



together Success

home • school • work

BLUEPRINT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

MISSION: TO ENABLE ALABAMA'S CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL

We VALUE the worth, dignity and rights of people with disabilities and we will:

- provide an easily accessible, integrated continuum of services;
- ensure quality services that are family-centered, culturally sensitive and community-based;
- promote and respect consumer choice regarding provision of services;
- advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and promote self-advocacy;
- include people with disabilities, their families and advocates in agency planning and policy development.

We VALUE independence and meaningful work for people with disabilities and we will:

- educate families, children, employers, schools and the public that people with disabilities can and do work;
- advocate for quality health services and community supports that enable people with disabilities to work and/or function independently;
- develop, maintain and expand working relationships with employers;
- identify and create job opportunities that are compatible with consumer abilities;
- foster cross-divisional collaboration to achieve successful work outcomes.

We VALUE all staff and their contributions in achieving our mission and we will:

- communicate openly and honestly;
- recruit, develop, retain and promote a diverse, qualified staff;
- involve staff in agency planning, policy development and performance objectives;
- recognize and reward exemplary job performance;
- provide staff opportunities for personal and professional growth.

We VALUE leadership at all levels and we will:

- maximize staff participation in all agency initiatives;
- create an environment which encourages and supports creativity and innovation;
- facilitate teamwork among all staff;
- provide support and leadership development opportunities.

We VALUE maximum acquisition and efficient and effective management of resources and we will:

- acquire maximum resources;
- increase legislative support;
- develop and use appropriate technological advancements;
- evaluate the effective and efficient use of our resources;
- collaborate with organizations in the public and private sectors.

We VALUE public support and we will:

- educate the public about our mission, goals, services and expertise;
- secure support from business and industry, consumers of services, partners and policymakers;
- create partnerships that expand services to enhance opportunities for consumers;
- maximize staff involvement in the development of grassroots support.



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Welcome

Dear Friends,

It's always a surprise. When it's time to write this letter of introduction for our department's new annual report, I suddenly realize another year is almost over! The upside of that abrupt awakening is that when I look over this official record of our accomplishments, I feel a great sense of pride, not only for the individuals and families we serve who have achieved so much this year, but also for our staff members and partners across the state who played important roles in countless success stories.

In that spirit of celebration, I invite you to enjoy the 2014 edition of *Together, Success*. This report presents the facts and figures that are the annual performance record for all of the programs that constitute our uniquely efficient "continuum of services" for Alabamians with disabilities. From program descriptions to individual statistics for all 67 counties, this report paints a detailed portrait of how ADRS strives to meet the needs of the thousands of infants, toddlers, adolescents and adults who receive our services.

The numbers are important in telling our story, but to me, the more important aspect of *Together, Success* is the "Meet Our Families" section. Here you will find the personal accounts of some of the individuals who are part of our ADRS family. They are tales of challenge, determination, courage, and – above all – **SUCCESS!** And they are stories that remind all of us in this profession why we chose rehabilitation as a career.

Together, Success is the perfect title for this report, as it underscores the importance of shared goals, committed partnerships, and innovative collaboration in the provision of disability services in Alabama. On behalf of the individuals and families we serve, I say "thank you" to our many partners for continuing our legacy of success.

Also again, I renew my yearly challenge: May we rededicate ourselves to each other and to our shared mission: to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

Sincerely,

Cary F. Boswell



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school.
work.**

together **Success**

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the **ADRS** continuum of services: for a lifetime

Whether the person is a child born with a disability or someone who acquires a disability later in life, the goal is the same: self-sufficiency and independence. With individualized services provided in homes, schools, the workplace, and the community, ADRS assists every person in achieving his or her maximum potential.

Alabama's Early Intervention System

coordinates services statewide for infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays from birth to age 3, preparing them and their families for the transition to the state Department of Education's preschool program for 3- to 5-year-olds. Early Intervention also provides financial and technical support to more than 50 community programs that provide direct services to families.



Children's Rehabilitation Service

provides individualized services to children with special health care needs from birth to age 21 and their families at home, school, and in the community.

In addition, Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) provides disability services, expertise, and adaptive technology to and for local school systems, assisting teachers, school nurses, and other staff in the education of children with disabilities.

The CRS Hemophilia Program serves Alabama's children and adults with this life-threatening blood disorder.



Vocational Rehabilitation Service

provides rehabilitation, education and employment-related services to teens and adults with disabilities.

Every year, the Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) Business Relations Program provides disability management and employee placement services to Alabama businesses.

The Business Enterprise Program for Alabamians who are blind and visually impaired promotes independence through the operation of vending operations, snack bars and cafeterias in locations statewide.



Homebound/State of Alabama Independent Living

provides services to Alabamians who have catastrophic congenital disabilities or disabilities resulting from spinal cord or head injuries.

State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) program/Homebound staff also provide education and support services to families with children and adults with severe disabilities to make them more independent in the home, community, or workplace to maximize their educational experience.





Dear Friends,

I am fortunate and honored to have spent another year as chairman of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services.

Though the state's continuing financial challenges made it a trying time, it gave me yet another opportunity to directly observe the remarkable, life-altering impact that ADRS has on the lives of thousands of Alabamians with disabilities. Their accomplishments offer a living testament to the untiring efforts of our creative, caring, committed staff and demonstrate the importance and value of our partnerships with schools, community programs, and other governmental agencies.

On behalf of the board, I would like to offer my sincere thanks and congratulations to everyone – staff and partners – for another outstanding year. It is through your collective efforts that we are able to do more for those we serve

Roger McCullough
Board Chairman
District 6



Stephen Kayes
District 1



Jimmie Varnado
District 2



Stacy Mitchell
District 3



Andrea Collett
District 4



Eddie Williams
District 5



Mitch Strickland
District 7

Meet the Board



The Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services consists of seven members, one from each U.S. Congressional District. Board members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Alabama Senate. Per Alabama law, three members must be individuals with a disability, selected from consumer disability organizations; one member must be the parent of a child with a disability; and three members must be from organizations of business and industry within the state.

The board's responsibilities include making rules and regulations for the provision of rehabilitation services; directing and supervising the expenditure of legislative appropriations; disseminating information concerning and promoting interest in disability and rehabilitation issues; taking appropriate action to guarantee rights of and services to people with disabilities; and serving as the governing authority of programs administered by the department.



together
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Meet our families



Amanda Borchardt has learned a great deal about caring for her son, William, from EI and CRS. From feeding to sitting up and walking, and needed advocacy skills, the services of ADRS have been there to provide support for her son's every step.

For the nine months that Amanda Borchardt carried her first child, everything went along smoothly.

That all changed with a very difficult and lengthy delivery for her son, William. The process left William with a birthing injury. Hours after he was born, the child's face turned blue, and he began having seizures while in the neonatal unit.

"Things were grim," Amanda said. "Early on it was pretty clear there was brain damage, and really cerebral palsy was the best prognosis we could hope for."

William received an anoxic brain injury at birth. Part traumatic brain injury, part cerebral palsy, William was helped through a collaboration between Early Intervention (EI) and Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS).

"William got all services EI offered," said Judy Bradshaw, his EI coordinator. "Occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, special instruction — the time and effort spent on William was a great investment!"

William received services through CRS's neurology, neuromotor, orthopedic, seating, and feeding clinics and received a gait trainer. He also had tremendous advocacy support.

"The level of resources available to us through EI and CRS has really lifted a burden off our shoulders," said Amanda. "People like Aimee Lott, our CRS care coordinator, have been our shining stars. They helped teach us to advocate and continually challenge us to become better advocates over time."

Since EI and CRS entered

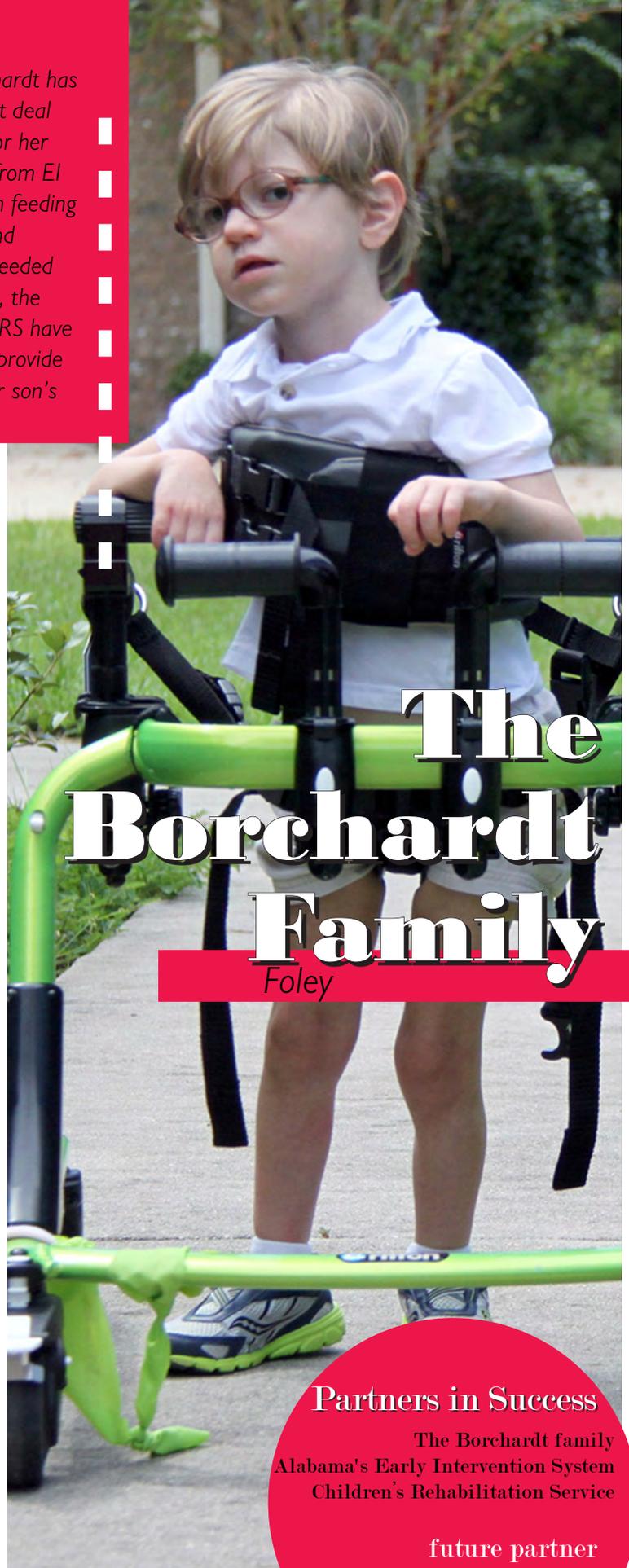
the picture, William has shown a dramatic improvement in his abilities.

His parents work with him daily to maximize the benefits of his therapy sessions. Common items, such as gloves, encourage him to flex his fingers. Patty cake games involve touch and hand clapping. Play-learning through making animal noises or banging on a toy piano helps William with auditory and sensory queues.

"I don't know where we'd be without CRS and EI," Amanda said. "We'd be without the equipment as well as the support. As first-time parents, raising a child is tough, but raising a child with a disability is that much more difficult. Our 3-year-old son would probably still be like an infant without (ADRS') help."

William is now able to sit up and take steps with the assistance of his gait trainer. He's also enrolled in a pre-k program to continue building on the strong foundation EI and CRS have given him during his first three years.

"What happened — what we went through — is a difficult thing to accept," Amanda said. "But our boy is happy, and he's got a heart of gold, and he's worked very hard to accomplish everything in his life. ADRS has been there to make his life the best it can be, and that's why what they do is so important!"



The Borchardt Family

Foley

Partners in Success

The Borchardt family
Alabama's Early Intervention System
Children's Rehabilitation Service

future partner
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

The Payne Family

Gardendale

Partners in Success

The Payne family
Alabama's Early Intervention System
Children's Rehabilitation Service

future partner
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Morgan, Jason, and Sophia Payne are all smiles after CRS and EI made a significant impact on their daily lives through assistance with feeding, mobility, and language development.

Knowing that the early years are critical for the success of any child, Morgan and Jason Payne doggedly searched for assistance when their daughter, Sophia, had multiple complications associated with her quadriplegic cerebral palsy.

"We feed Sophia through a g-tube, and we first became acquainted with CRS because of special feeding issues," said Morgan. "In the beginning, we had no idea how much CRS and EI could do for our daughter."

Sophia initially received services from CRS through the feeding and seating clinics. CRS provided the family with an adaptive stroller and a gait trainer to assist the little girl's mobility. Alabama's Early Intervention System also helped the Paynes with occupational and speech therapy for their daughter and advocacy training for them.

The breakthrough for Sophia, however, came during a CRS clinic visit when Speech-Language Pathologist Karen Baggett noticed Sophia's exceptional cognitive abilities.

Knowing that language skills develop in a child long before he or she is able to speak, Baggett attempted to offset any language delay. When Sophia was only 2 years of

age, the youngster was selected as an excellent candidate for CRS's Augmentative Communication Technology (ACT) clinic, becoming one of the youngest children in the nation to receive a Tobii Eye 12, an advanced augmentative communication device that tracks eye movement to "speak" when an individual is unable.

After initial calibration adjustments, the eye gaze system opened up a whole new world for Sophia. Just months before, she had been unable to communicate effectively, but now she is able to identify colors and shapes by name, knows the different sounds animals make, and is able to interact with her parents in ways that were not possible without the device.

"ADRS has done all of the leg work on this," said Morgan. "From the walker, to the gait trainer, to the Tobii ... It's so nice to have all of these resources available all in one place. Our daughter's communication has improved by leaps and bounds. We couldn't do this on our own. Not only is it too financially strapping, we wouldn't know where to start. CRS is a vital part of our lives."



CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc9tvWKfcxA> **FOR VIDEO**



When the newborn hearing screening test indicated Amanda Hahn's son, Dylan, had severe hearing loss, her eyes widened.

"Troy and I knew we had a long road ahead of us to be able to talk to our son," she said.

The Hahn family was referred to Alabama's Early Intervention System, and EI immediately facilitated early speech therapy when Dylan was only three months of age.

Suzy Barr, EI service coordinator at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, worked closely with the Hahns from the beginning. One of the many things she suggested was the incorporation of Baby Babble Speech Enhancing videos – which were developed by Speech Pathologists – to give Dylan a leg up in speech development. With EI's assistance, the Hahn family also began learning American Sign Language.

"EI was instrumental in providing us with a sense of community," said Amanda. "They worked hard to plug us into different support communities and connect us with other families, which was really important to us. Here in the Dothan area, it sometimes felt like we were the only ones with a special needs child. Understanding that you are not alone and it isn't the end of the world is the first step on the pathway to success."

In addition to providing emotional support, CRS fitted Dylan for ear molds and hearing

aids. Both EI and CRS worked together to arrange for a preschool Dylan would attend.

"Something EI and CRS did for Dylan, which I never expected, was they talked to his preschool teachers when an issue arose with him wanting to remove his hearing aids," Amanda said. "It was really nice to see how Dylan always had someone in his corner watching out for his best interests."

The early coordination of care and assistance with speech development benefitted Dylan immensely, and when the youngster was discovered to have more profound hearing loss than first thought, CRS provided more powerful hearing aids.

"It was that moment when I could see the light bulb come on," Amanda said. "He went from not hearing a thing to a world full of sound. All of the care and attention we got through EI, CRS, and AIDB kept him ahead of the game, and their care really opened doors for us and Dylan."

Today Dylan, just like any other 3-year-old boy, loves trains and playing outside, and his profound hearing loss isn't slowing him down in any way.

"Hearing loss is one of those things that I think most people would miss out on," Amanda said. "It's not something you can see, and some might not even consider it a necessity, but seeing the difference that CRS and EI have made in my child's life is night and day."

With EI and CRS working in tandem, Dylan Hahn's profound hearing loss will not slow him down in any way or keep him from doing the many things he wants to do.



The Hahn Family

Midland City

Partners in Success
The Hahn family
Alabama's Early Intervention System
Children's Rehabilitation Service

future partner
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4IQAxNAXIk> **FOR VIDEO**



The Rose Family

Selma

Partners in Success

The Rose family
Alabama's Early Intervention System
Children's Rehabilitation Service

future partner
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Mattie Rose said she is thrilled that EI and CRS addressed feeding and speech issues affecting her son, Kayden, who has a cleft palate.

Kayden was only two weeks old when he first came into the Rose family home.

"I met Kayden through my niece," said Mattie Rose, a foster parent. "I never intended to take in infants as a foster mom, but from the beginning, he was our baby. We did everything for him but the birthing, and fully adopting him as our own felt so natural."

Their perfect child wasn't born without issue, though. Kayden came into the world with a cleft palate and had developmental delays and feeding difficulties.

Mattie was finalizing the adoption process when she first enrolled her 10-month-old son with CRS and Early Intervention.

"The therapies through EI were so great," she said. "He was trying to walk, but all my boy could do then was scoot. That first visit with the ADRS family opened up a whole new world for us."

After Kayden's palate was repaired through surgery, he started speech therapy with ADRS.

"EI recognized the delays in Kayden's speech development," said April Joyner, CRS speech pathologist. "In the time since, Kayden has made huge improvements and is making more intelligible sounds. He's now expressing himself more clearly, and further therapy and preschool

at the SPEC program at Easter Seals will build on that strong foundation."

