

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

Date of meeting: Monday, April 22, 2024

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	Chris White – CEO & President, Road to Responsibility, Inc.
3	Gyasi Burks-Abbott – Self Advocate Faculty, LEND Program, Boston Children's Hospital
4	Oz Mondejar – President, Mucho Gusto Consulting
5	Rachel Stanton – Investor Relations and Communications Graphic Designer, Clean Water Trust
6	Carl Richardson – ADA Coordinator, Massachusetts State House
7	Representative Mathew Muratore – Massachusetts House of Representatives
Members Not Present	

Action Items		Person Responsible
1	Reach out to Colletley's Cookies, MicroTek	Imene
2	Reach out to Plymouth YMCA and Rep. Cutler	Rep. Muratore

Welcome, Roll Calls, and Introductions

1. Welcome, Roll Call, and Introductions
2. Inspirational Quote provided by Rachel Stanton: *“Acceptance doesn't mean resignation; it means understanding that something is what it is and that there's got to be a way through it.”* By Michael J. Fox
3. MA Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) Individuals with Disabilities Pilot: Past, Present, and Future
 - Presentation by Individuals with Disabilities Program Coordinator Emily Maguire and Program Intern Dallas Silva-Dunn
 - Q&A / Discussion

- How do you get certified as a vendor?
 - SDO utilizes [Disability:IN](#), a third-party certifier, for certifications. Once certified, SDO recognizes this, identifying businesses as either disability-owned or service-disabled veteran-owned. This identification is listed in the SDO directory and is accessible through [CommBuys](#), where SDO maintains a profile to help agencies and businesses use this identification to meet their spending metrics. Being certified is an acknowledgment from both DISABILITY:IN and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that a business has been thoroughly vetted and confirmed as disability-owned, allowing it to use this identifier in state contracting competitions.
- Is there a registry where people can find businesses that are listed?
 - <https://www.diversitycertification.mass.gov/BusinessDirectory/BusinessDirectorySearch.aspx>
 - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/sdo-certified-diverse-business-dashboard>
- Larger businesses often face challenges incorporating smaller businesses into their procurement processes. Is there a component in the SDO's work that focuses on educating businesses throughout the Commonwealth about the importance of including disability-owned businesses in their procurement strategies?
 - The SDO's primary focus has been to reach out and connect with businesses who are unaware that certification is an option for them. The first step is ensuring they understand that the state procurement process is accessible, how to get certified, and how they can compete with the larger companies. While connecting these larger companies with smaller ones is definitely something the SDO would love to work on, it hasn't been the main focus at this time. Presentations like this often lead to more projects and initiatives for programs or pilots. The SDO would love to circle back and talk about it more just to see what folks are looking for in terms of connecting those two types of businesses.

- The SDO provides training for larger contractors interested in collaborating with smaller businesses. As part of its efforts to facilitate statewide contracting, the SDO participates in bidders' conferences to ensure potential prime bidders are aware of the SDO matchmaking services that help connect them with smaller businesses.
- Additionally, the SDO manages a platform called The Hub, which is accessible to public institutions, including state colleges. This platform is also available to larger buyers, such as Mass General Brigham. It serves as a venue where certified vendors can register and connect with larger buyers who are looking to partner or with large contractors who are seeking to contract or purchase supplies. The SDO is eager to discuss this further with the sub-committee.
 - Oz- Sometimes the bottleneck occurs with those larger businesses. It's really about education and raising awareness. I'm happy to connect after this through Imene.
- What is the first step for businesses to get in touch with you?
 - They can reach out via email, phone, zoom, meeting in person: **Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (SDO)** One Ashburton Place, Room 1410, Boston, MA 02108
Phone 857-869-0806 **Email** emily.maguire@mass.gov

4. Continued FY24 Goal Discussion:

Goal: Identify and facilitate at least one opportunity (e.g., event, speaking engagement, information dissemination) to engage and educate at least 100 small and medium businesses/employers on the value of including people with disabilities in the workplace, available community resources, and recognition of effective employer practices.

Employer Video Project:

- Review Vision for the Video
 - Key messages and resources to be captured

- The format is business-to-business, featuring key speakers from businesses and employers who are already successful and advanced in hiring, supporting, retaining, and accommodating employees with disabilities.
 - Steps taken so far:
 - Kathy, Oz and Gyasi met and discussed the key message they would like to see the businesses speak about. Those key messages were circulated to all subcommittee members prior to today's meeting. They also identified potential speakers for the video but wanted to start with the organizations that the Commission recognized at the last National Disability Employment Awareness Month event.
 - Rachel and Imene have been working on a social media kit.
- Discussion:
 - Continue to focus on small businesses, i.e., “mom and pop” shops, daycares, etc.
 - Plymouth YMCA could be an option as it has 50 or less employees and can send a strong message that even small companies can benefit from hiring employees with disabilities. Rep. Muratore will send an email introduction.
 - Companies to reach out to: MicroTek, Plymouth YMCA, possibly Colletty's Cookies.
 - Chris: No mission creep – we need to maintain a sharp focus on our core message and what we are seeking in the video. Keep it simple, focused, and brief.
 - Stephanie, the video producer, provided feedback on the video project. She agrees with the goal outlined in the document that was distributed, which emphasizes the importance and incentives of the project. The target completion date for the video is September.
 - Stephanie suggests that conducting these videos over Zoom may not be the best approach; it would be more strategic to film in person, either by visiting the participants or having them come to a central location. This approach will enhance the business-to-business messaging.

- Additionally, the video will combine scripted and freestyle speaking, utilizing a teleprompter to ensure clarity and impact.
- Suggested timeline:
 - reach out to the top 3 choices first then move to the next
 - pre-production planning in May/early June
 - Film in June or July.
- Commitment would be for all 3 employers to come to one of the employers' sites for interviews and get b-roll from workers at that business.
- Hybrid between zoom and in person employers was also discussed. It may hinder the quality of the video.
- May meeting prep - dissemination plan:
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 - Once the video is created, we need to establish a clear plan for its distribution. This should include a call to action, directing viewers to specific resources available on our website for download. Additionally, we should provide a phone number and email address for further engagement.
 - Rep. Muratore will reach out to Rep. Cutler for input
 - Entities to reach out to for dissemination:
 - Chambers of commerce will post our video
 - Northeast HR Association [NEHRA](#)
 - Press release
 - Commission's list serv
 - Other list servs
 - Commissioners' networks

5. Next Meeting Dates:

- Monday, May 20, 2024 from 12:00-1:00 PM
- Monday, August 26, 2024 from 12:00-1:00 PM
- Monday, November 18, 2024 from 12:00-1:00 PM

6. Adjournment