



**DENVER**  
THE MILE HIGH CITY

# Juneteenth Commemoration

FinGov Feb. 2, 2021

BR21-0079

FOR CITY SERVICES VISIT | CALL  
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# Juneteenth History

- President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in states that had seceded from the Union on Jan. 1, 1863
- On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger delivered news to Galveston, TX that the Civil War had ended and enslaved people were free - the last area left to formally acknowledge this reality - almost 2 ½ years after the Emancipation Proclamation first began to free slaves





# Juneteenth Celebrations

- Held on June 19th to commemorate the end of slavery
- First celebrated as a holiday in Texas
  - Now at least 45 cities and States officially commemorate Juneteenth in some way
- Also called Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, Emancipation Day (TX)
- Denver's first celebration happened in 1953 in Denver's historic Five Points neighborhood, and today includes an annual parade and music festival

- Mayor Hancock & Councilman Herndon propose to add Juneteenth as a commemorative holiday in city code
  - Would designate the Saturday closest to June 19<sup>th</sup> as Denver's day for celebration
  - Recognizes Denver's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
  - Educates about our history and honors African American freedom, heritage and achievement
- Would join other commemorative holidays in city code
  - Denver Day (added in 2013) to recognize the founding of Denver and promote community spirit
  - Indigenous Peoples Day (added in 2016) to recognize and appreciate the indigenous people and traditional lands on which Denver resides

- Why commemorative and not an official legal holiday?
  - Legal holidays have broader HR/employee benefits and service implications
  - Typically try to line up legal holidays with State and Federal legal holidays for consistency and planning purposes around things like Election deadlines
  - Last change to Denver legal holidays was in 2001 when Columbus Day was removed and Cesar Chavez Day added (no net effect on number of holidays)

Article I of Chapter 2, D.R.M.C. shall be amended by adding a new section 2-6 to read as follows:

Sec 2-6. – Juneteenth.

On the Saturday closest to June 19th in each year, hereafter to be known as "Juneteenth," appropriate observance may be held by the public in commemoration and to honor the spirit of freedom and understanding the experiences that have shaped our nation.

Questions?



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# Appendix

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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
Cesar Chavez Day	Memorial Day	Memorial Day
Memorial Day	Independence Day	Independence Day
Independence Day	Labor Day	Labor Day
Labor Day	Cabrini Day	Columbus Day
Veterans Day	Veterans Day	Veterans Day
Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	Christmas Day	Christmas Day

- Arbor Day
- Susan B. Anthony Day
- Leif Erikson Day
- Colorado Day
- Cesar Chavez Day
- Public Lands Day