



PENNSYLVANIA
TECH ACCELERATOR

**Supports Coordinator
Training Series
Training #2
2026**

Technology Solutions Specialists: Leadership and Peer Mentorship

Trainer

Kaley Day

Research Project Coordinator

KU Center on Disabilities

Life Span Institute



State of the States
In Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator Partners



Office of Developmental Programs
Office of Long-Term Living



Institute on Disabilities



State of the States
In Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

KU CENTER ON
DISABILITIES



Technology First Systems Change



Technology First began as a movement but has transformed into a “framework for systems change where technology is considered first in the discussion of support options available to individuals and families through person-centered approaches to promote meaningful participation, social inclusion, self-determination, and quality of life.”

Tanis, 2019



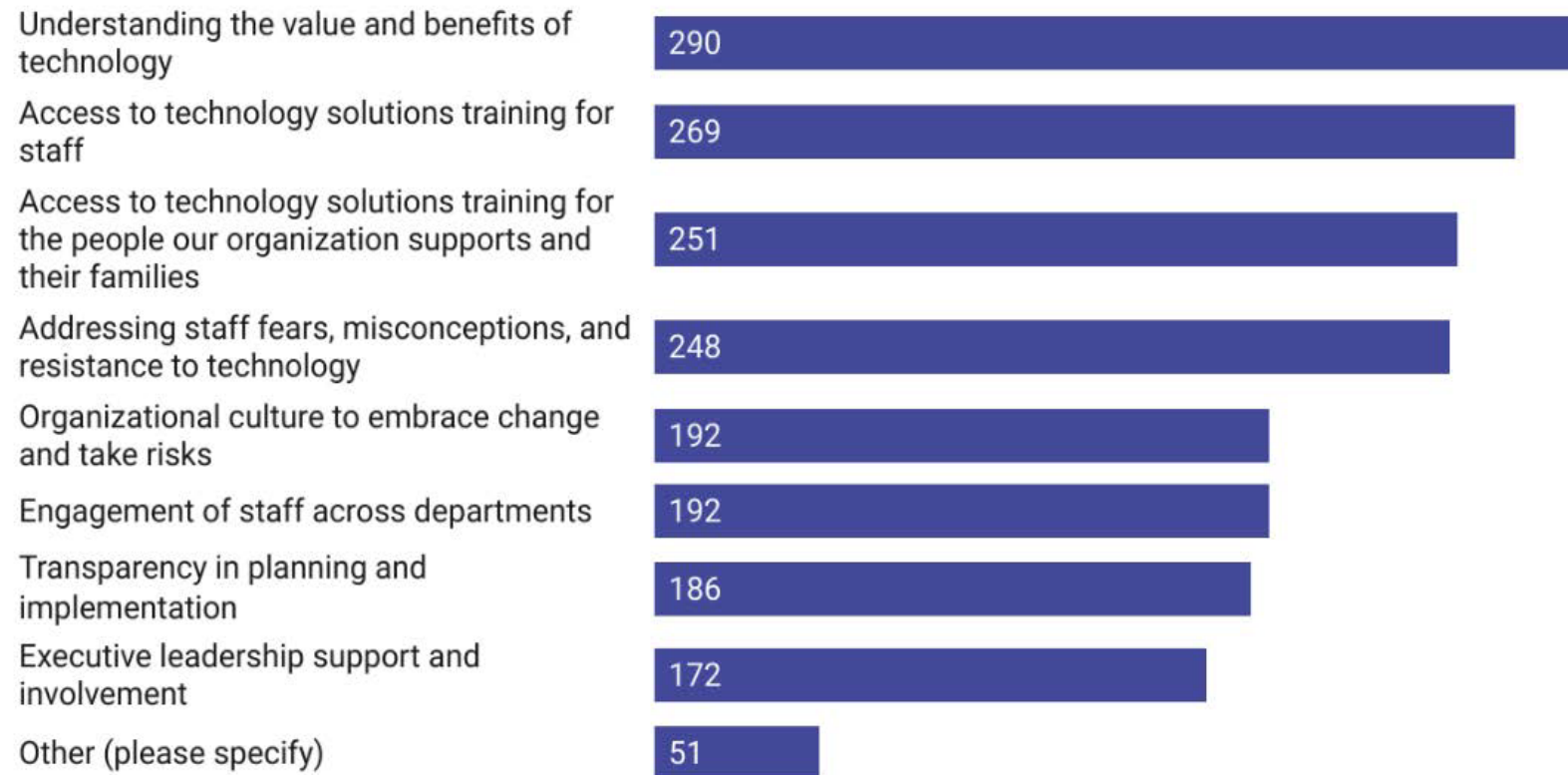
Technology Solution

An innovation applied in the environment to address a mismatch in cultural, social, or contextual demands

