

Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Commission Meeting Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Time: 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Place: Hybrid

In Person Hearing Room 222

MA State House

24 Beacon Street,

Boston, MA, 02108

Access to the recording: [Meeting Recording](#)

Members Present	
1	Gyasi Burks-Abbott – LEND Faculty, Boston Children’s Hospital/UMass Boston Institute for Community Inclusion
2	The Honorable Denise Garlick
3	Nancy Garr-Colzie – Member, Worcester Disability Commission; Board Chair, Center for Living and Working
4	Victoria Gill – Disabled Persons Protection Commission
5	Craig Hall – Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council
6	Rachel Kaprielian – Triangle, Inc.
7	Representative Jay Livingstone – House of Representatives
8	Ann Lynch – Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office
9	Representative John Marsi – House of Representatives
10	Oswald Mondejar – Mucho Gusto Consulting
11	Bridget Murphy – Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin
12	Kathy Petkauskos – University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School
13	Christopher White – Road to Responsibility, Inc (RTR)
Members Not Present	
14	Charles Carr – Disability Policy Consortium
15	Senator Vanna Howard – Senate
16	Regina Marshall – Advocates
17	Representative John Marsi – House of Representatives
18	Regina Marshall – Advocates
19	Senator Patrick O’Connor – Senate
20	Angela Ortiz – MA Health Council
21	Carl Richardson – State House ADA Coordinator
22	Representative Lindsay Sabadosa – House of Representatives
23	Leo Sarkissian – The Arc of Massachusetts
24	Lexi Semanchik – State Treasurer’s Office
25	Rachel Stanton – State Treasurer’s Office
26	Meghan Todd – City of Framingham

Proceedings

1. Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of March Meeting Minutes
 - Motion to approve September meeting minutes was made and seconded.
 - Motion approved.

2. Message from the Chair
 - Meeting The Moment update:
 - The Chair provided an update on the upcoming Meeting the Moment community conversation in Lowell, the second event in the Commission's series.
 - The discussion highlighted the purpose of these events: creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities, families, caregivers, providers, advocates, and community partners to share their experiences directly with the Commission.
 - The Lowell event will focus on key priority areas, including digital accessibility, education-to-employment transition, workforce supports, long-term services and supports, and health equity.
 - The Commission incorporated feedback from the first Meeting the Moment event to improve accessibility, networking opportunities, and hybrid participation.
 - Commissioners were encouraged to participate and share outreach materials with their networks.
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month
 - The Chair provided an early update on planning for the upcoming NDEAM celebration.
 - The event will highlight disability employment, recognize inclusive employers, and bring together leaders working to expand workforce participation.
 - A planning group will be formed to support event development, including employer recognition, themes, outreach, and program planning.
 - Commissioners and Advisory Council members expressed interest in participating in the planning process.

3. Advisory Council Orientation Update
 - The Advisory Council met in January for its orientation meeting. An update was provided on the discussion themes that emerged from the orientation and next steps for continued engagement.
 - The Advisory Council was created to serve as a group of thought partners and strategic advisors to the Commission by sharing expertise, lived experience, and perspectives from across sectors and communities.
 - Members discussed ways the Advisory Council can support the Commission's work by strengthening collaboration, identifying barriers and opportunities, sharing resources, and highlighting promising practices.

- Several key priority areas emerged from the orientation discussion, including:
 - Access and accessibility across healthcare, transportation, public systems, and community life.
 - Employment and workforce pathways, including hiring, retention, and long-term opportunities.
 - Education and transition pathways for youth and young adults.
 - Housing and community inclusion.
 - Health equity and ensuring diverse experiences and perspectives inform disability policy and practice.
 - Technology and artificial intelligence were also identified as emerging areas of both opportunity and concern, including accessibility, equity, and the impact of these tools on people with disabilities.
 - Advisory Council members were encouraged to participate in Commission subcommittees, events, and other opportunities for collaboration.
 - Next steps include continuing to build connections among members, sharing resources and promising practices, and identifying future focus areas for the Council.

