

MEMORANDUM – DENVER NONPROFIT ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION

TO:	Denver City Council
FROM:	Office of Boards & Commissions
DATE:	8/4/2025
PURPOSE:	Appointments to the Denver Nonprofit Engagement Commission

Purpose:

The Nonprofit Engagement Commission serves as a catalyst for leveraging the best of Denver's public and nonprofit sectors and their commitment to engaging in innovative and collaborative work. The Commission's core work is focused on providing support for the Office of Nonprofit Engagement and the implementation of its strategies and goals.

Appointment Process:

The Mayor appoints up to 21 members and City Council confirms for 3-year terms, with a 3 term limit

Appointment Candidates

Term: 9/1/2025-8/31/2028 or until a successor is duly appointed.



Mackenzie Langley (she/her)
(Female, Caucasian)

*Founder & CEO, Lighthouse /
DEI Program Developer &
Facilitator, Iliff Graduate
School of Theology*

As a lifelong advocate for community-driven solutions, Mackenzie believes that investing in the leadership and infrastructure of Denver's nonprofit sector is essential for ensuring that our community thrives for generations to come. As the founder of Lighthouse, she actively collaborates with over 100 local nonprofits. She is an effective liaison in communicating trends and insights back to local government. Lighthouse is a social network that makes it easy for nonprofit leaders to develop strategic partnerships and share resources in order to increase their impact on the communities that they serve.

Recommendation Note:

Mackenzie Langley brings deep nonprofit-sector expertise rooted in collaboration, advocacy, and lived experience. Mackenzie is focused on ensuring city policies reflect the needs of marginalized communities through nonprofit engagement backed by strategic action, equity-driven programs, and a strong ethical foundation. Mackenzie's alignment with the Commission's core pillars, fostering nonprofit resilience, bridging sectors, amplifying community voices, and supporting policy with lived insight, is evident in their extensive experience in strategic collaboration, operational programs, and policy advocacy. This alignment makes them exceptionally well-suited to help DNEC become a model for amplifying nonprofit voice, engagement, and inclusion.



MaryBeth Lawson (she/her)
(Female, Caucasian)
*Vice President of
 Development, Denver Public
 Schools Foundation*

MaryBeth Lawson is the Vice President of Development at the Denver Public Schools Foundation. She has over a decade of experience helping folks accomplish their philanthropic goals while strengthening the support for and awareness of programs, mission and goals. Prior to joining the Denver Public Schools Foundation, MaryBeth supported the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work as their Executive Director of Development, and was part of several municipal teams and nonprofit organizations, including the American Red Cross. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, exploring the playgrounds, parks, and cultural institutions of Denver with her two daughters, and cheering on her Colorado Buffaloes with her husband. MaryBeth also serves on the Women's Commission.

Recommendation Note:

MaryBeth Lawson combines a people-focused leadership style with proven fundraising and development success across multiple sectors. MaryBeth recognizes the unique problem-solving role of nonprofits in education and housing and is eager to enhance this advocacy skill set through a meaningful commission role. MaryBeth's combined strengths in policy, organizing, and public service align seamlessly with the Commission's purpose: to champion innovative, collaborative work that amplifies nonprofit voices and builds equitable solutions.



Joel Cox (he/him)
(Male, Caucasian)
*Climate Assistant, Colorado
 Department of Natural
 Resources*

Joel serves as a Climate Assistant with Colorado's Department of Natural Resources, supporting the state's GHG Pollution Reduction Roadmap 2.0. As the only public sector representative, I would add a crucial dimension to the Commission's perspectives. Additionally, I bring environmental expertise, which is continuously being furthered through my graduate studies in Environmental Policy at the University of Denver. Prior to my pivot into Environmental Policy, I spent seven years in marketing and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) communications, focusing on social impact initiatives. This experience allowed me to develop a diverse range of skills, including strategic communication, project management, and cross-sector alignment. These tools will enable me to drive impactful community engagement for the Commission. In Denver, I have extensive community engagement experience as a precinct organizer, an elected delegate for the Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation, and a board member of my Registered Neighborhood Organization. These roles have allowed me to foster community connections and create inclusive spaces, aligning with the Commission's mission. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the Nonprofit Engagement Commission and collaborate with diverse stakeholders to enhance Denver's nonprofit sector.

Recommendation Note:

Joel Cox brings a powerful blend of lived perspective, technical policy training, community organizing, and inclusive leadership. They're well-positioned to guide the Commission in driving equitable, cross-sector solutions, especially in housing, environmental justice, and community engagement. Joel's combined strengths in policy & energy and community and civic engagement align with the Commission's purpose: to champion innovative, collaborative work that amplifies silenced nonprofit voices and builds equitable solutions. Their commitment to inclusion, equity, and system-level change would contribute positively to Denver's nonprofit ecosystem.



Brandon Zelasko (he/him)
(Male, Caucasian)
*Principal & Co-Owner, SE2
(Social Change Agency)*

Brandon is a dedicated social change marketing professional with extensive experience in driving community change through nonprofit and government collaboration. With a background in operations and strategic management, he has effectively partnered with various nonprofit organizations to address pressing social issues on topics including substance use prevention and treatment, mental health, community connection, affordable housing, utilization of human service programs and environmental issues. Brandon's professional highlights include leading initiatives to enhance community outreach and program effectiveness, managing cross-sector partnerships, and securing funding to support impactful projects. At the core of his work is a commitment to leveraging resources and fostering relationships that drive positive social outcomes. Brandon is currently a co-owner of SE2, a social change marketing agency and a 2024 Governors Fellow. When he is not working, he enjoys volunteering on nonprofit boards and getting out of his neighborhood (City Park West) and exploring quiet mountain trails.

Recommendation Note:

Brandon Zelasko brings seasoned communications leadership, a deep commitment to marginalized communities, and proven success in cross-sector collaboration. Brandon is poised to help the Commission elevate all voices, drive health equity, and advance economic inclusion through innovative public messaging and partnerships. Brandon's messaging expertise, multi-sector navigation, and lived insight make them well-positioned to support the Commission in amplifying our voice, implementing action-driven impact, and community awareness.