



State of Wisconsin

Assistive Technology Advisory Council

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Assistive Technology Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting

August 18, 2026

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Join via [Zoom](#):

<https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1607865948>

Join via Phone:

Phone: 1-669-254-5252

Meeting ID:

A. Action Items

B. Motions Items

Motion Item 1: Motion made by Jim Denham to approve the August 18, 2026 ATAC Meeting Agenda. Motion seconded by Rick Ziller. Motion carried.

Motion Item 2: Motion made by Laurie Lane to approve the May 7, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Motion seconded by Jim Denham. Motion carried.

Motion Item 3: Motion made by Jim Denham to elect Laurie Lane as Chairperson. Motion seconded by BJ Ermence. Motion carried.

Motion Item 4: Motion made by Rick Ziller to elect Dawn Merth-Johnson as Vice Chairperson. Motion seconded by Jim Denham. Motion carried.

Motion Item 5: Motion made by Jim Denham to appoint applicants #1, #2, #4, and #5 to the AT Council. Motion seconded by BJ Ermence. Motion carried.

Motion Item 6: Motion made by BJ Ermence to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Dawn Merth-Johnson. Motion carried.

C. Meeting Minutes

1. **Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping, and Opening Question** (What is your favorite summer-time food?)
 - Members Present: Cassie Frost; Ashley Lien; Dawn Merth-Johnson; BJ Ermenc; Laurie Lane; Stacy Ellingen; Rick Ziller, Jim Denham, Dean Amusa, Lindsey Kreitzman, and Jennifer Seale.
 - Guests Present: Jenesis Lindbo, Compass IL; Gerald Hay; Independence First
 - DHS Staff Present: Laura Plummer;
2. **Review and Approve Quarterly Meeting August 18, 2026 Agenda**
 - Motion made by Jim Denham to approve the August 18, 2026 ATAC Meeting Agenda. Motion seconded by Rick Ziller. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 1.**
3. **Review and Approve May 7, 2026 Quarterly Meeting Minutes**
 - Motion made by Laurie Lane to approve the May 7, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Motion seconded by Jim Denham. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 2.**
4. **Public Comment on Issues Affecting Assistive Technology Users (9:10 A.M. – 9:20 A.M.) or on the State Plan on Assistive Technology, 2024-2026** (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/atac/state-assistive-technology-plan.htm>)
 - No public comment.
5. **Assistive Technology Program Partner Updates**
 - Ashley Lien from Compass IL provided the following updates from the network
 - Independence First supported DHS and MILC at Farm Technology Days in July. Their staff have completed a comprehensive inventory of their AT devices and have updated their internal database for reporting efficiency. They have had a 40% increase in I/R contacts for AT devices and services.

They are using their 3D printing to support a map project with the DOT and for devices for consumers. Staff continue to provide outreach and training to post-secondary training programs.

- MILC has continued to build their adaptive gaming programming and recently used funds from the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation to expand hardware, software, and training. A Disability Proud event was held in early August and focused on adaptive recreation.
- Access to Independence has been working on launching the third annual adaptive gaming expo. This event brings together gamers with and without disabilities, technology enthusiasts, disability advocates, game developers, and curious community members. Attendees will have the chance to try customized controllers and other assistive technology, listen in on keynote sessions from professional gamers with disabilities, and take part in a workshop where you can learn how to build your own low-cost gaming station.
- Options has also done a comprehensive inventory of the AT devices to determine what to keep or give away. They hosted a wheelchair wash in the Fox Valley, attended the Green Bay Deaf Club picnic, and held an Open House to celebrate the 36th anniversary of the ADA. The VIP (Visually Impaired People) group has now begun meeting at Options on a regular basis.
- Compass IL hosted a 1st annual Resource Fair with AT on display and showcased the accessible bikes. Staff presented at the Chippewa Valley Dementia Conference. Compass staff continue to take or register for the WisTech AT Certification Course. Annual Fishing Has No Boundaries will be held September 12th.
- Dean Amusa from the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired shared that his office will be hosting their Adventures in Vision Loss event at the Lions Camp in September. The purpose is to teach daily living skills. Approximately 18 participants are registered and six are on the waiting list.

