

**Resource Guide
for
People
With Visual
Impairments**

Older Alabamians System
of Information and Services

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES

OASIS

Resource Guide

produced by

OASIS
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of Information and Services

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Disclaimer

In the provision of services and in employment practices, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, creed, national origin, religion, age or disability.

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Resource Guide for People With Visual Impairments

This resource guide is provided by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' Older Alabamians System of Information and Services (OASIS) Program. Please direct comments to the OASIS Program at 1-800-671-6837.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OASIS (Older Alabamians System of Information and Services)	1-3
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	4-5
Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services	6
Alabama Laws and Statutes	7-9
Resources	11-80
Aids and Appliances	11-15
Independent Living Tips on Cassette Tape.....	16
Banking Services.....	17-19
Books and Reading	20-25
Large Print Materials	22
Technology Assistance.....	26-27
Consumer Groups.....	28-29
Correspondence Education.....	30
Dog Guide Schools	31-32

Employment Assistance.....	33-38
Eye Care.....	39
Directory Assistance - Financial Exemption ...	40
Financial Resources.....	41-43
Health Care	44-45
Housing - Low Cost	46
Non-drivers Identification Card.....	47
Independent Living Services	48-53
Consumer Assistance	54-55
Low Vision Services	56-58
News and Current Events.....	59
Radio Reading Service	59-60
Periodicals	61
Recreation	62-63
Senior Services	64-68
Alabama's Area Agencies on Aging.....	64
Shopping Services.....	69
Support Groups	70-72
Transportation	73-75
Parking Permits.....	76-77
Travel Discounts.....	78-79
Voting	80

**Alabama Department of Rehabilitation
Services
OASIS PROGRAM**

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' Older Alabamians System of Information and Services (OASIS) program provides an array of independent living services to persons who are age 55 and older who are blind or visually impaired. Services are provided statewide and include rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility, adaptive aids, low vision exams and devices, support groups, peer counseling, and reader services. To be eligible for services a person must be a resident of Alabama, age 55 or older, and blind or functionally visually impaired.

Alabama OASIS Service Sites

Anniston
1105 Woodstock Avenue
36207
Tel. 256-238-9300
1-800-671-6834

Birmingham
P.O. Box 19888
236 Goodwin Crest Drive
35209
Tel. 205-290-4400
1-800-671-6837

Decatur
621 Cherry Street, NE
35601
Tel. 256-353-2754
1-800-671-6838

Dothan
795 Ross Clark Circle, NE
36303
Tel. 334-792-0022
1-800-275-0132

Gadsden
1100 George Wallace Drive
35903
Tel. 256-547-6974
1-800-671-6839

Huntsville
2939 Johnson Road, SW
35805
Tel. 256-650-8219
1-800-671-6840

Mobile
2419 Gordon Smith Drive
36617
Tel. 251-479-8611
1-800-671-6842

Montgomery
2127 East South Boulevard
36116
Tel. 334-288-0220
1-800-441-7578

Muscle Shoals
1450 East Avalon Avenue
35661
Tel. 256-381-1110
1-800-275-0166

Opelika
520 West Thomason Circle
36801
Tel. 334-749-1259
1-800-671-6835

Talladega
#4 Medical Office Park
35160
Tel. 256-362-1300
1-800-441-7592

Tuscaloosa
P.O. Drawer 1610
1305 37th Street, East

35405

Tel. 205-554-1300

1-800-331-5562

State Office

2129 East South Boulevard

Montgomery, AL 36116

Tel. 334-281-8780

1-800-441-7607

Blind Services

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services assists eligible Alabamians who are blind or visually impaired in making informed choices to achieve full inclusion in society through employment, independent living, and social self-sufficiency.

We do this by providing:

- a continuum of services from youth transition to older blind services, including skills training that enables people to remain independent in their home communities
- individual and group counseling addressing adjustment to blindness
- employment counseling, training, and job placement
- resources for employers interested in hiring or retaining visually impaired employees
- training in adaptive skills for reading, computer use, traveling, job seeking, and other skills which increase independence and work readiness
- public education regarding the abilities of people who are blind or visually impaired
- supported employment programs for people who have multiple disabilities and who are

blind

- a clearinghouse for Alabamians seeking Information and referral regarding blindness and visual impairment

The customers of Blind Services, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, are:

- blind or visually impaired Alabamians who require rehabilitation services to become employed or to live independently in their communities (The majority of these individuals lose their sight as adults due to a variety of conditions including diabetes, macular degeneration, injury, glaucoma, and retinitis pigmentosa.)
- businesses in Alabama which have hired or are considering hiring employees who are blind or visually impaired
- the taxpayers of Alabama who benefit from People who are blind or visually impaired being fully integrated into their communities Taxpayers also benefit from blind individuals entering employment and paying taxes while decreasing their dependence on public assistance including premature nursing home care.)

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

The Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services consists of seven members, one from each United States Congressional District appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Alabama Senate. Three members must be individuals with disabilities selected from consumer disability organizations. One member must be a parent of a child with a disability. Three members must be selected from business and industry within the state. The terms of office are seven years. No member shall serve more than two full seven-year terms of office. If you would like to know the current members of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, please contact the State Office of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services at 334-281-8780 or toll-free at 1-800-441-7607.

Alabama Laws and Statutes

Department of Rehabilitation Services

Code of Alabama, 1975,

§§ 21-9-1 through 21-9-14

These statutes created the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) which is designed to provide rehabilitation services to eligible children and adults with disabilities throughout the state. ADRS is responsible for administering component programs and working with other agencies of the state to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

Rights of blind and otherwise physically disabled persons

Code of Alabama, 1975, §§ 21-7-1 through 21-7-10

These statutes are designed to encourage and enable the blind, the visually impaired, and the otherwise physically disabled to participate fully in the social and economic life of the state. The statutes include laws that guarantee the rights of the blind to full and free use of the streets, highways, sidewalks, walkways, public buildings, public facilities, and other public places.