In addition to speech therapy, Kayden also attended a pediatric assessment at CRS to determine whether he had neurological issues. Testing indicated no such problems, but his feeding difficulties were addressed by CRS. With guidance by CRS Social Worker Constance Phillips, Kayden now feeds himself without issue.

"CRS has done so much for us," said Mattie. "These many programs need to continue because it's such good help for those who need it. I know it has helped me. Kayden has made such a big difference in my life; he keeps me going. I became a foster mother because I've always felt that every child needs a mother. For kids with special needs, CRS makes just as big an impact. It's awesome to know that CRS and EI have made such a big difference in his life, too."

The CRS team's hard work is made better through empowered parent advocates, and it takes hard-working parents like Mattie to bring out a huge difference in a child's life, said Melvina Moss, Kayden's care coordinator.

"Ms. Rose was diligent and has done everything we've ever asked of her," she said. "She's a great mom to Kayden, and has gone above and beyond for him. If we are Kayden's support, she is his shining star."



CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCGZQyyMJw8> **FOR VIDEO**



As scary as a missing myelin sheath may be, Starr is amazed at the quality of care that her daughter, Emma, has received from the many services at ADRS and the level of improvement she has noticed as a result.

Emma Walker's mother, Starr, first grew concerned and began the search for answers when her one-month-old daughter appeared to have severe issues in steadying and focusing her eyes.

After also noticing low muscle tone, Emma's pediatrician suspected her condition was an underdeveloped myelin sheath, a condition which disrupts signals between the brain and other parts of the body.

Alabama's Early Intervention System stepped in to provide an immediate response to circumvent these potentially devastating issues.

"The entire experience has been relieving," Starr said of the assistance she and her daughter have received through EI. "EI was early in setting goals and guidelines for us to follow, and they push us to meet those goals. I'd have no one to talk to without them, and without them, I would be lost as to how to care for my precious Emma."

Through Early Intervention, Emma seems to be doing remarkably well. Occupational, physical, and speech therapies have increased the youngster's muscle tone and her erratic eye movements have ceased. CRS helped Emma with various feeding issues and provided her with an orthopedic strap to aid in developing better posture. Since acquiring the strap, the toddler has regularly been seen at CRS orthopedic clinics to ensure success.

With Emma, delays are still present, but she has advanced well above all expectations, and there is hope that she will soon be learning to walk and talk.

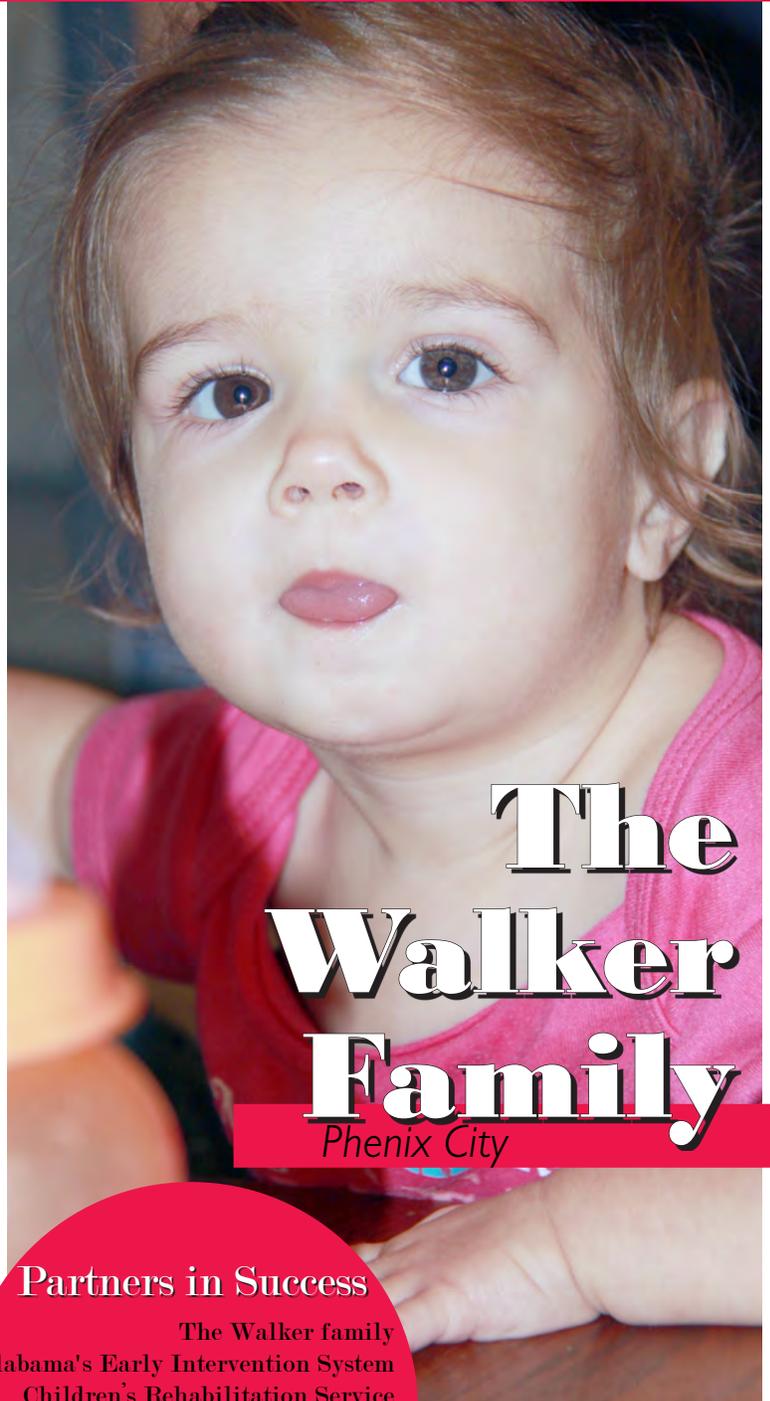
"In the beginning, I was scared — no, terrified," Starr said. "I didn't know what to do then, and I'm certain I would be that much further behind without EI's help. Ordinary people aren't educated on raising a child with a disability, and EI came in, calmed me down, and taught me to look at the issue in a whole new way. Now, it's not so scary."

Starr credits Early Intervention and CRS in providing her with the necessary encouragement and faith in raising a daughter with special health care needs.

"She means everything to me," she said. "Every little victory, every small achievement, I cherish and celebrate with her, and I contact EI and let them know, too. They've been such a resource for Emma, and they're always there when I need them."

During an EI therapy visit, Starr felt so inspired by Emma's drastic improvement through therapy, she decided to give her a new nickname.

"My sweet, darling baby Emma — she's my little 'Snail Bug,' " she said. "She might be moving slow, but she's definitely making progress!"



The Walker Family

Phenix City

Partners in Success

The Walker family
Alabama's Early Intervention System
Children's Rehabilitation Service

future partner
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Devin Kerby

Florence

Partners in Success

Devin Kerby
Children's Rehabilitation Service

future partner
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Devin's road to success began with learning how to accommodate her TBI. Now, she's teaching others by raising awareness about her injury.



On Dec. 11, 2005, 4-year-old Devin Kerby was in a tragic car crash. She was not properly restrained when the vehicle hit a bridge going 60 miles per hour, and the crash ejected and threw her 20 feet from where the vehicle came to rest.

"All of our lives changed in an instant," said Devin's mom, Desiree. "I heard about the wreck as soon as I was leaving work and feared the worst."

Devin was airlifted to a hospital in Huntsville with a brain bleed and a fractured skull. The first few days were critical, but she mostly recovered following multiple physical therapy sessions at Children's Hospital.

Her traumatic brain injury (TBI), however, had longer lasting effects. As a result, the family was put in touch with Suki Nelson, a CRS social worker who specializes in TBI.

Through CRS, Devin and her mom learned the in's and out's of managing a TBI.

"Devin has memory problems and difficulty with fine motor skills," Desiree said. "It's sometimes a struggle, but we can always work around it."

Suki worked closely with Devin's teachers to overcome these issues, explaining to them how the brain functions differently following a TBI.

"Before and after that training, I noticed a difference in how I teach, and how Devin responded to my teaching," said Melissa

Waddell, Devin's seventh grade Life Science teacher. "You just have to break down the information into smaller chunks."

Because of all the help she received with her brain injury, Devin decided to give back and came up with an initiative to raise money for the Kevin Pearce Foundation, to help others in situations similar to her own.

She got her school involved, with all students wearing green for a week in March – TBI Awareness Month – and collecting donations for the privilege. She sold handmade green ribbons to raise additional money and put up posters to promote the fundraising drive.

"Together, we raised \$200," Devin said. "It felt really good to do that, and I'm going to do it again next March."

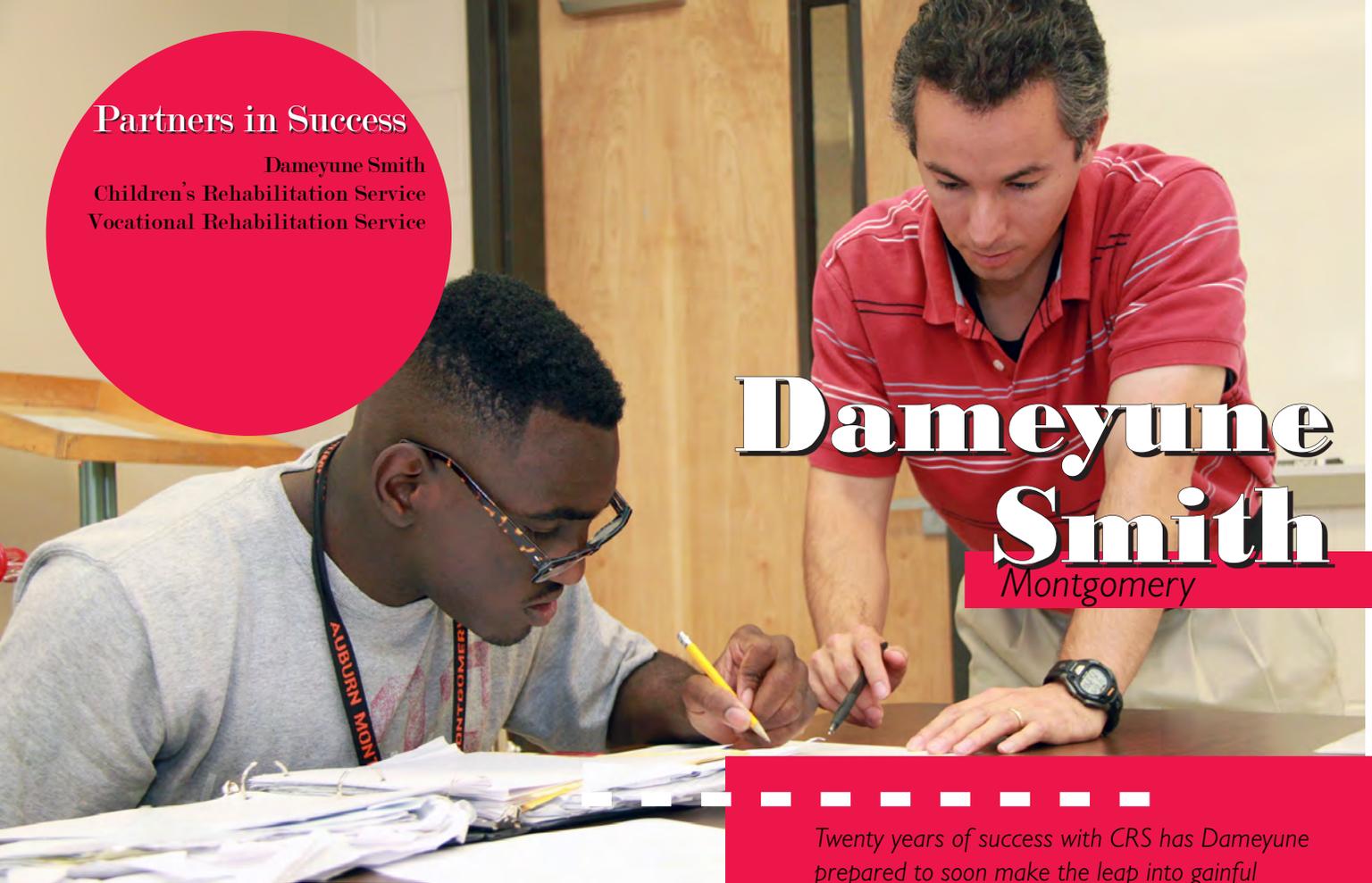
In addition to its other services, CRS works with parents to help them become strong advocates for their kids and to help their children advocate for themselves, believing that a self-advocating child is further along on the journey toward independence and lifelong success.

"I can't describe how great CRS or Suki has been to us," added Desiree. "What CRS has done for us would be impossible for us to do on our own. I'm grateful to have that outlet to talk to and listen to us about our needs. CRS has been a such a wonderful resource for our family for these past nine years."

CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6i61kknLuPE> **FOR VIDEO**

Partners in Success

Dameyune Smith
Children's Rehabilitation Service
Vocational Rehabilitation Service



Dameyune Smith

Montgomery

Twenty years of success with CRS has Dameyune prepared to soon make the leap into gainful employment as an adult.

For twenty years of his life, Dameyune Smith has made it a point to overcome all obstacles placed before him.

"CRS has been a part of my life for a long time," said Dameyune, a current student at Auburn University Montgomery. "Jane Barkley, my care coordinator, always encouraged me to get involved, so I did."

Born with cerebral palsy, Dameyune was the official "spokeskid" for the United Way when he was 3 years old. Not long after, he was also an ambassador child with the March of Dimes.

"My mom and dad were my foundation growing up," Dameyune said. "They kept me busy. They kept me active. But if my parents inspired me, it was my CRS care coordinator who empowered me."

Dameyune's mom, Ruby, took her son to the CRS Orthopedic Clinic, where they provided him with devices like AFO leg braces to encourage better posture, a walker to increase mobility, and a power chair for traversing long distances. Additional equipment, like tablets for writing and Dragon Naturally Speaking and Alpha Smart for taking notes assist in his efforts at school.

As Ruby explains, the equipment was necessary, but the additional advice was invaluable.

"What it boils down to is opportunity," Ruby said. "Capable children have every opportunity to be successful, but for children with special needs, their opportunities sometimes exist on different avenues.

CRS provides parents with road maps to navigate the way to success."

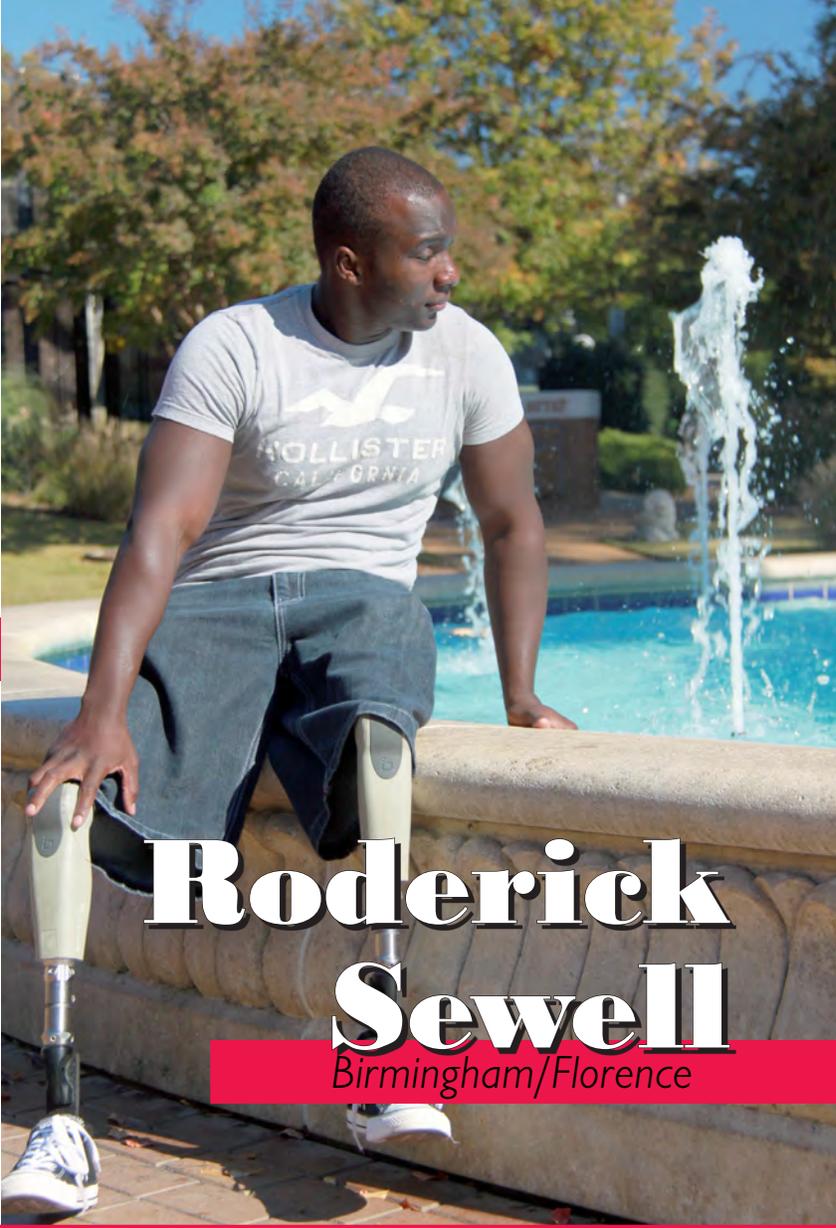
Over the years, Jane Barkley remained in close contact with the Smith family. She advised Dameyune to participate in as many events as possible to maximize his pathway to independence as an adult. From the Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) and Teen Transition Clinic – where major changes occurred in Dameyune's attitude and independence – to ASU's Camp GIFTED and wheelchair basketball at Auburn University – which impacted him in more subtle ways – CRS always ensured Dameyune was included and involved.

