



## Statutory Council on Blindness (SCOB) Quarterly Open Meeting Minutes

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**Date of the Meeting:** Wednesday, March 4, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

**Location:** Online via [Zoom](#) and telephone, **Meeting ID:** 160 095 7421

**Prepared by:** Zachary, DHS on March 4, 2026.

**Minutes Status:** DRAFT. These minutes will be presented for approval at the next SCOB Quarterly meeting on June 22, 2026.

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### 1. Call to Order

- Patty Zallar, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

### 2. Roll Call

- **Executive Committee Members Present:** Patty Zaller, Brenda Brunet, and Jenny Marchewka.
- **SCOB Members Present:** Kerry Robinson, Kathi Zoern, Tami Frentzel, Felicia Clayborne, and Chuck Fehl.
- **DHS Staff Present:** Zachary Davenport, Ann Sievert, Angela Brenna, and Lisa Sobczyk.
- **Interpreters:** Nicole Keller and Chantel Wiedmeyer.
- **Guests:** Denise Jess and Janet Zander.

### 3. Approval of the Agenda

- Jenny Marchewka made a motion to approve the March 4, 2026, SCOB Quarterly Meeting Agenda. Kathi Zoern seconded. Motion carried.

### 4. Approval of the Minutes

- Chuck Fehl made a motion to approve the November 5, 2025, SCOB Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Brenda Brunet seconded. Motion carried.

## 5. Public Comment (9:05 AM – 9:15 AM)

- Public Comment was held from 9:05 AM to 9:15 AM.
- No public comment received.

## 6. Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC) Overview

- Denise Jess
  - Denise explained that the WiNDAC focuses on systems-level transportation change for people who do not drive. The committee was intentionally created to be more than a discussion group. From the beginning, its leadership committed to ensuring the group produces concrete actions and policy improvements, with both short-term and long-term outcomes.
  - One of WiNDAC's early accomplishments was developing a clearer understanding of the non-driver population in Wisconsin. The committee found that approximately 31–32% of Wisconsin residents do not drive.
  - The WiNDAC also created county-level data, allowing advocates and local governments to see the percentage of non-drivers in their communities. In some counties, nearly 40% of residents do not drive, making transportation access a major local issue.
  - WiNDAC members participated in updating Wisconsin's Active Transportation Plan, which covers walking and biking infrastructure.
  - WiNDAC worked with the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to improve accessibility. An outcome from this work includes allowing state ID renewals online every other cycle so people can "skip the trip" and avoid unnecessary travel.
  - WiNDAC members serve at the discretion of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and the Governor. Denise shared that with the upcoming gubernatorial transition, the committee's future is uncertain. It may continue under the next administration, but it could also be dissolved if it is not prioritized.
- Denise encouraged advocacy to help ensure the committee continues by:
  - Helping to lift the quality of the conversations around transportation issues.
  - Encouraging the next governor to maintain the committee.

- **MOTION:** Tami Frentzel made a motion that SCOB draft and send a letter to the newly elected Governor of Wisconsin welcoming them to office and encouraging the continued support and maintenance of the Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC). The letter will include an overview of the committee, its role in addressing transportation barriers for non-drivers, and the importance of maintaining the committee to support systems-level transportation access across the state. Kathi seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- **Action Item:** DHS staff Zachary Davenport will start the draft of the letter to be reviewed by the next SCOB meeting

## 7. Volunteer Driver Insurance Protection Legislation

- Janet Zander
  - Janet explained to members that Wisconsin state statutes do not clearly distinguish true volunteer drivers from Transportation Network Company (TNC) drivers like Uber/Lyft. Because the statutes don't make that distinction, insurers may classify volunteer drivers as "commercial" or "business use."
  - Janet explained that as a result, volunteer drivers are increasingly told they must:
    - Purchase commercial auto insurance (hundreds to thousands of dollars more per year), or
    - Pay a surcharge based on trips or mileage, or
    - Accept restrictions on who they can transport.
  - Council Members discussed the importance of volunteer drivers, particularly in the rural communities without public transit.
- **MOTION:** Kathi Zoern made a motion that the SCOB become involved in the volunteer driver initiative led by the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) and partners, including participation in stakeholder efforts and support for collecting stories and advocacy related to volunteer driver insurance protections. Tami Frentzel seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- **Action Item:** Continue planning on how SCOB can become involved with the volunteer driver initiative led by the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR).

## 8. Break

- 15 Minutes Break (10:45 AM – 11:00 AM)

## 9. GCPD United Council Updates

- Brenda Brunet
  - Brenda is currently SCOB's representative on the United Councils Workgroup. Brenda shared the following updates from the previous United Councils meeting:
  - **Work group versus committee structure:**
    - David Morstad, chairperson of GCPD, outlined tradeoffs. As a work group, the group moves faster but has limits such as no formal agenda, no official minutes, and constraints related to open meetings rules. As a committee under GCPD, the group could use agendas, minutes, broader communication, and more formal public input pathways, but with more procedural requirements. Several comments supported embedding the work more directly within GCPD so it drives core work instead of sitting one layer outside it.
  - **Need for proactive, unified action:**
    - Multiple speakers noted that councils often meet quarterly, leaving long gaps where time sensitive issues can be missed. There was agreement that the group should identify intersections across disability communities, unify messaging, and decide when to act quickly versus when to pursue longer term systemic change
  - **Council snapshots:**
    - There was support for each council providing a short blurb on who they are, what they do, approximate active membership, and current priorities. This would help members understand each other's scope and find common ground more quickly.
  - **Training function for the group:**
    - DHS Staff Angela Brenna proposed using this space as skills building, not only updates. Examples included how to craft talking points, how to contact legislators, how to use personal stories in policy advocacy, and practicing through role play ahead of meetings with decision makers.
  - **United Council Engage for Change event**

