

# ***Together, Success***

at all ages – at home, at school, at work



Alabama Department of  
REHABILITATION SERVICES  
2005 Annual Report

# 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.

# ADRS

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# ADRS

## from the commissioner and board chairwoman

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure, as commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, to present *Together, Success*, the department's 2005 annual report. As the title indicates, 2005 was truly a year of success for ADRS and our many partners – both public and private. More importantly, though, it was a year of great success for the children, teens, adults and families we serve. This report shows that, in another year of financial challenge, each division in our continuum of services was able to provide life-changing services to more people than the previous year – nearly 63,000 Alabamians.

By opening the doors to education, training, and the workplace, our Vocational Rehabilitation division enabled a record number of Alabamians with disabilities to begin realizing their dream of independence. Specialists in our Children's Rehabilitation division were a greater presence than ever in schools across Alabama, working with local systems to ensure that children with disabilities can succeed in the classroom. Our Early Intervention division, extended its hand of support to the families of more than 4,600 infants and toddlers with developmental delays – another high. At the same time, our Independent Living/Homebound program touched the lives of more Alabamians who have the most-severe disabilities.



**Steve Shivers**  
Commissioner

Behind the numbers, however, are the extraordinary stories of every person and family we serve. In these pages, you will be introduced to some of them. All are different, but all share the same hope: the very best life can offer. These remarkable stories of success reflect their personal determination as well as the collective dedication of ADRS staff and our many partners.

I want to express my gratitude to our staff, our partners, our advocates and our supporters in communities across the state for another outstanding year, and, as we look to the year ahead, ask each for your continued commitment to our mission: to enable Alabama's children and adults to achieve their maximum potential.

My Dear Friends,

What an honor and blessing it has been to have spent the past year as chairwoman of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services and to have witnessed – once again – the remarkable accomplishments of this department.

As you look through this year's annual report, you'll see the individual success stories that bear witness to the unwavering commitment of ADRS staff. You'll also see that *Together, Success* is more than the title of this report; it speaks to the very heart of the work of this department. Nowhere is that more evident than in the story of 4-year-old KeKe Lawrence, who is succeeding beyond expectations because of the combined efforts of EI, CRS, Cahaba Early Intervention, the SPEC Program and Dallas County Schools. It's also evident in the life of Brooke Grissom, who is pursuing her dream of a college degree because of collaboration both inside and outside the department.



**Patricia  
'Crickett' Floyd**  
District 3

These are only two of the thousands of stories of children, teenagers and adults with disabilities who are able to succeed each year thanks to the partnership between ADRS and community programs and school systems throughout the state.

On behalf of the board, I would like to offer my gratitude and congratulations to staff as well as our partners on another outstanding year. By working together, we are able to do more.

## ADRS alabama board of rehabilitation services



**John Shackelford**  
District 1



**Young Stevenson Jr.**  
District 2



**David Brock**  
District 4



**James Brown Jr.**  
District 5



**Roger McCullough**  
District 6



**Mitch Strickland**  
District 7



# Together, Success

at all ages – at home, at school, at work

*Through its Continuum of Services, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services provides assistance throughout a lifetime. Whether the person is a child born with a disability or is someone who acquires a disability later in life, the ultimate goal is the same: self-sufficiency and independence. Through services provided in homes, schools, the workplace, and the community, the department assists each individual in achieving his or her maximum potential.*

The *ADRS Continuum of Services* is provided through four major programs:

**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 the more than 60 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. In addition, Children's Rehabilitation Service 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.

Children's Rehabilitation Service is also responsible for administering the statewide Hemophilia Program, which serves Alabama's children and adults who have this life-threatening blood disorder.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Service** is the department's largest division and provides rehabilitation, education and employment-related services to more than 44,000 adolescents and adults with disabilities each year. These

services involve long-standing partnerships with local school systems, colleges and universities, junior colleges, vocational technical schools and community rehabilitation programs.

The ADRS Employer Development program provides nearly 7,500 disability management and employee placement services to Alabama businesses each year.

ADRS also administers the Business Enterprise Program for Alabama's citizens who are blind and visually impaired. The program promotes independence through the operation of more than 100 vending operations, snack bars and cafeterias in locations statewide.

**SAIL (State of Alabama Independent Living)/Homebound** provides services to Alabamians who have catastrophic congenital disabilities or disabilities resulting from spinal cord or head injuries. SAIL/Homebound staff provide education and support services to families with children and adults with these severe disabilities to make them more independent in the home and, whenever appropriate, to maximize their educational experience.

Though services are tailored for each person, all ADRS programs work in harmony toward a common goal: that every Alabamian with a disability have the appropriate services, support, education and training to become an independent, productive citizen.



*“For parents of children with special needs, EI is the most important investment of their time that they can make for their kids. It’s so important that they get the services they need at a younger age. They need it for their whole well-being.”*  
– Rita Andrews

One-year-old Isabella receives occupational and physical therapy from ARC of Autauga/West Elmore County

After a mission trip to Guatemala, William and Rita Andrews fell in love with the country. Months later, they fell in love again – this time with a little Guatemalan girl with Down syndrome.

“As soon as I saw her, I knew she was our daughter,” said Rita Andrews.

The couple already had teenage twins, but had wanted to adopt a child with Down for years.

The little girl was 13 months old when the family began the adoption process. Eleven months later, they brought young Giovanna home.

When the youngster arrived in the states, she was “so behind she could barely sit up.”

That’s when the family contacted Alabama’s Early Intervention System and ARC of Autauga/West Elmore County, also known as EIEIO.

After three months of physical and occupational therapy, Giovanna was walking.

“The difference was absolutely amazing,” her mother said.

Today, Giovanna is approaching her fourth birthday, and too old for early intervention services, but Alabama’s Early Intervention System and EIEIO are still very much a part of the family.

That’s because a year and a week after Giovanna arrived, the family brought home Isabella, a little girl from Trinidad who also has

Down syndrome.

Like her older sister, Bella, who turned 1 year old in December, has received

occupational therapy and physical therapy. As she ages, she will begin speech therapy.

Rita Andrews said she is pleased with the progress of both of her young daughters, and she encourages other parents of children with developmental delays to contact Early Intervention as early as possible.

“For parents of children with special needs, early intervention is the most important investment of their time that they can make for their kids,” she said. “It’s so important that they get the services they need at a younger age. They need it for their whole well-being.”



### **Partners in success**

- Giovanna and Isabella Andrews and family
- Alabama’s Early Intervention System
- ARC of Autauga/West Elmore County

**Future Partner:** Vocational Rehabilitation Service (for education or training, employment assistance)



*“At first I was hopeless, but they (EI and CRS) came in and turned the whole picture around, proving to me that she is able and capable of doing things that the doctors told me that she would never, ever be able to do.”*  
– LaShoundra Lawrence

KeKe spends playtime with dad Bert Allison, mom LeShoundra Lawrence, CRS Social Worker Dianne Chandler (top), and District Early Intervention Coordinator Tania Baldwin

“Never say never.”

That’s the moral of the story of KeKe Lawrence.

Born premature at 26 ½ weeks, the little girl weighed a mere 2 pounds, 8 ounces at birth.

The infant spent the following two months in the hospital, where doctors made dire predictions: She’ll never walk, never talk, never function.

And, for a time, her mother believed them.

“At first I believed them because they were the only people telling me anything,” said LeShoundra Lawrence.

Then she was referred to Cahaba Early Intervention, an AEIS program in west Alabama.

It was there that she learned not to believe everything the doctors had said.

“That’s one thing about early intervention,” said Lynn Sanders,



### Partners in success

- KeKe Lawrence and family
- Alabama’s Early Intervention System
- Children’s Rehabilitation Service
- Cahaba Center/Early Intervention
  - SPEC Program
- Dallas County School System

who works with Cahaba EI, “we love to take the babies who aren’t expected to do anything and prove that wrong.”

After months of physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and special instruction, the little girl began to make progress, going from sitting up to crawling to walking, talking, and running.

But it wasn’t only Cahaba staff members who worked with the child – it was a “whole family effort.”

“We don’t just work with the child, hand her to Mama, and leave,” said Lynn. “We actually taught her mother what to do; we sat down with older brother and sister and helped them to interact with her.”

CRS also has had a role in the little girl’s development. She attends orthopedic and seizure clinics, and the program assists with equipment needs and care coordination.

CRS also works closely with the SPEC program, which contracts with the Dallas County schools to provide services to KeKe now that she is too old for early intervention.

LeShoundra attributes a lot of KeKe’s progress to the child’s determination, but she also is grateful for all that EI and CRS have done for her and her daughter.

“At first I was hopeless,” she said, “but they (EI and CRS) came in and turned the whole picture around – proving to me that she is able and capable of doing things that the doctors told me that she would never, ever be able to do.”

**Future Partner:** Vocational Rehabilitation Service (for education or training, employment assistance)



*"I finally have the voice  
I always wanted."  
– Freddy Martinez*

Freddy uses his  
augmentative  
communication device  
to speak with his mother,  
Maria

For the first time in his 10-year life, Freddy Martinez has a voice, but not the figurative one often sought for children with speech disabilities such as Freddy's.

A real one. Electronically generated. In both the English used by his classmates at Somerville Road Elementary School in Decatur and the Spanish spoken by his Mexican-born parents.

The one-of-a-kind augmentative communication device Freddy received in May is the collaborative effort of a team of therapists working for Children's Rehabilitation Service and teachers and technology and speech specialists with Decatur City Schools.

With the device, Freddy can say, "I like to eat French fries. I don't like cabbage." He can ask and answer questions in class.

Freddy was referred to CRS by Decatur City Schools in April 2004.

"It's apparent when you meet him that he's a very bright child," said Jenna Dees, a CRS speech-language pathologist.

Also apparent to his CRS team was a long list of needs.



### **Partners in success**

- Freddy Martinez and family
- Children's Rehabilitation Service
- Decatur City Schools

Freddy had a stroke when he was 18 months old. For eight days, he remained in a coma at a Birmingham hospital while doctors frantically sought what triggered the stroke.

The diagnosis: citrullinemia, a metabolic disorder so rare he may be the only child in Alabama to have it. Because of it, he cannot process protein easily.

The stroke destroyed the part of Freddy's brain that governs speech but left motor, sight and hearing skills intact. And while he understands the spoken word, his ability to speak is limited.

Following his referral, Freddy's CRS team evaluated his strengths and weaknesses, eventually developing a plan for speech, physical and occupational therapy – all with input from his teachers.

Another recommendation: a Vantage augmentative communication device, which can produce 4000 words in phrase form.

After some training, Freddy is now able to speak about 1,200 words with the device.

His CRS team will continue to monitor his progress, assisting with needs as they arise. When the Vantage eventually fails – in about five years – CRS will be ready to assess the technology available at that time and assist in acquiring a new device.

About that time, he will be in high school, hopefully on course to graduate, Dees said. And CRS wants to be there to help him transition into work or college.

"You should have been with me the day I handed Freddy his device," Dees said. "I told him I'd never seen him so happy, why was he so happy today?"

"Because I finally have the voice I always wanted," he wrote in reply.

**Future Partner:** Vocational Rehabilitation Service (for education or training, employment assistance)



*“CRS has been one of the blocks in the re-building process for not only Bryan, but for our family.”  
— John Jordan*

Bryan shows one of his pieces to his parents, John and Laura

Most parents expect their children to change when adolescence approaches, but John and Laura Jordan were bewildered and frightened by the changes they saw in Bryan, their only child.

Until he was 15, the young man had excelled academically, athletically and socially.

Seemingly overnight, he became depressed and began struggling in school. He became impulsive and had difficulty managing his anger.

“They sound like typical teenage behaviors, but multiply it by a thousand and that’s where he was,” said his mom.

Bryan, too, realizes that the changes were extreme.

“I didn’t care what was happening,” he said, “didn’t care where I wound up, or where I was, or who I was with, or what I was doing.”

After months of searching for the root of Bryan’s problems, the Jordans finally received an answer: damage to the frontal lobe of the teen’s brain caused by a congenital skull malformation and childhood head injury.

Still, knowing the cause of his problems wasn’t enough. The family also needed direction and guidance.

“We were totally at a loss,” said Laura Jordan.

Shortly thereafter, the family met Cynthia Murphy, traumatic brain injury care coordinator for CRS, and she provided what the family desperately needed – information.

“It was still difficult,” said Laura, “but with the information we were able to understand a lot more. Otherwise, you’re just out there floundering by yourself.”

The Jordans are especially grateful for Cynthia’s work with Bryan’s

school, Hoover High School.

“She’s been helpful in informing the school about what behaviors to expect, how to deal with certain behaviors,” said Laura Jordan.



### **Partners in success**

- Bryan Jordan and family
- Children’s Rehabilitation Service
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service
- Hoover City Schools

“I thought that was very helpful to the teachers and the school because schools don’t really deal with brain injury in massive numbers.”

To look at Bryan today, one would never imagine how far the 19-year-old has come.

He enjoys school again, partly because of a newfound passion for pottery. The budding artist serves as an aide in the art room, has sold several

of his works and donated three pieces that earned \$1,000 for Very Special Arts of Alabama.

He’s also working with VRS Rehabilitation Counselor Lisa Le and Job Coach Kendra Boyd, who are helping him map out his future after high school – a future that John Jordan believes is much brighter thanks to CRS.

“CRS has been one of the blocks in the re-building process for not only Bryan, but for our family.”



*“I shudder to think what life would be like without CRS and VRS. They told me that I have a chance; that I can be something.”  
– Brooke Grissom*

Brooke laughs with Angela Betts, a fellow student who also serves as her aide

For a lot of her life, Brooke Grissom “had blinders on.”

“I always thought, ‘This is what I have to do because this is my disability,’ ” said the young woman, who has cerebral palsy.

Then, during her senior year in high school, she met Elizabeth Mathes, a rehabilitation counselor in the Homewood VRS office. And everything changed – in a hurry.

Mathes quickly referred Brooke to CRS and signed her up for Teen Transition Clinic (TTC), which is designed to help young people plan for their transition to adulthood.

