

United Cerebral Palsy's 2026 "Change is Possible for CP" Grant Program Now Accepting Applications

UCP's Grant Program invests in research that translates scientific insights into practical improvements in early diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.

VIENNA, VA, UNITED STATES, January 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [United Cerebral Palsy \(UCP\)](#), a leader in

providing resources and assistance to individuals with disabilities, is launching its 2026 "Change is Possible for CP" grant cycle, a program designed to advance clinical and translational research that bridges the gap between science and care.



Each new grant cycle is an opportunity to push the field forward. We encourage investigators to submit proposals that meaningfully improve how cerebral palsy is understood, identified, and addressed."

Valerie Pieraccini, co-chair of UCP's Research Council

Starting January 12, 2026, researchers and clinicians across the U.S. and Canada are invited to submit letters of intent for funding opportunities to transform the lives of children with cerebral palsy and related neurodevelopmental disabilities. The deadline for submissions is February 13, 2026.

Led by UCP's Research Council, which comprises medical professionals, individuals living with cerebral palsy, clinician-researchers, UCP affiliate leaders and community-based advocates who are dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with cerebral palsy, the [Research](#)

[Grant Program](#) emphasizes knowledge translation — the application of research insights to real-world care — by funding projects that foster meaningful advances in early diagnosis, early treatment and rehabilitation.

The 2026 cycle includes two grant categories:

□ Pilot Grants (\$20,000 USD): Funding for generating preliminary data or performing novel

analyses on existing datasets to support future large-scale projects.

□ Extension Grants (\$20,000 USD): Support for expanding ongoing research projects.

While letters of intent on any topic relevant to cerebral palsy and related neurodevelopmental disabilities are welcome, the Research Council will prioritize proposals that:

□ Focus on early diagnosis and treatment of cerebral palsy.

□ Involve collaboration with UCP affiliates.

□ Focus on biomedical and therapy studies.



Valerie Pieraccini is an occupational therapist and Director of Clinic and Homebased Therapy Program & Early Learning Center at UCP of Central Arizona

2025 Awardees Highlight Breakthrough Research

UCP's Research Grant Program fuels groundbreaking studies, enabling clinicians and scientists to explore innovative approaches that can redefine care for individuals with cerebral palsy. The 2025 awardees exemplify the transformative potential of these grants:

California Primary Care Provider Education of Early Identification and Intervention for Infants
Primary Investigator: Christiana Butera, University of Southern California

This project will expand training for primary care providers across California to improve early detection of cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities. Building on the Early Identification and Intervention for Infants Network (EI3) initiative, the project will adapt a pilot program from Los Angeles County into a statewide virtual training program, ensuring accessible, evidence-based tools are available to providers and families.

Translating Early Diagnosis into Practice: Clinical Validation of BabyOSCAR for Selective Motor Control Assessment in Infants with Probable Cerebral Palsy

Primary Investigators: Theresa Sukal Moulton and Colleen Peyton, Northwestern University

This study will validate BabyOSCAR, a novel assessment tool that evaluates joint-specific movement using observational scoring of video-recorded spontaneous infant movement. By analyzing 250 retrospective infant videos and testing reliability across clinicians, the project aims to establish BabyOSCAR as a scalable, clinically feasible tool for earlier, more accurate CP diagnosis and individualized intervention.

"Each new grant cycle is an opportunity to push the field forward," said Valerie Pieraccini, co-chair of UCP's Research Council. "We are opening this program at a moment when the CP

research community is bringing bold ideas, interdisciplinary thinking, and a clear focus on real-world impact. We encourage investigators to submit proposals that can meaningfully improve how cerebral palsy is understood, identified, and addressed.”

“UCP’s Research Grant Program is designed to catalyze innovation where it matters most — for children and families,” said Diane Wilush, interim president and CEO of United Cerebral Palsy. “By investing in rigorous, translational research, we aim to accelerate progress from discovery to practice and support solutions that lead to earlier identification, better interventions, and improved lifelong outcomes for people with cerebral palsy and related neurodevelopmental disabilities.”

The UCP Research Council will notify selected candidates to move forward with submitting a full proposal on March 25, 2026, which coincides with National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day. The deadline for full proposals is May 29, 2026. Winners will be announced in September, and grant funding will begin in October.

For more information, including guidelines and the application form, please visit www.ucp.org/research/research-grant-program/.

About United Cerebral Palsy

United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) was founded in 1949, and today, its network of affiliate organizations in the United States and Canada provides a wide range of services annually to approximately 200,000 children and adults with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. These services include information, resource referral, advocacy, research, educational instruction, early intervention, therapies, job coaching, integrated employment, home and community-based services, recreational opportunities, and housing assistance. UCP is committed to the mission that all people with disabilities should be treated as equal members of an inclusive society. Learn more at UCP.org.

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