4. Federal Work Updates from the Attorney General's Office, presented by Chief State Trial Counsel Katherine Dirks

- A presentation was provided regarding federal developments and ongoing litigation impacting Massachusetts residents, including individuals with disabilities and other protected communities.
- Key areas discussed included:
 - Federal Funding and Policy Changes:
 - An overview was provided regarding litigation challenging federal actions that may impact state programs, funding, and protected communities.
 - The presentation highlighted efforts to monitor federal policy changes and protect access to services and supports.
 - Education
 - Updates were provided regarding federal education-related actions, including concerns about data collection, funding requirements, and changes impacting educational institutions.
 - The discussion included concerns regarding uncertainty around federal interpretations of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives and the potential impact on organizations.
 - Immigration
 - The presentation included updates regarding immigration-related litigation and the role of state attorneys general in

- Registered Apprenticeship Programs combine paid on-the-job training, related technical instruction, mentorship, and opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials.
- The discussion highlighted the value of apprenticeships for both employers and employees by creating career pathways, supporting retention, and investing in workforce development.
- Pre-apprenticeship models and partnerships supporting individuals with disabilities, including neurodivergent individuals, were discussed.
- Examples of programs and partnerships discussed included:
 - [Bridgewater State University's EXCEL Program](#) supporting neurodivergent students and students with disabilities through career and workforce pathways.
 - Apprenticeship models connected to healthcare fields, including Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), sterile processing, and pharmacy technician pathways.
 - Partnerships with community colleges and other education providers to support training opportunities and career development.
 - [MA Inclusive Postsecondary Education Program \(MAIPSE\)](#)
- Discussion:
 - Commissioners discussed opportunities to expand apprenticeship pathways for people with disabilities.
 - Discussion included the importance of accessible industry credentials, employer-designed training models, partnerships with education providers, and opportunities to replicate successful programs.
 - Commissioners emphasized the importance of collaboration among employers, service providers, educational institutions, and community organizations.

6. Subcommittee Reports

- Disability Employment:
 - The subcommittee continued discussions with the State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED) regarding strategies to strengthen disability employment initiatives.
 - Areas of discussion included State as a Model Employer initiatives and youth and young adult employment pathways.
 - Upcoming meetings will include presentations and discussions with additional workforce and employment partners, including the Office of the Veteran Advocate.
 - Meeting minutes and other materials are accessible here: [Disability Employment subcommittee page](#)
- Workforce Supports:

- The subcommittee continued discussions on workforce challenges impacting disability service providers, including recruitment, retention, and career pathways.
- Members explored opportunities to expand the use of apprenticeship models within the disability workforce.
- The subcommittee discussed potential future sessions focused on:
 - Apprenticeship development and implementation.
 - Workforce shortages and promising practices from other states.
 - Career pathways, workforce supports, and professional development opportunities.
- Meeting minutes and other materials are accessible here: [Workforce Supports subcommittee page](#)
- Long Term Services and Supports and Health Equity:
 - The subcommittee continued reviewing issues related to long-term services and supports, particularly in the context of policy and budget changes.
 - Discussions included Personal Care Attendant workforce issues and anticipated changes that may impact access to services. The subcommittee discussed continuing to engage subject matter experts and stakeholders to better understand emerging issues impacting people with disabilities.
 - Future discussions will focus on equitable access to healthcare, impacts related to COVID, disability rights protections, and strengthening long-term services and supports across the Commonwealth.
 - Meeting minutes and other materials are accessible here: [LTSS and Health Equity subcommittee page](#)

7. Executive Director Report:

- Continued participation in national disability employment initiatives focused on improving disability inclusion in state government.
- Continued collaboration with disability advocacy organizations and state partners to monitor emerging policy issues and identify opportunities for coordination.
- Ongoing partnership discussions with state agencies focused on accessibility, municipal engagement, digital access, and resources available to local disability commissions.
- Continued work preparing for upcoming Meeting the Moment community conversations.
- Engagement with workforce partners [MACaregiver Coalition](#) regarding strategies to support caregivers and improve workplace inclusion.

8. Commissioner Announcements

- Resources related to Medicaid, disability services, and federal policy developments:

- Report from KFF regarding CMS' focus on Medicaid Waste, Fraud, and Abuse: <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/understanding-medicaid-home-care-amid-cms-focus-on-potential-fraud-and-abuse/>
- Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program: [link](#)
- The [Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council \(MDDC\)](#) and The Arc of Massachusetts hosted the 48th Annual Legislative Reception, which was a wonderful success with legislators and disability community in attendance. Commission appointee, Representative Jay Livingstone was recognized as the House champion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- The MDDC is convening a Massachusetts Medicaid Summit with The Council of State Governments in June. The two-day event will include a day for legislators, staff and policymakers. Day 2 will be a virtual event for the public and disability community. Learn more here: [link](#).
- The MDDC is exploring ideas to plan and fund the continuation of the [Paul W Spooner Generational Leadership Summit](#). The innovative model and alumni capacity have developed self-advocate leaders in the past three years. Anyone with funding support or ideas can contact Craig Hall, Executive Director, of MDDC. Without critical funding, the summit is unlikely to continue in 2026.

Next meeting dates:

- June 3, 2026
- September 16, 2026
- December 9, 2026