



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

**University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Education, Research and Service (UCEDDs)**

**FY 2021 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Bill
HHS Administration for Community Living (ACL)
Administration on Disabilities (AoD)
Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disability Programs**

| FY17 | FY18 Omnibus | FY19 | FY20 | AUCD's FY21 Request |
|--------|--------------|--------|----------|---------------------|
| \$39.0 | \$40.6 | \$40.6 | \$41.619 | \$43.5 |

Recommendation: Appropriate at least \$43.5 million under the ACL's Administration on Disabilities program for the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), an increase over the FY 2020 level. This increase would fund the core grants to each center at \$600,000 per year, an increase from \$570,000 to reflect the growth in scope of work as related to assisting states in effectively implementing recently-enacted Federal laws, and the growth of need around autism, Zika and neonatal abstinence syndrome. It continues the \$1,000,000 allocated in FY20 to establish a pilot program to support partnerships between existing University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and highly-qualified, non-profit service providers to develop models that offer individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and their families community-based adult transition and daytime services to support independent living. The \$43.5 million requested appropriation supports \$857,374 for the technical assistance contract, a 5% increase from the current \$816,547, to address and support these centers' program performance, statutory compliance, and program outcomes including responding to emerging needs.

Background: Authorized under Section 156 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-402, Subtitle D), HHS/ACL supports a network of 67 UCEDDs that provide interdisciplinary pre-service preparation of students and fellows, continuing education, community training, research, model services, technical assistance, and information dissemination. UCEDDs exist to provide a unique, expert, state and community resource to facilitate the independence and full participation in the community of people of all ages living with developmental and other disabilities.

Developmental disabilities are disabilities that significantly affect three or more activities of daily living, occur prior to the age of 22, and include such disabilities as autism, behavioral disorders, cerebral palsy, brain injury, fragile X, Down syndrome and other genetic syndromes, fetal alcohol syndrome, intellectual disabilities and spina bifida.

Each Center is housed in a university, but by mandate must translate the best scientifically-validated practices into broad-based, high quality, community practices. Centers do this through preparing personnel for the future, through direct services and supports including community training and technical assistance, and through

research and information dissemination. Center activities provide a real return on the investment of Congress and the federal government by creating new knowledge and translating that knowledge into practice at individual and systems levels. Each center currently receives \$570,000 each year for this work.

At the state and local levels, the national network of University Centers is well situated to facilitate communication across agencies, schools, and other providers, as they are accustomed to blending resources and have had extensive experience working with multiple state and local agencies, interdisciplinary academic departments and community partners.

Justification: This increased level of funding is necessary to keep the national network of Centers strong and able to respond to emerging national issues, such as assisting states to effectively implement recently enacted Federal laws like the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and new regulations pertaining to the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services waivers. Increased funding will be used to leverage the UCEDDs' existing relationships with state agencies, disability organizations, and youth and young adults with disabilities to help implement provisions under WIOA and ESSA, such as training education professionals regarding the use of evidence-based best practices in educating students with disabilities and improving comprehensive transition outcomes from adolescence to adulthood in ways that lead to successful post-secondary education and meaningful employment.

Increased funding will also enable the Centers to assist in ongoing developmental monitoring, especially for children exposed to lead and other environmental teratogens, and for infants exposed to the Zika virus or opioids with their resulting complications. The UCEDDs are community links to services and supports for these newest members of the disability community and their families.

This funding will also help the UCEDD network to address other critical national and emerging needs such as: developing evidence-based interventions to support the rising numbers of individuals on the autism spectrum; demonstrating cost-effective long-term services and supports for adults with disabilities and those aging with disabilities; developing science-based information for parents with children newly-diagnosed with developmental disabilities; and supporting returning veterans with disabilities. Improving cost-effective services for citizens with disabilities will support economic self-sufficiency and reduced reliance on federal safety net programs.

Recommended Report Language: University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities — The Committee provides for the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), a network of 67 centers that are interdisciplinary education, research and public service units of a university system or public or non-profit entities associated with universities. The funding will help the national network of Centers remain strong and able to assist states to initiate collaborative research, education, training, and service efforts that help states to implement enacted legislation ensuring that youth with disabilities successfully complete elementary school and transition from school to postsecondary education and/or integrated employment. The funding will also allow the Centers to continue to respond to emerging and emergent national issues such as assisting in ongoing developmental monitoring, especially for children exposed to lead and other environmental teratogens and for infants exposed to the Zika virus or opioids with their resulting complications. This funding will also allow the UCEDDs to continue addressing the needs of the rising numbers of individuals on the autism spectrum, demonstrate cost-effective long-term services and supports for adults with disabilities and those aging with disabilities, support returning veterans, and provide technical assistance to strengthen and support the national network of Centers as they disseminate research and best practices nationwide.