"All of these programs – they were all door openers for me," Dameyune said. "They've shaped me into who I am today, and I wouldn't be the person I am today without that support or encouragement CRS has given me."

Today, Dameyune's future has been made a bit brighter thanks to the involvement and impact CRS has had on his life. On the brink of a new chapter in his life, VR will be there to successfully guide this determined young man to gainful employment.

"I'm a headstrong individual who leads by example," Dameyune said. "My disability is just a part of who I am. I don't look at the handful things I can't do, I look at the millions of things I can. It's too obvious to me now, but I might not see it that way if it weren't for the influence ADRS has had on me."





Roderick Sewell

Birmingham/Florence

Essentially homeless while living in California as a young teenager, Roderick's life has transformed with assistance from Alabama CRS and VRS. Now training to swim in the 2016 Paralympics in Rio, Roderick hopes to inspire others in a way similar to how ADRS has inspired him.

Just a month away from graduating from the University of North Alabama in Florence, like any other college senior, Roderick Sewell is looking ahead to a future made brighter by education.

Unlike other college seniors, though, Roderick was born with tibial hemimelia, a congenital anomaly of absent shin bones.

The rarest lower limb deficiency — occurring in approximately one in a million births — tibial hemimelia creates major problems because the tibia is the strongest weight-bearing bone in the body.

“When I was little and we were still living in San Diego, my mother decided to have both of my legs amputated,” Roderick said. “I could either learn to walk with prosthetics or forever be in a wheelchair. My mom made the right decision.”

Roderick and his mom moved to Alabama when he was 13 to seek better opportunities. Essentially homeless before moving east, Roderick's mom found a job for her, and CRS for her son.

“CRS, and later VR, taught me a lot about disability when I was a teenager,” Roderick said. “There's a lot you can do with disabilities, and a disability doesn't have to keep you from doing what you want to do. I learned that while at CRS clinics, and going through Teen Transition, College Prep, and YLF. Those ADRS programs are all vital to making me into who I am today.”

Once afraid of the water, Roderick is now an avid swimmer who spends up to four hours each day in the pool. He is currently training to compete in the 2016 Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro.

“Training to compete has me swimming two times a day in addition to work in the gym,” said Roderick. “I'm doing it, though, because my main goal in life is to inspire others. CRS and VR helped grow that in me. Before I went to CRS, I embarrassingly had a wide step with my prosthetic legs. CRS taught me to straighten my stride, boosted my confidence, and swimming in the Paralympics is a my little way of giving back and showing that I made it.”

Ultimately, Roderick wishes to be a motivational speaker to inspire other persons with disabilities, but immediately following graduation, he plans to move back to San Diego where he has a job lined up with the YMCA to challenge a new generation of youth with and without disabilities.

“You know, it's crazy to think of where my life could have ended up,” Roderick said. “A physical disability is as impactful as you allow it to be, and while we were homeless in California, I know I didn't have much of a future. ADRS stepped in and really helped me out, and today, I'd like to think that I've grown into a decent man. Overcoming disability doesn't always have to take a lot, but it always takes something meaningful. The people I met at ADRS made all the difference for me. A mindset can change the whole situation, and for me ADRS means having a normal life and not worrying about my disability.”



Partners in Success

Roderick Sewell
Children's Rehabilitation Service
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hnLJIkyWqQ> **FOR VIDEO**

Ashley Rhea

Birmingham

Partners in Success

Ashley Rhea
Vocational Rehabilitation Service
State of Alabama Independent Living

There was a time not too long ago when Ashley Rhea didn't think she would be a lawyer or even employed, and certainly not living on her own.

"I don't see a disability as a limitation," said Ashley, "but you still need to think differently if you want to overcome it."

Ashley has arthrogryposis, which impacts her mobility. Her muscle weakness limits the number of physical tasks she can complete, but with clever modifications and accommodations, she is able to do nearly everything anyone else can do.

When Ashley expressed an interest in going to Birmingham Southern College, VR and the State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) program were there. Personal care was an issue, and the SAIL Waiver provided 25 hours of attendant care. Modifications to the dorm room living space maximized accessibility, and Ashley was provided devices to assist with daily tasks, like brushing her hair and teeth.

"I wanted the full-college experience, and ADRS made that possible," Ashley said. "I have to stand to write, and ADRS provided me with a standing desk and stool. Dragon speech recognition software helps me type papers and documents easily. Little things

even — like optimal positioning of items — make all the difference, and it's all thanks to ADRS."

While at Birmingham Southern, a professor saw potential in Ashley and urged her to attend law school. With her professor's recommendation, the young woman enrolled at Cumberland three years ago, and in October 2014, officially received her certificate to practice law in Alabama. She intends to specialize in disability law as a way to give back for all of the support she's received in getting her where she is today.

"I had a lot of concerns about how I was going to accomplish any of this at first, but ADRS made it all possible," she said. "It made me a full participant in society. Without ADRS, I wouldn't even be on my own. Today, I'm making a great living as an attorney. I'm giving back, and obviously I'm thankful for the entire program."

For Ashley, driving is the final frontier in her rehabilitation process, and it's something that has stalled since she was in high school.

"Driving is the final step, that final mark of independence and mobility for me," added Ashley. "It's still a work-in-progress, but Craig Rogers at ADRS Lakeshore is working on a full evaluation for me, and I'm hoping driving will soon be a reality for me."

A host of ADRS services — including SAIL, VR, Assistive Technology, and Transition — coordinated to help Ashley achieve her maximum potential of becoming a practicing attorney.

On Dec. 15, 2011, Heath Pollard's truck careened into an embankment and rolled over before coming to a stop, partially ejecting him from the vehicle, and giving him asphalt burns to his back and elbow.

The crash broke Heath's neck, crushed his vertebra, and left him with a C5 spinal cord injury, paralyzed from the chest down. ADRS worked with Heath to help restore order in his life and send him back to his passion of teaching chemistry and physics.

"The crash nearly killed me," Heath said. "It was a life changing and tragic event for me and my family, and it took me into my own personal hell. It's been a long road, but I've recovered."

Heath's rehabilitation started with just getting him healthy. He spent six weeks in ICU in a halo, where his life was in the balance. Well after this critical period, the catastrophic accident continued to affect everything from his blood pressure to his body's ability to regulate core temperature.

"It took a long time to get back to normal," Heath said. "After the accident, there were several scares and trips to the ER, and that was my body saying it wasn't quite ready. I spent months in the Shepherd Center (in Atlanta) working through physical pain, went through several surgeries, and once thought it would never be possible to return to the classroom and my passion."

ADRS responded to Heath's needs in the classroom with different assistive devices to assist him in his teaching efforts. SAIL provided

necessary personal care, and VR made van modifications and provided equipment to enable him to drive.

Rehabilitation technology specialists coordinated with Brookwood High School to optimize his classroom work area. VR provided Heath with an elevated wheelchair to ensure visibility of his students, and Heath's dad even stepped in to handcraft a special desk that accommodated Heath's power chair.

"Getting me back to work — it means everything to me, and ADRS as an organization has been great," Heath said. "Teaching is everything I've been about, and getting back to it has restored my confidence. Without the support from ADRS, there's no way I would have been able to get back here, and I don't know what I would have done with my life without them."

Heath returned to the classroom in January 2014, and VR closely monitored his progress. In August, a new Brookwood High School was built, and Heath's classroom was set up specifically with his needs in mind.

"There are still several challenges for me," Heath said. "I'm working hard on projection and getting my voice back, and it's still sometimes a struggle to maintain my blood pressure. The whole experience with VR and SAIL has been nothing but positive for me. Accepting my disability was one of the hardest things I've done, but all of the encouragement and support I've received along the way told me to never give up, and I never did."



With the assistance of SAIL and VR, Heath has returned to Brookwood High School, near Tuscaloosa, to teach chemistry and physics full-time following a catastrophic wreck that nearly killed him.



Heath Pollard

Tuscaloosa



Partners in Success

Heath Pollard
Vocational Rehabilitation
State of Alabama Independent Living
The Shepherd Center
Tuscaloosa County Schools

CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsvF6qqFodg> **FOR VIDEO**



C.J. Miller

Oxford

Following C.J. Miller's motorcycle wreck, VR and SAIL worked together to restore his "sense of purpose" by getting him back into the classroom.

C.J. Miller was only weeks away from the beginning of a new school year when a motorcycle wreck left him with a spinal injury and incomplete quadriplegia. "Teaching is my passion — it's my life," said C.J., a teacher at Oxford's C.E. Hanna Elementary School. "The official wreck report said I hit a patch of gravel while going around a curve. I don't remember exactly what happened, but what was immediately apparent to me after the accident was this injury very well might rob me of everything I love."

Instead of returning to school for the 2012-13 school year, Miller's extensive injuries required multiple physical therapy sessions, which were provided through the State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) program.

"The road to recovery after a major accident is a long one," C.J. said. "Most people assume the time spent in the hospital is the toughest. It isn't. The hardest part is that first trip home, because it's only then you realize your life will never be the same."

Despite battling depression, C.J. did exceedingly well with rehab. His spirits lifted on the hope of returning to the classroom to teach, and a RAVE (retaining a valuable employee) case soon was opened, with VR Counselor Teresa Austin guiding C.J.'s path back to teaching.

Craig Rogers with ADRS Lakeshore provided

a driver evaluation for adaptive driving to assist C.J. in re-obtaining his driver license. Lakeshore also assisted with modifications to his car, including hand controls. Independent Living Specialist April Jones provided a wheelchair lift for his car. Rehabilitation Technology Specialist Bynum Duren provided recommendations for modifications at home and work.

"The support I received from VR and SAIL was unbelievable," C.J. said. "Returning to work has restored my sense of purpose. I don't know if I ever would have gotten back to work on my own, but I do know that without VR, I'd be so much further behind in that effort. I'm so grateful for all the help I've received. They gave me my life back!"

For now, C.J. is working five-hour days, three days a week as an intervention specialist, assisting a team of teachers from fourth to sixth grades. With eyes on teaching full-time, C.J. admits that being a floating teacher has its benefits, too.

"Most teachers have 20 or so kids," he said. "I did before the crash, but this way, I get to positively impact nearly every child at this school. What happened to me was unfortunate, but I'm still here, and I'm still going to inspire. My students all know that life can be hard, but you've got to keep on going when it gets the hardest."



Partners in Success
C.J. Miller
Vocational Rehabilitation Service
State of Alabama Independent Living

Partners in Success

Gail Smith
Vocational Rehabilitation Service
VRS Business Relations
Alabama Institute for the Blind

Gail Smith

Jasper

While she was growing up in Gardendale in 1969, a severe infection irreparably damaged Gail Smith's optic nerve.

"It changed my sight, but I never lost my vision," said Gail, who was 14 at the time. "I've always wanted to work and help out in any way I could."

For the next several years, she chipped in around the house, cooking and cleaning. She even worked at the family's hobby and craft shop.

Gail's first contact with ADRS was in 1976, where she was urged to take the G.E.D. to make her more employable. She did, and with ADRS's help, she happily worked several different jobs over the years, ranging from a court reporter to a telemarketer.

"I enjoy working," said Gail, "but there isn't a lot you can do when the company moves to another town. VR has always been there for me over the years, so I went back to them to seek job assistance."

Rehabilitation Counselor Hayden Steward was impressed with Gail's work ethic, but after looking at her work history, she realized that Gail was perhaps underselling herself.

"I wanted a job — any job," Gail said. "There aren't a lot of businesses hiring in Jasper, but Hayden suggested I go into business for myself, and do something I really enjoy."

And thus, Gail Smith the BrailleSmith was born.

Gail, Hayden, and ADRS Business Relations Consultant Leslie Dawson met several times to work on a business plan for Gail to start her own Braille business. They conducted research on equipment needs, paper products, and consumer demand.

After discovering that only a handful of businesses exist that provide Braille business and greeting cards, Gail saw a need to fill in the market, and the team at ADRS proceeded in helping Gail's dream become a reality.

"I've been a part of ADRS for a long time," Gail said, "and I can honestly say that it's changed my life. It's so awesome to work for myself. None of this would be possible without the help of VR."

Since opening BrailleSmith, business has taken off, and Gail has served high-profile customers, including Target Corporation. Gail and her husband, Don, have received a lot of positive feedback on their business, and Gail hopes that she will soon be able to grow the business by hiring her first employee, preferably someone who is also visually impaired.

"I couldn't tell you how much ADRS has impacted my life," said Gail. "With this business, ADRS has put my future in my hands, and it is bright."

The VR team around Gail Smith would not rest until she was completely satisfied with her job. Limited options in Jasper led the team to get creative and help her develop her own braille business running right out of her home.



CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjAkOwdb3GA> **FOR VIDEO**

D.D. Nicolau

Vestavia

Partners in Success

D.D. Nicolau
Vocational Rehabilitation Service
State of Alabama Independent Living
The Shepherd Center

D.D.'s high-level neck injury requires her to have at-home attendant care. Though her mobility is severely limited, VR and SAIL helped her remain in full control of her thriving commercial real estate business.

Outgoing and vivacious, D.D. Nicolau enjoyed the sport of fencing, where she played at a competitive level, almost as much as she loved riding horses and world travel.

"Life was much different prior to the accident," she said.

On March 20, 2011, D.D. was working with her riding coach on jumping fences when she tumbled off the back of the horse and landed on her face. She was airlifted to UAB, where she spent one month in ICU. Afterward, her rehabilitation effort began at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta.

"I was in pitiful shape for rehab," D.D. said. "It took me a year to 18 months to just get healthy. I was vent dependent and still coming to terms with my injury."

The State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) program, ADRS's homebound program, and vocational rehabilitation teamed up to restore a sense of order to D.D.'s life. Home attendant care through SAIL enables D.D. to live independently, and innovative solutions from VR allow her to remain at the helm of her vibrant commercial real estate business.

"I'm so grateful for ADRS in helping me establish my own measure for independence," she said. "VR has made several suggestions to me that have allowed me to remain in control of my business despite my injury."

Environmental controls on D.D.'s iPad allow her to turn on lights or the television without ever pressing a switch. Quick Pro software on the device allows D.D. to create documents and look at spreadsheets to manage her business from her chair.

"Technology – I sort of have a love/hate relationship with it," said D.D. "But I know this: I would have gone crazy without remaining in control of my business, and VR and SAIL positively found a way for me to continue to manage it."

As D.D. describes her life following the riding accident, she now has two qualities that did not exist before.

"I was never a patient person," she said, "and humility really means something to me now. But what surprises me is that there is so much I can do – still. I've learned that by working with ADRS, and they have simply been guardian angels to me."

serving
infants
&
toddlers

together
Success



Early Intervention

Early Intervention



Studies show that 85 percent of a child's brain development occurs by the age of 3 and that investment in early childhood programs results in more-effective public schools, better-educated workers, and less crime.

The early years are critical to the success of any child, but they are especially vital for a child who has a developmental delay or disability.

Created as the first step in ensuring that all children start school ready to learn, Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) is an essential component in assuring lifetime success for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Through its coordinated, community-based, family-centered system of support and services, EI works collaboratively with families, community organizations, and public and private service providers to assist with a child's development as well as with a family's ability to help their child develop and learn.

Studies show that 85 percent of a child's brain development occurs by the age of 3 and that investment in early childhood programs results in more-effective public schools, more-educated workers, and less crime.

Early Intervention is also a good investment, with studies indicating that every dollar spent on early intervention saves \$7 in future costs.

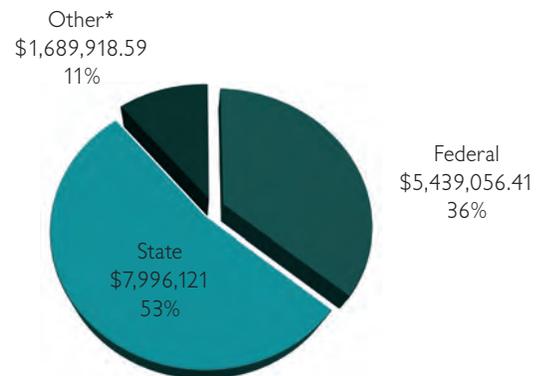
There are more than 50 early intervention programs in local communities across Alabama delivering services and supports to infants and toddlers and their families in their natural environments. In home and community settings, such as child-care centers, mother's-day-out programs, or city parks, youngsters with disabilities are able to participate in daily activities with their peers who do not have disabilities.

To be eligible for Early Intervention services, a child must be younger than 3 years old and experience delays in hearing, seeing, walking, talking, or learning or have a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in delays.

