



State of Wisconsin

Assistive Technology Advisory Council

Post Office Box 2659
Madison, WI 53701-2659

Telephone: 608-514-2513

Fax: 608-267-3203

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

Assistive Technology Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting

August 28, 2025

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Join via **Zoom:**

<https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1601760035>

Join via Phone:

Phone: 1-669-254-5252

Meeting ID: 160 176 0035

Meeting Minutes

A. Action Items

B. Motion Items

Motion Item 1: Motion made by Cassie Frost to approve the August 28, 2025 AT Council Meeting Agenda. Motion seconded by Calvin Richtig. Motion carried.

Motion Item 2: Motion made by Laurie Lane to approve the May 7, 2025 AT Council Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Motion seconded by Calvin Richtig. Motion carried.

Motion Item 3: Motion made by Jim Denham to appoint Dawn Merth-Johnson to a second term. Motion seconded by Laurie Lane. Motion carried.

Motion Item 4: Motion made by Jim Denham to elect Cassie Frost as Chairperson. Motion seconded by BJ Ermenc. Motion carried.

Motion Item 5: Motion made by Jim Denham to elect Laurie Lane as Vice Chairperson. Motion seconded by Debra Rimmel. Motion carried.

Motion Item 6: Motion made by Jim Denham to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Dwan Merth-Johnson. Motion carried.

C. Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Debra Rimmel; Jim Dehnam; Cassie Frost; Calvin Richtig; Dawn Merth-Johnson; Jim Rau; Mike Hipple; Jennifer Seale; BJ Ermenc; Laurie Lane; Stacy Ellingen; Julie Bergen.

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

Guests Present: Amanda Miller and Ashley Lien from Compass IL; Dani Kaslow, Center for Deafblind Persons, Melinda Dolezal; Dawn Magnusen; Pauline Lorenz.

DHS Staff Present: Laura Plummer, Jenna Sturgis, Angela Brenna

1. Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping, and Opening Question (What was your dream job growing up?)

2. Review and Approve Quarterly Meeting August 28, 2025 Agenda

- Motion made by Cassie Frost to approve the August 28, 2025 AT Council Meeting Agenda. Motion seconded by Calvin Richtig. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 1.**

3. Review and Approve May 7, 2025 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by Laurie Lane to approve the May 7, 2025 AT Council Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Motion seconded by Calvin Richtig. 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>)

- BJ Ermenc commented about the concerns she has heard from people impacted by the flooding in the Milwaukee area and how people may have lost assistive technology.

5. Assistive Technology Program Partner Updates

- Jim Denham shared from the WI Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired recently did a session on the use of smart glasses. The session was recorded and is available on YouTube. Smart glasses are really developing rapidly with a lot of interest by users. The Council is having a gallery night in October to represent artists who have a vision loss. www.wcblind.org
- Mike Hipple shared that the Family Camp had about 35 families and it was successful. One mother shared that the child used their device for the first time. He is working on the fall newsletter and will be doing a session at a conference. He was approved to be on the Wisconsin BPDD Council. The USAAC can pay for AAC devices that are destroyed by natural disasters.
- Debra Remmel shared that DVR has a busy time right now with the return to school. The AsTec group will be sending a survey to VR Counselors to gauge training needs.
- Laurie Lane from WisLoan shared that there are currently 50 loans with \$850K out on loans. The Down Payment Assistance funds are almost expended and 37 people benefited so far. Five more loans are up for review. She attended Farm Technology Days and will be attending the Self-Determination Conference in October. She shared a success story.

