

HOME • SCHOOL • WORK



together, success.

2015 ADRS 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.

Welcome.



Dear Friends,

It's my pleasure to present our 2015 annual report, *Together Success! At home. At school. At work.*

It is always gratifying for me to look back over an entire year of the personal accomplishments and achievements of our consumers and staff. But it is especially exciting this year, as our department celebrates the 20th anniversary of its creation by the Alabama Legislature as an independent agency whose primary purpose is to serve Alabama's children and adults with disabilities and their families. In my judgment, it was one of the most-significant legislative decisions in state history – one that has had a profoundly positive and lasting effect on the lives of the people we serve.

You will notice that this year's report places a special emphasis on this department's role *At School*, as an education agency. I believe education is the most-important ingredient in fulfilling our mission, especially for consumers who dream of finding independence in the workplaces of the 21st century.

This department's programs provide a unique lifetime continuum of services that embraces and supports tens of thousands of students with disabilities who are in Pre-K programs, K-12 classrooms, and postsecondary education environments. The very funding that supports our programs comes from Alabama's Education Trust Fund at the state level and from the U.S. Department of Education federally. Nothing – other than the success of our students – speaks more clearly to our educational role!

I urge you to take time to meet the students, families, and individuals whose stories are featured in this report. Keep in mind that they represent thousands of others who, with the support of this department's dedicated staff, are enjoying success in the classroom and beyond.

As we recognize their success, we also must express our gratitude to our many partners whose commitment to our shared mission is so important to the people we serve. Because of the support of the Alabama Department of Education, community rehabilitation programs, local organizations, and so many other state agencies and programs, the journey to independence and maximum potential is possible!

Please join us in celebrating this important milestone in our department's history by pledging to renew our mutual commitment to our mission: *To enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.*

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Cay A. Howell



together, success

2015 ADRS annual report.

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the ADRS continuum of services:

SUCCESS starts with education

Whether a person is born with a disability or acquires one later in life, education provides the foundation for success.

The department's unique CONTINUUM OF SERVICES supports thousands of Alabamians — from youngsters preparing to begin school to adults pursuing a post-secondary education.



Early Intervention

Alabama's Early Intervention System (EI) is the beginning of Pre-K services for children from birth to 3 who have disabilities and developmental delays.

School readiness is its sole function.

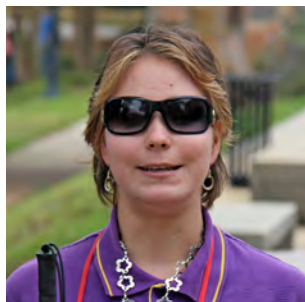
To prepare children for this transition, EI programs throughout the state provide specialized instruction; physical, occupational, and speech-language therapies; service coordination; and parent and family education.

EI also provides training to local school system teachers to ensure a smooth, seamless transition to school for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities.

Children's Rehabilitation Service

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

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



Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) provides rehabilitation, education, and employment-related services to teens and adults with disabilities.

To ensure consumers achieve in the classroom, VRS also collaborates with high schools and postsecondary schools around the state to ensure students with disabilities have the resources to do well in school.

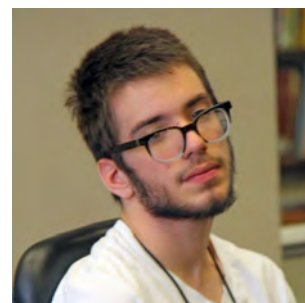
The VRS Business Relations Program provides disability management and employee placement services to Alabama businesses.

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

Homebound/Independent Living

Homebound/State of Alabama Independent Living provides services to Alabamians who have catastrophic congenital disabilities or disabilities resulting from spinal cord or head injuries.

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



THE BOARD CELEBRATES our 20th year



Dear Friends,

I am fortunate and honored to have served as chairman of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services in this milestone 20th year.

My position has given me the unique privilege of bearing witness to the ingenuity, resourcefulness, and commitment of this department's staff as well as the profound impact their work has on the lives of Alabama's children and adults with disabilities.

On behalf of the board, I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to staff, community programs, and partner agencies for the vital role they each play in improving everyday life for Alabamians with disabilities – whether they are at school, home, or work. It is because of your combined efforts that success is possible for the thousands of people we serve.

Congratulations on another successful year!

Jimmie Varnado
Board Chairman
District 2

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

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



Stephen Kayes
District 1



Stacy Mitchell
District 3



Andrea Collett
District 4



Eddie Williams
District 5



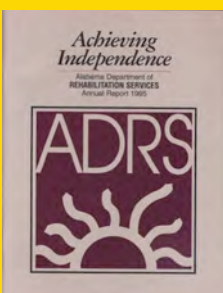
Roger McCullough
District 6



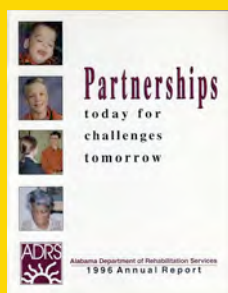
Mitch Strickland
District 7

20 years of covering SUCCORADA

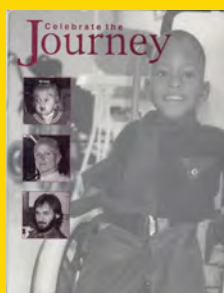
1995



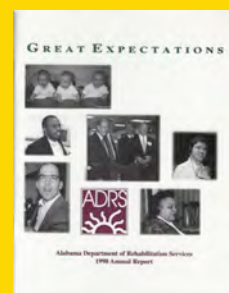
1996



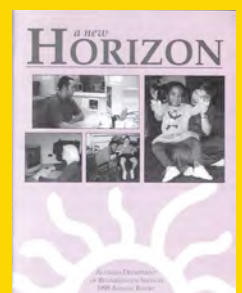
1997



1998



1999



maximum potential

Origins

Every good story has a great beginning. From the passage of our "Declaration of Independence" establishing ADRS as a separate state agency to giving our consumers a voice in the operation of our department through a seat on the Board, the origins of our success were clear from the beginning.



Staff remove the lettering from the former facility on South Boulevard in Montgomery



Staff gather to discuss and organize the various programs, duties, and roles of the new department



O.D. Vann takes his seat as first chairman of the new Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services



Lamona Lucas, the department's founding commissioner, visits with longtime staffer Carl Nowell at a gathering to celebrate the creation of the department

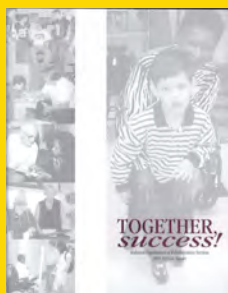


Then-Gov. Jim Folsom Jr. shakes hands with ADRS staffer Becky Fields on Jan. 3, 1995, the department's first day of operation

2000



2001



2002



2003



2004



words of success

20 years strong

Each year, we feature our many consumers' success stories as a part of *Together, Success*. Here is just a sampling of their expressions of gratitude from the past 20 years:

"Early intervention has made such a difference for our family. John Michael's development has exceeded all his doctors' expectations."

"I credit ADRS with saving my career."

"THEY WELCOMED US AND TREATED OUR CHILD LIKE THEIR OWN. FINDING OUT ABOUT CRS WAS AN ANSWERED PRAYER."

"Without Vocational Rehabilitation Service, I would not have hearing aids today — nor an **education** — nor a job. How can I thank you for helping me?"

"Homebound is a life-saver."

"CRS and his teachers have worked so well together. Everyone has embraced the modifications and assistive technology Marshall needs in the **classroom**."

"Vocational Rehabilitation was able to provide me with the hand controls for my car so I could drive and also helped me find apartments that were accessible. Their assistance gave me the mobility and independence I needed to **do well in school**."

"Thanks to this EI program, I have an idea of what direction we need to go with Bradley. Otherwise, I would be sitting home with a blind child, not knowing how to get him to eat, not knowing how to encourage him to do things on his own, not knowing when he **needs to go to school**. I would be lost."

"I guess, in a subconscious way, VR gave me confidence. It showed me that, 'Wow, this is actually possible.'"

"After CRS provided a wheelchair and built a ramp at his home, Roosevelt was able to leave the house, **get on the school bus and get back to the classroom**."

"I don't know what we would have done without VRS and ADRS Lakeshore. They opened the door and welcomed us with open arms."

"I don't know how I would've done it without CRS. They know about resources I don't know about. If I need anything, I call them."

"Y'all think of everything. Every milestone in my life, you've been there."

"They were absolutely relentless in ensuring I got an education, and they would not stop until I found a job."

"They make sure he is well enough to attend school."

2005



2006



2007

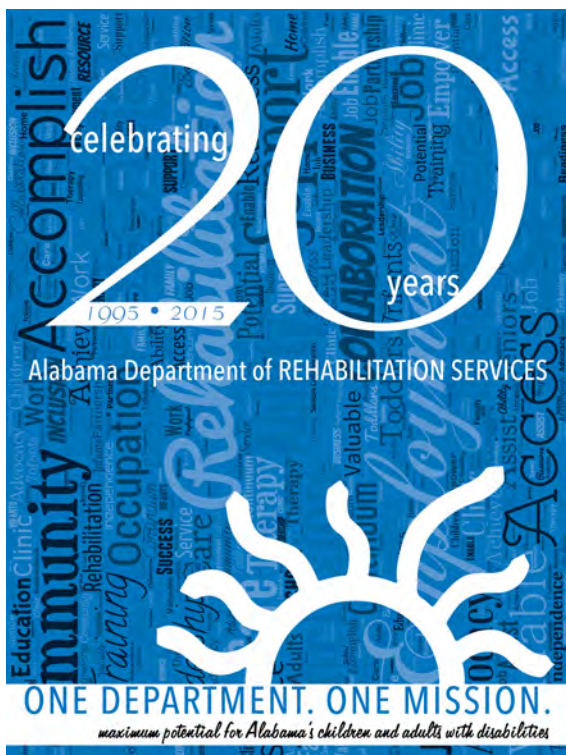


2008



2009





Celebrating Success

To close out the fiscal year, ADRS held a statewide celebration of our first two decades as a department. With events in Anniston, Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, and Montgomery, the six-part commemoration recognized the contributions and accomplishments of staff throughout the state, who make our success possible.



Commissioner Cary Boswell presents Founding Commissioner Lamona Lucas the commemorative poster in Mobile



Former Commissioner Steve Shivers speaks at Anniston's celebration

Former Commissioner Winona Nelson speaks in Montgomery



Assistant Commissioner Curtis Glisson congratulates longtime staffer Sue Schulgin in Birmingham



Huntsville staff receive service pins from members of the department's Executive Leadership Team (ELT)



Commissioner Cary Boswell discusses the creation of the 'Blueprint for the 21st century' at the Dothan commemoration

2010



2011



2012



2013



2014



Meet our families



Emma Shepard attends the Headland Elementary pre-kindergarten program thanks to support her family has received from Early Intervention and Children's Rehabilitation

Success for Pre-K and school-readiness

Alabama's Early Intervention System (EI) and Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) work in tandem to help assure that infants and toddlers with disabilities are ready for school. In fact, EI was created specifically to help children prepare for school.

Emma Shepard is one such child who currently benefits from these two programs. Thanks to support she has received through the coordinated efforts of EI and CRS, she is currently enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program at **Headland Elementary** in Henry County.

READY FOR SCHOOL

Emma has Dandy-Walker syndrome, a congenital brain malformation involving the cerebellum. In addition to various motor delays, Emma also has a vision impairment and a speech delay.

EI assisted the Shepard family with special instruction, physical and occupational therapy sessions, and much-needed moral support. Care received through CRS clinics - from seizure to seating to feeding - greatly benefitted Emma, who now has a g-tube with CRS's recommendation.

"Without CRS or Early Intervention, I'd be lost," said Emma's mother, Elizabeth Shepard. "Without a doubt, Emma is where she is today because of all of the help ADRS has provided us."

With ADRS monitoring progress, Emma is currently working on

developing communication skills at school, is identifying colors, and is better equipped to enter kindergarten in August 2016.

"Having a child with a disability has taught me to take it one day at a time," Elizabeth said. "It's slow progress, but it is still progress. EI and CRS help me celebrate our little victories. At 4 years old, my daughter has already come farther than any of her doctors ever thought she would."

REACH FOR THE GOAL, SEARCH FOR THE CURE

EI and CRS help thousands of children in Alabama prepare for school each year, but very few children directly impact education quite like Porter Heatherly in Opelika.

Porter was born, as mom Sara describes, a perfectly normal, typical, healthy child. Unknown to her or anyone else, though, Porter was born with a rare genetic condition known as GM1 gangliosidosis.

At the time of his diagnosis at a mere four months of age, Porter's parents were told their son would gradually lose mobility and neurological function and might not live beyond two years of age.

Early Intervention staff worked with Porter to help him retain his abilities as much as possible, with the infant reaching a development peak at nine

months of age. Porter was even able to take his first steps with the assistance of a CRS-provided gait trainer before the buildup of enzymes in his body attacked his brain, spine, and liver.

"The help from Early Intervention has been so huge to us," said Sara. "We knew what GM1 would do to our son, but no one else would tell us what we could do to help Porter retain the functions he had."