“We went whole hog,” said Mathes. “We asked for Teen Transition Clinic right off the bat and an evaluation and everything we could think of.”

TTC – which in Brooke’s case, included a social worker, a physical therapist, specialty doctors, a VRS counselor, a rehabilitation technology specialist, and an independent living specialist – helped the young woman broaden her thinking.

“Teen Transition Clinic got us headed in the right direction. Before that, it was like we’d accidentally taken a wrong turn. They gave us a road map,” Brooke said.

That direction was especially important for Brooke.

“ ‘Regular’ kids get more life experiences and know what they can do,” she said. “But until you go through something like TTC, you don’t know what you need to work on, or what you may need help with.”

One thing Brooke needed help with, the TTC team decided, was mobility. Its members recommended a power wheelchair and foot surgery.

“We took their recommendations and ran with them,” she said. “I mean, what did we have to lose?”



### **Partners in success**

- Brooke Grissom and family
- Children’s Rehabilitation Service
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service
  - ADRS Lakeshore
- Jefferson State Community College

Both the surgery and the power wheelchair have made a world of difference – helping her as she has made the transition to life as a freshman at Jefferson State Community College. She hasn’t chosen a major, but is considering social work as a way to “give back.”

But no matter the direction, she’s grateful for the “road map” provided by Teen Transition Clinic, CRS, and VRS.

“I shudder to think what life would be like without CRS and VRS,” she said. “They told me that I have a chance; that I can be something.”



*“The job has given him purpose, and helped him make friends, and given him a sense of value I can’t begin to describe.”  
– Pamela Fuqua*

Darrian assembles a drug kit on the job at U.S. Diagnostics

It’s no wonder that Darrian Fuqua sets his daily goal when he arrives at his job at U.S. Diagnostics in Huntsville.

After all, the 18-year-old set a goal to graduate in May 2005 from Lee High School with an Alabama occupational diploma – no small feat for someone with Duchene’s muscular dystrophy.

The goal was at the back of his mind as he underwent countless hours of evaluation last year at ADRS Lakeshore, where he learned the impact his disability might have on future employment.

And it was the goal of graduation, said his mother, Pamela, that kept Darrian on his job at U.S. Diagnostics through the 2004 winter break from school – even when his muscles ached and he knew the rest of the class was taking it easy.

Today, Darrian works three days a week at his job assembling, sealing and packing drug test kits used by employers.

“VRS has been a godsend,” said Pamela Fuqua, who takes her

son to work on the way to her own job. “The job has given him purpose, and helped him make friends, and given him a sense of value I can’t begin to describe.”

Darrian began his relationship with VRS after an unusual dual referral. Children’s Rehabilitation Service – which has been assisting him since he was 13 – and his teachers both wanted Darrian to take advantage of VRS services.

He was passing his AOD courses “with flying colors,” said ADRS Rehabilitation Counselor Alanya Beckner.

But because of the disease, Alanya knew moving the young man from school to work would present special challenges. Duchene’s is a disease that causes a gradual weakening of the muscles; Darrian already had moved from a walker to a wheelchair for mobility and was unable to lift anything heavier than a half-empty Coke can.

The game plan for Darrian included participating in CRS’ Teen Transition Clinic, and contracting with Huntsville Rehabilitation Foundation for a job coach. ADRS worked with U.S. Diagnostics to create a job niche for Darrian and provided a rehabilitation technology specialist to modify equipment and the worksite to accommodate his wheelchair.

Darrian’s need for ADRS involvement is pretty minimal now, Alanya said. But should he ever need them, the department is ready to step in again to assist.

Darrian’s outcome “showed the best of the (ADRS) system at work,” Beckner said. “But no one could be prouder of what was accomplished than Darrian.”



### **Partners in success**

- Darrian Fuqua and family
- Children’s Rehabilitation Service
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service
  - ADRS Lakeshore
- Huntsville Rehabilitation Foundation



*“Dianne (Brewer) is our face for what VRS is, and she’s been so steady and committed to him.”  
– Lucy Barr*

Ben visits with a classmate at the University of South Alabama, where he is a student

When Ben Barr’s doctor told his family he could drive, they couldn’t believe it.

“We never imagined he would be able to drive,” said Lucy Barr of her son, who has muscular dystrophy. “We wouldn’t let him dream it; we just didn’t think he was physically able.”

Today, thanks to ADRS Lakeshore’s driving program, the sophomore at the University of South Alabama is considering ways to raise money for a Chevrolet Uplander.

But the driving program is only one way that Ben’s life has improved since he became a Vocational Rehabilitation Service consumer in high school.

VRS also helped the young man get ready for college with its College Prep program, which taught him how to study,

take notes, organize and manage his time, and advocate for himself – all skills that are vital to success in college.

More importantly, perhaps, the program gave the young man confidence.

“College Prep showed me that I could get through college – that a degree was attainable,” said Ben, who is majoring in communications and wants to be a sports writer.

His mother also praised the program and its impact on her son.

“He came out saying, ‘Mama, I can do this.’ It changed him so much – made him ready for college,” she said.

Lucy Barr is equally pleased with Dianne Brewer, Ben’s rehabilitation counselor, who has helped pull everything together for the young man.

“Dianne is our face for what VRS is,” she said, “and she’s been so steady and committed to him.”

In addition to her help with the driving program and College Prep, Brewer has provided financial assistance with tuition and books and put the family in touch with Robert Perry, a rehabilitation technology specialist in the Mobile VRS office who helped the aspiring journalist choose voice recognition software.

Like his mother, Ben is grateful that VRS has been there.

“I don’t know where I’d be without VRS,” he said. “I’d probably be lost.”



### **Partners in success**

- Ben Barr and family
- Children’s Rehabilitation Service
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service
  - ADRS Lakeshore
- University of South Alabama



*“VRS and CRS have helped tremendously. ... Because of this computer and email, five others are now diagnosed with Lyme disease.”  
– Craig Hunnicutt*

Craig spends a moment with his wife, Tanya; the two had been married six months when he was diagnosed with ALS

For several years, Craig Hunnicutt has been silent, left unable to speak by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurodegenerative condition.

But the loss of his voice wasn't the worst of it. Slowly, but surely, the disease had seized control of his body. In 2000, the once-athletic man had to quit his job as a coach at a school in Chilton County. In 2001, he began using a wheelchair.

He contacted VRS for help in staying employed, but the severity of his condition precluded a return to work, so he was referred to Renee Hathcox, a SAIL independent living specialist.

Renee immediately knew that Craig would need an augmentative communication device, so she got in touch with Bynum Duren, a rehabilitation technology specialist who works out of the Homewood VRS office, and Lora Chatmon, a speech-language pathologist in the Anniston CRS office.

Together, the three worked with Craig to choose a device that also provided internet access.

The choice was appropriate for two reasons. First, Lora said, it allowed him to “be an advocate for himself, to talk for himself.” Second, the internet access “got him out of the bedroom and into the world,” Bynum said.

But the little device – called the Freedom 2000 – has done much more than that.

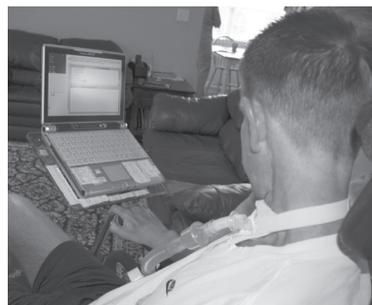
Last July, while visiting an ALS website, Craig stumbled upon an article that explained how Lyme disease, an illness contracted from ticks, mosquitoes, and fleas, is often misdiagnosed as ALS. He shared the information with his wife, who contacted the Texas doctor mentioned in the article.

Suddenly, the 39-year-old and his family had hope. A simple test revealed that Craig did, in fact, have Lyme. Within days of the correct diagnosis, he began taking high doses of antibiotics.

The turnaround has been stunning. His legs are gaining strength, and his voice – though still weak – is returning. His doctor even thinks he may be walking within two years.

Craig credits ADRS with helping in his recovery.

“They have helped tremendously,” he said, using the Freedom 2000 to speak for him. “Without them, I wouldn't have heard about Lyme. Because of this computer and



### **Partners in success**

- Craig Hunnicutt and family
- Children's Rehabilitation Service
- State of Alabama Independent Living (Homebound)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service

email, five others are now diagnosed with Lyme.”

Bynum, meanwhile, is anticipating a day when ADRS will reclaim the Freedom 2000.

“We'll take it away,” he said. “He's not going to need it.”

Right now, though, Craig is just grateful for what he sees as a miracle.

“I don't have to live with a death sentence.”



*“They (VRS staff) are the ones who deserve the recognition. They’re the ones who worked so hard to bring down the barriers, who work so hard every day to give their consumers back a sense of self-worth, to get them to believe in themselves again.”*  
– Laura Ayers

Laura proudly displays the master's degree in engineering that she earned from the University of Alabama in Huntsville

After working together for nearly 17 years, the friendship between Laura Ayers and ADRS veteran Carl Nowell is readily apparent.

Laura, who in 1988 was among the first ADRS consumers to seek guidance for learning disabilities, is one of Carl's greatest success stories.

Today, she's a few hours shy of completing the coursework for a doctorate in mechanical engineering from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

The degree, like her B.S. in electrical engineering and M.S. in aerospace engineering, will come in handy on her job with the U.S. Army.

It's a dream she never would have attained had VRS rehabilitation counselors – and Carl – not been there to help.

Diagnosed with severe dyslexia as a child, Laura stayed in special education classes until her high school graduation in 1984. Bright and “very good in math,” she entered UAH that same fall believing

she could overcome on her own any obstacles college might present.

“It was an unequivocal disaster,” she said. “I flunked out.”

She went home, married, settled into domesticity. But she wasn't happy, the yearning to be an engineer ever present.

Encouraged by her husband, she decided in 1988 to again tackle UAH, this time with help from ADRS. It was a time when vocational specialists began to look upon learning disabilities as a different kind of vocational disability and devised policies for reducing their impact on education and employment.

Because of the dyslexia diagnosis from her childhood, Laura's ADRS counselors also referred her for further testing and uncovered a second disability – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Together, Laura, Carl and her counselors petitioned for accommodations from UAH.

The accommodations “leveled the playing field for me, and that's all I ever wanted,” she said. “Accommodation merely opens the door; it's up to the individual to push it open and make something happen. That's what I did.”

In 1994, Laura graduated with honors. The master's came in 2005; the doctoral dissertation should begin shortly.

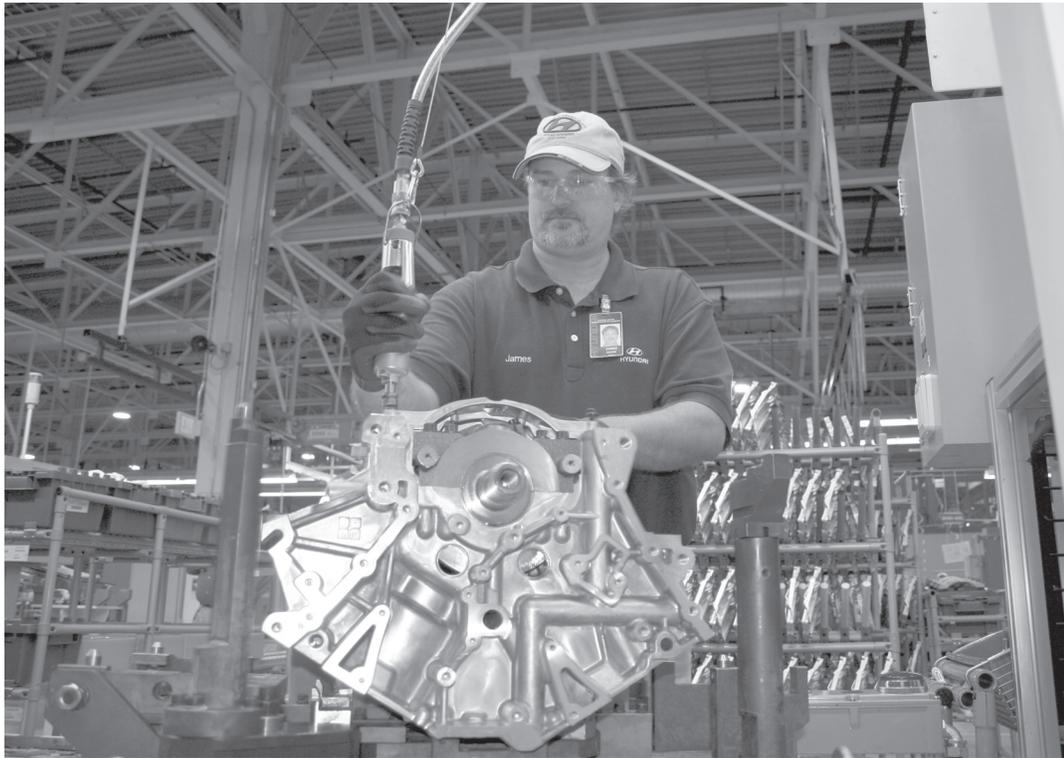
Carl credits Laura's innate self-advocacy for her success. Laura agrees, but still gives significant credit to VRS staff.

“They're the ones who deserve the recognition,” she said. “They're the ones who worked so hard to bring down the barriers, who work so hard every day to give their consumers back a sense of self-worth, to get them to believe in themselves again.”



### **Partners in success**

- Laura Ayers and family
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service
- University of Alabama in Huntsville
- United States Army



*“I try to encourage other people in the deaf community about jobs and being familiar with VR services and JCCD.”  
– James Moore*

James works in the engine department of the Hyundai Motors plant in Montgomery.

Over his lifetime, James Moore has signed his name literally thousands of times, but one time was particularly memorable.

That’s when he inked his signature alongside that of hundreds of others – including President George W. Bush, Gov. Bob Riley, Montgomery Mayor Bobby Bright, State Rep. John Knight, and State Sen. Larry Dixon – on the body of a new Hyundai Sonata.

That would be a pretty significant milestone for anyone, but doubly so for James, who is deaf.

“It made me feel really proud because I was the first deaf person to sign it,” he said.

Beyond that, though, his job at the Hyundai plant in Montgomery has other significance – he is the first completely deaf individual hired by an automobile manufacturer in the state of Alabama.

