

Larysa Kautz is President & CEO of Melwood, a leading employer and advocate for people with disabilities headquartered in the DMV. Kautz brings nearly 20 years of experience in law, business, advocacy, and nonprofit management to Melwood, driving practical policy change to expand the field of employment for people with disabilities and create a more inclusive workplace for the future. Kautz has been instrumental in advocating for the abolition of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which allows employers to pay workers with disabilities below minimum wage.

As a first-generation American, a daughter of parents with invisible disabilities, and a mother of a child with autism, Larysa is passionate about Melwood's mission of inclusion and has been a fierce advocate for people with disabilities throughout her life. She founded Melwood's Advocacy department, which has significantly increased the organization's effectiveness at influencing policies and legislation that benefit the communities that Melwood serves and remove barriers to economic empowerment.

Larysa serves on the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) State Rehabilitation Council, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, and the Arlington County Chamber of Commerce Board. She previously served as a consultant to President Obama's Office of White House Counsel, Virginia Governor Northam's Transition Team, the Foundation for the National Archives, and Lawyers for Good Government.