

## At-a-Glance

# 2019-2020 AUTISM RESEARCH PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS REPORT

The 2019-2020 IACC Autism Research Portfolio Analysis Report provides comprehensive information about the status of autism research funding among federal agencies and private research organizations in the United States, featuring analysis of funding trends in autism research from 2008-2020. This **At-a-Glance** version provides a summary of key findings included in the report. The full report can be found here: <https://iacc.hhs.gov/publications/portfolio-analysis/2020/>

## Who funded autism research in 2019 and 2020?

**30 funders**  
provided funding data  
for this report.

**14** federal agencies  
**16** private organizations

### FEDERAL

### PRIVATE

- Administration for Community Living
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency\*
- Department of Defense – Army
- Department of Education
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Food and Drug Administration\*
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Institute of Museum and Library Services\*
- National Endowment for the Arts\*
- National Institutes of Health
- National Science Foundation
- Social Security Administration\*

- Autism Research Institute
- Autism Science Foundation
- Autism Speaks
- BRAIN Foundation\*
- Brain & Behavior Research Foundation
- Eagles Autism Foundation\*
- Els for Autism Foundation\*
- Escher Fund for Autism/Escher Family Fund
- FRAXA Research Foundation
- New England Center for Children
- New Jersey Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism
- Organization for Autism Research
- Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute
- Simons Foundation
- Thrasher Research Fund\*
- Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance

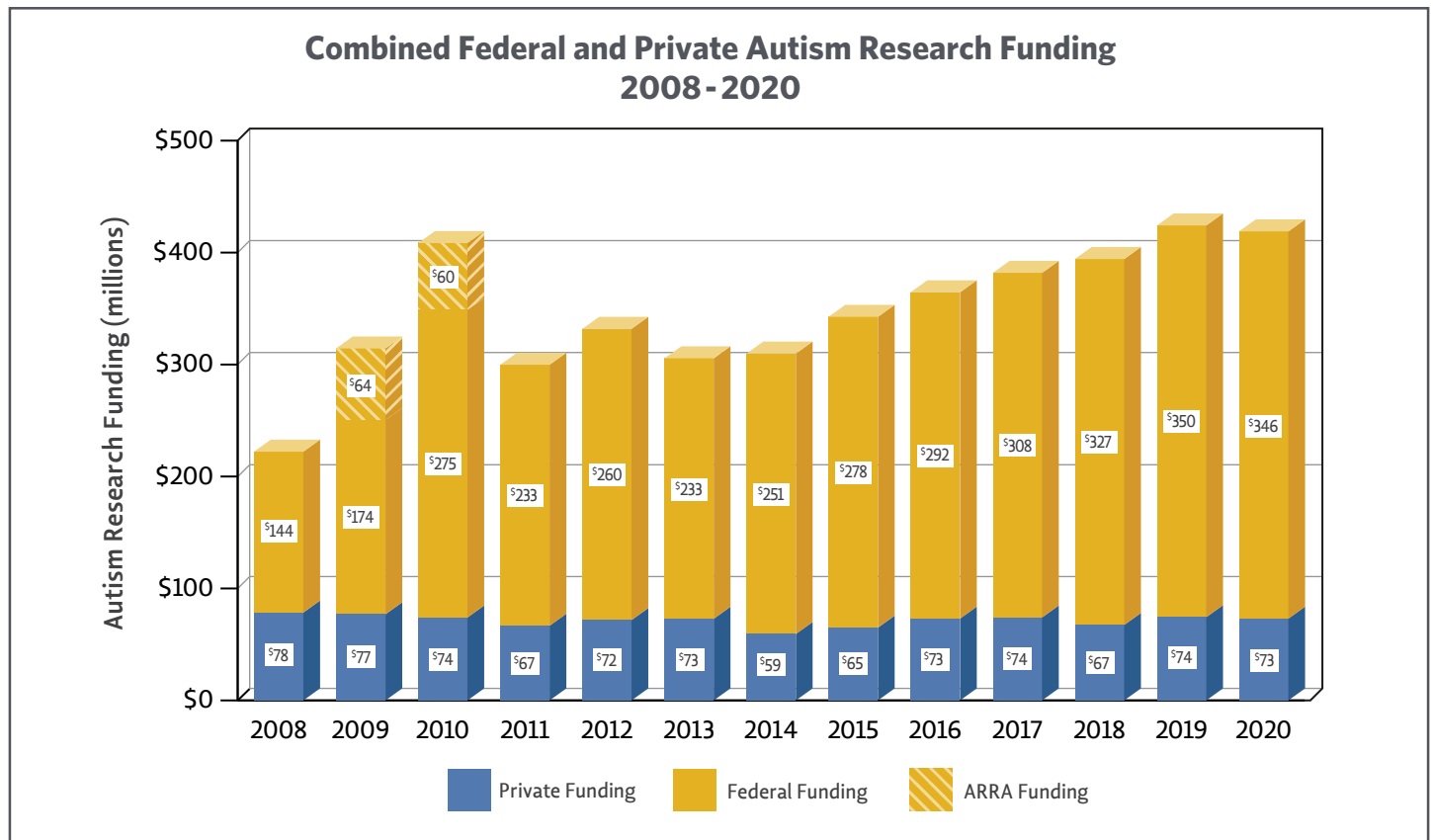
\* Funders newly added to the Portfolio Analysis Report in 2019 and 2020