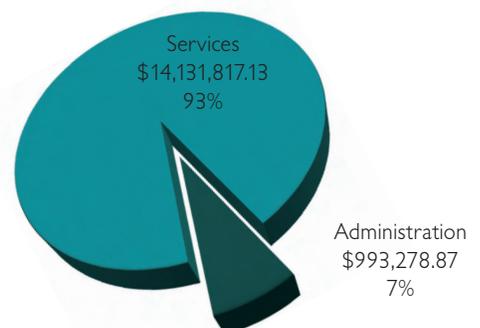
EI by the numbers

More than \$15 million in services to infants, toddlers, and families

Source of Revenue



Use of Revenue



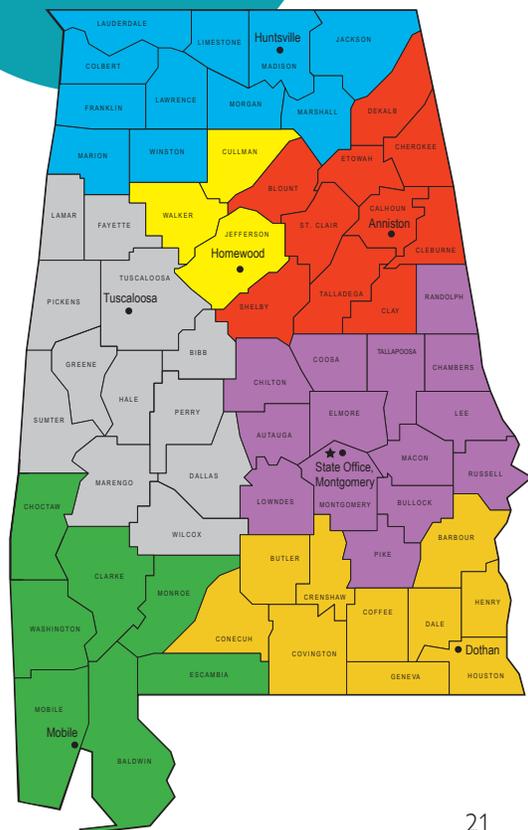
*Medicaid reimbursements

2014 program highlights



- Provided services and supports to 6,053 infants and toddlers and their families.
- Provided funding, technical assistance, and program monitoring to more than 50 local community early intervention programs statewide to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.
- Continued to offer training and technical assistance on the regulations for early intervention under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to more than 50 EI community programs. Training focused on implementation of policies/procedures and evidence-based practice strategies with the goal of ensuring that all children are ready for preschool and kindergarten.
- Was ranked again in the highest category of “Meets the Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” as determined annually by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs based on compliance with federal regulations. Specific factors affecting Alabama’s determination included the provision of valid and reliable data reflecting measurement of each required indicator and reported high levels of compliance on all indicators.
- Submitted an Annual Performance Report (APR) and State Performance Plan (SPP) that evaluates Alabama’s efforts in implementing the requirements and purposes of early intervention and describes how Alabama will improve such implementation. ADRS, as the lead agency for Alabama’s Early Intervention System, must report annually to the public on the performance of each local EI program based on the targets found in the SPP. (These individual program profiles may be found on the ADRS website at www.rehab.alabama.gov/ei.)
- Continued to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate with other early childhood partners, including the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Public Health, Head Start, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, the Alabama Department of Children’s Affairs, ADRS’ Children’s Rehabilitation Service division, the Alabama Department of Human Resources, the Alabama Partnership for Children, Alabama Respite Coalition, and others. Ongoing joint trainings were provided to staff throughout the year, resulting in improvements in the referral process, strengthening the service delivery system, and enhancing supports to children and families.
- Lastly, programs continued to maintain a high level of compliance, and family survey results were excellent. Families reported improvement in knowing their rights, communicating their child’s needs, and helping their child develop and learn. Child outcome data also indicated that infants and toddlers improved in how they get along with others and express their emotions, their ability to think, reason and solve problems, and their ability to take care of their own needs.

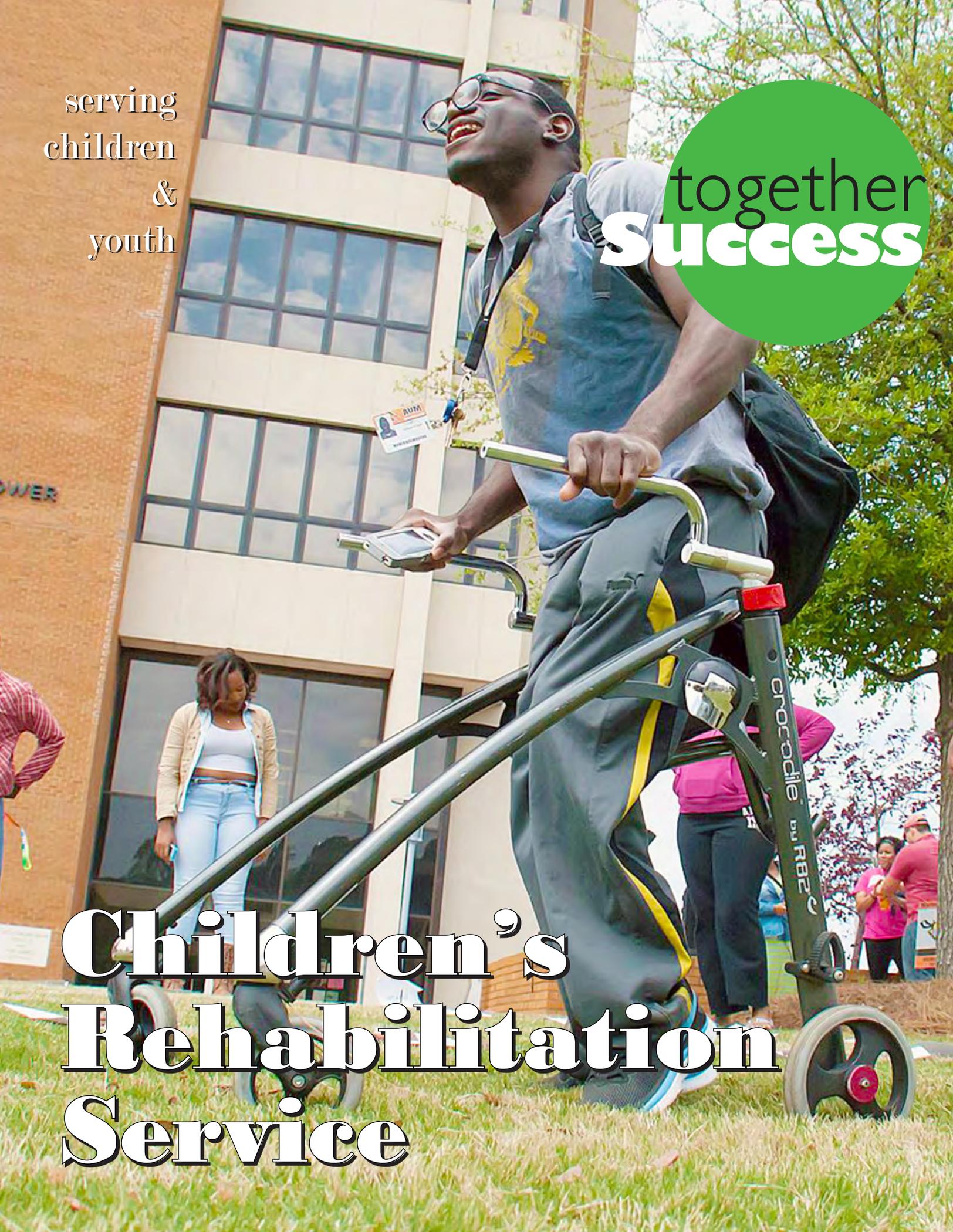
EI Office Locations



serving
children
&
youth

together
Success

Children's Rehabilitation Service



Caring doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, audiologists, and nutritionists partner with clients and their families to provide expert care, information, and the support that each child needs to succeed at home, in the classroom, and in the community.

For parents of children and teens with special health care needs, Children's Rehabilitation Service can be a valuable lifeline.

Caring doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, audiologists, and nutritionists partner with clients and their families to provide expert care, information, and the support that each child needs to succeed at home, in the classroom, and in the community.

Throughout the state, CRS collaborates with school systems to provide expertise and consultation for assessment, evaluation, therapy services, and assistive communication devices, helping children with special health care needs to participate more fully in school and to impact their futures.

Fourteen community-based offices provide a team approach, bringing together health care specialists from many fields to provide services specially tailored to each individual family.

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- **Information and referral:** links families to community resources and services
- **Care coordination:** assists the child and family in identifying, accessing, and using community resources to effectively meet their individual needs
- **Clinical evaluation:** identifies the unique needs of a child with feeding problems, mobility and/or communication challenges, or special diagnostic needs
- **Clinical medical:** operates specialty clinics throughout the state
- **Patient/family education:** provides information necessary to carry out treatment regimens and to make informed choices about services
- **Parent Connection:** provides a network of family support
- **Youth Connection:** facilitates youth involvement with policy development and decision-making.

Services are available to any Alabama resident with special health care needs who is younger than 21; individuals with hemophilia are eligible for services into adulthood.

Treatment options vary, ranging from clinical interventions and medication to specialized equipment and therapy services to care coordination and referral to community resources as needed.

Families can receive services regardless of their income. Financial participation is on a sliding scale, based on each family's needs and resources.

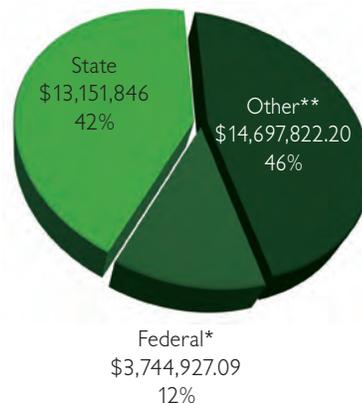


Children's Rehabilitation Service

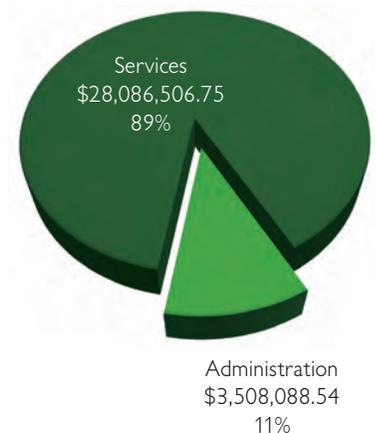
CRS by the numbers

More than \$31.5 million in services to Alabama's children and youth

Source of Revenue



Use of Revenue



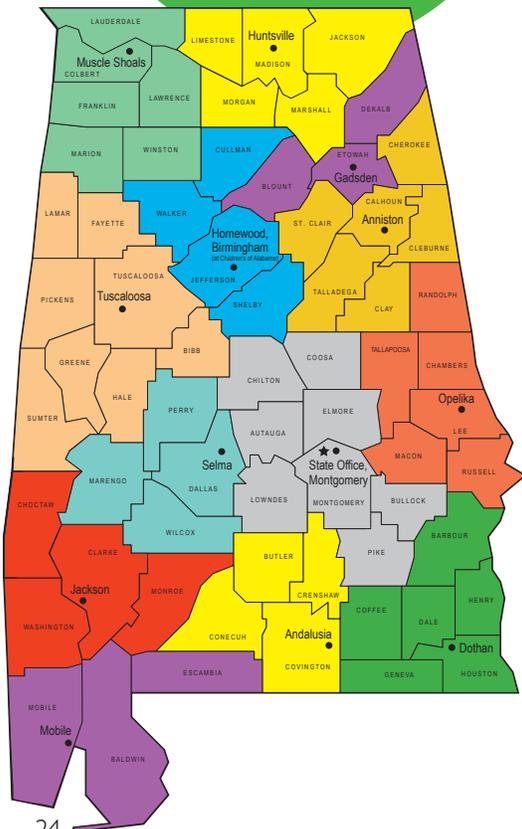
*Federal grants **Medicaid, insurance reimbursements

2014

program highlights



CRS Office Locations

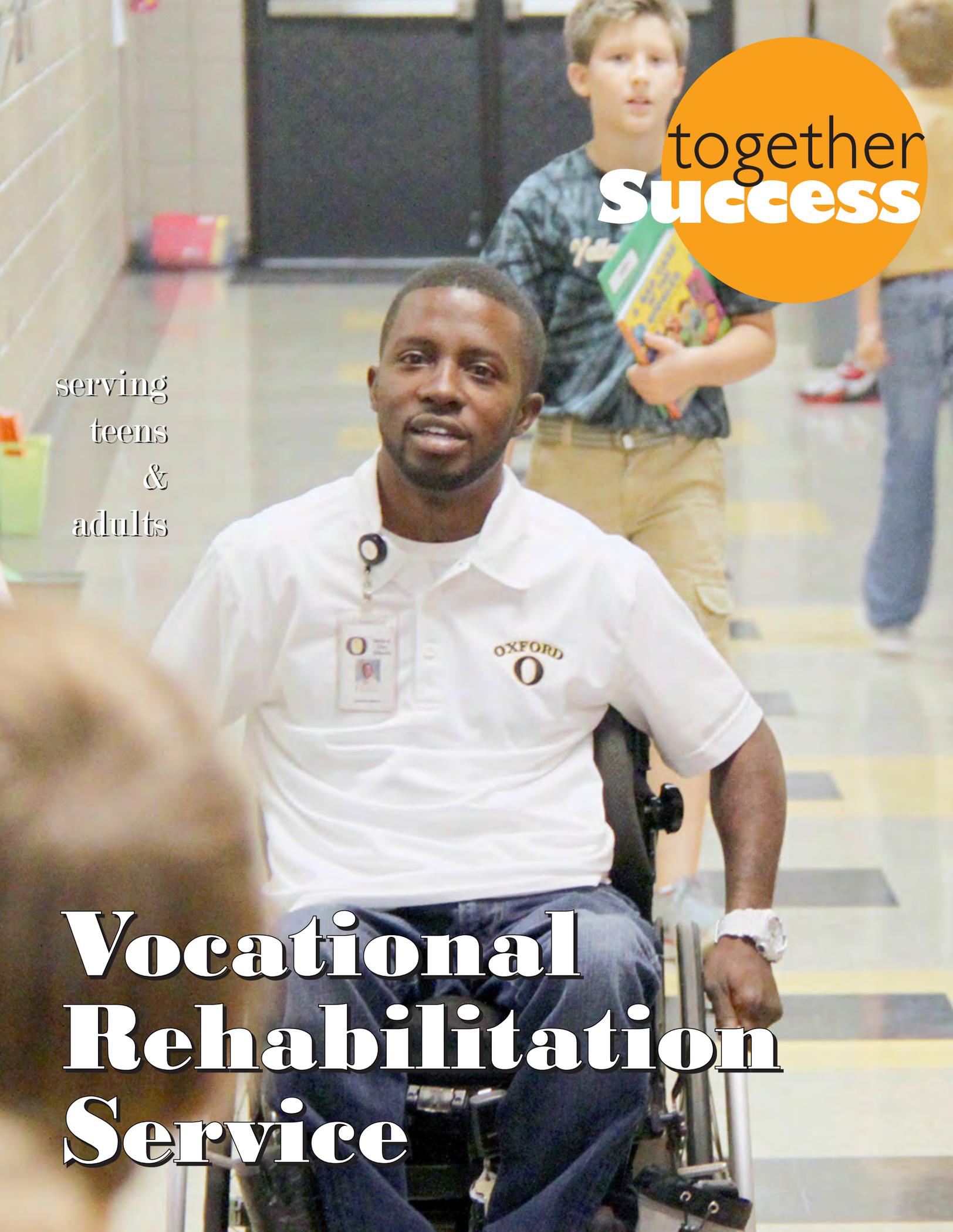


CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION SERVICE

- Served 10,192 children and youth with special health care needs, including 376 with no insurance, through the CRS clinical programs.
- Provided 2,346 information and referral services.
- Had a total of 5,701 client contacts result in connection to \$272,614 in community resources, with estimated values as follows:
 - Food assistance, \$3,770
 - Medical supplies, \$12,711
 - Nutrition-related items, \$15,378
 - Ramps, \$500
 - Prescription medication assistance, \$7,152
 - Speech-language-related items, \$2,800
 - Utility bill assistance, \$6,332
 - Wheelchair-related items, \$24,382
 - Miscellaneous items, \$69,269
 - Medicaid NET travel reimbursements were expedited for an estimated total of \$130,320
- Presented at the Alabama State University-University of Alabama at Birmingham Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Pipeline Course career panel.
- Partnered with Alabama State University to provide observation and/or practicum experiences for students interested in physical therapy, social work, and other health-related or MCH professions/careers.
- Participated in an Action Learning Collaborative (ALC) sponsored by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP): Transitioning Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) into Medicaid Managed Care Arrangements. CRS will continue to use the knowledge gained to make changes to the CYSHCN program and other infrastructure-building initiatives as the state moves toward establishing Medicaid Regional Care Organizations.
- Conducted training for nutritionists from the state of Mississippi. Sponsored by the University of Alabama at Birmingham's School of Public Health, the two-day training covered nutrition issues specific to children and youth with special health care needs.

HEMOPHILIA PROGRAM

- Served 323 people with bleeding disorders.
- Served 21 uninsured participants.
- Provided 12 pediatric Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Birmingham.
- Provided 12 adult Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Birmingham.
- Provided six Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Mobile.
- Provided two satellite pediatric Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Montgomery.
- Provided approximately 963,000 units of clotting factor at a cost of \$770,000.

A man in a wheelchair is the central focus, wearing a white polo shirt with an 'OXFORD' logo and an ID badge. He is in a school hallway with a student in the background. An orange circle in the top right contains the text 'together Success'.

together
Success

serving
teens
&
adults

Vocational Rehabilitation Service



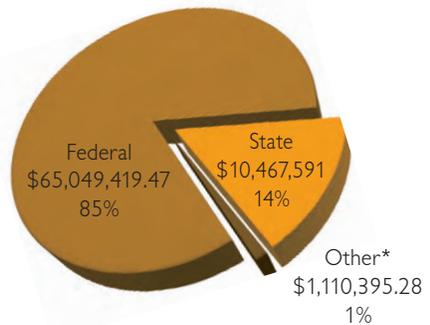
Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Partnerships are the key to VRS' success and the successes of those it serves.

