

MASSACHUSETTS



COMMISSION ON THE STATUS
OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MEETING THE MOMENT SERIES

A Community Hearing and Resource Fair – Needham Town Hall

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Our Purpose

- An introduction to the work of the Commission and its impact across Massachusetts.
- To convene, collaborate and communicate to strengthen the disability community including all individuals, families, allies, advocates, providers and state agencies.

Our Mission and Statutory Charge

To advance **equity, inclusion, and opportunity** for **people with disabilities** across the Commonwealth through communication, connection, and collaboration.

Established by the Legislature to:

- Study and advise on barriers to access, employment, and opportunity.
- Promote inclusion and equity across public and private sectors
- Strengthen collaboration among state agencies, local disability commissions, and advocacy organizations.

How We Advance Our Mission

The Commission's mission comes to life through three subcommittees:

- **Disability Employment:** expanding inclusive hiring and opportunity.
- **Workforce Supports:** strengthening the direct care and human services workforce
- **Long-Term Services & Supports and Health Equity:** advancing equitable access to care and community living.

Meet Our Commissioners - Executive Board

- **The Honorable Denise Garlick**, Commission Elected Chair, Appointed by the Governor
- **Christopher White**, Commission Elected Vice Chair, President & CEO, Road to Responsibility, Appointed by the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers Inc.
- **Carl Richardson**, Commission Elected Treasurer, ADA Coordinator/504 Diversity Officer, Massachusetts State House, Appointed by the Senate President
- **Oswald Mondejar**, Commission Elected Clerk, President, Mucho Gusto Consulting, Appointed by the Governor

Meet Our Commissioners - Subcommittee Chairs

- **Rachel Stanton**, Disability Employment Subcommittee Co-Chair, Investor Relations & Communications Designer, Clean Water Trust | Debt Management, Treasurer's Office Designee
- **Gyasi Burks-Abbott**, Disability Employment Subcommittee Co-Chair, Self-Advocate, Faculty, LEND Program, Boston Children's Hospital and UMass Boston's Institute for Community Inclusion, Governor Appointee
- **Andrew Levrault**, Workforce Supports Chair, Deputy General Counsel, Disabled Persons Protection Commission Designee
- **Charles Carr**, Long Term Services and Supports and Health Equity Subcommittee Co-Chair, Legislative Liaison for the Disability Policy Consortium, Disability Policy Consortium Appointee
- **Carl Richardson**, Long Term Services and Supports and Health Equity Subcommittee Co-Chair, ADA Coordinator/504 Diversity Officer, Massachusetts State House, Senate President Appointee

Meet Our Commissioners – Appointed & Designated Members

- **Nancy Garr-Colzie**, Member & Board Chair, Worcester Disability Commission, Center for Living & Working, Appointed by the Governor
- **Craig Hall**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, Appointed by Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council
- **Representative Vanna Howard**, State Representative, Massachusetts House of Representatives, Appointed by the Speaker of the House
- **Rachel Kaprielian**, Chief Executive Officer, Triangle, Inc., Appointed by the Governor
- **Representative Jay Livingstone**, State Representative, Massachusetts House of Representatives, Appointed by the Speaker of the House
- **Ann Lynch**, Assistant Attorney General, Disability Rights Coordinator, Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, Appointed by the Attorney General's Office

Meet Our Commissioners – Appointed & Designated Members

- **Representative John Marsi**, State Representative, Massachusetts House of Representatives, Appointed by the House Minority Leader
- **Regina Marshall**, Chief Operating Officer, Advocates, Appointed by the Senate President
- **Bridget Murphy**, Project Manager, Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, William Francis Galvin, Appointed by the State Secretary
- **Senator Patrick O'Connor**, State Senator, Massachusetts Senate, Appointed by the Senate Minority Leader
- **Angela Ortiz**, Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Health Council, Appointed by the Governor

Meet Our Commissioners – Appointed & Designated Members

- **Kathy Petkauskos**, Executive Director, Workplace Equity and Inclusion, Work Without Limits, ForHealth Consulting, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, Appointed by the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School
- **Representative Lindsay Sabadosa**, State Representative, Massachusetts House of Representatives, Appointed by the Speaker of the House
- **Leo Sarkissian**, The Arc of Massachusetts, Appointed by the Governor
- **Lexi Semanchik**, HR Marketing & Communications Specialist, State Treasurer and Receiver General's Office, Treasurer's Office Designee #2

Disability Employment Subcommittee:

- **Employment is an important part** of the Commission's mission.
- Gathered data on **how increased earnings effect public benefits.**
- Created a **resource for employers** and produced a promotional video.
- Co-hosted a networking and resource-sharing event at the State House.
- Participated in the **MA-APSE Annual Employment Matters Conference**
- Future planning

Workforce Supports Subcommittee:

- Reviewed the Center for Health Information and Analysis and national data to pinpoint **severe staffing shortages and their impact on service access.**
- Met with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to **track major workforce investments in training, loan repayment, and education pipelines**, while identifying remaining gaps.
- Highlighted findings from the Administration for Community Living and the Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center on **turnover, low pay, and barriers facing a diverse workforce.**
- Engaged with the Attorney General's Office on **immigrant worker rights, wage enforcement, and workforce stability.**
- Future planning: Continue **gathering data and stories, advance solutions for recruitment and retention**, and align efforts with broader Commission priorities.

Long Term Services and Supports & Health Equity Subcommittee:

- Reviewed Medicaid & LTSS Landscape: Collaborated with MassHealth leadership to **understand the impact of federal funding cuts, rising PCA program costs, and strategies to sustain community-based services.**
- Hosted Health Equity Hearing: Brought together state leaders, providers and advocates to **discuss barriers and solutions for more equitable care.**
- Following MassHealth's new Quality & Equity Incentive Program and progress on health equity goals that promote **data transparency, disability competency training, and system-wide accountability.**
- Looking Ahead: Continue **bringing in experts, monitoring Medicaid changes, and connecting work across LTSS, housing, and health equity.**

Thank you! Questions?

Contact

Imene Bouziane Saidi, imene.bouzianesaidi@mass.gov

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