

**WisTech
State Assistive Technology Program**

**By-laws of the Assistive Technology (AT) Advisory Council
As Amended and Approved August 17, 2017**

I. Purpose

- A. The purpose of the Council shall be to provide advice and guidance to the WisTech program and assure that it is in compliance with the provisions of the Assistive Technology Act (AT Act) of 1998, as amended. The AT Act describes the requirement to establish an advisory council “to provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to the State for, planning of, implementation of, and evaluation of the activities carried out through the grant, including setting the measurable goals (as described in the AT Act of 2004, subsection (d)(3)):

“(A) measurable goals, and a timeline for meeting the goals, that the State has set for addressing the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in the State related to –

(i) education, including goals involving the provision of assistive technology to individuals with disabilities who receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);

(ii) employment, including goals involving the State vocational rehabilitation program carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.);

(iii) telecommunication and information technology; and

(iv) community living; and

(B) information describing how the State will quantifiably measure the goals to determine whether the goals have been achieved.”

- B. Specifically, the Advisory Council will provide advice and guidance on the following:
- i. 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),
 - ii. Monitoring the WisTech program according to the State Plan for AT,
 - iii. Developing and maintaining collaborations with other agencies, organizations, and bodies providing AT services and devices throughout the State, and
 - iv. Monitoring of program data and outcomes.

II. Council Composition

- A. The Council shall be composed of no fewer than 9 and no more than 13 members.
- B. Five members of the Council will be appointed per the instructions of the AT Act. These are representatives from:
 - i. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction,
 - ii. Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation,
 - iii. Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Office for Blind and Visually Impaired,
 - iv. Council on Workforce Investment, and
 - v. Independent Living Centers.

The Council will accept the appointee of the aforementioned bodies as an appropriate representative of that organization. In addition, the AT Council may appoint additional representatives from other state agencies, public agencies, or private organizations, as long as the consumer majority is maintained.

- C. At least fifty-one percent of the elected membership of the Council shall be persons with disabilities who use assistive technology devices and services. Of the consumer representatives, the Council will strive for representation from the following disability groups:
 - i. Blind and Visually Impaired,
 - ii. Deaf and Hard of Hearing,
 - iii. Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities,
 - iv. Chronic and Persistent Mental Illness, and
 - v. Physical Disabilities.

As the State AT program recruits consumer members and makes additional appointments, care should be taken to maintain a council that reflects the diversity of the State “with respect to race, ethnicity, types of disabilities across the age span” as well as the types of AT devices and services used by its citizens with disabilities. The Council will seek to have representation that is geographically, culturally, racially and gender representative of the state of Wisconsin according to the most recently available demographic statistics.

- D. The Council will strive for consumer membership representing the following populations of people using assistive technology devices and services:
 - i. Representative of people age 60 and older,
 - ii. Representative of people ages 17 to 23, and
 - iii. Representative of a person with a disability, such as a family member or guardian of a person with a disability who uses assistive technology devices and services.

- E. Department of Health Service support staff to the Council shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Council. All other members are voting members.
- F. Involvement of non-members from organizations, agencies, or vendors providing services to people with disabilities who use assistive technology devices and services will be incorporated into the body of the Council through active membership on Council Committees.

III. Council Membership

- A. Appointments to the Council shall be made through a majority vote of the Council at the Council's quarterly meetings.
 - i. Interested candidates will submit an AT Council application to the Office for the Promotion of Independent Living at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.
 - ii. Applications for joining the Council will be accepted at all times and maintained on file by the Office for the Promotion of Independent Living at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.
- B. Council Member Reimbursements and Accommodations
 - i. Council members will be reimbursed for their travel expenses according to the state of Wisconsin travel reimbursement rules and rates.
 - ii. Council members requiring special accommodations to participate on the Council and at meetings will have reasonable accommodations provided for them and/or will be reimbursed for these expenses.
 - iii. If a Council member requires accommodations they need to send this request to the Department of Health Services staff support person to the Council.
- C. Term Limits
 - i. Council members will serve three-year terms.
 - ii. Council members will serve no more than two terms, consecutive or otherwise.
 - iii. Term limits apply to all Council members.
- D. Vacancies will remain open until an appropriate candidate is appointed or nominated, and approved by the Council.
 - i. Council members filling a vacant position with time left in the term will finish the partial term and be eligible for two additional terms.
 - ii. When the Council decides to solicit applications from consumers, the Council or appointed Council committee will develop a solicitation letter to be distributed to a wide variety of organizations and agencies serving people with disabilities, representing all the disability groups, geographic diversity and age ranges the Council seeks to represent.