CRS provided the Heatherly family with a stroller to aid mobility and a bath chair to help his parents bathe him. CRS also helped the Heatherlys by adapting their car seat to better accommodate Porter as he grew.

Unique to Porter is his link to **Auburn University's research** to discover a cure to his rare disease. Auburn recently found a successful treatment for GM1 in cats, and the Heatherly family immediately began raising funds needed to send the treatment to clinical trials.

"Of all of the places in the world, we are living with Auburn University at our back door," Sara said. "To be that close to what is going on there in terms of coming up with a cure to this disease is amazing. It has been an inspiration to our family, and I hope that Porter's journey will help future families who find themselves in this situation."

Though Porter's illness is terminal, his impact on Auburn's research for a GM1 cure is long term. And ADRS has

been there to help the Heatherly family make the most of Porter's abilities.

"To have somebody like EI and CRS on your side is eye opening," said Sara. "Having a child with a disability is something you can't fully understand until you find yourself wearing those shoes. We can't do everything a normal family can, but we try."

NEW BABY, NEW BEGINNINGS

Brian and Rachel Harrison felt like parenting veterans when they first learned they were pregnant with their fourth child, Anna Pruitt.

When Rachel was 24 weeks pregnant, doctors noticed the baby was small and feared the worst.

"The doctors located three brain malformations and two heart defects. They were certain she had Trisomy 13," Rachel said. "We were told that, if she was born, she would only live a few hours, and they encouraged us to terminate the pregnancy."

It wasn't Trisomy 13. Still, because of her other health issues, Anna Pruitt automatically qualified for EI services, and was enrolled in the program before leaving the hospital.

"When doctors are down and giving you negative, Early Intervention has always been positive," said Rachel. "Even though Anna Pruitt is small, she has always fed well and is now even feeding herself. Having a child with a disability — it's all about baby steps. And Anna Pruitt has met and even exceeded all of her goals with EI. It's so encouraging to see."

Said Brian, "EI has been big for us because with our fourth child, it was like starting over. We didn't know specifically what she needed, and in that respect, Early Intervention has been a lifesaver."

Without Early Intervention, Anna Pruitt would likely not be crawling or rolling over. She wouldn't be as engaged, and the moment EI came into her picture, it has made all of the difference in her life as well as in the life of her family.

"Teaching these children early on is going to make the difference when they reach school age," said District Early Intervention Coordinator Tania Baldwin, who continues to monitor the success of the Harrison family.



THE HEATHERLY FAMILY IS RAISING FUNDS TO SEND EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENTS DEVELOPED AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY TO CLINICAL TRIALS



ANNA PRUITT HARRISON RECEIVES POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AND ENCOURAGEMENT BY PLAYING WITH HER BROTHER AND TWO SISTERS AT THEIR HOME IN TUSCALOOSA



Helen Hendrix wears hearing aids provided by CRS to help her succeed in Christina Lurson's fourth grade classroom at Corpus Christi Catholic School in Mobile

SUCCESS for Grades K through 12

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services provides vital support for education, including training for teachers about specific disabilities.

One student who benefits from ADRS instruction to teachers is Savannah Cochran, a fifth-grader at **Rosalie Elementary** in Jackson County.

EVERYTHING CHANGES IN AN INSTANT

In 2010, Savannah was in a horrible car crash and wasn't expected to survive. Despite the odds, Savannah pulled through.

The injuries she sustained left her with weakness on her right side as well as memory and difficulties with speech due to a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

"Before I met Savannah, I just had a little bit of an overview on teaching a student with a TBI while I was taking education classes in college," said Cody Anderson, Savannah's teacher at Rosalie Elementary.

"(CRS TBI Care Coordinator) Suki Nielson contacted me when Savannah transferred here from another school, and since then she has been the best resource I've had regarding Savannah or TBIs. To me, Suki is specialized in Savannah, and she has made the transition to working with a student with a TBI that much easier."

Jennifer Yothers, Savannah's grandmother, credits Suki and CRS with Savannah's success in school.

"Knowing that CRS is there to help my granddaughter succeed gives me hope," said Jennifer. "We were thrown into this situation in an instant, and we didn't know what all we would need to help care for Savannah."

"I remember after first being put into contact with CRS and speaking on the phone with Suki, I was concerned with hospital beds and just trying to gather phone numbers to track down all of the different medical supplies we needed. She told me to not worry about all of these things and that CRS would handle it for me. CRS did that to let me focus more energy on caring for Savannah."

ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR TEACHERS

For many K-12 students, success in school starts with listening to the teacher. This otherwise simple task becomes problematic to impossible for children with various hearing disabilities.

Sam Pritchett and Helen Hendrix both attend **school in Mobile County**. Both have profound hearing loss, and both receive services through ADRS that are specially designed to help them succeed in the school setting.

Sam is in the first grade at **Castlen**

Elementary in Grand Bay. Numerous health problems, including congestive heart failure, left Sam with speech, mobility, and learning delays. It wasn't until later that Sam's mom, April Fry, realized that hearing was also an issue.

"After finding out about my son's hearing loss, we were immediately put into contact with (CRS Audiologist) Heidi Elliot and the CRS team. I told Heidi that



Rosalie Elementary Teacher Cody Anderson helps Savannah Cochran with a question on a math test

since Sam was in kindergarten, I was very worried about how his hearing loss would affect his education. CRS immediately partnered with the school system to come up with a solution for Sam."

The solution was a bilateral hearing aid, provided by CRS to send auditory information into his good ear. The information comes at a slight delay that, with training, alerts the brain that the sound is coming from the side of his body with his weaker ear.

CRS also worked with the school system to obtain a sound field spectrum — essentially a large speaker — to amplify the teacher's voice.

Helen is a fourth-grader at **Corpus Christi Catholic School**, and CRS has been meeting her hearing needs for most of her life.

"Helen's pediatrician never gave a definitive answer about Helen's hearing loss," said Helen's mom, Miranda Manley.

"Excuses ranged from excess amniotic fluid to her crying during the hearing test. When Helen was 2 1/2, I finally sought some answers from CRS. They tested her hearing, my daughter

received aids, and she could finally hear. My only regret was I didn't start with CRS."

CRS audiologists also collaborate with Helen's school to help meet her academic needs. Christina Lurson, Helen's fourth-grade teacher, wears a transponder that directly connects to Helen's hearing aids, ensuring that she hears exactly what is said throughout the school day.

"The microphone Ms. Lurson wears is great," Helen said. "It makes sure I'm hearing my teacher and not the boy who sits behind me."

Of course, CRS is also there to provide support for students who face more significant disabilities.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Sydney Purinton, a 16-year-old student at **Lincoln High School**, is nonverbal and has various mobility issues connected to cerebral palsy.

"CRS has guided me to practically every service in Alabama," said Valerie Purinton, Sydney's mom.

"CRS has assisted with IEP meetings with the school, given me advice on different services they could provide

the school system, and even suggested some classes to help Sydney's teachers. In short, CRS has given some really good ideas and assistance to Sydney and the school."

Over the years that CRS has followed Sydney, they have helped open doors to her ability to communicate — a primary concern for Valerie and her husband, Keith.

The young woman began with simple yes/no augmentative devices and with CRS' assistance has since developed enough fine motor control to successfully manipulate an iPad.

With her device, she has finally found her voice.

"CRS has been a true resource for me as a teacher," said Candace Gibson, Sydney's teacher at Lincoln.

"I first became acquainted with CRS during my first year as a teacher, which is coincidentally when I first began working with Sydney. CRS is there for the kids, but I feel that they are also there for the teachers. Whenever I have a question about any student, I've always felt like I could pick up the phone and call CRS for help."

SAM PRITCHETT RAISES HIS HAND TO ANSWER A QUESTION FROM HIS FIRST-GRADE TEACHER, ASHLEY CRIST



LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ANDY KEITH AND TEACHER CANDACE GIBSON CONGRATULATE SYDNEY PURINTON AFTER THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Maggie Reed, who successfully completed Project SEARCH two years ago, is employed today with food nutrition at Thomas Hospital in Baldwin County



Success for persons with significant disabilities

Two innovative Supported Employment programs are working with local school systems to put persons with significant disabilities to work.

With 10 sites throughout the state, Project SEARCH takes seniors in high school and places them at a worksite for



One of Jamaica Cooper's many jobs at Crossing Points is to record other students' work habits to study in the classroom

one year. Interns work three rotations at the site, acquiring skills necessary for employment along the way.

NOT YOUR AVERAGE CLASSROOM

"Social skills are a huge focus of ours at Project SEARCH," said Shawn O'Connor, teacher with the Baldwin County School System, which is a partner in the Project SEARCH program. "The interns represent the hospital, so social skills are a priority. We also work with the interns on résumé writing, interview skills, and building soft skills."

Interns in the program are consistently coached on good employee habits, ranging from interview techniques to the importance of timeliness.

"Project SEARCH has been good for me," said Jamie Harper, a Project SEARCH graduate who is currently employed full-time at Thomas Hospital. "They helped me learn to stay focused, keep doing what I'm doing, and keep working hard."

"Knowing I have a job — I wake up everyday with a smile on my face. I'm really glad I went through Project

SEARCH. It's the best thing to ever happen to me."

BAMA BOUND FOR SUCCESS

The University of Alabama also houses a similar program — Crossing Points — in conjunction with Tuscaloosa City Schools, Tuscaloosa County Schools, and ADRS.

"The Crossing Points program is for students with disabilities aged 18 to 21, and it provides transition education to better prepare them for adult life," said Dr. Kagendo Mutua, director and co-founder of the program. "One of the biggest markers of adulthood is being employed, so we developed that connection with ADRS early, and the process has been seamless ever since. ADRS helps us determine the exact support these students need to really be successful, particularly in the area of employment."

Students participating in Crossing Points receive hands-on vocational instruction and spend up to three hours each day working in real job settings. Additionally, the Crossing Points model works with employers to help

them understand the realities and advantages of hiring people with disabilities.

"Crossing Points has helped me find my voice," said Jamaica Cooper, a Crossing Points student in her third and final year of the program.

"As I get ready to graduate, I feel very excited because this means that I'm actually going to be ready to get a job and that I can actually get a job and do things that I've never done before."

And that is the most-special thing about these two programs: In the state of Alabama, Project SEARCH and Crossing Points are instilling hope, confidence, and independence for a group of people that have historically been very difficult to employ.

INNOVATION YIELDS RESULTS

Statistics on success back up these claims. Persons with disabilities who participate in Project SEARCH have a 67 percent rate of employment – a rate significantly higher than the rate for those not participating in the program.

"I was in Project SEARCH two years ago," said Maggie Reed, "and it showed me how to be a team player and a hard worker. Having a job is amazing, makes me proud of myself, and makes my parents very happy."

For 13 years, Crossing Points has been helping students with significant disabilities in the Tuscaloosa-area find and retain employment. Elsewhere in the state, Project SEARCH has done the same for other students and has rapidly grown from only two sites to 10 in a short three years.

"We work with these students on job-readiness and independent living, and what they need to be working on to improve themselves, which is part of the education process," said VRS Senior Vocational Counselor Reese Grantham. "It's getting them there. You have what they are learning in class and from us, and these extra steps are better preparing them to go and look for a job when they leave these programs."



PROJECT SEARCH GRADUATE JAMIE HARPER WORKS FULL-TIME WITH HOUSEKEEPING DUTIES AT THOMAS HOSPITAL IN BALDWIN COUNTY

AS A PROJECT SEARCH PARTNER, THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS ALSO PROUD OF THE PROGRAM AS THEY PROMINENTLY FEATURE IT ON THE COVER OF THE 2015-2016 STATE EDUCATION DIRECTORY

Project SEARCH Alabama

A one-year high school transition program for students with disabilities.

www.projectsearch.us

Alabama State Department of Education

EDUCATION DIRECTORY

2015-2016

Alabama State Board of Education Information · Alabama State Department of Education Contacts
Alabama Public School Addresses and Information · Postsecondary Education · Selected State Agencies



Tim Alexander, who was instrumental in saving UAB's football program, meets with Head Coach Bill Clark

Postsecondary Success

ADRS partners with technical schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities to help students with disabilities succeed in postsecondary education and transition to employment.

HOMEBOUND? TRY COLLEGE-BOUND!

"Coming to the University of Montevallo has really helped me find who I am and where I fit in the world," said Andrew Brown, a junior with quadriplegia who is able to attend the liberal arts school thanks to assistance from the State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) program, which provides attendant care to help him with everything from bathing and dressing to brushing his teeth.

"They help me get through the day — from helping me change clothes and go to the bathroom if I need to," he said.

"Because I am not allowed to be in the room by myself at night, I also have an attendant stay overnight to help me safely exit the dorms in the event of an emergency. Their assistance is probably the biggest part of how I'm able to attend school. It's hard for me to overstate how much that means to me because their help is my lifeline."

At college campuses throughout the state, ADRS works with institutions of higher learning and postsecondary

faculty to develop creative solutions to assure classroom success for students with disabilities.

EVEN DOCTORS NEED OUR HELP

"There is a whole level of expertise that ADRS provides that helps make education happen for our students with disabilities," said Dr. Mary Bowers, director of disability support services at the University of North Alabama. "My job would be so much more difficult — if not impossible — were it not for ADRS. Florence is a rural area, and we don't have great numbers of students with sensory impairments, so when we have an issue, ADRS always helps us sort it out."

