

# Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities

## Disability Employment Workforce Subcommittee

### Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting: Monday, January 30, 2023

Start time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Kathy Petkauskos (Chair) – Director, Work Without Limits
2	Gyasi Burks-Abbot – Self Advocate Faculty, LEND Program, Boston Children's Hospital
3	Oz Mondejar – Senior Vice President of Mission and Advocacy, Spaulding Network (MGB)
4	Representative Mathew Muratore – Massachusetts House of Representatives
5	Chris White – CEO & President, Road to Responsibility, Inc.
Members Not Present	
	Carl Richardson – ADA Coordinator, Massachusetts State House

#### Welcome, Roll Calls, and Introductions

- Chair Kathy Petkauskos opened the meeting with welcoming remarks, each subcommittee member reintroduced themselves to Imene Bouziane Saidi, the new program director for the Commission.
- Inspirational quote from Gyasi Burks-Abbot was shared: *“Time to reflect, reform, and renew. Imagine all the great things I'm going to do. But I must remember. Fate can be a trickster. I hope when the Universe roasts me. It's all in the name of Serendipity. When things don't turn out as I expect. May they always work out for the best.”*  
Gyasi reflected on his own quote sharing the main message is to “come up with solutions in unexpected places.”

#### Review of Subcommittee Priorities:

- Using [The Grid](#) as a live document to catalog status, action steps and assigning committee member lead
  - **Action Step:** S. 4102 Savings Penalty Act. Representative Muratore will reach out to MA Senators Warren and Markey to see if this has been done again.
  - MA Disability Employment Tax Credit. Oz suggested getting a list of number of employers small or large to promote it and employers speak to others on it. Benefit for for-profit, not only incentives to hire people with disabilities, let Chamber of Commerce about it, have employers think about this as a tax credit incentive. Oz mentioned having a day-long signature hybrid event, which would include mini videos, follow up with Representative. Garlick.

**Action Step:** MA Disability Employment Tax Credit. Kathy suggested partnering with MRC to provide more information on newsletters, links, webinar, video, etc

to explain the Tax credit to employers. Kathy will reach out to MRC to learn more and invite to future employment subcommittee meeting.

- MassHealth CommonHealth. Gyasi put forth a suggestion in looking into Maryland as a state model.

**Action Step:** Gyasi will reach out to Maryland about their Medicaid Buy-In program that established a \$10K asset limit. In MA, the Medicaid Buy-In program (called MassHealth CommonHealth) has no asset limit if you have a disability.

### **Review of Workability Report Priorities:**

- Using [The Grid](#) as a live document to catalog status, action steps and assigning committee member lead
  - Goal #8: Improve the support for individuals with significant disabilities and monitor geographic disparities.

First order Kathy wanted to discuss. Chris White commented that this is a group that is largely left behind due to Covid and they are the last group to get services back. “They are the ones with the greatest needs and get support and services last”. This is mainly due to the severe staffing shortage in the health and human services field. Trade associations (AAPE, The Providers Council, etc) are working with state agencies to drive more resources to get workers (create a career PR campaign, significant ARPA funds designated through grant process to help organizations to better recruit and retain qualified people).

Gyasi asked about the possibility of the Commission and/or Subcommittee endorsing bills (Community college bill, increase workforce wages bill).

Rep. Muratore- no committee has been assigned yet in the 193rd legislature. Once that is determined, the Commission would be better apt to testify, provide letters of support, etc.

**Action Step:** Members agreed to bring this to the full Commission for guidance and advise, and ensure efforts are not being duplicated with the Legislative and Budget subcommittee.

Idea from members: have other subcommittee members take a look at the Grid and assign bullets with other subcommittees Chairs.
  - Goal #1 has been met. The Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities was established on 7/21/2021. Subcommittees have also been established.
  - Goal #2 Expand Regional Employment Collaboratives (RECs).

Status: At least one new REC was established in 2022. Currently include Central Mass, Greater Boston, North Suburban, Greater Merrimack Valley, South Shore and Western Mass.

<https://yournextstar.com/make-a-hire/massachusetts-regional-employment-collaboratives/> Oz asked if they work EOWD and will look into/reach out to

Commonwealth Corp.

**Action Step:** Kathy will work on getting an updated list of RECs. Confirm if MassHire career centers are engaged with RECs.

- Goal #3: Partnerships with Ride Share services.  
Status: the pilot was successful in Plymouth area per Rep. Muratore report. A \$50K grant was awarded to establish it. Challenges exist to sustain it now that the grant is no longer available. Uses both Lyft and Uber to supplant transportation needs. Chris shared that Roads to Responsibility, Inc. just signed a purchase order for Uber as well. Kathy shared this initiative could be used as best practice and could be replicated in the state. This could also be shared with the public and/or signature event in a series of mini presentations with the greater community.  
**Action Step:** None at this time. Consider as a future presentation for the employment subcommittee, or a bigger forum the full Commission might be spearheading.
- Goal #4: Support disability hiring benchmarks for smaller businesses.  
**Action Step:** Oz will contact [Disability:IN](#) to educate the subcommittee on the DEI index. The Disability Equality Index (DEI) is a comprehensive benchmarking tool that helps companies build a roadmap of measurable, tangible actions that they can take to achieve disability inclusion and equality. Each company receives a score, on a scale of zero (0) to 100, with those earning 80 and above recognized as “Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion.”  
Oz HRC survey, similar for disability, employment, policy, website, accessibility etc.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Disability Employment Subcommittee will be held on Monday, February 27th at 12:00 pm.

### **2023 Meeting Dates:** (Kathy will send calendar invite for all)

April 24th at 12pm

May 22nd at 12pm

August 28th at 12pm

November 13th at 12pm

### **Adjournment**