



State of Wisconsin

Assistive Technology Advisory Council

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Assistive Technology Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2026

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Join via [Zoom](#):

<https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1608885278>

Join via Phone:

Phone: 1-669-254-5252

Meeting ID: 1608885278

A. Action Items

B. Motions and Action items

Motion Item 1: Motion made by Jim Denham to approve the AT Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for February 12, 2026 with a correction to the opening question. Motion seconded by Debra Rimmel. Motion carried.

Motion Item 2: Motion made by Rick Ziller to approve the AT Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for November 4, 2025 with a correction to the number of AT Forward Community of Practice Participants. Motion seconded by Stacy Ellingen. Motion carried.

Motion Item 3: Motion made by Mike Hipple to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Debra Rimmel. Meeting adjourned at 11:53 A.M.

C. Meeting Minutes

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

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

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; Deen Amusa; Rick Ziller.

Guests Present: Amanda Miller from Compass IL; Dani Kaslow, Center for Deafblind Persons; Cindi Pichler, Independence First; David Morstad, Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

DHS Staff Present: Laura Plummer; Nichole Hysel; Lisa Sobczyk

2. Review and Approve Quarterly Meeting February 12, 2026 Agenda

Motion made by Jim Denham to approve the AT Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for February 12, 2026 with a correction to the opening question. Motion seconded by Debra Remmel. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 1.**

3. Review and Approve November 4, 2025 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

4. Motion made by Rick Ziller to approve the AT Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for November 4, 2025 with a correction to the number of AT Forward Community of Practice Participants. Motion seconded by Stacy Ellingen. Motion carried. **See Motion Item 2.**

5. 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

6. Assistive Technology Program Partner Updates

- Laurie Lane from Independence First, WisLoan. The program completed 24 loans last year and the down payment assistance grant program is finished. This grant assisted 47 people. They launched commercials about the program and received over 80 phone inquiries. Each ILC was provided with the commercial

that was customized to their own program contact information. Attending the Circle of Life, Farm Days, ADILN, and Self Determination.

- Jim Denham from the WI Council for the Blind. The Council is offering scholarships for students with vision loss entering post-secondary education. The 2K scholarships can be used for tuition but also technology or other school related costs. This is open to part-time students as well. www.wcbvi.org
Also shared about a new product which is the Monarch. It's a refreshable Braille display that is multi-line (15/30 cell) versus single line. Always better display of graphics. The cost is \$15K.
- Debra Remmel from DVR received training on accessible transportation from Laura Plummer and Nichole Hysel. DVR continues with the waitlist with over 4K on the list. They can still provide Pre-Ets to students on the waitlist. There is no set estimation of a timeline.
- Cassie Frost recently attended ATIA in Orlando, Florida. Met with vendors and colleagues.
- Deen Amusa from the OBVI. Shared information about the work he is doing with the DHS IT Department around staff use of the latest version of JAWS and AI concerns.
- Julie Bergen shared that no major updates from the ILCW and watching the budget due to the federal budget process and previous shutdown.
- BJ Ermenc shared an update from the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The new Executive Committee is being active and interfacing with all of the other disability related councils. She has been advocating to use funds to send a council member to the national HLAA Convention. The Wauwatosa Commission for People with Disabilities followed up on a wheelchair made available at the library. They have not made one available for public use. They noticed some surprising resistance to providing accommodations.
- Mike Hipple The winter newsletter is done and he is hoping to send out that this weekend. Wisconsin CEC got a national award winner. He will be studying computer science at UW Whitewater.