Operation of vending stands by blind persons

Code of Alabama, 1975, §§ 21-1-40 through 21-1-41

These statutes create the Business Enterprise Program for the Blind of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and designate the department as the State Licensing Agency pursuant to the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act. The laws provide for the establishment of vending facilities for operation by blind persons on real property owned, leased, or occupied by the State of Alabama.

Federal Program

Older Alabamians System of Information and Services

29 U.S.C. §§ 796j through 796l

This federal program is authorized by the federal Rehabilitation Act and is dedicated to renewing independent and rewarding lifestyles for Alabama's older adults who have vision problems. OASIS provides evaluation and referrals, instruction in independent living skills, adaptive equipment, low vision exams and aids, and mobility instruction. Qualified rehabilitation teachers, mobility specialists, and peer supporters work with individuals to teach new or adaptive methods of performing day-to-day activities. OASIS services are free and available regardless of financial need. Individuals 55 years of age or older who are experiencing visual problems may receive services. OASIS provides comprehensive and personalized independent living training. An advisory council composed of consumers and representatives from many groups that work with citizens with disabilities gives guidance to the OASIS staff to ensure quality services.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Aids and Appliances

The following companies offer products such as watches, canes and writing guides for people who are blind and visually impaired. They also offer aids for household, personal, and recreational use.

Adaptive Solutions
1301 Azalea Road, Suite 102
Mobile, AL 36693
251-666-3045
1-800-299-3045

Ambutech (mobility equipment)
34 DeBaets Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2J3S9
1-800-561-3340

APH
1839 Frankfort Avenue
P.O. Box 6085
Louisville, KY 40206-0085
1-800-223-1839
www.aph.org

Cleveland Sight Center
1909 East 101st Street
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-8118
www.clevelandsightcenter.org

Eschenbach Direct (low vision magnification
equipment)
904 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield, CT 06877
1-800-487-5389

Freedom Scientific
11800 31st St., N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33716-1805
1-800-444-4443

Goodkin, Border and Associates
1862 Veterans Memorial Highway
Austell, GA 30168
1-800-759-6275

Independent Living Aids (includes Ann Morris
Enterprises)
200 Robbins Lane
Jericho, NY 11753
1-800-537-2118
www.independentliving.com

or P.O. Box 9022
Hicksville, NY 11802

Lighthouse Consumer Products
111 E. 59th Street
New York City, NY 10022
1-800-829-0500
www.lighthouse.org

Gladys E. Loeb Foundation
2002 Forest Hill Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20903-1532
1-301-434-7748

G. W. Micro
725 Airport North Office Park
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
260-489-3671

LS&S Group
P.O. Box 673
Northbrook, IL 60065
1-800-468-4789
www.LS&Sgroup.com

Magnilog Catalog
Science Products
P.O. Box 888
Southeastern, PA 19399
1-800-888-7400

Maxi Aids, Inc.
P.O. Box 3209
Farmingdale, NY 11753
1-800-522-6294
www.maxiaids.com

Mill & Textile
7630 Commerce Lane
P.O. Box 1210
Trussville, AL 35173
205-328-3440

NOIR Medical Technologies
P.O. Box 159
South Lyon, MI 48178
1-800-521-9746

Optelec US Corp. (low vision
devices/equipment)
321 Billerica Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824
1-800-828-1056

Radio Shack

(Check local phone book.) They may carry talking watches, talking clocks, mini-cassette players, etc.

UAB Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation
1720 University Boulevard, Suite 380
Birmingham, AL 35233
205-488-0736

UAB School of Optometry/UAB Eye Care
HPB
1716 University Boulevard
Birmingham, AL 35294-0010
205-934-2625 or 205-934-3086

Vision Technology, Inc.
8501 Delport Drive
St. Louis, MO 63114
800-560-7226
251-463-6742
www.visiontechnology.com

Independent Living Tips on Cassette Tape

Sound Solution Series

Braille Institute

741 North Vermont Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90029

1-800-272-4553

Sound Solution series is a set of audio cassette tapes available free of charge to persons who are visually impaired.

Sharing Solutions

New York Lighthouse for the Blind

111 E. 59th Street

New York, NY 10022

212-821-9200

1-800-829-0500

Sharing Solutions is a newsletter which includes tips for independent living.

Hadley School for the Blind

700 Elm Street

Winnetka, IL 60093

1-800-323-4238

This school offers self-study courses in independent living.

Banking Services

Extra large checks with boldface print and raised lines are available through most banks at varying costs. Inquire at your local bank for this service.

AmSouth Bank: Twenty four hour telephone banking service is free of charge. Raised line checks with a wide-line check register may be ordered for a fee. They have "Pay by Phone" direct payment service. There is a charge for "Pay by Phone" services.

AmSouth Bank
(various offices)
205-326-5300
www.amsouth.com

Bank of Alabama: Full service banking is available, including: on line banking; net teller for a monthly fee; and large print, raised line checks for a fee. Automated phone service is not available. You speak to a customer service representative.

Bank of Alabama
2340 Woodcrest Place
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-870-7027

Colonial Bank: Services offered include: 24 hour customer account information; on line banking for a monthly fee; bill paying with PC banking for a monthly fee; and large print, raised line checks for a fee. Free *classic advantage* checking is offered for persons age 50 and older.

Colonial Bank
1928 1st Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35203
1-205-325-1649
1-800-388-1477
www.colonialbank.com

Compass Bank: Services include 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. banking; account information available 24 hours a day, seven days a week; PC banking; and large print, raised line checks available for a fee.

Compass Bank
15 South 20th Street
Birmingham, AL 35233
1-205-297-3000
1-880-239-2265
www.compassweb.com

Regions Bank: Services include 24 hour telephone banking, seven days a week; PC banking with bill paying for an annual fee; braille statements; large print, raised line checks available for a fee.

Regions Bank
417 North 20th Street
P.O. Box 10247
Birmingham, AL 35202
1-800-734-4667
www.regionsbank.com

SouthTrust Bank: Services include on line banking; telephone account information; free internet banking; PC banking for a monthly fee; PC banking with bill paying for a monthly fee; large print, raised line checks for a fee; and statements in braille at no charge.