- E. Council members accruing two or more absences during a calendar year may be dismissed from the Council at the discretion of the Council at-large.
 - i. Participation from a remote location does not constitute an absence.
 - ii. Absences accrued due to illness, death, or other factors beyond the control of the Council member will not count toward the total of two absences and will be counted as “excused.” The decision to classify a decision as “excused” or “unexcused” is at the discretion of the Chairperson and the Executive Committee.
- F. Council officers will be nominated by Council members at the August quarterly meeting.
- G. The Council members will elect the following officers to two-year terms. Officer terms can be extended by one year to coincide with the term of the member.
 - i. Chairperson – This officer is responsible for running the meeting, acting as the public face of the Council, being the primary liaison with the Department of Health Services, and other duties implicit in leadership of the Council. This position will be filled by a consumer representative.
 - ii. Vice Chairperson – This officer will act as the Chairperson in that officer’s absence.

IV. Council Meetings

- A. Meetings of the Council will be held quarterly at locations that are geographically central or acceptable to the majority of the members. The locations and dates of the meetings for the next calendar year will be chosen at the last quarterly meeting of the year.
- B. Special meetings may be called when three members, or the Chairperson, request a special meeting in request to Council staff support person with the Department of Health Services.
 - i. Attendance rules apply to special meetings.
 - ii. Notice of special meetings must be provided to all Council members ten calendar days prior to the meeting. Notice must include the topic of the special meeting and distance communication access information.
- C. Public notices of all meetings will be made according to applicable state laws and regulations related to public meetings.
- D. Decisions of the Council shall be made by the majority vote of members present. Any vote taken shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
 - i. No decisions of the Council may be acted on unless a quorum is present. A quorum is the majority of all positions filled on the Council.

- ii. No members of the Council shall vote on or attempt to influence any Council determination or deliberation where such action would create a conflict of interest.

V. Council Committees

- A. There will be at least one member of the Council on each Council Committee.
- B. The Council has established Committees to assist in carrying out its duties.
- C. Council will solicit involvement from members and non-members representing private industry, and agencies, and organizations serving people with disabilities, which are relevant to the charge of the Committee.
- D. Actions of committees will be treated as recommendations to the Council at-large.
- E. Committees will have specific assignments from the Council. After a Committee completes its assignment, it will receive a new assignment or be dissolved at the discretion of the Council.
- F. All Committees will report to the Council at-large, Chairperson, and Vice Chairperson on a regular basis and work on items as assigned by the full Council.
- G. Each Committee will have a Chair. Council members will serve as Committee Chairs. Committee Chairs will be elected by the Council at the August quarterly meeting
- H. The Council's standing committees are as follows:
 - i. Collaboration and Outreach (Minimum of 3 members) – This committee will work on marketing, social media, website, and other related items for the WisLoan and WisTech programs to improve public knowledge about these programs and to increase referrals and utilization of assistive technology statewide. This committee will also work with staff to the AT Council to identify key partners and funding resources to expand the state's AT program.
 - ii. Assistive Technology and State Plan Development (Minimum of 3 members) – This committee will work on identifying the latest and most up-to-date assistive technology devices cross-disability, cross-age to assist consumers statewide. This committee will also work with DHS staff on developing survey instruments and other related materials to collect data for the State Assistive Technology Plan (3 year plan).
 - iii. Data Collection and Analysis (Minimum of 3 members) – This committee will review quarterly data from the AT Network and related data analysis to identify unmet AT needs throughout the state. This committee will also work with DHS staff to improve reporting of AT data to ensure compliance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended in

2004 (Tech Act) and to improve AT outcomes statewide. This committee may also identify additional data that the AT Network should be collecting to get a more accurate picture of AT needs throughout Wisconsin.

VI. Council By-Laws Review

- A. Council by-laws will be reviewed annually during the first quarterly meeting of the calendar year.
- B. Changes to the by-laws will only be enacted through a 2/3 majority vote of the Council.