One such UNA student is Annie Park, who has Leber congenital amaurosis, an eye disorder that primarily affects the specialized tissue at the back of the eye that detects light and color.

BLIND AMBITION

"My optic nerves never developed," Annie said. "I can see a tiny bit with my left eye, but none out of my right."

Though she has no eyesight, Annie, a freshman, already has a distinct vision for herself following graduation. She's majoring in psychology and hopes to get a degree in social work.

"ADRS has provided me a BrailleNote APEX note taker for me to use here at school," said Annie. "That's just one thing that I use every day. ADRS means assistance for me in college and career. Independence is being able to do what I want to do by myself as much as possible, and ADRS helps make that happen."

While most would argue that the



Freshman Annie Park uses a BrailleNote APEX to take notes and study for classes at the University of North Alabama



ANDREW BROWN RECEIVES ATTENDANT CARE THROUGH SAIL WHICH ALLOWS HIM TO ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTEVALLO



ANNIE PARK VISITS WITH DENA DODD, HER VR COUNSELOR, ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

college experience shapes people into who they become as adults, rarely do students have as much impact on the future of a school as Tim Alexander did at the **University of Alabama at Birmingham.**

A TRUE TEAM PLAYER

Cited as one of the main catalysts behind UAB resurrecting its shuttered football program, Tim is the quintessential team player.

For UAB Head Football Coach Bill Clark, he became "the voice of the player, the voice of the student body, and a rallying point for the reason football matters at UAB."

And he accomplished this without possessing the ability to walk.

"When I was in high school, I was ranked eighth in the state and was recruited by several top division one schools — from Alabama, Auburn, Tennessee, Texas, to Florida," Tim said. "On Oct. 28, 2006, we were heading to Legion Field to see the Magic City Classic, and my friend fell asleep behind the wheel. It changed my life in an instant."

Making the best of a bad situation, Tim quickly pulled through his initial depression with determination and a desire to finish high school.

In the meantime, ADRS worked to get the young man enrolled in Children's Rehabilitation Service and set up with transition services through Vocational Rehabilitation.

Despite his positive outlook, he still didn't think college was a realistic goal. That changed when he attended VRS' College Prep program.

"College Prep to me is like orientation for students with disabilities at a major university," said Tim. "That program certainly inspired me, and I circle that date on my calendar each year so I can return and try to impact the next wave of students in the same way my mentors impacted me. Without a doubt, VR helped save my life and has shaped me into who I am today. It means that much."

Because football was such an important part of his life before his injury, he decided to maintain his connection to it while at UAB. He became a member of the team, working out at every practice and wearing a jersey and encouraging his teammates on the sidelines at every game.

In December 2015, Tim graduated with a master's degree in communications.

With ADRS by his side, his future is now fully under control and in his hands.



BEP Participant Donna Bates and her staff prepare food for the busy lunch rush at her dining facility located at International Paper's Prattville Mill

Postgraduate Success

Each year, Vocational Rehabilitation Service offers education-related and specialized employment assistance to Alabamians with disabilities.

BUSINESS VISIONARY

Donna Bates is owner and operator of *Snack-a-licious*, a business that runs the dining facilities at International Paper's Prattville Mill, 30 vending machines scattered throughout the mill, and a catering business. She is able to operate her own business with assistance from VR's Business Enterprise Program (BEP), which provides blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities through self-employment.

"I was born with optic atrophy," said Donna. "My optic nerve isn't very strong, so it doesn't let a lot of light through. The good news about my condition is that it doesn't gradually get worse. The bad news is no corrective surgeries or lenses will help me."

Ten years ago, Donna, who has a college degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, was working in human resources at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear.

"Katrina happened. The hotel was closed. The company offered to relocate me, but I couldn't move at the

time," Donna said. "I had a small child and couldn't readily go somewhere else; I needed to find something else. I remembered my counselor had mentioned something in the past about BEP, and she said that if you are a go-getter, there are opportunities there, so I decided to sign up for training at Gentry at the **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind** in Talladega."

The training at E.H. Gentry is a six-month intensive business-oriented curriculum that also includes ServSafe certification, a food safety requirement for all restaurants.

"I am juggling quite a few balls, from catering, to running a cafeteria, to operating vending machines," said Donna. "The work can be hectic, but it is very rewarding. I am so thankful to ADRS for this opportunity; it's been an amazing journey so far. Without it, my future wouldn't be near as bright."

Creative solutions at putting people with disabilities to work is really what VRS is all about, and another college graduate who was still having difficulty finding employment was Brandon Powell, who lives in Livingston.

SHREDDING THE COMPETITION

Though now retired, Brandon's father was a well-known business

owner in the small west Alabama town. Brandon had previously worked several different odd jobs throughout the town for his father.

Brandon's cerebral palsy means he has several physical limitations to overcome, but his strong will to work has never wavered.



Brandon Powell wheels a portable shredder to destroy documents at a Livingston law office

"I want to make my brother and father proud," he said.

Knowing that Brandon was a fixture in the community with numerous citizens wanting to see him succeed, ADRS worked to build a team around him to support him in getting a paper shredding business off the ground, said Business Relations Consultant Leslie Dawson.

"Rehabilitation Technology Specialist Tim Driskell and I visited a large paper shredding business to take notes," Leslie said. "We knew there was nothing like that in Livingston, and with identity theft becoming such an issue, we thought this type of business would be great for both Brandon and Livingston."

Randy Phillips, Brandon's VR counselor, agrees.

"I've been a counselor for a really long time," he said. "And in that time, I don't think I've ever encountered someone who possessed as strong a work ethic as Brandon. It was difficult finding Brandon work because most of the businesses, especially in the Livingston area, want you to be able

to do several different things, and multitask, and that wasn't playing to Brandon's skill set. With Brandon running his own business, I'm excited, he's excited, and it's going to work out much better for everyone all around."

UNBELIEVABLE EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Solutions for Vocational Rehabilitation clients are good for all parties — be they employer or employee.

Sometimes, too, employers have employees who mean so much to the business that they contact VR to create a solution to enable a valued employee to keep his job.

The VRS RAVE (retaining a valued employee) Program worked for Bryan Johns when he feared he could no longer continue his work as a programmer analyst for the Department of Mental Health.

"I'm considered paraplegic," said Bryan, who has multiple sclerosis. "Major health problems, including bed sores, put me out of work for quite some time. My office needed me to return,

and RAVE first stepped in to provide me with necessary equipment to allow me to work from my home."

As Bryan's health gradually improved, he was medically cleared to return to the office. But his office wasn't quite ready for him.

"Bryan's desk was much too low to properly accommodate his wheelchair," said Bryan's counselor, Andrew Richards. "We examined his work space and optimized his area to better meet his needs. His cubicle is now more accessible, his monitors are at proper angles, and his desk is elevated based on our recommendations."

Thanks to needed assistance from VR, Bryan is happily and successfully employed and doing what he loves.

"Without RAVE, I would have probably lost my home and would have had to move to Georgia to live with my mom and stepdad," he said. "Instead, I am employed and VR has made all the difference. RAVE has been a very positive influence in my life."

Continued next page



Bryan Johns's workstation more easily accommodates his wheelchair thanks to recommendations from ADRS rehabilitation technology specialists



ADRS VISION REHABILITATION THERAPIST LORETTA BRYAN ASSISTS SHIRLEY ROGERS WITH MAGNIFICATION OF A DOCUMENT



BRANDON POWELL USES HIS COMPUTER TO DRAFT AN INVOICE

With individualized services provided in the schools, at work, and in the community, ADRS strives to assist every person, at any age, in achieving his or her maximum potential.

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Shirley Rogers is a retired veteran living in Tuskegee, who recently discovered that her eyesight is rapidly declining.

"In 2011, at my annual eye exam, everything seemed fine," said Shirley. "Something was amiss, though. I was becoming scared to drive — especially at night — and my fears were verified when I went back to the eye doctor in 2012."

That's when she found out that she was blind in her right eye.

Shirley began doing research on the topic. And though resources were scarce in her community, she says she lucked out when she discovered a blind and low-vision support group, operating through ADRS.

"At that first support group meeting," said Shirley, "I was able to meet several people from ADRS. I got business cards, brochures, lots and lots of information that I needed, all of which was wonderful."

From that initial contact, Shirley started receiving services through OASIS — Older Alabamians System of Information and Services — and became extremely involved in both the support group and other OASIS services, like Camp SAVI (Seniors Adapting to Visual Impairment), a weeklong camp that teaches independent living skills to older Alabamians who've lost their eyesight.

"At Camp SAVI, they did serious assessment," Shirley said. "Hearing, vision, everything. My depth perception is not good at all, and I tend to fall. I wasn't aware that I needed a cane until I attended SAVI, but there I learned all about the white cane, how to navigate with it, and how it aids someone like me with very limited vision."

Shirley is overjoyed about her experience with ADRS, and continues to educate others — not only about her own vision impairment, but also about the benefits of seeking support and assistance from an agency that has helped her out so much.

"Without ADRS, I would be isolated," she said. "I wouldn't have all of these people around me that understand or can explain what the different vision impairments are, or how we can overcome those obstacles. And the resources — the resources — if you don't know what's going on, how are you going to know what will help?"

Added Shirley, thanks to ADRS, I'm being enhanced all the time!

Alabama's Early Intervention System.



serving infants and toddlers

Pre-K for children with disabilities



Anna Pruitt Harrison is able to crawl and feed herself today due to the assistance she receives through Early Intervention in Tuscaloosa

Early Intervention

Early childhood development is vital to the growth and success for all children, but for a child with a disability or developmental delay, those years are that much more crucial.

Created to be a critical first step to ensure that all children enter school equipped to learn, Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) is instrumental in securing a lifetime of success for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Early Intervention works collaboratively with families, community organizations, and public and private service providers to enrich a child's development through its community-based and family-centered system of support. EI also works alongside the family to further their child's development and learning.

Studies indicate that 85 percent of a child's brain develops in the first three years of life, and investing in early childhood programs increases the effectiveness of public schools, develops more-educated workers, and reduces crime.

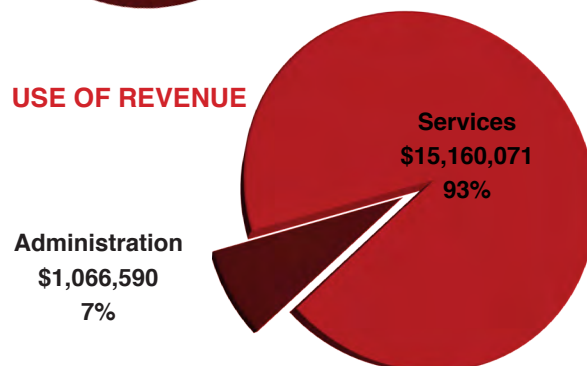
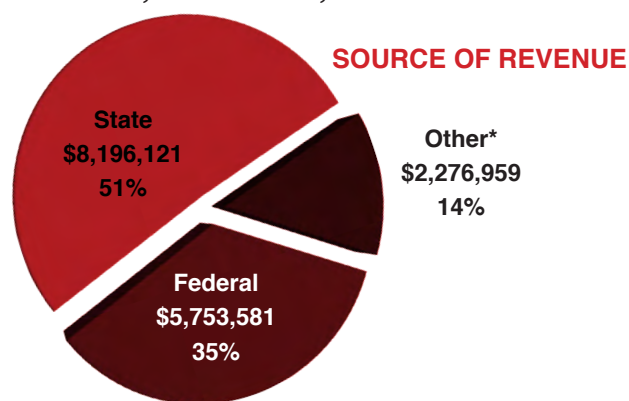
Moreover, that investment is also a good one, with studies showing that each dollar spent on early intervention saves \$7 in future costs.

With more than 50 programs in local communities across Alabama, Early Intervention delivers services and support to infants and toddlers and their families in their home and community. Because of Early Intervention, youngsters with disabilities are able to participate in an array of activities among their peers who do not have disabilities.

