

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 25-1403

In Observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day in the City and County of Denver

WHEREAS, the State of Colorado defines "indigenous" as "having descended from people who were living in North America prior to the time people from Europe began settling in North America, being an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian tribe or being a lineal descendant of a tribally enrolled parent or guardian.

WHEREAS, the Denver City Council recognizes that the Indigenous Peoples have lived and flourished on the lands known as the Americas since time immemorial, and that Denver and the surrounding communities are built upon the ancestral homelands of numerous Indigenous people, to include two land-based sovereign nations, the Southern Ute Mountain Ute, and the Ute Mountain Ute, 49 additional Tribes with legal and historic standing, and is home to the descendants of approximately 150 Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the homelands and communities of the Arapaho and Cheyenne peoples along the banks of the Cherry Creek and South Platte River confluence gave bearing to future encampments of newcomers that would become the birthplace of the Mile High City; and

WHEREAS, the Denver City Council acknowledges that the land upon which the city stands was not legally transferred under the 1861 Fort Wise Treaty due to the lack of proper signatures as required by U.S. law, resulting in the illegal transfer of lands; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho peoples were forcibly removed from their homelands to make way for this illegal occupation, a legacy of displacement and injustice that remains uncorrected; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2025, the Denver City Council unanimously passed CB25-0261, officially designating the second Monday of October of each year as Indigenous Peoples' Day in Denver, Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the Denver City Council honors the resilience and survivance of Indigenous people despite historical and contemporary barriers that seek to extract, displace, and destroy, and recognizes that it is because of their tenacity and stewardship of knowledge, land, science, philosophy, arts, and culture that the City of Denver has developed and thrived; and

WHEREAS, the Denver City Council acknowledges the ongoing harm caused by the illegal transfers of land under the 1861 Fort Wise Treaty and the forced removal of Indigenous peoples, and that to promote the health, wellness, and safety of current and future generations of the Indigenous community, it is of paramount importance to repair both historical and ongoing harm; and

WHEREAS, the Denver American Indian Commission has advocated for and successfully passed a paid city holiday for Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor the cultural and foundational stewardship of Indigenous People to our past, present, and future; and to promote education to the Denver community about the historical and contemporary legacy of Indigenous People; and

WHEREAS, on Monday, October 13th, the First Annual Indigenous Peoples' Day will be commemorated and celebrated in the City and County of Denver. This recognition is a small step forward in the city to fully acknowledge the intentional role that the Government had in the Sand Creek Massacre, relocation and many other events that have yet to be accepted as their responsibility and part of the genocide of the people; and

WHEREAS, on Monday, October 13th, during the First Annual Indigenous Peoples' Day, the Living Land Project which was envisioned through outreach with the American Indian community, in partnership with Denver Parks and Recreation and the Office of Climate, Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency, will officially ground break. An area in the south meadow of City Park has been designed to incorporate medicinal plantings, creation of multiple gathering spaces and an arbor. This space designed, by the American Indian community will be a welcoming space for this community to safely gather, harvest medicines and practice in their own way.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council celebrates and honors October 13, 2025, the second Monday in October, as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to the Denver American Indian Commission, the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs, Denver Indian Center, Denver Indian Health and Family Services, Denver Indian Family Resource Center, MMIR Task Force of CO, Spirit of the Sun, My Auntie's Closet, TallBull Memorial Council, People of the Sacred Land, Project Mosaic, and Native Futures Collective.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL September 22, 2025

