



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Juneteenth Official City Holiday

BR22-0555

FinGov Committee

May 17, 2022



Juneteenth Celebrations

- Held on June 19th to commemorate the end of slavery
- First celebrated as a holiday in Texas
 - Now over 50 cities and States and the Federal government 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

- In 2021, Mayor Hancock & Councilman Herndon proposed to add Juneteenth as a commemorative holiday in city code
 - Designated the Saturday closest to June 19th as Denver's day for celebration
 - Passed by City Council in February 2021
- Since that time, Federal government and State government have added Juneteenth as a legal holiday
 - Federal government adopted Juneteenth as holiday in June 2021
 - Governor Polis signed SB22-139 on May 2, making Juneteenth a State holiday for Colorado
- Following these actions, Denver began necessary work to consider official Juneteenth holiday

- Denver currently has 11 paid holidays for CSA employees
- Last change to Denver legal holidays was in 2001 when Cesar Chavez Day added, replacing Election Day (no net effect on number of holidays)
 - Prior to that, the Personal Holiday was added in lieu of a previous Birthday Holiday (1990) and MLK Day was added in 1985
- Options considered were for adding a new holiday or replacing an existing holiday (annual personal holiday)

- Overtime costs
 - Approx. \$1.3M cost for overtime pay for those who must work on a holiday
 - Total compensation for 1 day for all employees is approx. \$4.5M
- Timelines for elections
 - No impact, but falls during the primary election window so Elections workers would need to work through the holiday and take their holiday at a different time
- Collective bargaining agreements
- Potential service impacts to residents
- Generally prevailing practice for benefits

- Charter provides 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 did 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 Juneteenth as a holiday and whether they were considering adding Juneteenth

Participation Summary:		
Total Number of Recipients		92
Total Number of Responses		44
Percentage of Responses		47.83%
Average Number of Paid Holidays		11.81
Total Number of Respondents That Observe Juneteenth		27
Percentage of Respondents That Observe Juneteenth		61%
Total Number of Respondents That Consider Observing Juneteenth		9
Percentage of Respondents That Consider Observing Juneteenth		20%

- Aurora recently added Juneteenth as a holiday (replacing the day after Thanksgiving), as did Longmont
- Lakewood, Loveland, Adams County, Larimer County all previously added the holiday
- Other CO cities have indicated they are considering the holiday: Arvada, Broomfield, Colorado Springs, Westminster
- Other national “peer cities” have added this holiday: Seattle, Portland, Nashville, Minneapolis, Phoenix

Action to Designate Holiday

- Based on survey results, OHR recommends adopting Juneteenth as a paid/legal city holiday
- Mayor Hancock and CM Herndon are partnering to bring this forward to honor the significance of our country's "second independence day"
- BR22-0555 for Juneteenth holiday
 - Designates June 19 as an official paid holiday for City & County of Denver
 - Repeals the commemorative holiday to avoid confusion and promote the official holiday

- FinGov: May 17
- Mayor-Council: May 24
- First Reading: June 6
- Final Reading: June 20
- This holiday would apply beginning in 2023
 - Allows for completing council process and appropriate planning/implementation



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Appendix

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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



Denver Holidays	Colorado Holidays	Federal Holidays
New Year's Day MLK Day Washington's Birthday Cesar Chavez Day Memorial Day Independence Day Labor Day Veterans Day Thanksgiving Christmas Day Personal holiday	New Year's Day MLK Day President's Day Memorial Day Independence Day Labor Day Cabrini Day Veterans Day Thanksgiving Christmas Day *Juneteenth (added May, 2022)	New Year's Day MLK Day Washington's Birthday Memorial Day Independence Day Labor Day Columbus Day Veterans Day Thanksgiving Christmas Day *Juneteenth (added in 2021)