

# United Cerebral Palsy's annual research grant application process opens March 25

*The grants are aimed at supporting cutting-edge, evidence-based "translational research" in the U.S. and Canada*

VIENNA, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, March 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Media Contact: UCP Communications Coordinator James Garcia, [jgarcia@ucp.org](mailto:jgarcia@ucp.org), 602-460-1374

The United Cerebral Palsy Research Initiative will begin accepting grant applications for awards of up to \$20,000 on March 25, National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day, for translational research projects that address early diagnosis and treatment of cerebral palsy and related neurodevelopmental disabilities.



UCP President and CEO Armando Contreras

"This is our third year for the grant program, which is part of our stepped up research initiatives," said UCP President and CEO Armando Contreras. "The program is aimed at funding cutting-edge science in the U.S. and Canada that helps identify and treat cerebral palsy and other intellectual and developmental disabilities."

Cerebral palsy is a developmental disorder caused by abnormal development or damage to motor systems before, during, or shortly after birth, and the most common physical disability in childhood, affecting both movement and posture.

About 1 in 345 children born in the U.S. are diagnosed with cerebral palsy. About 18 million people worldwide have CP, including more than 1 million in the U.S. The average age of a child to be diagnosed in the U.S. is two years old but 2017 international guidelines have shown that children can be diagnosed as early as three months of age.

“The UCP grant program is part of an effort to translate research into transformative treatment of cerebral palsy and other neurodevelopmental disabilities,” said Valerie Pieraccini, Vice President of Innovation and Clinical Operations at UCP of Central Arizona and co-chair of [the UCP Research Committee](#) (URC).

The Committee is co-chaired by Pieraccini and Dr. Michael Kruer, director of the Cerebral Palsy & Pediatric Movement Disorders Program at Phoenix Children’s Hospital and associate professor of Child Health Genetics, Neurology and Cellular & Molecular Medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Phoenix. Committee members include some of the most renowned scientists and practitioners in the world.

In addition to overseeing the grant program, the URC provides scholarships to enhance best practices for practitioners who work directly with children and adults with cerebral palsy to empower them to participate in research and evidence-based, early childhood intervention.



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Armando Contreras*

“The one thing we’ve known for many years is that diagnosing and treating children with CP and other neurodevelopmental disorders as early as possible is the best way to help them live long and independent lives,” said Kruer. “Research into the causes behind early brain injury and the genetic determinants of disorders and disease, such as rare mutations, are changing what we’ve learned about these disorders.”

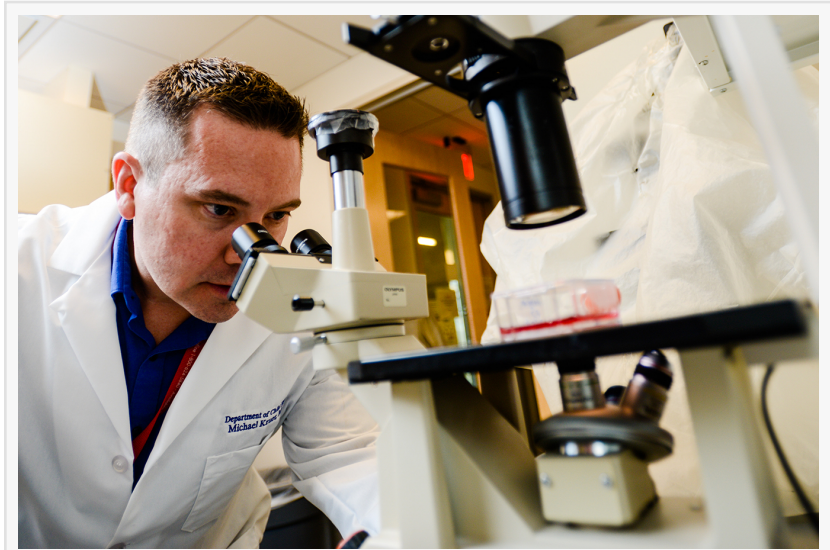
Additionally, breakthroughs in genomic research are helping people living with cerebral palsy and other

neurodevelopmental disabilities through better understanding that results in individualized diagnosis and treatment, Kruer said.

This is the third year for the grant program, which provides funding for research into both

biomedical and therapy-focused studies.

Researchers and clinicians in the U.S. and Canada are invited to submit applications that address any topics relevant to cerebral palsy and related neurodevelopmental disabilities. Preference will be given to projects focused on early diagnosis and early treatment of cerebral palsy and those proposed by either UCP affiliates or researchers who collaborate with one or more of our affiliates. Two grants of up to \$20,000 will be awarded for pilot and extension proposals, and two grants of up to \$10,000 will be awarded for affiliate planning grants. Researchers in the U.S. and Canada are eligible to apply.



Dr. Michael Kruer is a pediatric movement disorders neurologist and director of the Pediatric Movement Disorders Program at Phoenix Children's. He's also an associate professor at University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix

Grant applicants are required to submit a letter of intent describing the subject and scope of their research project. The program awards grants to projects aimed at advancing clinical and translational research that bridges the gap between research and care and helps transform the lives of children and adults with cerebral palsy and related neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Applications will be available on UCP's website beginning March 25. The deadline to submit a letter of intent to apply is April 26, 2024 and the deadline to submit a completed application is June 21, 2024. Grants winners will be announced in mid August. Please direct questions about this program to [research@ucp.org](mailto:research@ucp.org).

### About United Cerebral Palsy

The mission of United Cerebral Palsy is to be an indispensable resource for people with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder and other neurodevelopmental disabilities. Founded in 1949, UCP has 55 affiliates (53 in the U.S. and two in Canada) that provide a wide range of services annually to more than 150,000 children and adults, including resources and referrals, advocacy, research, educational instruction, early intervention, physical therapy, job training, integrated employment, home and community-based services, recreational opportunities and housing assistance. UCP is a strong advocate for direct support professionals (DSPs) and other direct care workers. We are committed to the idea that all people with disabilities should be treated as equal members of an inclusive society so they can "live life without limits."

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