



Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Rehabilitation Engineering and
Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology and Transition

**Finding practical tools for education, employment,
independent living, and community participation**

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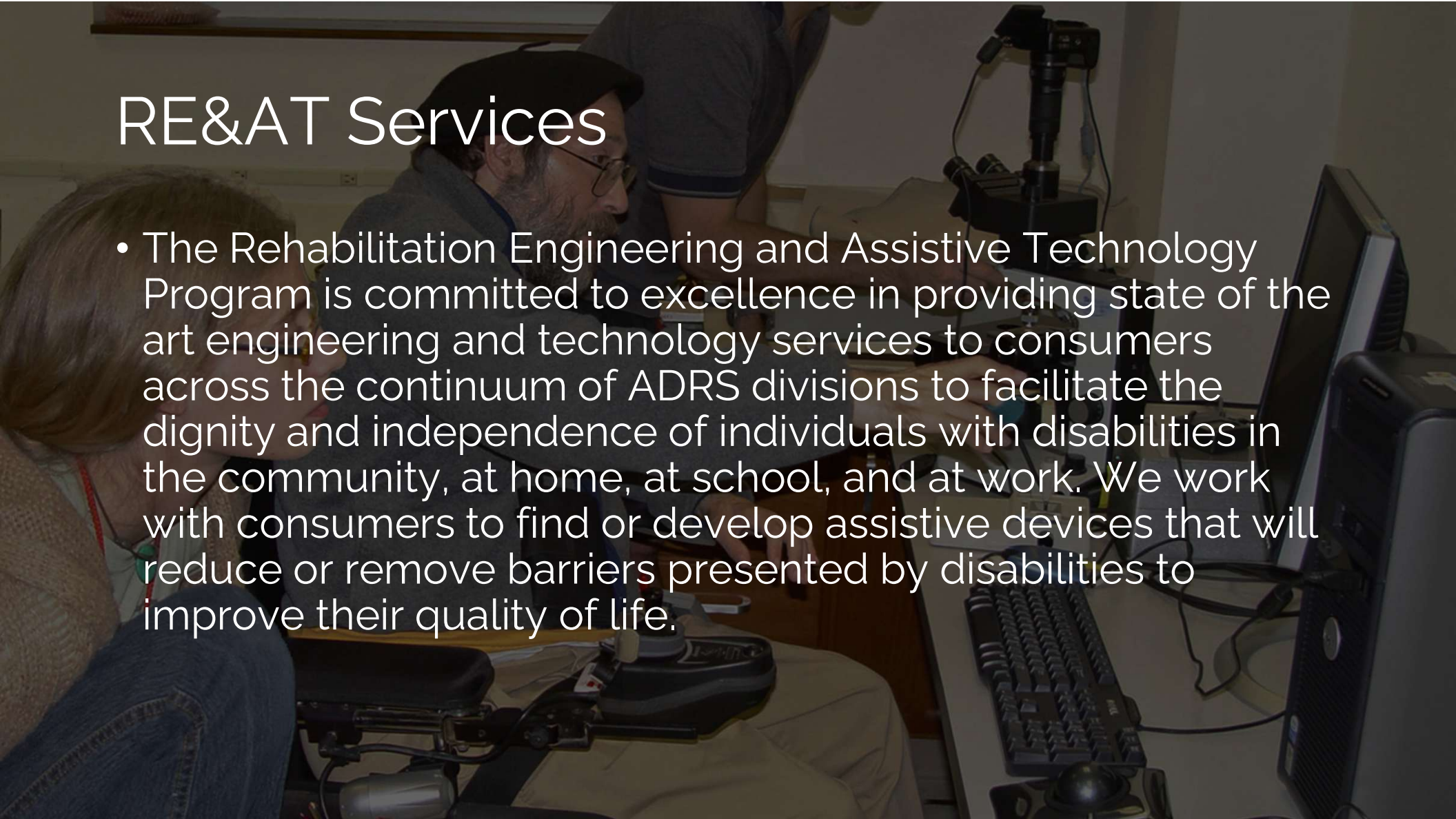
one mission

ONE DEPARTMENT. ONE MISSION

Our mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

RE&AT Services

- The Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Program is committed to excellence in providing state of the art engineering and technology services to consumers across the continuum of ADRS divisions to facilitate the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities in the community, at home, at school, and at work. We work with consumers to find or develop assistive devices that will reduce or remove barriers presented by disabilities to improve their quality of life.



