

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS
CANDIDATES MEMORANDUM
 Commission for Nonprofit Engagement

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| To | Denver City Council |
| From | Sterling Simms sterling.simms@denvergov.org |
| Date | May 11, 2026 |

BOARD PURPOSE

The commission brings together Denver's public and nonprofit sectors to drive innovative, collaborative initiatives that benefit the community.

APPOINTMENT CANDIDATE PROFILES

Term Dates: 5/1/2026 to 4/30/2028



Bio:

Charlyn Moss is the founder and CEO of Working Within, a management consulting firm she launched in 2021 to help nonprofit leaders access capital and build sustainable fundraising strategies. Working Within serves as a fractional fundraising executive for grassroots organizations focused on building community wealth, and has raised more than \$4.8M for its clients to date. Before founding Working Within, Charlyn served as Chief Operating Officer for the Economic Development Association for Black Communities, Chief of Staff at EdSolutions, and as an Analyst at Redstone Strategy Group, where she managed the strategy refresh for a client's \$300 million portfolio of national K-12 education investments. She holds a B.S. in Business Administration with a Finance concentration from the Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis, where she was named one of two Best and Brightest Business Undergrads for the class of 2020. Charlyn was recently recognized as an Inno Under 25.

Charlyn Moss
 CEO, Working Within
 She/Her
 African American

Female

entrepreneur by the Denver Business Journal and is a 2022 Connect Leadership Fellow with the Urban Leadership Foundation of Colorado, where she received the Richard Lewis Rising Star Award.

Statement of Support:

The commission recommends adding Charlyn because she would add a valued voice to our group. She scored a 60 on our scoring matrix, which is well above our targeted score to be added to the group. Her experience within the sector is extensive and she brings a diverse perspective to our commission because of the consulting work she does where she works primarily with nonprofit leaders of color and organizations addressing racial and economic inequities. She wants to join because she believes in strengthening the nonprofit sector as a driver of equity, innovation and community wealth. She's eager to contribute experience in fundraising strategy and cross-sector solution-building to help shape policies and practices that expand opportunities.

Candidate Answers to Additional Screener Questions:

Describe a previous experience that demonstrates how you would approach your role.

My approach to new leadership roles is to sit, watch, and observe before acting. I joined the board of Adams Purpose with that mindset. I went through their onboarding, took time to understand where there were genuine opportunities to grow the organization, and identified where my specific expertise could add value rather than just adding noise. I engaged heavily in the areas where I had something real to contribute, and over time the board voted me in as board chair. I am now leading board recruitment as well. That pattern, earn trust, find your lane, and then lead from it, is exactly how I plan to approach a commissioner role.

Describe what goals or actions of this Mayoral administration align with your personal priorities for the City.

The issues I see Denver's nonprofit community working hardest on every day are homelessness, violence prevention, and programming for young people. These are not abstract policy areas to me. They are the missions of the organizations I work alongside. I am encouraged that the Mayor's administration has identified these as priorities, and I want to help ensure that the grassroots organizations doing this work on the ground have the resources and visibility to sustain it.

Reappointment? No
For New Appointments:
Filling an Open Seat? Yes
Replacing an Expiring Seat:

Term Number: 1

Appointment Process for Seat: Indicate one appointment type (b) Mayoral Appointment, Council Confirmation;

Term Dates: Open Now- Terms last 2 years



Abenicio Real
President and CEO, Scholars
Unlimited
He/Him
Hispanic
Male

Bio:

Dr. Abenicio Rael is a mission-driven education and nonprofit executive with more than 15 years of leadership experience across K–12 education, higher education, and community-based organizations. He currently serves as President and CEO of Scholars Unlimited, where he leads organizational strategy, financial sustainability, fundraising, and equity-centered program growth. Throughout his career, Dr. Rael has been recognized for building strong teams, strengthening governance, advancing equity, and translating vision into measurable impact.

Born and raised in Denver, Dr. Rael is deeply committed to the well-being of the city's communities and families. He holds a

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership for Equity from the University of Colorado Denver and has served in senior leadership and advisory roles across Colorado's education and nonprofit sectors. Above all, Dr. Rael is passionate about being a father and bringing his values of care, accountability, and opportunity into every aspect of his work and civic service.

Statement of Support:

The commission recommends adding Abenicio to the Commission for Nonprofit Engagement. He scored a 47 on our scoring matrix, well above our targeted mark. He has a background in education equity and community leadership. He has shown a dedication to serving underrepresented youth in Colorado. He is committed to ensuring community voices, especially from underrepresented and underserved areas are reflected in policy and resource allocation. He brings a unique perspective to our commission through his lived experience and background that is missing from our current members.

Candidate Answers to Additional Screener Questions:

Describe a previous experience that demonstrates how you would approach your role.

One experience that reflects how I would approach my role as a commissioner comes from my work supporting nonprofit initiatives through collaboration, listening, and systems-level thinking. In this role, I worked alongside nonprofit leaders,

community members, and public-sector partners to address shared challenges, particularly around limited resources and equitable access to services.

Rather than starting with assumptions, I focused on listening carefully to stakeholders to understand their priorities, constraints, and lived experiences. This helped build trust and ensured that decisions were informed by those closest to the work. I also paid close attention to how policies and funding structures impacted organizations differently, especially smaller or community-rooted nonprofits, and elevated those perspectives in group discussions and planning efforts.

When disagreements or competing interests arose, I approached them with a solutions-oriented mindset, seeking common ground, using data where available, and keeping the broader community impact at the center. I made a point to follow through on commitments, communicate clearly, and remain accountable to both partners and outcomes.

This experience mirrors how I would serve on the Denver Nonprofit Commission: as a collaborative, prepared, and equity-focused commissioner who values transparency, diverse viewpoints, and practical recommendations that strengthen Denver's nonprofit sector and the communities it serves.

Describe what goals or actions of this Mayoral administration align with your personal priorities for the City.

Several priorities of Mayor Mike Johnston's administration align closely with my personal goals for Denver. I strongly support the city's focus on reducing unsheltered homelessness and expanding affordable housing, particularly the emphasis on coordinated systems and measurable outcomes. Housing stability is foundational to health, workforce participation, and community well-being, and nonprofits are essential partners in outreach, housing navigation, and long-term stabilization.

I also align with the administration's approach to public safety that pairs enforcement with prevention, wraparound services, and neighborhood-based solutions. Investing in community-rooted organizations builds trust and addresses the root causes of violence more effectively than enforcement alone.

Additionally, I value the city's commitments to climate resilience, economic vitality, and making Denver a more affordable and family-friendly city. These goals recognize the interconnected nature of equity, sustainability, and opportunity. As a commissioner, I would focus on strengthening collaboration between the city and nonprofits

to help translate these priorities into equitable,
community-driven outcomes across Denver.

Reappointment? No

Term Number: 1

For New Appointments:

Filling an Open Seat? Yes

Replacing an Expiring Seat:

Appointment Process for Seat: Indicate one appointment type (b) Mayoral Appointment, Council Confirmation;