

**IACC July 2021 Meeting
Round Robin Updates**

FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

- The [Administration for Children and Families](#) (ACF) promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities.
- The Office of Head Start (OHS) updates their website regularly with [inclusion resources](#) to support children with disabilities and their families enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- The [Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation \(OPRE\)](#) is currently conducting the [Study of Disability Services Coordinators and Inclusion in Head Start \(2019 – 2024\)](#) that will provide a descriptive national picture of the Disability Services Coordinators workforce for Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS). This effort will explore how EHS/HS serves children with disabilities and their families and will seek to understand how EHS/HS collaborates with services in the community, including health providers, Local Education Agencies, and Part C.
- ACF maintains the web page "[Autism Awareness and Acceptance in Early Childhood Education](#)," which focuses on providing information on ASD to early childhood teachers. The webpage includes fact sheets, helpful tips, advice on finding local resources, and links to multiple relevant websites.
- The ACF [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) (ORR) helps new populations immigrating to the United States to maximize their potential, providing people in need with critical resources to assist them in becoming integrated members of American society. Resources disseminated by ORR include ASD-related materials developed by ACF and CDC (e.g., [Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#)) to assist families with recognizing and addressing autism-related needs.

Centers for Medicaid & Medicaid Services (CMS)

- American Rescue Plan of 2021 (ARP) Guidance
 - CMS issued guidance via a [State Medicaid Director Letter](#) on May 13, 2021, that outlined the eligible services and parameters for which states can claim increased federal funding for certain Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) from April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022. These additional funds are to expand, enhance, or strengthen HCBS for Medicaid beneficiaries. HCBS benefits provide critical services to millions of older adults and individuals with disabilities, allowing them to receive health services in their homes and communities, rather than in nursing homes and other institutions. The enhanced funding (10 percentage point increase), provided through section 9817 of the ARP, allows states to tailor HCBS enhancements based on the needs and priorities of its residents, while protecting and strengthening the HCBS workforce, safeguarding financial stability for HCBS providers, and accelerating long-term services and supports reform and innovation.
 - CMS [announced](#) a \$15 million funding opportunity on July 13, 2021, made possible by the ARP, to help states strengthen system capacity to provide community-based mobile crisis intervention services for those with Medicaid through planning grants to support

developing these programs. This funding opportunity provides financial resources for state Medicaid agencies to assess community needs and develop programs to bring crisis intervention services directly to individuals experiencing a mental health or substance use related crisis outside a hospital or facility setting. Grant funds can be used to support states' assessments of their current services; strengthen capacity and information systems; ensure that services can be accessed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; provide behavioral health training for multi-disciplinary teams; or seek technical assistance to develop State Plan Amendment (SPAs), demonstration applications, or waiver program requests under the Medicaid program. Letters of Intent to apply from states and territories are due July 23, 2021. Final applications must be submitted by August 13, 2021, 3:00 pm ET. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is available on [Grants.gov](#) under [CFDA# 93.639](#). Effective April 1, 2022, and for five years thereafter, these services may include screening and assessment, stabilization and de-escalation, and coordination of referrals after the initial treatment.

- Interim Final Rule with Comment - COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents and Staff of Long-Term Care Facilities
 - As part of the ongoing response to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and to improve health care access and reduce the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, CMS published an [interim final rule with comment period \(IFC\)](#) on May 11, 2021. This regulation will ensure long-term care (LTC) facilities and facilities serving clients with intellectual disabilities educate and offer the COVID-19 vaccine to residents, clients, and staff. These requirements apply to LTC facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, or ICFs-IID, and align with existing requirements for influenza and pneumococcal vaccines in LTC facilities. They include new requirements for educating residents, or resident representatives, and staff regarding the benefits and potential side effects associated with the COVID-19 vaccine and offering the vaccine. In addition, LTC facilities must report COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutics treatment information to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Of particular importance in this IFC is the inclusion of Preamble language that identifies Medicaid-funded congregate community settings (such as assisted living facilities and group homes) as a concurrent priority and encourages them to adhere to the reporting and vaccine offering provisions. Public comments were sought on challenges and paths forward for these entities to report data to the NHSN. The public comment period closed on July 12.