**Thank you to all funders who contributed to this report!**

## How much autism research was funded from 2008 to 2020?

- U.S. autism research was funded at the highest ever levels in 2019 and 2020.
- Federal agencies accounted for approximately 82% of total funding.
- Private organizations accounted for almost 18% of total funding.
- Factors possibly contributing to funding fluctuations include:
  - New or ending initiatives
  - Changes in organization budgets and priorities
  - Changes in government appropriations
  - Differences in funding mechanisms
  - Potential impacts of COVID-19 pandemic

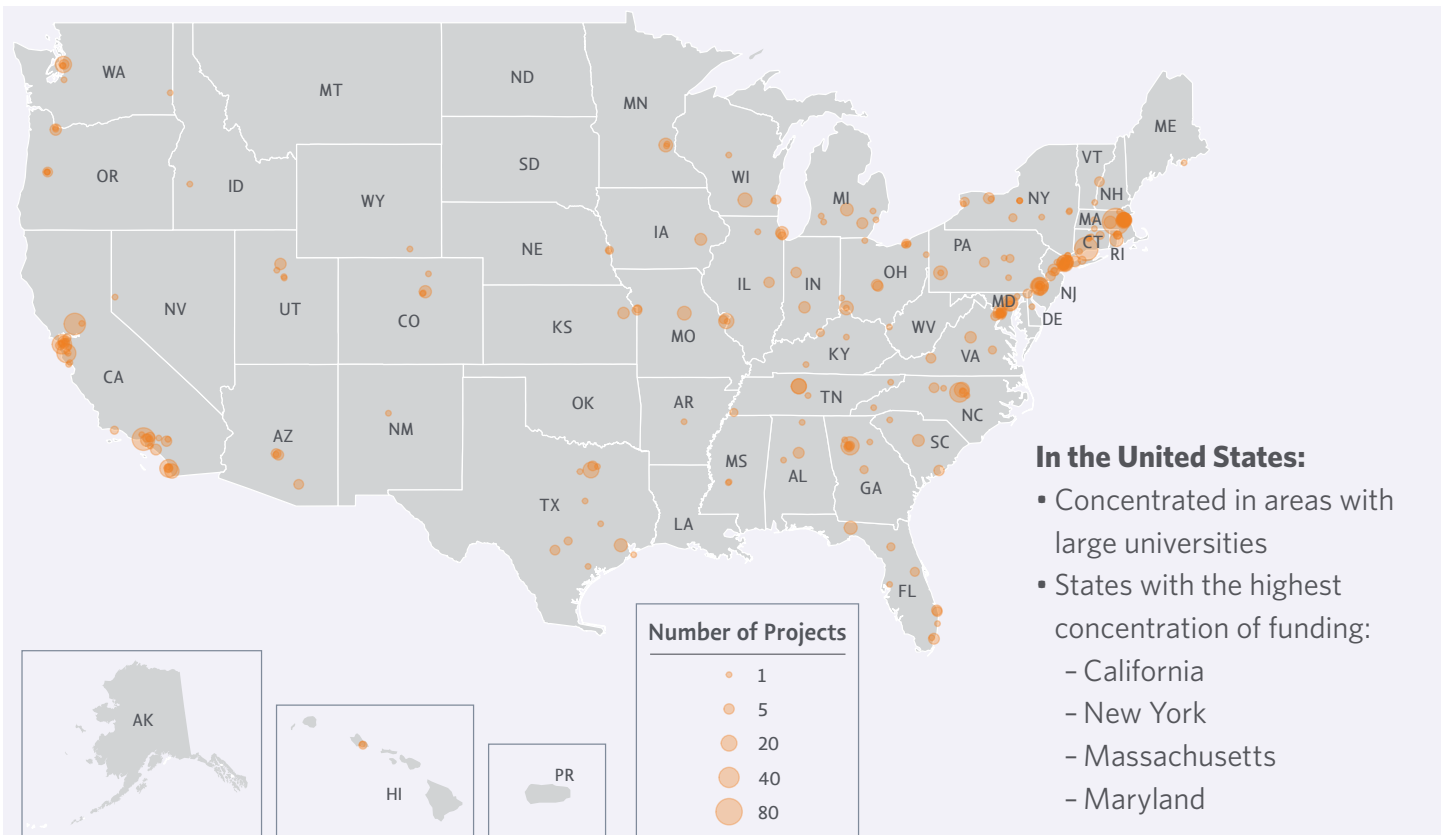
Year	Funding Amount (millions)	Number of Projects
2008	\$222	731
2009	\$314	964
2010	\$409	1,367
2011	\$300	1,227
2012	\$332	1,312
2013	\$306	1,279
2014	\$310	1,441
2015	\$343	1,410
2016	\$364	1,360
2017	\$382	1,508
2018	\$394	1,543
2019	\$424	1,604
2020	\$419	1,573