- The term is an umbrella term (captures mainstream, assistive, and enabling technologies)
- The term technology solution allows for the inclusion of multi-functional and diverse technologies
- The term implies a person-directed and goal-oriented approach to the identification, acquisition, and on-going training of technologies
- The term supports the development of solutions to eliminate the mismatch between the person and environment
- The term allows for the inclusion of emerging and future technologies not yet identified to be supported through policy and practice

What the PA Provider Survey Tells Us

Supports and Structures Needed to Advance Tech

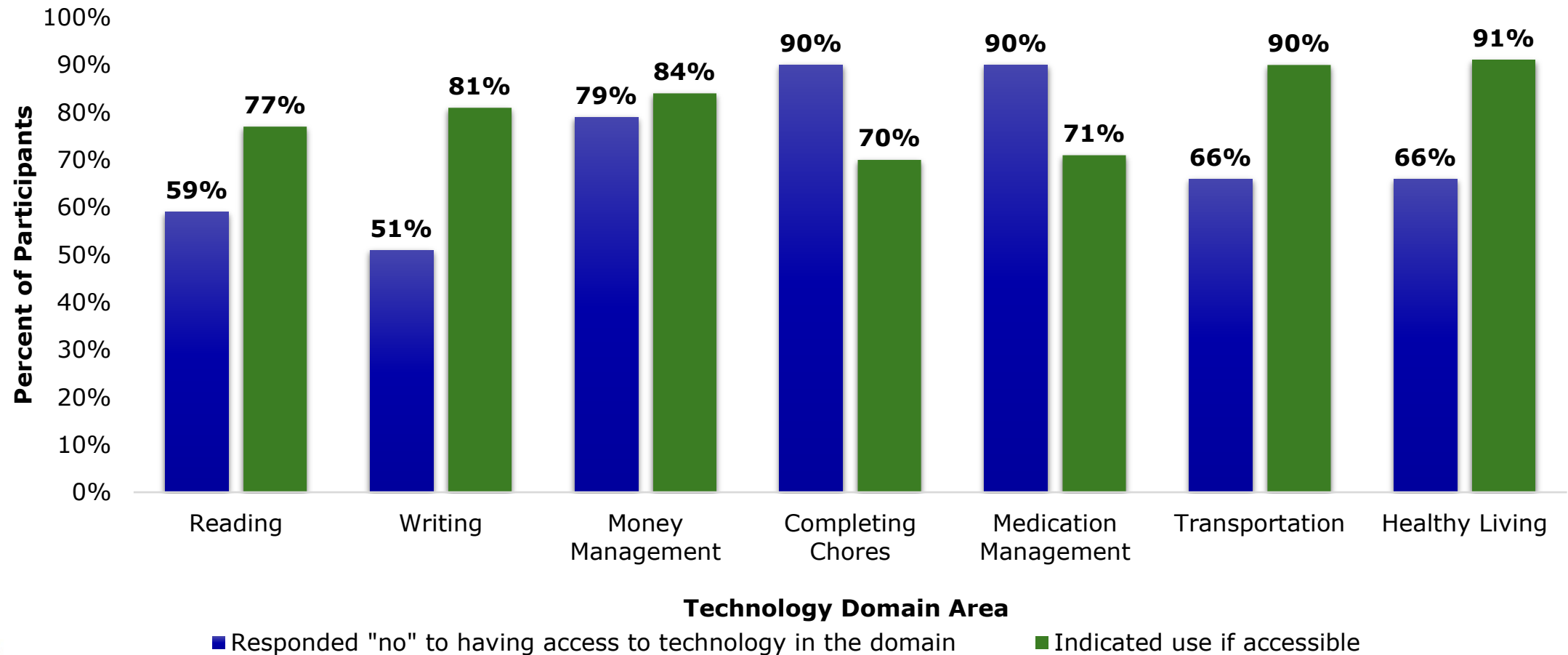


- 2025 survey with 595 ODP- and OLTL- licensed provider agencies
- All PA counties represented