SouthTrust Bank
420 North 20th Street
Birmingham, AL 35203
1-205-254-5000
Customer Service: 1-800-225-5782

Books and Reading

Braille Books

Independent Living Resources: ILR will, for a nominal fee, transcribe materials into large print, braille or tape.

Independent Living Resources

2410 SE 11th Avenue

Portland, OR 97214

503-232-7411

TDD 232-8408

ilrpd@quest.net(general mailbox)

Talking Books and Braille: Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, a division of the Alabama Public Library Service, provides books, magazines, playback equipment, accessories, information services, and technology to enable eligible Alabamians to access published materials. Materials are sent by mail and no postage is required to send or return the items. You can obtain further information and an application by contacting the library.

Alabama Regional Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped
Alabama Public Library Service
6030 Monticello Drive
Montgomery, AL 36130-000
334-213-3906
1-800-392-5671
TDD 334-213-3900
www.apls.state.al.us

Books Aloud: This is a "Reading By Listening" program that provides a wide variety of recorded reading material to individuals who are blind, visually impaired or physically disabled and are unable to read conventional print. Cassettes are available on loan at no charge. Cassettes play on standard cassette players. Contact Books Aloud for an application and Certificate of Disability.

Books Aloud
MLK, Jr. Library
San Jose, CA 95101
408-808-2613

Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, Inc.: This is a national nonprofit service organization using 4,800 volunteers at 31 sites around the nation to

provide textbooks on tapes and computer diskettes to individuals who cannot read standard printed material because of visual, physical, or perceptual disabilities. Borrowers register with RFB by completing an application form, which may be obtained from RFB. There is a one-time registration fee of \$65.00 and a \$35.00 annual membership fee, with additional charges for on-loan recorded books.

Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, Inc.

20 Roszel Road

Princeton, New Jersey 08540

1-866-732-3585

1-800-221-4792

www.rfbd.org

Large Print Materials

American Printing House for the Blind: APH sells Braille and large print books, writing aids, tape recorders, etc.

American Printing House for the Blind

P.O. Box 6085

1839 Frankfort Avenue

Louisville, KY 40206

502-895-2405

1-800-223-1839

www.aph.org

Betty Crocker: This company offers popular recipes using Betty Crocker products. The Betty Crocker Cookbook is available in large print. Recipes in large print on 9 x 12 inch cards are free. A catalog is available free of charge.

Betty Crocker

Home Service Department

General Mills Consumer Services

1 General Mills Boulevard

Golden Valley, MN 55440

1-800-328-6787

www.bettycrocker.com

For additional cookbook titles and resources, call the Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped or your local office of ADRS OASIS.

The Doubleday Large Print Home Library: The book club sells large print copies of latest bestsellers. First two books are \$2.00 plus shipping and handling. You must buy four other books in 12 months at book club prices. A free catalog is available on request.

The Doubleday Large Print Book Club

401 Franklin Avenue

Garden City, NY 11535

516-490-4561

Hansen House Publishing: Hansen House sells a wide selection of music books (more than 50 books in the series). Music notes are 1/2 inch across with the name of the note written inside the note. A free catalog is available on request.

Hansen House Publishing
Golden Music Big Note Songs
1820 W Ave.
Miami Beach, FL 33139
305-532-5461

National Association for Visually Handicapped: This organization provides information on large print books, textbooks, and educational tools. They maintain a free by-mail library of large print titles. All library materials are printed in 18 point type. Request a large print Loan Library List to obtain this free service by mail. They publish some excellent booklets related to coping with low-vision problems. Annual membership fee is \$50.

National Association for Visually Handicapped
22 West 21st St., 6th Floor
New York, NY 10010
212-889-3141
www.navh.org

Readers Digest Magazine: Large print edition available by subscription. Cost is \$27.96 per year.

Reader's Digest

Box 8177

Red Oak, Iowa 51591

815-734-4151

1-800-334-9599

1-800-491-7504 (Shop at home)

www.readersdigest.com

Readers Digest Large Print Books: Publishes two large print stories in a one-volume book six times a year. Cost is \$14.95.

Readers Digest

Box 262

Mount Morris, IL 61054

1-800-334-9599

1-800-877-5293

www.readersdigest.com

Technology Assistance

Statewide Technology Access and Response (STAR): STAR offers training and funding information for assistive technology and holds presentations and workshops about assistive technology throughout Alabama. It is centrally located in Montgomery with regional offices in Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery and Mobile. Services include training and workshops, technology demonstration, equipment loans, financial loan program, equipment recycling and information referral. These services are free and available to consumers as well as professionals regardless of disability or age.

Statewide Technology Access and Response

P.O. Box 20752

Montgomery, AL 36120-0752

334-613-3480 • TDD (334) 613-3519

1-800-782-7656

Twin Peaks Press: Twin Peaks provides resource information on how people with disabilities can acquire and fund computers. It also provides publication information on areas of interest to people with disabilities, including travel, daily living, employment, legal issues, etc.

It has published a book called "Computer Resources for the Disabled" which can be purchased from Twin Peaks.

Twin Peaks Press

P.O. Box 129

Vancouver, WA 98666-0129

360-694-2462

Fax: 360-696-3210

Consumer Groups

American Foundation for the Blind: AFB is a national information clearinghouse on blindness. It publishes the “Directory of Agencies Serving the Visually Handicapped in the US.” AFB also publishes a catalog entitled “Products for People with Vision Problems” which is an excellent source for items to help facilitate and improve daily living for people who are blind or partially sighted.

American Foundation for the Blind
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10001
212-502-7600

National Federation of the Blind: NFB is a national nonprofit organization of blind persons and concerned sighted friends. The Alabama Chapter has chapters throughout the state. The NFB provides help with Social Security claims; legal assistance for problems relating to blindness; employment assistance; skills training; information and referral services; public education; interest groups for students, parents of blind children, diabetics, and professionals; and other services.