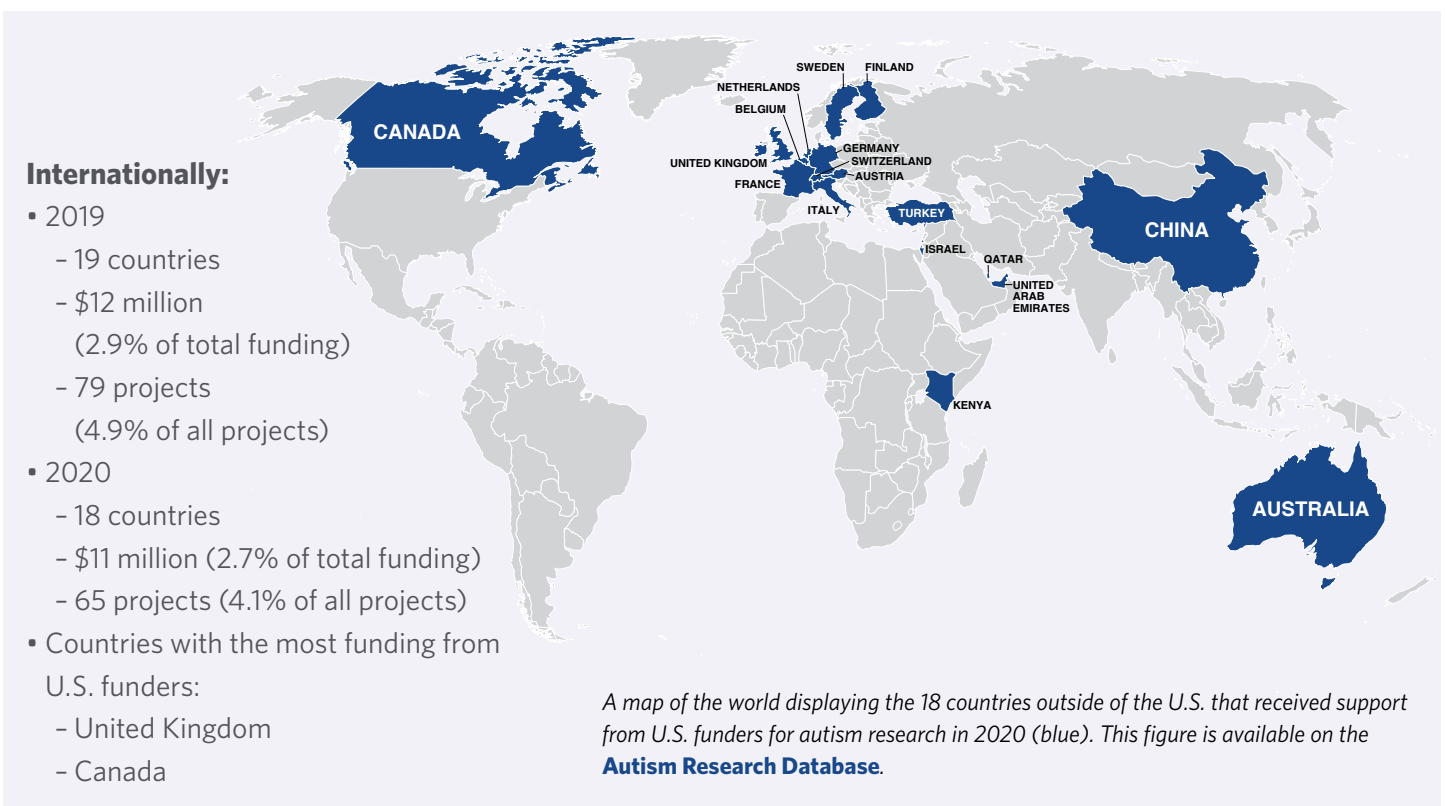
2008-2020 autism research funding from federal (yellow) and private (blue) sources. Yellow dashed shading indicates supplementary funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009 and 2010.

