



State of Wisconsin

Assistive Technology Advisory Council

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Assistive Technology Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting

November 4, 2025

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Join via **Zoom**:

<https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1600164605>

Approved February 12, 2026

Join via Phone:

Phone: 1-669-254-5252

Meeting ID: 1600164605

Meeting Minutes

A. Action Items

B. Motion Items

Motion Item 1: Motion made by Dawn Merth-Johnson to approve the November 4, 2025 AT Council Meeting Agenda. Motion seconded by Julie Bergen. Motion carried.

Motion Item 2: Motion made by Laurie Lane to approve the August 28, 2025 AT Council Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Motion seconded by Stacy Ellingen. Motion carried.

Motion Item 3: Motion made by Jim Denham to appoint Ashley Lien to a first time as the Independent Living Center representative. Motion seconded by Laurie Lane. Motion carried.

Motion Item 4: Motion made by Mike Hipple to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Julie Bergen. Motion carried.

C. Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping, and Opening Question (What is your favorite game?)

Members Present: Debra Remmel; Jim Denham; Cassie Frost; Ashley Lien; Dawn Merth-Johnson; Jim Rau; Mike Hipple; Jennifer Seale; BJ Ermenc; Laurie Lane; Stacy Ellingen; Julie Bergen; Lindsey Kreitzman, Deen Amusa; Rick Ziller.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/atac/index.htm>

Guests Present: Amanda Miller from Compass IL; Dani Kaslow, Center for Deafblind Persons, Kelly Fonner.

DHS Staff Present: Laura Plummer and Angela Brenna

2. Review and Approve Quarterly Meeting November 4, 2025 Agenda

- Motion made by Dawn Merth-Johnson to approve the November 4, 2025 AT Council Meeting Agenda. Motion seconded by Julie Bergen. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 1.**

3. Review and Approve August 28, 2025 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by Laurie Lane to approve the August 28, 2025 AT Council Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Motion seconded by Stacy Ellingen. 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

- Cassie Frost shared that the Closing the Gap Conference was a valuable experience. She was able to attend and present. This is held in the Twin Cities area.
- Dawn Merth Johnson from the Department of Public Instruction shared that they now have over 1,500 COP members and close to 500 micro-credentials have been issued. The most recent device loan report showed that 108 devices were loaned last year. Review of inventory for outdated or non-functioning devices. Five devices will still be valuable for families so they can be moved to WisTech Reuse. The COP meetings had close to 100 for the first two meetings this fall. Frank Devereaux at CESA 2 has developed an AI chatbot for Accessible Educational Materials (AEM).
- Jennifer Seale from the Waisman Center shared that the partnership program continues between CASC and school districts. This allows expansion of implementation services, not simply evaluations. Staffing remains a challenge so the more formal partnership program is reaching statewide. aacpartnershipprogram@waisman.wisc.edu. Exploring sustainability for the program. Planning for ECHO AAC for the spring with guest speakers.
- BJ Ermenc shared that the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has new members elected and a newly elected Executive Committee. The next meeting will review a workplan for the next year. She has asked for a standing item to provide updates on new technology developments. Med-El, a cochlear implant company, has a development for an internal-only processor. Nagish, a speech to text app, has been very reliable for

captioning products. They do send out a monthly newsletter and they have announced to include AI for ASL. Disability:IN now has a Wisconsin presence.

- Mike Hipple shared that the quarterly email went out in September. He also did a session at the International AAC Conference. He was not able to go to Closing the Gap but hopes to go to the ATIA conference in Florida.
- Laurie Lane from WisLoan shared they have over 50 loans happening right now. Winding down the Down Payment Assistance grant which helped 43 people use WisLoan for AT, home modifications, or vehicle adaptation loans. Coming soon will be a PSA ad on television.
- Lindsey Kreitzman from the Division of Medicaid shared that the long term care programs in 2026 will offer more choices in certain counties; up to 3 MCOs will be available for choice. IRIS will have a new consulting agency for certain counties. All MA providers will need to be enrolled in the Forward Health portal. IRIS Waiver was up for renewal, submitted in September and the new cycle begins Jan 1, 2026.
- Jim Rau shared that the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has a new brochure out. He did a booth at a veteran's expo in his area to share information. He recently had an experience when getting new hearing aids. He was seen by a private practice audiologist. Researching was difficult from manufacturer websites which lacked technical information. There is an effort in the works to ask manufacturers to provide consistent information. Auracast updates include how well they are doing in the marketing department. Auracast can now work for recorded audio and not live speech.
- Dani Kaslow from the Center from Deaf-Blind Persons, the only agency that serves adults with combined hearing and vision loss. The agency has not lost funding with the news of WDBTAP losing funds. WDTAP was able to continue operations for this coming year due a grant. Dani recently received her certification for Braille translation. Library of Congress of Literary Braille Translation. (Get details from her).
- Rick Ziller the only update has been a major shift in the Amazon Echo device production shift to new models.
- Deen Amusa from the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired hosted 17 individuals for the Adventures in Vision Loss in September. He just completed the WisTech AT Certification. Deen had completed the Literary Braille certification years ago.
- Debra Remmel from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation shared that the AsTech team is working on a survey to learn about AT needs from staff and related training. The agency has implemented the Order of Selection which means there will be a waitlist for DVR Services. November 13th there will be a public hearing about this.
- Ashley Lien from Compass IL recently hosted their 45th anniversary event. They will be providing services to Haven House, an agency that helps with homelessness along with WestCap. They hosted a tour for Life without Limits which is youth with AT. Compass applied for a dementia grant.

6. Other State AT Programs Overview; Guest Invited

- No speaker available.

7. WisTech Program Updates

- Laura Plummer provided an update on the WisTech AT Certification course, the second cohort is happening now and the next is set for January 7th.
- The federal shutdown has meant that we have not received the notice of award (NOA) for the WisTech program for fiscal year 2026.
- Laura Plummer provided a preliminary overview of the data collected for this past fiscal year and shared a draft of the ROI one-pager being prepared.
- WisTech did a booth with WisLoan at the Self-Determination Conference and is also working with the Department of Corrections on inmate access.

8. ADA Legislative Updates; Angela Brenna, DHS

- Presentation by Angela Brenna regarding recent ADA updates around digital accessibility and the importance of advocacy.

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

- Motion made by Jim Denham to appoint Ashley Lien to a first time as the Independent Living Center representative. Motion seconded by Laurie Lane. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 3.**

10. Adjourn

- Motion made by Mike Hipple to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Julie Bergen. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 4.**

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

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