

**Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Workforce Supports Subcommittee Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

Date of Meeting: Thursday, February 26, 2026

Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual

This is a meeting of the **Workforce Supports Subcommittee** of the permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. This subcommittee will collect data and analyze initiatives that address the workforce crisis for people who provide services to individuals with disabilities.

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Rachel Kaprielian – Triangle, Inc.
2	Leo Sarkissian – The Arc of Massachusetts
3	Oz Mondejar – Mucho Gusto Consulting
4	Victoria Gill – Disabled Persons Protection Commission
Members Not Present	
5	Angela Ortiz – MA Health Council
6	Representative Vanna Howard – House of Representatives
7	Rep. Jay Livingstone – House of Representatives
8	Chris White – Road to Responsibility, Inc

Action items	Person responsible
1 Reach out to Undersecretary Cutler regarding health and human services apprenticeship pathways	Chris (all set for February meeting)
2 Reach out to Executive Office of Economic Development Assistant Secretary Vega regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statewide workforce development and partnership strategies to address disability service workforce shortages and ▪ Explore community-based workforce models serving BIPOC communities to understand local recruitment and retention approaches. 	Chris (two emails sent)
3 Lurie Disability Center nationwide direct care workers survey results and findings (spring 2026)	Imene
4 Explore a panel of 2-3 peer states (Indiana, New Jersey, Maryland, North Carolina) to share strategies addressing workforce shortages in disability services. (Imene – SAME, Leo – The Arc.)	Leo & Imene

5	Develop proposal for a panel on the profile of WS staff, including workforce size, lived experience and working conditions, workplace stressors, compensation and value, and opportunities for career pathways and professional development (internal and external).	All
6	Hosting informational sessions or panels featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A sector with an existing apprenticeship program (e.g., sterile processing). - A member of the state apprenticeship liaison team. - A current industry sponsor to provide practical perspectives. 	Co-Chairs & Imene

1. Welcome and Roll Call
 - Motion to approve minutes approved by Rachel, seconded by Oz
 - Motion approved

2. Strengthening Recruitment in Human Services: Workforce Strategies and Apprenticeship Pathways Discussion by Undersecretary of Labor Josh Cutler
 - The subcommittee welcomed the Undersecretary of Labor for a discussion on apprenticeship pathways and workforce strategies.

 - Key Highlights from Discussion:
 - The apprenticeship model has received strong support from the Governor and Legislature.
 - Significant growth has occurred in early education and healthcare apprenticeship programs.
 - Expansion into human services is anticipated as a next step.
 - Apprenticeship was described as an “earn while you learn” model that can help address low wages and retention challenges in direct care and human services roles.
 - The Commonwealth has invested in expanding apprenticeship into additional sectors, including partnerships with the Massachusetts Bankers Association and the biotechnology sector (MassBioEd), banking institutions such as Rockland Trust and South Shore Bank.
 - Early education apprenticeship initiatives recently received grant funding.
 - Collaboration with higher education institutions including:
 - Bridgewater State University
 - Quinsigamond Community College
 - UMass Boston
 - Healthcare apprenticeship programs were described as one of the largest and most vital workforce sectors in Massachusetts.

- Recent milestones include reaching 10,000 registered apprentices statewide.
 - The Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit (RATSI) was expanded to apply to a broader array of employers, providing up to \$4,800 per apprentice (potentially twice, depending on duration). Employer participation fees remain modest at \$250 annually. [RATSI link](#)
 - The state has hired regional apprenticeship liaisons to engage chambers of commerce and employers directly.
 - The GROW (Grants for Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities in Workforce) program supports employer participation: [link to application](#)
 - Apprenticeship intermediaries assist employers with program development and administration.
 - Retention and professionalization were highlighted as key strengths of the apprenticeship model.
- Discussion Themes
 - Employer Engagement
 - Outreach to additional financial institutions was discussed, including Eastern Bank.
 - The Massachusetts Bankers Association serves as an intermediary to support employer participation. Higher Education Partnerships
 - Apprenticeship intermediaries assist employers so they can focus on training and workforce development rather than administrative complexity.
 - Human Services and Direct Care
 - Salaries remain a challenge in the sector.
 - However, apprenticeship can provide certification, mentoring, and professional identity.
 - Expansion within DDS-funded systems may be more complex.
 - Emerging Fields
 - Sterile processing and radiology were highlighted as in-demand fields.
 - The “Uniquely Able” project was mentioned as a model for modified training programs for individuals with autism and intellectual/developmental disabilities in computer numerical coding.
 - Marketing and other nontraditional sectors were also discussed as potential areas of expansion.
 - Tax incentives available to employers were reviewed, including the Disability Employment Tax Credit (DETC).
 - Resources Mentioned:
 - Advocates for Human Potential: [link](#)
 - O*NET occupational coding tool: [link](#)
 - Role of the Subcommittee:
 - Undersecretary Cutler suggested the subcommittee could act as a convener to:

- Identify and engage additional employers.
- Support outreach and awareness.
- Facilitate cross-sector conversations to grow grant participation.
- Subcommittee members discussed the idea of hosting informational sessions or panels featuring:
 - A sector with an existing apprenticeship program (e.g., sterile processing).
 - A member of the state apprenticeship liaison team.
 - A current industry sponsor to provide practical perspectives.

3. Adjournment

Next meeting dates

- April 30, 2026
- May 21, 2026
- * Monday, August 31st 2pm-3pm
- November 19, 2026