Assistive Technology and Transition

When a Task Is Difficult...

Before deciding that a student cannot do it—or that someone else must do it—ask whether technology, a strategy, or an environmental change can reduce the barrier.

Assistive Technologies are devices, services, strategies, and practices developed and applied to overcome barriers faced by individuals with disabilities

The goal is not more technology.

The goal is greater access, choice, participation, and independence.



Assistive Technology and Transition

Today's AT Roadmap

Begin with goals, tasks, and barriers

Plan for ownership, training, support, and change

Leave with a transition checklist and Alabama resource guide

Explore current AT across adult-life settings

Connect with adult services and campus disability services



Assistive Technology Is Broader Than Devices

AT may be specialized, mainstream, low-tech, modified, or custom-built.

Devices

Adapted keyboards,
AAC, braille displays,
magnifiers

Software

Screen readers,
dictation, word
prediction, scheduling
tools

Strategies

Visual supports,
templates, checklists,
alternate workflows

Environmental changes

Lighting, positioning,
access routes, smart
controls

Services

Evaluation, trials,
training,
implementation, and
follow-up

Built-in access

Features already
available on phones,
tablets, and
computers

Start With the Activity—not the Product

A diagnosis does not identify the best tool. A clear functional goal gives the team a place to begin.

- 1 What does the person want or need to do?
- 2 What part of the task creates the barrier?
- 3 Where and with whom will the task occur?
- 4 What features could reduce the barrier?
- 5 What should we try—and how will we judge success?

Consider the Whole Situation

A solution succeeds only when it fits the person, task, environment, and available support.

PERSON

Strengths, preferences, access methods, experience

TASK

Required steps, speed, accuracy, duration, frequency

ENVIRONMENT

Physical space, noise, policies, connectivity, people

TOOLS & SUPPORT

Features, training, setup, maintenance, backup

Transition Changes the Context

A tool that works in high school may not transfer automatically into college, training, work, home, or the community.

- New tasks and performance expectations
- Different environments and technology systems
- Different people responsible for arranging support
- Possible loss of school-owned devices or licenses
- Greater need for self-advocacy and troubleshooting



Current Success ≠ Future Readiness

Document what works now, then test it against future settings.

CURRENT SETTING

- Who prompts or sets it up?
- Who owns the device?
- Does it depend on school Wi-Fi, accounts, or staff?
- Is the student using it independently?

NEXT SETTING

- Will the same tasks and platforms be used?
- Can the technology go with the student?
- Who will pay, maintain, and troubleshoot it?
- What training or backup plan is needed?

Education and Training

Look beyond classroom accommodations to the complete learning workflow.

Access materials

Accessible files, OCR,
text-to-speech, braille

Create work

Dictation, word
prediction, adapted
input, templates

Capture information

Structured notes,
smart pens,
transcription, photos

Study and organize

Calendars, reminders,
task breakdown, focus
supports

Participate

Captioning,
amplification, AAC,
remote access

Complete assessments

Accessible testing,
compatible formats,
alternate access

Reading and Writing

Match features to the barrier—not to the product name.