National Federation of the Blind of Alabama
340 Shelton Road
Auburn, AL 36830
Mike Jones, President
334-501-2001
www.nfbofalabama.org

Alabama Council of the Blind: ACB seeks the advancement of the social and economic interests of the blind and has local chapters throughout Alabama with more than 300 members. The Council publishes newsletters in braille, large print, and on cassette; offers scholarships to qualified applicants; and monitors and lobbies national, state and local government. The Alabama chapter is affiliated with the American Council of the Blind, a national nonprofit consumer interest organization.

Alabama Council of the Blind
David Trott
1018 East Street South
Talladega, AL 35160
256-362-5649
dart1018@charter.net

Correspondence Education

The Hadley School: Hadley offers correspondence classes on a wide range of subjects for home study for people who are blind. The school also has a program for parents of blind children. All courses are free to all individuals who are legally blind. A selection of courses for vision professionals is also available.

Hadley School for the Blind

P.O. Box 0299

Winnetka, IL 60093-9986

1-800-323-4238

(Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. CST)

www.hadley-school.org

Dog Guide Schools

There are quite a few dog guide schools in the United States. The following list is not exhaustive. Most schools require students to attend an on-site training period that lasts about four weeks followed by training in the student's home community when necessary.

Most schools provide the training, room, board, and dog at no cost to the student. Many also provide financial assistance for the dog's feeding and care. Some schools will provide dogs to students who have additional disabling conditions. For more information about dog guides, speak to an Orientation and Mobility Specialist with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc.

P.O. Box 151200

San Rafael, CA 94915-1200

415-499-4000

1-800-295-4050

www.guidedogs.com

Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc.
4210 77th Street, East
Palmetto, FL 34221
941-729-5665
www.guidedogs.org

Guiding Eyes for the Blind
611 Granite Springs Rd.
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
914-245-4024
www.guiding-eyes.org
(Serves people with visual and hearing impairments.)

Leader Dogs for the Blind
1039 Rochester Rd.
Rochester, MI 48307
248-651-9011 or 1-888-777-5332
www.leaderdog.org

Pilot Dogs, Inc.
625 West Town St.
Columbus, OH 43215
614-221-6367
www.pilotdogs.org

Employment Assistance

Job Hotline Numbers: A variety of Job Hotline phone numbers are available with businesses and agencies around the state of Alabama. Contact your local ADRS employer development coordinator for a list.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services: This agency provides free vocational rehabilitation services to eligible Alabamians. The consumer develops an individualized plan for employment. Services may include vocational counseling, training, placement, and technology.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

Andalusia
1082 Village Square Drive
Suite 1
36420
Tel. 334-222-4114
1-800-671-6833

Anniston
1105 Woodstock Avenue
36207

Tel. 256-238-9300
1-800-671-6834

Birmingham (Homewood)
P.O. Box 19888
236 Goodwin Crest Drive
35209
Tel. 205-290-4400
1-800-671-6837

Birmingham
Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility
P.O. Box 59127
3830 Ridgeway Drive
35209
1-800-441-7609

Columbiana
Community Services Building
P.O. Box 856
108 West College Street
35051
Tel. 205-669-3829

Decatur
621 Cherry Street, NE
35601
Tel. 256-353-2754

1-800-671-6838

Dothan

795 Ross Clark Circle, NE
36303

Tel. 334-792-0022

1-800-275-0132

Gadsden

1100 George Wallace Drive
35903

Tel. 256-547-6974

1-800-671-6839

Huntsville

2939 Johnson Rd., SW
35805

Tel. 256-650-8219

1-800-671-6840

Jackson

1401 Forest Avenue
P.O. Box 1005

36545

Tel. 251-246-5708

1-800-671-6836

Jasper
301 N. Walston Bridge Road
Suite 116
35504
Tel. 205-221-7840
1-800-671-6841

Mobile
2419 Gordon Smith Drive
36617
Tel. 251-479-8611
1-800-671-6842

Montgomery
2127 East South Boulevard
36116
Tel. 334-288-0220
1-800-441-7578

Muscle Shoals
1450 East Avalon Avenue
35661
Tel. 256-381-1110
1-800-275-0166

Opelika
520 West Thomason Circle
36801
Tel. 334-749-1259
1-800-671-6835

Scottsboro
203 South Market Street
P.O. Box 296
35768-0296
Tel. 256-574-5813
1-800-418-8823

Selma
2906 Citizens Parkway
36701
Tel. 334-872-8422
1-888-761-5995

Talladega
#4 Medical Office Park
35160
Tel. 256-362-1300
1-800-441-7592

Thomasville
Thomasville Rehabilitation Center
P.O. Box 1006
Adams Building, Bashi Road
36784-1006
334-636-5421
1-800-335-3237

Troy
518 S. Brundidge Street
36081
Tel. 334-566-2491
1-800-441-7608

Tuscaloosa
1305 37th Street, East
P.O. Drawer 1610
35403-1610
Tel. 205-554-1300
1-800-331-5562

Eye Care

Alabama Academy of Ophthalmology
P.O. Box 130238
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-391-1967

Alabama Optometric Association
1043 Ambassador Court
Montgomery, AL 36117
1-334-273-7895

National Eye Care Project: This is a public service program sponsored by the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and state ophthalmological societies. It provides medical and surgical eye care to low-income U.S. citizens or legal residents who are 65 or older.

National Eye Care Project
1-800-222-3937
www.eyenet.org

Directory Assistance—Financial Exemption

Directory Assistance Exemption: You may qualify for exemption from charges for directory assistance calls in your area code or calls with operator assisted dialing. To qualify for this exemption, you must sign a form certifying that you are unable to use a telephone directory. You can obtain an application for this service from the carrier of your choice.

Financial Resources

Free Mail for the Blind: Materials in braille or large print as well as audio cassettes may be mailed free to persons with visual impairments within specific guidelines. For more information, contact your local Post Office.

Income Tax Exemption: A taxpayer who is legally blind may be entitled to a tax exemption on his/her federal tax return. If you have any questions regarding this exemption, call the IRS or a tax specialist.