Department of Defense (DoD), Autism Research Program (ARP)

- For the FY20 cycle, 10 projects were funded, including: a study investigating efficacy of telehealth naturalistic developmental behavioral intervention parent coaching to help their children's social-communication skills; a randomized trial to determine whether cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is effective relative to the usual clinical care offered to youth with ASD by the clinicians who provide their mental health services; and a randomized trial investigating the use of group Cognitive Behavioral Treatment for anxiety in adolescents with ASD and intellectual disability. The entire list of funded FY20 projects as well as abstracts are available on the [Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs \(CDMRP\) website](#).

- [FY21 funding opportunities](#) were released in March 2021. These included the Idea Development Award, Clinical Translational Research Award, the Clinical trial Award, and the Career Development Award Mechanism, a newly offered mechanism for the program.

Department of Education (ED), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

- The Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) various technical assistance centers developed resources on virtual service deliver, distance learning, reopening to in-person learning, and supporting continuity of learning for all children with disabilities, including children with autism. Two OSEP funded centers are key repositories for these resources:
 - [The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\)](#) created a webpage for resources for State Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs
 - The [National Center for Systemic Improvement \(NCSI\)](#) created a resource HUB for supporting school age students with disabilities.
- The [OSEP Ideas that Work](#) website offers information, tools, and resources to help educators, parents and families, and related service providers meet the educational, behavioral, and emotional needs of all children and youth with disabilities through remote and virtual learning and as they are returning to in-person learning and services.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

- FY21 Funding Opportunity:
[The Collaborative Crisis Response Training Program](#): Communities will use grant funds up to 150K, for law enforcement and corrections agencies to implement crisis response training, based on the Memphis-Model CIT training and expanded to include current issues, multilayered approaches in response, and people with disabilities inclusive of autism spectrum disorder. The [deadline](#) for the [FY 2021 Collaborative Crisis Response Training Program](#) has been extended to August 16th.
- National Academic Training Curriculum in Development:
[The Crisis Response and Intervention Training \(CRIT\)](#): is a 40-hour training program developed through BJA and the University of Cincinnati to prepare police officers in their response to people experiencing crises related to behavioral health (BH) disorders and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Publicly available in spring of 2022.
- Funding Opportunity and National Program:
[Home Safe](#): Kevin and Avonte's Law-The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) provides funding to law enforcement and public safety agencies to implement technologies to track missing individuals and to develop or operate programs to prevent wandering, increase safety, and facilitate rescue through the [Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities Program](#). The IACP serves as the training and technical assistance provider to 26 grantees. Awards up to 150K each.
- New- FY21 Funding Opportunity to Increase Law Enforcement Response:
[The Connect and Protect: Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response Program](#): Communities will use grants up to 550K, for law enforcement entities to prepare, create or expand collaborative response programs that improve responses to people with co-occurring MI and IDD including autism spectrum disorder.

- Example models include: Co-responder Teams, Crisis Response Teams, Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams, Intensive Case Management Team or Law Enforcement/ Integrated 911 Dispatch and Disability Response Teams.

Department of Labor (DOL)

- The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is excited to join the IACC; the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at DOL focuses on developing policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- ODEP will soon launch our new research project on Supporting Employment for Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum, which Congress had requested in appropriations; in FY21, ODEP launched the [Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship](#) to increase access to career pathways in high-growth, high-demand fields, such as information technology, cybersecurity, healthcare, and clean and renewable energy.
- ODEP is also commemorating our [20-year anniversary](#) as an agency and the [31st anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act into law](#).
- During the pandemic, ODEP has released COVID-19 resources through our technical assistance (TA) centers; people with disabilities, service providers, employers, and others can connect with resources from the [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#), [EARN](#) (the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion), and [CAPE-Youth](#) (the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth).

