Dedicated mill levy funding to provide services to residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) is no longer required to go to Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS), the community-centered board for Denver. To inform the allocation of a portion of the funding, Denver Human Services (DHS) hired an independent consultant to gather feedback on the needs of Denver residents with I/DD and make recommendations. DHS and the consultant worked with a steering committee comprised of individuals who have a deep knowledge of services for people with I/DD, as identified by the Department and the Mayor’s Commission for People with Disabilities.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### THE TOP FIVE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED FOR DENVER RESIDENTS WITH I/DD WERE ...

- Relief of housing cost burden (87% identified as “big problem”)
- Waiting list for services (70% identified as “big problem”)
- Adequate mental health services (65% identified as “big problem”)
- Obtaining employment (63% identified as “big problem”)
- Transition to adulthood (54% identified as “big problem”)

#### PEOPLE DON’T HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEDICATED MILL LEVY

- Only 24% of people and families receiving services have a good or excellent understanding of the mill levy and only 19% have a good or excellent understanding of the services it funds.
- 54% of all respondents have a poor or fair understanding of the mill levy (including service providers, policymakers, and others).

#### THOSE WHO ACCESSED MILL LEVY-FUNDED SERVICES THROUGH RMHS RATED THEM FAVORABLY

- Of the individuals, families, and organizations that applied to RMHS for mill levy services, 66% had a positive experience, 12% had a neutral experience, and 6% indicated not applicable. Only 17% indicated they had a negative experience.
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most positive, mill levy services provided through RMHS scored an average of between 7.2 and 7.9 for people and families receiving services and between 7.7 and 8.1 for providers. Individualized client assistance is the highest-rated mill levy program.
- For those who applied to RMHS for mill levy funds, 71% rated the response from approval to receiving funds as positive and 74% rated response to questions or requests for assistance as positive.
Key informant interviews with eight community experts and leaders in providing services to people with I/DD.

Web-based, 37-question survey between April 30 and July 1 generated 417 responses.

- 164 respondents identified as a self-advocate, guardian of a person with I/DD, or a family member of a person with I/DD.
- 147 identified as providers, including host home family, health care provider, school person, case manager, or direct service provider.

Three focus groups including:

- 15 self-advocates
- six individuals with I/DD experiencing homelessness and staff helping to connect them to resources and find housing, and
- 14 early childhood providers and leaders.

Public meeting in central Denver with two sessions attended in person, by phone, and on Facebook Live by over 60 people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DHS should establish a formal structure to gather input on how to disperse dedicated mill levy funding such as an advisory committee that identifies and prioritizes needs to address.

DHS should look at ways to relieve the burden of housing cost in Denver for people with I/DD and service providers who may not otherwise be able to afford to live here.

DHS should explore ways to encourage the employment of people with I/DD in Denver.

DHS should focus on the needs of those on the waiting list for services.

DHS should develop more resources to support transitions to adulthood.

DHS should enhance the capacity in Denver to provide mental health services for people with dual diagnoses of mental health and a developmental disability.