

The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRCs) were established in 1963 as "centers of excellence" as the country's first national research opportunity to address intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The IDDRCs remain the nation's foremost sustained effort to prevent and treat disabilities through biomedical and behavioral research.

The IDDRC Network with AUCD membership consists of 15 Centers with current P50 core grant funding from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The IDDRCs support approximately 300 research projects on an annual basis that seek to advance the understanding and treatment of chromosomal conditions and biochemical processes as they relate to brain function and intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. IDDRCs' scientific and clinical findings are key drivers to developing cutting-edge tests for detecting and diagnosing brain health conditions, creating new behavioral, biological, and biochemical therapies to be used in the clinic, and improving assistive technologies. These contributions aim to find solutions that will ensure people with disabilities can live independently and fully participate in their communities. The IDDRCs provide invaluable training, mentoring, and support opportunities for the current and next generation of emerging leaders in clinical and biomedical sectors.

### **FY 2025 Funding Request:**

AUCD requests that Congress appropriate \$1.891 billion for the NICHD within NIH in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations. AUCD additionally requests allocated funding in report language for the IDDRCs at the same proportional increase to the overall increase to NIH.

### **How does the IDDRC impact neurological disabilities that affect the aging population?**

As people age, our ability to focus or recall and retain memories may become hazy, or our ability to maintain physical balance and coordination may decline. These issues are prominent in Alzheimer's disease (AD) and Parkinson's disease (PD). Although it has been known that these conditions are caused by 'degeneration' of important brain cells, there is a clear need to find ways to delay, prevent, and treat these conditions.

To address this urgent need, the IDDRC at the Waisman Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is at the forefront of developing new treatment strategies for AD and PD. Using advanced laboratory techniques, IDDRC investigator Su-Chun Zhang, MD, PhD, professor of neuroscience and neurology, and his team have shown for the first time a new experimental technique that allows the creation of "life neurons," a type of brain cell essential to governing healthy brain function, that, when lost over time, contributes to clinical problems seen in people living with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Notably, the approach uses an individual's own skin cells to make new "life neurons" that can be used to replace brain cells that are lost with aging. This research gives hope for the development of a new "cell therapy" to treat the symptoms of memory or coordination problems in people living with AD and PD.



## NICHD Funding History (*in billions*):

FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25 Request
\$1.506	\$1.557	\$1.590	\$1.683	\$1.749	\$1.759	\$1.891

### **Justification:**

This increased level of funding for NICHD and the IDDRCs is essential to building upon the cutting-edge research and successful collaboration of the IDDRCs to better understand and treat chromosomal conditions and biochemical processes as they relate to brain function and intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. While NICHD has seen annual funding increases, the funding for the IDDRCs has remained flat for several years. The research by the IDDRCs that is identifying specific genes causing life-threatening conditions and are developing interventions to preserve health and function in the earliest stages of life is critical to improving the lives of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

### **Recommended Report Language:**

The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers in NICHD are provided a proportional increase to the overall increase in funding for NIH. The IDDRCs remain the nation's foremost sustained effort to prevent and treat disabilities through biomedical and behavioral research. The IDDRCs are integral to the development, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based practices for detecting and diagnosing brain health conditions, creating new behavioral, biological and biochemical therapies, developing assistive technologies, and advancing prenatal diagnosis and newborn screening.

*For more information on the IDDRCs, visit [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)  
or contact [policy@aucd.org](mailto:policy@aucd.org).*

