



# Trainee Welcome Guide

*Information about AUCD, programs,  
the AUCD network, partners, and  
resources to help maximize your time  
as an AUCD trainee*



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES  
RESEARCH, EDUCATION, SERVICE



*“I have learned a great deal this year. I not only learned about different developmental disabilities, but I learned what it means to be family-centered, working on an interdisciplinary team... I have learned way more than I have room to write here.”*

– a former trainee

## Dear New Trainee Member,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the membership of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), and staff, we extend our warmest welcome!

As an AUCD Trainee you are part of a national network of training programs that include thousands of individuals who strive to make a difference for individuals with disabilities and their families. You were selected to join this group because your program's faculty have recognized qualities in you that will allow you to become a respected, successful leader for people with disabilities in teaching, research, clinical practice, community services, and/or policymaking. As an AUCD trainee, you will learn best-practice techniques, such as interdisciplinary teamwork, leadership development, advocacy, and a person/family-centered and culturally and linguistically appropriate approach to services.

AUCD has much to offer our trainee members. As you begin your traineeship, you will find that our conferences and trainings offer some of the best interprofessional development opportunities in the developmental disabilities field; the AUCD website has hundreds of resources to help you in your leadership trajectory; and our national membership is gracious, down-to-earth, and eager to see you succeed in making a positive difference in the lives of children, adolescents, and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

To help acquaint you with AUCD, we have assembled this packet of information. It is designed to provide you with information about AUCD, the programs that make up the AUCD network, our partners, and resources that will help you maximize your time as an AUCD trainee.

It is our sincere wish that you enjoy your time as an AUCD member and take full advantage of all the resources and opportunities the network has to offer. We also hope that this network will become a career home for you as you progress in your training and subsequent work. If you have any questions, please contact your Training Director or a member of the AUCD staff.

*Welcome to AUCD!*



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# Trainees and AUCD Membership

## Who are Trainees?

Trainee is the term used to refer to any individual receiving preservice training or continuing education at an AUCD member program –a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND), or a Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center (IDDRC). There are over 4,000 new trainees each year across the AUCD network of Centers and programs who come from a variety of backgrounds, such as audiology, disability studies, education, engineering, family, genetics, health administration, instructional technology, law & ethics, medicine, nursing, nutrition, occupational therapy, pastoral counseling, pediatrics, pediatric dentistry, physical therapy, psychology, public health, social work, and speech-language pathology, just to mention a few. Trainees might be undergrad students, grad students, post-docs, or community fellows. They might be called a student, trainee, or fellow at your Center or program. Traineeships at an AUCD member Center or program might last as little as one semester or as long as 4 years. Regardless of the differences, all AUCD trainees desire to learn about and work with individuals with developmental and other disabilities and their families. For more information, refer to the AUCD Interdisciplinary Trainee Handbook at [www.aucd.org/Resources/AUCD Publications](http://www.aucd.org/Resources/AUCD_Publications).

## AUCD Trainees Become Leaders

LEND, UCEDD, and IDDRC trainees are groomed to become leaders in the disabilities field. Many current Center Directors, faculty, and disability community leaders are former trainees. Upon completion of your training, you'll be able to take what you have learned and apply it in your field. AUCD leaders

- understand and support AUCD values, mission, and goals
- value interdisciplinary collaboration and diversity
- bring the capacity to think critically about issues at both the population and individual levels, as well as to communicate and work with others and use self-reflection
- possess core knowledge of children and families and their needs
- demonstrate professionalism in attitudes and working habits
- continually seek new knowledge and improvement of abilities and skills central to effective, evidence-based leadership
- are responsive to the changing political, social, scientific, and demographic context and demonstrate the capacity to change and adapt in the face of emerging challenges and opportunities

Adapted from [http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/training/goal\\_mchleaders.asp](http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/training/goal_mchleaders.asp).