- Stacie – The electronic ballot lawsuit is still active and may go to court this summer. She will keep the AT Council updated.
- Ashley Lien from Compass IL shared updates from the ILCs
 - Independence First held their 2nd annual reuse fair in October, they hosted the Mt Mary OT program, and gave a presentation on accommodations to a Parkinsons group. They are working with shelters and free clinics. PCW wellness event. And an inclusive Halloween event.
 - Indigo update includes bringing the track chair to the ice event.
 - ILR has a 3D printer and staff is learning to use it.
 - Compass is starting their yearly inventory. Received a dementia grant to distribute in their area. Working with the University of Ottawa on development of AT. Met with a 2nd grader who cannot write and she used the Guided Hands and she was able to use it but still some problems. Working with the University to develop a table that allows better access for her.
- Dawn Merth Johnson shared the following:
 - We have over 1700 members of the AT Forward Community of Practice now
 - Close to 500 microcredentials have been awarded (6 more to go); New AEM microcredential will be available soon
 - 20 school districts are participating in a pilot program for PAR/uPAR (Universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading) – a digital online assessment tool to help determine if struggling readers benefit from accommodations to improve their reading skills
 - Community of Practice Meetings have been gaining participants from across the country.
 - AI and Special Education (December) Technology, Access, and Best Practice for Students with Low Vision (January) AAC: Assessment and Resources (February)
 - Michelle Silverman, DPI OT/PT Consultant and I have been presenting on AT, AAC and AI for various groups
 - The number of loans from the Assistive Technology Lending Center through WisTech is down from this time last year

- The AAC Partnership Program with the CASC Center at Waisman is leaning into the consultation model this year to increase reach across the state; We are also reaching out to communicative disorders university programs across the state to have additional options to refer those looking for AAC assessments
- DPI is working to meet deadlines for accessibility of the website and will be switching platforms
- DPI has a new [webpage for AI](#) which contains guidance and information and resources based on roles (i.e., educators, administrators, public libraries, support staff, community & families)
- Jennifer Seale has participated for the Community of Practice with AT Forward Waisman now has a new Clinic Coordinator starting next week. Training sessions that are upcoming include
 - March 25th: Dr. Savanna Brittlebank, Interventions to Support Young Children with Multiple Disabilities who Benefit from AAC
 - April 22nd: Dr. Tracy Rackensperger, Lance McLemore, Dr. David McNaughton, AAC Users and Direct Support Professionals: Strategies for Supporting Positive (and Safe!) Interactions
- Jim Rau shared that he recently experienced a new listening system, Auri. It's a Bluetooth transmission that can go from one source to numerous recipients. It was installed in a church in Ashland and costs approximately \$2K. This worked with his Auracast hearing aids recently. He also shared that on his computer he will usually stream audio to his hearing aids directly. After reaching out for help from Apple, the audiologist, and the app developer (Ava) had command of the BT. Technology requires determination by the user.
- Rick Ziller shared feedback as well on the Apple has proprietary BT chip technology. He does not have additional updates and things are slowing down due to the DVR waitlist.
- David Morstad from the GCPD (Chair) shared information about the GCPD and the United Councils workgroup. In his role he will be encouraging greater membership engagement as they set advocacy agenda items. The United Councils workgroup will be integral to this work.

- Dani Kaslow from the Center for Deafblind Persons. She coordinates the ICanConnect program. The agency has been doing some behind the scenes work on improving processes. There will be an Open House for the 40th Anniversary and show off some of the renovations completed with the Lowes Home Improvement Grant that they received. April 16th from 10am – 2pm.

7. WisTech Program Updates

- Laura Plummer provided updates including a review of the Annual Progress Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and the Q1 data for Federal Fiscal Year 2026. One Notice of Award for funding has been received so far with a portion of the current year grant funding. An update on the WisTech AT Certifications was provided. Laura Plummer attended the ATIA Conference and presented about the ILSP Program. She shared information on devices she had the chance to see in the exhibit hall.
 - <https://www.tactonom.com/en/>
 - <https://nuluknives.com/>
 - <https://lunaglasses.nl/>
 - <https://totchop.com/collections>
 - <https://www.kinnebar.com/>
 - <https://accesstraxsd.com/>
 - <https://doorbotics.com/>

8. Digital Accessibility Project at the Department of Health Services

- Lisa Sobczyk from DHS provided an update on the Digital Accessibility Project for the Department of Health Services.

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

- No action needed.

10. Adjourn

Motion made by Mike Hipple to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Debra Remmel. Meeting adjourned at 11:53 A.M. **See Motion Item 3.**

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.

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