Council Advocate member description – Non-voting member

A **Council Advocate** is a non-voting member of the Mill Levy Advisory Council that can be seated upon the request of a Council member who has an intellectual and developmental disability and wishes to receive support to participate fully and meaningfully as a voting Council Member. This request is considered a reasonable accommodation request.

A Council Advocate is an expert identified by Denver Human Services (DHS) through community partners such as AdvocacyDenver and can be a non-Denver resident as they are not a voting member. The person in this role will work with the Council member assigned to them on navigating the Council governance, along with the responsibilities, duties, and tasks assigned to voting members. They should promote and support their assigned member’s efforts to develop self-advocacy skills in the Council environment. They will ensure the Council member, where requested and appropriate, has ample opportunity to represent the perspectives and experiences of themselves and others in their community on issues vital to the health and wellbeing of Denver residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A Council Advocate may provide support in the following ways, dependent upon requests from the assigned voting member on support needs and accommodations:

- Check in with the individual member on dates, communications, and assigned tasks
- Help them navigate complex systems and complete tasks and assignments
- Provide support in requesting and advocating for reasonable accommodations
- Assist with planning or arranging transportation to Council meetings as needed
- Review meeting minutes and other documents ahead of meetings (by phone, email, or in person)
- Meet with the individual member ahead of meetings to prepare for agenda topics
- Attend Council meetings and sit with the individual member so they are readily available to facilitate communication and understanding between the individual member and others at meetings
- Serve purely as a access tool to ensure the individual can share their knowledge and perspective in meetings, as needed. They should be a soft accompaniment that participates in a way that empowers the individual member instead of speaking for them on issues
- Exercise recusal along with other voting and non-voting members when a potential conflict arises

It is critical that a Council Advocate remain neutral when supporting or relaying communications to and from the individual member they’re supporting. A Council Advocate will not:

- Color statements made by the individual or other members with their own perspective or opinion
- Interject with information or facts outside the realm of their role as advocate for the individual member
- Make motions or vote on motions before the Council
- Champion their own issues or causes to the Council
- Advocate for the individual from an individual needs or service perspective outside of the Council

This role is meant to facilitate the full participation of the Council member with intellectual and developmental disabilities that requested the support, in concert with the DHS staff liaison. The individual Council member originally requesting an advocate can adjust the level of support or decide to suspend the support at any time, at which point a Council Advocate may be asked to discontinue their service on the Mill Levy Advisory Council.

This is a volunteer position on the Council specifically recruited by DHS through targeted outreach.