

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Special Education Services
ASSIST Funding Support for
I. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

An Assistive Technology (AT) device is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device.

The term AT service means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an AT device. The term includes:

1. The evaluation of the needs of the child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment.
2. Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of AT devices by children with disabilities.
3. Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing AT devices.
4. Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with AT devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.
5. Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of a child with a disability.

AT can help children with disabilities work around many challenges faced such as academic, organizational skills, mobility, communication, environmental controls, visual and/or hearing needs, recreation, or daily living skills. The right AT can help a child thrive in school and in life and can help grow a child's confidence and independence while also playing to his/her strengths. There are many AT tools available from low tech to high tech to help a child with a disability be successful in school.

Each LEA must ensure that AT devices and/or AT services are made available to a child with a disability if required as part of the child's special education, related services, or, as supplementary aids and services. Children with AT needs often require consultation and technical assistance performed by qualified personnel trained in the area of AT. Consultation, technical assistance, as well as providing AT services, and high-tech equipment may be costly for LEAs. Access to trained specialists in the area of AT is needed in every LEA across the State.

The Assistive Technology Support Plan

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Special Education Services (SES) will reserve funds from Other State-Level Activities to support AT services and/or equipment for a specific student who is in need of AT. All services must be provided in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1400, et.seq.,(P.L. 108-446) IDEA, Part B, and the *Alabama Administrative Code*. Services requested will be monitored by the ALSDE.

Criteria

1. Consultations, assistance, training, and conducting assessments must be completed by a highly skilled professional in the area of AT.
2. LEAs Should Consider the Following Guidelines for Professionals in Case Preparation:
 - Schedule all parts of the AT evaluation with the LEA.
 - Conduct a parent interview.
 - Conduct an interview with school personnel who interacts with the child.
 - Observe the child in both a structured and unstructured school environment or natural setting.

- Conduct appropriate AT assessments after identifying the area(s) of challenge and need.
- Provide consultation feedback to both the family and the LEA.
- Provide a written diagnostic summary to the LEA that includes summative information of the assessments, interviews, and observations conducted, and provide analysis of the type of services and/or devices the child may need.
- Provide the AT Assessment report to the LEA within 21 days of the evaluation.
- Provide training to the student, and all stakeholders who work with the student when the AT will be utilized. This training should include the family if the AT will be used at home.

Criteria for LEA Participation:

An LEA is eligible to complete an ASSIST funding application for AT services and devices on behalf of any child, ages 3-21, who has a disability under IDEA, a current IEP, and may benefit from additional supports in the area of AT.

Criteria for LEA Use of the Application Funds for ASSIST, I. Assistive Technology:

1. Allowable expenditures include, but are not limited to:
 - Highly skilled professionals that are specifically trained in the area of AT services and equipment to provide evaluations and training to the staff, the child, and parents
 - Contracted services specific for the child with a disability who requires AT
 - Funding for high cost devices and equipment
2. The application for ASSIST funding, I. Assistive Technology is used only to provide AT documented in the application for a specific child with a disability that exceeds the average cost of typical AT services and devices. ALSDE SES reimbursement per evaluation, per child, including any travel cost incurred, may not exceed \$2,000.00.
3. If the trainer requires travel costs, it is the responsibility of the LEA to pay costs using the LEAs rates, rules, and regulations, or the State’s rates, rules, and regulations regarding travel. It will be the responsibility of the LEA to determine and account for travel costs and to negotiate for services rendered. Any transportation costs not specific to the AT supports outlined in the application is considered an unallowable expense.
4. An LEA submitting a claim under this provision of IDEA shall be prepared to provide supporting documentation related to the AT supports the specific student with a disability received.

Documentation:

The LEA may also be required to submit supporting documents and have available for review in the statewide electronic portal, the current *Notice and Eligibility Decision Regarding Special Education Services* form and IEP relating to the submitted application.

Application for ASSIST Funding, I. Assistive Technology Awards Status Timelines, Procedures, and Notification:

The procedural timelines for the ASSIST fund application, I. AT Supports are as follows:

1. An LEA may submit multiple student applications for students with a disability that may benefit from additional AT supports in the LEA’s jurisdiction. **MAXIMUM REIBURSEMENT PER CHILD, INCLUDING ANY TRAVEL COST INCURRED is \$2,000.00.**
2. The application for ASSIST funds, I. Assistive Technology cannot be used for expenses incurred for the identified evaluations in prior years or funded by an alternate funding source.
3. All applications received will be reviewed by staff of the ALSDE within 15 days to determine if the unique qualities of the child(ren) related to occurrence, intensity of, and diversity of services are in excess of the typical high-needs child with a disability that needs additional AT supports. An award notification will be sent via email to the LEA after an approval of the application is granted.

Please complete and return the Application for ASSIST funding via email to:

speced@alsde.edu

ATTENTION FISCAL TEAM