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

EI BY THE NUMBERS

MORE THAN \$16.2 MILLION IN SERVICES TO INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND FAMILIES



*MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENTS

2015

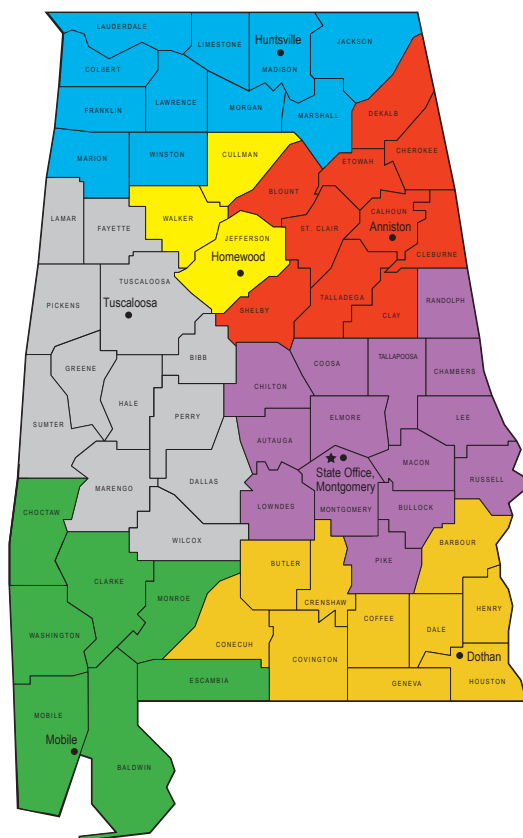
program highlights

- Provided services and supports to 6,231 infants and toddlers and their families.
- Continued to offer training and technical assistance on the regulations for Early Intervention under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to more than 50 EI community programs. Training focused on implementation of evidence-based practice strategies, routines-based assessments/interventions, smooth transitions to preschool, and developing improvement plans for the future.
- Again ranked in the highest category of “Meets the Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” as determined annually by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs based on compliance with federal regulations. For the first time, determinations were made using both compliance and results data, giving equal weight in making each state’s determinations. OSEP’s “results-driven accountability” brings into focus the educational results and functional outcomes for children with disabilities while balancing those results with the compliance requirements of IDEA.
- Submitted an Annual Performance Report, State Performance Plan, and State Systemic Improvement Plan that evaluates Alabama’s efforts in implementing the requirements and purposes of early intervention and describes how Alabama will improve such implementation. With broad stakeholder input, Alabama identified a state improvement measurable result in the area of social-emotional development and supporting families. Plans for implementation and evaluation are being developed. Early Intervention is working in close partnership with Project LAUNCH through the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Public Health to train and support evidence-based practices to improve the social-emotional development of infants/toddlers and their families.
- Continued to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate with other early childhood partners – including Head Start, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the Alabama Department of Human Resources, the Alabama Partnership for Children, the Alabama Respite Coalition, and others. Ongoing training opportunities for staff were provided to improve referral processes, increase evidence-based practices, and support families.
- Continued to maintain a high level of compliance by programs, with excellent family survey results. Among the findings: 97 percent of families reported understanding their IDEA rights, 95 percent reported that service coordinators followed up on all of their concerns, and 95 percent reported that service coordinators assisted them in obtaining needed community services.



Porter Heatherly was among 6,231 served by EI in FY 2015

EI OFFICE LOCATIONS



Children's Rehabilitation Service.



serving children and youth

K-12 for children with disabilities

Children's Rehabilitation Service

For many parents of children and teens with special health care needs, Children's Rehabilitation Service is a cherished resource and proven lifeline.

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

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

Fourteen community-based offices around the state offer a team approach to bring together health care specialists from many fields providing services tailored to each family's needs.

Services include:

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

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

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

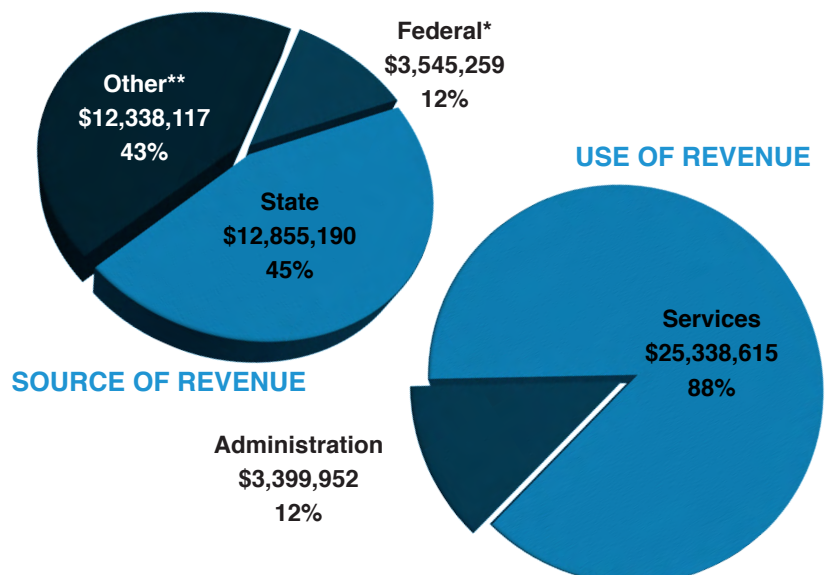
Families can receive services regardless of their income. Financial participation is on a sliding scale, based on each family's needs and resources.



Miranda Manley, mom of Helen Hendrix, credits CRS for meeting her daughter's hearing needs at Corpus Christi Catholic School

CRS BY THE NUMBERS

MORE THAN \$28.7 MILLION IN SERVICES TO ALABAMA'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH



*FEDERAL GRANTS **MEDICAID, INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENTS

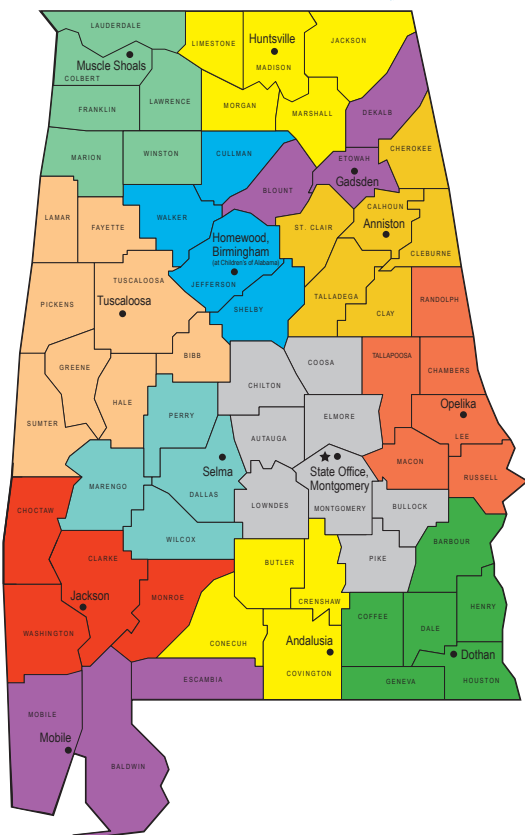
2015

program highlights



CRS served Sam Pritchett in FY 2015

CRS OFFICE LOCATIONS



Children's Rehabilitation Service

- Served 9,914 children and youth with special health care needs, including 351 with no insurance, through the CRS clinical programs.
- Had a total of 131,113 client encounters.
- Provided 2,230 information and referral services.
- Had a total of 3,364 client contacts result in connection to \$220,016 in community resources, with estimated values as follows:
 - Audiology-related items, \$12,810
 - Food assistance, \$1,055
 - Medical supplies, \$9,292
 - Nutrition-related items, \$21,850
 - Ramps, \$1,400
 - Prescription medication assistance, \$3,500
 - Speech-language-related items, \$2,286
 - Utility bill assistance, \$4,539
 - Wheelchair-related items, \$30,770
 - Miscellaneous items, \$59,660
- Filed Medicaid paperwork on behalf of families to expedite their receipt of a total of \$69,854 in NET (non-emergency travel) travel reimbursements.
- Presented at the Alabama State University-University of Alabama at Birmingham Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Pipeline Course career panel.
- Partnered with six major universities in Alabama to provide observation and or/practicum experiences for students interested in nutrition, physical therapy, social work, and other health-related or MCH professions/careers.
- Completed the Title V Maternal and Child Health Five-Year Needs

Assessment for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs.

- Participated in an Action Learning Collaborative on CYSHCN National Standards of Care sponsored by the Lucille Packard Foundation with technical assistance provided by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP). CRS has integrated some of the standards into its strategic plan to meet the requirement of two of the Title V National Outcome Measures for CYSHCN and is the lead agency in promoting the use of the standards across the system of care for CYSHCN in Alabama.
- Partnered with Family Voices of Alabama and the Family-to-Family Health Information Center to host the 2015 Partners in Care Summit, a three-day summit covering youth and family leadership development, family/professional workshop, and the National Standards for Systems of Care for CYSHCN workshop.
- With Education Resources, Inc., served as co-host for "Picky Eaters vs. Problem Feeders, the Sequential Oral Sensory Approach to Feeding" held in Montgomery and attended by 69 participants from 15 states.

Hemophilia Program

- Served 326 people with bleeding disorders.
- Served 21 uninsured participants.
- Provided 12 pediatric Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Birmingham.
- Provided six Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Mobile.
- Provided two satellite pediatric Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Montgomery.
- Provided approximately 730,000 units of clotting factor at a cost of nearly \$600,000.

Vocational Rehabilitation Service.



serving teens and adults

Postsecondary and adult education



Senior VR Counselor Andrew Richards talks with Bryan Johns

Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Each year, Vocational Rehabilitation Service's general and blind/deaf programs offer specialized employment- and education-related assistance to tens of thousands of teens and adults with disabilities.

Whether the person is a young adult going to school to prepare for his or her first job or an older adult trying to remain employed, VRS can help.

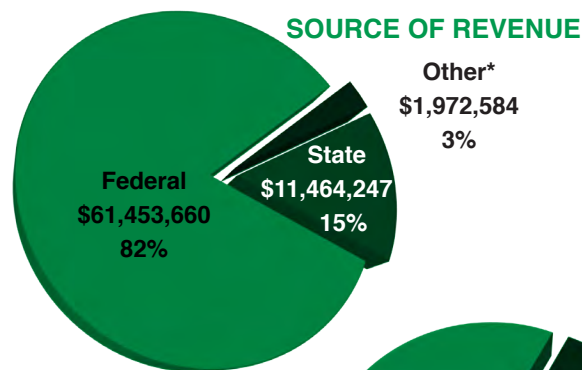
Partnerships are the key to VRS' success and the successes of those it serves. To assure consumers achieve in the classroom, VRS collaborates with high schools, vocational schools, junior colleges, and universities statewide to assist students with disabilities in receiving appropriate educational opportunities.

Through 21 strategically located offices, VRS works closely with Alabama employers, community rehabilitation programs, and other state agencies to match people with jobs.

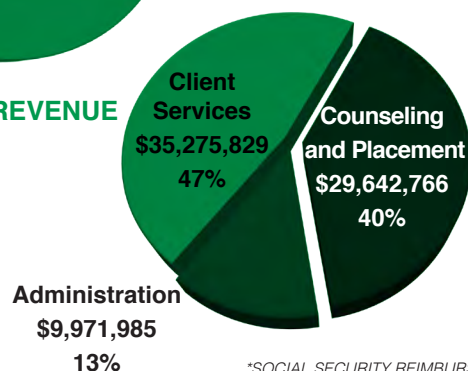
For the thousands of Alabamians with disabilities who receive services, VRS is more than a monetary return. For them, rehabilitation does not cost; it pays.

VRS BY THE NUMBERS

MORE THAN \$74.8 MILLION TO PROVIDE DIRECT SERVICES TO TEENS AND ADULTS



USE OF REVENUE



*SOCIAL SECURITY REIMBURSEMENTS

2015

program highlights

■ Expanded Project SEARCH to 10 sites in Alabama. This unique, collaborative transition program takes seniors with significant disabilities in their exiting year of school and places them at a worksite within a hospital setting for one year.

■ Made programmatic changes for sponsoring VR consumers in post-secondary education so that assistance is provided in the most cost-effective and economical way. The changes are expected to yield a higher success rate among those supported at the post-secondary level.

■ In partnership with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Auburn University, established an Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) model to serve individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

■ Obtained a \$1.14 million dollar grant from the Department of Human Resources (DHR) through an interagency agreement that allows ADRS to operate a statewide program that provides counseling, evaluation, and employment services designed to meet the specific needs of DHR consumers with disabilities who are receiving Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF).

■ Obtained funding for a second year for the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Partnership Implementation Grant awarded by the Health Resources and Services Administration which focuses on improving outcomes of youth offenders with issues related to TBI in the juvenile justice system.

■ Received more than 500 calls through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information Line and provided 27 ADA trainings and 19 ADA consultations and/or accessibility reviews.

■ Expanded services and resources provided to students who fall under PETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services). Types of services include Smart Works Ethics training and Job Exploration Training (JET) through community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) and onsite with employers.

■ In partnership with the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Troy University, and the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, presented the Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum for 37 youth with disabilities from around the state.

■ Expanded ADRS-Lakeshore's Connections Program for consumers with autism to include cities in north and south Alabama.

■ Received \$1,068,042.08 in Social Security reimbursements.

■ Received a five-year \$300,000 per year grant from the Social Security Administration to be the sole source for work incentive planning assistance services in all 67 counties in Alabama.

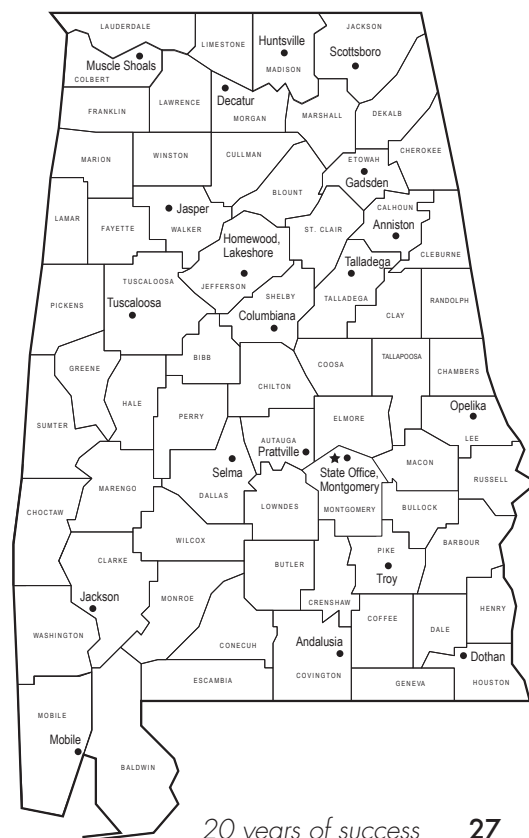
■ Provided information and referral and intensive long-term benefits counseling services to 1,380 beneficiaries and recipients of SSDI and SSI statewide who are interested in returning to or entering employment.