James downplays his history-making accomplishment, but Shay Hicks, for one, is not surprised by his success.

“When I look at the deaf community – we’re constantly helping people find jobs,” said Shay, who is the assistant director of the Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf (JCCD). “James is self-motivated. I just want other deaf people to look at him as an example.”

When James first interviewed in January 2004 for a position with Hyundai, the automaker didn’t know how to accommodate him. But VRS and JCCD did.

“When James applied with Hyundai, there was no program in place to meet his needs,” said Shay.

That’s when VRS and JCCD contacted Alabama Industrial Development Training, which was overseeing training of candidates

for positions at Hyundai.

Working together, the three entities created a testing and training program specifically for the deaf.

Following 40 hours of pre-employment training and testing, James was hired.

Then the real fun began – hundreds of hours of intensive post-hire training, with interpreters along for the ride.

“We’re not talking about interpreting for an hour,” said Shay. “It was days, weeks.”

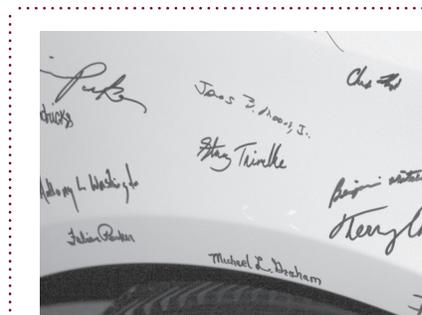
Once James joined the assembly line in the Hyundai engine department, a job coach was there,

assisting him as needed, before being phased out over the course of 90 days.

Today, James is more or less on his own again, but is grateful for the support from VRS and JCCD.

And how important was that support?

“You see me, don’t you?”



### **Partners in success**

- James Moore and family
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service
- Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf
- Hyundai Motors



*"I was thinking, 'Here I am living here by myself and I'm going to go blind, and I don't know what to do.' So, OASIS was just a godsend."  
– Bloise Zeigler*

Bloise Zeigler reads some correspondence using his CCTV as Rehabilitation Teacher Donna Rowe looks on.

When Bloise Zeigler was diagnosed with macular degeneration almost two years ago, he wasn't sure where to turn.

Even after retiring in 2000 after 20 years as mayor of Oak Grove,



### Partners in success

- Bloise Zeigler
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service (OASIS program)

the 92-year-old had always stayed involved in his community as a way to "feel worthwhile," and was concerned that his vision loss would limit his independence as well as his activity.

Then a friend from church told him about the department's OASIS (Older Alabamians' System of Information and Services) program, which assists older Alabamians who are blind or visually impaired.

"I was thinking, 'Here I am living here by myself and I'm going to go blind, and I don't know what to do.' So, OASIS was just a godsend," he said.

The program has provided Zeigler with several assistive devices, including a large-print Bible, the Bible on tape, a large-face clock, a talking clock, a magnifier, and a closed-circuit television (CCTV).

He has been especially grateful for his CCTV, which allows him to read correspondence related to his numerous volunteer activities.

"The CCTV has been a lifesaver," he said. "It helps me to continue to do the things I've always done."

His list of volunteer activities is extensive. In addition to assisting with the inmate program at his church, the nonagenarian works with Carpenters for Christ, serves on the Silver Haired Legislature, and is a member of the East Alabama Agency on Aging Advisory Council. His later-life activities have earned him accolades, most notably an induction into the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame and "Bloise Zeigler Day," celebrated the third Thursday each May in Oak Grove.

Since becoming an OASIS consumer, he's added yet another activity – he serves as a member of the program's advisory board.

He has also helped promote OASIS to other older Alabamians who are facing similar situations.

"I tell them that the most important thing is for them to stay busy and feel like they're worthwhile," he said. "It sure is wonderful to keep a sense of well-being and self-worth and to know you can keep doing. That's what OASIS means to me."

# ADRS

## *program information*

early intervention • children's rehabilitation • vocational rehabilitation • independent living/homebound



# AEIS

## alabama's early intervention system

### serving children from birth to age 3

Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) coordinates a statewide system of services and supports for infants and toddlers with a delay in a major area of development or a condition that has a high probability of resulting in delay. With the assistance of eight other state agencies working through the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), community service providers and the families of children served by AEIS, the system provides a coordinated, community-based, family-centered system of services. The early intervention system was created as an important first step to ensuring that all children start school ready to learn.

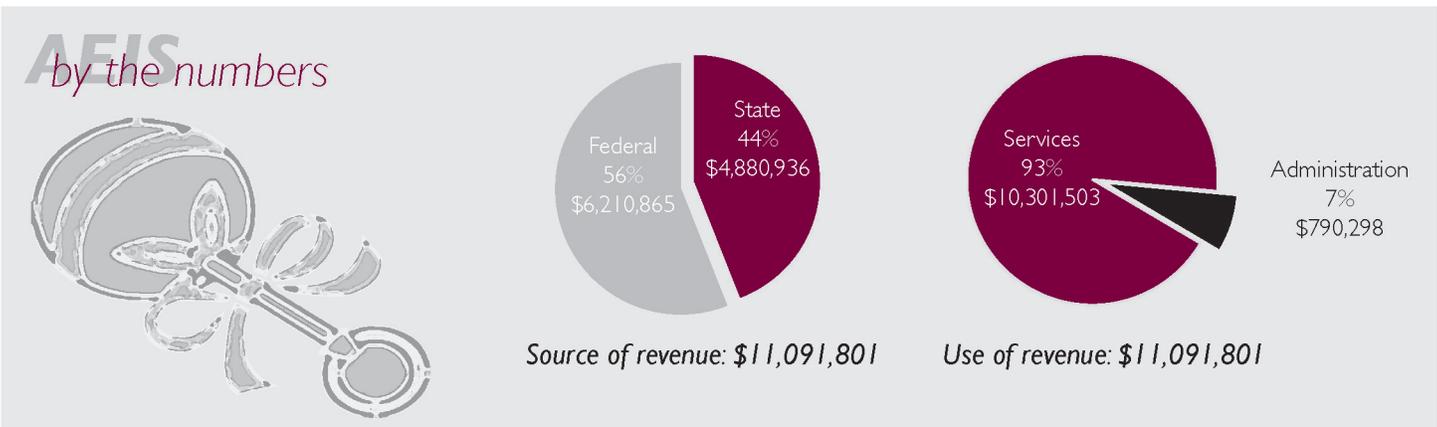
AEIS staff members begin early to encourage families who have young children with delays to become involved in community activities that already exist for young children, if possible. Providing early intervention for infants and toddlers in their "natural" environments is a very important part of their learning process.

In home and community settings, such as child-care centers, mother's-day-out programs or city parks, youngsters with disabilities are able to become involved in activities with their nondisabled peers. AEIS works together with families, community organizations, and public and private service providers to help with development.

To be eligible for Early Intervention services, a child must be younger than 3 years old and exhibit a 25 percent



or greater delay in one or more of the five developmental areas (cognitive, physical, adaptive, social/emotional, speech/language) or have a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Infants and toddlers may be referred to AEIS by calling the toll-free Early Intervention Child Find hotline, 1-800-543-3098 (En Español 1-866-450-2838).



# AEIS alabama's early intervention system

## fiscal year 2005 highlights

### Early Intervention service

- Provided services to 4,640 infants and toddlers and their families in FY '05.
- Provided funding with technical assistance, support and monitoring to more than 60 local community Early Intervention programs and service coordination agencies statewide to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

### Early Intervention and accountability/ quality assurance

- Submitted a federally required strategic plan to the U.S. Department of Education/Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), which outlines specific data-driven goals and actions steps to document evidence of progress/slippage. OSEP found Alabama to be in 100 percent compliance with every requirement as stipulated in carrying out the Early Intervention sections of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Continues to maintain a high level of compliance with federal and state rules/regulations in more than 65 early intervention programs through an effective monitoring and technical assistance process (PAR – Provider Appraisal Review).
- Continues to maintain a high level of family input related to quality and effectiveness of AEIS through the Family Satisfaction Survey. Results from 2005 indicated a high level of satisfaction and are available on the ADRS website ([www.rehab.state.al.us](http://www.rehab.state.al.us)). AEIS also surveys families who have recently transitioned to preschool services under the State Department of Education with a high level of satisfaction.
- Continues to maintain a formal tracking system to document and resolve any issues and concerns expressed by families participating in AEIS.

### Early Intervention and collaboration

- Has worked closely with the Alabama Medicaid Agency in developing a mechanism to allow Medicaid coverage of more early intervention services, which will assist in addressing the rising cost of serving babies with disabilities and their families.
- Collaborated with more than 32 state agencies and

organizations to host the annual Alabama Early Intervention and Preschool Conference. The conference was attended by more than 610 participants including teachers, providers, therapists, and service coordinators. One hundred forty-eight families also attended – the largest number in the history of the conference. They participated in a Family Forum where they brought forth consumer input to assist in the development of system improvement strategies.

- Through collaboration with the State Department of Education, was able to obtain a federal State Improvement Grant. This grant funded for providers and teachers statewide free workshops addressing the unique service needs of infants and toddlers with autism, best-practice evaluation and assessment tools, and effective transition strategies for toddlers moving into preschool.
- Collaborated with the Department of Human Resources for statewide training of local social workers regarding the importance of early identification and referral and the process established through the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to serve those children younger than 3 years of age with a substantiated case of abuse and neglect.
- Collaborated with the University of South Alabama in working with babies with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders. AEIS is working with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation in serving babies as soon as possible if they are born to mothers who are receiving treatment at one of that department's treatment facilities around the state.

### Early Intervention and outreach

- Distributed more than 100,000 AEIS outreach materials requested by families and other primary referral sources.
- AEIS district staff, District Coordinating Councils and EI program personnel targeted low-referring counties to increase referrals throughout the state.
- Increased availability of AEIS publications and reports and provided statewide information about AEIS workshops, conferences and resources access via the ADRS website with more than 1,950 materials downloaded by families, family support organizations, and private and public providers statewide.

## AEIS growing with the future

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006*</u>
Referrals	3,325	3,450	3,849	4,286	4,300
Eligible	2,055	2,036	2,065	2,419	2,440
Served	4,015	4,162	4,351	4,640	4,663

\* Projected

# AEIS

## alabama's early intervention system

### fiscal year 2005 program locations

As part of Alabama's Early Intervention System, the following is a list of program locations for fiscal year 2005. These programs provided supports and services to eligible families in the counties surrounding the city listed.

#### ANNISTON

ARC of Calhoun and Cleburne County  
East Central Alabama UCP Center, Inc.

#### ANDALUSIA

South Central Alabama Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board, Inc.

#### AUBURN/OPELIKA

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region VI  
Project AIM

#### BIRMINGHAM

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

#### CULLMAN

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

#### DECATUR

Early Childhood Services of Centers for the Developmentally Disabled (CDD)  
North Central Alabama Mental Retardation Authority

#### DOTHAN

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

#### DUTTON

Twin Acres Early Intervention

#### EUFAULA

Families and Babies, Playing and Learning

#### FLORENCE

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region I

#### GADSDEN

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

#### GUNTERSVILLE

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Authority

#### HUNTSVILLE

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region II  
ARC of Madison County  
Madison County Mental Retardation Board  
UCP of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley

#### JASPER

ARC of Walker County

#### LOXLEY

UCP of Mobile (Sunrise Program)

#### McINTOSH

UCP of Mobile (New Journey)

#### MOBILE

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region IX  
Goodwill Easter Seal-Gulf Coast  
Gulf Coast Therapy Early Intervention  
UCP of Mobile (Project Special Delivery)

#### MONROEVILLE

Southwest Alabama Mental Health/Mental Retardation Board, Inc.

#### MONTGOMERY

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region VII  
Children's Center of Montgomery, Inc. (PPEI)  
The H.O.P.E. Project  
Montgomery Area Services for Persons with Mental Retardation  
Project Wiggles and Giggles  
UCP of Greater Montgomery (Horizon)

#### MUSCLE SHOALS

Shoals Committee on Programs and Employment for  
Mental Retardation 310 Authority (SCOPE)

#### ONEONTA

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Blount County)

#### OZARK

Vivian B. Adams Early Intervention

#### PELHAM

Shelby County ARC/Kids First

#### PELL CITY

UCP of Greater Birmingham (St. Clair County)

#### PRATTVILLE

ARC of Autauga/Western Elmore County (EIEIO)

#### RAINSVILLE

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

#### ROBERTSDALE

The MR/DD Board of Baldwin County

#### SCOTTSBORO

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Authority

#### SELMA

Cahaba Center Early Intervention

#### SHEFFIELD

UCP of Northwest Alabama

#### TALLADEGA

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region IV  
Burton Developmental Center

#### TROY

UCP of Mobile (Bright Beginnings)

#### TUSCALOOSA

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region V  
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc.  
RISE Program

#### TUSCUMBIA

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Region I

#### VALLEY

Valley Haven School

#### WYNFIELD

Tri-County MRDD

# AEIS

## alabama's early intervention system

### office locations

#### STATE OFFICE

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery, 36116  
334-215-5043, 1-800-499-1816 (TTY)  
334-215-5046 (fax)

**Child Find Hotline: 1-800-543-3098**

[www.rehab.state.al.us](http://www.rehab.state.al.us)

#### BIRMINGHAM

P.O. Box 19888  
234 Goodwin Crest Drive, 35209  
205-290-4550, 1-888-430-7423  
205-943-9302 (fax)  
Counties: Cullman, Jefferson, Shelby, Walker

#### DOTHAN

795 Ross Clark Circle  
P.O. Drawer 1627, NE, 36302-1627  
334-792-0022, 1-800-677-9123  
334-702-8442 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Butler, Coffee, Conecuh,  
Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry,  
Houston

#### HUNTSVILLE

407 Governors Drive, SW, Suite B, 35801  
256-536-6621, 1-800-283-9352  
256-518-9702 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale,  
Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall,  
Morgan, Winston

#### MOBILE

1610 Center St., Suite A, 36604  
251-439-7890, 1-800-879-8163  
251-432-8632 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Escambia,  
Mobile, Monroe, Washington

#### MONTGOMERY

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116  
334-288-0220, 1-800-441-7607  
334-613-3541 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock, Chambers,  
Chilton, Coosa, Elmore, Lee, Lowndes,  
Macon, Montgomery, Pike, Randolph,  
Russell, Tallapoosa

#### TALLADEGA

7 Bemiston Ave., 35160  
256-362-5832, 1-800-947-7140  
256-362-6941 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, Calhoun, Cherokee, Clay,  
Cleburne, DeKalb, Etowah, St. Clair, Talladega

#### TUSCALOOSA

1110 Sixth Ave., East, 35401  
205-759-1279, 1-800-723-0490  
205-344-4072 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Dallas, Fayette, Greene, Hale,  
Lamar, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa,  
Wilcox

# CRS children's rehabilitation service

serving children and youth from birth to age 21

Children's Rehabilitation Service provides medical, evaluation, and care coordination to children with special health care needs in homes, schools and other community settings. In addition, CRS collaborates with local school systems to provide consultation for assessment, evaluation, therapy services, and assistive communication devices, helping children with special health care needs to participate more fully in school.