United States Internal Revenue Service

Need a Tax Form

1-800-829-3676

Problem Resolution

1-800-829-1040

www.ustax.com

Social Security: Social Security directs two disability programs—SSI and SSDI—which pay monthly benefits to eligible people. They are stepping stones to improving a person's economic condition. Work incentives are available to support people to self-sufficiency. For more information, contact Social Security for the publication "If You Are Blind: How Social

Security and SSI Can Help” (publication # 05-10052). For more information and for an office in your area, call 1-800-772-1213. www.ssa.gov

SSI - Supplemental Security Income: To be eligible for SSI based on a medical condition a person must:

- have little or no income, assets or resources
- be considered medically disabled.
- not be working or working but earning less than An amount called the “substantial gainful activity” level.

SSDI - Social Security Disability Insurance: To be eligible for SSDI a person must:

- have worked and paid Social Security taxes for enough quarters to be covered under Social Security
- be considered medically disabled
- not be working or working but earning less than an amount called the “substantial gainful activity” level

You must apply for SSI and SSDI at your local Social Security office or by phone.

Veterans Administration: Veterans of the armed forces or military who are visually impaired, whether or not service connected, may qualify for benefits ranging from low vision evaluations

and counseling on useful devices to extensive rehabilitative services at regional centers.

The Visually Impairment Services Team can also refer veterans for other available services.

In Alabama contact:

Visually Impaired Services Team Coordinator

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Southeastern Blind Rehabilitation Center

700 South 19th Street

Birmingham, AL 35233

1-205-933-4389

www.va.gov/health/elig

Alabama Blinded Veterans Association (ABVA):

The ABVA is an organization of blinded veterans that will provide assistance to other blinded veterans throughout the state. Over the years BVA has attempted to provide assistance to blinded veterans in a variety of ways and with a variety of programs. For years BVA has conducted the National Field Service Program assisting veterans in adjusting to blindness; obtaining federal, state, and local benefits to which they are entitled; receiving blind rehabilitation; and overcoming any obstacles they may encounter. For more information, contact:

VIST Coordinator
VA Blind Center
700 19th Street, South
Birmingham, AL 35233
205-933-8101, ext. 6987

Health Care

Medicare: Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people age 65 or older, some people younger than 65 with disabilities, and people with end stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a transplant).

Medicare has two parts. Part A is for hospital insurance. Most people do not have to pay for Part A. Part B is a medical insurance. Most people pay a monthly premium for Part B.

Medicare Outreach is a program designed to educate people with Medicare and others about Medicare benefits, changes, options, and rights. Medicare Outreach is a program of Cahaba Government Benefit Administrators, a division of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. If you would like a Medicare Outreach representative to speak to a group of 100 or more or to participate in a health fair or conference, please call 205-220-1440 or write to:

Medicare Outreach Representative
P.O. Box 830139
Birmingham, AL 35283-0139

Medicaid: Medicaid is a state administered health care assistance program. It is jointly financed by state and federal governments and is designed to provide health care to low income individuals. Persons must fit into one of several categories and must meet necessary criteria before eligibility can be established. There are three agencies in Alabama that either directly or indirectly determine eligibility for Medicaid.

Persons who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from the Social Security Administration are automatically eligible for Medicaid in Alabama. Persons who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families from the Department of Human Resources may also be eligible for Medicaid. The Alabama Medicaid Agency determines eligibility for persons who meet certain eligibility requirements. There are several different Medicaid programs, including SOBRA for pregnant women and for children, Medicare related programs and programs for persons who are residents of a medical institution.

For more information or the address of the District Office in your area, call 1-800-362-1504.

Housing—Low Cost

The Housing Authority: The Housing Authority administers the Section 8 Existing Housing Program to provide housing assistance to eligible families.

Contact your local county Housing Authority.

Identification Card

DMV Identification Card: The Department of Motor Vehicles will issue a picture identification card to any Alabama resident. The card can be used for identification, check cashing, age verification, etc. It is available through your local office of the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Independent Living Services

Birmingham Independent Living Center (BILC): This is a nonprofit consumer controlled resource center providing services designed to enhance the ability of people with disabilities to live more independently. Services include independent living skills training, housing modifications, advocacy, producing braille, peer counseling, computer training, information and referral.

BILC

206 13th Street South

Birmingham, AL 35233 • 205-251-2223

www.birminghamilc.org

bhamilc@bellsouth.net

Independent Living Center

Jasper Office

300 Birmingham Avenue

Jasper, AL 35502

205-387-0159

pjmagik@bellsouth.net

jasperilc@bellsouth.net

Independent Living Center

Alabaster Office

120 Plaza Circle

Alabaster, AL 35027

205-685-0570

alabasterilc@bellsouth.net

www.birminghamilc.org

Montgomery ILC

600 South Court Street

Suite 320

Montgomery, AL 36104

334-240-2520

mcil@bellsouth.net

Mobile ILC
5304 Overlook Road
Mobile, AL 36618
251-460-0301
ilc@mobileilc.org
www.mobileilc.org

E.H. Gentry Technical Facility

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind:

The primary purpose of the E. H. Gentry Technical Facility is to provide quality services to individuals who are deaf, blind, and deaf-blind which will lead to maximum independence and employment. E.H. Gentry's main campus, along with nine Regional Centers located throughout Alabama; provide a statewide service delivery system for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired. E.H. Gentry serves adults, 18 years old through senior years, providing individualized services including:

- Vocational evaluations and assessments
- Adjustment services-teaching practical skills in home and personal management including home care, cooking, Braille, and personal budgeting.
- Orientation and Mobility
- Job skills training
- Upgrading literacy skills
- Assistive Technology- Specialized equipment
And training to minimize barriers due to blindness and/or deafness.
- Employment Services
- Counseling and Referral services
- Business Enterprise Program
- Residential Services

For more information contact:
E.H. Gentry Technical Facility
PO Box 698
Talladega, Alabama 35161
Toll Free 1-888-774-2335
or email Masia.John@aidb.state.al.us

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind Regional Centers: Each AIDB regional center offers a unique mixture of services developed according to the needs of the community it serves. Services may include programs for older citizens, orientation and mobility training, reading services, braille services, and information and referral.