■ Provided training to 90 case management (Department of Mental Health) and other residential services staff on work incentives and benefits counseling services.



VRS helped Tim Alexander succeed at UAB

VRS OFFICE LOCATIONS





Shirley Rogers is so thankful for the assistance she has received through the OASIS program, she gives back by leading a blind support group for seniors which was established by ADRS

VRS Blind and Deaf Services

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

In FY 2015, Blind and Deaf Services:

- Served more than 3,946 individuals with significant vision or hearing disabilities through individual employment programs. These services assisted 672 individuals with significant visual and hearing impairments in entering the workplace.
- Continued to focus on assisting consumers in achieving a competitive entry-level hourly wage, attaining an average hourly wage for blind and deaf consumers of \$13.87 – the highest to date.
- Provided services to 1,491 individuals to allow them to function independently.
- Provided services to 333 blind adults, teaching them to travel independently using a white cane.
- Provided instruction and services to

1,028 senior citizens with age-related blindness to assist them in remaining independent in their homes.

- Purchased 36 assistive technology devices for low-vision consumers designed specifically to help people with vision loss and recycled about 30 similar devices from former consumers.
- Held the fifth annual session of Camp SAVI (Seniors Adapting to Visual Impairment), a camp designed to assist seniors with vision loss in living more independently.
- Through the rehabilitation audiology program, served 545 new consumers, with 402 fitted for hearing aids, and 1,299 receiving consultation/follow-up.
- Provided 10,127 hours of interpreter services to 1,208 consumers (These hours do not include hours of interpreter services provided by vendor interpreters paid for by ADRS.)
- Developed collaborative agreements and strategic partnerships with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB), Troy University, Mississippi State University, and the Alabama Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf to improve and expand services throughout the state.
- In partnership with AIDB, sponsored three transition events to assist students who are blind or visually impaired and

their parents in becoming familiar with resources to facilitate each student's transitioning from high school to postsecondary education or training and then to employment.

- Collaborated with AIDB and the alumni of the Alabama School for the Blind to present the Technology Symposium, which provided individuals who are blind, low vision, or deaf-blind and professionals who work in the field of blindness or deaf-blindness the opportunity to receive training and hands-on exposure to current technology.
- Continued the partnership with the National Weather Service (NWS) of Huntsville to provide Weather Spotter Training specifically for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.
- Continued to collaborate with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) to provide interpreters for Gov. Robert Bentley's news conferences on state emergencies.
- Supported leadership development activities for blind and deaf high school and college students.
- Expanded summer work experiences to 77 blind and visually impaired students and 56 deaf and deaf-blind multi-disabled students.

Assistive Technology Services

Each year, thousands of Alabamians with disabilities achieve greater independence at school, work, and home through Assistive Technology Services.

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

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

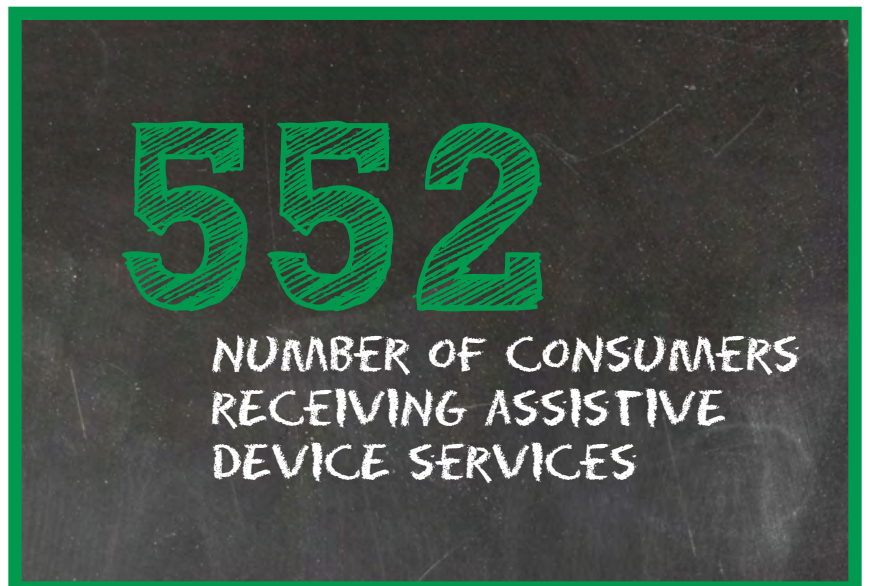
RTSs evaluate the functional abilities of people with disabilities, the tasks they perform, and the environments they live and work in to recommend off-the-shelf, modified, or customized technology solutions to increase their independence.

In FY 2015, this program:

- Completed assistive technology workshops in Mobile and Montgomery to modify and create custom assistive technology solutions for consumers in those areas.
- Added a 3D printer to help design and create assistive devices.
- Provided 552 assistive device services to ADRS consumers.
- Provided 110 engineering design services.
- Provided AT training or demonstrations to 91 individuals.
- Provided follow-up or coordination of services to 408 consumers.
- Provided one or more services to 354 VRS consumers, 85 CRS consumers, 24 SAIL consumers, and 9 consumers in other ADRS programs.
- Provided services to 163 Children’s Rehabilitation Service consumers through Augmentative Communication Technology (ACT) clinics.



Rehabilitation Technology Specialist Tim Driskell puts finishing touches on a custom portable shredding unit he built to enable Brandon Powell’s business to take off in Livingston





BEP vendor
Donna Bates
operates the
dining facility
at International
Paper -
Prattville Mill

Business Enterprise Program

The Alabama Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides qualified blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities that provide independence through self-employment.

Alabama's BEP provides employment for more than 100 blind vendors and licensees in snack bars, cafeterias, vending machine facilities, vending routes, a gift shop, and five federal dining hall operations statewide.

As in the past, vending machine operations accounted for the majority of the facilities, with Alabama's vendors operating approximately 64 vending machine routes – more than any program in the country.

Alabama's blind vendors also employ 471 other Alabamians, including persons with disabilities, to assist in their small business operations. Despite a challenging economic environment again in FY 2014, the Alabama

BEP achieved \$25,883,169 in gross sales while increasing average income per vendor to \$40,861.

Also in FY14, BEP continued its successful partnership agreement with the Alabama Department of Corrections, with blind vendors actively managing 10 work release canteen facilities. This joint effort has proven to be successful for both departments by providing long-term jobs for work release vendors and above-average earnings.

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

\$40.861

AVERAGE INCOME OF
AN ALABAMA BEP VENDOR

Supported Employment



Supported Employment helps place ADRS consumers with significant disabilities in competitive jobs, such as this one at automotive parts manufacturer SANOH in Fort Payne

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

Alabama contracts with 38 supported employment providers to provide the following services:

- community-based situational assessments
- the Discovery process (intensive personal assessment process that matches consumer interests, needs, strengths, and barriers and includes input from a team to facilitate better job matches; may include job “carving” or customizing)
- individualized job development and placement
- job analysis
- sequence of job duties
- job coaching
- employer and consumer satisfaction reports
- identification of natural supports
- extended supports

Residents in all 67 Alabama counties now have access to supported employment.

In FY 2015, Supported Employment:

- Had more than 825 consumers complete situational assessments in the community and/or the Discovery process.
- Served 1,254 consumers who received an assessment or service in supported employment.
- Closed 439 consumers employed with supported employment plans; these consumers are working an average

of just over 22.5 hours at \$7.97 an hour, collecting annual wages of \$9,551.

■ Expanded Project SEARCH to 10 sites in Alabama. This unique, collaborative transition program takes seniors in their exiting year of school and places them at a worksite for one year. These “interns” complete up to three rotations at the business site, acquiring skills necessary for competitive employment. They learn complex, repetitive tasks and work in highly skilled areas. The employment rate for last year’s participants is between 70 percent and 80 percent. Project SEARCH blends funding from ADRS, local school systems, the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH), and the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities.

■ In collaboration with ADMH and Auburn University, began development of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment to serve consumers with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders. The program is expected to serve at least 450 consumers over a five-year period. IPS is evidence-based with stringent fidelity measures and will improve service delivery and employment outcomes for consumers.

■ Continued expansion of the GATE Project (Gaining Access to Employment). This collaborative program between ADRS and the Alabama Department of Mental Health is an effort to move individuals who are working in sheltered workshops into competitive integrated employment. The program serves adults who have been in day activities (sheltered work and day habilitation) and braids funding from ADRS and ADMH, which implements the Medicaid waiver. Participants are embedded in highly skilled work environments, supported by a job coach and paid a training wage while they learn transferrable skills.



ADRS Career Counselor Sabrina Wren assists students with goal planning at the College Prep session for students with hearing loss held on the Troy University campus

ADRS Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility

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

As a result of the shift in our referral population as well as the ADRS emphasis on providing services to those who need it the most, ADRS-Lakeshore has continued to develop services designed to serve those with the most-significant disabilities. In addition, the program continues to expand transition services into schools across the state.

In FY 2015, ADRS Lakeshore:

- Provided Adaptive Driving services throughout the state, enabling individuals with limited mobility and cognitive disorders to drive by providing vehicle modifications, driver training, and instruction. In FY15, the program also developed and implemented a bioptic driving program, giving ADRS another resource for this much-needed service.

- Participated in the further development of college preparation services to consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing. Lakeshore staff were involved in the planning at the state level and taught career exploration classes during these sessions.

- Expanded specialized services to consumers who are blind/low vision to include career exploration and college preparation programs.

- Continued to develop group-based services – including CONNECTIONS, CREST, and CONNECTED – focused on the career needs of consumers to assist them in developing

appropriate social skills/soft skills for the workplace. These programs were offered in new areas of the state, including sites in Auburn and Montgomery, to assist ADRS consumers in managing behaviors that may impact employment.

- Improved our employability development services, including designated staff focusing on social skills training provided in schools as well as in offices around the state.

- Offered College Preparation programs in one- to two-day sessions in high schools throughout the state, as well as the five-day programs offered during the summer in Birmingham, Anniston, Tuscaloosa, Dothan, and Blount County.

- Enhanced Vocational Evaluation services to include the use of technology in the evaluation process. Also, began putting in place additional services to enhance one-on-one evaluations with consumers with the most-significant disabilities to include specialized evaluation services for Project SEARCH applicants.

- Collaborated with the Business Relations Program to implement teaching strategies aimed at assisting ADRS consumers in enhancing skills needed to successfully complete online job applications and behavioral assessments.

- Partnered with Children's' Rehabilitation Service to further enhance Teen Transition Clinic for those eligible for CRS services. Evaluation services – a core clinic service – are provided by specialized vocational evaluators at Lakeshore, with a focus on work and/or post-secondary training. This evaluation also can identify other community resources and volunteer opportunities for participants.



Community Rehabilitation Programs

ADRS-Lakeshore is the CRP operated by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

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

In FY 2015, the network of 25 programs:

- Served 5,709 ADRS consumers, a 4 percent increase over FY14. Of those, 2,722 entered the STEPS to Employment program, with 1,598 successfully placed in employment.
- Achieved an average wage of \$9.11, an increase of 6 percent compared with FY14.
- Added two CRPs to the ADRS network partnership –

Disability Staffing Services in Huntsville and MOCA Family Services in Montgomery – providing ADRS consumers with additional choices in the served areas. Both programs are preparing for accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), a requirement for all programs in partnership with ADRS.

- Had several facilities awarded accreditation by CARF. Each facility surveyed received a three-year accreditation, the highest award.
- Continued to receive positive responses through consumer satisfaction surveys in such areas as evaluation, vocational training, job readiness, job search activities, and job placement.

Traumatic Brain Injury System of Care

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

In FY 2015, services funded by ADRS and the Impaired Drivers Trust Fund (IDTF) assisted more than 3,500 Alabamians with TBI. Services included community re-integration, housing, respite care, independent living, resource coordination, attendant care, medical supplies, assistive equipment, cognitive stimulation, recreation, and employment.

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

In FY 2015, the TBI System of Care:

- Continued to provide targeted training to TBI staff on key issues, including juvenile justice and TBI, concussion and "return-to-think" recommendations, and problematic behavioral interventions.
- Continued to provide service linkage to more than 1,000

eligible individuals through the Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Registry (AHSCIR). Respondents are provided with information and referral assistance to ADRS, AHIF and other community agencies.