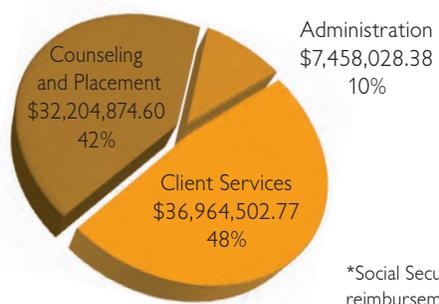
VRS by the numbers

More than \$76.6 million to provide direct services to teens and adults

Source of Revenue



Use of Revenue



*Social Security reimbursements

Each year, Vocational Rehabilitation Service's general and blind/deaf programs offer specialized employment- and education-related assistance to tens of thousands of teens and adults with disabilities. Whether the person is a young adult going to school to prepare for his or her first job or an older adult trying to remain employed, VRS can help.

Through 21 strategically located offices, VRS works closely with Alabama employers, community rehabilitation programs, and other state agencies to match people with jobs. In fiscal year 2014, VRS provided specialized services to 30,121 Alabamians and assisted 4,596 individuals with disabilities in achieving employment.

Partnerships are the key to VRS' success and the successes of those it serves. To assure consumers achieve in the classroom, VRS collaborates with high schools, vocational schools, junior colleges, and universities statewide to assist students with disabilities in receiving appropriate educational opportunities.

VRS also works closely with Alabama employers, marketing its trained, job-ready consumers and a wide range of consultant services to Alabama's business community.

For the thousands of Alabamians with disabilities who receive services, VRS is more than a monetary return. For them, "Rehabilitation does not cost; it pays."

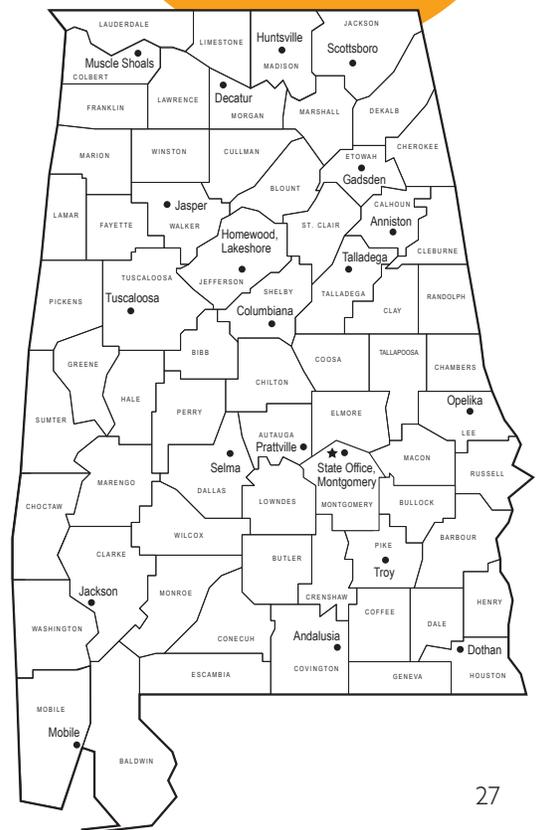
2014

program highlights



- Received reimbursements from the Social Security Administration Ticket to Work program in the amount of \$1,346,947.42.
- Fully converted to an automated verification process with the Social Security Administration that allows counselors to verify benefits and determine eligibility faster for SSA beneficiaries and recipients.
- Obtained grant funding for a second year of services through SSA to provide benefits counseling to Social Security recipients in 29 central and southern counties in Alabama.
- Purchased a new state-of-the-art vehicle for our Adaptive Driving Program which offers assessment and training to ADRS consumers who are interested in learning to drive.
- Expanded college prep services for general and deaf/hard of hearing consumers to cover the majority of the state.
- Sponsored the Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum on the campus of Troy University, with 28 delegates (students) from across the state attending. The event received a \$10,000 grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. Other sponsors were Troy University, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health.
- Successfully completed a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment with the assistance of VRS State Rehabilitation Council.
- Through the STAR Reutilization Program, experienced a 31 percent increase in donations and a 33 percent increase in reused items, saving Alabamians with disabilities \$1,849,215.
- Through its STAR Alternative Finance Program, approved 17 loans totaling \$314,395. AT loan referrals increased by 24 percent and ADRS referrals increased by 19 percent. The program established seven new vendor partnerships to increase AT loans and awareness: Liberty Hearing Aids, Quadadapt, Alabama Resource Handbook, Scott Vision, Maxi-Aids, Transportation South, and UCP Birmingham.
- Piloted the GATE Program (Gaining Access to Employment) innovative internship embedded in industry or hospitals for those who have been served in day programs or sheltered work.
- In partnership with Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Auburn University Center for Disability Research, was awarded a \$4.8 million grant. The grant will allow VRS to implement Individualized Placement and Supports (IPS) Supported Employment in two settings and serve 450 consumers over five years. IPS assists individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders in obtaining competitive employment in the community.
- Through its network of 23 Community Rehabilitation Programs, served 5,500 consumers in FY 2014. Of those, 2,798 entered the STEPS to Employment program and 1,598 of these consumers were closed as rehabilitated in jobs. This was a 7 percent increase over last year's successful closures. The average wage for these jobs was \$8.66.

VRS Office Locations



VRS Blind and Deaf



Blind and Deaf Services provided services to 331 blind adults, teaching them to travel independently using a white cane.

The VRS Blind and Deaf Program provides assistance to Alabamians statewide through its Blind Services, Deaf Services, and OASIS (Older Alabamians System of Information and Services) programs. Services are delivered through a team of specialized professionals, partnerships with consumer organizations, and state and private organizations that serve people who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind.

In FY14, Blind and Deaf Services:

- Served more than 4,096 individuals with significant vision or hearing disabilities through individual employment programs. These services assisted 669 individuals with significant visual and hearing impairments in entering the workplace.
- Continued to focus on assisting consumers in achieving a competitive entry-level hourly wage.
- Provided services to 1,550 individuals to allow them to function independently.
- Provided services to 331 blind adults, teaching them to travel independently using a white cane.
- Provided instruction and services to 1,031 senior citizens with age-related blindness to assist them in remaining independent in their homes.
- Purchased 12 closed circuit television magnification devices for low-vision consumers and recycled 30 similar devices from former consumers.
- Held the fourth annual session of Camp SAVI (Seniors Adapting to Visual Impairment), a camp designed to assist seniors with vision loss in living more independently.
- Through the rehabilitation audiology program, served 324 new consumers, with 268 fitted for hearing aids and 1,062 receiving consultation/follow-up.
- Provided 4,905 hours of interpreter services to 1,234 consumers (These hours do not include hours of interpreter services provided by vendor interpreters paid for by ADRS.)
- Developed collaborative agreements and strategic partnerships with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB), Troy University, Mississippi State University, and the Alabama Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf to improve and expand services throughout the state.
- In partnership with AIDB, sponsored three transition events to assist students who are blind or visually impaired and their parents in becoming familiar with resources to facilitate each student's transitioning from high school to postsecondary education or training and then to employment.
- Collaborated with AIDB and the alumni of the Alabama School for the Blind to present the Technology Symposium, which provided individuals who are blind, low vision, or deaf-blind and professionals who work in the field of blindness or deaf-blindness the opportunity to receive training and hands-on exposure to current technology.
- Continued the partnership with the National Weather Service (NWS) of Huntsville to provide Weather Spotter Training specifically for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.
- Continued the collaboration with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) to provide interpreters for Gov. Robert Bentley's media conferences concerning state emergencies.
- Supported leadership development activities for blind and deaf high school and college students.
- Expanded summer work experiences to 63 blind and visually impaired students and 35 deaf and deaf-blind multi-disabled students.

Assistive Technology Services

Thousands of Alabamians with disabilities are able to become more independent each year through Assistive Technology Services.

The statewide rehabilitation technology specialist team is comprised of individuals with backgrounds in engineering and industrial design who partner with other assistive technology professionals – including computer specialists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and physical therapists – to provide high-quality services to Alabama’s children and adults with disabilities.

Rehabilitation technology specialists (RTSs) systematically apply engineering methodology and scientific principles to evaluate and provide technological solutions to children and adults in areas such as mobility, communication, vision, hearing, and cognition in activities associated with employment, education, independent living, and community integration.

RTSs evaluate the functional abilities of people with disabilities, the tasks they perform, and the environments they live and work in to recommend off-the-shelf, modified, or customized technology solutions to increase their independence.

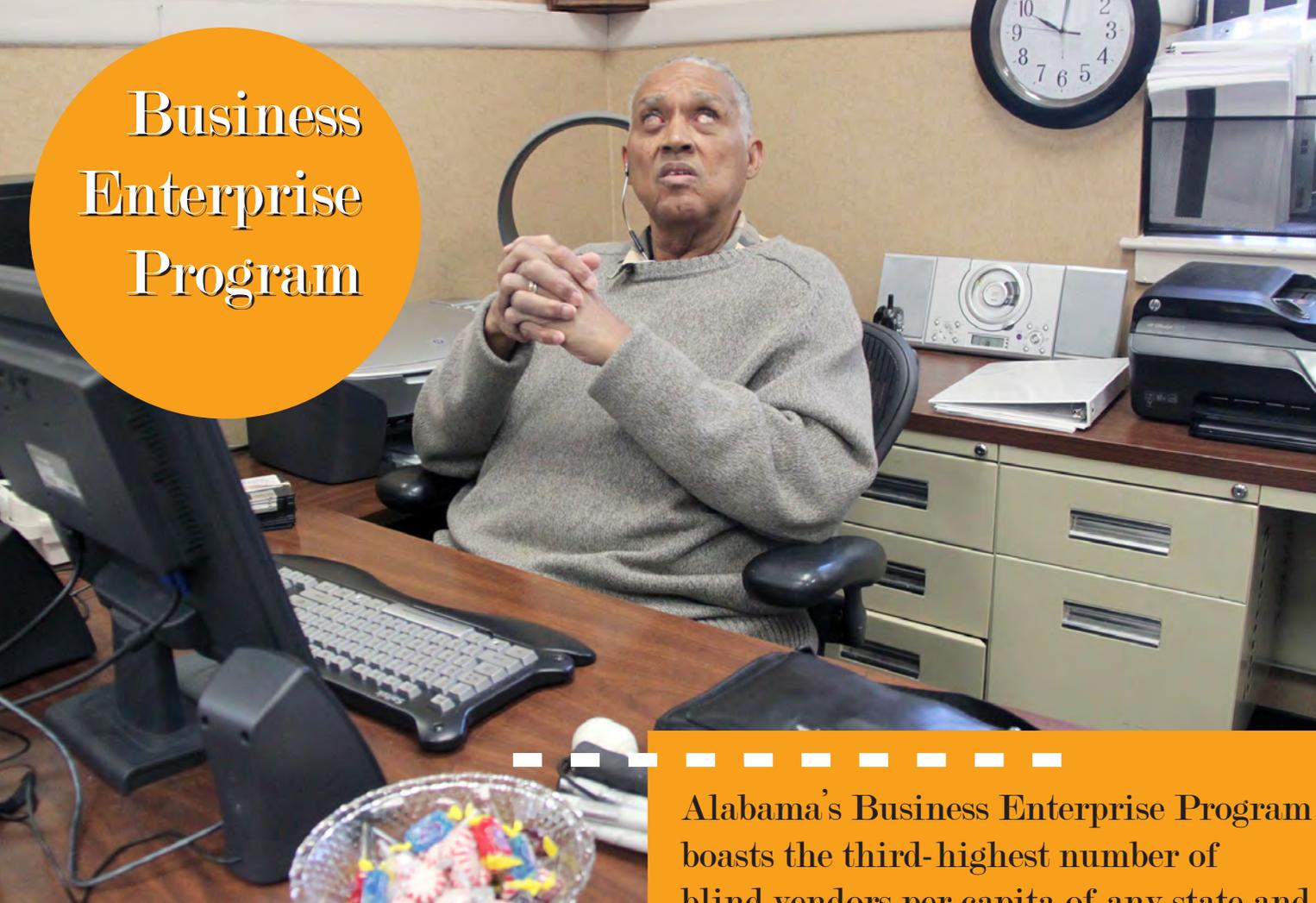
In FY14, Assistive Technology Services:

- Provided 669 assistive device services to ADRS consumers.
- Provided 114 engineering design services.
- Provided AT training or demonstrations to 138 individuals.
- Provided follow-up or coordination of services to 465 consumers.
- Provided one or more services to 425 VRS consumers, 90 CRS consumers, 43 SAIL consumers, and 12 consumers in other ADRS programs.
- Provided services to 131 Children’s Rehabilitation Service consumers through Augmentative Communication Technology (ACT) clinics.



Rehabilitation Technology Specialists systematically apply engineering methodology and scientific principles to evaluate and provide technological solutions to children and adults in areas such as mobility, communication, vision, hearing, and cognition in activities associated with employment, education, independent living, and community integration.

Business Enterprise Program



Alabama's Business Enterprise Program boasts the third-highest number of blind vendors per capita of any state and provides employment for 98 blind vendors and licensees in snack bars, cafeterias, vending machine facilities, vending routes, a gift shop, and five federal dining hall operations statewide.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides qualified blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities through the management and operation of small businesses that are designed to provide independence through self-employment.

Alabama's BEP boasts the third-highest number of blind vendors per capita of any state and provides employment for 98 blind vendors and licensees in snack bars, cafeterias, vending machine facilities, vending routes, a gift shop, and five federal dining hall operations statewide. Vending machine operations continue to account for the majority of these facilities, with Alabama's vendors operating approximately 64 vending machine routes – more than any program in the country. Alabama's blind vendors also employ 328 other Alabamians, including persons with disabilities, to assist in their small business operations. Despite a challenging economic environment in FY 2013, the Alabama BEP achieved \$26,987,846 in gross sales while increasing average income per vendor to \$38,017.

The Alabama BEP continues a successful partnership agreement with the Alabama Department of Corrections whereby blind vendors actively manage 10 work-release canteen facilities. This joint effort has proven to be a valuable win-win for both departments, providing long-term jobs for work-release vendors and above-average earnings.

The BEP formula for success is based on aggressive site recruiting by 12 area representatives, comprehensive managerial and technical support, a close relationship with our training partners at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the consistent "can-do attitude" of our vendors, and ADRS' strong relationship with the Elected Committee of Blind Vendors.



ADRS- Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility



The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services operates ADRS Lakeshore, located in Birmingham. This office serves individuals with disabilities statewide through such programs as Vocational Evaluation, Career Exploration, College Preparation, Assistive Technology, and Adaptive Driving.

As a result of the shift in our referral population as well as the ADRS emphasis on providing services to those who need it the most, we have continued to develop services designed to serve those with the most-significant disabilities.

In FY14, ADRS-Lakeshore:

- Provided Adaptive Driving services throughout the state, enabling individuals with limited mobility and cognitive disorders to drive by providing vehicle modifications, driver training, and instruction.
- Further enhanced deaf/hard of hearing services through a collaboration between ADRS and post-secondary institutions to provide college preparation services to these consumers.
- Further developed services designed to assist those with sensory impairments in entering the world of work. This effort includes a specialized evaluator serving the blind/low-vision population. Services to these consumers were expanded this year to include driver training

for consumers using bioptics.

- Continued to develop group-based services based on the career needs of our consumers through programs such as CONNECTIONS, CREST, and CONNECTED. These groups are offered around the state throughout the year to assist young adults in developing appropriate social skills/soft skills for the workplace.
- Improved employability development services, including designated staff focusing on individualized social skills training.
- Offered College Preparation programs in one- to two-day sessions in high schools throughout the state in addition to five-day programs offered during the summer in Birmingham, Anniston, Tuscaloosa, Dothan, and Blount County.
- Enhanced evaluation services to include the impact of technology on the evaluation process. Also, began putting in place additional services to enhance one-on-one evaluations with consumers with the most-significant disabilities to include specialized evaluation services for Project SEARCH applicants.
- Collaborated with the business relations consultants in developing on-site employment training programs at Office Max.

Community Rehabilitation Programs



Located throughout the state, the community rehabilitation program (CRP) network of private organizations has been providing services to ADRS consumers for more than 70 years.

In FY14:

- The network of 23 CRPs served 5,500 ADRS consumers. Of those, 2,798 entered the STEPS to Employment program and 1,598 of these consumers were closed as rehabilitated in jobs, an increase of 7% over last year's successful closures.
- The average wage of the jobs was \$8.66.
- Two new CRPs were added to the ADRS network partnership – SouthCare Specialty Services in Dothan and Housing First in Mobile – providing ADRS consumers with additional choices in the served areas. Both programs are preparing for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), a requirement for all programs in partnership with ADRS. Several other facilities were awarded accreditation by CARF. Each one surveyed received a three-year accreditation, the highest award.
- Consumer satisfaction surveys continued to show positive responses to services provided by the CRP network, including evaluation, vocational training, job readiness, job search activities, and job placement.

Supported Employment



Supported Employment assists ADRS consumers with the most-significant disabilities who need ongoing support to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment.

