

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS:

You should care because:

Each year since the Great Recession, the financial press have published articles reporting that a 39%-60% of Americans are one emergency expense away from being on the street. The percentage varies based upon the health of the economy. Setbacks such as a health crisis, an unexpected \$500 car repair, loss of a job, closure of a business, reduction in hours at work, fraud, eviction after a 3-day notice, a substantial rent increase, divorce, fleeing an abusive relationship, aging out of foster care, flooding or other disaster, etc, can cause us to lose our financial footing. Maybe you are secure, but what about your brother, daughter, or grand children? Homelessness touches many families.

More than 2000 students in the Denver Public School system are homeless. And 6-10% of students at the 3 Auraria campuses are homeless. Many sleep in their vehicles to save money for tuition. Here's a Feb, 2018, article about homeless students at Metro: <https://red.msudenver.edu/2018/ghosts-on-campus-the-plight-of-homeless-students.html>. Our high schools and the Auraria campuses now have food banks to feed students who don't have money for food. As you will see in this video, homeless students across the US are trying really hard to make it: https://youtu.be/S6_fMj8VRSk

In Colorado, the Housing and Urban Development latest point-in-time count found there were 3,250 homeless families with children in Colorado. Colorado has the third highest rate of homeless families with children in the US. These counts are known to miss many families.

Men, veterans, and LGBTQ youth and adults also find themselves on the street. In 2017, police contacted 4,647 homeless people for the criminal charge of violating Denver's unauthorized camping ordinance, and told them to "Move Along." Move Along to where? We call it Whack-a-Mole enforcement, as there is no legal place for homeless folks to sleep outdoors.

One important data point is that both nationally and in Denver, more than 60% of those experiencing homelessness work. Think of the challenges that presents: finding a way to clean up and use a bathroom, getting food, hiding your pack or rolling luggage so it won't be taken by the police or a Business Improvement District worker while you're at work, affording transportation to get to and from work, finding a place to sleep when you get off work because shelter hours and

policies keep you outside. Trying to sleep but not being able to due to police harassment. Being homeless is tough.

Very few acknowledge a homeless individual as a human being. People berate them on NextDoor, call police to arrest them for sleeping on public property in their neighborhood, or want them gone - but gone to where? Our unhoused residents are trying hard to make a life. Let's protect them and give them some respect, not take their blankets away.

Dianne Thiel,
Denver Right to Survive

DENVER RIGHT TO SURVIVE INITIATIVE

Ballot Title: *Shall the voters of the City and County of Denver adopt a measure that secures and enforces basic rights for all people within the jurisdiction of the City and County of Denver, including the right to rest and shelter oneself from the elements in a non-obstructive manner in outdoor public spaces; to eat, share accept or give free food in any public space where food is not prohibited; to occupy one's own legally parked motor vehicle, or occupy a legally parked motor vehicle belonging to another, with the owner's permission; and to have a right and expectation of privacy and safety of or in one's person and property?*

As housing becomes more unattainable we must learn to be better neighbors to all. People are being pushed out of their homes, neighborhoods, communities, and even public spaces. Denver can be better than this and you can help!

Cities have responded to mass homelessness by passing laws that remove homeless folks from sight and mind, making it a crime for anyone to sit, sleep, or cover themselves in public spaces.

Denver law, under the Unauthorized Camping Ban, makes it illegal to "use any form of protection from the elements other than your clothing."

THE RIGHT TO SURVIVE INITIATIVE WILL PROTECT THESE RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE IN DENVER:

1. The right to rest in a non-obstructive manner in public spaces.
2. The right to shelter oneself from the elements in a non-obstructive manner in outdoor public spaces.
3. The right to eat, share, accept, or give free food in any public space where food is not prohibited.
4. The right to occupy one's own legally parked motor vehicle or occupy a legally parked motor vehicle belonging to another, with the owner's permission.
5. The right and expectation of safety and privacy of or in one's person and belongings while occupying public spaces.

WHAT CAUSES HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness can happen to anyone. Many factors push someone into homelessness - job loss, health crisis, disability, break in the family, and more. While these factors can trigger homelessness, ultimately a lack of accessible low-income housing and a broken economy are the root of mass homelessness.

WE CAN BE A DENVER THAT VALUES ALL PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF WEALTH OR POVERTY!