- Focused on improving the outcomes of youth offenders by identifying and addressing issues related to TBI in the juvenile justice system by screening, extensive training and education, and resource facilitation for those affected by TBI.
- Continued collaboration with UAB/Children's of Alabama to host the Second Annual Concussion Summit for statewide participation with physicians, clinicians, athletic trainers, coaches, and educators.
- Continued partnership with UAB's TBI Model System, one of 16 programs funded by the National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation and Research improving care and outcomes for individuals with TBI.
- Continued coordination of the Alabama Head Injury Task Force (AHITF), the statewide advisory board for TBI in Alabama established to develop the ideal service-delivery system for Alabamians who experience TBI.



The ADRS College Prep Program held programs for more than 200 students at six sites throughout Alabama

Transition Service

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

During FY 2015, transition students comprised approximately half of all individuals served and placed into employment by ADRS counselors, with 16,240 transition students receiving services and 2,238 successfully employed.

In FY 2015, with the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity ACT (WIOA) and the requirement that Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) be provided to student with disabilities, ADRS continued efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs, and service models to meet the needs of students with disabilities and overcome barriers to employment and community living.

In FY15, Transition Service:

- Contracted with creators of Smart Work Ethics to provide this curriculum to students with disabilities during the school year or summer months. Smart Work Ethics focuses on soft skills and addresses communication skills and strategies, attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability, and much more.

- Improved our summer work program for students with disabilities by offering Job Exploration Training

(JET) in our community rehabilitation programs. Students received training in job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training as well as a paid work experience in a community setting.

- Developed a Best Practices Guide as an overview of the types of services and activities that may be provided to students with disabilities in schools and that also serves as a tool to help transition counselors develop ideas and services/programs in their local areas.

- Developed a Menu of Services to be used when discussing services for students with disabilities with school systems to let them know what is available and how VR might fill gaps in services for students with disabilities.

- Continued College Prep Program services at six sites around the state, with more than 200 students participating.

- Continued collaboration with the Special Education Division of the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Department of Corrections to implement the Prison Transition Initiative for youth with disabilities incarcerated in adult prisons.

- Continued collaboration with Children's Rehabilitation Service to provide the Transition Liaison Council.

- Increased collaboration in the State Interagency Transition Team to encourage local areas to establish

Community Transition Teams to address transition issues for youth with disabilities.

- Continued collaboration with the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Troy University, and the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities to provide the Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum. In FY 2015, 37 youth with disabilities from throughout Alabama participated in this five-day program designed to enhance leadership skills. Alumni of previous forums returned to work as staff.

- Continued collaboration with local school systems across the state to provide jointly funded job coaches. These job coaches worked in 27 school systems to assist transition students in obtaining and maintaining employment.

- Supported many local transition events, such as career fairs, transition expos, mentoring days, summer employment readiness programs, and summer paid work experiences.

- Expanded Project SEARCH to 10 sites. These projects are collaborative efforts among the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, local school systems, and host business sites.



Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

Gov. Robert Bentley, who spoke at the statewide awards ceremony, poses with the 2014 winners

The Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities promotes greater independence for people with disabilities and educates the public about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

FY 2015 accomplishments included:

- Expansion of special events, particularly for students with disabilities and the "reverse job fairs" assisting youth and adults with disabilities.
- Mentoring days for students throughout the state to acquaint them with the world of work and how to be best prepared to enter it with Alabama employers such as Lowe's, Regions Bank, VA Medical Center – Birmingham, and many others hosting and teaching these individuals.

■ Special outreach and job fairs for wounded warriors in collaboration with the many Alabama entities that assist them.

■ Improved outreach and education through the creation of the Governor's Committee Facebook page.

■ Expansion of the Governor's Committee web page (www.rehab.alabama.gov/govcomm) to include separate pages for local committees.

During NDEAM, 14 local events honored 118 winners statewide, including students, youth, businesses, media, employees with disabilities, media, advocates, and partners. The local winners competed for 12 statewide awards presented at the Capitol, with Gov. Bentley in attendance.

STAR: Alabama's Technology Resource

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

Reutilization Programs

In FY 2015, STAR partnered with six reutilization programs statewide. With STAR, these partnerships:

- saved Alabamians with disabilities \$1,829,028.86 by refurbishing assistive technology for reuse.
- received 5,354 requests for assistive technology items.
- received 3,406 donated items from communities.
- reused 2,963 assistive technology items.
- responded to 171 ADRS consumer requests.
- saved ADRS \$108,904 by providing needed assistive technology to ADRS consumers.

Training Programs

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

In FY15, this program:

- held 23 onsite trainings, directly impacting 473 individuals and indirectly impacting 8,257 individuals.
- registered 56,577 visits to the website.
- housed eight new webinars and 30 modules related to AT at startraining.org.

Device Demonstrations and Device Short-term Loans

Through its partnership with T.A.S.C., STAR provides AT demonstrations and device short-term loans to individuals with disabilities, family members, caregivers, schools, support groups, and other organizations serving people with disabilities. In FY 2015, this program provided 25 AT device demonstrations to 50 participants, and lent 53 AT devices to 17 individuals (an increase of 55.8 percent over FY14).

Alternative Finance Program (AFP)

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

In FY 2015, the program provided 11 loans, with a dollar value of \$218,069. The top three requests were for adaptive vehicles, mobility equipment, and home modifications.



Business Relations Consultant Leslie Dawson works with Brandon Powell to help him get his business off of the ground

Business Relations

FY 2015 was an active year for READI-Net – the ADRS business relations program – and its team of 18 business relations consultants.

Emphasis on serving youth and those with significant disabilities led to additional collaboration with Project SEARCH, opening new doors to employer recruitment and customized hiring.

Outcomes reflected record-high production:

With Alabama businesses:

- 1,723 active employer accounts
- 827 “contact” relationships
- 6,411 no-cost services to these business partners

With VR consumers:

- 1,389 assisted statewide, including those with significant disabilities
- 7,613 customized services to improve the employment readiness and marketability in the employment marketplace.
- Referrals to 3,316 jobs posted through the READI-Net partnership

Business services addressed critical issues: Federal contractor mandates for hiring, ADA case law, outreach-recruitment-retention, and self-identification by applicants or employees with disabilities.

Highlights

- Products & services for business added new items in FY 2015:
 - A checklist to review personnel processes for accessibility
 - Training on dialogue/documentation for accommodations

- Affiliations with business groups increased access to more hiring opportunities through EEOC and OFCCP technical assistance seminars or follow-up with businesses after compliance; Alabama’s Industry Liaison Group’s endorsement and use of READI-Net resources for businesses and participation in their quarterly meetings with contractors

- ABLN – Alabama’s Business Leadership Network – the 501c3 chapter of the U.S. Business Leadership Network focused on workplace diversity and disability:

- Named Chapter of the Year because of joint projects with READI-Net: statewide conference; educational materials; new “503” services

- Expanded skills development for consumers – a work in progress on:

- Microsoft IT Academy
- Work-at-home – evaluation of readiness and information technology supports
- On-line behavioral assessments
- Virtual career links
- “Reverse” job fairs
- Inclusion of Alabama consumers in the VR national talent pool
- Improved pre-hire work tryouts

- Customized training for targeted employers included companies like:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| • Blue Cross/Blue Shield | • Lockheed Martin |
| • EBSCO | • Alabama Power |
| • Lowe’s | • CVS/Pharmacy |

Homebound. State of Alabama Independent Living.



*serving persons
with significant disabilities*
Hybrid approach for educational services



Without assistance from Homebound - SAIL, Heath Pollard would not be teaching physics and chemistry at Brookwood High School today

Homebound - State of Alabama Independent Living

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

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

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

SAIL expanded its SAIL/VR Hybrid program during 2015. This program allows individuals with the most significant disabilities to consider and pursue educational training and employment options. Participants in this program receive Waiver or Homebound services and vocational rehabilitation services through one hybrid counselor. There are currently counselors in Birmingham, Decatur, and Tuscaloosa who work this specialized hybrid caseload.

SAIL is comprised of three specialized programs:

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

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

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

- be at least 18 years old,
- be medically and financially eligible for a nursing home,
- have experienced the onset of the disability before age 60,
- have a neurological disability as a result of reasons other than aging.

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

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

2015

program highlights

Assisted 1,394 Alabamians with the most-significant disabilities in remaining in their homes and communities rather than being moved into nursing homes or other institutions. This included 382 in the Homebound Program, 490 in the Independent Living Service, 532 in the SAIL Waiver Program, 33 in the Technology Assisted Waiver, and 37 on the ACT Waiver program. An additional 429 were served through the independent living specialists by receiving information and referral services.

Provided services to consumers and families in all 67 counties through seven SAIL teams located statewide.

Continued to develop resources to supplement limited funding with donated goods and services, with independent living specialists securing donations of \$173,226.

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

Continued involvement with the Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and the State Independent Living Council (SILC).

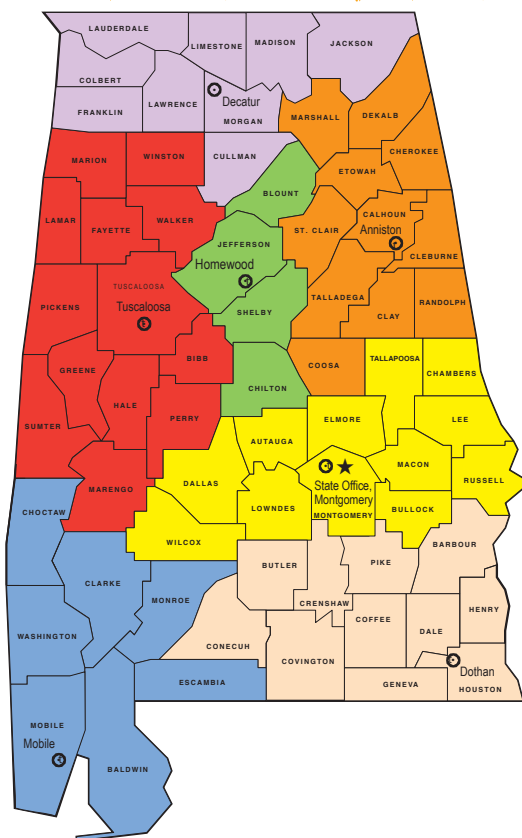
Continued to work with the Alabama Department of Senior Services and the Alabama Medicaid Agency to develop a seamless system of audits for direct-service providers enrolled in the provision of waiver services.

Continued involvement in the VR/SAIL project in Homewood and Tuscaloosa, where SAIL case managers also serve people with the most-significant disabilities to assist them in achieving an employment outcome.



Homebound - SAIL assists Andrew Brown with personal care so he can attend the University of Montevallo

