



Graduate Student Application

Fall 2025 – Spring 2026

The Illinois LEND Program is funded Grant Number: T73MC11047 by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).



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TO: Interested Graduate Students and Professionals

FROM: Kruti Acharya, IL LEND Program Director

SUBJECT: 2025-2026 IL LEND Fellowship Program

Applications are now being accepted for the 2025-2026 IL LEND Fellowship Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Enclosed please find program information and an application form. Adults with developmental disabilities, parents and/or siblings of individuals with developmental disabilities, and individuals from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

Application Checklist

- ☐ Completed Graduate Student application, including cover page
- ☐ Résumé/CV
- ☐ Two letters of recommendation from faculty members or supervisors with whom you have been associated in the past. Letters must be signed.
- ☐ Official College Transcript (under unusual circumstances, unofficial transcripts are acceptable)
- ☐ Evidence of liability insurance coverage (*For licensed practitioners only*)
- ☐ Interview with one or more members of the traineeship review committee (*Selected applicants only*)

Please return application materials **by March 1, 2025** to:

Submit application materials to the faculty member from your discipline who will be your **LEND discipline coordinator**. A full list of discipline coordinators and contact information is available on our website.

For further information about LEND, please visit our webpage at www.illinoisLEND.org or contact Eleanor Powell, Program Coordinator, at illinoisLEND@uic.edu.

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A collaboration between
 The University of Illinois Chicago
 The University of Chicago
 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
 Southern Illinois University- Carbondale
 Rush University Medical Center
 Advocate Medical Center

Graduate Student Application Cover Page

What is LEND?

The Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Interdisciplinary Training Program is a 1 year training program that incorporates both didactic and experiential learning in clinical and community-based settings. This program prepares future leaders who will serve children with disabilities (with a focus on autism) and their families through coordinated, culturally competent, and family-centered care, as well as through public health services and policy systems change. LEND is based at the University of Illinois at Chicago but partners with other institutions including the University of Chicago, Southern Illinois University, and Rush University.

Training Activities

The LEND training develops competency in the following 7 domains: (1) leadership (2) public health (3) interdisciplinary clinical training and practice (4) cultural competence (5) family centered care (6) emerging issues and (7) research. Learning experiences include core didactic seminars, interdisciplinary group activities, systems and policy trainings, clinical screenings, care coordination, a research or leadership project, and faculty mentoring. Sessions take place over 2 semesters starting **August 2025** and ending **May 2026**.

Program Requirements

Fellows in the LEND program are required to complete a minimum of 300 hours of didactic, advanced clinical, community, and interdisciplinary leadership training. The following activities are integral components of the LEND training program:

- A mandatory LEND Orientation held on **Friday, August 15, 2025** (8am to 4pm)
- Weekly seminars (Thursdays from 4 to 7pm)
- Bi-weekly Clinical sessions (Fridays from 1 to 4pm)
- Monthly meetings with your training mentor
- Development of an Individual Leadership Plan (ILP) to structure your LEND time and select personal goals
- Participation in clinical and community training including multiple visits outside of class time
- Development of a policy project
- An interdisciplinary research or leadership project to be presented at the mandatory end of the year Open House held on **Thursday, May 8, 2026** (10am to 2pm)

I have read and understand the requirements as listed on this application

Applicant Signature

Date



IL LEND Fellow Application 2025-2026 ***Graduate Student***

Instructions: Please enter your information directly into each field.

Contact Information

Name: _____

Local Address: _____ Permanent Address (if different from Local): _____

Home Phone: _____ Day Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

What is the best way to contact you?

☐ Home Phone

☐ Day Phone

☐ Cell Phone

☐ Email

Demographic Information

Sex Assigned at Birth: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Decline to Answer

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Transgender Male

☐ Transgender Female ☐ Gender Diverse ☐ Decline to Answer

☐ Additional Gender Category: _____

What pronouns do you use? _____

Ethnicity: ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Not Hispanic/Latino

Race: ☐ Black or African American ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Asian

☐ White ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ☐ More than one

Are you legally eligible for employment in the U.S.? _____

Languages Spoken: _____

Current Education *(if applicable)*

Current Degree Program:

College/University: _____ GPA: _____

Program(s) of Study: _____

Advisor: _____ Anticipated Date of Graduation: _____

Anticipated Degree: ☐ M.A. ☐ M.S. ☐ M.Ed. ☐ M.S.W. ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Other: _____

Prior Education *(if applicable)*

Name of School: _____ GPA: _____

Program/s of Study: _____ Date of Graduation: _____

Degree Earned: ☐ B.A. ☐ B.S. ☐ B.Ed. ☐ B.S.W. ☐ Other: _____

Name of School: _____ GPA: _____

Program/s of Study: _____ Date of Graduation: _____

Degree Earned: ☐ M.A. ☐ M.S. ☐ M.Ed. ☐ M.S.W. ☐ Other: _____

Employment *(if applicable)*

Current Employer: _____

Job Title: _____

Start Date: _____ Hours/Week: _____

Position Responsibilities:

Graduate Student Application Questions

Directions: On a separate page, please type your answers to the questions (you also may video or audio record your answers and send them in electronically). Each question can be answered in one or two paragraphs, but you may give longer answers if you wish.

1. Please explain why you have an interest in applying for the IL LEND program. In your answer, include how you feel this program might contribute to your professional aspirations.
2. As an IL LEND trainee, what strengths would you bring? What do you anticipate as potential challenges? What aspect of the IL LEND program is of most interest to you?
3. The IL LEND program focuses on family-centered culturally effective practices in providing supports and services to children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and other developmental disabilities and their families. Please describe previous work experience/scholarship/personal involvement with individuals with ASD or NDs. What have you learned from your experiences?
4. The IL LEND program is designed to support the development of leadership skills that will assist participants in becoming effectively engaged in positive social change for people with disabilities. What do you believe are the characteristics of an effective leader? Tell us about any opportunities you have had to be a leader. How would you describe your effectiveness in these situations? What skills did you use? What have you experienced as barriers to effective leadership? How do you see yourself leading during your future career?
5. How did you hear about the IL LEND program?
6. If accepted into the program, which of our training sites would be most convenient for you to attend if needed?
 - ☐ University of Illinois at Chicago
 - ☐ University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 - ☐ Southern Illinois University- Carbondale

Thank you for your application!

Deadline: March 1, 2025