Vote for the Denver Right to Survive Initiative in May 2019

Denver Right to Survive Initiative Committee
P.O. Box 195
Englewood, CO 80151

LEARN MORE
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Denver Right to Survive Endorsers

9to5 Colorado

ACLU of Colorado

American Friends Service Committee
Bayaud Enterprises
Beloved Community Mennonite Church
Black Lives Matter 5280

Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition

Colorado Jobs With Justice
Colorado Mental Wellness Network
Colorado People's Action
Colorado Village Collaborative
Communities United Against Mass Incarceration

Democratic Party of Denver

Denver Artists for Rent Control
Denver Boulder Real Estate
Denver Catholic Worker
Denver Compost Collective
Denver DSA
Denver Food Not Bombs
Denver Homeless Out Loud
Denver Justice Project
Denver Welcome Home
Harm Reduction Action Center
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
Metro Denver Community Rights

National Coalition for the Homeless

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

Romero Theater Troupe
Veterans for Peace Boulder Chapter 120
West Side Books
Warm Cookies of the Revolution
Western Regional Advocacy Project
Network Coffee House
The Center on Colfax

Working Families Party

Your organization belongs here !

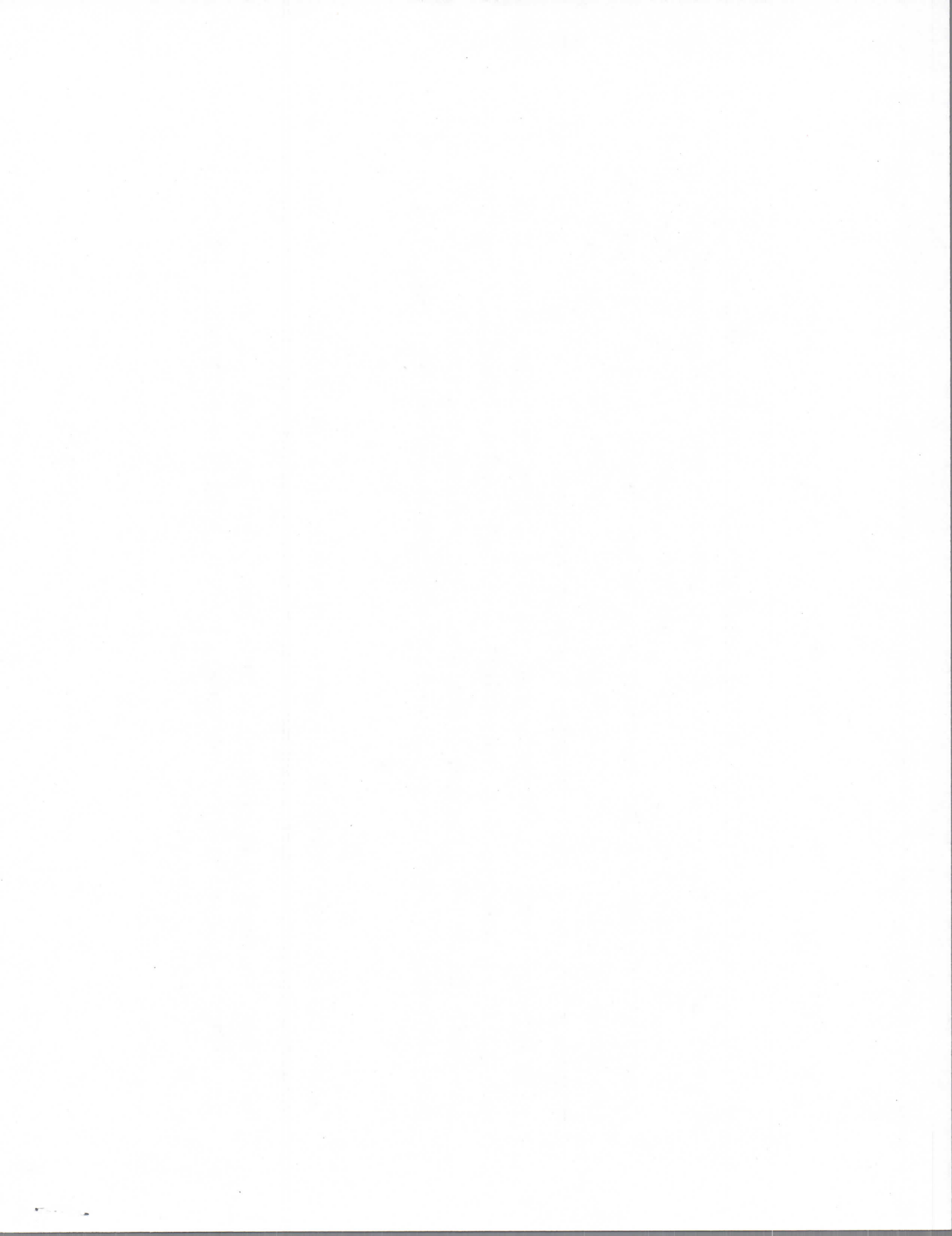
Constitutional Rights of People Who Are Homeless

