

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

Date of meeting: Monday, May 18, 2026

Start time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

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

Action Items	Person Responsible
1	Discuss the State Exchange on Employment and Disability (SEED) Crosswalk Policy Brief and Benefit Cliff document
	All Members

Agenda

- Welcome, Roll Call, and Meeting Minutes Approval
- Inspirational Quote by Cicero, provided by Representative Lindsay Sabadosa

“It is not by muscle, speed, or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character, and judgment.”
- Disability Employment Tax Credit Update by Joseph Reale, Financial Wellness Director at MassAbility
 - Highlights:
 - The DETC provides a tax incentive for employers hiring individuals with disabilities, including up to \$5,000 or 30% of wages during the first year of employment and up to \$2,000 or 30% in subsequent years.

- MassAbility collaborated with EOHHS and the Department of Revenue to establish regulations, eligibility criteria, and the certification process for the credit.
 - The online DETC certification application, dedicated webpage, and support email were reviewed.
 - Discussion included ongoing outreach and marketing efforts to increase awareness among employers and business networks.
 - Presenters shared that the certification process was designed to support broad eligibility and reduce unnecessary barriers to participation.
 - Members discussed the importance of increasing employer awareness of the tax credit and ensuring employers understand how to utilize the credit during tax filing.
 - Members asked about current utilization data for the Disability Employment Tax Credit program, including the number of applications and employer participation to date. Preliminary discussion referenced approximately 78 applications, though members noted follow-up with the Department of Revenue may be needed for updated figures.
 - Members discussed the importance of continued outreach to employers and workforce partners to expand participation in the program.
 - Links shared:
 - <https://www.mass.gov/tax-credits-for-employers-and-employees>
 - application: https://mrc.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6J8Axx0HM83fTcG
 - Dedicated email: detc@mass.gov
- Office of the Veteran Advocate presentation by Scott Pitta, Chief of Staff
 - Highlights:
 - The presentation reviewed the mission and responsibilities of the Office of the Veteran Advocate, including coordination with local veteran service officers, state agencies, and federal partners.
 - Information was shared regarding regional liaison resources available across Massachusetts to support veterans and their families.
 - The presentation emphasized that disability does not equate to inability and highlighted the importance of accessibility, accommodations, and workforce participation for veterans with service-connected disabilities.
 - Available veteran services discussed included vocational rehabilitation, employment assistance, housing supports, mental health services, caregiver resources, and benefits counseling.
 - The presentation highlighted workforce and licensure barriers faced by veterans transitioning from military service into civilian employment, particularly when military training and credentials are not recognized by civilian licensing systems.
 - Opportunities for collaboration discussed included improving workforce retention strategies, increasing awareness of veteran resources, and addressing credentialing and workforce-entry barriers.

- Members discussed barriers veterans may face when attempting to access benefits and services, particularly for individuals who may not qualify for certain federal programs or who have discharge-related eligibility challenges.
 - Discussion included the need for stronger coordination between agencies and referral systems to ensure veterans are connected to appropriate supports.
 - Members discussed professional licensure reciprocity and recognition of military training and competencies, particularly in healthcare and skilled professions. Comparisons were made to approaches used in other states related to veteran credential recognition, licensing pathways, and workforce incentives.
 - Members discussed opportunities for additional data collection and research related to veteran employment outcomes and workforce participation in Massachusetts.
 - Potential collaboration opportunities with workforce and licensure-related organizations were also discussed.
- State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED) MA Disability Employment Crosswalk Policy Brief Members Discussion
 - Members discussed the format and organization of the crosswalk document, including interest in a spreadsheet-style version to support review and tracking.
 - Members agreed to continue the discussion during the August meeting as part of planning and priority-setting conversations for FY27 goals.
 - Adjournment

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- August 31, 2026
- November 16, 2026