



Appendix



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Legal Holidays

Denver Holidays	Colorado Holidays	Federal Holidays
New Year's Day	New Year's Day	New Year's Day
MLK Day	MLK Day	MLK Day
Washington's Birthday	President's Day	Washington's Birthday
César Chávez Day	Memorial Day	Memorial Day
Memorial Day	Juneteenth	Juneteenth
Juneteenth	Independence Day	Independence Day
Independence Day	Labor Day	Labor Day
Labor Day	Cabrini Day	Columbus Day
Veteran's Day	Veteran's Day	Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	Christmas Day	Christmas Day
Personal Holiday		



Additional Resources

- Denver American Indian Commission
- Truth, Restoration & Education Reports
<https://peopleofthesacredland.org/trec-reports/>