Chart: E.S. Tanis, 2025 • Source: KUCD • Created with Datawrapper



Technology Needs and Barriers Survey: Ownership and Access



Takeaway: People with I/DD do not have access to technologies for key support areas, but if available they would use them.



The Necessity of Self-Advocacy

“NOTHING ABOUT US
WITHOUT US”



Image Source: [International Disability Alliance](#)

- People with disabilities want technology
 - Technology Needs and Barriers data
 - Over twenty applicants across PA for the Specialists program
- Successful peer and family trainer programs across the country
 - CO – Families at the Forefront of Technology
 - CT – Ability Beyond TIP Squad
- Self-advocates as key leaders in Technology First Systems Change



The Power of Story-Telling



Image Source: [The Arc US Instagram](#)

- Policy recommendations and data are important, but stories give context and meaning.
- Stories are remembered up to 22 times more than facts alone. (Source: [Stanford](#))
- People with disabilities have historically been reduced to statistics and talked about but not with.





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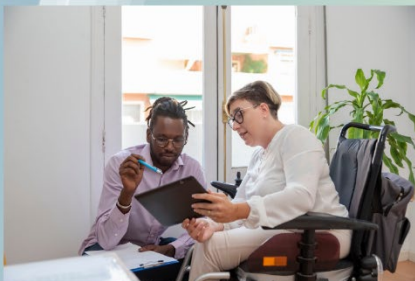
The Technology Solutions Specialists Program

Specialists Program Curriculum

What Does a Technology Solutions Specialist Do?

Public-Speaking	Share your experience and knowledge to make technology more accessible
Peer Mentorship	Teach others about technology, how to use it, and how to get it
Advocacy	Promote policies and laws that improve access to technology
Leadership	Lead technology efforts wherever you are

Knowing how to talk about accessibility makes you a better technology advocate!



1. Be specific about what is difficult or doesn't work.
2. Offer ideas and suggestions for how to fix it.

- Story-telling and public-speaking
- Finding and using technology resources online
- Creating accessible technology resources
- Accessibility features in mainstream devices
- Peer technology expertise
- Funding technology with public and private resources
- Policy advocacy and legislative testimony



Video Stories

Andre is a jazz musician who uses technology like QR codes to share his music and AI to understand complicated contracts.



Quinn uses her laptop and Livescribe pen as a college student at Misecordia University.

Joseph uses noise-cancelling headphones to focus in busy environments and access his community.



Gretchen's Every Day Technology

A Life Full of Tech

by Gretchen Laudenslager



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Technology One-Pagers

Published
November, 2025

AI The GOOD and BAD



What is AI?

- **AI** stands for artificial intelligence.
- When people talk about **AI**, they are usually talking about generative **AI**, like Chat GPT.
- Generative **AI** takes text, images, and videos from the internet and turns it into new text, images, and videos.
- Technology companies like Google, Adobe, Microsoft, and OpenAI make generative **AI**.

How can you use AI?

You can use AI to...

get help writing emails or social media posts



get step-by-step instructions for cooking



make different texts, like articles or laws, easier to read



talk with an AI assistant, like Alexa or Siri



caption meetings and videos with speech recognition



describe places, people, and the world around you through your camera



Josh needs to replace the tire on his bike, but he doesn't know where to start. Josh uses an AI app on his phone to make easy-to-read, step-by-step instructions for replacing his tire.



A Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator product made possible by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the American Rescue Plan Act

Published
November, 2025

Staying Safe on the Internet

Tips for Safe Web Browsing



- The internet can connect you to people around the world.
- People use the internet to connect with others on social media, for work or school, and to play video games.
- The internet is very big. Most things are safe, but some things can be harmful.
- It is important to watch out for scams, unkind people, and false information.