Please note that funding amounts have been rounded to the closest million throughout this document.

## Where was autism research being funded in 2019 and 2020?










A map of the United States displaying the geographic distribution and number of autism research projects funded by federal agencies and private organizations in 2020.



# Which areas of autism research were funded in 2019 and 2020?

Autism research funding in 2019 and 2020 supported projects relevant to all seven Questions of the **2016-2017 IACC Strategic Plan**.

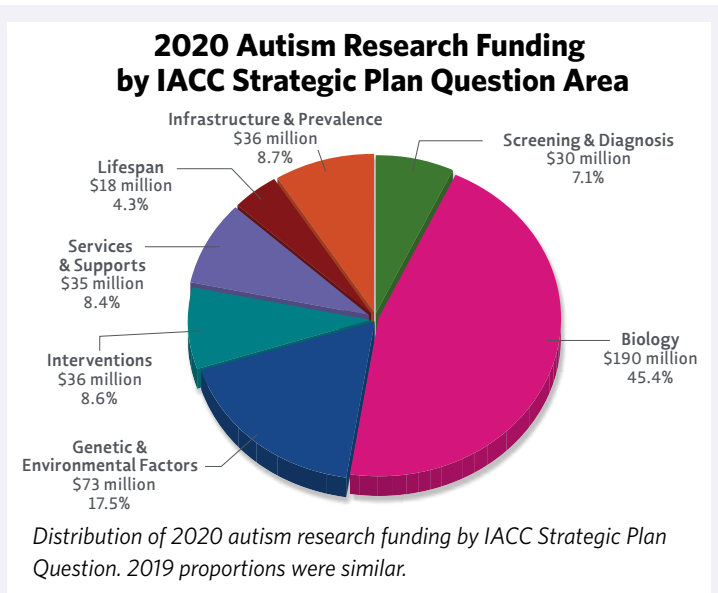
 <b>Screening &amp; Diagnosis</b>	<p><b>How can I recognize the signs of autism, and why is early detection so important?</b>                  Examples of research topics: diagnostic and screening tools, early signs and biomarkers, reduce disparities in early diagnosis, spectrum of characteristics</p>
 <b>Biology</b>	<p><b>What is the biology underlying autism?</b>                  Examples of research topics: brain structure and function, cognitive studies, language development and communication, co-occurring conditions, molecular pathways, sensory and motor function, sex and gender differences</p>
 <b>Genetic &amp; Environmental Factors</b>	<p><b>What causes autism, and can the disabling aspects of autism be prevented or preempted?</b>                  Examples of research topics: gene-environment interactions, genetic factors, environmental factors</p>
 <b>Interventions</b>	<p><b>What treatments and interventions will help?</b>                  Examples of research topics: communication/augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), behavioral, educational, pharmacological/medicinal, dietary, occupational, and technology-based interventions</p>
 <b>Services &amp; Supports</b>	<p><b>What kinds of services and supports are needed to maximize quality of life for people on the autism spectrum?</b>                  Examples of research topics: community inclusion, education, service delivery, practitioner training, safety, reduce disparities in service access and outcomes</p>
 <b>Lifespan</b>	<p><b>How can we meet the needs of people on the autism spectrum as they progress into and through adulthood?</b>                  Examples of research topics: employment, housing, daily life skills, health outcomes, health care systems, transition to adulthood, postsecondary outcomes, aging</p>
 <b>Infrastructure &amp; Prevalence</b>	<p><b>How do we continue to build, expand, and enhance the infrastructure system to meet the needs of the autism community?</b>                  Examples of research topics: data tools, prevalence, research infrastructure, research workforce</p>

## Which areas of autism research experienced the greatest growth?

Strategic Plan Question Area	2016	2020
Screening & Diagnosis	107	105
Biology	491	590
Genetic & Environmental Factors	240	224
Interventions	254	237
Services & Supports	84	179
Lifespan	48	95
Infrastructure & Prevalence	136	143

The number of autism research projects by IACC Strategic Plan Question in 2016 and 2020.

Question areas with the <b>greatest growth</b> in number of projects from 2016 to 2020:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Services &amp; Supports</b> (113% increase)</li> <li>• <b>Lifespan</b> (98% increase)</li> <li>• <b>Biology</b> (20% increase)</li> </ul>
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Question areas that received the <b>most funding</b> in 2019 and 2020:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Biology</b></li> <li>• <b>Genetic &amp; Environmental Factors</b></li> </ul>
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