- Read aloud with synchronized highlighting
- OCR for print or inaccessible images
- Magnification, contrast, spacing, and reflow
- Dictation, word prediction, and spelling support
- Alternate keyboards, pointing methods, or switch access

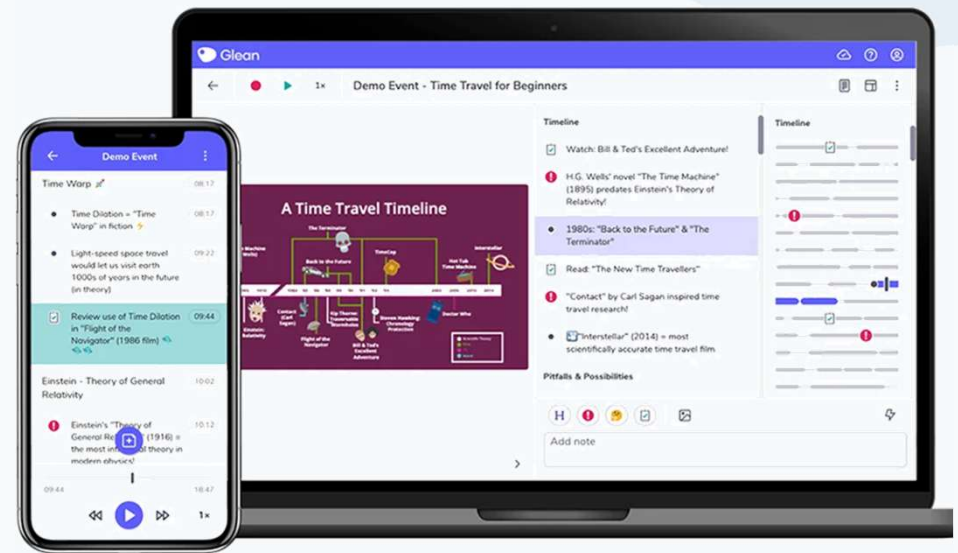


Example: C-Pen Exam Reader

Capturing and Using Information

The useful outcome is not simply recording information; it is being able to find, understand, and use it later.

- Typed, handwritten, photographed, or recorded
- Speech-to-text, OCR, summaries, or accessible formats
- Names, tags, folders, calendars, and course structure
- Searchable notes, read-aloud, highlights, and reminders
- Assignments, follow-up questions, meetings, and deadlines

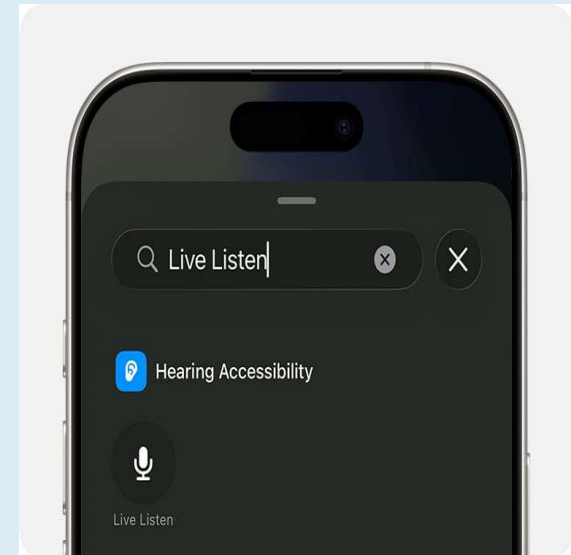


Example: Glean Notetaking app and software

Communication and Hearing Access

Mainstream devices can now perform tasks once handled only by dedicated products—but they still require careful feature matching and trials.

- Phone and compatible earbuds for personal amplification
- Live captions and speech-to-text for conversations
- Visual or vibrating alerts
- AAC for face-to-face and remote communication
- Remote microphone systems when distance and noise remain barriers



Example feature: Apple Live Listen

Employment

AT should support the essential task while fitting the actual workplace.