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

HRSA is pleased to share the following grant and resource updates from our Autism CARES portfolio:

- Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program
 - HRSA awarded 60 new grants to support the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program (LEND) on July 1, 2021. The LEND program trains future leaders in a variety of disciplines to improve the health of children who have or are at risk of developing neurodevelopmental disabilities or other similar conditions such as autism and intellectual disabilities. These grants were awarded in 45 states and DC, reaching every state and eight jurisdictions through partnerships to achieve national access to a LEND program.
- Healthy Weight Research Network (HWRN)
 - HRSA awarded a cooperative agreement to the University of Massachusetts Medical School on July 1, 2021, to support the Healthy Weight Research Network (HWRN). HWRN provides national leadership in research designed to improve the promotion of healthy weight through the prevention and treatment of overweight, obesity, and underweight among children and adolescents with ASD/DD.
- Autism Transitions Research Project (ATRP)
 - Researchers from Drexel University's A.J. Drexel Autism Institute recently published two new [National Autism Indicators Reports \(NAIRs\)](#), including the following:
 - [NAIR: Family Perspectives on Services and Supports \(May 2021\)](#): This report explores what family members report about autistic adults, the settings they live in, their access to services, opportunities to participate in their communities, and the choices they have about their services and supports.

- [NAIR: Health and Health Care \(December 2020\)](#): This report focuses on indicators of health and health care for autistic persons across the lifespan. Topics covered include overall health, health services, medication, insurance, and accessing services.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- The [Emergency Housing Vouchers \(EHV\)](#) is a special program available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that will provide 70,000 housing choice vouchers to local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). The program will assist individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or meet other eligibility criteria. HUD created several [EHV webinars](#) to present information about the program and about opportunities through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to fund and provide housing-related supports and services that can be coordinated with HUD housing assistance.
- The Community Integration Working Group is a new collaborative effort between the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The group is working on initiatives to improve the community integration of people with disabilities. One initiative aims to increase the utilization of Mainstream Vouchers by people leaving institutional settings.
- HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) is expected to contract shortly a study on Housing Search Assistance for People with Disabilities. The study will identify successful approaches and programs to assist people with disabilities overcome challenges encountered when using housing rental assistance, searching for and successfully leasing housing in the community.
- HUD's Learning Agenda is being developed right now, and HUD is seeking input and support from practitioners, advocates, researchers, and policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels. For additional information and updates, check the [HUD website](#).
- The overall purpose of the FY 2021 Eviction Protection Grant Program is to support experienced legal service providers, not limited to legal service corporations, in providing legal assistance at no cost to low-income tenants at risk of or subject to eviction. HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research is making available grant funds to non-profit or governmental entities to provide services in areas with high rates of evictions or prospective evictions, including rural areas. This grant program plays an integral role in helping individuals and families, including people of color who are disproportionately represented among those evicted, people with limited English proficiency and people with disabilities, avoid eviction or minimize the disruption and damage caused by the eviction process. Funding of approximately \$20 million is available through this grant competition. Applications are due 9/8/2021.
 - For additional information and updates, check the [HUD website](#).

Indian Health Service (IHS)

- On June 1, 2021, IHS released an on-demand (self-paced) training entitled "[Improving Cultural Competency when Serving American Indian/Alaska Natives](#)." We encourage federal partners to share this training with their networks.
- From April-June 2021, IHS hosted a webinar training series on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to develop healthcare providers' skills to treat individuals with ASD. Topics included: Screening,

Diagnosis, Applied Behavior Analysis, and Supports for Transition-Aged Individuals. The [archives of these recordings are available on the IHS website](#).

- In observance of World Autism Day on April 2, 2021, IHS hosted the third annual Autism Awareness Interagency Roundtable. Federal officials and Autism Speaks discussed recent collaborations, important resources, and the impact of COVID-19 on services. The [recording is available on the IHS website](#).

