

## Assistive Technology

Categories : [Disability Related Services](#), [Independent Living Services](#)

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: DEFINITION** Assistive Technology consists of devices or services that help people to achieve greater independence and to enhance the quality of their lives. The Assistive Technology Act was passed in 1988 and subsequently amended in 1998 and 2004. It was reauthorized in 2014 as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. See summary:

(<https://acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act>). defines an assistive technology device as "...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 functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities."

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES (Also called Assistive Devices):** Assistive technology devices can be simple or complex, depending upon the needs of the individual. The following are categories and examples summarized from the National Library of Medicine: MedlinePlus website:

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/assistivedevices.html>

- **Aids for Daily Living** – Self help aids for use in activities such as bathing, cooking, dressing, eating, and home maintenance
- **Communication Aids** – Devices for people with limited or no speech including augmentative communication devices and electronic and manual communication boards.
- **Educational Aids** – Devices that allow people with disabilities to perform work or school-related activities. Examples are input and output devices, modified or alternate keyboards, and special software (including speech recognition software) that allow people with disabilities to use a computer.
- **Mobility Aids** – Devices to allow freer movement which include patient lifts, transfer aids, and all types of wheelchairs and three-wheel vehicles.
- **Prosthetics and Orthotics** – Artificial limbs, braces or other devices to augment, replace, or substitute for missing or non-functioning body parts.
- **Sensory Aids** – Devices to help people with visual or hearing disabilities such as hearing aids, low-vision aids, and telecommunication devices for the deaf.

Assistive technology devices can also be used with environmental control systems, home or worksite modifications, and motor vehicle access devices.

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES:** The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act provides a legal definition of assistive technology services as "...any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device". Examples of assistive technology services include:

- Evaluation of the needs of an individual with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the individual in their customary environment;
- Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by individuals with disabilities;
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices;
- Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;



- Training or technical assistance for an individual with disabilities, or where appropriate, the family of an individual with disabilities; and
- Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities.

As a specific example, the Neat Center run by Oak Hill (<https://assistivetechology.oakhillct.org/>) is an assistive technology and equipment restoration center. The center serves all ages and all disabilities, and can be used by consumers, their families, and the professionals who work with people with disabilities. Also, donated assistive devices are restored and made available through vendors at lower cost than a new item.

**TO FIND PROVIDERS IN CONNECTICUT'S COMMUNITY RESOURCES DATABASE:**

Search by service name: [Assistive Technology Information](#)

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*SOURCES: Agency listings in iCarol database; "Assistive Technology Devices" posted on the SpecialLink website; Neat Center at Oak Hill; Assistive Technology Definitions, ReHabTool.com Website; "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014" Summary; [www.ataport.org](http://www.ataport.org)*

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