- *Information and referral*: links families to community resources and services
- *Clinical evaluation*: identifies the unique needs of a child with feeding problems, 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
- *Care coordination*: assists the child and family in identifying, accessing and utilizing community resources to effectively meet their individual needs
- *Parent Connection*: provides a network of family support
- *Youth Connection*: facilitates youth involvement with policy development and decision-making

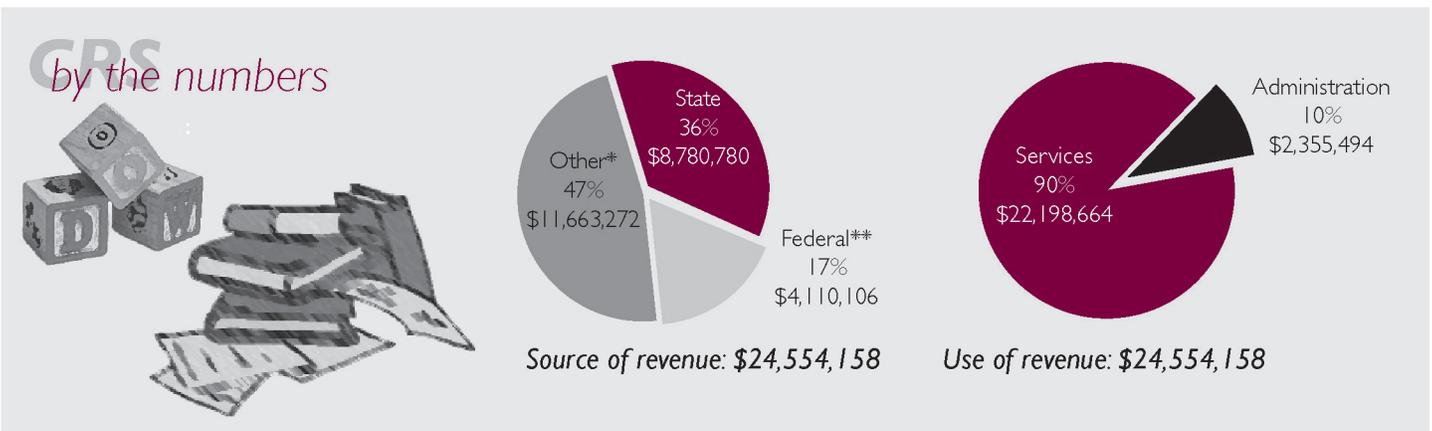
Services are available to any Alabama resident with special health care needs who is younger than 21, while consumers with hemophilia are eligible for services into adulthood.



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

Treatment options vary, ranging from clinical interventions and medication to specialized equipment and therapy services.

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



\*Medicaid, insurance reimbursements; \*\*Federal grants

# CRS children's rehabilitation service

## fiscal year 2005 highlights

### Children's Rehabilitation services

- Served 10,721 children and youth with special health care needs through the CRS clinical programs.
- Purchased health care and related services for children and youth with special health care needs who had no insurance during the entire year. The average cost per child to provide these services increased by 10 percent compared with FY 2004.
- Provided expanded services to 364 children with traumatic brain injury.
- Implemented an automated medical billing system and developed a formulary for pharmaceuticals.
- Served 191 infants and school-age children through collaboration with Alabama's Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program and local school systems by providing hearing screening, ongoing monitoring, and referral for intervention for infants who failed initial hospital testing or had risk factors for late-onset hearing loss and for children who had hearing concerns identified in the classroom.

### Children's Rehabilitation and education

- Assisted teachers in educating children with special health care needs by providing more than 2,637 visits by nurses, social workers, audiologists, nutritionists, and physical therapists to local school systems.
- Educated teachers, career tech and vocational/tech school professionals on methods for helping students with disabilities in the classroom.
- Provided disability expertise to school nurses statewide regarding children with special health care needs.
- Provided expertise and assistive technology, including digital programmable hearing aids, to students and teachers in Alabama school systems to assist children with disabilities in the classroom.
- Provided free equipment repair and refurbishing prior to the start of the school year for children with special health care needs in Huntsville, Muscle Shoals, and Mobile.

### Children's Rehabilitation and collaboration

- Convened six groups of key stakeholders to develop and implement of Alabama's 2010 Action Plan for Children and Youth With Special Health Care Needs to address national outcome



measures related to accessing an organized system of care, family-professional partnerships, medical homes, early screening, adequate insurance coverage and transition services.

- Hosted a statewide conference for professionals, youth, and families related to Healthy People 2010 objectives for children and youth with special health care needs as a part of a grant received from the Champions for Progress Center.
- Participated in Medicaid's Oral Health Coalition to improve access and reimbursements for children's dental needs.
- Presented CRS programs through 292 public awareness contacts with 8,601 Alabamians.

### Children's Rehabilitation and transition

- Hosted two Youth Power self-determination workshops.
- CRS Advisory Committee presented a session, "What Does Health Have to Do With Transition?" at the 15th annual Alabama Transition Conference.
- Participated in the development of a plan for a collaborative interdepartmental initiative to promote transition services for youth with special health care needs.
- Developed a procedure manual for the Teen Transition Clinic to be used in expanding the number of clinic sites.
- Sponsored a state youth consultant to provide youth input into our program and supported her participation on the national board of KASA (Kids as Self Advocates), a project of Family Voices.

## CRS growing with the future

Number of new children served: 1,813

Number of encounters with physicians, dentists, staff: 70,731

Average number of SSI beneficiaries younger than 16 served: 2,808

Information and referral calls: 6,300

Number of service encounters in hemophilia program: 2,325

Number of clinic visits: 13,669

# CPRS children's rehabilitation service

## hemophilia program

The Alabama Hemophilia Program (AHP), established in 1975, is administered by the Children's Rehabilitation Service division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. The purpose of AHP is to provide access to comprehensive, multidisciplinary care to ensure optimal outcomes for Alabamians with hemophilia and related bleeding disorders. The major types of this hereditary disease, which affects predominantly males, are hemophilia A (factor VIII deficiency) and hemophilia B (factor IX deficiency), diagnosed as being mild, moderate or severe. In addition to serving people who have hemophilia, AHP provides services to people with other bleeding disorders. The most common of these is Von Willebrand disease, a condition that affects women as often as it affects men.

The AHP service area covers the entire state. Three-fourths of the population attend clinic at the Birmingham Hemophilia Treatment Center, while the remaining one-fourth attend clinic at the Mobile Hemophilia Treatment Center. The multidisciplinary team available through all components of the program includes board-certified hematologists, orthopedists, nurses, social workers, physical therapists, nutritionists,

## CPRS hemophilia program by the numbers

- Served 306 people
- Served 27 uninsured participants
- Provided two Montgomery satellite pediatric clinics
- Provided 52 outreach programs to educate school personnel, health care professionals, patients and families
- Provided participants with approximately 3.5 million units of clotting factor for treatment, at a cost of more than \$2 million

dentists, local parent consultants, and vocational rehabilitation counselors. In addition to the Hemophilia Treatment Center, community-based services offered include care coordination, family support, client/family education, information and referral, home visiting, nursing care, nutritional assessment and counseling, and physical therapy evaluation and therapy as ordered.

In addition to funding received through the Alabama Legislature, AHP also receives a comprehensive care grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau totalling \$28,700.

## CPRS children's rehabilitation services



- Service coordination
- Physical therapy
- Speech/language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Hospitalization/surgery
- Social work services
- Patient education/parent resource centers
- Nursing services
- Nutrition counseling
- Assistive technology
- Low-vision services
- Medical services
- Audiological services
- Special dental and orthodontic services
- Laboratory testing
- Medication

# **CPRS** children's rehabilitation service

## office locations

### STATE OFFICE

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery, 36116  
334-281-8780, 1-800-846-3697  
1-800-499-1816 (TTY)  
334-613-3553 (fax)  
[www.rehab.state.al.us](http://www.rehab.state.al.us)

### ANDALUSIA

1082 Village Square Drive, Suite 2, 36420  
334-222-5558, 1-800-723-8064  
334-222-1078 (fax)  
Counties: Butler, Conecuh, Covington,  
Crenshaw

### ANNISTON

1010 Christine Ave., Suite 250, 36207  
256-235-3050, 1-800-289-9533  
256-238-9875 (fax)  
Counties: Calhoun, Cherokee,  
Clay, Cleburne

### BIRMINGHAM

Homewood CRS  
P.O. Box 19848  
234 Goodwin Crest Drive, 35209  
205-290-4550, 1-888-430-7423  
205-290-4560 (fax)  
Medical Center: 205-939-5900  
Counties: Cullman, Jefferson, Shelby, Walker  
Birmingham TCH (The Children's Hospital)  
P.O. Drawer 2328, 35201  
1600 Seventh Ave. South, 35233  
205-939-5900; 1-800-285-9318  
205-939-5900 (fax)  
Counties: Cullman, Jefferson, Shelby, Walker  
(hemophilia and cystic fibrosis only)

### DOTHAN

795 Ross Clark Circle, NE  
P.O. Drawer 1627, 36302-1627  
334-792-0022, 1-800-677-9123  
334-702-8442 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Coffee, Dale,  
Geneva, Henry, Houston

### GADSDEN

1100 George Wallace Drive, 35903  
256-547-8653, 1-800-289-1353  
256-547-3513 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, DeKalb, Etowah

### HUNTSVILLE

407 Governors Drive, SW  
Suite B, 35801  
256-518-8640, 1-800-283-9352  
256-518-9702 (fax)  
Counties: Jackson, Limestone,  
Madison, Marshall, Morgan

### JACKSON

1506 College Ave., 36545  
251-246-4025, 1-800-283-8140  
251-247-1890 (fax)  
Counties: Choctaw, Clarke,  
Monroe, Washington

### MOBILE

1610 Center St., Suite A, 36604  
251-432-4560, 1-800-879-8163  
251-432-9013 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Escambia,  
Mobile

### MONTGOMERY

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116  
334-288-0220, 1-800-568-9034  
334-284-6557 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock,  
Chilton, Coosa, Elmore,  
Lowndes, Montgomery, Pike

### MUSCLE SHOALS

1450 E. Avalon Ave., 35661  
256-381-1212, 1-800-285-9924  
256-386-7338 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Franklin,  
Lauderdale, Lawrence, Marion,  
Winston

### OPELIKA

516 W. Thomason Circle, 36801  
334-745-7579, 1-800-568-8428  
334-749-3530 (fax)  
Counties: Chambers, Lee, Macon,  
Randolph, Russell, Tallapoosa

### SELMA

2906 Citizens Parkway  
P.O. Box 750, 36702-0750  
334-872-8422, 1-800-967-6876  
334-877-3796 (fax)  
Counties: Dallas, Marengo, Perry,  
Wilcox

### TALLADEGA

7 Bemiston Ave., 35160  
256-362-9254, 1-800-947-7140  
256-480-1472 (fax)  
Counties: St. Clair, Talladega

### TUSCALOOSA

1110 Sixth Ave., East  
P.O. Drawer 2817, 35403-2817  
205-759-1279, 1-800-723-0490  
205-344-4072 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Greene,  
Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Sumter,  
Tuscaloosa

# VRS

## vocational rehabilitation service

### serving teenagers and adults

Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) provides specialized employment- and education-related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities in becoming employed. The largest division within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, VRS markets its trained, job-ready clients and a wide range of consultant services to Alabama's business community. The division offers specialized employment-related assistance to more than 45,700 adults and adolescents with disabilities each year. In addition, VRS works with middle schools, high schools, junior colleges and universities statewide to assist students with disabilities in receiving appropriate educational opportunities.

The types of services available through VRS are as varied as the people it serves and are designed specifically to meet the needs of each individual. Available through any of the 21 VRS offices statewide, services can include educational services; vocational assessment, evaluation and counseling; medical treatment; job training; assistive technology; orientation and mobility training; and job placement. To be eligible for VRS services, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment and must be able to benefit from services in terms of going to work.

Employment is the goal for every VRS participant, regardless of age or disability. In fiscal year 2005, a record-setting 7,717 people with disabilities achieved their dream of employment, thanks to VRS services. VRS helps each person match his



or her talents with the right career. Then, VRS links the person to its extensive network of employers through its Employer Account System.

VRS is a vast, coordinated network that creates a remarkable return on taxpayers' investment. For each dollar expended on a VRS consumer who becomes employed, \$19.66 is returned to the economy through employment.\* And for Alabamians with disabilities, VRS represents much more than a monetary return. Employment means pride, dignity and independence – being empowered to achieve one's maximum potential.

*\*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration*

## VRS

### specialty programs

**Transition Service:** Helps high school students with disabilities to prepare for post-secondary education, employment and community living through employment training and support services.

**Supported Employment:** Assists Alabamians with the most significant disabilities, offering intensive on-site job training and support services including job coaches.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Care Coordination:** Assists persons with TBI and their families in preparing for the return to the community and assists with appropriate vocational rehabilitation services in preparation for entering or returning to school or the workplace.