Supported Employment assists ADRS consumers with the most-significant disabilities who need ongoing support to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment.

Alabama contracts with 41 supported employment providers. All contracted providers participate in the following services: community-based situational assessments, the Discovery process (intensive personal assessment process that matches consumer interests, needs, strengths, and barriers and includes input from a team to facilitate better job matches; may include job “carving” or customizing), individualized job development and placement, job analysis, sequence of job duties, job coaching, employer and consumer satisfaction reports, identification of natural supports, and extended supports. All counties in Alabama now have access to supported employment.

In FY14, more than 847 consumers completed situational assessments in the community and/or the Discovery process.

In FY14, Supported Employment:

- Served 1,023 consumers who received an assessment or service in supported employment.
- Closed 367 consumers employed with supported employment plans; these consumers are working an average of just over 22 hours at \$7.82 an hour, collecting annual wages of \$9,139.00.
- Expanded Project SEARCH to seven sites in Alabama. This unique, collaborative transition program takes seniors in their exiting year of school and places them at a worksite for one year. These “interns” complete up to three rotations at the business site, acquiring skills necessary for competitive employment. They learn complex, repetitive tasks and work in highly skilled areas. The employment rate for last year’s participants is between 70 percent and 80 percent.

- With the Alabama Department of Mental Health-Mental Illness/ Substance Abuse division and Auburn University, applied for and was awarded a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA grant) for \$4.8 million to implement IPS (Individual Placement and Support) Supported Employment for those with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders in two mental health centers in Alabama. Chilton Shelby Mental Health and AltaPointe in Mobile were selected as the host sites for implementation. This program will serve at least 450 consumers over a five-year period.
- Continued our participation with Employment First in Alabama. The Interagency Team with members from ADRS, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Post-Secondary Education, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the Alabama Department of Senior Services, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama Medicaid recently drafted an interagency agreement on common principals and policies surrounding Employment First.
- Piloted GATE (gaining access to employment) last year, resulting in all participants being offered employment. The program serves adults who have been in day activities (sheltered work and day habilitation) and interweaves funding from ADRS and ADMH, which implements the Medicaid waiver. Participants are embedded in highly skilled work environments and supported by a job coach and paid a training wage, while they learn transferable skills. This was piloted last year with great success. We are actively working on five additional sites and hope to secure additional sites throughout the year.

Mary Johnston & Clayton Yakola

Project Search Superstars of Supported Employment



Without the help of the innovative Supportive Employment program Project SEARCH, Mary Johnston and Clayton Yakola might not have jobs today.

"Project SEARCH means I can work," said Mary, a 2014 graduate of the program who lives in Loxley and is currently employed at Robertsdale Dental Care in Baldwin County. Mary stays busy four days a week sterilizing dental equipment and cleaning offices using a color-coded system to indicate which areas are sterile and which areas are dirty.

"White gloves are for touching clean parts, blue are for handling dirty," Mary said.

The program in Baldwin County is working, said Chris Dailey of the MRDD Board, who is also Mary's job coach.

"It's an amazing program," Dailey said. "The partners are numerous, including ADRS, the Department of Mental Health, Baldwin County Board of Education, the MRDD Board, the DD Council, and Mobile Infirmary Health Systems. I think the reason there are so many partners, though, is that everyone wants to have a hand in this wonderful success."

Program statistics show that persons with disabilities who participate in the program have a 67 percent rate of employment — a rate significantly higher than the rate for persons not participating in the program.

Across the bay from Robertsdale, another shining star of the program is Clayton Yakola, a 20-year-old who has been employed at Sacred Heart Little Sisters of the Poor Nursing Home since March 2014.

"This job has changed my attitude," said Clayton. "I used to be bossy, but this job has taught me a lot of things I needed to learn about myself. I'm punctual. I'm reliable. And I enjoy earning a good living each week."

The Project SEARCH job training program reinforces good employee behavior, ranging from interview techniques to the importance of timeliness.

"I wear a watch now," Clayton said. "It helps me catch the bus to work, follow the schedule at work, and lets me know when I need to catch the bus home. It helps me keep it all together."

Of course, the program potentially helps out the employer as much as it does the employee.

"It's wonderful; Mary brightens up the whole place," said Sharon Lamb, the clerical team leader at Robertsdale Dental. "Having her here has worked out so much better than anyone even hoped for. Mary is such a hard worker, and she does everything with a smile that could warm anyone's heart. We want her to succeed just as badly as she wants to, and together we'll search for a way to do just that."

The inspiring program has caught fire over the past few years. What opened with two sites just two years ago has blossomed to seven statewide.

"I never believed I would have a job, yet here I am!" said Clayton. "My job has changed me, and I get to talk to the incoming group about my success and experience. If I can do this, so can they."

And thanks to Project SEARCH, they soon will.

Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (AGCEPD) educates the public about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities while promoting greater independence for people with disabilities.

Major initiatives of the AGCEPD for FY14 included:

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

"Because we are all EQUAL to the task" was the national theme for the dozen-plus local events throughout Alabama. More than 100 certificates of recognition from the governor were awarded to employees with disabilities, professionals, news media, youth, local elected officials, and educators for their accomplishments related to employment of individuals with disabilities.

Disability Mentoring Days

Throughout FY 2014, ADRS business relations consultants worked with business partners in banking, retail, government, and the service industry to coordinate local Disability Mentoring days throughout the state. These events create innovative ways for Alabama's youth with disabilities to experience the world of work that they may enter upon graduation.

The events target high school students served by Vocational Rehabilitation Service and its transition program and typically offer daylong experiences with a company where participants observe workers, learn about soft skills important on the job, and hear about company policies and ways to apply for jobs.

Annual Recognition Event at the Capitol

In December 2013, AGCEPD, in partnership with the Alabama Association of Local Governor's Committees on Employment of People



Each December, the Alabama Governor's Committee statewide awards ceremony celebrates excellence among Alabamians with disabilities

with Disabilities, hosted the annual recognition event in which Gov. Robert Bentley recognized the efforts and accomplishments of the 12 state winners selected from the local October national disability month events.

Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum

The governor's committee continued its longstanding financial support of the Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum, which is held each summer on the campus of Troy University. In FY'14, some 20+ high school students attended the five-day event, which teaches participants valuable and practical leadership skills.

STAR: Alabama's Assistive Technology Resource

Funded by the Rehabilitation Service Administration, STAR is Alabama's Assistive Technology Act program. Through its Reutilization, Training, and Alternative Finance programs and public awareness activities, STAR assists Alabamians with disabilities by improving access to and acquisition of assistive technology that enables them to live more productive and independent lives.

Reutilization Programs

In FY14, STAR partnered with the six reutilization programs statewide. With STAR, these partnerships:

- saved Alabamians with disabilities \$1,849,215.45 by refurbishing assistive technology for reuse.
- received 4,835 requests for assistive technology items.
- received 3,464 donated items from communities.
- reused 3,527 assistive technology items.
- responded to 219 ADRS consumer requests.
- saved ADRS \$153,751.32 by providing needed assistive technology to ADRS consumers.

Training Programs

Through its partnership with T.A.S.C. (Technology Assistance for Special Consumers) of UCP Huntsville, STAR offers assistive technology training modules/webinars for Alabamians with disabilities, family members, caregivers, schools, support groups, businesses, and other

organizations providing services to people with disabilities.

In FY14, this program:

- held 170 trainings, impacting 1,425 individuals
- handled 181,154 visits to the website

Device Demonstrations and Device Short-term Loans

STAR, through its partnership with T.A.S.C., provides AT demonstrations and device short-term loans to individuals with disabilities, family members, caregivers, schools, support groups, and other organizations serving people with disabilities. For FY14, there were:

- 70 device demonstrations with 39 participants
- 32 AT devices loaned to 21 borrowers

Alternative Finance Program (AFP)

Alabama's Ability Loan Program, a partnership that includes ADRS, STAR, Southern Disability Foundation Inc., (www.sdfalabama.com) and AuburnBank, provides individuals with disabilities access to affordable low-interest/extended-term loans to purchase assistive technology equipment and/or other related services. The AFP program offers loans at a 4 percent and a 6 percent interest rate.

For FY 2014, the program provided 17 loans, with a dollar value of \$314,395. The top three requests were for adaptive vehicles, mobility equipment, and home modifications.

Traumatic Brain Injury System of Care

ADRS is the state's lead agency in traumatic brain injury (TBI) and a source of education and resources for survivors, professionals, and organizations.

Services funded by ADRS and the Impaired Drivers Trust Fund (IDTF) assisted more than 3,000 Alabamians with TBI during FY 2014. Services included community re-integration, housing, respite care, independent living, resource coordination, attendant care, medical supplies, assistive equipment, cognitive stimulation, recreation, and employment.

ADRS collaborates with the Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF), the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), and other agencies, consumers, and family members to oversee and monitor the Alabama State TBI Plan.

In FY14, TBI System of Care:

- Continued to provide targeted training to TBI staff on key issues: sports concussion and return to the classroom strategies, neurobehavioral interventions and assistive technology.

- Collaborated with Mt. Sinai TBI Model System on a pilot project of a telehealth-based emotional regulation group training/ psychoeducational approach that focuses on individuals with TBI. Participants historically have had difficulty accessing community-based services due to limited proximity and access to trained professionals, scarcity of treatment programs, and limited transportation options.
- Continued collaboration with UAB/Children's of Alabama to host the first-ever Concussion Summit for statewide participation with physicians, clinicians, athletic trainers, coaches, and educators.
- Continued partnership with UAB's TBI Model System, one of 16 programs funded by the National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation and Research, improving care and outcomes for individuals with TBI.
- Continued coordination of the Alabama Head Injury Task Force (AHITF), the statewide advisory board for TBI in Alabama established to develop the ideal service delivery system for Alabamians who experience TBI.

Transition Service

ADRS Transition From School to Work Services strives to enable Alabama's students with disabilities to leave school as independent, productive, and contributing members of their communities.

During FY 2014, transition students comprised approximately half of all individuals served and placed into employment by ADRS counselors, with 16,055 transition students receiving services and 2,233 successfully employed.

In FY 2014, ADRS continued efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs, and service models to meet the needs of students with more-significant disabilities and overcome barriers to employment and community living.

In FY14, Transition Service:

- Continued College Prep Program services offered at six sites around the state, with more than 200 students participating.
- Continued collaboration with the Special Education Division of the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Department of Corrections to implement the Prison Transition Initiative for youth with disabilities incarcerated in adult prisons.
- Continued collaboration with Children's Rehabilitation Service to provide the Transition Liaison Council.
- Increased collaboration in the State Interagency Transition Team to encourage local areas to establish Community Transition Teams to address transition issues for youth with disabilities.
- Continued collaboration with the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Troy University, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to provide the Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum. In FY 2014, 28 exemplary youth with disabilities from throughout Alabama participated in this five-day program designed to enhance leadership skills. Alumni of previous



In FY14, Transition Service held a focus group to determine specific interests and trends to make department materials more appealing to youth and young adults.

- forums returned to work as staff.
- Continued collaboration with local school systems across the state to provide jointly funded job coaches. These job coaches worked in 34 school systems to assist transition students in obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Supported many local transition events, such as career fairs, transition expos, mentoring days, summer employment readiness programs, and summer paid work experiences.
- Expanded Project SEARCH in Alabama to seven sites. These projects are collaborative efforts among the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, local school systems, and host business sites. The most-recent addition is the VA Medical Center in Tuscaloosa.

Business Relations



The Section 503 Conference, held in February, was the first-of-its-kind nationwide to explain to prospective employers the many updates to Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Business Relations Team is “READI and ABLE” to help Alabama businesses.

READI-Net (resources for employment and disability information), Vocational Rehabilitation’s business relations program, is the department’s lead connection to Alabama businesses on disability in the workplace.

The non-profit ABLE (Alabama Business Leadership Employment) Network, an alliance of Alabama businesses, is a READI-Net partner that links businesses to resources and information on disability issues in the workplace.

In 2014, READI-Net and ABLE Network continued to address emerging issues of significance to Alabama’s businesses, including:

- new federal contractor mandates regarding the 7 percent hiring goal for inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace
- outreach and recruitment and connections to effective local resources
- review of personnel processes
- company training needs
- diversity and inclusion
- workable accommodation solutions
- retention of valued workers whose jobs are affected by illness, injury, or disability

Tool Kit for Businesses

In 2014, VR’s READI-Net co-sponsored a statewide conference for businesses eager to learn more about Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and its amendments. The focus for the 200-plus business representatives in attendance was on what the laws mandate, dealing with implementation of those laws, and the no-cost resources available from VR.

A “tool kit” was developed to market and provide tangible resources requested by businesses. The kit reflects more than 20 years of expertise by VR staff pooled into a “one call gets it all” option for Alabama businesses. It includes information on:

- where to find qualified candidates with disabilities
- dealing with the new self-identification mandates for contractors
- review of personnel processes
- how to dialogue about and document reasonable accommodation, plus accommodation solutions through VR’s team of rehab technology specialists
- more than 10 different training options for employer staff involved in disability recruitment, hiring, retention, and upward mobility

Retaining valued workers with disabilities became an important issue for VR and READI-Net with a re-release of no-cost services to business through the VR RAVE (retaining a valued employee) program.

To support this effort, READI-Net renewed strategic alliances with a number of organizations, including the Alabama Industry Liaison Group (AILG), Alabama Industrial Development and Training (AIDT), VR’s National Employment Team (The NET), the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

In FY 2014 the statewide READI-Net team of 17 business relations consultants:

- assisted 1,505 VR consumers seeking employment, providing 9,577 employment readiness services.
- provided 7,783 no-cost services to 1,981 companies, including Alabama Power, a Southern Company; Amerex; BC/BS; EBSCO and its subsidiaries; Office Depot; and a wide variety of small businesses.



together
Success

serving
persons
with
significant
disabilities

**Homebound /
Independent
Living**



State of
Alabama
Independent
Living

SAIL assists individuals with severe disabilities in maintaining and regaining as much independence as possible while remaining in their homes and communities.

Independence. Self-sufficiency. No two words better summarize the goal of the State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL).

With seven community-based offices located throughout Alabama to serve residents in every county, SAIL assists individuals with severe disabilities in maintaining and regaining as much independence as possible while remaining in their homes and communities.

SAIL's team of registered nurses, rehabilitation counselors, and independent living specialists provides consumers and their families with individualized services and training about the unique problems and needs presented by their disability. Through specialized in-home education, counseling, attendant care, training, and medical services, consumers are taught about activities of daily living, health, safety, nutrition, and assistive technology.

SAIL is comprised of five specialized programs:

Homebound Services provides a wide range of education and home-based services to assist people with severe disabilities in leading more independent lives. To be eligible for this program, a person must:

- be an Alabama resident,
- be at least 16 years old,
- have a medical diagnosis of traumatic brain injury or quadriplegia,
- be dependent on others for assistance with activities of daily living,
- demonstrate a financial need.

Through a special **SAIL Medicaid Waiver**, the program is able to maximize its resources and access additional programs and services for the individuals served by providing services in the participant's home, leading to reductions in institutional placements. To be eligible for services through the waiver, a person must:

- be at least 18 years old,

- be medically and financially eligible for a nursing home,
- have experienced the onset of the disability before age 60,
- have a neurological disability as a result of reasons other than aging.

The **Independent Living** program enhances and promotes independence in the home, community, and workplace. To be eligible, a person must:

- have a severe disability that limits his or her ability to live independently,
- provide evidence that by receiving an IL service, his or her potential to achieve independence will improve.

SAIL provides targeted case management for the **Technology-Assisted Waiver for Adults** (TAW), serving eligible individuals who are 21 years of age, ventilator dependent, or have a tracheostomy and require private duty nursing services to remain in the home. SAIL TAW case managers perform assessments and initiate, monitor, and coordinate waiver services to participants in the program.

The **Alabama Community Transition Waiver** (ACT) provides services to persons with disabilities currently residing in institutions to assist them in safely transitioning into the community.* To be eligible for services through this waiver, an individual must:

- meet nursing home level of care criteria,
- meet the Alabama Medicaid Agency financial eligibility,
- be in the nursing home at least 90 days. In addition, nursing home transition must occur within 180 days of initializing.

*The cost to provide services in the community cannot exceed Medicaid's cost for institutionalization per individual.

