

**Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Legislative and Budget Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

Date of meeting: Monday, February 12, 2024

Start time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Carl Richardson – ADA Coordinator, Massachusetts State House
2	Charlie Carr – Legislative Liaison, Disability Policy Consortium
3	Chris White – CEO & President, Road to Responsibility, Inc.
4	Meghan Todd – Grants Manager, City of Framingham
Members Absent	

Action Items		Person Responsible
1	Reaching out to legislators Senator Michael Barrett, Senator Robyn Kennedy and Representative Jay Livingstone regarding disability caucus	Meghan Todd and Charlie Carr
2	Invite Maura Sullivan to present on legislative process resources	Carl Richardson
4	Invite legislators/ Committee chairs who have disability-focused bills to speak on their priorities	Carl Richardson

Agenda

1. Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of January Minutes
 - Motion to approve the January meetings, approved by all members.
2. Guest Speaker MA Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Financial Wellness Director Joseph Reale and Director of Communication and Legislative Affairs Colleen Casey on the MA Disability Employment Tax Credit
 - MA Disability Employment Tax Credit Q&A
 - With regards to the certification process, how many people so far has MRC certified? Is the certification restricted to MRC clients?

- 23 applications so far, mostly by word of mouth. Doing presentations to other stakeholders have been helpful to raise awareness about the program.
 - We certify anyone in the Commonwealth, MRC and non-MRC consumers.
 - There are several mechanisms to approve people in the program.
 - Our certification program is [online](#) and very easy to use.
 - MRC has a tax coordinator Suzanne Davis and we have a dedicated email address for all inquiries DETC@mass.gov
- Can employer apply for the Federal and State programs as a bundle?
 - Yes, it is highly encouraged.
- How's been the uptake been since launch?
 - These types of presentations have been helpful for outreach.
 - People don't trip on us on the internet, our marketing getting the word out has been essential.
- Any further questions can be sent to DETC@mass.gov
 Department of Revenue contact information: Department of Revenue Contact Center Hours – 9:00AM-4:00PM, M-F (617) 887-6367 or (800) 392-6089 (toll-free in MA)
- Employer Campaign Report Q&A
 - Marketing approach: www.mass.gov/dobetterbiz: elevating the perceived values of an individual with disabilities with employers leading the way.
 - Is MRC using job placement specialists and those who engage the business community in the DETC program outreach efforts?
 - Yes, we are. Our business career specialists and job placement specialists use our campaign targeted at employers.
 - Some marketing photos don't show the individuals have disabilities, it would be great to see them in that aspect.
 - What was the source of funding used for the Argus contract?
 - We used Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) funds.
 - What about MRC's rebranding?
 - Mix of state funds and VR funds.

- Approved by Rehabilitation Services Administration for an upcoming marketing campaign for the business community and youth with disabilities.
 - Very impressive campaign, the billboards were great.
- Other projects Joe Reale is working on:
 - LEARN to EARN initiatives to help mitigate the cliff effect: test pilot a training program. If a person participates for a few months and receives a stipend, the trial work period will be on hold so they can adjust to working without losing benefits.
 - PROJECT IMPACT: benefits counseling.
 - Is benefits counseling project still shared with UMass?
 - ➔ Yes, Work Without Limits WIPA program
 - ➔ We also have students benefits counseling that are available

3. Members discussion following MRC's presentations

- MRC's marketing initiatives may help with solving the problem of stigma.
- A real way to get this word out is by interacting with other programs and different stakeholders.

4. Actions Items for next meeting

- Invite legislators to find out what happened to the disability caucus, which was formerly chaired by Senator Michael Barrett and Representative Denise Provost who is no longer at the State House and see if there is an interest to start another disability caucus.
- Meghan reported that Senator Spilka is interested in re-starting a disability caucus.
 - Reach out to Senator Robyn Kennedy, Representative Livingstone (Meghan and Charlie)
 - Other legislative champions we could target and invite as this subcommittee's priority (Charlie)
 - Other priority: disability community is overwhelmed with legislative process. Invite Maura Sullivan to present best practices.
- Budget conversation on PCA campaign:
 - Advocates are opposing cuts:

- There are about [6,000 individuals](#) who have ten or less hours that may be losing their PCA hours.

5. Adjournment

Next Meeting Dates

- 4/8/24 at 12pm
- 5/13/24 at 12pm
- 7/8/24 at 12pm
- 8/26/24 at 10am
- 11/18/24 at 10am