

# DDS



Department of  
Developmental Services

## Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Meeting

December 11, 2024

## Introductions and Opening Remarks

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- Sarah Peterson, Acting Commissioner
- Holly McCarthy, Director of Community, Life, Engagement
- Elimination of Sub-Minimum Wage in Group Supported Employment Programs Massachusetts
- UMass Partnership  
<https://youtu.be/08rQFjvNFAs>

# DDS EMPLOYMENT PRIORITIES FY25

**THE MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT IS TO CREATE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS, INNOVATIVE AND GENUINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND AUTISM TO PARTICIPATE FULLY AND MEANINGFULLY IN AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES AS VALUED MEMBERS.**

## Strengthen our foundation

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- Support focus on Community Based Day Supports (CBDS) programs as a pathway to employment for people of working age through the development of intentional and robust approaches that provide purposeful and hands-on experiences for discovery, exploration of interests, and development of skills and work behaviors through volunteer work, community service projects, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities.
- This involves communicating high expectations and adopting a pro-employment lens while also meeting individuals where they are in their employment development/journey.

## Promote Networks and Collaboration

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- Work with Regional Employment Collaboratives to expand their network. This includes engaging with local chambers of commerce and small business associations within the collaborative's regions. In addition, we are working together to support the development and expansion of “on-the job” skills training programs in partnership with businesses that provide both valuable work experience for individual workers and support the development of a “pipeline” of workers for businesses in specific sectors with a high demand for employees. Some positive examples include partnerships with CVS, T.J. Maxx, and Sodexo.
- DDS has also facilitated a new partnership between the Regional Employment Collaboratives and the MA Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) in FY25. The first effort of this partnership will be sending a letter of introduction of the RECs to the employers who are already working with the SDO. The second effort will be a webinar with REC employer partners to learn about the opportunities of working with the SDO. This effort would focus on the benefits of becoming a certified vendor

## Promote Networks and Collaboration

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- Increase and streamline access to employment for individuals transitioning from school to adult life through partnerships with DESE, local school systems, and MassAbility.
- Increase engagement and partner with MassAbility to work collaboratively in supporting mutually eligible individuals to promote access to job skills training programs and other employment services leading to competitive integrated employment. This is being done with our MOA and we are currently developing training for the field and identifying liaisons in DDS and MassAbility area offices to support case collaboration and efficient communication.

## Training and Technology

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- Enhance access to and proficiency in supportive technology for both individuals receiving services and staff providing support, empowering individuals to build skills and achieve greater independence in the workplace.
- This effort includes fostering partnerships with key stakeholders such as the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) and ADDP. By promoting awareness of various trainings and resources, we can broaden the reach of opportunities available to providers, equipping their workforce with best practices in Employment Supports



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## To Learn more about how DDS is supporting opportunities for Employment and meaningful community engagement for individuals we support....

- Reach out to Holly McCarthy: Director Community, Life, Engagement  
[Holly.McCarthy@mass.gov](mailto:Holly.McCarthy@mass.gov)
- Visit our Website and Read our Blueprint for Success 2.0: Moving Forward Together.

[Blueprint 2.0](#)

# QUESTIONS