Computer access

Adapted input, voice access, screen reading, magnification

Job tasks

Adapted tools, jigs, fixtures, reach, positioning

Communication

AAC, captioning, hearing access, accessible phones

Organization

Prompts, schedules, checklists, task-sequencing supports

Ergonomics

Workstation setup, fatigue reduction, material handling

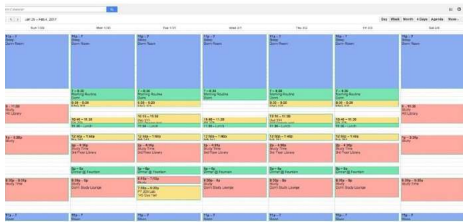
Environment

Lighting, noise, access routes, controls, safety

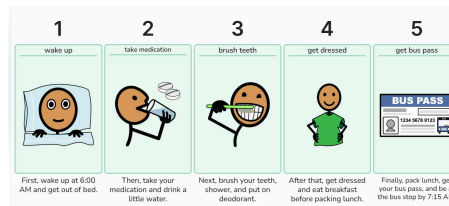
Organization

AT should support the essential task while fitting the actual workplace.

Shared Calendar



Visual Supports



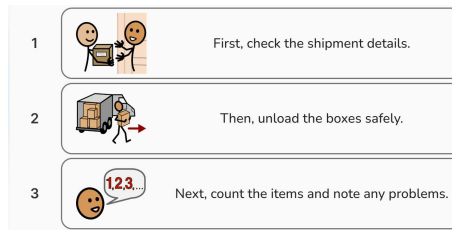
Checklists



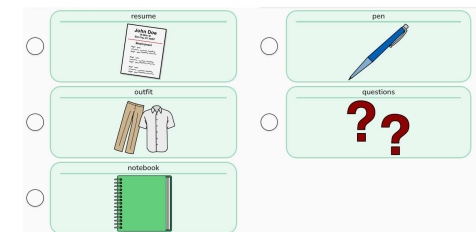
Financial Organization

A screenshot of a financial organization application. The interface shows a balance sheet or ledger with columns for categories, amounts, and balances. The total balance is displayed as \$0.00. The application is titled 'JUL 2010' and includes navigation controls.

Task Sequence



Checklists



Organization and Executive Function

A familiar phone or watch may provide effective support across school, work, home, and community settings.

Time

Visual timers, alarms, calendar blocks

Remembering

Location-based and scheduled reminders

Starting

First-step prompts and task launchers

Sequencing

Checklists, photos, video modeling

Focusing

Reduced-distraction modes and structured work periods

Follow-through

Shared lists, completion tracking, backup prompts

Home and Daily Living

Independence may come from a simple tool, a changed method, environmental access, or a combination.

Personal care

Adapted grips,
dressing tools,
positioning

Cooking

Talking or tactile tools,
timers, safe
workstations

Medication

Reminders,
organizers, accessible
labels

Home control

Voice, switch, phone,
or automated controls

Safety

Alerts, sensors,
emergency
communication

Access

Door, bathroom,
kitchen, bedroom, and
transfer modifications

Personal Care

Tools to help with grooming, bathing, dressing toilet use, etc.

Nail clipper



Bathing aids



Bath lift



Dressing aids



Hairdryer stand



Bidet seat



Cooking

Accessible for people with disabilities, <https://theblindkitchen.com/>

Cut glove



Measure Cups



Locking lid pan



Measure spoons



Knife brush



Talking timer



Access

Accessible for people with disabilities, <https://theblindkitchen.com/>

Gutter ramp



Threshold ramp



Lever handle



Glide board



Door opener



Controller



Transportation and Community Access

Transportation planning includes driving, riding, navigating, scheduling, paying, and managing unexpected changes.

- 1 Identify the destinations and transportation options
- 2 Assess physical, sensory, cognitive, and communication barriers
- 3 Explore driving evaluation, vehicle access, or non-driving options
- 4 Practice navigation, scheduling, payment, and safety routines
- 5 Create backup plans for delays, device failure, or emergencies

Vision Access

Vision-related AT can combine optical, electronic, auditory, tactile, and environmental approaches.

Digital access

Screen readers, magnification, braille displays

Printed information

OCR, video magnifiers, accessible formats

Environment

Lighting, glare reduction, contrast, labeling

Navigation

Wayfinding, orientation and mobility tools

Daily living

Talking, tactile, and high-contrast tools

Training

Technology skills plus techniques for real-life tasks

Communication and Complex Access

For students with significant support needs, transition planning must include how technology will work across people and places.