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

- NIH COVID-19 testing initiative has funded research projects to safely return children to in-person school (<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-funded-covid-19-testing-initiative-aims-safely-return-children-person-school> and <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/newsroom/news/070221-RADx-UP>): NICHD played a critical role in this initiative that has funded thirteen projects to identify ways of safely returning students and staff to in-person school in areas with vulnerable and underserved populations, including those with developmental disabilities for whom access to school-provided therapies has been limited.
- Dr. Bianchi, director of NICHD, co-authored the [introduction to the Proceedings and conclusions](#) from the May 9–10, 2019 workshop on Methods for Assessing the Impact of Screening in Childhood on Health Outcomes to address methodologic challenges in creating the evidence base to support screening recommendations for exposures, behaviors, and conditions that are part of current routine pediatric care.
- [News release](#): An NIH-funded research project has developed a mobile app that could screen toddlers at risk for ASD based on eye movements and visual tracking preferences.

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

- NIDCD has long been a supporter of ASD research, with a primary focus on the varying communication abilities and challenges in this population. Our support spans career development and training awards as well as research grants. With our participation in various trans-NIH autism initiatives, investigator-initiated activities and our particular encouragement of projects focused on minimally verbal individuals, we have seen our ASD dollars double over the past five years, and the number of projects almost triple.
- The NIDCD [website](#) offers additional information to researchers and families.

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

- NIEHS has worked hard to adapt to the ongoing coronavirus situation and implement strategies toward hosting meetings and promoting environmental health science (EHS) relevant to autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Last November, we used a virtual platform to host the yearly and international Environmental Epidemiology Autism Risk Network (EEARN) meeting, which focuses on epidemiologic research, environmental contributors, and gene-environment interplay in autism. This meeting facilitates new collaborations, stimulates cross-fertilization of ideas, and discusses possible solutions to common problems. The 2020 virtual meeting centered on Covid-19 related challenges, including issues surrounding incorporating Covid-19 effects on biological and epidemiological specimens and data. In addition, trainee and early-stage investigators participated in a session to discuss perspectives on Covid-19 disruptions to scientific careers and the general training pipeline. The

meeting included participants from the NIH, Autism Speaks, Autism Science Foundation, and various grantee-related universities and collaborations across the United States and abroad.

- NIEHS sponsored two events for Autism Awareness Month in April that focused on “The Next Generation in Autism Research.” The first was a mini symposium featuring a group of junior investigators supported by NIEHS (i.e., Jennifer Ames, Ph.D., Kaiser Permanente Northern California; Katie Eyring, Ph.D., UCLA; Yijie Geng, Ph.D., University of Utah; Sagi Gillera, Ph.D. candidate, NCSU; Jessica Jimenez, Ph.D. candidate, UNC-Chapel Hill; and Caroline Smith, Ph.D., Duke University). The research presented used a variety of approaches from epidemiology to laboratory-based mechanistic work. The second event featured Diego Bohórquez, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Gastroenterology and Neurobiology at Duke University, who gave a talk titled Sugar: A Gut Choice. Dr. Bohórquez is a recipient of an NIH Director’s New Innovator Award managed by NIMH. He recently discovered that cells in the intestine form extensions similar to neurons and found that those extensions connect to nerve fibers in the gut, which relay signals to the vagus nerve and onward to the brain. He called these sensory cells of the gut, neuropods. Dr. Bohórquez’s recent work has involved the connection between gut and brain and its impact on nutrient sensing, eating, and other essential behaviors, and how these may be relevant to kids with autism that frequently cope with GI issues.
- Workshop: At the Crossroads of Exposures, Microbiome, and the Nervous System is scheduled for September 22-23, 2021. This virtual meeting will explore the relationship among environmental agents, the microbiome, and neurological health outcomes, including ASD. Session topics comprise exposures and windows of susceptibility, the role of nutrition in the microbiome-brain axis, as well as novel tools and approaches. More information will be available soon on the NIEHS website.
- A planning group that includes NIEHS and NICHD staff, as well as scientists from the environmental health science community, are brainstorming and putting together a workshop agenda that will focus on magnifying and mitigating the effects of exposure risks for ASD via maternal diet and nutrition. This meeting is being planned for an in-person venue in Spring 2022. The planning committee is prepared to host the meeting using a virtual forum should the need arise. Information about this meeting will be available this fall on the NIEHS website.