- The United Councils Engage for Change event will be on Thursday, August 13, 2026, at the Madison Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Planning for this one-day advocacy event will continue through the United Councils Work Group meetings. As part of the process, we anticipate inviting state legislators, agency directors, and community leaders. The day will include advocacy presentations, impact stories, public comments, and direct Q&A opportunities.
- **Action Item:** Zachary will work with Brenda on sharing updates from today's meeting with the United Council Workgroup who will meet later today.

## 10. Discuss SCOB Workplan Accomplishments

- DHS Staff Zachary Davenport shared the accomplishment with the Council members:
- Mental Health
  - Potentially developing the plan on the white paper that:
    - Clarifies what issue matters to SCOB
    - Explain why they matter
    - States what SCOB is advocating for
    - Grounds everything in SCOB's statutory role
  - Access to Program and Services
    - Currently involving the Digital Accessibility Stakeholder Project Feedback Group.
    - SCOB Council Members provided the feedback based on digital accessibility to DHS's programs and services.
  - Transportation:
    - Inviting Denise Jess and Janet Zander to share about the transportation issues that need to be discussed.
  - Data and Partnership:
    - Gather the data from Helen Sampson and Denise Jess. We will continue gathering the data if needed.

## 1. DHS Digital Accessibility Feedback Group Opportunity

- Lisa Sobczyk

- Lisa presented an overview and updates on Digital Accessibility and shared information about the Digital Accessibility Feedback Group opportunity to council members.

## 11. Discuss SCOB Website on Mental Health

- DHS Staff Zachary Davenport looked into adding mental health resources to SCOB's website and shared the following with the council members:
  - Under updated ADA Title II requirements:
    - If SCOB links to external websites or documents that are not accessible responsibility may fall back on SCOB.
    - Linking to third-party PDFs, coalitions, or organizations that are not accessible creates potential compliance risk.
    - It's ownership matters. If we link to it, we may share responsibility.
    - SCOB needs to be carefully vetted links.
  - Mental Health & external coalitions:
    - SCOB isn't directly provided with mental health services, it isn't appropriate place to host mental health resource list.
    - Promoting third-party coalitions (especially if their content is not accessible) increases risk.
    - Some partner organizations' materials are known to be inaccessible.
  - If SCOB wants to elevate an issue, a better approach may be:
    - Add SCOB's workplan with priorities on its website.
    - White papers or statement
- Council members discussed the need to shift from posting external mental health resources on the SCOB website to developing a white paper due to ADA Title II accessibility requirements and the risk of linking to inaccessible third-party content. Members expressed interest in participating in the work group and continuing efforts to elevate mental health as a council priority.
- **MOTION:** Tami Frentzel made a motion that the Statutory Council on Blindness (SCOB) establish a Mental Health Work Group to develop a white paper addressing mental health issues impacting individuals who are blind or have low vision. The work group will gather information, draft the white paper, and present it to the full council for review and approval before

it is posted on the SCOB website. Jenny seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- **Action:** Zachary, Jenny and Tami Frentzel will set up a meeting and start to work on a white paper to share with the entire council for review.

## 12. Review Action Items

- DHS Staff Zachary Davenport will start the draft of a letter to the newly elected Governor of Wisconsin welcoming them to office and encouraging the continued support and maintenance of the Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC). The letter will include an overview of the committee, its role in addressing transportation barriers for non-drivers, and the importance of maintaining the committee to support system-level transportation access across the state.
- Continue planning on how SCOB can become involved with the volunteer driver initiative led by the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR.)
- DHS Staff Zachary Davenport will work with Brenda on sharing updates from today's meeting with the United Council Workgroup who will meet later today.
- DHS Staff Zachary Davenport, Jenny Marchewka, and Tami will set up a meeting and start to work on a white paper to share with the entire council for review.

## 13. Adjournment

- Jenny Marchewka made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brenda Brunet seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:16 PM.

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## About the SCOB

The Statutory Council on Blindness was established by the Wisconsin Legislature, [WI State Statute 15.197\(2\)](#), in 1969 and is administratively attached to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). The Council is appointed by the Secretary of DHS to make recommendation to the DHS and other state agencies on services, activities, programs, investigations, and research that affect persons on Wisconsin who are Blind or Visually Impaired. To learn about the specifics of our mission, visit:

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

## **Accessibility and Accommodations**

If you need accommodations to participate, please contact Zachary Davenport at 414-207-8820 or [zachary.davenport@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:zachary.davenport@dhs.wisconsin.gov)