# NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS: EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title20/html/USCODE-2020-title20-chap31-subchapII-part2-sec1228a.htm>) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program.

**ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW GRANT AWARDS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

Please respond to the following requests for information:

1. **Describe how your entity’s existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.**

The primary mission of the California Department of Education (CDE), Special Education Division (SED), is to ensure that students with disabilities are afforded equal access to their education and educational environments. A larger overview of the activities of the SED to ensure equitable access and participation are located at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/> which includes monitoring, dispute and complaint resolution, guidance, information, training, technical support, and coaching through the CDE, CDE contractors and grant recipients, and educational partners throughout the state. Information about the educational partners can be found on the California Special Education Technical Assistance Network website at <https://caltan.info/partners>. These supports are intended to reach parents, teachers, school staff, and other educational partners around the state. Through our Quality Assurance Process, found on the CDE Quality Assurance Process website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/>, we monitor each local educational agency (LEA) on a variety of indicators as outlined in the State Performance Plan and data provided through the California School Dashboard, found on the CDE California School Dashboard and System of Support website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/aC/cm/>, to verify they are meeting targets set by the State Board of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. When LEAs fail to meet the targets, or when an LEA demonstrates a disproportionality by race/ethnicity for students with disabilities in discipline, placement, identification for special education, or identification for a specific disability category, the LEA falls into the Compliance and Improvement Monitoring (CIM) process. For more information on the CIM process, please visit the CDE Compliance and Improvement Monitoring Process website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/cimprocess.asp>. The CIM has multiple monitoring levels based on LEA performance. In the Targeted and Intensive levels of monitoring, LEAs participate in a process that is designed to ensure the LEA engages in a deep review of their policies, procedures, and practices, as well as qualitative and quantitative data (including parent and student perspectives) around these targets. LEAs in Intensive Monitoring, and those determined to be Significantly Disproportionate, engage in a student file review or education benefit review that allows the LEA to review Child Find policies and practices, inclusion practices, and behavior supports. The information gathered through this process is then utilized to understand problems in practice, and formulate root causes. Once root causes are determined, an improvement plan is developed with specific measurable outcomes, and activities to achieve those outcomes, thereby addressing inequities in access and participation in both the general education and special education settings, and promoting better outcomes for students with disabilities.

1. **Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of** **students, educators, or other beneficiaries?**

Not all LEAs have sufficient knowledge, tools, or support to understand how to review and disaggregate data, examine problems in practice, formulate root causes, or formulate effective action plans to address root causes. Additionally, some LEAs may not prioritize a resolution to the disproportionality or low performance on the indicators and Dashboard data due to competing demands. Failure to fully implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) may also create barriers to access for students with disabilities. Many LEAs express barriers created by lack of available staff, or the inability to attract new staff.

1. **Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?**

The SED, either internally or through contracts and grants, has created information, tools and technical assistance to assist the LEAs with the CIM process. This includes guidance documents, timelines, training videos, tools, webinars, in person training and progress monitoring of both the development and implementation of the improvement plan. LEAs in the Intensive levels of CIM are provided grant opportunities, and provided support or coaching by a technical assistance provider with expertise in the area associated with their problems in practice. Additionally, LEAs who are determined to be significantly disproportionate are provided technical assistance from facilitators that are experts in helping the LEA review policies, procedures, practices and data from a cultural or ethnic lens to address issues in equity. Required quarterly progress reports allow the SED to ensure implementation and provide technical assistance as appropriate, and allow the LEAs to enter a cycle of continuous improvement by updating their plan as data indicates the success or lack of success of the plan. Statewide implementation monitoring has been developed and tested to track implementation and assist LEAs struggling with implementation of IEPs. To address teacher shortages, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing have created several initiatives to address the teacher shortages, including teacher residency grant programs, teacher pathway programs and local solution grants.

1. **What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?**

The SED has addressed the identified barriers, but remains in a cycle of continuous improvement. The effectiveness of the information tools and technical assistance is monitored through annual progress of LEAs in CIM; feedback from educational partners, including the LEAs; and through internal reviews. Annual changes and updates are completed, as appropriate, to address any areas where improvement in the process is needed. As we are in a continuous improvement cycle, there is no end to the improvement timeline, though we look to address identified areas of improvement in the process prior to the start of each annual CIM cycle. The statewide IEP Implementation monitoring will be in full effect this year, with the first statewide certification of the data by June 30, 2023. Current grants and programs to address teacher shortages extend through 2027, though new grants and programs may be added from year to year.

**Notes:**

1. Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity in order to submit an application.
2. Applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
3. Applicants may have already included some or all of this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) and page number(s) in their applications or State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

**Paperwork Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0005. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain a benefit. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this individual collection, send your comments to [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference OMB Control Number 1894-0005. All other comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form may be addressed to either (a) the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section in the competition Notice Inviting Applications, or (b) your assigned program officer.