## Benefits of Trainee Membership in AUCD

Centers and programs are the actual members of AUCD, but all staff, faculty, and trainees at that Center are extended membership benefits. By accepting a traineeship at your Center or program, you are automatically granted trainee status membership into AUCD – for free! AUCD members have access to thousands of people, jobs, and research opportunities nationwide at LENDs, UCEDDs, and IDDRCs. All members are invited to attend local, regional, national, and virtual conferences, trainings, and webinars. Trainees have access to the AUCD website, Facebook and Twitter pages, newsletters, and members-only topical listservs. Whatever your interest specific to individuals with disabilities and their families, you can find experts on that topic at an AUCD member Center or program. Members are encouraged to collaborate on research, conference presentations, and more. If you are looking to move to another part of the country, you are now part of a network of programs that may be looking for a well-trained individual for their LEND, UCEDD, or IDDRC in your discipline. Simply find other network members on the AUCD Directory at [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org) and ask!

*“I truly feel that my experiences as a LEND trainee and AUCD virtual trainee helped me take the leap from a “thinker” to a “doer.” At any given time, I tend to have numerous ideas for innovation swirling around my head. Prior to my traineeship, I often thought ‘why is no one doing this?’ Now, I find myself thinking, ‘how can I make this happen?’”*

– Liz Maus, AUCD Virtual Trainee, 2008-2009, LEND trainee at The Ohio State University Nisonger Center, 2007-2009

## About the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

As an AUCD trainee, it is important that you know about AUCD, a network of interdisciplinary centers that advances policy and practice for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities. Check the “About Us” section of [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org) for additional details.

AUCD is a membership organization that supports and promotes a national network of university-based interdisciplinary programs:

- 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD)
- 43 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) programs funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)
- 15 Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disability Research Centers (IDDRC), funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Development (NICHD)

These programs serve and are located in every U.S. state and territory and are all part of universities or medical centers. They serve as a bridge between the university and the community, bringing together the resources of both to achieve meaningful change.

AUCD supports this national network through:

- leadership on major social problems affecting all people living with developmental and other disabilities or special health care needs
- advocacy with Congress and executive branch agencies that fund and regulate programs serving individuals with disabilities and their families
- networking and partnering with other national organizations to advance the network’s national agendas
- promoting communication within the network and with other groups by collecting, organizing, and disseminating data on network activities and accomplishments
- providing technical assistance on a broad range of disability, management, and policy topics

# Trainees and AUCD Membership, continued

## Vision

AUCD envisions a future in which everyone, including people living with developmental and other disabilities, are fully integrated, participating members of their communities. We envision a future in which culturally appropriate supports that lead to independence, productivity, and a satisfying quality of life are universally available across the life span.

## Values

AUCD values the participation of people with disabilities, family members, and a culturally diverse membership in its governance and programs. The AUCD network promotes self-determination, family-centered care, and cultural competence in disability services and supports throughout the life span.

## Map of Network Centers, below

**University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDDs)**  
[www.aucd.org/UCEDD](http://www.aucd.org/UCEDD)

UCEDDs work with people with disabilities, members of their families, state and local government agencies, and the community to provide training, technical assistance, service, research, and information exchange, with a focus on building the capacity of communities to sustain all their citizens. UCEDDs have played key roles in every major disability initiative over the past four decades.

The nation's 67 UCEDDs receive core funding from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). AIDD "ensures that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally-competent needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life." For more information on AIDD, visit [acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/](http://acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/).



## Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND)

[www.aucd.org/LEND](http://www.aucd.org/LEND)

LEND programs provide long-term, graduate-level, interdisciplinary training to health professionals. Their purpose is to develop leadership potential to improve the health status of infants, children, and adolescents with or at risk for neurodevelopmental and related disabilities, and to enhance the systems of care for these children and their families. Since their inception in the early 1950s, LENDs have trained thousands of individuals from a wide variety of disciplines to work with and provide the best possible services and supports for children with developmental disabilities and their families. The focus of these training programs has always been on children with a wide range of intellectual and developmental disabilities and special health care conditions, especially medically fragile children with multiple or complex challenges. More recently an additional focus on education, early detection, and intervention in autism and related developmental disabilities has been added to this network's mission through the Combating Autism Act. There are 43 LENDs at universities or major Children's Hospitals in 37 states, funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). "The MCH Training Program of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) funds public and private non-profit institutions of higher learning to provide leadership training in maternal and child health (MCH). The MCH Training Program seeks to ensure excellent health services for families through workforce preparation." For more information, visit <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/training/>.

## Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRCs)

[www.aucd.org/IDDRC](http://www.aucd.org/IDDRC)

IDDRCs were established by Congress in 1963 as "centers of excellence" in research to understand intellectual and developmental disabilities. They embody the nation's first sustained effort to prevent and mitigate the impact of disabilities through biomedical and behavioral research. IDDRCs represent the world's largest concentration of scientific expertise in the fields of intellectual and developmental disabilities. 15 IDDRCs are funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). "The mission of the NICHD is to ensure that every person is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no harmful effects from reproductive processes, and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability, and to ensure the health, productivity, independence, and well-being of all people through optimal rehabilitation." For more information, visit [nichd.nih.gov/](http://nichd.nih.gov/).

*"An MCH Leader inspires and brings people together to achieve sustainable results to improve the lives of the MCH population."*

– Adapted from  
Truly authentic leadership, by  
Bill George,  
*U.S. News & World Report*, 52:  
October 30, 2006

# Trainee Resources

As a trainee member of AUCD, you have free access to a number of resources relevant to your training. Following are select conferences, websites, and items that you will find helpful during your training experience. Visit [www.aucd.org/trainees](http://www.aucd.org/trainees) or ask your Training Director for more information.

## Communication

### AUCD Virtual Trainee

[www.aucd.org/trainees](http://www.aucd.org/trainees)

The AUCD Virtual Trainee is a current LEND or UCEDD trainee who works side by side with AUCD staff to enhance communication and information sharing among trainees in the AUCD network. The Virtual Trainee connects trainees with learning and employment opportunities, professional development and networking opportunities, and each other. The Virtual Trainee attends conferences and events to represent trainees and brings the experience back to the trainee network, sits on the AUCD Board as an ex officio member, and assists in planning trainee activities at national events. “Meet” the Virtual Trainee on the Trainee section of AUCD’s website, and be sure to say “Hi!” when you see the Virtual Trainee at a conference or meeting.

*“The strength of our program is our interdisciplinary approach to patient care and education. We also have the opportunity to participate in clinical research in order to create new knowledge.”*

– Former UCEDD Trainee

### Trainee Liaisons

[www.aucd.org/trainees](http://www.aucd.org/trainees)> Trainee Liaisons

A Trainee Liaison is designated at each Center or program to work locally with the Virtual Trainee to increase communication among programs. Liaisons are responsible for sharing national news and resources with their fellow trainees and assisting the Virtual Trainee in communication efforts. To learn more about becoming a Trainee Liaison, speak with your Training Director or contact the Virtual Trainee.

### Listserv

[www.aucd.org/trainees](http://www.aucd.org/trainees)

The AUCD Trainee Listserv is one of the ways you can connect to the larger network of current and former AUCD trainees. Regular listserv communications include policy updates, professional development opportunities, networking opportunities, links to resources and research, and fellowship and job opportunities, as well as conversations with other trainees from across the nation.

### Facebook & Twitter

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), search “AUCD Trainees”

[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com), @AUCDvt

Are you on Facebook or Twitter? Become a Facebook fan of “AUCD Trainees” and follow “AUCDvt” on Twitter to find other trainees with common interests, discuss questions and news stories, share your profile, and upload your trainee photos.



## Attend Conferences and Webinars

AUCD hosts two major national conferences yearly, as well as a number of network meetings and events across the country. Travel stipends are often offered for select events. Webinars are also offered throughout the year to members at no cost.

### AUCD Conference

[www.aucd.org/conference](http://www.aucd.org/conference)

Each Fall over 600 AUCD members gather to discuss issues important to the growth and advancement of the network and to share the latest research and project successes. This is a great time to meet faculty and trainees from across the country while selecting from over 200 sessions and posters. A large gathering of trainees attends this conference to present their research and network with trainees and faculty from around the country. Travel scholarships are often offered.