Social Security Administration (SSA)

- The Social Security Administration (SSA) joined with external partners to launch a new national outreach campaign with the goal of connecting eligible individuals to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. Key components of SSA’s ongoing outreach campaign are: (a) Working with community-based groups that can assist with taking applications for SSI and SSDI; (b) Launching a national advertising campaign on TV, radio, and social media, with emphasis on children with disabilities; and (c) Adding a number of new online tools and informational pages. For example, SSA has added an [online informational page](#) that specifically addressed COVID-19. SSA also has an outreach program for people currently receiving Disability Insurance benefits who could potentially be eligible for additional payments through SSI.
- The Social Security Administration is pleased to announce a new resource for youth receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The [new web page](#) has links to six new mini brochures (the “Youth Toolkit”) that cover an array of topics that will especially benefit transition-age

youth. These youth-friendly resources help to connect youth and young adults with disabilities to important information to achieve education, career, and life goals.

- Social Security Administration staff worked with researchers at the A. J. Drexel Autism Institute at Drexel University to analyze participation trend for adults with ASD in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The authors found that a large and growing number of adults with autism receive SSI benefits. This finding underscores the importance of future research related to the economic security of adults on the autism spectrum. The paper citation is: Anderson KA, Hemmeter J, Rast JE, Roux AM, Shattuck PT. Trends in Supplemental Security Income Payments to Adults With Autism. Psychiatr Serv. 2020 Jun 1;71(6):602-607. Epub 2020 Apr 8. [[PMID: 32264799](#)]

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

- The [Interdepartmental Serious Illness Coordinating Committee \(ISMICC\)](#) reports to Congress and federal agencies on issues related to serious mental illness (SMI) and serious emotional disturbance (SED). The next meeting of the ISMICC is August 27, 2021, at 1:00 pm. Registration is [available online](#).
- The complementary [Interdepartmental Substance Use Disorders Coordinating Committee \(ISUDCC\)](#) meets for the first time on August 26, 2021, at 1:00 pm. Registration is [available online](#), and information about the meeting is published in the [Federal Register](#).
- Behavioral health equity resources are available [online](#).

PUBLIC MEMBER UPDATES

Autism Science Foundation (ASF)

- During the pandemic, ASF focused our funding support on helping scientists continue to work on their projects with social distancing protocols as well as better understand the effects of the pandemic on families affected with neurodevelopmental disorders and ASD. This has included understanding the challenges of the pandemic in early career researchers. We are happy to announce that in early August we will be releasing a 2022 RFA back to supporting pre- and post-doctoral fellows as well as medical school gap year fellowships. We are also adding a new grant mechanism called the “Post-Undergraduate Two Year Research Fellowship Awards”. This mechanism will support college graduates who would like to gain experience in an autism research lab, either as training for a later career or before attending graduate school. We have increased our stipend amounts to be more competitive with NIH levels. Please email Alycia Halladay if you have any questions: ahalladay@autismsciencefoundation.org
- ASF partners with Els for Autism to support Sam’s Sibs Stick Together, a webinar series and website for support of siblings across the spectrum. Everyone is welcome to attend, and the next webinar on September 8th will include IACC member Julie Taylor talking about what siblings need to know about transition supports. Go to the [ASF website](#) to learn more.
- ASF continues to support understanding and support of families who have infants and toddlers with a high probability of ASD. We will be announcing the recipients of three new Baby Siblings Research Consortium Database Grants very soon, as well as a partnership with Autism Navigator to expand access to the Autism and Baby Navigator programs.

- Keep your calendars open, we are planning a hybrid Day of Learning next May. There will be both an in-person event with an amazing lunch in NYC, as well as the option of viewing it online. Stay tuned! Also, please join us wherever you live for the 2021 Ride Far for Autism Research on October 2nd. Please sign up at www.wallstreetridesfar.org. You do not have work on Wall Street; it's open to everyone. We will have virtual and in-person events in multiple places across US and Canada. Walk, run, bike in your own community and support ASF.

