



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES
THE LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH NETWORK

Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Programs provide interdisciplinary training, service, and care to improve the health of people with developmental disabilities.

Since the 1950s, Congress has recognized that early identification of children with disabilities is a priority. Authorized under the Autism CARES Act (P. L. 116-60), LEND programs operate within a university system, usually as part of a University Center for Excellence (UCEDD) or other larger entity, and collaborate with local university hospitals and/or health care centers. They are a strong community link to services and supports for addressing emerging issues within the disability community for individuals and their families. The 52 LEND programs located in 44 U.S. states, with an additional six states and three territories reached through program partnerships, have played key roles in providing advanced training to a broad array of professional disciplines in the identification, assessment, and intervention of children and youth with a wide range of developmental disabilities. The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) supports and promotes the national network of university-based interdisciplinary programs.



FY2021 Funding Request:

AUCD requests that Congress appropriate \$53,844,00 for Autism and other Developmental Disabilities for FY 2021 and of this amount appropriate \$36,245,00 for LENDs within Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.

Funding History:

| | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | AUCD FY21 Request |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Autism and other DD | \$49,000,000 | \$50,000,000 | \$52,344,000 | \$53,844,000 |
| LENDs | \$31,317,485 | \$33,500,000 | \$35,245,000 | \$36,245,000 |

Recommended Report Language:

This funding will enable the LEND network to fulfill its expanded statutory mandate to serve individuals across the lifespan, addressing a critical shortage of health care professional for adults with autism and other developmental disabilities. This funding is critical to the LENDs' role in providing direct clinical assessment and evidence-based interventions. In addition, the funding will allow these programs to develop innovative strategies to integrate and enhance existing investments, including translating research findings on interventions, guidelines, tools, and systems management approaches to training settings, to communities and into practice; and promote life-course considerations – from developmental screening in early childhood to transition to adulthood issues.

Justification:

An increase in FY21 funding will support LENDs to recruit and support autistic adults as faculty advocates and as trainees, with particular emphasis on expanding LEND curriculum to include and address adult life needs and healthcare. It will also expand their efforts, training more professionals to diagnose and provide high quality care for individuals of all ages with ASD/DD. Additionally, this funding will enable the LEND network to assist in ongoing developmental monitoring, especially for children impacted by pressing public health crises (opioids, lead and other environmental toxins, the Zika virus, and other new or emerging issues) with resulting complications.

For more information on LEND work in your state, visit www.aucd.org or contact Rylin Rodgers, Director of Public Policy at rrodgers@aucd.org