AIDB Regional Center Locations

Auburn
660A North College Street
36830
334-887-3880 Voice/TDD
Fax: 334-821-4022

Birmingham
220 34th Street South
35222
205-328-3989 Voice/TDD
Fax: 205-323-3691

Dothan
111 Medical Drive
36303
334-677-6270 Voice/TDD
Fax: 334-793-7044

Huntsville
600 St. Clair Avenue, Bldg.2
35801
256-539-7881 Voice/TDD

Mobile
1050 Government Street
36604
251-432-7777 Voice/TDD
Fax: 251-432-3199

Montgomery
2629 B Eastern Boulevard
36117-1509
334-273-9200 Voice/TDD
Fax: 334-273-9400

Muscle Shoals
512 North Main Street
Tuscumbia 35674
256-383-3503 Voice/TDD
Fax: 256-383-3562

Talladega
Box 698
412 Cherry Street
35161
256-761-3370 Voice/TDD
Fax: 256-761-3693

Tuscaloosa
701 22nd Avenue
35401
205-345-2883 Voice/TDD
Fax: 205-345-4883

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
– OASIS Program: OASIS provides free independent living services to Alabamians who are age 55 and older and visually impaired to assist them in setting and achieving goals to remain independent in their homes and communities. Services provided include rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility, adaptive aids, low vision exams, low vision devices, support groups, peer counseling, and reader services.

OASIS Program
1-800-671-6837
www.rehab.state.al.us

Consumer Assistance

State of Alabama Client Assistance Program (SACAP): SACAP is funded by the federal government to assist people in understanding their rights and responsibilities in obtaining vocational rehabilitation services through agencies such as the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

SACAP

2129 East South Boulevard

Montgomery, AL 36116-2455

1-800-228-3231 (in Alabama)

www.sacap.homestead.com/sacappage1.html

Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program

(ADAP): ADAP provides quality, legally based advocacy services to persons with disabilities through protecting, promoting, and expanding their rights.

Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program

University of Alabama

P.O. Box 870395

Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0395

205-3484928 • 1-800-826-1675

adap@adap.ua.edu

www.adap.net

Alabama's Toll Free Number for Information on the ADA: This is a free information service within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and is operated by an assistant attorney general. Anyone can call the number to obtain information on rights and responsibilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and related laws and regulations. The ADA is a civil rights law for people with disabilities which includes anyone with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits him or her in a major life activity. The ADA protects against discrimination in employment, public services, and with respect to goods and services offered by private businesses.

1-800-205-9986

1-888-574-2257 (TTY)

Low Vision Services

University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry Low Vision Clinic/UAB Eye Care: UAB School of Optometry Eye Care offers comprehensive low vision evaluations including visual acuity refraction and prescription of optical aids, as well as demonstration of practical non optical aids and referral to additional resources.

UAB

School of Optometry
Henry Peters Building
1716 University Boulevard
Birmingham, AL 35924
205-934-2625

UAB Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation and Research is a multidisciplinary rehabilitation and research center. Experts in optometry, ophthalmology, occupational therapy, and psychology have combined their knowledge to meet the special needs of each patient.

UAB Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation and Research
1720 University Boulevard, Suite 380
Birmingham, AL 35233
205-488-0736

Mobile and Baldwin County area:

Vision Rehabilitation, LLC: Vision Rehabilitation, LLC provides comprehensive care to those with vision loss. It is owned and operated by a physician with vision loss. Low vision patients have acuity and visual function testing, counseling and occupational therapy. A full display of adaptive, non optical, optical, electronic and computer assistance is available. Maintenance of independence, function and quality of life are its goals. It is located in Fairhope on Highway 98 near Thomas Hospital.

Vision Rehabilitation, LLC

247 South Greeno Road

Fairhope, AL 36532

251-928-2888

visionrehab@bellsouth.net

www.visionrehabilitationllc.com

Liz Moore Low Vision Center at Medical Center East:

The Liz Moore Low Vision Center's goal is to assist the person with low vision to use functional vision to the utmost capacity. Services

provided are evaluation, training, counseling,
referral, and a low vision support group.
Liz Moore Low Vision Center at Medical Center
East
50 Medical Park East Drive
Birmingham, AL 35235
205-838-3162
mcjones@ehs.inc

News and Current Events

Radio Reading Service: Radio programming serves people who are unable to read print due to a visual impairment or who are unable to hold printed material. Radio Reading Service provides newspaper, magazine, and book reading, consumer interest information and entertaining features. A special receiver is required. Call for information regarding current scheduling and to obtain a receiver. The service is available in most areas of Alabama. Eligibility is identical to the requirements for the Library of Congress Talking Book Program.

Alabama Radio Reading Service

Birmingham 35294

650 11th Street South

205-934-6576

Fax: 205-934-5075

philip@wbhm.org

www.wbhm.org/arrs

Huntsville 35899

256-895-9574

Fax: 256-830-4577

www.wlrh.org

rrs893@aol.com

Montgomery 36104
207 Montgomery St., Suite 1125
334-241-9574
Fax: 334-240-7320

Mobile 36689-0509
Box 8509
251-380-4699
Fax: 251-460-2189
www.alaprint.org
adler@alaprint.org

Tuscaloosa 35487
Box 870370
205-345-3994
205-348-6644
Fax: 205-348-6648

NFB Newsline

National Federation of the Blind and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped along with local sponsors provide a free service to those who qualify which reads various newspapers over the telephone. Applications may be obtained from the NFB website. An access code will be issued when the applicant is approved. www.nfb.org 1-888-882-1629

Periodicals

Blind Skills, Inc.: This is a nonprofit organization that publishes the quarterly magazine *Dialogue* which is available in large print, braille, and cassette tape format.

Dialogue features first person accounts and articles by and for visually impaired people and other interested individuals. Issues cover a wide range of interesting topics including sports and leisure activities, fiction, and technical information on new adaptive products and services. The subscription price is \$28 per year for legally blind subscribers and \$40 for subscribers who are not legally blind. It is available in braille, four track tape, large print and disk.

