



# Needs Assessment Summary

Conducted by Health Management Associates, March-August 2018

## BACKGROUND

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

### 1 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”)

### 2 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).

### 3 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.



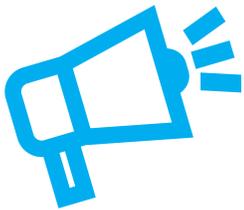
**Key informant interviews** with eight community experts and leaders in providing services to people with I/DD.

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.

## HOW FEEDBACK WAS GATHERED



**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.