

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

Date of meeting: Monday, November 17, 2025

Start time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

<b>Members Participating Remotely</b>	
1	Rachel Stanton – Clean Water Trust at the Treasurer’s Office (Co-Chair)
2	Oz Mondejar – Mucho Gusto Consulting
3	Kathy Petkauskos – UMass Chan Medical School present
4	Gyasi Burks-Abbott – LEND Fellowship, Boston Children’s Hospital (Co-Chair)
5	Chris White – Road to Responsibility, Inc present
6	Carl Richardson – Massachusetts State House present
7	Nancy Garr-Colzie – Worcester Disability Commission; Center for Living and Working
<b>Members Not Present</b>	
8	Lexi Semanchik – Treasurer’s Office
<b>Other Commissioners Present</b>	
9	Hon. Denise C. Garlick – Commission Chair
10	Victoria Gill – Disabled Persons Protection Commission

<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
1 Follow up with State Exchange on Employment and Disability (SEED)	Co-Chairs & Imene

## Agenda

- Welcome, Roll Call, and Meeting Minutes Approval
  - Motion to approve minutes
  - Motion approved
- Inspirational Quote by John Quincy Adams, provided by Gyasi Burks-Abbott  
*“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.”*
- Presentation on the Role of Employment Resource Groups in Disability Employment by Kristen Grip, Project Manager in Immersive Design Systems (IDS) and Katie McCarthy, Outreach and Support Services Coordinator for the Department of Otolaryngology and Communication Enhancement, Disability Alliance Employee-Led Group (ELG), Boston Children’s Hospital
  - Key takeaways:

- The Disability Alliance (DA) is an employee-led group at Boston Children's Hospital focused on fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive workplace for employees with disabilities and allies.
- The group's work is organized around three core pillars: Education, Community, and Advocacy.
- DA conducts monthly meetings that include educational programming, employee experience panels, internal resources, and external speakers focused on disability inclusion, workplace accessibility, and accommodations.
- Community-building is a central component of the group's work, including collaboration with other employee-led groups, Disability Pride Month activities, and hospital-wide events that promote awareness and inclusion.
- The presentation emphasized the importance of lived experience and employee leadership, including the principle of "Nothing about us without us."
- The group identified internalized ableism and fear of disclosure as ongoing challenges for employees with both apparent and non-apparent disabilities.
- Boston Children's Hospital received a top score on the Disability Index 2025 and was recognized as a Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion, with strengths noted in culture, enterprise-wide access, and recruitment.
- The presentation also identified areas for continued improvement, including accommodations, retention and advancement, education, and supplier inclusion.
- The group highlighted the role of intersectionality, noting that disability often intersects with race, gender, and sexual orientation, and referenced institutional efforts such as Disability Pride Month programming and a Disability Health Equity Symposium.
- Universal design principles were emphasized, including that access benefits everyone, inclusion drives innovation, and disability inclusion supports broader organizational progress.
- Discussion:
  - Subcommittee members asked about how employers can begin establishing employee-led disability groups. In response, presenters shared that initial steps included working with an internal HR diversity department, forming a small core group, and securing leadership involvement. They noted that having internal advocates was important and that it took approximately one year to formally establish the group.
  - Work Without Limits at UMass Chan Medical School has a Disability Employee Resource Group guide:  
<https://www.workwithoutlimits.org/siteassets/pdf-resources-new-branding/2023-wwl-disability-employee-resource-groups.pdf>
  - Discussion highlighted the value of employee-led groups collaborating across identities and addressing intersectionality. Participants referenced the importance of maintaining practical guidance for inclusive workplaces

as a living resource.

- FY 26 Goals Discussion
  - Subcommittee leadership provided background on prior engagement with the State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), a state–federal initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).
  - A September meeting was referenced in which SEED learned more about the subcommittee’s work, including the Massachusetts as a [State Employer analysis and the benefit-cliff modeling completed by the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research](#).
  - SEED expressed interest in the work completed to date and indicated openness to exploring ways to support next steps.
  - SEED was described as providing policy assistance, technical support, and research to states working to improve disability employment outcomes.
  - Potential areas where SEED could support the subcommittee’s work were discussed, including:
    - Comparative examples and best practices from other states related to State as a Model Employer
    - Education and engagement efforts with state agencies, human resources teams, or employer groups
- Possible approaches for engaging with SEED included:
  - Inviting SEED to a future subcommittee meeting for a brief overview of their technical assistance and state examples
  - Identifying which elements of the subcommittee’s work may be the best fit for partnership, including State as a Model Employer policy development, use of benefit-cliff findings, or benchmarking against other states
  - Exploring connections to SEED’s youth-focused work, including [CAPE Youth](#)
- Adjournment

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- January 26, 2026
- February 23, 2026
- April 27, 2026
- May 18, 2026
- August 31, 2026
- November 16, 2026

### **Meeting Materials:**

- [August 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Disability Alliance \(DA\) Employee Led Group](#)