- Stacy Ellingen shared an update on her legal work around disability rights and voting. A judge has ruled that the current absentee ballot is discriminatory for print disabilities. No decision on their recommended accommodations has been made so far. Stacy will be presenting at the Self Determination Conference and at the DSPN Tech Event.
- Jim Denham shared that WI Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired will be celebrating their 75th anniversary and are going through a rebranding process. New name and website. They are also seeking artists for their annual Gallery Night to showcase art created by those who are Blind or have low vision.
- Laurie Lane from Independence First attended the Engage for Change last week. She attended Farm Tech Days again along with MILC. WisLoan has submitted a grant application to the ACL. Attending ADILN and Self Determination. At 1M in AT loans. Vehicles are the majority of loans. The last grant, received in 2022, assisted 55 people. There has also been more interest in Telework loans.
- BJ Ermence from the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing reported a good turnout for the Engage for Change. They found the day useful due to the presentations and the group work time to develop goals. Creating a work group for people who are Deafblind. Adrian Klenz from the Center for Deafblind Persons is now serving on the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Dawn Merth Johnson from the Department of Public Instruction shared the following updates:
 - The AT Forward CoP meetings averaged 87 Zoom registrations per meeting during the 2025-26 school year.
 - The [AT Forward CoP Schedule](#) is posted for 2026-2027: Kick off CoP will be Thursday, September 17, 2026 12:00pm-1:00pm CST Title: Does the AT Fit? Navigating WIAT4ALL and the AT Lending Center with Laura Plummer and Rachel Holt
 - Our AT Forward community grew by over 400 participants during the 2025-26 school year with a July total of 1990 members.

- The two CoP meetings around AAC had the highest number of registrations (116 and 144 participants).
 - As of July, 513 microcredentials have been completed. 44% of the microcredentials (15) completed in the 2025-26 school year were from participants in the CESA 2 statewide CLASS special education licensure program.
 - The Waisman Center's AAC Partnership Program is once again collaborating with the Department of Public Instruction this year to support school-based SLPs and school teams through AAC consultation, which will be offered with morning, lunchtime, and end-of-day time slots available to fit into busy school schedules. SLPs can request virtual consultation support more than once.
 - Planning is underway for a CESA 2 Midwest AT Conference: Monday March 15, 2027 at Blackhawk Tech
 - Working on making the WI AT map on the DPI website more accessible
- Rick shared that there has been a funding allocation for DVR so the waitlist should be moving people off due to the influx of funds.

6. WisTech Program Updates

- Laura Plummer, DHS, provided an update on the quarterly program performance data, past and upcoming events, and the WisTech AT Certification Course.

7. Specialized AT Topic (speaker invited)

- Presentation by Gerald Hay, Independence First, on Alternatives in Mobility program.

8. Assistive Technology Advisory Council Member Officer Elections, Appointments, United Councils Workgroup Appointment, and Vacancies.

- Motion made by Jim Denham to elect Laurie Lane as Chairperson. Motion seconded by BJ Ermence. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 3.**

- Motion made by Rick Ziller to elect Dawn Merth-Johnson as Vice Chairperson. Motion seconded by Jim Denham. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 4:**
- Motion made by Jim Denham to appoint applicants #1, #2, #4, and #5 to the AT Council. Motion seconded by BJ Ermence. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 5:**

9. Adjourn

- Motion made by BJ Ermence to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Dawn Merth-Johnson. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 6.**

The purpose of this meeting is to conduct the governmental business outlined in the above agenda. The purpose of the Advisory Council is to provide advice and guidance to the WisTech Program and assure that it is in compliance with the provisions of the Assistive Technology Act (Tech Act) of 1998, as amended. Specifically, the Advisory Council will provide advice and guidance on the following:

- Submission of Wisconsin's State Plan for Assistive Technology (AT) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL);
- Monitoring the WisTech program according to the State Plan for AT;
- Developing and maintaining collaborations with other agencies, organizations, and bodies providing AT services and devices throughout the State; and
- Monitoring of program data and outcomes.

The Council is administratively attached to the Department of Health Services. If you need an interpreter, alternate formats, or other accommodations to participate, please contact Laura Plummer at 608-514-2513 or laura.plummer1@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Phone: 1-669 254 5252

Meeting ID: 1607865948