



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

**FY 2015 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Bill
HHS Administration for Community Living
Developmental Disabilities Program**

	FY 2013	FY 2014	President's FY2015 Request	AUCD's FY 2015 Request
UCEDD	\$36,602,000	36,769,000	36,769,000	\$39,000,000

Recommendation: Appropriate at least \$39,000,000 under the ACL/AIDD program for the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), an approximately \$2 million increase over FY 2014, but level-funding compared to FY 2012. This amount would restore the cuts that resulted due to sequestration in FY 2013.

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 and continuing education, community training, research, and technical assistance and information dissemination. UCEDDs exist to provide a unique, expert, state and community resource to facilitate independence and full participation in the community for 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.

The national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, whose purpose is the provision of interdisciplinary pre-service education and community service and conduct of research, are 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. Transition experts from UCEDDs across the country have recently developed researched-based recommendations and are eager to collaborate in breaking down the barriers to collaborative and coordinated support for transition in response to the well-documented transition needs of youth with IDD.

Justification: There has been an increased interest on the part of bipartisan state governors in collaborative research, education, training, and service initiatives to assist youth with disabilities to successfully transition from school to postsecondary education, service, and/or integrated employment.

Additional funds are needed to leverage the UCEDD's existing relationship with state agencies, disability organizations and youth with disabilities to improve comprehensive transition outcomes from adolescence to adulthood in ways that lead to post-secondary education and meaningful employment. UCEDDs can also support these state efforts by applying their expertise in other life domains that influence the potential successful transition including health care, housing, transportation, social inclusion and access to assistive technology. Continued sequestration cuts will result in diminished capacity of the Centers to respond this need.

Funding will be used to address obstacles to improve outcomes for youth in ways that can save money and lead to greater independence. Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) want to graduate from school, find a job that pays a living wage, and be able to fully participate in our society as contributing citizens. What often stands in the way to this goal, are poorly coordinated and poorly supported transitions from school to postsecondary education and/or work, including needed services in the housing, transportation, health and direct supports sectors.

These initiatives have the dual potential to both improve outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities and reduce reliance on public safety net programs like SSI and SSDI, Medicare and Medicaid. Extensive research on SSI and SSDI has shown that those who experienced disability onset before adulthood, particularly those who received SSI benefits as children, face substantial barriers to employment and that early intervention is essential to improving outcomes. Diverting just one young person into living-wage employment could save an average of \$150,000 in SSI benefits over their lifetime (net present value in 2009 dollars). According to the Social Security Administration, transitioning just one half of one percent of current SSDI and SSI beneficiaries from benefits to self-sustaining employment would save \$3.5 billion in cash benefits over the work-life of those individuals. This figure would be even higher if it included the savings to Medicare and Medicaid.

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. The National Council on Disability recommended in its 2011 report (*Rising Expectations: The DD Act Revisited*) additional core funding to enable "UCEDDs to address issues that are not funded by other agencies or organizations. Often these are issues that do not fit squarely into the categorical nature of other agencies, such as dual diagnosis of developmental disability and mental health; aging with a disability; and integration of employment, housing, transportation, and recreation."

Recommended Report Language: University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities— The Committee provides \$39,769,000 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 provided will allow Centers to assist state to initiative collaborative research, education, training, and service efforts to assist youth with disabilities to successfully transition from school to postsecondary education, service, and/or integrated employment. The funding will also allow the Centers to continue to address critical and emerging national needs, such as addressing the needs of 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; supporting returning veterans; and providing technical assistance to strengthen and support the national network of Centers and to disseminate research and best practices nationwide.