

**Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities  
Disability Employment Workforce Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes**

Date of meeting: Monday, May 22, 2023

Start time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

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

Action Items		Person Responsible
1	Sending thank you note to Becky Curran Kekula	Kathy and Imene
2	Next Disability Employment SC Quote	Carl Richardson
3	Send “Getting Started” resource to committee	Becky Curran Kekula
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**Welcome, Roll Calls, and Introductions**

- Members welcomed each other.
- Guest speaker Becky Curran Kekula, Senior Director, Disability Equality Index at Disability:IN introduction.
- Inspirational quote “I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.” by Ralph Braunby, provided by Representative Muratore.

### **Disability Index Presentation:**

- Presentation questions/answers:
  - Can you share your experience working with smaller businesses? We've released a "Getting Started" Resource to best guide them along with Massachusetts Top Scorers.
  - Can you confirm that DEI is for Fortune 1,000 companies? It is for 1,000 scope companies. Other companies who have 500 employees or more may be eligible as well, not owned by a larger entity, non-governmental organizations.
  - Carl Richardson shared that he does consulting with streaming services and networks on how to make their content accessible to blind people through their applications and audio descriptions.
  - Gyasi asked if non-profits are also included as organizations Disability:IN works with. Becky shared that the non-profits that may be included are hospitals but Disability:IN focuses on corporate America.
  - Members thanked Becky for sharing her background and the Disability Equality Index.

### **Subcommittee's priorities discussion:**

- Kathy mentioned the subcommittee's approach should continue to be thoughtful with bold and impactful priorities, while avoiding duplicating efforts other stakeholder groups may be working on.
- Kathy asked each member to share what their top priorities would be for the subcommittee.
- Kathy would like to focus on the SSI Penalty Elimination Act. The subcommittee could also focus on creating a disability employment benchmarking tool or a guide for small and medium size businesses.
- Chris would like to focus on the State as a Model Employer.
- Rep. Muratore would like to focus on small business communities including disability in their DEI efforts.
- Oz would like to focus on the State as a Model Employer. He would also like to focus on how the subcommittee can be part of recognizing small businesses and how can they access the talent of persons with disabilities as employees.
- Gyasi would like to focus on the benefits cliff, State as a Model Employer and flexibility in creation of jobs.
- Imene shared that she has had conversations related to the State as a Model Employer and the SSI Penalty Act with different stakeholders.
- Kathy brought up the Workforce Supports subcommittee's listening sessions where health and human service organizations are having trouble recruiting into their positions. Since the unemployment rates for people with disabilities continues to stay high, can health and human service organizations hire and train more people with disabilities to help solve their staffing problems?

- Gyasi asked if the apprenticeship program could be combined with the State as a Model Employer and even create new types of jobs that would help fill the workforce crisis.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Disability Employment Subcommittee will be held on:

**Monday, August 28 at 12:00 pm.**

**Adjournment**