4th Amendment: “The right of the people to be secure in their persons,... papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.”

8th Amendment: “Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.”

14th Amendment: “...No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges of or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.”

Colorado Constitution Bill of Rights Article II: “Inalienable rights: All persons have certain natural, essential and inalienable rights, among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties; of acquiring, possessing and protecting property; and of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness.”



Shelters are not a viable option for many.



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 5, 2018

DENVER HOMELESS OUT LOUD ENCOURAGING CITY OF DENVER TO GIVE BACK SHELTER AFTER TAKING IT IN COLD WEATHER FRONT

Human rights, resources for housing remain UNavailable as temperatures drop

"Cities cannot use quick-fix criminal justice measures to address their social service failures. Housing is the solution to homelessness." Eric Tars of National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty

DENVER – With winter weather moving in, the City and County of Denver is actively on the streets taking shelter - such as tarps, tents, sleeping bags - from people experiencing homelessness and moving them to less visible areas. As they do this the city claims to be “encouraging homeless people to seek shelter ahead of the cold front.”

Let’s just start with the math. Denver has at least 3,445 people experiencing homelessness (a known undercount) and not quite 2,000 spaces at shelters. At least 609 of these people are “unsheltered” (meaning staying outside). The city claims there is on average, 100 to 150 shelter spaces that go unused each night. Even given this massive undercount of people experiencing homelessness, and this liberal estimate of open shelter spaces, 609 people do not fit in 150 spaces. The math doesn't add up.

Now let’s go beyond math to the human elements of this situation. People without housing are not bodies to be put in spaces in a shelter building, but rather human beings who have lives. The reality of life and dynamics in shelters are such that they are not a viable, healthy, safe, or possible options for many people. Accordingly, hundreds of people without housing WILL BE living outside creating their own shelter in Denver this winter.

We simply ask the City of Denver to give back the shelter people create for themselves to survive - both the physical tarps/tents/blankets/ect, and the right to use this shelter to survive.

Who is asking for this?

All those who love their husband or wife and feel safer together than separated as shelters do to couples...
All those who work late nights and can't get into a shelter...
All those who work nights and have no option to sleep in a shelter in the day...
All those who work early morning day labor and can't get out of the shelter in time to work...
All those women who are traumatized by men staff in the bunk areas waking women to kick them out...
All those with pets or service animals who are rejected...
All those who can't conform to regimented rules...

All those who can't handle being ordered around and degraded by staff...
All those with insomnia who can't watch tv or read but must be in bed with no cell phones...
All those who have stayed in a shelter program for 90 days with a promise of housing to no avail and given up on service providers...
All those who have been kicked out at 3am for no fault of their own because staff failed to sign them in or enter their chores in the records...
All those who need food in the night and fear being kicked out for keeping food with them in bed against the rules...
All those who don't want to sleep with bed bugs...
All those suffering a drug addiction that can't pass a urine analysis to stay in the shelters...
All those don't make it in the lottery to get a bed...
All those who can't get down on the floor to sleep on a mat...
All those with more than two bags of belongings who either go into the shelter and lose their property, or stay outside to keep their property...
All those trans-gender folks who have been abused in a shelter or forced to strip to prove their sex...
All those who want their time back from waiting in lines for early admission hours to get into a shelter...
All those who don't want to be preached to by shelter providers...
All those with mental health struggles who can't handle being around hundreds of people in a tight space...
All those released from the hospital at 1am onto the streets...
All those physically unable to move about when police ask them...
All those who feel safer staying outside with friends than in a building with strangers...
All those who feel safer or happier staying by themselves on the streets than with hundreds of people in a shelter...
All those who prefer the dignity of a tent to the warehousing and dehumanizing treatment of a shelter...
All those who want control of their own life and choices...

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