Blind Skills, Inc.

P.O. Box 5181

Salem, OR 97304-0181

503-581-4224

www.blindskills.com

Recorded Periodical: This company provides recorded magazines for an annual subscription cost.

Recorded Periodical

Associated Services for the Blind

919 Walnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-627-0600, ext. 3208

Recreation

Wheelin' Sportsmen: This organization sponsors sporting events for persons with disabilities.

Wheelin' Sportsmen
(National Wild Turkey Federation)
www.wheelin-sportsmen.org
1-800-843-6983

Alabama Blind Golfers Association
205-640-7193
On Even Par
205-554-7585

Descriptive Video Service: Descriptive videos are available for purchase through Descriptive Video Service (DVS). In addition to describing movies on video, DVS adds description to a number of PBS programs and to some cable programming on Turner Classic Movies.

Cable subscribers can call the DVS information line at 1-800-333-1203 for information on movie titles and times for select Turner Classic Movies.

DVS Home Video

P.O. Box 55742
Indianapolis, IN 46205
317-579-0439 or 1-888-818-1999

U.S. Park Service: The U.S. Park Service offers permits providing free lifetime admission to national parks, monuments, historic sites, recreational areas and national wildlife refuges. It also provides a 50 percent discount for camping, boating, launching, and parking fees for the pass holder, family, and/or guests. A Golden Access Passport must be obtained in person at any federal area where an entrance fee is charged or at the National Park Service in Washington by showing proof of medically determined permanent disability or eligibility for receiving benefits under federal law.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
18th and C Streets NW
Washington, DC 20420
www.nps.gov

Montgomery Area:
Montgomery Parks and Recreation Department
Therapeutic Recreation Center (TRC) is for use by persons with permanent mental or physical disability who cannot actively participate in other

fitness programs. Indoor pool, outdoor pool, fitness room, and VIP pool exercise programs are available. To obtain a participation form, call 334-240-4595.

Senior Services

The Alabama Department of Senior Services offers a variety of services for the elderly, including transportation, information and referral, needs assessment, legal services, nutrition services, health services, continuing education, health screening, day care, volunteer opportunities, physical fitness, recreation, Medicaid waiver as well as various home delivered services and nursing home ombudsmen services.

Alabama's Area Agencies on Aging

Alabama Department of Senior Services

770 Washington Avenue, Suite 470

P.O. Box 301851

Montgomery, AL 36130-1851

334-242-5743 • 877-425-2243 • Fax 334-242-5594

Website: <http://www.adss.state.al.us>

Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments

P.O. Box 2603, 103 Student Drive
Muscle Shoals, AL 35662
256-389-0500 • 800-838-5845 • Fax: 256-389-0599
Counties: Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, Winston

West Alabama Regional Commission
4200 Highway 69 North, Suite 1
Northport, AL 35476
-65-
205-333-2990 • Fax: 205-333-2713
Counties: Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Tuscaloosa

Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging
P.O. Drawer 90
110 North Main Street
Columbiana, AL 35051
205-670-5770 • Fax: 205-670-5750
Counties: Blount, Chilton, Shelby, St. Clair, Walker

Office of Senior Citizens Services
2601 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35205
205-325-1416 • Fax: 205-325-1429
Counties: Jefferson

East Alabama Regional Planning and
Development
Commission

P.O. Box 2186

1130 Quintard Avenue, Suite 300

Anniston, AL 36202

256-237-6741 • 1-800-239-6741 • Fax: 256-237-
6763

Counties: Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay,
Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega,
Tallapoosa

South Central Alabama Development
Commission

5900 Carmichael Place

Montgomery, AL 36117

334-244-6903 • Fax: 334-270-0038

Counties: Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes,
Macon, Pike

Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission

107 Broad Street

Camden, AL 36726

334-682-4234 • 1-888-617-0500 • Fax: 334-682-
4205

Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas,
Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington,

Wilcox

Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging
P. O. Drawer 1886 230 North Oates Street
Dothan, AL 36302

334-793-6843 • 1-800-239-3507 • Fax: 334-671-3651

Counties: Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale,
Geneva, Henry, Houston

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
P.O. Box 1665, 110 Beauregard
Mobile, AL 36633

334-433-6541 • Fax: 334-433-6009

Counties: Baldwin, Escambia, Mobile

Central Alabama Aging Consortium
818 South Perry Street, Suite 1

334-240-4666 • 1-800-264-4680 • Fax: 334-240-4681

Counties: Autauga, Elmore, Montgomery
Lee Russell Council of Governments
2207 Gateway Drive

Opelika, AL 36801-6834

334-749-5264 • 1-800-239-4444 • Fax: 334-749-6582

Counties: Lee, Russell

North Central Alabama Regional Council of
Governments

P. O. Box C, 216 Jackson Street
Decatur, AL 35602

256-355-4515 • Fax: 256-351-1380

Counties: Cullman, Lawrence, Morgan

Top of Alabama Regional Council of
Governments

115A Washington Street, SE
Huntsville, AL 35801

256-533-3330 • Fax: 256-533-3442

Counties: DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison
Marshall

Dementia: The Dementia Education and Training Act (DETA) Program provides education to professional and family caregivers regarding dementia. It enables Alabama's citizens with dementia to remain in their homes and/or communities. Free educational materials and video tapes are available.

Dementia Education and Training Act (DETA)
Program

Bureau of Geriatric Psychiatry

Alabama Department of Mental Health/Mental

Retardation

200 University Boulevard

Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

Helpline staffed by RNs and social workers

1-800-457-5679

Shopping Services

Grocery Store: Most supermarkets will provide a shopping assistant to help you locate your selections. Call your local market for information on services they offer.

Personal Shoppers: Many department stores offer personal shoppers for their customers to provide input on colors, styles, sizes and other needs you might have. You can make an appointment with a personal shopper to get shopping assistance for yourself or for gift shopping for someone else by calling the store.