Safe browsers (Firefox, Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome) and anti-virus software (Windows Defender, Malwarebytes) can help keep your computer safe.



Create a strong password with a mix of symbols (!, %, \$), capital and lower case letters, and numbers.



Keep your computer, apps, and software updated. You can usually find updates in your device settings.



Be careful when visiting new websites. Only visit links if you know where they will take you!

A Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator product made possible by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the American Rescue Plan Act

- Mainstream Accessibility Features
 - Apple and Android
- Artificial Intelligence
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- Smart Home Technology
- Switch Access
- Device Care
- Internet Safety



Public Speaking and Consultation



International Association for
the Scientific Study of Intellectual
and Developmental Disabilities



Legislative Testimony



Chris Moore,
PA Disability Summit and
Technology First
Legislative Policy Hearing
2025



Legislative Testimony Continued

Nae Vallejo,
PA Disability Summit and
Technology First
Legislative Policy Hearing
2025



Connect with the Specialists

**Pennsylvania Technology Solutions Specialists**
Profiles and Contact Information

**Quinn Crispell**
Location
Swoyersville, PA
Email
mightyquinn9703@gmail.com

My skills and expertise:
I am a full-time college student and I am an experienced public speaker.

Why I became a Technology Solutions Specialist:
The most important part of my work as a Technology Solutions Specialist is helping people with disabilities know what kind of technology is available to them in their daily lives.

**Bobby Evans**
Location
Downingtown, PA
Email
revans0614196@gmail.com

My skills and expertise:
I have skills with computers, working with phone help with technology when it comes to technology.
I am also a great technology.

Why I became a Technology Solutions Specialist:
It's important to me to work with co-workers and people to make their technology better for them. I bring a lot of skills.

**Gretchen Laudenslager**
Location
Quakertown, PA
Email
glaundenslager@sau1.org

My skills and expertise:
I am a public speaker, organized, friendly, outgoing, and approachable.

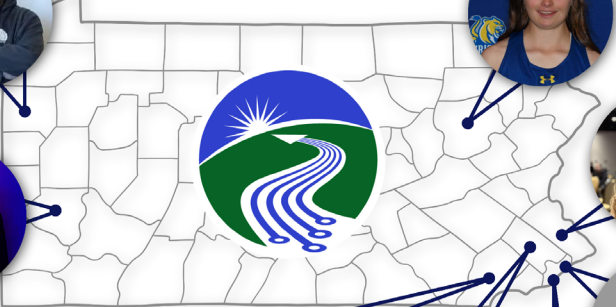
Why I became a Technology Solutions Specialist:
The work of being a Technology Solutions Specialist is important because I have learned about different technologies. I will be able to pass along what I have learned to other people with a disability. My hope is that learning about technology will improve other people's lives.

**Chris Moore**
Location
Wyncote, PA
Email
cmm.11640@gmail.com

My skills and expertise:
My skills include public speaking, working in a team, basic computer skills, and Microsoft Excel spreadsheet knowledge.

Why I became a Technology Solutions Specialist:
Being a Technology Solutions Specialist is an opportunity to give back to my community. I feel that people don't necessarily know how accessible and impactful technology can be when used right. People with disabilities and providers should know how to use certain technologies to make individuals' lives easier.

Specialists Across the Commonwealth



Matt Smith
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Quinn Crispell
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Gretchen Laudenslager
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Bobby Evans
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Andre Rhone
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Specialists are available for speaking, consultant, and peer mentorship opportunities.
Contact a Specialist directly or learn more at stateofthestates.ku.edu/tss

Technology Solutions Specialists are a program of the PA Tech Accelerator, a partnership between Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs and Office of Long-Term Living, The State of the States in I/DD, and Temple University, made possible with American Rescue Plan Act funds.

