Alexa, Siri, and Cortana and others have become common devices that support our households in today's technological world. They provide us with information upon request. Cell phones supply easy access to travel directions, camera, monitoring, memos, reminders, internet access, text, email, social media and much more. They become the computer in our pocket. Specific applications called "Apps" address unlimited possibilities to accommodate us. On a daily basis, new technology makes our lives easier.

Everyone, young and old, is using assistive devices to make our lives more convenient. People with developmental or intellectual disabilities are finding many ways to use technology to support them. GPS devices can give walking and public transportation directions. They also can track someone who might get lost. Video cameras on cell phones and computers support communication. Immediate assistance can be provided remotely and summons direct support within minutes, when needed. Devices easily monitor medical issues like heart rates, blood pressure, insulin levels and more. Prompts send reminders to take medications and can notify a third party, when they are missed. Personal emergency response systems (PERS), worn as a pendent or watch, supply quick response to emergencies. In countless ways, technology has become a function in our everyday lives. In our homes, these applications can keep us safe, provide us more independence and control the comfort in our environment.

Assistive technology also called assistive domotics represents a wide range of technology that support people to live and work more independently.

Smart Home Technology adds security, safety, energy conservation and conveniences. Many systems are controlled by voice commands. A central hub can be customized to supply personalized assistance designed to achieve certain outcomes. People living with disabilities can accomplish many tasks without assistance because of these devices. A word of caution however as we become more and more reliant upon technology in our daily lives, we must have backup systems in the event of a power outage or interruptions of internet connection. Consideration must be made regarding security of personal information and protection of privacy as more communication occurs between devices in and outside of the home.

Smart Home Technology refers to devices and apps connected to the internet that automate and monitor systems within the home and are controlled from your phone or other devices.
New Jersey's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) defines an assistive technology device as "an item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of participants. Assistive technology service means a service that directly assists a participant in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device."

For people with developmental disabilities, New Jersey DDD specifically permits funding to be utilized to purchase, lease and maintain assistive technology services as well as Personal Emergency Response Services (PERS).

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**How much does it cost and how do I pay for Assistive Technology?**

The cost of technology varies depending upon the complexity of the system. Many items can be purchased easily and are quite affordable. Complex systems of assistive technology can be more expensive. Lending libraries offer use of technology on a trial basis to see if the devise is well suited for your application.

State agencies such as Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) may be able to fund assistive technology. For example, NJ DDD can fund the costs of evaluation, training, purchase/leasing, ongoing monitoring, for assistive technology as a waiver service under the Supports Program or the Community Care Program. DVR can fund technology that supports a person to be employed.

**What can home automation do for me?**

Specialists can design a specific plan to support a person with a disability using technology to achieve individual objectives. You can access these knowledgeable consultants through the company where you purchase the equipment or through Assistive Technology Advocacy Center (ATAC) at (888) 322-1918.

Safety devices monitor for smoke, gas, water leaks, home intrusions, elopement and movements inside and outside of the home. Electronics can monitor if someone falls, has a seizure, leaves their bed at night or is in the bathroom for a long time. A device can shut off the stove, when unattended.

Personal Emergency Response Systems can be programmed to monitor and contact safety personnel in event of falls, illness, seizure, safety questions or concerns. Alarms, lights or bed shaking devices serve as a fire alarm. Other motion sensitive devises indicate when someone might need assistance.

Video monitoring can assist remotely with decision-making. For example, someone with cognitive impairment can use Skype or Face Time to contact a person and ask for assistance.

Reminders, checklists or sequence prompts offer video or auditory prompts to remind individual to take medications or follow routines. Safeguards can alert caregivers when follow-up is needed.

Devices add convenience to turn things on or off, set temperature controls, open doors and more. These physical accommodations are particularly helpful for those having physical or cognitive handicaps.

There are unlimited possibilities of how technology can provide assistance. Specialists can evaluate your objectives and recommend devises to assist.
Where do I find resources for more information about technology?

**Some resources include:**

Assistive Technology Advocacy Center (ATAC) operated by Advancing Opportunities offers assistance in selection of products to support a person with a disability and a lending library of assistive technology [https://www.assistivetechnologycenter.org/](https://www.assistivetechnologycenter.org/)

The New Jersey Coalition for the Advancement of Rehabilitation Technology (NJCART) offers a Cartwheel directory of technology services at [http://www.drnj.org/atac/?page_id=223](http://www.drnj.org/atac/?page_id=223)


Temple University at [http://www.temple.edu.tech](http://www.temple.edu.tech) and the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities at the University of Colorado [http://www.cu.edu/ColemanInstitute/agenda.html](http://www.cu.edu/ColemanInstitute/agenda.html) offer information on some of the latest technological advancements utilized by people with disabilities.

How do I find assistive technology products that meet my needs?

Many companies supply consultation and assistive technology products to support people with disabilities including:

Simply-Home at [https://www.simply-home.com/](https://www.simply-home.com/)

Home link Technologies at [http://www.homelinktechnologies.com](http://www.homelinktechnologies.com)