- Calvin Richtig shared that the person Laurie mentioned is the Mayor of Clintonville, WI. Options had hosted wheelchair wash clinics in their service areas. Farm Technology Days was hosted in the Options service area. It's staff intensive and he has been tracking the referrals which he can share in the future. Calvin completed the WisTech Verified ATP certification and another Options staff is participating in the WisTech AT Certification. Options received a grant to support the construction of ramps (\$10,000 so possibly 10 people can get \$1K each). Options does kitchen skills classes and they will be starting those up again this fall with the start of the school year. Marinette Parks Wheel Hike Together is coming up on September 30 – October 5th. There is some support from the Action Track chair who is loaning an additional 10 chairs for the event.
- LEND continues to grow and is close to double what it was a year ago. A local DME dealer is closing so they donated 300 devices to Options. Recently met with another possible partner with space in a church. Interest from them is for youth equipment.
- Dawn Merth-Johnson shared that the AT Forward COP has over 1500 members. They have given almost 500 micro-credentials. Over 18K students are accessing materials through Bookshare. The ATLC reopens with the start of school and they continue with the partnership with the Waisman Center. The COP schedule is posted on the website and Cassie Frost is doing on session and there is one regarding an AAC implementation guide. Outreach is planned for the OT/PT conference. Michelle Silverman and Dawn presented at the recent WI Facets Conference. The group will be leading efforts on sensory disabilities guidance.
- Julie Bergen shared that she is also going to the Self-Determination Conference.
- Cassie Frost shared that she is working with a variety of students and ensuring that their AT is ready to go for return to school. She will be presenting for the AT Forward COP and for WisTech regarding AT and Mental Health. Three members of her team are in the WisTech AT Certification course with positive feedback. She is seeing changes in how AT is being funded for the 18-21 age range.
- BJ Ermence shared that the Milwaukee airport now has a program for people with invisible disabilities which is called the Sunflower program. She is happy to share more information if people are interested. Staff receive training on how to interact. BJ also shared that she has been working with the ADRC on an event for deaf/hard of hearing and conducting outreach to reach this population.
- Jim Rau brought up the topic of the variation of the ADA and HIPPA regulations. There is a disconnect between speech to text apps and privacy concerns. Education for providers is important. HLAA-Wisconsin is focusing on hearing accommodations in healthcare settings.
- Jennifer Seale noted that Waisman will be posting for a speech pathology position again due to turnover in staff. Partnership continues with DPI/CESA #2 again this school year.
- Looking to launch ECHO AAC again this fall.
- Stacy Ellingen shared that she is still working on the electronic ballot access issue.

6. Other State AT Programs Overview; Melinda Dolezal New York

- Melinda Dolezal presented information about the AT program for New York.

7. WisTech Program Updates

- WisTech participated in the Farm Technology Days the first week of August and had meaningful conversations with 588 individuals.
- Laura Plummer attended a meeting in DC on Promoting Public Health through Outdoor Recreation. She attended on behalf of the Division of Public Health along with the Outdoor Recreation Director for Wisconsin at the request of the Governor's office. The format was a roundtable for those in attendance to discuss the connection between public health and outdoor recreation. Approximately 13 states attended and it was hosted by the National Governor's Association.
- The WisTech AT Certification course is going well and feedback has been positive.
- Minneapolis airport has been installing hearing loops in the terminals.
- OPDIL staff have had their session proposal for the ATIA conference accepted. The session will review the outcomes of the ILSP program.
- Two remaining WisTech webinars are happening in September.
- AgrAbility has invited the WisTech network to a series of free webinars in November.
- Laura Plummer reviewed quarterly data.

8. United Councils Work Group Overview; Angela Brenna, DHS

Angela Brenna from DHS shared information about the United Councils Work Group along with a request for a representative from the AT Council to participate.

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

- Motion made by Jim Denham to appoint Dawn Merth-Johnson to a second term. Motion seconded by Laurie Lane. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 3.**
- Motion made by Jim Denham to elect Cassie Frost as Chairperson. Motion seconded by BJ Ermenc. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 4.**
- Motion made by Jim Denham to elect Laurie Lane as Vice Chairperson. Motion seconded by Debra Remmel. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 5.**

10. Adjourn

- Motion made by Jim Denham to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Dwan Merth-Johnson. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 6.**

DRAFT

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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