

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

Date of meeting: Monday, January 26, 2026

Start time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Rachel Stanton – Clean Water Trust at the Treasurer’s Office (Co-Chair)
2	Gyasi Burks-Abbott – LEND Fellowship, Boston Children's Hospital (Co-Chair)
3	Kathy Petkauskos – UMass Chan Medical School
4	Rachel Kaprielian – Triangle, Inc.
5	Chris White – Road to Responsibility, Inc
6	Carl Richardson – Massachusetts State House
Members Not Present	
7	Lexi Semanchik – Treasurer’s Office
8	Oz Mondejar – Mucho Gusto Consulting

Action Items	Person Responsible
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 Jane Goodall, provided by Kathy Petkauskos

“Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.”

- State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED): Disability Employment Policy Options for States Presentation by Katia Albanese, Project Director and Dina Klimkina, Policy Director.
 - SEED provided an overview of disability employment policy options available to states and described its role in offering technical assistance to support state-level policy development. SEED representatives explained that their work involves leveraging federal resources, sharing best practices from other states, and serving

as a technical assistance partner to states seeking to strengthen disability employment initiatives. They emphasized that they work collaboratively with state leaders to identify priorities and provide policy options tailored to state-specific interests and concerns.

- Discussion:
 - Members referenced Slide 11 of the presentation, which highlighted Minnesota’s Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (established in 2023). This fund allows small- to mid-sized employers to request reimbursement for expenses related to providing reasonable accommodations to qualifying applicants and employees with disabilities. Members discussed whether a similar model could be explored in Massachusetts.
 - A question was raised regarding SEED’s role in establishing state policies. SEED clarified that they do not create policy directly but provide technical assistance, policy analysis, research, and examples from other states. They described themselves as an extension of state staff, offering information and strategic guidance to support state-led decision-making.
 - Members inquired whether SEED is currently working with Massachusetts state leadership, including Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Supplier Diversity Office (including Empowering Abilities in Contracting and Employment (EACE)), and whether SEED engages in digital accessibility initiatives. SEED confirmed continued collaboration with various Massachusetts stakeholders and noted that the Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT) has been refunded and continues its work.
 - SEED shared that they have previously worked with Undersecretary Cutler, the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC), the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD), the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and prior leadership.
 - Members asked whether Massachusetts’ “State as a Model Employer” (SAME) efforts have been leveraged in SEED’s national work. SEED indicated that Massachusetts’ model has not yet been highlighted as a national example.
- Potential areas for collaboration between this subcommittee and SEED:
 - Members discussed several possible areas for future collaboration, including:
 - Development of a Massachusetts Model Employer Roadmap, informed by:
 1. Benchmarks from other states;
 2. A gap analysis using Department of Economic Resources (DER) data and additional data from relevant state agencies;

3. Priority action steps focused on hiring, retention, and leadership development for employees with disabilities.
- Youth and Young Adult Employment & Volunteer Pipeline Initiative
 - Additional examples from other states were discussed, including Maryland's establishment of a new office through legislation and Ohio's apprenticeship initiatives. Members expressed interest in learning more about best practices and challenges experienced by peer states.
 - SEED representatives indicated they would follow up with guiding questions to help frame next steps and potential areas of collaboration as well as two briefs: one analyzing Massachusetts' current position relative to other states, and another focused on career readiness and state-level SAME initiatives.
- Adjournment

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- February 23, 2026 (canceled)
- April 27, 2026
- May 18, 2026
- August 31, 2026
- November 16, 2026

Meeting Materials:

- [November 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)
- [State Exchange on Employment & Disability \(SEED\) Presentation](#)