



PRESS RELEASE

Julie Smith
(720) 944-1422 - Direct
(303) 513-6851 - Mobile
Julie.Smith@denvergov.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Holiday Light Installation to Shine a Light on Scope of Homelessness in Denver

3,445 individuals identified in January's Point-in-Time count represented in light display

DENVER — Crews from Denver's Road Home, the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, Denver Parks & Recreation, and Denver Day Works will install a new display that seeks to illuminate the state of homelessness in the City and County of Denver on Thursday, November 28 beginning at 9 a.m. Crews will weave a tapestry of 3,445 lights along the chain-link backstop at Sonny Lawson Park along California St. and Park Ave. Each bulb in the display will represent one person who was identified as experiencing homelessness in the City of Denver at the beginning of 2018. White lights will represent people identified in shelter and transitional housing during the 2018 Point in Time (PIT) survey of Denver, while purple lights will represent those who reported remaining unsheltered. In 2018, 18 percent of people identified as experiencing homelessness in Denver were unsheltered compared to 35 percent identifying unsheltered nationally.

"At the end of 2018, in partnership with our nonprofit and charitable community, we will have ended homelessness for hundreds of people in Denver," Mayor Michael B. Hancock said. "No single number will every fully capture the individual needs of those experiencing homelessness in Denver, but I hope this display gives our community a glimpse into a moment in time in the lives of 3,445 people who had no place to call home in our city on one night back in January, and draws attention to the importance of volunteering to ensure everyone counts this year."

WHEN: Thursday, Nov. 28, 2018
Installation: 9 a.m. – noon (approx.)
Illumination: 6 – 6:45 p.m.

WHERE: Sonny Lawson Field
2301 Welton St, Denver, CO 80205

The 2019 PIT will be held on January 28, 2019. The effort requires the support of hundreds of trained volunteers and staff who fan out across the region to survey those experiencing homelessness. Organizers hope those drawn to the display of lights will also be drawn to serve as a 2019 PIT volunteer.

"Whether you volunteer to conduct surveys in the community, or sponsor or donate needed supplies to organizations facilitating the count, everyone's generosity makes a difference," said Chris Conner, director of Denver's Road Home. "We are pleased to partner with MDHI and dozens of others in the region again this year to better understand the dimensions of homelessness in our community and work together to identify solutions to end it."

The PIT is a snapshot of homelessness on a single night that helps communities understand trends and the needs of those staying in sheltered and unsheltered situations across the region. While helping to determine the scope of homelessness, the PIT also raises public awareness, promotes collaboration across seven counties, provides needed data, and helps the region apply for increased housing funds.

"A Point in Time count of people in homelessness will always be challenging. Inevitably we will miss someone," said Will Connelly of Metro Denver Homeless Initiative. "Nonetheless we hope the number goes down due to strategies that end homelessness, but also hope that it goes up because more people are participating in this important count."

“Seeing the display helps you appreciate the full scale of work being done in our city while also allowing us to appreciate each light as someone’s unique experience,” said Deputy Executive Director of Parks & Planning, Scott Gilmore. “We are pleased to host this display at Sonny Lawson Park throughout December and January and encourage our community to share generously to support this important effort.”

The Blair-Caldwell Library is also coordinating a winter sock and boot drive for those in homelessness in the neighborhood. Items can be dropped off at the library and will be distributed by Denver’s Road Home street outreach teams.

The Point in Time count is a requirement for every community receiving funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for homelessness programming. The survey can affect investments in housing and a wide array of services for those experiencing homelessness.

To volunteer for the 2019 PIT, contact the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative at PIT@mdhi.org.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:

Installation, 9 a.m. - noon:

Crews from Denver Day Works, Parks, MDHI, Denver’s Road Home installing the light display;

Illumination, 6-6:45 p.m.:

Remarks from community and neighborhood partners, the chair of Denver’s Advisory Committee for Housing People Experiencing Homelessness Cuica Montoya, Denver’s Road Home and Metro Denver Homeless Initiative.

Illumination of the light display

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About Denver’s Road Home

Denver’s Road Home strengthens, aligns and empowers partnerships to provide safe and supportive pathways out of homelessness.

About the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative

The Metro Denver Homeless Initiative leads and advances collaboration to end homelessness in our region.