Communication

AAC vocabulary for adult roles and settings

Access

Eye gaze, head pointing, switches, scanning

Positioning

Mounting, seating, reach, and fatigue

Daily routines

Step-by-step prompts and environmental control

Support partners

Training for family, staff, instructors, and employers

Continuity

Funding, repair, backups, data, and vocabulary transfer

Consumer Products or Specialized?

Use the least complicated solution that performs reliably—but do not stop at mainstream technology when specialized support is needed.

MAINSTREAM

- Often familiar and socially accepted
- May cost less and update frequently
- Built-in accessibility is increasingly powerful
- May lack durability, precision, mounting, or support

SPECIALIZED

- Designed for particular access requirements
- May offer better reliability and customization
- Often includes specialized training or support
- May require funding, setup, and longer repair planning

Assistive Technology Is a Service Process

A device alone is not an outcome.

DEFINE

Clarify the goal and functional barrier

EXPLORE

Identify features and possible approaches

TRY

Use realistic tasks in realistic environments

SELECT

Choose based on performance and preference

IMPLEMENT

Configure, train, integrate, and document

FOLLOW UP

Measure results, adjust, maintain, and plan backups

Before the Student Exits K–12

Use the accompanying AT Transition Checklist to capture what must travel forward.

Document current tools, strategies, access settings, and results

Identify future tasks and environments—not only the next school

Determine ownership, licenses, accounts, data, funding, and repair

Build independent setup, use, troubleshooting, and self-advocacy skills

Arrange trials, training, referrals, and backup plans before exit

Assistive Technology Transition Checklist

Planning for education, employment, independent living, and community participation

Core question: What does the student want or need to do—and could assistive technology make it possible, safer, easier, or more independent?

Use this checklist with the student, family, school team, vocational rehabilitation counselor, service providers, and representatives of future settings. Start early and review the plan as goals, environments, and technology change.

Student and planning information

Student name: _____

People participating in this review: _____

Review date and next review date: _____

Goals and future environments

- ☐ Ask the student what they want to learn, do, change, or control in adult life.
- ☐ Identify likely education or training, employment, home, transportation, and community environments.
- ☐ Include daily activities—not only academic or work tasks.
- ☐ Identify activities that are currently difficult, unsafe, slow, tiring, avoided, or completed by someone else.
- ☐ Consider whether AT could allow the student to perform the activity, participate in part of it, direct assistance, communicate choices, or reduce needed support.

Priority activities or goals: _____

Review life activities

- ☐ Education and training: reading; writing; note-taking; listening; communication; computer access; testing; labs; trade tools; accessible materials.
- ☐ Employment: job applications; interviews; communication; transportation; task completion; productivity; safety; workplace systems and tools.

Responsibilities Change After High School

The IEP does not transfer to college, trade school, or employment. Adult settings generally require the individual to identify needs and request accommodations.

- Practice describing the functional barrier
- Know which accommodations and AT are effective
- Keep useful documentation and an AT history
- Contact campus disability services early
- Ask about compatibility, procedures, training, and timelines



Plan for Participation—not Just Placement

Three ideas to take with you

Begin with the person's goal and the task barrier.

Plan for technology, training, ownership, support, and change.

Connect early with ADRS, APTAT, campus disability services, and other appropriate specialists.

State Resources

ADRS – rehab.alabama.gov

- RE&AT
- APTAT
- Vision Rehab Therapy and O&M
- Rehab Audiology
- Adapted Driving
- CRS Clinics (Aug Comm, Audiology, Seating)

AIDB - aidb.org

- E.H. Gentry
- AIDB Regional Centers



**Rehabilitation Engineering &
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Facilitating Dignity and Independence with Technology
A Program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services



**Alabama Institute
for Deaf and Blind**
Deaf. Blind. Limitless.



Questions?

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