**Blind and Deaf Services:** Rehabilitation teaching provides

instruction in the use of adaptive techniques and equipment for people who are visually impaired; orientation and mobility specialists provide instruction in the use of compensatory skills and adaptive devices to enable people with visual impairments to travel independently; interpreters are available to assist those with hearing impairments in their job searches.

**Business Enterprise Program (BEP):** Provides qualified blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities through the management and operation of snack bars, vending facilities, gift shops and cafeterias.

**OASIS (Older Alabamians System of Information and Services):** Assists Alabamians 55 and older with vision problems in living more independently in their homes and communities.

# VRS vocational rehabilitation service

## fiscal year 2005 highlights

### Vocation Rehabilitation services

- Provided services to 45,781 Alabamians, including rehabilitation, education- and employment-related services.
- Assisted a record 7,717 Alabamians with disabilities in becoming successfully employed at an average wage of \$8.20 an hour.
- Successfully rehabilitated 568 people on SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance).
- Return on investment: for each \$1 expended on successfully rehabilitating a consumer, \$19.66 is returned to the economy through his or her employment.\*
- Continued the Welfare-to-Work grant, which helps welfare recipients with disabilities enter the world of competitive employment.
- Implemented a sliding fee scale for services contingent upon economic need, resulting in a more consistent service-delivery process for services.

### Vocational Rehabilitation and education

- Served more than 16,113 Alabama students with disabilities in transitioning from school to work and rehabilitated 2,844.
- Continued to serve 75 school systems through joint funding of 80 full-time job coaches.

- Educated teachers, career technology and vocational/technology school professionals on means and methods of helping students with disabilities prepare for the labor market.
- Provided rehabilitation technology assistance to VRS consumers, educational personnel, and employers in order to move VRS consumers into competitive employment.

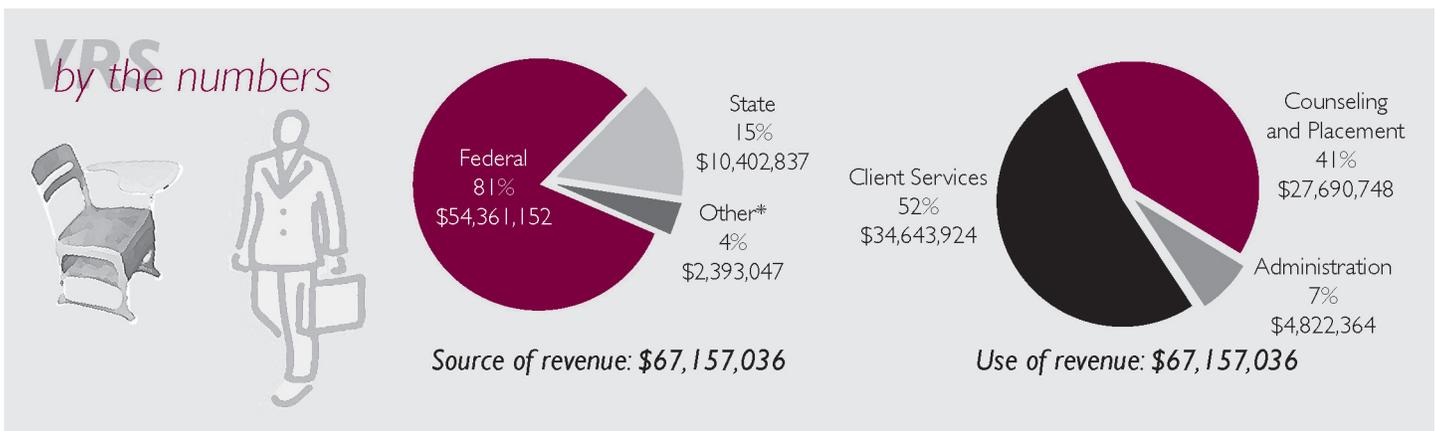
### Vocational Rehabilitation and collaboration

- Continued the Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Registry for Survivors of Spinal Cord and Traumatic Brain Injury in Alabama in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Head Injury Foundation, and the UAB Center for Injury Sciences.
- Continued involvement in Alabama's Career Center System by accepting referrals of people with disabilities and placing them into training and/or employment.

### Vocational Rehabilitation and business

- Provided 7,539 disability management and employee placement services to Alabama businesses.
- Upgraded the statewide VRS Internet Job Bank system to allow employers to view potential VRS job applicants for employment.

\*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration



\*Social Security reimbursements

# VRS

## vocational rehabilitation service

### program highlights



### Blind Services, Deaf Services, OASIS

*The Blind/Deaf section provides assistance to Alabamians through its Blind Services, Deaf Services and OASIS (Older Alabamians System of Information and Services) programs.*

In fiscal year 2005, VRS rehabilitation counselors for the blind and deaf served more than 5,000 individuals with significant vision or hearing disabilities through individual employment programs. These services assisted 1,177 individuals with significant visual and hearing impairments in entering the workplace.

In FY 2005, this section also:

- Provided rehabilitation teaching instruction and services in functional independent living skills to 1,644 citizens of Alabama who are blind or visually impaired to allow them to pursue employment or function independently
- Provided instruction and services to 1,170 senior citizens through the older blind who have age-related blindness to assist them in maintaining or gaining independent living skills to allow them to remain in their homes
- Taught 418 adults how to travel independently using a white cane
- Continued a partnership with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind to provide a personal planning workshop for students who are deaf-blind with significant multiple disabilities and their parents
- Provided sponsorship for the Alabama Radio Reading Services for the visually impaired
- Provided interpreter services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Continued expansion of specialized ADRS/Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility programs to identify individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and have a learning disability or cognitive disorder
- Conducted four regional transition conferences for blind students and their parents
- Provided paid summer work experience programs for blind students in public school and at the Alabama School for the Blind

- Expanded transition services – including paid summer work experience – for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in public schools and at the Alabama School for the Deaf
- Implemented the second year of a three-year strategic plan for services to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Input into the plan included a statewide meeting of stakeholders and focus groups made up of consumers, partner agencies and ADRS staff
- Completed the first year of a three-year strategic plan for services to blind and visually impaired individuals. Input was received through a statewide stakeholders meeting and focus groups that included organizations of blind consumers, partner agencies and ADRS staff

### Business Enterprise Program

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

The program provides self-employment for 132 blind vendors and licensees in vending machine facilities, vending routes, snack bars, cafeterias, washeterias, a gift shop, four military dining hall operations, and a Federal Food Service contract at Fort McClellan.

Alabama's BEP operates 102 vending machine locations, more than any program in the U.S.

While data for FY 2005 is being gathered, during FY 2004 Alabama's blind vendors employed 468 Alabamians, including visually impaired individuals, in various capacities in their businesses. In FY 2004, gross sales were \$16,481,702.

Projections from FY 2005 data indicate that the average annual earnings for Alabama's BEP vendors will increase for the seventh consecutive year. Since FY 1996, individual annual earnings have increased from \$22,175 to \$33,936 in FY 2004, a rise of more than 53 percent. It is anticipated that average earnings in FY 2005 will be the highest in program history.

In FY 2005, this program also:

- Successfully directly negotiated a 10-year contract to feed soldiers housed on Redstone Arsenal
- Opened a cafeteria at Ayers Community College in Anniston and was successful in obtaining the contract to operate a Head Start Center at this facility
- Added a second vending machine technician to the Anniston/Talladega area.

# VRS

## vocational rehabilitation service

### program highlights



### Community Rehabilitation Programs

*The Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) network of mostly private, nonprofit organizations has been providing services to ADRS consumers for more than 70 years. This network of providers is located throughout Alabama. Services provided include individualized programming, vocational evaluation, case management, employability development, vocational and academic skills training, job placement, job coaching and job retention – all of which assist ADRS consumers in obtaining and maintaining employment.*

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services operates the Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center located in Birmingham. This CRP assists people with severe disabilities in achieving their dreams – whether they lead directly into employment, vocational training or college. Programs are based on the needs of the consumer, are individualized and may include vocational assessment to identify vocational skills, abilities and career goals. Lakeshore's College Preparation program and its services for individuals with specific learning disabilities are nationally recognized.

In FY '05, ADRS/Lakeshore:

- served more than 1,300 consumers and provided more than 1,500 programs.
- expanded Adaptive Driving Services throughout the state
- conducted a college preparation program for the deaf on the campus of Jacksonville State University
- held the Career Preparation Program at Lakeshore Foundation bringing employers, schools and community resources together
- expanded vocational assessment services

In Montgomery, Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama provides work adjustment and evaluation services, job readiness classes, placement services, and skills training in vocational areas, environmental services and retail sales. The number of individuals obtaining employment has continually risen over recent years, with the retention rate for those individuals **obtaining employment at 86 percent** in 2005. This high retention rate is supported by a very comprehensive and individualized job readiness curriculum. Goodwill Industries also provides employment for more than 200 individuals with disabilities within their own organization.

Chosen as the 2005 Organization of the Year by the Alabama Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Goodwill of Central Alabama continues to be a valuable partner to ADRS and the consumers served in the central Alabama area.

### ADRS network of community rehabilitation programs

#### ADRS Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center, Birmingham

Other community rehabilitation programs:

#### ANNISTON

Opportunity Center-Easter Seals

#### BIRMINGHAM

Easter Seals of the Birmingham Area  
Glenwood Mental Health Services  
Goodwill Industries of Alabama  
Workshops, Inc.

#### DECATUR

Tennessee Valley Rehabilitation Center

#### DOTHAN

Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center

#### GADSDEN

Darden Rehabilitation Foundation

#### HUNTSVILLE

Huntsville Rehabilitation Foundation

#### MOBILE

Goodwill/Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast  
Mobile Association for the Blind

#### MONTGOMERY

Easter Seals Central Alabama  
Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama  
Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf-Easter Seals

#### MARC

#### MUSCLE SHOALS

Easter Seals Rehabilitation Center,  
Northwest Alabama

#### OPELIKA

Achievement Center-Easter Seals

#### SELMA

West Central Alabama Easter Seals  
Rehabilitation Center

#### TALLADEGA

E.H. Gentry Technical Facility

#### TUSCALOOSA

Easter Seals West Alabama

# VRS

## vocational rehabilitation service

### program highlights



#### Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

*The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (Governor's Committee) serves as the community relations component for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS).*

The governor's committees serve as a neutral forum for Vocational Rehabilitation staff, community service providers and employers to work together to break down employment barriers for people with disabilities. The local committees work to increase public awareness regarding this virtually untapped labor pool across the state.

Through a network of local-affiliated committees, the Governor's Committee sponsors events and programs yearround to help promote the skills and abilities of people with disabilities throughout the state.

In FY 2005, this program participated in the following:

- **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

October is a month-long celebration of the successes of employees and employers in the hiring, promotion and retention of people with disabilities in the local community.

In FY 2005, the theme was "Your Hired! Success Knows No Limitations." In FY 2005, 18 local affiliated committees sponsored recognition events honoring 123 individuals and 58 businesses for their continued commitment to include people with disabilities in Alabama's workforce.

- **Alabama Disability Mentoring Day**

Alabama participated in the National Disability Mentoring Day activities in October 2004. In the Dothan, Mobile, Birmingham and Talladega areas, 25 students who had participated in an ADRS-sponsored youth leadership program were mentored by local businesses.

- **ABLE Network (Alabama Business Leadership Employment Network)**

In FY 2005, the ABLE Network experienced a significant increase in membership across the state. The establishment of regional chapters is under development, with the following areas being targeted to host regional chapters: Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery, Talladega/Anniston, Mobile and Dothan. The electronic Job Candidate Recruiting and Job

Posting portion of the ABLE Network website ([www.alabamabl.org](http://www.alabamabl.org)) experienced significant growth in the number of job vacancies listed (475) and job candidates available (2,650).

- **Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum**

The Governor's Committee and Troy University joined together in conducting the 7th Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for students with disabilities. Fifty-two students were selected to participate in the five-day forum on the Troy campus in June. The 146 alumni of previous YLF programs are kept involved in the program by being invited back to participate in panels and mentor activities as well as by keeping in touch through a YLF chat room.

- **"Ability Counts" High School Poster/Journalism Contest**

Through a 57-year partnership with the Department of Industrial Relations' veterans program, the Governor's Committee again sponsored the High School Poster/Journalism Contest with the theme "You're Hired! Success Knows no Limitations." Seventy-five high school juniors and seniors demonstrated their talents in written and artistic form to heighten the awareness of people with disabilities in the workforce. The winners were honored at a luncheon.

### Traumatic Brain Injury Care System

*As the lead agency in traumatic brain injury (TBI), ADRS serves as a source of information, education and resources for survivors, professionals, agencies and organizations.*

Cutting across all physical, socioeconomic, and cultural lines, TBI has lifelong, far-reaching effects for individuals, their families and their environment.

ADRS has been working in this arena for the past 20 years and collaborates with numerous partners, including the Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF), the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). The quality of life for many Alabamians affected by TBI and/or spinal cord injury has been improved through services funded by the Impaired Drivers Trust Fund (IDTF) and ADRS.

Through this special initiative, more than 2,200 individuals with TBI were assisted in FY 2005 with community re-integration; service linkage; housing; respite care; independent living services; resource coordination; attendant care; medical supplies; assistive equipment; cognitive, recreational, and vocational rehabilitation; and for many, ultimately, employment.

# VRS

## vocational rehabilitation service

### program highlights



### Transition Service

*ADRS transition from school to work services help to ensure that Alabama's students with disabilities leave school as independent, productive and contributing members of their communities.*

During FY 2005, ADRS continued to expand and improve collaborative interagency transition programs. Transition students continued to make up more than one-third of all individuals served and placed into employment by ADRS counselors.

The transition program also continued to strengthen the jointly funded job coach program with more than 75 local school systems across the state. This \$2.5 million program is designed to place students with disabilities who are in their final year of school into competitive jobs in their local communities before they leave high school. The program is cooperatively managed by local Vocational Rehabilitation Service offices and school systems staff and during FY 2005 provided services to more than 2,000 students through 80 coaches.

In addition, students, parents, rehabilitation counselors, local school special and regular education staff, and the job coaches work together to plan for students' successful and smooth transitions to adult life and work.