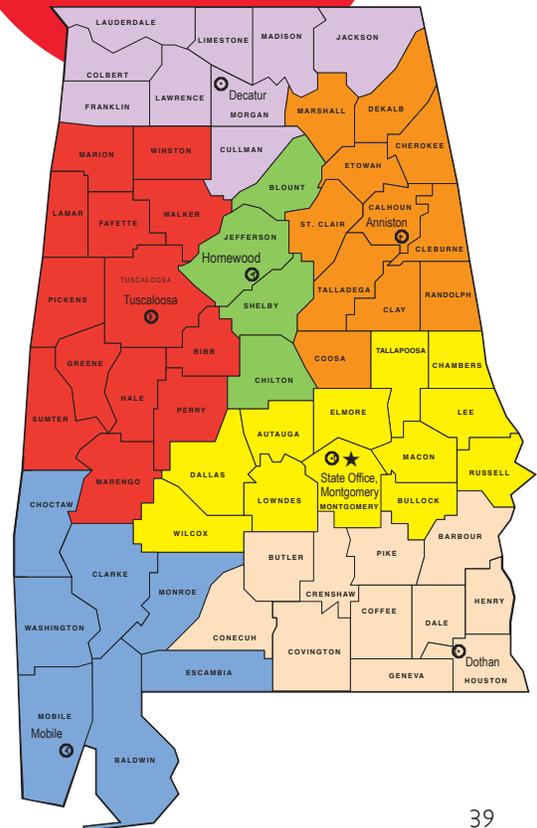
2014

program highlights



- Assisted 1,503 Alabamians with the most-significant disabilities in remaining in their homes and communities rather than being moved into nursing homes or other institutions. This included 389 in the Homebound Program, 521 in the Independent Living Service, 510 in the SAIL Waiver Program, 39 in the Technology Assisted Waiver, and 35 on the ACT Waiver program. An additional 332 were served through the independent living specialists by receiving information and referral services.
- Provided services to consumers and families in all 67 counties through seven SAIL teams located statewide.
- Continued to develop resources to supplement limited funding with donated goods and services, with independent living specialists securing donations of \$364,525.80.
- Used the ADRS Recycling Centers, donated goods and services, in-kind services, and community resources to serve consumers throughout the state.
- Continued collaboration with Alabama Medicaid for the implementation of the Alabama Community Transition (ACT) Waiver designed to assist some persons currently residing in nursing homes in moving back into the community.
- Continued involvement with the Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and the State Independent Living Council (SILC).
- Continued to work with the Alabama Department of Senior Services and the Alabama Medicaid Agency to develop a seamless system of audits for direct-service providers enrolled in the provision of waiver services.
- Continued involvement in the VR/SAIL project in Homewood and Tuscaloosa, where SAIL case managers also serve people with the most-significant disabilities in a vocational rehabilitation caseload.

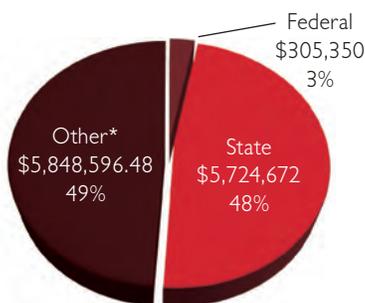
SAIL Office Locations



SAIL by the numbers

More than \$11.8 million to serve Alabamians with the most-significant disabilities

