

MEMORANDUM – DENVER COMMISSION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

TO:	City Council
FROM:	Office of Boards & Commissions
DATE:	12/06/24
PURPOSE:	Appointments for Denver Commission for People with Disabilities
PROCESS:	City Council Confirmation

CURRENT BOARD STATUS

Staff Liaison: Rowena Alegria, HRCP

Scope of Board/Commission:

The mission of the Denver Commission for People with Disabilities (DCPD) is to promote and enhance equality for people with disabilities through empowerment, advocacy, and education by working with community members, as well as City and County of Denver officials and employees who have the ability to effect change.

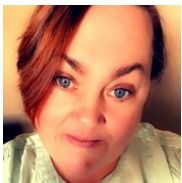
Appointment Process:

The Mayor appoints up to 21 members and City Council confirms appointments for a term of 3 years.

Mayor Mike Johnston has approved the below appointments.

Term: 1/01/2025 - 12/31/2027 or until a successor is duly appointed

Tina Johnson – Resident Council Program Administrator, Denver Housing Authority



Bio: Tina Johnson has worked for the Denver Housing Authority for 14 years and hopes to serve as a voice on the commission for DHA disabled residents and others within our city. She is a disabled veteran and is interested in improving the transportation challenges faced by disabled people as well as housing conditions. Her passion and commitment to serve in a broader capacity outside of the DHA was apparent during her interview.

Samuel Trout - Case Manager, Apex Disability Law LLC



Bio: Sammy is a recent CSU graduate and strong advocate for disabled students. His emerging experience has landed him with opportunities to intern and serve on councils at the local and state levels of government. He is currently a Case Manager for Apex Disability Law.

Elisa Aucancela - Co-Executive Director of El Grupo Vida

Bio: Elisa Aucancela is the Co-Executive Director of El Grupo Vida, a Denver nonprofit organization who support immigrants with disabilities and their families. She is a Bilingual Early Childhood Special Education Specialist in the state of Colorado with over 13 years of experience working with young children and their families in school- and home-based services. Elisa has received continuing education in infant and early childhood mental health and cultural and linguistic diversity. She is currently specialized in working with children birth to 5 and their families and feels especially connected to working with children with autism spectrum disorders and culturally diverse families. Elisa was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She obtained her Bachelor of Art in Education in the University of Puerto Rico; a Post bachelor's in education administration from Universidad Abierta de Santiago, Dominican Republic; a master's in clinical psychology from the Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago, Dominican Republic, and a Master of Early Childhood Special Education from the University Northern Colorado. She completed all but dissertation programs in Psychology at Universidad de Granada, Spain and in the Infant and Early Childhood Development at Fielding University, California. She obtained a DIRFloortime Basic Certificate and is endorsed as an Infant Family Specialist. Elisa feels passionately about improving housing and shelter options for families of children with disabilities and will bring a much needed perspective to the commission.

Joshua Hursa

Bio: Joshua Hursa has been a longtime advocate for those with mental health issues including schizophrenia. He has experience testifying at the state level and has been active in local Denver issues including serving on the current Mayor's advisory transition team for mental health.

Brian Tallant Owner, Neurodiverse Communities

Bio: Brian Tallant is a Licensed Professional Counselor and owner of Neurodiverse Communities. Brian has over 33 years of working with people who have developmental disabilities, primarily in the community mental health setting. Brian is a contributing member of the IDD and Trauma Expert Panel for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). Brian also serves on the Board of Directors for NADD, an association for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health needs, and Brian carries the NADD Clinical Certification credential. Brian conducts workshops nationally and internationally on adapted mental health treatment for people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Katelyn E. Kendrick (they/them)

Bio: Katelyn E. Kendrick is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst with a focus on neurodiversity-affirming and trauma-informed practices. They practice in the Denver-Metro region, bringing over 10 years of experience in the fields of ABA and Special Education. Their educational background includes a B.A. in US History with a minor in Education from The University of California, Riverside, obtained in 2015; and an M.Ed. in Behavior Analysis from the University of Cincinnati in 2017. Beyond their professional endeavors, Katelyn has dedicated over 15 years to advocacy and political movements. Their journey began with involvement in the fight for marriage equality, spurred by the passage of Prop 8 in California. Since then, they have actively engaged in DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, access) initiatives within behavior analytic professional organizations such as the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science and Association of Behavior Analysis International. Additionally, Katelyn has contributed training and labor to community theater organizations in the Denver-metro region, including Phamaly Theatre Company, Vintage Theatre Company, and IDEAs (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access: Stages). Katelyn also serves on the DEI Subcommittee of the Dissemination Committee for the Colorado Association of Behavior Analysis. Living at the intersection of multiple identities, Katelyn embraces their life as an autistic, mentally ill, pansexual, and non-binary femme individual.

CURRENT BOARD**Mayoral Appointment****Term end date:**

Timothy Dodd	9-30-25
Alicia Cooper	9-30-25
Karen Roberts	9-30-25
Stephanie Crookston	5-31-27
Dedra Prester	5-31-27
Christine Humphrey	5-31-27
Ty Smith	5-31-27
Kyle Lephart	9-30-27
Justin Dodge	9-30-27
Elena Mendoza	9-30-27
Mario Dino	10-31-27
Michelle Dumay	10-31-27
Tralaine Bigbee	10-31-27