In FY 2005, ADRS also continued efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models to meet the needs of students with more significant disabilities and barriers to employment and community living.

Other highlights of FY 2005 include:

- Continuation of specialized services for students with specific learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders.
- Continuation of the College Prep Program offered at six sites around the state. These programs had more than 200 participants during 2005. Plans to expand the College Prep program to two new sites during the summer of 2006 are being finalized.

- Collaboration with the Special Education Division of the Alabama Department of Education and the Department of Corrections to implement the Prison Transition Initiative for youthful offenders.
- Participation by Alabama youth in National Mentoring Day in Washington, D.C.
- Collaboration with Children's Rehabilitation Service to provide Teen Transition Clinic. Two clinics sites are currently operating in Homewood and Mobile. Plans are in place to expand this clinic to one new site during 2006.

### Supported Employment

*In an effort to assist individuals with the most-severe disabilities in becoming employed, supported employment provides community-based assessments, job-site training and support services to ensure quality job performance and stability. These services are funded through Milestones, an outcome-based payment system.*

In FY 2005, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services funded 31 agencies across the state to provide supported employment. More than 600 individuals were referred for supported employment. Of this number, 480 obtained competitive employment, and 280 were successfully closed. These individuals averaged working more than 23 hours per week and earned an average hourly wage of \$5.95 per hour. Both wages and hours worked increased over 2004 numbers. Also, 760 individuals are being followed in long-term support across the state. Four additional agencies will be funded in 2006, providing services in areas of the state not previously offering supported employment.

ADRS continues to collaborate closely with Alabama APSE, The Network on Employment. Alabama APSE was fortunate to play host to the 2005 National APSE Conference in Mobile in July. More than 600 people from across the United States and other countries attended the conference, marking the largest attendance at this national conference in the past six years.

Alabama had three individuals win national awards during this conference. The individuals won in the following categories: Personal Achievement, APSE Professional of the Year and Large Employer.

# VRS

## vocational rehabilitation service

### services for employers

Since 1984, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) has recognized Alabama's businesses as true "customers" of its Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) division. In fiscal year 2005, the 17 VRS specialty staff, employer development coordinators (EDCs), who work with employers throughout the state established relationships through contacts and formal accounts with more than 800 businesses.

### No-cost services for business

VRS has developed a variety of services for businesses that have been custom-designed with input from business and industry and cover the gamut of disability-related expertise:

- Recruitment assistance with pre-screened, qualified job candidates
- Assistance with retaining valued employees whose jobs have been affected by illness, injury or disability
- In-service training or consultation sessions on "hot" employment issues such as:
  - Lowering the cost of disability management
  - Accommodating applicants or workers with disabilities
  - Links to a multitude of community-based resources
  - Tips on interviewing do's and don'ts
  - Rehabilitation engineering assistance
  - Accessibility suggestions
  - Expanding diversity initiatives to include disability
  - Access to special tax incentives
  - Pre-hire "work-tryout" options in line with wage and hour laws
  - "Clean-up" or updating job descriptions, expanding their use by a company

### Active partners

A number of businesses partner with VRS as customer and advisor to identify emerging needs that could be addressed by VRS. Some of those companies are:

- Alabama Power, a Southern Company
- Wachovia Bank
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Jefferson County Personnel Board
- Degussa-Huls
- National Bank of Commerce
- Manpower, Inc
- Auburn University
- Home Instead Senior Care
- West Corporation
- CVS/Pharmacy

### Leadership

Many of the VRS business partners also serve ADRS and VRS in a leadership or advisory capacity. Examples include:

- Member, Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services
- Chair, VRS Rehabilitation Council
- Chair, Employment Committee of the VRS Council
- Ad hoc advisors, VRS Council Employment Committee
- Steering Committee, Alabama's Business Leadership Employment Network

"We have a tremendous history with Vocational Rehabilitation over the past 20 years. We learned at an early stage in the partnership how valuable they are to our business in terms of the services they can provide.

– Beth Butler, VP, Employee Relations  
Wachovia Bank

- Regional representative, U.S. Business Leadership Network
- Spokespersons at Congressional Breakfast
- Presenters at the National Rehabilitation Association's Legislative Conference
- Trainers at the Rehabilitation Services Administration's National Employment Conference

### Collaboration of employment resources

VRS business partners continue to stress the importance of collaboration among Alabama's vocational rehabilitation resources dedicated to the employment of individuals with disabilities. To address this need, VRS forges ahead as a leader in:

- In-state collaboration among the many rehabilitation "providers" who work with VRS consumers when approaching and partnering with employers
- Regional collaboration with the other VRS agencies in the Southeast to leverage partnerships with business across

### VRS employer services by the numbers

- EDC partnerships with business: 815
- Services to these businesses: 7,539
- Consumers served by EDC specialty team: 1,928
- Employment services to these consumers: 12,302
- Total number of these consumers hired: 824

state lines

- National networking in the building of the "National VR-Business Network" to create long-term partnerships with business and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Outreach to disabled veterans returning from overseas in need of assistance with return-to-work or in finding a job. VRS now collaborates with the Veterans Administration's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program and with the Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service to maximize services and employment outcomes for these vets dealing with disabilities such as the loss of a limb, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, and much more.

# VRS vocational rehabilitation service

## UAB & VRS: a mutually beneficial partnership

*The partnership between the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Vocational Rehabilitation Service began in the late 1970s, when VRS began referring job candidates to UAB recruiters. Later, both VRS and UAB appointed a primary point of contact. Services were later expanded beyond candidate referral and hiring into assistance with accessibility, accommodations, and return to work. In 2000, Roger McCullough, who was then UAB's assistant vice president of human resources, was appointed to represent District 6 on the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services. In recent years, the partnership has been formal through a shared staff position to enhance the working relationship and expand return-to-work assistance on site at UAB. Today, two VRS staff members are assigned to work part-time with the UAB account.*



### University of Alabama at Birmingham

- Excellent affirmative action in recruitment and outreach (with reduced costs to recruit, train and pre-screen candidates)
- Ready access to accommodation resources (for new hires and current employees)
- No-cost access (to job coaches, interpreters)
- Favorable impact on employee morale
- Retaining valued employees (not losing the UAB talent pool of the existing workforce)
- No-cost consultant services, ergonomic assessments
- Purchase of accommodations
- Ease of access to in-service training for UAB staff (topics such as disability awareness or etiquette training)

**210**

Number of job seekers receiving one-on-one job preparedness from UAB's RAVE program

**140**

Number of those who applied to UAB

**49**

Number hired, no preferential hiring involved  
(35 percent success rate compared with general public applicants with a success rate of 4 percent of candidates hired)

**257**

Number of VRS consumers attending UAB-targeted job fairs over a two-year period  
(with a recruitment rate of 9 percent into competitive positions at UAB)

**129**

Number of UAB employees receiving retention assistance through RAVE

**83**

Number still employed at UAB  
(64 percent success rate; more than half of those who left UAB, departed for reasons not related to the disability)



### Alabama Department of REHABILITATION SERVICES

- More professional and comprehensive access (to quality, career opportunities for people with disabilities)
- More effective post-hire follow-along, (ensuring long-term employment)
- Direct, clear input from UAB (about employment issues and VRS products and services to business)
- Quality leadership on ADRS Board (with former UAB staff member)
- Higher wages for VRS consumers (increasing overall average wage at case closure)
- Opportunities to pilot "new" services (to business)
- Impressive testimonies (to engage other Alabama employers)

**49**

Number of VRS consumers hired and "closed" as competitively employed

**30**

Number of RAVE cases activated

**12**

Number of those successfully served and closed as employed

**\$21.15**

Average wage at closure  
(compared with \$13.50 for other closures in UAB RAVE counselor's caseload)

**\$1,390**

VRS cost for each closure

**\$20,412**

Average annual consumer wage at closure  
(compared with \$16,515 for overall VRS closures)

# VRS

## vocational rehabilitation service

### program highlights



### Assistive Technology Services

*The statewide rehabilitation technology specialist team is comprised of individuals with backgrounds in engineering and 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.*

Throughout the state, thousands of Alabamians with disabilities are able to become more independent every year through Assistive Technology Services.

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

RTS's 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 FY 2005, this program:

- provided 436 assistive device services to ADRS consumers
- provided 116 engineering design services
- evaluated 330 ADRS consumers for assistive technology
- provided one or more services to 495 ADRS consumers
- served approximately 19 percent more people with disabilities than in FY 2004
- increased emphasis on training to maintain state-of-the-art knowledge in the assistive technology field
- provided computer aid design (CAD) software and training to improve access to rehabilitation technology services
- continued acquisition of equipment to provide state-of-the-art evaluations and services

### VRS

#### assistive technology services

- Job accommodations
- augmentative communication assessments
- educational accommodation assessments
- computer access evaluations
- installation and repair of accommodations
- task analysis
- home modification consultations
- transportation/mobility consultations
- architectural accessibility walk-through surveys
- architectural accessibility basic facility surveys
- product searches/information and referral
- ergonomic equipment demonstrations
- assistive technology presentations and training

- improved collaboration with staff at E.H. Gentry and other community rehabilitation programs
- made 19 educational presentations on the Alabama's assistive technology program, including two at national conferences
- improved collaboration with university engineering program to promote rehabilitation engineering

### STAR: Alabama Assistive Technology Resource

*STAR is Alabama's technology-related assistance program.*

In October 2004, President Bush signed legislation changing STAR from a discretionary grant to a formula program under RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration).

In FY 2005, this program:

- directly provided advocacy and technical information to consumers and professionals statewide
- continued to experience significant growth in the equipment-recycling program, with the three centers beginning to function more universally. In 2005, the centers began distributing a statewide monthly email detailing available assistive technology
- through a federal grant award, began plans to expand its financial loan program to continue to provide alternative funding for individuals purchasing assistive technology

# VRS vocational rehabilitation service

## office locations

### STATE OFFICE

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery 36116  
334-281-8780, 1-800-441-7607  
1-800-499-1816 (TTY)  
334-281-1973 (fax)

### ANDALUSIA

1082 Village Square Drive, Suite 1, 36420  
334-222-4114, 1-800-671-6833  
334-427-1216 (fax)  
Counties: Butler, Coffee, Conecuh,  
Covington, Crenshaw, Pike

### ANNISTON

1105 Woodstock Ave., 36207  
256-238-9300, 1-800-671-6834  
256-231-4852 (fax)  
Counties: Calhoun, Cleburne, Randolph

### BIRMINGHAM

Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility  
P.O. Box 59127  
3830 Ridgeway Drive, 35209  
205-870-5999, 1-800-441-7609  
205-879-2685 (fax)  
Statewide

### HOMEWOOD (Birmingham)

P.O. Box 19888  
236 Goodwin Crest Drive, 35209  
205-290-4400, 1-800-671-6837  
205-290-0486 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby

### COLUMBIANA

Community Services Building  
P.O. Box 856, 35051-0856  
205-669-3829, 205-669-0605 (fax)  
County: Shelby

### DECATUR

621 Cherry St., NE, P.O. Box 1686, 35602  
256-353-2754, 1-800-671-6838  
256-351-2476 (fax)  
Counties: Cullman, Lawrence, Limestone,  
Morgan

### DOTHAN

795 Ross Clark Circle, NE, 36303  
334-792-0022, 1-800-275-0132  
334-792-1783 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Dale, Geneva, Henry,  
Houston

### GADSDEN

1100 George Wallace Drive, 35903  
256-547-6974, 1-800-671-6839  
256-543-1784 (fax)  
Counties: Cherokee, DeKalb, Etowah,  
Marshall, St. Clair

### HUNTSVILLE

2939 Johnson Road, SW, 35805  
256-650-8219, 1-800-671-6840  
256-650-8250 (fax)  
Counties: Jackson, Madison

### JACKSON

1401 Forest Ave., P.O. Box 1005, 36545  
251-246-5708, 1-800-671-6836  
251-246-5224 (fax)  
Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Monroe,  
Washington

### JASPER

301 N. Walston Bridge Road  
Suite 116, 35504  
205-221-7840, 1-800-671-6841  
205-221-1062 (fax)  
Counties: Marion, Walker, Winston

### MOBILE

2419 Gordon Smith Drive, 36617  
251-479-8611, 1-800-671-6842  
251-478-2197 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke,  
Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington

### MONTGOMERY

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116  
334-288-0220, 1-800-441-7578  
334-281-1388 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock, Elmore, Macon,  
Montgomery

### MUSCLE SHOALS

1450 E. Avalon Ave., 35661  
256-381-1110, 1-800-275-0166  
256-389-3149 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale

### OPELIKA

520 W. Thomason Circle, 36801  
334-749-1259, 1-800-671-6835  
334-749-8753 (fax)  
Counties: Chambers, Lee, Macon,  
Russell, Tallapoosa

### SCOTTSBORO

P. O. Box 296, 203 S. Market St., 35768  
256-574-5813, 1-800-418-8823  
256-574-6033 (fax)  
County: Jackson

### SELMA

2906 Citizens Parkway, 36701  
334-872-8422, 1-888-761-5995  
334-877-3796 (fax)  
Counties: Dallas, Lowndes, Wilcox

### TALLADEGA

#4 Medical Office Park, 35160  
256-362-1300, 1-800-441-7592  
256-362-6387 (fax)  
Counties: Clay, Coosa, Randolph,  
St. Clair, Talladega

### THOMASVILLE

Thomasville Rehabilitation Center  
P.O. Box 1006, Adams Building,  
Bashi Road, 36784  
334-636-5421, 1-800-335-3237  
334-636-4618 (fax)  
Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Monroe,  
Washington

### TROY

518 S. Brundidge St., 36081  
334-566-2491, 1-800-441-7608  
334-566-9415 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Bullock, Butler,  
Crenshaw, Pike

### TUSCALOOSA

1305 37th St., E, P.O. Drawer 1610,  
35403-1610  
205-554-1300, 1-800-331-5562  
205-554-1369 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Greene,  
Hale, Lamar, Marengo, Marion, Perry,  
Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Walker,  
Winston

# SAIL

## state of alabama independent living/homebound serving alabamians with severe disabilities

The State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) Service provides specialized in-home education and counseling, attendant care, training and medical services to Alabamians with severe disabilities. The SAIL program has seven community-based offices located throughout the state to serve residents in all 67 counties.

