

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

Date of meeting: Monday, August 26, 2024

Start time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Kathy Petkauskos (Chair) – Director, Work Without Limits at UMass Chan Medical School
2	Chris White – CEO & President, Road to Responsibility, Inc.
3	Gyasi Burks-Abbott – Self Advocate Faculty, LEND Program, Boston Children's Hospital
4	Oz Mondejar – President, Mucho Gusto Consulting
5	Carl Richardson – ADA Coordinator, Massachusetts State House
Members Not Present	
6	Representative Mathew Muratore – Massachusetts House of Representatives
7	Rachel Stanton – Investor Relations and Communications Graphic Designer, Clean Water Trust

Action Items	Person Responsible
1 Send Imene at least 10 small to mid-size businesses contacts	ALL
2 Provide feedback for Employer and Employees Perspectives video	ALL
3 Create social media with ready-to-share language.	Imene

1. Welcome
2. Inspirational Quote provided by Chris White: *“Fall down 7 times; get up 8.” Japanese proverb.*
3. Overview of the Commission’s Benefits Project with the Department of Economic Research (DER):

Imene provided an overview of DER’s project with the Commission:

Project Name: Economic Modeling of Benefit Cliffs

The project examines how various scenarios impact employment decisions and financial well-being for individuals with disabilities. Key points include:

- Modeling different household scenarios, such as:
 - Single-person households receiving SSDI or SSI.
 - Single-parent households with one or two dependents.
 - Two-parent households with one dependent receiving SSDI benefits.
- Analyzing how income changes affect benefits, potentially creating work disincentives.
- Providing comprehensive insights by assessing interactions with other assistance programs.
- Aiming to serve as a resource to better understand how benefit cliffs influence labor market participation.

Research Questions

Key research questions guiding the project:

- How do benefit cliffs from increased employment income impact persons with disabilities and their work incentives?
- What are the income thresholds at which benefit cliffs occur, and what income levels are needed to overcome them?
- What are promising job opportunities for individuals with disabilities to navigate benefit cliffs?
- How can workforce development programs adjust to better support workers facing benefit cliffs?

Discussion Points:

- How will DER disseminate this report?
- Consideration of an environmental scan to avoid duplicative efforts.
- Dashboard for reference: [Massachusetts Labor Force Dashboard](#)

4. Continued FY24 Goal Discussion

Goal:

Engage and educate at least 100 small and medium businesses/employers on the value of including people with disabilities in the workplace, available resources, and recognition of effective practices.

Action Items:

- Connect Lauren with Carl to ensure video captioning and audio descriptions.
- **Employer and Employees Perspectives Video Project Update:**
 - Review of the dissemination plan.
 - Creation of a contact list targeting 100 small to mid-size businesses.
 - Launch plan for the NDEAM video.
- Imene to create social media with ready-to-share language.
- Plan to revisit the goal in six months, checking in with different stakeholder groups to evaluate their employment journeys and resource utilization.

- Convene forums featuring three businesses as speakers, potentially twice per year.
- Transcribe video content into written scripts.

Call to Action:

Encourage participants to email the Commission or visit a designated landing page. Strategies to motivate them to share resources within their networks were also discussed. Imene circulated dissemination plan to all members.

5. Adjournment

Next Steps:

- Next subcommittee meeting scheduled for Monday, November 18, 2024, from 12:00 to 1:00 PM.