



## Vision

- ◆ Screen magnifiers
- ◆ Screen readers
- ◆ Video magnifiers
- ◆ Reading systems
- ◆ Braille embossers
- ◆ Braille translation
- ◆ Accessible media players

## Hearing

- ◆ Amplified phones
- ◆ Amplified ringers
- ◆ TTYs
- ◆ Specialized alarms
- ◆ Signal systems
- ◆ Specialized software

## Mobility

- ◆ Voice recognition software
- ◆ Touch screens
- ◆ Head / eye controls
- ◆ Word prediction software
- ◆ Specialized keyboards, computer mouses, and other input devices

*This fact sheet and others can be found at [www.mdeid.org](http://www.mdeid.org) and [www.mdworkforcepromise.org](http://www.mdworkforcepromise.org).*

*Questions?*

*Contact the Maryland Department of Disabilities.*

# Assistive Technology

## What Is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology, also called AT, is a tool or machine that helps you live or work more on your own. Activities that you may not be able to do independently right now may be possible with assistive technology. These tools allow you to carry out housekeeping, self-care tasks, work tasks, as well as talking, learning, and participating in free-time activities. Some tools are complex and would require a commitment from you to learn how to use them.

AT for self-care might include eating and drinking tools, bathing aides, or motorized scooters. Office tasks can be made easier with the use of special

software, adjustable desks and chairs, special keyboards and computer mouses, Braille, and reading systems. AT that helps you talk with others includes speech machines, TTYs (teletypewriters), picture boards, and talking notepads. AT for learning consists of games, software, tools and tapes that teach reading, writing, and math. See the sidebar on this page for a few examples of AT for vision, hearing, and mobility disabilities.

An assessment helps determine what AT is best for you. See the back of this fact sheet for information on what to think about when being matched for an AT device.

## Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MD TAP)

MD TAP is a program of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. MD TAP teaches people about using assistive technology. MD TAP can also show you AT machines and tools to help you find the one that best meets your needs. Having this support to find and try AT is important to help you go to work.

### Assistive Technology Loan Program

Because the cost of AT may be more than you can afford, MD TAP and

the Maryland Department of Disabilities run the Assistive Technology Loan Program. This program gives low-interest loans to people who live in Maryland. Other people, including your family, can help you in asking for the loan.

You can receive a loan application by calling MD TAP. Not everyone gets a loan. However, this loan program has fewer rules than regular bank loans, making it easier for more people to receive loans.

Loan amounts range from \$500 to \$50,000, and you can use the loan to buy many kinds of AT. The loans can be used for more than just AT. You can buy training to use the tools, extended warranties, and maintenance plans.

The website for MD TAP is [www.mdmap.org](http://www.mdmap.org). Other contact information for MD TAP and the AT Loan Program is listed in the resource section of this fact sheet.

## Additional AT Funding Options

In addition to the AT Loan Program, you have other choices to help you purchase assistive technology tools and machines.

### Place of Employment

Your place of employment pays for AT when it is a reasonable accommodation for which you are eligible. It may be helpful to give your supervisor information about tax credits and incentives that can help with the cost. Ask for the fact sheet entitled *Tax Incentives/Credits* which outlines these incentives for businesses.

### Vocational Rehabilitation

Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) may be able to buy AT for you if it will increase your ability to go to work or to keep working. To be most

effective, AT should be considered early in the process. Your counselor will talk with you about your needs and arrange for an assessment either through the Workforce Technology Center Rehabilitation Technology Services or through an approved community AT provider. This will give you an opportunity to try different types of technology to figure out what will work best for you. Training and follow-up evaluations should be provided. You must meet eligibility requirements to receive services from DORS.

### Social Security Work Incentives

If you receive Social Security disability benefits, you might be able to use Work

Incentives to help you buy AT. These work incentives are not easy to understand. You should make sure that you talk about them with an expert. Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects have staff trained specifically on Social Security Administration (SSA) Work Incentives. Contact information for WIPAs is listed in the resource section of this fact sheet. You can learn more about SSA's work incentives in the fact sheet entitled *Think You Can't Work? Think Again*.

### U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

The VA may buy AT if you are a Veteran with a disability. See the resource section of this fact sheet for contact information.

## AT Assessment: Things to Consider

### What tasks are difficult for you?

- ◆ Will the use of AT help you complete these tasks more independently? Will you be able to use the AT in different places (work, home, social situations)?

### What have you tried before?

- ◆ What ways of doing things have you tried? What materials, equipment, or tools have you used in the past?

### How involved will you be in the process?

- ◆ Will you be part of the decision making to figure out what AT you should try? What do you hope the AT device will do for you? Will you have a chance to try it before buying it?

### How will you know if the AT device is a good fit for you?

- ◆ Will you be trained on the new AT device? Will you actually use it? Will the AT device help you meet your goals?

## Resources

### Maryland Service Providers

*Maryland State Dept. of Education  
Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)*  
Voice: (410) 554-9442 / (888) 554-0334  
TTY: (410) 554-9411  
Email: dors@dors.state.md.us  
Website: www.dors.state.md.us

### Maryland Technology Assistance Program

*Maryland AT Loan Program*  
Voice: (800) 832-4827  
TTY: (866) 881-7488  
Email: mdtap@mdtap.org  
Website: www.mdtap.org

### Additional Information

*AT: LAST, Inc.*  
MD Assistive Technology Cooperative  
Voice: 410-381-2667  
TTY: Use Maryland Relay 711  
Email: info@matcoop.org  
Website: www.matcoop.org

### Benefits InfoSource Main Office

Voice: (301) 277-2839 / (888) 838-1776  
TTY: Use Maryland Relay 711  
Website: www.innow.org

### Disability.gov

www.Disability.gov is a website that has information on assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.

### Family Center on Technology and Disability

Voice: (202) 884-8441  
Email: fctd@aed.org  
Website: www.fctd.info

### Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Voice: (800) 526-7234  
TTY: (877) 981-9403  
Email: jan@askjan.org  
Website: www.askjan.org

### Learning Independence Through Computers (LINC)

Voice: (410) 554-9134  
TTY: (410) 843-0219  
Website: www.linc.org

### Maryland Department of Disabilities

Voice / TTY: (410) 767-3660  
Voice / TTY: (800) 637-4113  
Email: mdod@mdod.state.md.us  
Website: www.mdod.maryland.gov

### Maryland Disability WorkFORCE Promise

Voice: (301) 662-0099  
TTY: (301) 662-4853  
Email: info@mdworkforcepromise.org  
Website: www.mdworkforcepromise.org

### U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Voice: (800) 827-1000 (National Office)  
TTY: (800) 829-4833  
Website: www.va.gov