

House Keys Not Handcuffs

Sweeps Outreach Fact Sheet - Denver, CO



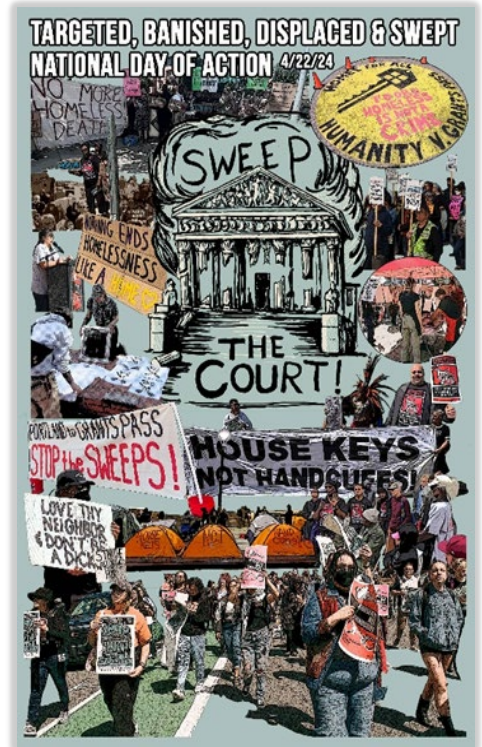
7/1/2025

Members of the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) are conducting a street outreach initiative as part of our campaign to fight sweeps/displacement. This outreach keeps us accountable to the community as it captures the priorities, experiences and realities of our community members directly impacted by these inhumane practices.

Our country's long history of racist, classist policing extends its grip to the livelihood of our unhoused neighbors. When individuals share their experiences in our outreach, all do so for the opportunity to speak *unfiltered* to the broader community about what is really happening to them. This is how we lay the foundation for a national organizing campaign and finally change the *narrative* of what a sweep actually is. The common experience of the people directly impacted tells us the intent and impact of these policies to remove people from public spaces and how inhumane this facially benign sounding program is, "they're just being swept, they'll be back."

A "sweep" is widely misunderstood because we rarely hear from the people who are directly impacted by the brutality of destroyed belongings, forced displacement, worthless referrals with dead ends, and an ever growing list of hostilities. This is the purpose of our outreach initiative which seeks to uplift the experience of those enduring a sweep to better inform organizers and the broader public of needed solutions.

By identifying the common themes and trends across our 12 cities and 5 states, we can then speak truth to power. **Our outreach forms are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) on WRAP website.** Continue reading to understand the common trends we've identified about sweeps. Of the 97 people we have asked these questions to so far in Denver:



When asked about advance notice of being swept

- 100% reported being swept in the past 30 days
- 71% reported No Advance Notice at All
- 65% received 24 hour notice

When we asked how many people were impacted by the sweep

- 49% reported 6 or more people
- 18% reported 3-5 people
- 15% reported 2-3 people
- 42% were by themselves when swept



Regarding people's belongings:

- 96% reported Not being offered storage; when storage was offered, only 2 people got their belongings back in good condition
- 54% reported belongings thrown away at the time of the sweep

When asked who conducted the sweep:

- 91% of the responses said the police (78% Local / 4% State)
 - 1% responded service provider or a private contractor
- 7 of those who were in a vehicle; 4 had their vehicle towed

When we asked how people were treated:

- 45% threatened with arrest
- 39% had warrant checks run on them
- 34% threatened with citation
- 6% reported some amount of verbal abuse

Where did people end up after being swept

- 73% ended up back living on the streets
- After the sweep, 89% were given stay away orders from the area.



Nationally we spoke to 270 people “what is important for the broader community to understand about sweeps;” the #1 answer was simply, “We are human.” The 2nd was “sweeps are traumatizing,” and lastly “we lose everything when we get swept.”

A full 90% of people felt they were targeted for being poor, with 10% identifying as “Disabled”

Last but not least; the big question of what alternatives/services people were offered

- 98% were not offered any type of service
- Of the 2% of people who were offered services
- 75% of all referrals were **unsuccessful**
- 5% were offered a shelter bed
- 100% of people reported they were unable to access legal assistance

“It’s not the Department of Homelessness, it’s the Department of Gaslighting.”



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