Autism Speaks (AS)

- AS Science team is continuing our collaboration with WHO to complete field testing of the Caregiver Skills Training program globally in low-resource communities. New U.S. sites are launching in Detroit, South Carolina, Pittsburgh, and metro D.C. in an Ethiopian expat community, and the virtual e-learning format is expected to launch through the WHO website at the end of 2021.
- AS Services & Supports team is continuing to build capacity and create resources around our employment initiative, [Workplace Inclusion Now \(WIN\)](#), alongside our Data Science team's [foundational research in what works to increase employment for autistic teens and young adults](#). Through our digital trainings for autistics, employers and community service agencies, as well as direct consulting with partner businesses like Stanley, Black & Decker, the Office of Naval Intelligence, Lee Container and others, we are moving closer to our [Delivering Jobs](#) commitment to create more work and leadership opportunities for people with autism.
- AS Advocacy team is focused on efforts to help advise state and local stakeholders on how [funding from the American Rescue Plan](#) can support Home and Community-Based Services as well as the needs of students with autism and special education needs. We continue to partner with federal officials on COVID-19 response priorities for the autism community, including [our recent webinar](#) with the CDC's Dr. Marshalyn Yargin-Allsop and other autism organizations addressing vaccine accessibility and safety to overcome hesitancy and encourage vaccination. In addition to providing accessibility tools, our Science team also continued to raise awareness on the experiences of families and individuals with ASD during the COVID-19 pandemic on key topics of [food insecurity](#) and impact of the COVID-19 [on health outcomes](#).
- In our partnership with the Ad Council, we are seeing success in our efforts to lower the age of screening and early intervention in underserved communities with a bilingual campaign in Spanish and English that has resulted in increased usage of our free online MCHAT tool at autismspeaks.org/MCHAT.

Madison House Autism Foundation

- The [A Place in the World Housing Market Guide](#) is a practical tool that provides the foundational nomenclature for housing and service delivery models with the goal to further define market segments, establish best practices and guiding principles, and help drive crucial partnerships that address pressing needs resulting from the current housing crisis. This Report was co-authored by Madison House Foundation's Desiree Kameka, Director of the Autism Housing Network.
 - In collaboration with:
 - Autism Housing Network – Madison House Autism Foundation

- First Place Leadership Institute – The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Center for Public Policy
 - The Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University
 - Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions at Arizona State University
 - This Guide is a sister study to 2009’s groundbreaking [Opening Doors Report](#).
- Autism After 21 Utah Blueprint Initiative
 - The [Autism After 21 Utah Blueprint Initiative](#) is a statewide pilot to prevent homelessness and create inclusivity for adults with autism and many more with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Engaging multi-sector stakeholders, families, and autistic individuals in a coordinated approach will help build inclusive communities, bringing direct relief to families, new housing options, lower healthcare costs, greater opportunity for employment and inclusion while spotlighting outstanding work already being done in the state.

Simons Foundation (SFARI)

- SFARI will soon be announcing research grant awards in two new areas of focus:
 - [Sex Differences](#): The aim of these awards will be to identify key differences in gene, cell and circuit function that account for the observed differential sensitivities of the two sexes to ASD.
 - [Maternal COVID-19](#): Maternal infection and inflammation are known to increase the likelihood of autism in the offspring. These awards will supplement support from other funders, to broaden biospecimen collection and to extend post-natal family tracking in pregnancy cohorts that are being recruited during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In addition, SFARI sponsors on-going initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among the participants in autism research, and among the community of autism researchers.
 - <https://www.sfari.org/grant/spark-research-match-diversity-equity-and-inclusivity-request-for-applications/>
 - <https://www.sfari.org/grant/sfari-seed-rfa/>

UC Davis

- Please “save the date” for the third annual UC Davis Neurodiversity Summit, co-sponsored by the MIND Institute and the Center for Mind and Brain. The summit will occur both in person and virtually on November 5, 2021, from 9am-4pm. Registration link will be announced.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

COVID-19 Impact, Response, and Recovery

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Racial Equity and Health Disparities in ASD

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Other ASD-related Topics

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