SAIL ensures the consumer can live as independently as possible at home and in the community through three specialized programs.

### Homebound Services

This program 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 financial need

### Independent Living Support Services

The goal of this program is to enhance and promote independence in the home, community and workplace. To be



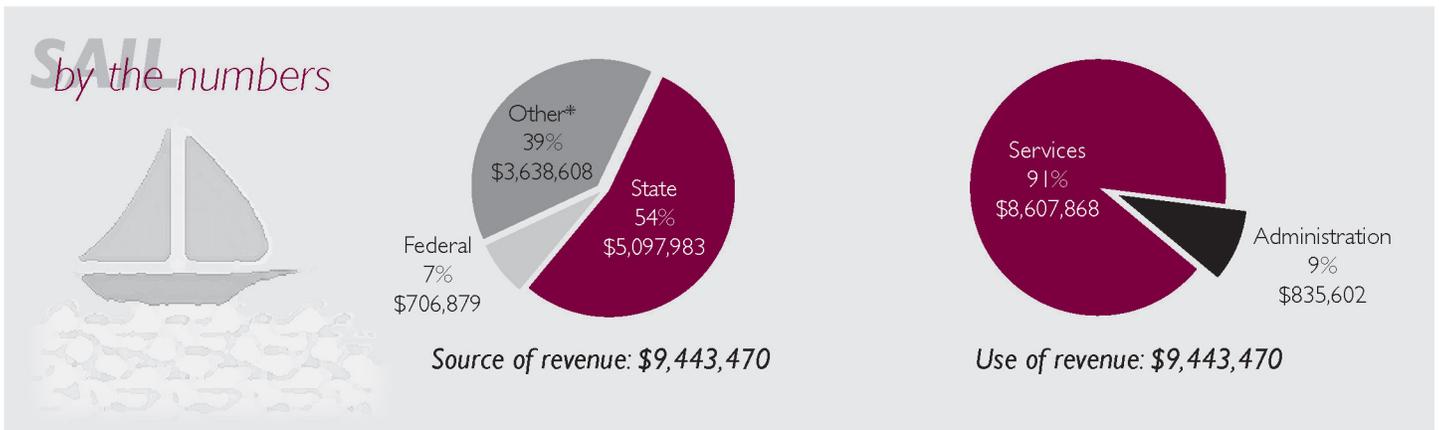
eligible a person must:

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

### Waiver Services

This special Medicaid Waiver allows SAIL to maximize its resources and access additional programs and services for the individuals served. 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 disability as a result of reasons other than aging



\*Medicaid reimbursements

# SAIL

## state of alabama independent living/homebound

### fiscal year 2005 highlights

#### Independent Living services

- Assisted 1,761 Alabamians with the severest disabilities in remaining in their homes and communities rather than in nursing homes or other institutions
  - 628 consumers in the Homebound Program
  - 530 consumers in the Independent Living Service
  - 603 consumers in the Medicaid Waiver Program
- Provided services to consumers and families in all 67 counties through seven SAIL teams located statewide. SAIL teams of registered nurses, rehabilitation counselors and independent living specialists provide individualized services and training to SAIL consumers and their families about the unique problems and needs presented by each differing disability. SAIL teams also teach activities of daily living, health, safety and nutrition as well as the use of assistive technology. In addition, SAIL teams educate SAIL consumers and their families about self-advocacy, empowering them to access services.

#### Independent Living and collaboration

- In partnership with the Alabama Medicaid Agency, continued under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act (TWWIIA) to provide Personal Assistance Service (PAS) as an additional waiver service. This program allows SAIL to provide services for working individuals who need personal assistance services outside the home in an employment setting.



Also completing projects in conjunction with Medicaid to improve employment opportunities to persons with disabilities in Alabama. The grant was scheduled to end December 2005.

- Used the ADRS Recycling Centers, donated goods and services, in-kind services, and community resources to serve consumers throughout the state

#### Independent Living and acquisition of resources

- Continued to develop resources to supplement limited funding with donated goods and services. In the past year, independent living specialists secured donations of \$482,171.28.

### SAIL

#### state of alabama independent living/homebound services

- Attendant care
- Personal assistance services for working participants
- Patient and family education
- Counseling and guidance
- Nursing management
- Home modifications
- Disability-related prescriptions
- Peer counseling
- Disability-related medical supplies
- Training in activities for daily living
- Information and referral

# **SAIL** state of alabama independent living/homebound office locations

## **STATE OFFICE**

2129 E. South Blvd., Montgomery, 36116  
334-281-8780, 1-800-441-7607  
TTY: 1-800-499-1816  
334-613-3542 (fax)  
www.rehab.state.al.us

## **ANNISTON**

1105 Woodstock Ave., 36207  
256-238-9300, 1-800-671-6834  
256-231-4852 (fax)  
Counties: Calhoun, Cherokee, Clay,  
Cleburne, Coosa, DeKalb, Etowah,  
Marshall, Randolph, St. Clair, Talladega

## **DECATUR**

621 Cherry St., NE, 35601  
256-353-2754, 1-800-671-6838  
256-351-2476 (fax)  
Counties: Colbert, Cullman, Franklin, Jackson,  
Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison,  
Morgan

## **DOTHAN**

795 Ross Clark Circle, NE, 36303  
334-792-0022, 1-800-275-0132  
334-792-1783 (fax)  
Counties: Barbour, Butler, Coffee,  
Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale,  
Geneva, Henry, Houston, Pike

## **HOMWOOD (Birmingham)**

P.O. Box 19888  
236 Goodwin Crest Drive, 35209  
205-290-4400, 1-800-671-6837  
205-945-8517 (fax)  
Counties: Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby

## **MOBILE**

2419 Gordon Smith Drive, 36617  
251-479-8611, 1-888-388-3245  
251-478-2198 (fax)  
Counties: Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Escambia,  
Mobile, Monroe, Washington

## **MONTGOMERY**

2127 E. South Blvd., 36116  
334-288-0220, 1-800-441-7578  
334-613-3455 (fax)  
Counties: Autauga, Bullock, Chambers, Dallas,  
Elmore, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Montgomery,  
Russell, Tallapoosa, Wilcox

## **TUSCALOOSA**

1305 37th St., East, 35405  
205-554-1300  
1-800-441-7597, 1-800-331-5562  
205-554-1369 (fax)  
Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar,  
Marengo, Marion, Perry, Pickens, Sumter,  
Tuscaloosa, Walker, Winston

# ADRS

*people served • purchased services • grant information*



# ADRS

## people served

Counties	Vocational Rehabilitation Service		Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Early Intervention System	Fiscal 2005
	Served	Rehabilitated into employment	Served	Served	Served	Total Served
AUTAUGA	414	66	128	18	58	618
BALDWIN	991	173	265	48	95	1,399
BARBOUR	215	40	79	23	27	344
BIBB	204	33	43	19	26	292
BLOUNT	323	69	102	23	30	478
BULLOCK	111	15	41	4	13	169
BUTLER	224	46	85	17	10	336
CALHOUN	1,686	286	379	46	96	2,207
CHAMBERS	386	66	96	14	27	523
CHEROKEE	357	48	79	13	13	462
CHILTON	230	30	68	20	42	360
CHOCTAW	149	30	34	4	8	195
CLARKE	350	53	113	16	31	510
CLAY	216	42	39	13	6	274
CLEBURNE	134	35	62	3	10	209
COFFEE	399	57	112	26	24	561
COLBERT	551	97	108	14	43	716
CONECUH	175	37	51	9	11	246
COOSA	132	21	13	5	10	160
COVINGTON	427	72	169	29	31	656
CRENSHAW	118	15	44	17	8	187
CULLMAN	585	124	146	14	75	820
DALE	364	64	114	23	57	558
DALLAS	277	64	212	12	93	594
DeKALB	563	119	189	38	69	859
ELMORE	839	122	179	30	57	1,105
ESCAMBIA	340	55	59	17	31	447
ETOWAH	1,273	269	319	47	74	1,713
FAYETTE	170	20	43	4	30	247
FRANKLIN	357	40	69	9	13	448
GENEVA	195	28	53	13	18	279
GREENE	26	2	28	16	21	91
HALE	188	30	42	5	25	260
HENRY	121	21	37	4	14	176

# ADRS

## people served

Counties	Vocational Rehabilitation Service		Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Early Intervention System	Fiscal 2005
	Served	Rehabilitated into employment	Served	Served	Served	Total Served
HOUSTON	868	160	233	47	90	1,238
JACKSON	644	141	113	21	49	827
JEFFERSON	8,219	1,405	918	235	675	10,047
LAMAR	143	20	49	7	44	243
LAUDERDALE	793	109	182	20	59	1,054
LAWRENCE	264	57	81	20	24	389
LEE	807	156	249	25	71	1,152
LIMESTONE	444	108	166	23	62	695
LOWNDES	141	18	46	6	19	212
MACON	178	33	78	4	16	276
MADISON	3,017	421	664	37	373	4,091
MARENGO	249	13	71	17	48	385
MARION	385	64	65	22	52	524
MARSHALL	776	146	278	26	79	1,159
MOBILE	3,840	648	1,219	191	407	5,657
MONROE	234	40	86	19	22	361
MONTGOMERY	2,313	393	685	101	256	3,355
MORGAN	1,016	208	233	24	119	1,392
PERRY	59	11	46	9	31	145
PICKENS	234	25	81	15	28	358
PIKE	317	68	91	10	47	465
RANDOLPH	195	39	47	13	20	275
RUSSELL	276	45	93	17	21	407
ST. CLAIR	534	89	101	31	211	877
SHELBY	1,400	160	161	28	52	1,641
SUMTER	117	18	44	13	42	216
TALLADEGA	980	182	204	48	68	1,300
TALLAPOOSA	382	60	80	17	23	502
TUSCALOOSA	2,194	338	406	74	287	2,961
WALKER	1,007	138	131	22	76	1,236
WASHINGTON	198	28	93	8	19	318
WILCOX	131	25	74	3	24	232
WINSTON	336	62	53	10	30	429
TOTALS	45,781	7,717	10,721	1,776	4,640	62,918

# ADRS *purchased services*

	Vocational Rehabilitation Service	Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Fiscal 2005
Counties	Expenditures	Expenditures	Expenditures	Total Expenditures
AUTAUGA	\$411,494.67	\$102,089.71	\$116,686.03	\$630,270.41
BALDWIN	789,288.20	100,016.51	157,649.31	1,046,954.02
BARBOUR	108,018.78	15,718.19	55,722.55	179,459.52
BIBB	205,241.40	18,956.55	48,191.80	272,389.75
BLOUNT	257,937.50	32,923.16	148,217.67	439,078.33
BULLOCK	37,654.34	13,726.70	314.89	51,695.93
BUTLER	132,566.87	15,545.78	45,962.13	194,074.78
CALHOUN	1,656,360.92	104,125.85	146,375.42	1,906,862.19
CHAMBERS	226,287.30	36,400.54	53,516.98	316,204.82
CHEROKEE	139,612.78	21,293.26	39,784.41	200,690.45
CHILTON	160,147.45	17,860.64	77,598.31	255,606.40
CHOCTAW	38,854.42	14,062.20	23,831.13	76,747.75
CLARKE	147,301.78	42,484.38	94,615.97	284,402.13
CLAY	23,802.32	18,435.80	39,041.05	81,279.17
CLEBURNE	175,574.89	15,422.95	13,834.64	204,832.48
COFFEE	211,076.62	18,988.33	83,231.42	313,296.37
COLBERT	320,168.44	41,335.32	51,641.23	413,144.99
CONECUH	107,974.59	11,889.89	13,462.71	133,327.19
COOSA	30,511.17	3,245.69	30,846.23	64,603.09
COVINGTON	303,799.69	60,517.38	78,444.23	442,761.30
CRENSHAW	45,874.93	11,462.31	60,081.55	117,418.79
CULLMAN	418,749.05	43,148.32	27,729.40	489,626.77
DALE	181,752.36	25,775.47	82,267.54	289,795.37
DALLAS	273,795.10	30,204.67	63,408.48	367,408.25
DeKALB	365,586.93	74,133.03	80,280.37	520,000.33
ELMORE	472,125.87	67,932.44	158,516.85	698,575.16
ESCAMBIA	119,250.01	11,597.12	48,970.41	179,817.54
ETOWAH	828,017.98	79,634.62	175,327.97	1,082,980.57
FAYETTE	143,002.62	15,942.91	34,758.73	193,704.26
FRANKLIN	164,821.68	38,850.18	41,289.60	244,961.46
GENEVA	72,703.34	8,055.43	66,936.16	147,694.93
GREENE	9,987.76	10,434.38	46,454.56	66,876.70
HALE	80,402.82	5,674.68	752.90	86,830.40
HENRY	70,674.83	9,298.33	13,695.76	93,668.92

