

RVBAT Meeting – March 4, 2026

Meeting Purpose

Discuss digital inclusion initiatives, ARPA funding, and AI's impact.

Key Takeaways

- **ARPA Funding Opportunity:** Business Oregon has leftover ARPA funds (deadline: March 16), but the challenge is funding device connectivity *after* the grant ends, as past programs failed due to unsustainable subscription costs.
- **Digital Literacy Expansion:** The group will expand digital literacy for older adults by leveraging Senior Planet curriculum, with Olivia Robinson (AGE+) offering in-person classes Ashland Senior Center and possible RVCOG Senior Resource Centers.
- **AI in the Workplace:** RVCOG is seeking professional AI training to guide its "human in the loop" policy. Google's NotebookLM was recommended for secure, internal-data-only analysis.
- **Upcoming Event:** The Access Senior Fair is March 24 at Rogue X, with RVCOG, Eric Molinsky (Library) and Olivia Robinson (AGE+) tabling.

Topics

ARPA Funding & Sustainability Challenge

- Business Oregon has leftover ARPA funds for public Wi-Fi and devices, with a March 16 application deadline.
- **Key Challenge:** Funding device connectivity *after* the grant term ends.
 - **Past Failures:** RVCOG's GrandPad program and the Library's tablet program ended because they couldn't sustain monthly subscription costs.
 - **T-Mobile Model:** Ryan Barber noted T-Mobile offers a 2-year plan for hotspots, which may fit the grant's capital expense focus.
- **Group Strategy:** Share application ideas and provide letters of support to strengthen submissions.

Expanding Digital Literacy for Older Adults

- Olivia Robinson (AGE+) will offer in-person Senior Planet digital literacy classes (e.g., Intro to AI, booking travel online) at Ashland Senior Center. Possible opportunity to offer classes at RVCOG's two Senior Resource Centers (Central Point and Grants Pass).
- **Rationale:** Use practical "hooks" to engage older adults and combat fraud.

- **Rogue Retreat Partnership:** The Library is developing a 4–5 class series for older adults who struggle with computer skills, hindering their ability to access benefits.
- **Tech Cafe:** Olivia and David Spinney (Rogue Seniors) are hosting a tech cafe near the Access Senior Fair to showcase a community support model.

AI in the Workplace: Policy & Tools

- RVCOG is seeking professional AI training to support its "human in the loop" policy and address varying staff skill levels.
- **Recommended Tool:** Jackie Wirz suggested **Google's NotebookLM** for secure, internal-data-only analysis (e.g., employee handbooks), preventing "hallucinations" from external data.
- **Ethical Concerns:**
 - AI replacing human social interaction.
 - Deepfakes and data privacy risks from uploading personal photos.

Next Steps

- **Natalie Mettler:** Connect Olivia Robinson (AGE+) with Shannon Holt (Ashland Senior Center) to schedule a Senior Planet class.
- **Olivia Robinson (AGE+):** Email the group details for the upcoming tech cafe with David Spinney.
- **Eric Molinsky:** Ask his son for recommendations on professional AI training resources.
- **All:**
 - Share ARPA grant application plans and requests for letters of support.
 - Attend the Access Senior Fair on March 24 at Rogue X.