

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Assistive Technology Fact Sheet

Assistive technology (AT) is any item, device, piece of equipment or system that is used to help a person with a disability to do the tasks of everyday life. Examples of AT include adapted computers and software, magnifiers, listening devices, notetaking devices and environmental control units.

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) understands that AT is an important part of DORS employment and independent living services.

Current Users

If you already use AT, let your DORS counselor know as soon as possible. This information could be helpful in figuring out if the AT will work for your employment or independence needs, or whether newer AT might work better.

Potential Users

Your DORS counselor, DORS AT staff, and some community providers understand how AT can help you do a job and be independent. An AT assessment may be needed so that you can try out different types of AT and see what works best for you.

Timing

Your AT needs should be talked about at the very beginning of your time working with DORS, so that you can learn about and try a lot of AT options. DORS can then make sure that you have the AT you need during job and other assessments. DORS will also make sure that you have AT and can keep up your skills if there is a lot of time between training and work.

Providing AT

If you need AT, your DORS counselor will help find out if equipment is available through a loan or rental program, and if that AT will meet your needs.

Buying AT

DORS may help with buying AT, if it is needed for you to reach your employment or independent living goal, and cannot be found through a loan, rental, or other source.

- Some types of AT can be bought quickly.
- Sometimes, an AT assessment will be needed before buying AT. While this takes longer, it makes it more likely that the AT will meet your needs.
- DORS can help with buying the most cost-effective AT that meets your needs. You might not always get every device or feature that you would like, but talking with DORS staff about the AT you think works best is important in the decision-making process.
- You may have to help pay for AT based on DORS financial policy and sliding scale.

AT Assessments

DORS AT specialists, and staff at some community providers, are experts on AT that helps people with disabilities. A technology assessment will give you the chance to work with a specialist, try different types of AT, and figure out what works best for you. Assessments can be done in a DORS office (including DORS Workforce & Technology Center in northeast Baltimore) or community provider office, or at your workplace or home.

AT Training

Training on how to use AT is very important in helping you get all the benefits of AT and reach your employment or independence goal. Training for AT may be done in small groups or one-on-one with a DORS AT specialist or a community provider. You might have training in the office of a community provider, in your workplace or home, or at the DORS Workforce & Technology Center.

Other AT Resources

If you want to learn more about different kinds of AT on your own, contact:

Maryland Technology Assistance Project (MDTAP)
www.mdta.org; 1-800-832-4827

Questions?

If you have questions about AT and how it might help you with your employment and/or independent living goals, talk with your DORS counselor.