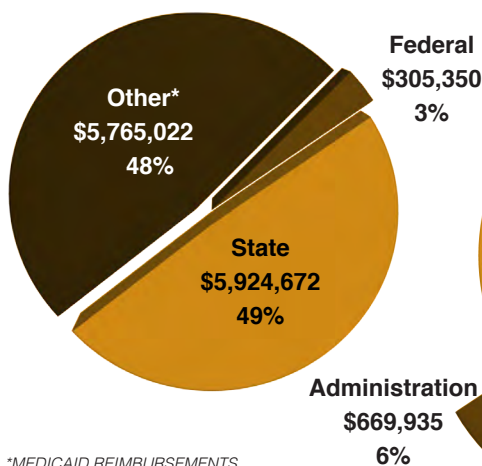
HOMEBOUND/SAIL OFFICE LOCATIONS



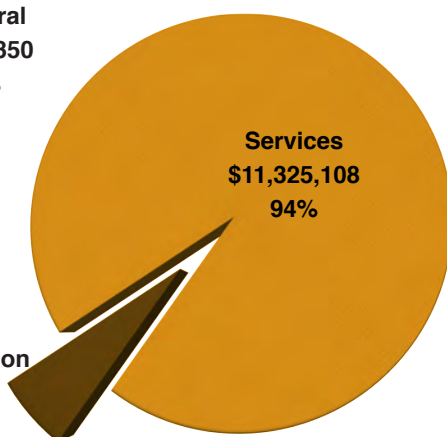
SAIL BY THE NUMBERS

MORE THAN \$11.9 MILLION TO SERVE ALABAMIANS WITH THE MOST-SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

SOURCE OF REVENUE



USE OF REVENUE



*MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENTS

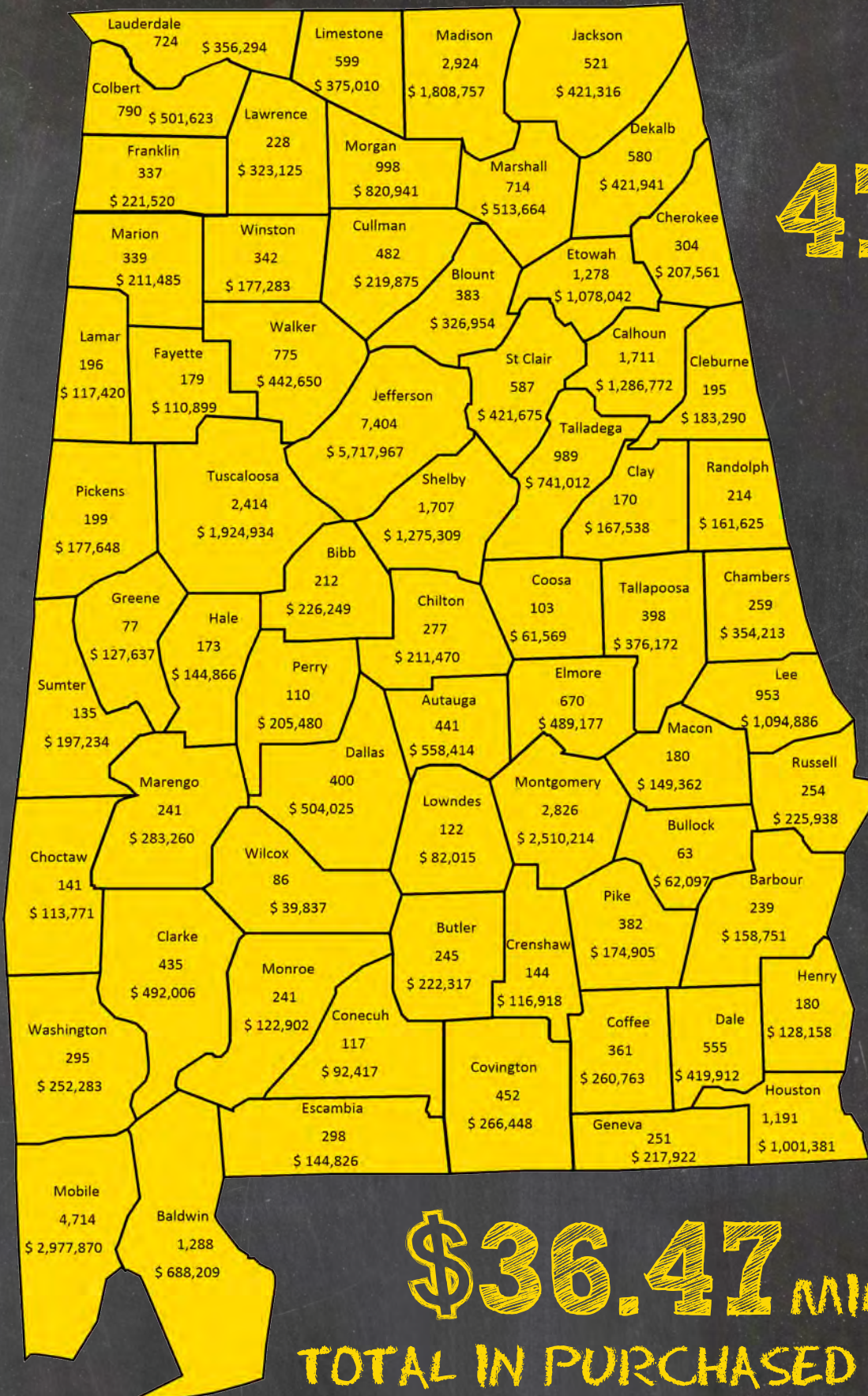
The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.



Serving Alabamians in all 67 counties

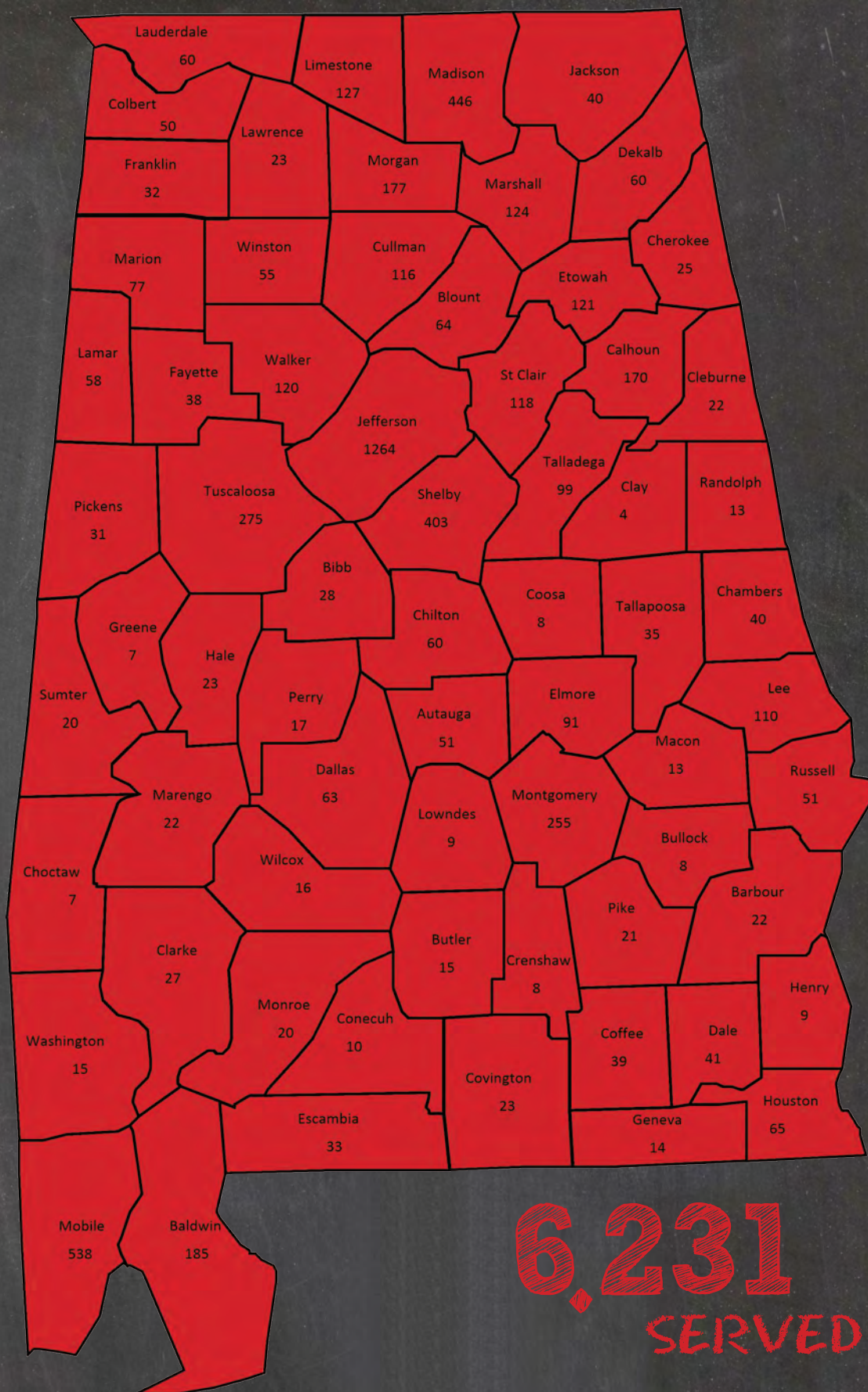
ADRS. people served, purchased services

47,787
SERVED



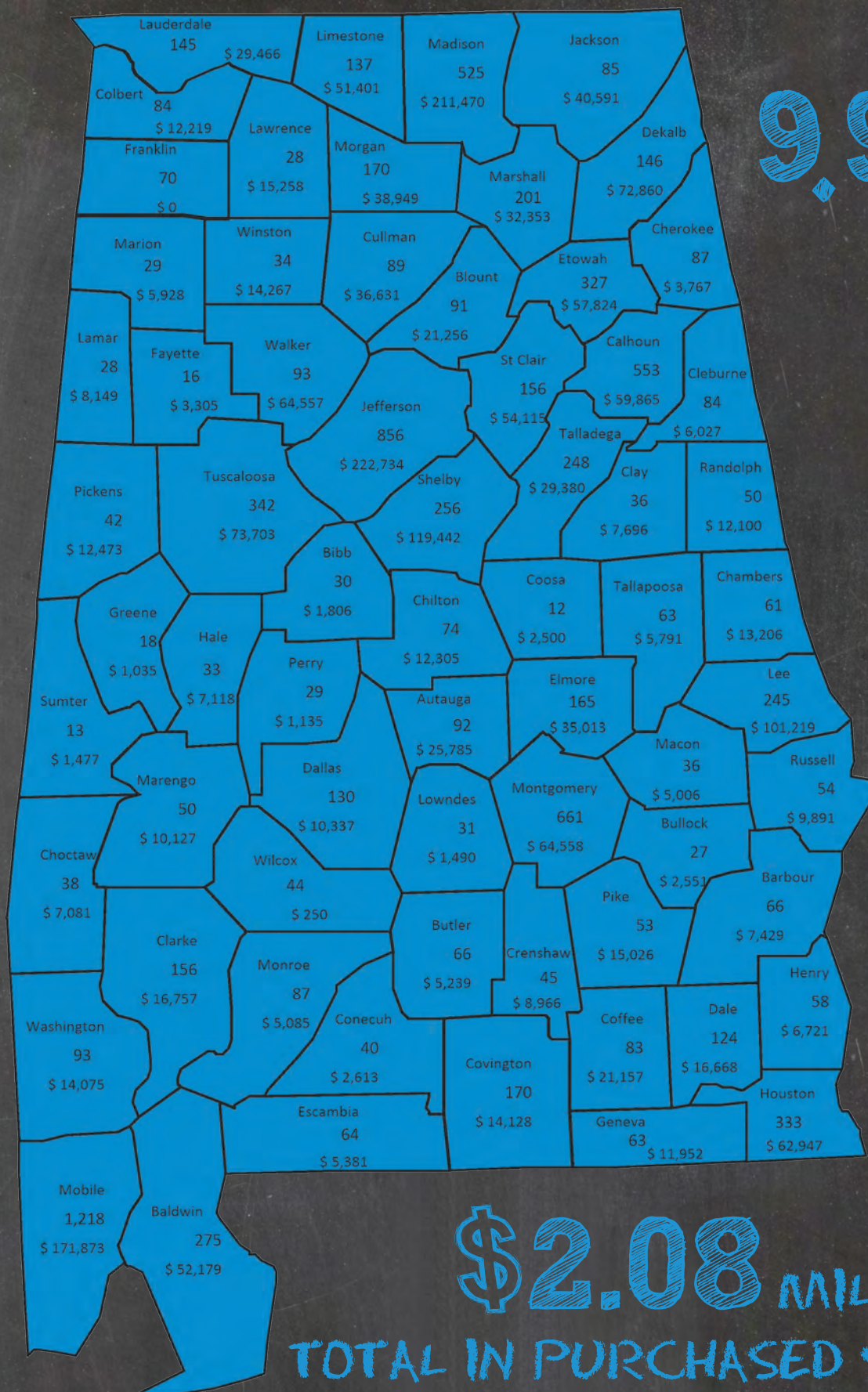
\$36.47 MILLION
TOTAL IN PURCHASED SERVICES