Source of Revenue



Use of Revenue



*Medicaid reimbursements



The Alabama

together
Success



Department of



Rehabilitation Services

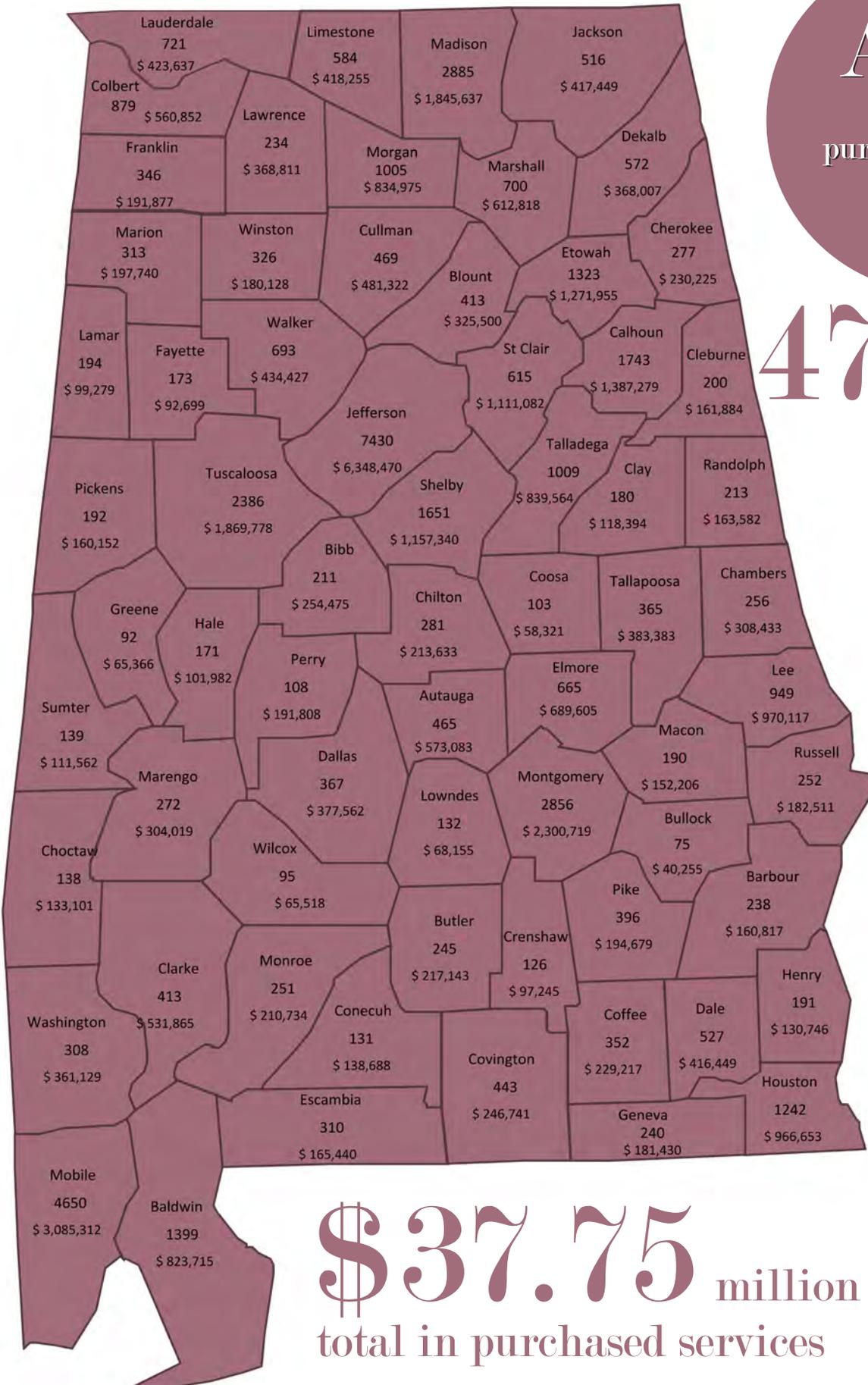
serving
Alabamians
in all 67 counties



ADRS

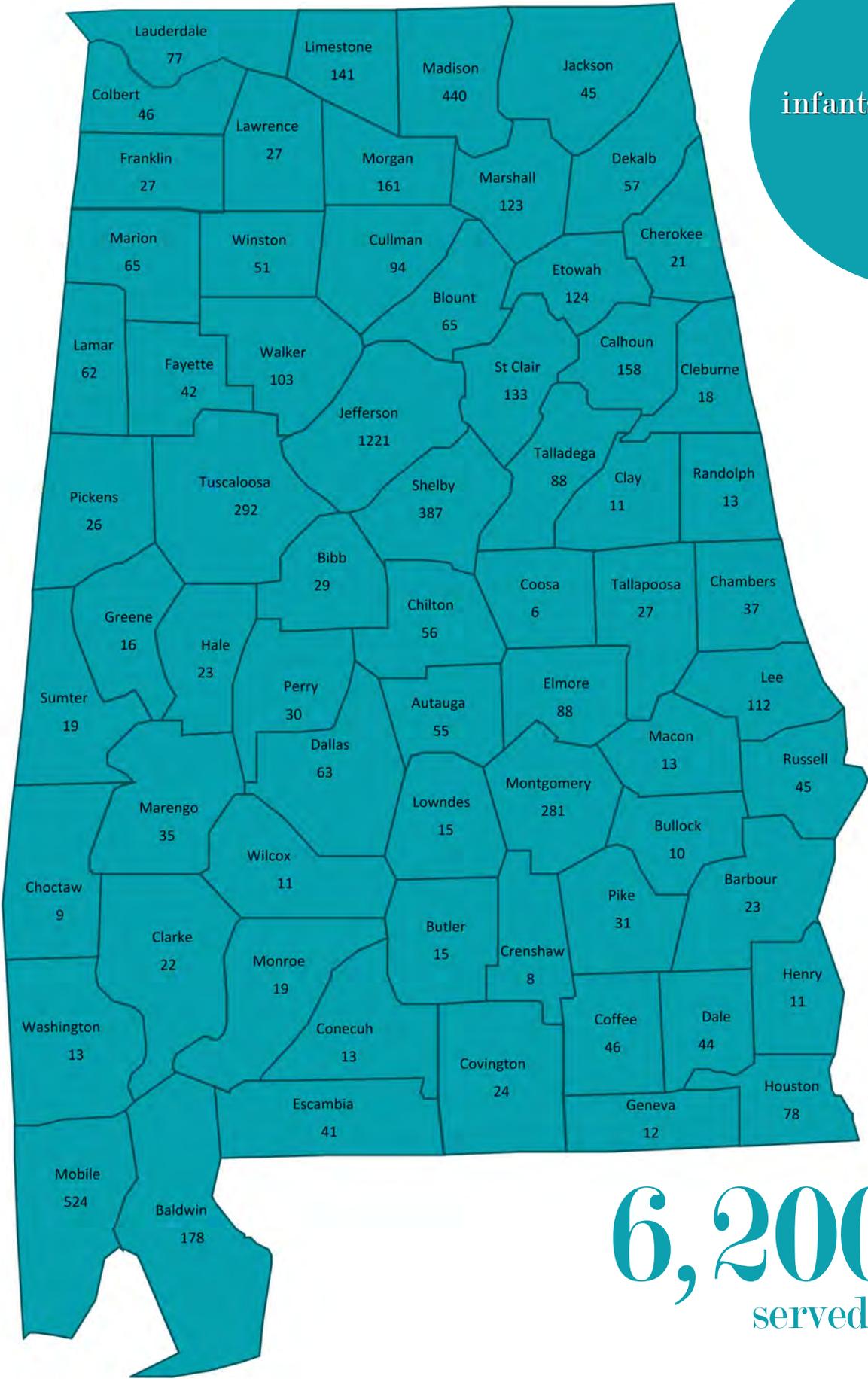
people served,
purchased services

47,899
served



\$37.75 million
total in purchased services

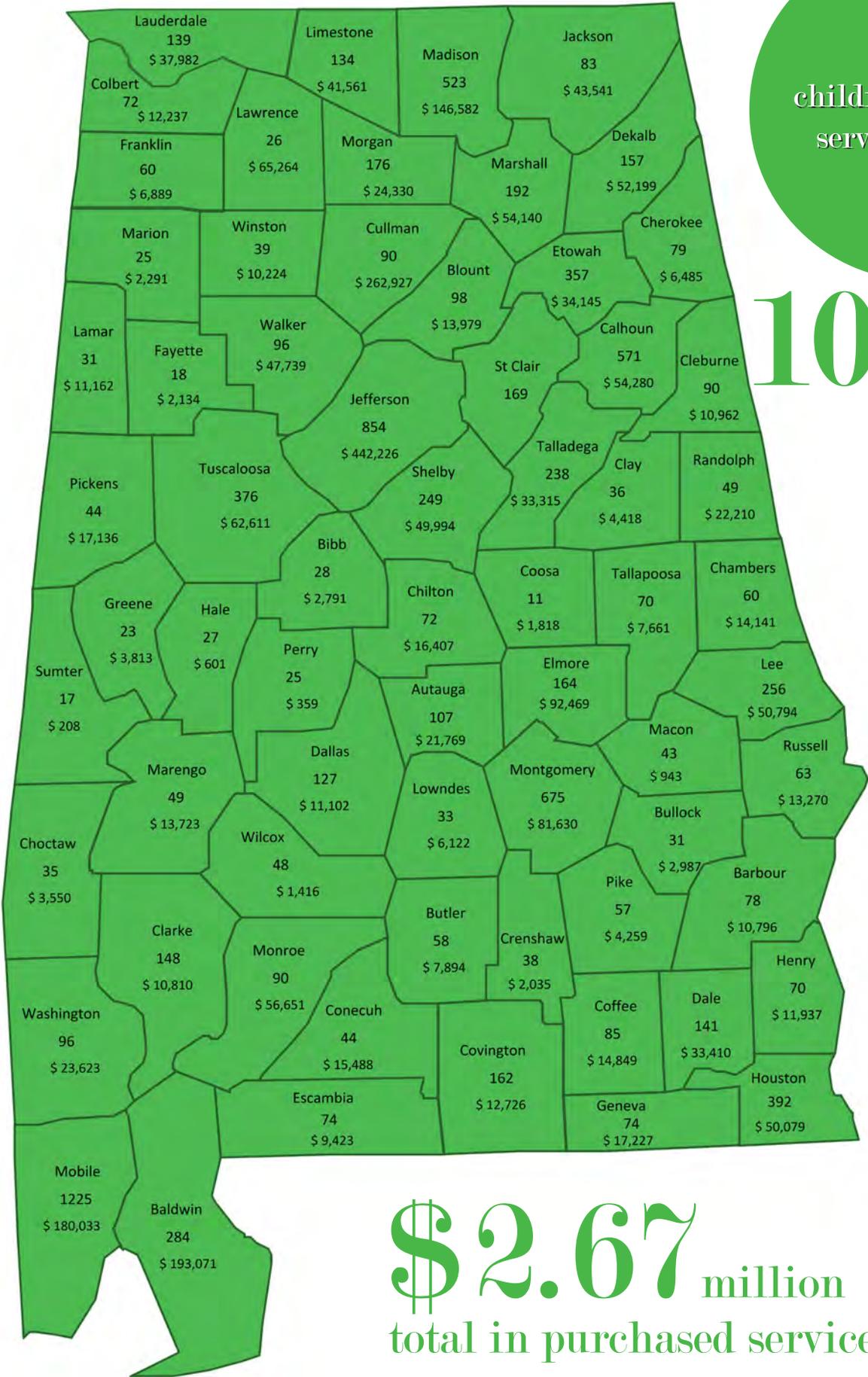
EI
 infants and toddlers
 served



6,200
 served

CRS
children and youth
served, purchased
services

10,162
served

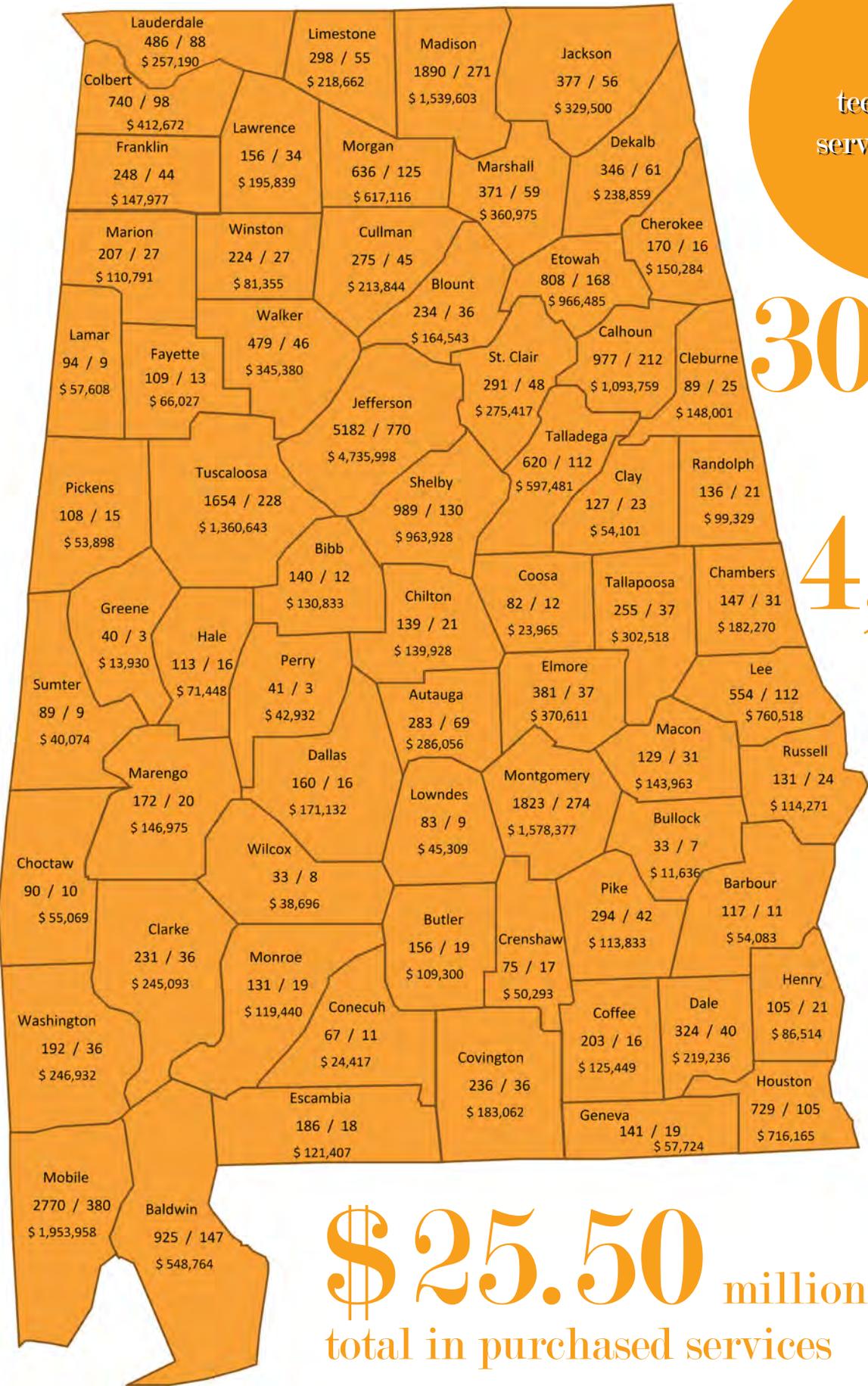


\$2.67 million
total in purchased services

VRS
teens and adults
served, purchased
services

30,121
served

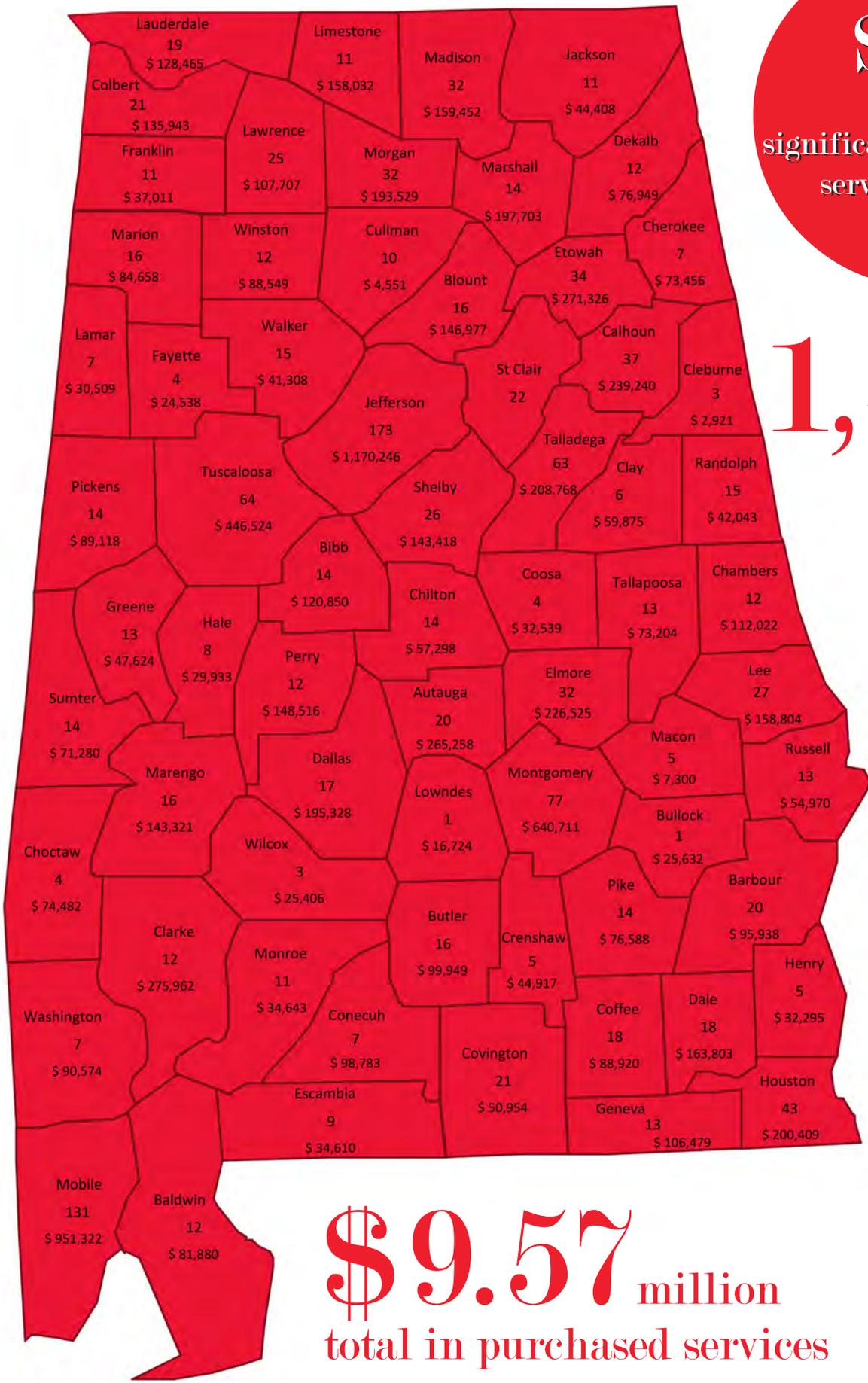
4,596
placed
in
employment



\$25.50 million
total in purchased services

SAIL
 persons with
 significant disabilities
 served, purchased
 services

1,416
 served



\$9.57 million
 total in purchased services

Our Community Partners



The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind is one of more than 50 programs that are part of the Alabama's Early Intervention System.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM LOCATIONS

ANNISTON

East Central Alabama United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Center Inc.

BIRMINGHAM

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
ARC of Jefferson County Inc.
Central Alabama Therapy Services, LLC
Children R Us
Children's of Alabama Early Intervention Program
UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

BREWTON

UCP Mobile Families First

CULLMAN

Cullman County Center for Developmentally Disabled Inc. (Todd's Club)

DECATUR

Center for the Developmentally Disabled (CDD)
North Central Alabama Mental Retardation Authority

DOTHAN

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
Dothan-Houston County Mental Retardation Board Inc. (Vaughn Blumberg Center)

FAYETTE

Tri County Early Intervention

FLORENCE

SCOPE 310

GADSDEN

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

GUNTERSVILLE

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Authority

HUNTSVILLE

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
ARC of Madison County
UCP of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley

JASPER

ARC of Walker County

MCINTOSH

UCP of Mobile (New Journey)

MOBILE

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast
Gulf Coast Therapy Early Intervention

UCP of Mobile (Project Special Delivery)

MONTGOMERY

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind Auburn/Opelika office
Children's Center of Montgomery Inc. (PPEI)
Project Wiggles and Giggles
UCP of Mobile (Horizon)

ONEONTA

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

OZARK

Vivian B. Adams Early Intervention

PELHAM

Shelby County ARC/Kids First

PELL CITY

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

PRATTVILLE

ARC of Autauga/Western Elmore County (EIEIO)

RAINSVILLE

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

ROBERTSDALE

The MR/DD Board of Baldwin County
UCP of Mobile (Project Sunrise)

SCOTTSBORO

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Authority
Twin Acres Early Intervention

SELMA

Cahaba Center Early Intervention

SYLACAUGA

Cheaha Mental Health/Burton Center El Program

TALLADEGA

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
Burton Center Early Intervention

TROY

UCP of Mobile (Bright Beginnings)

TUSCALOOSA

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
Community Service Programs of West Alabama Inc.

TUSCUMBIA

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
UCP of Northwest Alabama

VALLEY

Chattahoochee Valley ARC/Valley Haven Early Intervention

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

ANNISTON

Opportunity Center-Easter Seals

AUBURN-OPELIKA

Achievement Center-Easter Seals
Jackie Johnson Employment Services

BIRMINGHAM

ADRS-Lakeshore
Easter Seals of the Birmingham Area
Goodwill Industries of Alabama

Triumph Services
United Cerebral Palsy
Vocational Resources Inc.
Workshops Inc.

DECATUR

Erica Allen Supported Employment Services (EASE)
Phoenix Rehabilitation Foundation

DOTHAN

Southcare Services
Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center

GADSDEN

Darden Rehabilitation Foundation

HUNTSVILLE

Erica Allen Supported Employment Services (EASE)
Phoenix Rehabilitation Foundation

JACKSON

Clarke County ARC

MOBILE

Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast
United Cerebral Palsy of Mobile
Housing First

MONTGOMERY

Easter Seals Central Alabama
Family Guidance Center

Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama

MUSCLE SHOALS

Northwest Easter Seals

PELHAM

Shelby County ARC

SELMA

West Central Alabama Easter Seals

TALLADEGA

E.H. Gentry Technical Center

TUSCALOOSA

Easter Seals West Alabama



FY14 Grant Information

The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) partnership grant helps expand the system of care for people with brain injuries.

Because we value maximum acquisition and efficient and effective management of resources, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to seek funding from state and federal sources to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential. The following are grant highlights from fiscal year 2014:

Hemophilia Program - \$23,000

Awarded by Hemophilia of Georgia, funded through Region IV South Maternal and Child Health Bureau Bleeding Disorders Program (administered through Children's Rehabilitation Service)

Purpose of grant: To provide access to comprehensive, culturally sensitive family-centered bleeding disorder treatment and services in the state of Alabama.

FY 14 accomplishments:

- Served 21 uninsured participants
- Provided 12 pediatric Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Birmingham
- Provided 12 adult Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Birmingham
- Provided 6 Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Mobile
- Provided 2 satellite Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Montgomery
- Provided approximately 963,000 units of clotting factor at a cost of \$770,000

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) State Implementation Partnership Grant: Expanding the System of Care for People with TBI: Children and Youth with TBI and at Risk for TBI who are Juvenile Offenders - \$241,630 (1st year)

Awarded to ADRS by Health Resources and Services Administration

Purpose of grant: To incorporate TBI services into Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS) systems at all levels and to provide support for reforms and systems changes that will result in positive outcomes for incarcerated youth with TBI in Alabama's DHS system and those at risk for TBI. Specific problems addressed are lack of identification of children and youth with TBI and those at high risk for TBI and lack of appropriate interventions to address TBI issues. The objective of the grant is to address barriers to services identified by HRSA as they impact this population: 1) screening for TBI, 2) professional training, 3) information and referral, and 4) resource facilitation.

FY 14 accomplishments:

- Established partnerships with the Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS), Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) and the Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF) to jointly accomplish grant objectives.
- Designated DHS representation on the Alabama Head Injury Task Force (AHITF)
- Met with DHS, ADAP, and AHIF staff to develop an action plan for implementation of grant activities.
- Received overview of the DHS system for AHITF members presented by DHS representative

The Alabama Head Injury Task Force (AHITF) will provide overall guidance and direction for grant projects. A Stakeholder Team including grant project staff, DHS, ADAP, AHIF, Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS), the Alabama Department of Education/Special Education, a representative from the Children and Youth Committee and the Behavioral Issues Committee of the AHITF, and others to be identified will monitor and oversee the activities of the project, provide guidance, establish an ongoing review process, and report to AHITF on outcome measures of success, challenges, and recommendations for improvements and system changes.

Client Assistance Program - \$155,711 (31st year)

Awarded by U.S. Department of Education

Purpose of grant: To fund the salaries of a director/advocate and assistant, benefits, supplies, transportation, and training.

Number of People served in Grant: 12 open/closed cases; 340 "consultation" or contacts

The main goal of the State of Alabama Client Assistant Program's (SACAP) is to provide advocacy to consumers. This is done in several different ways in which the advocate will talk with the consumer about their concern regarding their vocational rehabilitation counselor or program. Case material from the counselor will provide additional information to the advocate, which may assist her in giving direction to consumer. Many times, this information allows the advocate to explain why a particular service cannot be provided by ADRS but allows for exploration for another service that can be provided.

The State of Alabama Client Assistant Program also serves as a resource for participants receiving assistance through independent living centers. Participants may call SACAP to express experiencing concerns about their program or someone who may be working with them.

FY14 Grant Information (continued)

In-Service Training Grant - \$106,003 (4th of 5-year cycle)

Awarded by U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration

Purpose of grant: To enhance the quality of the vocational rehabilitation services provided to individuals with disabilities by improving the competencies of vocational rehabilitation personnel through enhanced training and educational opportunities.

FY 14 accomplishments:

- Provided training opportunities and continuing education to VR staff in the areas of supported employment, employment first, ethics, DSM-5, transition services, assistive technology and specific disabilities.
- Developed and provided an employee orientation program for new employees.
- Provided updated RAVE training to all VR staff.
- Sponsored a session at the SERNRA training conference for VR staff.
- Developed and provided training to VR Blind Services staff and VR supervisors.
- Collaborated with UAB and other divisions within ADRS to provide our annual Medical Aspects of Disability Conference.
- Increased the number of direct service VRS staff meeting the state and federal criteria of the CSPD by providing financial incentives to complete coursework and sit for the CRC exam.

Independence Through Employment Grant - \$1,144,064 (7th year)

Awarded by Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR)

Purpose of grant: To assist DHR consumers with disabilities who receive assistance through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program in becoming self-sufficient.

Number of People served in Grant: 1,874, 216 of whom achieved independence from TANF

STAR "Alabama's Assistive Technology Resource" - \$435,958 (20th of 20-year cycle)

Awarded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration

Purpose of grant: To enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential through improved access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT).

FY 14 accomplishments:

- The Reutilization Program saved Alabamians with disabilities \$1,849,215 and ADRS Consumers \$153,751.
- Alabama AT Reutilization Program continued to rank 2nd nationally among 56 programs for three consecutive years.
- STAR's Training Program provided 170 trainings to 1,435 individuals.
- STAR AT Reuse Network developed a "Best Practices Questionnaire" to aid in improving marketing and sustainability strategies.
- One Reutilization program established verbal agreements with local Area Agencies on Aging, volunteer fire departments, and CVS to increase awareness in rural areas and conduct equipment drives.
- STAR completed a one-year pilot Assistive Technology Device Demonstration and Device Short-term Loan Program, which included 70 AT demonstrations and 32 device loans.

- Alternative Finance Program approved 17 loans totaling \$314,395. AT loan referrals increased by 24 percent, and ADRS referrals increased by 19 percent. To increase AT loans and awareness, the program also established new vendor partnerships with Liberty Hearing Aids, Quadadapt, Alabama Resource Handbook, Scott Vision, Maxi-Aids, Transportation South, and UCP Birmingham.

Social Security Work Incentive Planning Assistance & Benefits Counseling Services - \$183,525 (2nd year)

Awarded by Social Security Administration

Purpose of grant: Provide benefits counseling services to beneficiaries and recipients of SSDI and SSI seeking to enter or re-enter employment. SSA funding supports three staff serving the central and southern 29 counties in Alabama.

Number of People served in Grant: 853

FY 14 accomplishments:

- ADRS used cost reimbursement funds to support three additional staff to provide the same service to the other underserved counties in Alabama. At present, ADRS serves all 67 counties-partially with SSA WIPA funds and partially with cost reimbursement funds. This blended funding allows ADRS to provide services statewide, a programmatic expansion that was previously not possible.

State Implementation Grant for System of Services for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs - \$300,000 (3rd year)

Awarded by: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ Health Resources and Services Administration/Maternal and Child Health Bureau/Division of Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs

Purpose of grant: To improve the system of care for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) by 1) building medical provider capacity so the CYSHCN receive enhanced comprehensive health care through identified medical homes; 2) enhancing collaboration and communication between care provider network, parents and youth, and other community partners within medical homes for successful transition of YSHCN into adult services; 3) providing ongoing statewide support for CYSHCN, their families, and their health care providers through coordination and collaboration with existing agencies and organizations.

FY 14 accomplishments:

- Completed the Alabama Medical Home Learning Collaborative
- Held two meetings of the Project Advisory Committee
- Completed and distributed Teen Health Guides to youth transitioning into adulthood
- Collaborated with Family Voices of Alabama and the Family to Family Health Information Center as well as Children's Rehabilitation Service
- Provided training to assist three (D70 practice sites seeking national accreditation as a Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) through the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).
- Provided care coordination and transition services to a number of clients with special health care needs using the family-centered approach
- Received extension of project to allow D70 carryover funds to be used through April 2015 to continue to carry out the goals and objectives of the grant.

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

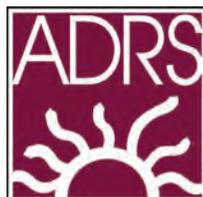
Many thanks to the hard-working ADRS staff who generously contributed their time, effort, expertise, and insights to this publication:

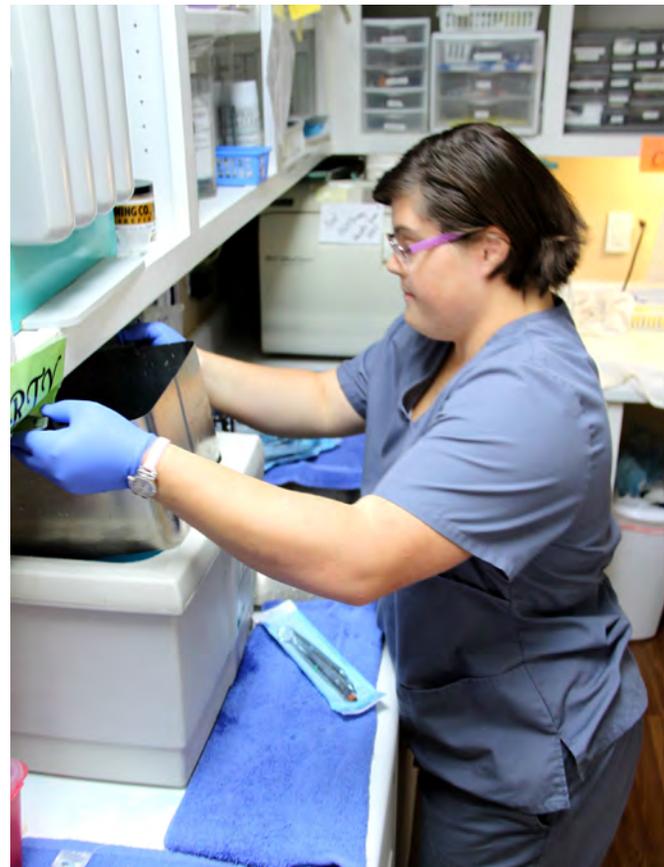
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The individuals listed represent only a small number of the hundreds of dedicated ADRS professionals around the state who work tirelessly to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Thanks to all ADRS staff who work each day to help the department accomplish its mission:
to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.





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