# ADRS *purchased services*

	Vocational Rehabilitation Service	Children's Rehabilitation Service	SAIL Service	Fiscal 2005
Counties	Expenditures	Expenditures	Expenditures	Total Expenditures
HOUSTON	\$633,162.84	\$56,325.65	\$112,103.28	801,591.77
JACKSON	346,815.70	43,370.93	100,654.19	490,840.82
JEFFERSON	6,157,338.51	253,402.94	1,216,297.66	7,627,039.11
LAMAR	106,420.16	32,073.60	48,613.45	187,107.21
LAUDERDALE	525,354.14	85,543.56	95,236.36	706,134.06
LAWRENCE	289,199.55	27,351.18	65,688.32	382,239.05
LEE	834,003.01	110,382.35	141,184.34	1,085,569.70
LIMESTONE	405,152.30	65,013.32	58,348.09	528,513.71
LOWNDES	120,605.29	6,768.38	22,068.50	149,442.17
MACON	248,996.04	25,582.12	20,504.47	295,082.63
MADISON	1,752,816.89	260,224.30	170,023.92	2,183,065.11
MARENGO	182,291.71	14,820.20	15,391.76	212,503.67
MARION	255,032.45	18,460.85	72,104.84	345,598.14
MARSHALL	397,599.65	86,318.07	114,307.66	598,225.38
MOBILE	2,468,655.28	402,040.59	834,926.13	3,705,622.00
MONROE	87,824.37	41,538.13	82,005.10	211,367.60
MONTGOMERY	1,769,005.31	124,779.29	533,848.81	2,427,633.41
MORGAN	520,338.48	84,362.80	153,617.86	758,319.14
PERRY	50,285.54	6,386.37	11,745.40	68,417.31
PICKENS	96,298.84	19,100.37	74,585.88	189,985.09
PIKE	206,328.19	40,198.32	30,077.26	276,603.77
RANDOLPH	142,882.07	8,831.51	57,928.45	209,642.03
RUSSELL	192,744.54	35,110.44	85,262.13	313,117.11
ST. CLAIR	213,811.04	46,845.59	90,046.84	350,703.47
SHELBY	798,663.51	41,554.52	122,047.87	962,265.90
SUMTER	35,597.60	13,364.65	14,623.92	63,586.17
TALLADEGA	474,855.44	68,396.21	191,457.09	734,708.74
TALLAPOOSA	225,428.41	33,741.85	80,900.59	340,070.85
TUSCALOOSA	1,692,113.80	78,039.54	332,960.11	2,103,113.45
WALKER	813,932.25	52,365.06	66,265.46	932,562.77
WASHINGTON	53,718.91	30,823.83	38,450.39	122,993.13
WILCOX	88,347.09	11,783.87	3,106.16	103,237.12
WINSTON	185,740.90	24,129.52	36,010.50	245,880.92
TOTALS	\$31,101,779.22	\$3,386,212.63	\$7,311,831.18	\$41,799,823.03

# ADRS

## fiscal year 2005 grants

*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 2005.*

### Project MAPS (Mapping Access to Program Services)

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, and the Office of Workforce Development were awarded a Work Incentive Grant by the Department of Labor in the amount of \$600,000. The goal of the grant is to facilitate a system's change for improving access to workforce development services for people with disabilities by improving outcomes in terms of program participation and suitable employment for persons with disabilities. In doing this, MAPS will work toward maximizing the participation of customers with disabilities in the workforce development system.

The grant has employed a staff of one coordinator and three regional Career System Facilitators. To date, MAPS has accomplished the following goals:

- identifying the physical and programmatic barriers to serving individuals with disabilities in the Career Center system
- developing a "Recommended Policies and Procedures Guide for Effectively Serving People with Disabilities" for Career Centers
- collaborating with all partner agencies and initiated action to develop a plan to overcome identified barriers
- identifying elements for a "Universally Accessible Workstation" and secured the funding for all 26 Comprehensive Career Centers to have all the assistive technology for a universally accessible workstation
- developing training modules to develop the capacity of Career Center staff to effectively identify and serve individuals with disabilities
- improving physical and program access to services for

persons with disabilities

- participating in the statewide electronic linkage system initiative for uniform referral and follow-up procedures
- currently is developing a website for easy access to all products and resources developed and/or identified through the MAPS project
- identifying local community resources to facilitate the success of people with disabilities

MAPS staff continue to address the remaining goals of:

- training all Career Center partners to better identify and serve persons with disabilities so they have better access to Career Center services
- conducting outreach to consumer groups, service organizations, employers, and community resources to both locate people with disabilities and locate the services to meet their diverse needs
- utilizing project efforts to design a Disability Program Navigator program designed to complement the existing VR program.

The project partners include:

- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)
- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)
- Alabama Department of Industrial Relations (DIR)
- Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (DPE)
- Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR)

It is anticipated that the efforts of this grant will result in an increase in the number of persons with disabilities being identified and served through the Career Centers and obtaining access to a wider variety of training and assessment options available through the partners represented in the Career Center System.

### Inservice Training

This \$163,490 grant from the Rehabilitation Service Administration plus \$18,166 in state matching monies enabled the department to provide professional development and training opportunities to staff members. Staff training is linked

# ADRS

## fiscal year 2005 grants

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to specific job tasks that enhance employee job performance in providing services to people with disabilities.

This year was the fifth year in a five-year grant funding cycle. Beginning in October of 2000, the grant included additional funding specifically for the purpose of establishing a video conference system to enhance our technology capabilities for training. ADRS was the first department in Alabama's state government to have this specific ability of linking all of the department's offices statewide. During the first year, 10 conference rooms were equipped with cameras and monitors as well as 14 office cameras. The initial funding year also provided necessary funds for enhancing the department's computer network and infrastructure capabilities making it possible for the audio-visual technology to work without compromising the flow of data necessary for our case management and financial systems. During 2002, 21 desktop cameras were added to the network's system as well as enhanced cables and software to accommodate additional cameras and users. Technology was also purchased that would allow our system to become integrated with colleges, universities and other agencies nationally and internationally.

Between 2003 and 2005, we purchased equipment that integrates archived and "real-time" servers. These servers are capable of giving ADRS staff the advantage of "training on demand" when their schedule and work load permit and from the convenience of their desktop computers. They also allow staff to participate in "real-time" training that occurs at another office in the state without the expense of time and travel.

The funding for the videoconference system is for the purpose of providing training to staff, connecting offices around the state for conference and meeting purposes and saving travel dollars while maintaining qualified rehabilitation staff. The five-year funding cycle for this grant ended with FY 2005. A new five-year RSA inservice training grant has already been submitted and awarded.

### Hemophilia

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Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) receives a grant

from Hemophilia of Georgia. The total amount of the grant monies, funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, is \$28,700.

The Alabama Hemophilia Program (AHP), administered through CRS, uses funding from this grant in providing comprehensive, culturally sensitive, family-centered care and services to Alabama residents with bleeding disorders. Special efforts are made to include traditionally underserved populations, such as persons living in rural areas, minorities, women and adolescents. Additionally, funding is used in efforts to provide outreach and education to people with bleeding disorders, medical providers, school personnel, and other community-based agencies.

### STAR: Alabama's Assistive Technology Resource

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Since October 2004, the STAR Program has undergone some major reconstruction in the form of congressional changes to the program's infrastructure.

STAR (as Alabama's Statewide Assistive Technology Resource) is now a formula program operating under a three-year plan with the mission of getting assistive technology into the hands of Alabamians with disabilities who need it most.

Under that premise, STAR functions are implemented in four major areas: (1) advisory counsels/committees comprised of 51 percent assistive technology users; (2) assistive technology centers designed through RFPs (requests for proposals) for refurbishing/recycling and/or demonstrations and device loan programs; (3) alternative financing programs designed for borrowing options regarding interest buy-down, low-interest revolving guarantees, etc., through CBO (community-based organization); and (4) training and statistics designed for awareness, measuring outcomes and strategic planning.

### Technology Loan Closet (TLC)

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While the TLC Grant was not funded in FY '05 as anticipated, a smaller grant in the amount of \$1,400 was received to update the assistive technology equipment in the Technology Loan closet housed in the Anniston CRS Office.

# ADRS

## fiscal year 2005 grants

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The TLC serves individuals in nine counties around Anniston, Talladega and Gadsden.

A second grant for \$1,000 was received to assist clients and families with travel expenses in accessing special services only available outside Alabama.

### Traveling Together on Highway 2010

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Children's Rehabilitation Service received a \$16,500 incentive award grant from the Champions for Progress Center at Utah State University, a national center that provides leadership and technical support for state Title V programs in systems building at state and community levels for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN). The grant was to help states make progress toward the six outcomes for CYSHCN set forth by the President's New Freedom Initiative and Healthy People 2010. CRS planned and played host to a statewide conference related to these objectives, held in Birmingham July 14-15, 2005. The conference, titled "Traveling Together on Highway 2010: Along the Road to Healthy Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs," targeted professionals, youth, and families of CYSHCN. Through a partnership with Family Voices of Alabama, CYSHCN and their families were supported to attend the conference. Nationally and locally recognized speakers including Dianna Denboba (federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau), Patti Hackett (Healthy and Ready to Work national center), Polly Arango (co-founder of national Family Voices), and Dr. Carden Johnston (past president of American Academy of Pediatrics) led conference sessions. Over the two days of the conference, 111 youth, family members and professionals participated in sessions and workgroups. Two CRS staff members attended a multi-state meeting in Snowbird, Utah at the close of the funding period to share grant activities and conference highlights with other states.

### LIFE Project (Learning to Impact Future Experiences)

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The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services was awarded a \$604,116.25 grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to provide transition

services to deaf and hard-of-hearing youths. The purpose of this initiative is to develop and implement a collaborative leadership and career development program for eligible 14- to 21-year-old high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing and living within the Alabama Workforce Investment Area.

This initiative is a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Alabama School for the Deaf, Jacksonville State University, and the Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf-Easter Seal. The program consists of three components: transition to independence and employment (job readiness training and work experience), transition workshops for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and their parents, and leadership workshops for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Over the three years this grant has been funded, 252 students from 58 counties in Alabama have been served. While participating in this program, 150 of these students participated in a leadership workshop.

### Independent Living Service

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A grant of \$307,268 from the Rehabilitation Services Administration allowed Independent Living Service to provide independent living skills training, advocacy, peer support and information and referral to 530 clients across the state. These services are provided by independent living specialists. The services provided are monitored quarterly by the State Independent Living Council (SILC) which develops a plan for Independent Living Service every three years.

In addition to providing direct services, the independent living specialists work closely with community organizations to ensure access to and local community support for independent living services for clients in communities across the state.

### Supported Employment

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Alabama used \$522,619 funding from the State Grant Supported Employment Program along with other Title I money to fund 31 supported employment agencies across the state. These agencies continue to provide employment services under

# ADRS

## fiscal year 2005 grants

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Milestones, an outcome-based payment system. More than 600 individuals participated in community-based assessments. Of this number, 480 obtained competitive employment and 280 were successfully closed. Individuals working as a result of their participation in supported employment averaged working more than 23 hours per week and earned an average hourly wage of \$5.95 per hour.

Training opportunities continue to be available to all staff working in supported employment. Two sessions of “Best Practices in Supported Employment” training, conducted by consultants from Virginia Commonwealth University, were held. Approximately 80 individuals completed this training in 2005.

Alabama was fortunate to host the 2005 national supported employment conference in Mobile. More than 600 people from across the U.S. and other countries attended the conference, making it the largest attendance for this conference in the past six years. Three individuals from Alabama received national awards for Personal Achievement, Professional of the Year and Large Employer of the Year.

The quality of supported employment continues to improve and services continue to expand. Four additional agencies have been funded for 2006 to provide supported employment services in areas of the state not previously served. Currently, 760 individuals are being followed in long-term support across the state.

### State of Alabama Client Assistance Program (SACAP)

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The Rehabilitation Services Administration awarded \$155,273 in the form of a grant to the Client Assistance Program. SACAP is an advocacy program that assists the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services consumers when they have questions about their program or problems associated with their program. SACAP assisted 34 individuals in FY 2005.

### ADRS Alabama Win Incentives Network (ALA-WIN)

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The ALA-WIN grant is currently in the fifth year of a five-year period. ADRS receives \$300,000 a year to provide services to

51 Alabama counties. ADRS currently has benefits specialists in Mobile, Dothan, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa and Huntsville as well as a referral coordinator in Montgomery. These specialists work with people in benefit status receiving Social Security Disability and/or Supplemental Security Income. They provide information on how wages will affect benefits. During FY 2005, more than 8,000 contacts were made with people in benefit status through group presentations and one-on-one counseling sessions. Alabama became a Ticket to Work state under the new Social Security legislation in November 2003. Because of this legislation, benefits specialists are now helping even more people in their desire to return to work.

### Traumatic Brain Injury

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In 2005 the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services implemented the \$100,000 awarded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau in the form of a Health Resources and Services Administration Post-Demonstration grant for the purpose of developing a model program of care for people acquiring a traumatic brain injury because of domestic violence (DV). The program will (1) identify those sustaining a TBI due to domestic violence; (2) provide education of social dynamic issues; (3) provide awareness of TBI services; and (4) develop successful approaches for domestic violence intervention. Partners included were: Alabama Head Injury Foundation, Alabama Head Injury Task Force, Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, YWCA Domestic Violence Services-Birmingham, Advisory Council on Violence Against Women, UAB Traumatic Brain Injury Model System, and UAB Injury Control Research Center. With shared collaboration of the project partners, the project:

- established ongoing collaborative relationships between TBI and DV service providers;
- developed training models for acute intervention and long-term counseling for DV service providers to enhance treatment outcomes of women acquiring a TBI as a result of DV;
- developed a consumer-focused video and literature

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explaining the TBI service system to facilitate the survivor's access to the TBI service system;

- trained TBI system staff to recognize and effectively serve DV-TBI consumers;
- provided a training program series on issues of TBI and DV for shelter staff using a TBI Training Tool Kit;
- developed and provided training, in collaboration with the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, for legal professionals and justice system staff; and
- contributed to systems change through influencing legislative initiatives and public policy.

they offer for the population who seek their services. The ACE goal is to complete surveys on all one-stop and satellite centers throughout Alabama in an effort to create greater accessibility to these sites and their programs for persons with disabilities.

### Alabama Customized Employment (ACE)

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The \$164,769 five-year ACE grant awarded in 2003 and funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy is comprised of three working components whose overall purpose is to provide employment opportunities for the most severely disabled. The three components — the Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf, Central Alabama Easter Seals, and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) Service — each provide similar, but different programs funded by the grant.

The ADRS SAIL program is responsible for the demonstration of customization in the One-Stop Career Center in Anniston and in Montgomery. The customized employment specialists hired by the grant in each of these service areas work to customize employment opportunities in each area for persons with severe disabilities and to identify barriers related to grant activities. During FY '05 some 54 program participants in these two areas received customized employment opportunities, which included job development and placement services.

Grant funds are also being used to educate the One-Stop Center and the Career Link staff about employment-related issues for persons with severe disabilities.

Accessibility surveys have been conducted in all 28 one-stop center systems in the state to ascertain and analyze information which will lead to easier access to the centers and the programs

## ***Many thanks ...***

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