EI. infants and toddlers served



CRS. children and youth served, purchased services

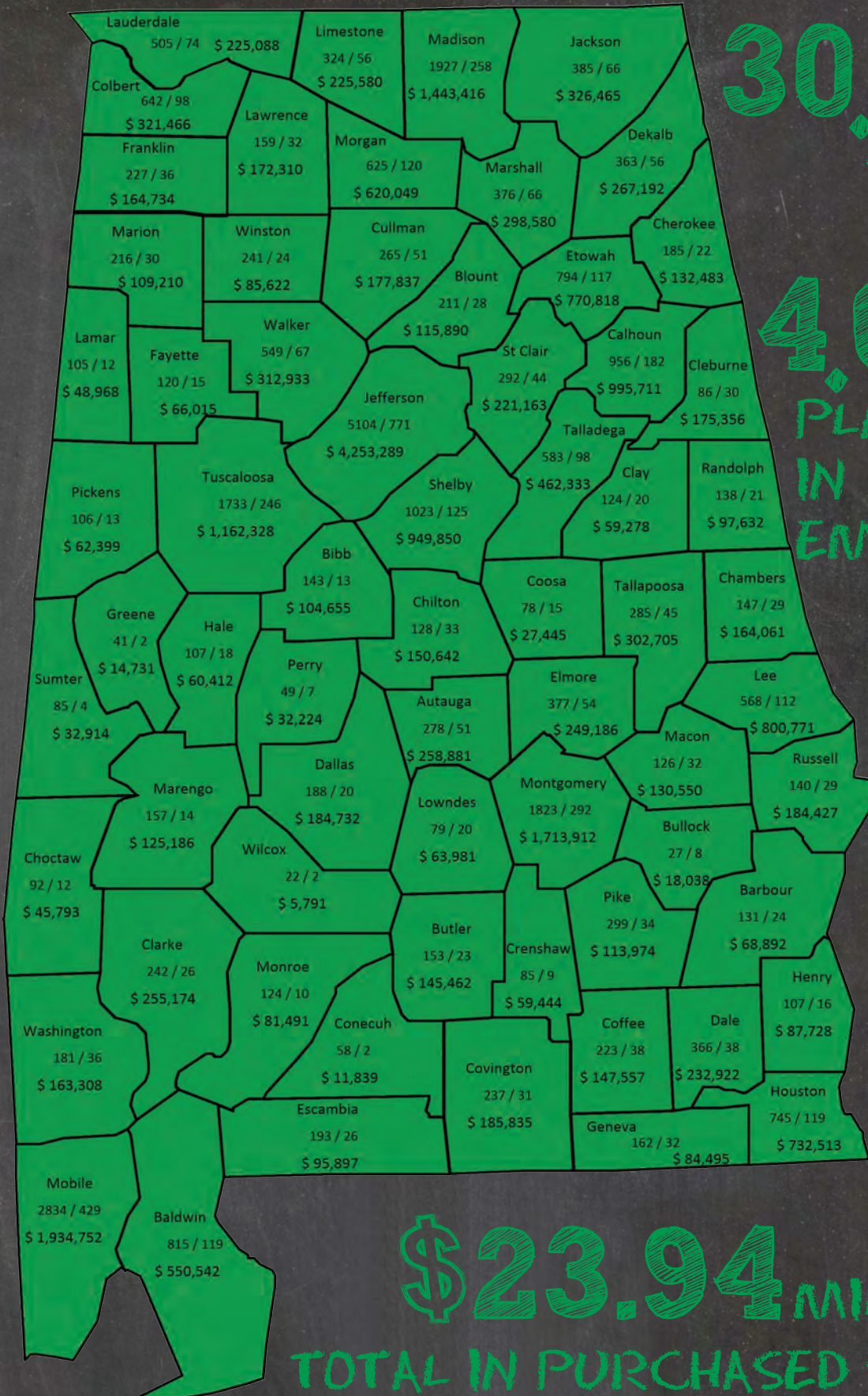
9,914
SERVED



\$2.08 MILLION
TOTAL IN PURCHASED SERVICES

30,248
SERVED

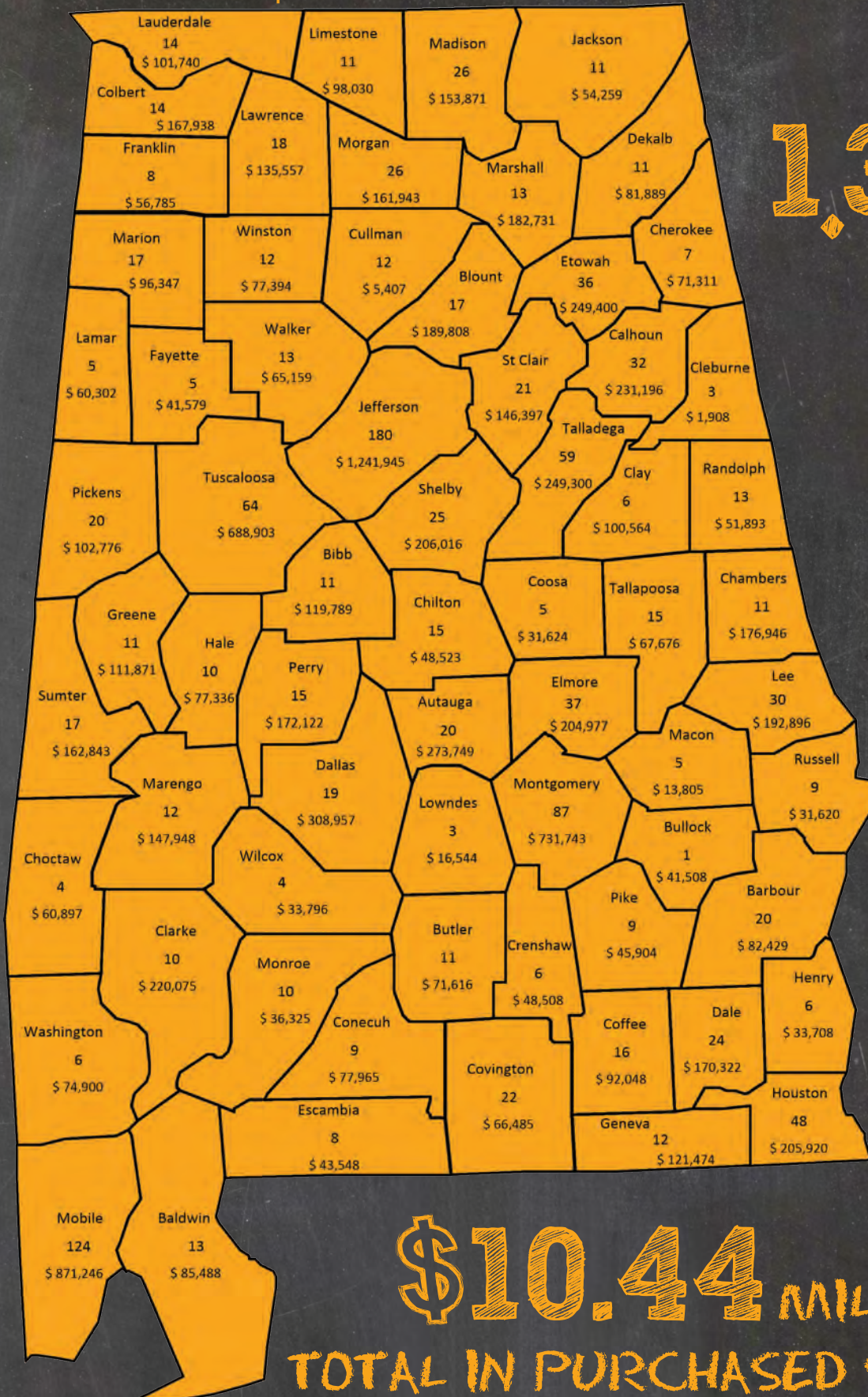
4,602
PLACED
IN
EMPLOYMENT



SAIL.

persons with significant disabilities served,
purchased services

1,394
SERVED



\$10.44 MILLION
TOTAL IN PURCHASED SERVICES

our Community partners

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



EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM LOCATIONS

ANNISTON

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

BIRMINGHAM

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

BREWTON

UCP Mobile Families First

CULLMAN

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

DECATUR

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

DOTHAN

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office

Dothan-Houston County Mental Retardation Board Inc. (Vaughn Blumberg Center)

FAYETTE

Tri County Early Intervention

FLORENCE

SCOPE 310

GADSDEN

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

GUNTERSVILLE

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Authority

HUNTSVILLE

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

JASPER

ARC of Walker County

MCINTOSH

UCP of Mobile (New Journey)

MOBILE

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, regional office
Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast
Gulf Coast Therapy Early Intervention
UCP of Mobile (Project Special Delivery)

MONTGOMERY

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

ONEONTA

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

OZARK

Vivian B. Adams Early Intervention

PELHAM

Shelby County ARC/Kids First

PELL CITY

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

PRATTVILLE

ARC of Autauga/Western Elmore County (EIEIO)

RAINSVILLE

UCP of Greater Birmingham (Hand in Hand)

ROBERTSDALE

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

SCOTTSBORO

Marshall/Jackson Mental Retardation Authority
Twin Acres Early Intervention

SELMA

Cahaba Center Early Intervention

SYLACAUGA

Cheaha Mental Health/Burton Center EI Program

TALLADEGA

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

TROY

UCP of Mobile (Bright Beginnings)

TUSCALOOSA

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

TUSCUMBIA

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

VALLEY

Chattahoochee Valley ARC/Valley Haven Early Intervention

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

ANNISTON

Opportunity Center-Easter Seals

AUBURN-OPELIKA

Achievement Center-Easter Seals
Jackie Johnson Employment Services

BIRMINGHAM

ADRS-Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center
Easter Seals of the Birmingham Area

Goodwill Industries of Alabama
Triumph Services
United Cerebral Palsy
Vocational Resources Inc.
Workshops Inc.

DECATUR

Erica Allen Employment Services (EASE)
Phoenix Rehabilitation Foundation

DOTHAN

Southcare Services
Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center

GADSDEN

Darden Rehabilitation Foundation

HUNTSVILLE

Erica Allen Employment Services (EASE)
Phoenix Rehabilitation Foundation

JACKSON

Clarke County ARC

MOBILE

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

MONTGOMERY

Easter Seals Central Alabama
Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama

MUSCLE SHOALS

Northwest Easter Seals

PELHAM

Shelby County ARC

SELMA

West Central Alabama Easter Seals

TALLADEGA

E.H. Gentry Technical Center

TUSCALOOSA

Easter Seals West Alabama



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

FY 2015 Grant Information

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 2015:

Hemophilia Program - \$23,000

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

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

FY 2015 accomplishments:

- Served 21 uninsured/underinsured participants
- Provided 12 pediatric Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Birmingham
- Provided 12 adult Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Birmingham
- Provided six Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Mobile
- Provided two satellite Hemophilia Treatment Clinics in Montgomery
- Provided approximately 730,000 units of clotting factor at a cost of nearly \$600,000

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) State Implementation Partnership Grant: Expanding the System of Care for People with TBI: Children and Youth with TBI and at Risk for TBI who are Juvenile Offenders - \$247,260 (2nd year)

Awarded to ADRS by Health Resources and Services Administration

Purpose of grant: To incorporate TBI services into Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS) systems at all levels and to provide support for reforms and systems changes that will result in positive outcomes for incarcerated

youth with TBI in Alabama's DYS system and those at risk for TBI. Specific problems addressed are lack of identification of children and youth with TBI and those at high risk for TBI and lack of appropriate interventions to address TBI issues. The objective of the grant is to address barriers to services identified by HRSA as they impact this population: 1) screening for TBI, 2) professional training, 3) information and referral, and 4) resource facilitation.

FY 2015 accomplishments:

- Conducted a Statewide Survivor and Family Needs Survey to obtain information to tailor policies and programs to meet the needs of people affected by TBI.
- Conducted a Statewide Traumatic Brain Injury Needs Assessment Professional and Agency Survey to identify current services, barriers to services and gaps in services.
- Conducted a survey through the Administrative Office of Courts of judges, juvenile probation officers, child's attorneys and other juvenile justice staff to obtain information to develop training and provide information for judges, juvenile probation officers, children's attorneys, juvenile justice system staff, and staff of detention and diversion programs in order to improve outcomes for children and families that have experienced TBI.
- Conducted a Survey of Knowledge and Needs of Department of Youth Services staff to determine their needs for training in recognizing and serving youth who exhibit symptoms associated with TBI.
- Met with juvenile probation officers and court staff in two counties to initiate pilot projects to identify children and youth with TBI and develop appropriate interventions and accommodations to foster successful re-integration into community, school, and employment.
- Provided specialized training to juvenile justice staff to identify children and youth with TBI and provide appropriate interventions and accommodations.
- Provided training at the Annual Alabama Juvenile Judges Conference on TBI and Children in the Juvenile Justice System.

FY 2015 Grant Information (continued)

State Implementation Grant for System of Services for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (D70) - \$220,987 (4th of 4 years)

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

Purpose of grant: To improve the system of care for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) by 1) building medical provider capacity so the CYSHCN receive enhanced comprehensive health care through identified medical homes; 2) enhancing collaboration and communication between care provider network, parents and youth, and other community partners within medical homes for successful transition of YSHCN into adult services; 3) providing ongoing statewide support for CYSHCN, their families, and their health care providers through coordination and collaboration with existing agencies and organizations. FY 2015 accomplishments:

- Three of six practice sites commenced the National Center for Quality Improvement accreditation process, leading to a Level 2 and a Level 3 certification, with one practice finalizing its application.
- Two of the six practice sites kept their D70 care coordinator on staff, and one care coordinator remained in her practice site as an employee of the parent consultant program.
- The Project Advisory Committee met twice.
- The D70 project collaborated with the CYSHCN Program and Family Voices of Alabama and the Family to Family Health Information Center Grant to host a three-day Partners in Care Summit.
- Three of the six care coordinators continued to provide care coordination and transition services for clients seen at their practice site.

Work Incentive Planning and Assistance - \$300,000 (1st of 5 years)

Awarded by the Social Security Administration

Purpose of grant: To provide work incentive and benefits counseling services to beneficiaries and recipients of SSI/SSDI who are attempting to enter or return to work.

On Aug. 1, 2015, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services became the sole provider and grantee for the state. ADRS proposed a unique model to blend SSA funding with department funding, and that proposal was accepted and awarded full statewide coverage, making ADRS the sole provider for the first time since Work Incentives and Planning Assistance funding began.

Client Assistance Program - \$166,850 (32nd year)

Awarded by U.S. Department of Education

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

Number of People served in Grant: 23 open/closed cases; 850 "consultation" or contacts

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

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

In-Service Training Grant - \$80,299 (5th of 5 years)

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

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

FY 2015 accomplishments:

- Provided training opportunities and continuing education to VR staff in the areas of supported employment, transition services, assistive technology, and specific disabilities.
- Developed web-based disability etiquette training as part of a new employee orientation training for staff.
- Launched a new learning management software system designed to allow staff to register for courses and track their learning.
- Graduated 23 staff from the yearlong ADRS Leadership Training Institute.
- Supported and developed training for all VR supervisors and Blind Services staff.
- Collaborated with UAB and other divisions within ADRS to provide our annual Medical Aspects of Disability Conference.
- Increased the number of direct service VRS staff meeting the state and federal criteria of the CSPD by providing financial incentives to complete coursework and sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) Exam.

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

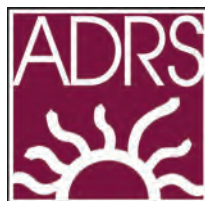
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The individuals listed represent only a small number of the hundreds of dedicated ADRS professionals around the state who work tirelessly to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Thanks to all ADRS staff who work each day to help the department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





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