Support Groups

For information about meeting times and locations, call the number listed or the local ADRS OASIS office.

Blount County Low Vision Support Group
(Oneonta) 205-429-2038

East Alabama Low Vision Support Group
(Anniston) 256-896-4351

Montgomery VIPs 334-269-1694

Marshall County Support Group (Boaz)
256-547-6974 or 256-891-2211

New Vision (Cullman) 256-739-4653

Positive Look (Athens) 256-353-2754

Looking Forward (Decatur) 256-353-2754

West Alabama OASIS Support Group
(Tuscaloosa) 205-554-1300

Clay County OASIS Support Group
256-362-1300

Visually Impaired Support Group of Huntsville
256-536-6621

Selma VIP's 334-354-4015

Shoals Area OASIS Support Group
256-381-1110

Insight (Birmingham) 205-631-4623

Gardendale Low Vision Support Group
205-631-4623

Shelby County Low Vision Support Group
205-290-4400

Liz Moore Low Vision Center Support Group at
Medical Center East (Birmingham)
205-838-3162

Mobile Low Vision Club 251-432-7777

Baldwin County Fairhope Support Group "The
Eyes Have It" 251-928-2835

Dothan Support Group
334-677-6270 or 334-792-0022

Transportation

Contact your local Area Agency on Aging office for information about transportation in your area. Most counties charge people with disabilities reduced fares on local public transportation.

Birmingham Area:

MAX (Metropolitan Area Express): The Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority operates the MAX fixed-route service throughout the Birmingham metro area. Senior citizens age 62 and older may ride the bus for half-fare using the new BJCTA photo ID or Medicare Card with photo ID. Half-fare rides are 50 cents and 15 cents for transfers. A monthly access pass may also be purchased for \$16. For more information, call 205-521-0101.

VIP (Special Transport for the Handicapped and Senior Citizens): For those senior citizens living within a mile of the MAX route and unable to reach a bus stop, VIP special transport is available. This is a door-to-door service. For more information, call 205-521-0180.

CLASTRAN: CLASTRAN was created to meet the transportation needs of senior citizens and persons with disabilities living outside the MAX

/VIP routes of Jefferson and Shelby counties. Due to the expanded area service, fares are \$2 to \$6, one way within Shelby county and \$4 one way within Jefferson county. Call 205-325-8787 for more information.

Mobile Area:
Senior Citizens Van
1717 Dauphin Street
Mobile, AL 36604
251-478-3311

Mobility Assistance Program
110 Beaugard Street, Suite 104
Mobile, AL 36602
251-344-5656

Montgomery Area:
Montgomery Area Council on Aging (MACOA)
MACOA Taxi Service is for persons age 65 and over. This service operates Monday through Friday, 24 hours a day to transport senior citizens to doctor's appointments and/or to the closest grocery store only. Cost is \$3 one way.
334-263-0532

MAP: Montgomery Area Paratransit provides curbside service and may be booked up to

two weeks in advance on a first come-first served basis. Must call at least one day in advance. An application for this service must be approved by a doctor or other social service professional. Call to obtain application.
334-240-4691

Parking Permits

Disabled person parking permits: Permits are linked to the disabled person's driver's license or identification card. Each time the license or ID card is renewed, the person must submit a certificate of disability. Alabama issues distinctive parking permits to people with disabilities. Vehicles which display these permits may park in designated parking spaces and are allowed other parking privileges.

To qualify for a parking permit, a person must have:

- loss of vision or substantial loss of visual acuity or visual field beyond correction
- severely limited mobility because of paralysis
Or the loss of use of some or all of the person's
Legs or arms
- any other disability that prevents the person
From walking without the use of an assistive
device or that causes the person to be unable
to walk more than 200 feet, including but not

necessarily limited to:
Chronic heart condition
Emphysema
Arthritis
Rheumatism or
Ulcerative colitis or related chronic bowel
disorder

Applicants are required to have a current valid
Alabama driver's license or identification card.

To apply for a disabled person parking permit,
your disability must be certified by a licensed
physician on an application form, which is
available at DMV. You may get an application
from any Motor Vehicles Division office.

Travel Discounts

Amtrak: Amtrak offers a 15 percent discounted
"rail only" (no sleeping cars) fare for individuals
who are disabled. A letter from a doctor
certifying a disability and a picture identification
card must be presented to receive this discount.

Amtrak
1-800-872 7245.
www.amtrak.com

Greyhound: Greyhound offers a program providing a 5% discount for persons age 62 and over on unrestricted fares. A companion traveler may ride with a disabled individual at a 50% discount. To receive this concession you must present either a picture identification card or a letter from your doctor certifying that you are disabled.

Disabilities Travel Assistance Line
1-800-752-4841
Contact 48 hours in advance.

Greyhound
1-800-231-2222
www.greyhound.com

Most bus companies will accept a DMV ID card and/or a certification of blindness for a discount.

Air Travel: For air travel, individuals who are blind may request either "Meet and Assist" or "Ground Assistance" services (including wheelchair) for assistance locating gates and getting on the plane. Call the airline representative or travel agent for details and request the brochure entitled "Disabled Traveler Information."

Birmingham International Airport
Administrative Office
5900 Airport Highway
Birmingham, AL 35212
205-595-0533

Huntsville International Airport
1000 Glenn Hearn Boulevard
Huntsville, AL 35824
256-772-9395

Mobile Regional Airport
8400 Airport Boulevard
Mobile, AL 36608
251-633-0313

Montgomery Regional Airport
Dannelly Field
4445 Selma Highway
Montgomery, AL 36108
334-281-5040

Voting

Voter registration forms are available at all ADRS offices.

Absentee Ballot: Absentee ballots are available on request for all state elections from the county circuit clerk's office.

Polling Places and Booths: Polling places are required to be readily accessible by people with disabilities. An individual with a disability can select a person of his or her choice to accompany him/her into the polling place or booth to assist in voting. Registration and voting aids to assist individuals with disabilities in the process of registering and voting are available from appropriate election officials in each county.