### Disability Policy Seminar

[www.DisabilityPolicySeminar.org](http://www.DisabilityPolicySeminar.org)

AUCD works with other disability organizations to co-sponsor the Spring Disability Policy Seminar, which provides an excellent time for everyone to learn more about all the current disability-related policy issues and current legislative efforts. Over 1,000 Directors, trainees, support workers, people with disabilities, researchers, and family members from a number of national disability organizations attend. During the Seminar, time is scheduled for attendees to meet with their members of Congress to discuss issues important to them.

### Scholarships and Travel Stipends to National Meetings

[www.aucd.org/trainees](http://www.aucd.org/trainees)

One of the benefits of being a Trainee in the AUCD network is you are eligible to apply for selected opportunities open only to AUCD Trainees. AUCD is periodically able to offer its trainee members scholarships, grants, fellowships, and other opportunities. AUCD utilizes an online system for trainees to submit their applications.

### Webinars

[www.aucd.org/webinars](http://www.aucd.org/webinars)

Throughout the year various webinars on up-to-date research and clinical practices will be made available for you, most often at no charge. The webinars are archived on the AUCD webpage and available for you to view at your convenience.



# Resources and Links

As you begin your training, you will learn more about the history and definitions of developmental disabilities, your role as a trainee, the structure of your training program, the federal agencies that support your training, and how the national network can enhance your learning goals and possible future employment in your field. Below are some resources that will help you get started:

## **AUCD Trainee Webpage** **[www.aucd.org/trainees](http://www.aucd.org/trainees)**

The “trainees” button on the left hand navigation bar of [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org) takes you to AUCD’s trainee website. Here you will find news of particular interest to trainees, updates from the Virtual Trainee, job opportunities within the network, available conference travel scholarships, listserv and social media links, and more. Browse the entire website to find out more about all of AUCD’s member programs, initiatives, and legislative issues.

## **AUCD Trainee Handbook** **[www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)> Resources> AUCD Publications**

The AUCD Trainee Handbook provides you with an excellent introduction to the history of disabilities, history of and information about AUCD, and an overview of UCEDDs, LENDs, and IDDRCs. It also includes information about our federal funders. Websites are provided throughout the handbook to provide you with additional information about the identified topics.

## **Early Career Professional Website** **[www.aucd.org/ECP](http://www.aucd.org/ECP)**

The ECP website provides valuable information for trainees and early career professionals. The Self-Assessment Tool allows you to see a visual representation of your perceived leadership strengths and areas for development as well as compare your strengths with others in your discipline and educational level. Browse the Leadership Resource Bank by Action (do, read, observe) or Topic (e.g., Interviewing, Communication, Self-Reflection, Critical Thinking). A section of the website provides a listing of Educational Opportunities and there are resources posted to assist with searching for a job.

## **Employment Listings** **[www.aucd.org/employment](http://www.aucd.org/employment)**

After your traineeship is complete, you’ll likely be looking for a job. Start on the AUCD employment pages to see open positions at AUCD’s National Office, around the network, and throughout the disability field.

## **Newsletters and Brochures** **[www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org), see Resources**

AUCD publishes a number of newsletters and brochures to share information and resources on a wide variety of topics in development. All are available for purchase or download on our website.

## **Maternal and Child Health Resources** **[www.mchb.hrsa.gov/training](http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/training)**

The *MCH Timeline: History, Legacy and Resources for Education and Practice*, traces the history of maternal and child health in the US, provides in-depth modules on select topics, and allows you to search for topical areas of interest. The MCH Trainee Resource and Links pages are also full of information valuable to trainees.



# MEMBERSHIP CARD

Trainee Member, AUCD



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TRAINING YEAR

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TRAINING SITE

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TRAINING DIRECTOR

*“The LEND fellowship helped me develop leadership skills that are invaluable to me in an executive role for a national non-profit. I am so grateful for my time as a fellow. I would highly recommend this fellowship program.”*

– a former trainee



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