



# Opening Doors to Employment for Persons with Disabilities Panel Session

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

1PM- 2:15PM | MA State House, Room 428

24 Beacon Street, Boston, MA, 02108

On Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83034893075>

As part of the Commission's Inaugural National Disability Employment Awareness Month Celebration, we will be holding a panel session of different stakeholders talking about barriers to employment, disability inclusive best practices and recommendations. We will also be engaging with the audience in a Q&A session.

## Facilitators

**OSWALD MONDEJAR**

*MA Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, Clerk; President Mucho Gusto Consulting*

**IMENE BOUZIANE SAIDI**

*Program Director, MA Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities*

## Panelists

**ERICH MANSER**

*Digital Accessibility Consultant from Harvard University Information Technology*

**COLLEEN MORAN**

*Director of Workforce Integration Workforce Development from Mass General Brigham*

**JOAN PHILLIPS**

*Assistant Commissioner from Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission*

**LAURA STOUT**

*Director of Contract Operations, President of Empowering Abilities from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts*



Erich is 50 and lives in Littleton, MA with wife Lisa and daughters, Ellie and Grace. He currently works at Harvard University as a Digital Accessibility Consultant, and has previously worked in technology accessibility for both IBM and Hewlett Packard. He's a long-time advocate for disability inclusion, and has been experiencing progressive vision-loss his entire life. Erich is also an avid runner and triathlete, and has participated in the Boston Marathon 14 times.

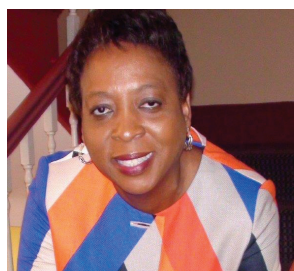


**Colleen Moran** serves as the Director of Workforce Integration at Mass General Brigham, the largest healthcare system in MA with over 80,000 employees.

In her role, Colleen bridges Workforce Development and Talent Acquisition to align training programs and candidates with the needs of the organization. Colleen also works with Mass General Brigham Sourcing in the areas of diversity, inclusion and community outreach.

Colleen joined Mass General Brigham in 2001 and has over 25 years of experience in Human Resources related work in healthcare, high-tech manufacturing and financial services. She holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Boston College.

Colleen has a long-standing interest in advocating for employment for people with disabilities and participates in a variety of related boards, committees and activities. She has presented both locally and nationally on disability and workforce development issues. Colleen had led a variety of initiatives including Project SEARCH, Working Partners and JobLab, a vibrant space for community organizations, government agencies, and employers to convene with and train job candidates with barriers to entry into the workforce.



**Joan Phillips** serves as the Assistant Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission providing overall program vision, leadership and strategic direction for the Vocational Rehabilitation Division and Workforce Development Initiatives. Ms. Phillips has 20+ years of management experience in nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

Ms. Phillips has collaborated in designing and implementing business strategies and programming that resulted in White House Champion of Change Recognition and Associated Industries of Massachusetts Gould Award for Innovative Business Strategies. She has also received several Key Contributor and Commissioner's Awards for outstanding performance.

Ms. Phillips holds a Masters of Education Degree from Springfield College and Bachelor of Science Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Boston University.

Ms. Phillips is widely recognized as an innovative and caring professional.



**Laura Stout** is Director of Contract Operations at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts leading an operations team responsible for the implementation and maintenance of provider contracts. Laura is President of Empowering Abilities, the company's disability inclusion Employee Resource Group. This cross-functional team of associates and leaders is dedicated to promoting and evolving disability awareness and programs company wide. In July 2022, Blue Cross was named one of the Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion on the Disability Equality Index. She has held previous director roles at Blue Cross in the Provider Education and Communications team and in the Executive Office, where Laura supported the company's Chief of Staff and the President and CEO in executing a variety of business and organizational activities. Laura is a strong advocate for the disability community, bringing a passionate voice and working closely with individuals to achieve their personal and professional goals. She's been actively involved in various networks of engaged employers and innovative, collaborative partners that aim to increase employment among individuals with disabilities.

Continuing her efforts to advocate for Massachusetts residents, Laura was Governor Charlie Baker's sole appointee to the Massachusetts Future of Work Commission in 2022 tasked with helping prepare Massachusetts for its economic future as the state emerged from a global pandemic. Also, Governor Charles Baker appointed Laura to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination Advisory Board in September 2018. Attorney General Maura Healey appointed Laura to the Disability Rights Advisory Committee. Laura was honored by Blue Cross in May 2019 with the Excellence in Service award and Laura was recognized by Working Mother magazine as a Working Mother of the Year for 2019. Laura is a member of the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy / Brandeis Heller School for Social Policy Parent Empowerment Project Advisory Board and the Disability and Pregnancy Advisory Group. Laura works with Little People of America, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides support and information to people of short stature and their families.



**Oz** is a Mission Driven Consultant who works at the intersection of policy, advocacy and community and government relations. His engagements include human centered universal designs for accessibility, diversity recruitment, human resources, and leading DE&I initiatives for several organizations. Before becoming a trusted advisor to leaders in business, government and nonprofit sectors as Mucho Gusto, Inc's President and Lead Consultant, Oz most recently served as Senior Vice President of Mission and Advocacy for Spaulding Rehabilitation Network (SRN), the post-acute care services division of Mass General Brigham. His responsibilities included mission integration and administrative operations across Organizational Development and Community Relations, including Adaptive Sports. Oz led SRN's Equity, Dignity and Respect (EDR). He also oversaw Human Resources, Marketing, and Communications.

Prior to joining Mass General Brigham in 2001, Oz led the Social Security Administration's New England Region's diversity recruitment and retention initiatives and worked as a Human Resources Executive in several different industries including manufacturing, hospitality, and finance. Internationally recognized for his expertise on accessibility, disability rights and workplace accommodations, Oz serves on several boards and is an advisor to others. He was recently appointed to serve on the Massachusetts Governors Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and has also been by the Governor as Vice Chair, Board of Directors for the Commonwealth Corporation.

Oz has received numerous recognitions, including the President's Champions of Change Award, Social Security Administration's Commissioners Citation, Kraft Family MVP Recognition for Community Service, Hispanics Executives Making an Impact, 25 Most Influential LGBTQ+ Pioneers Award and the Disability Law Center Leadership Award.

Oz earned his B.A. from Lesley University