



## **Press Release**

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### **Homeless Persons' Memorial Vigil Attended by Hundreds of Denverites on Saturday, December 21: Honoring the Lost Lives of 294 or More Unhoused Neighbors**

For the thirty-fifth year, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (the Coalition) hosted the “We Will Remember: Homeless Persons' Memorial Vigil” at the Denver City and County Building on Saturday evening. The candlelight vigil and name-reading ceremony was attended by an estimated 300 housed and unhoused community members and paid tribute to people who died while experiencing homelessness in 2024. Vigils like this one have been held in Denver and cities across the country since 1990 on the longest night of the year.

The number of names read this year was 294, a lower number than 2023's total of 311. An additional 12 names were added at the event by attendees whose loved ones had not been captured originally. The event program is available [here](#).

The vigil featured a eulogy by local activist and poet Randle Loeb, two songs performed by Denver Chorale, and a collection drive for winter wear donations for new adult coats, socks, gloves, and other new winter wear. An estimated 40 coats and dozens of socks, gloves, and hats were donated, some of which were taken by attendees in need as they exited the event.

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless President and CEO Britta Fisher, who introduced the event, added “We come together to mourn the heartbreaking loss of each and every loved one, colleague, friend, and neighbor, who was lost this year, and provide them with the honor, dignity, and respect that they deserve.”

At the event, each of the 294 names was read, followed by “We Will Remember” chanted by hundreds of crowd members. This event is hosted through collaboration between the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, the City of Denver's Department of Housing Stability (HOST), and homelessness service providers across the Denver Metro Area including those listed on the [event program here](#). [Photos are available here](#).

### **WE WILL REMEMBER: HOMELESS PERSONS' DEATH REVIEW**

As a companion to the Memorial Vigil, The Coalition presents *We Will Remember: Homeless Death Review*, a data-rich report on the deaths of people experiencing homelessness in Denver. The Coalition aims to bring

attention to the troubling trend of preventable deaths and identify programs and efforts that could reduce such loss of life. [The report is available here digitally.](#)

According to the data compiled by homelessness service providers for the Vigil, at least 294 people experiencing homelessness passed away in metropolitan Denver in 2024 (representing the period of November 1, 2023 through October 31, 2024). During this same period, the Denver Medical Examiner's Office (OME) listed 225 deaths. Without the names from OME, it is impossible to know how many of those 225 names are captured amongst the 294 submitted by partner organizations, and what the true total is.

**Some key data points from this year's report include:**

- The death totals from OME and from Denver area homelessness service providers were both lower in 2024 than 2023, breaking a trend from recent years. The number provided by OME was 225 in 2024 and 239 in 2023. The number of lost lives submitted by service providers was 294 in 2024, and 311 in 2023.
- Overdose remained the primary cause of death for individuals captured in the OME data. That number was 68% in 2024, a very slight decrease from 68.6% in 2023. However, the difference between individuals identified by OME and those who passed away within CCH housing was dramatic. Just 17.2% of deaths among CCH's housed clients were attributed to overdose—50.8% lower than those who were unhoused. These overdose deaths among CCH's housed clients declined from 28.6% in 2023 to 17.2% in 2024.
- The rate of deaths attributed to suicide among unhoused people in Denver rose from just over 2% in 2023 to nearly 5% in 2024. Conversely, deaths by suicide among CCH's housed clients fell from 4.76% in 2023 to 3% in 2024.
- Proven solutions are again highlighted in the *Death Review*, including the protective factor that housing can have on an individual's potential lifespan, and the impact of the City of Denver's recent efforts including the House1000 initiative, All In Mile High, and updated cold weather protocols.

More information is available at [coloradocoalition.org/vigil](https://coloradocoalition.org/vigil).

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*The mission of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is to work collaboratively toward the prevention of homelessness and the creation of lasting solutions for homeless and at-risk families, children, and individuals throughout Colorado. The Coalition advocates for and provides a continuum of housing and a variety of services to improve the health, wellbeing and stability of those it serves. Learn more at [www.coloradocoalition.org](http://www.coloradocoalition.org).*