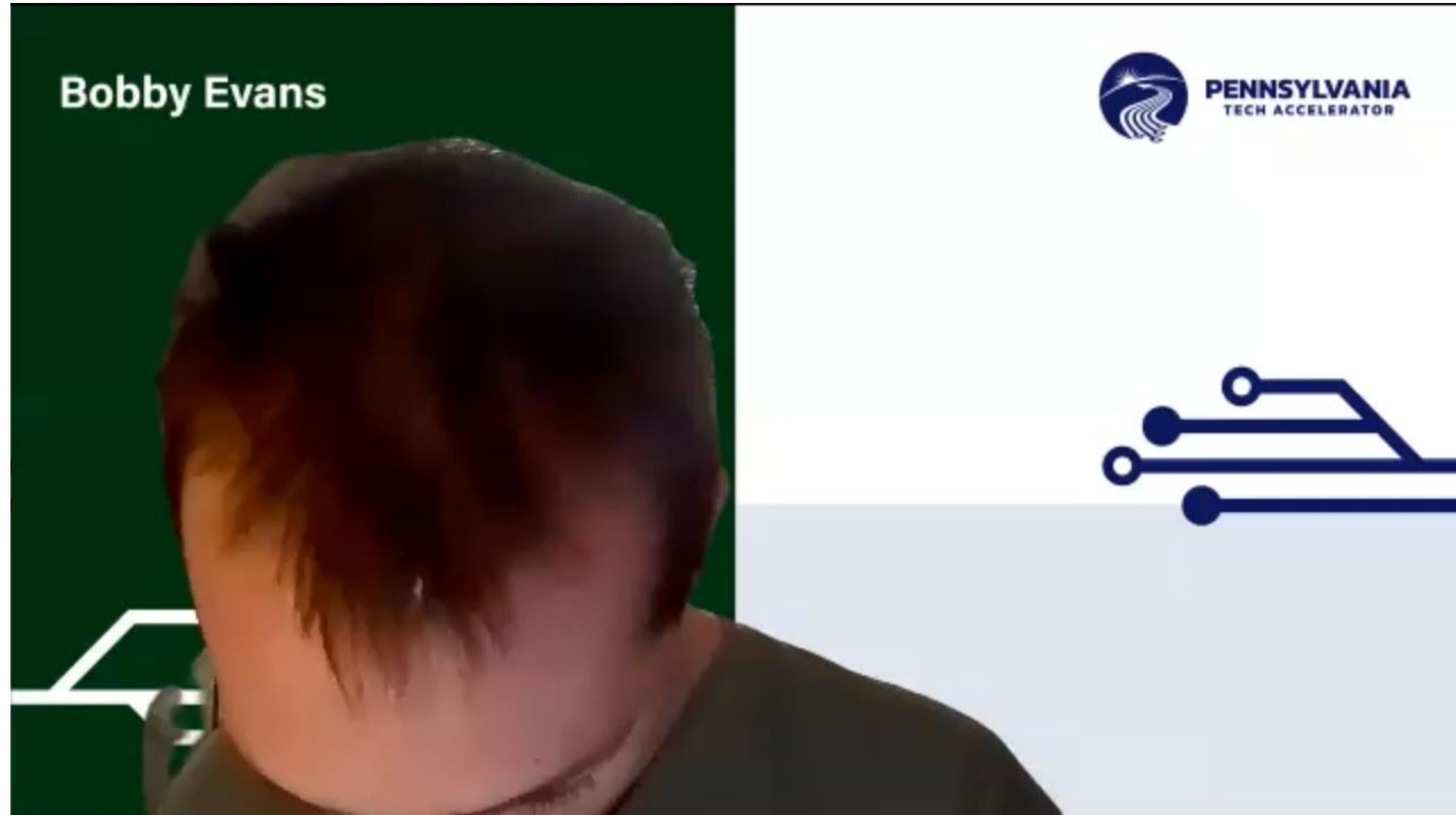




Access the Technology Solutions Specialists Resource Library



Advice from a Specialist



Other Training Series Topics

- **#1 The Self-Directed Model for Identifying Technology Solutions for Individual Goal Attainment**
- **#3 Accessibility and Why it Matters**
- **#4 Technology Agility, Resilience, and Literacy Training for Users and Professionals**
- **#5 Technology-Related Services, Waiver Policies, and Resources for Technology Acquisition**
- **#6 Innovative and Emerging Technology Solutions for Community Living**



Stay in Touch!



Email Us



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Visit Our Website



stateofthestates.ku.edu

