

## **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](#)) 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 mission of the Texas Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program is to assure families with young children with developmental delays have the resources and support they need to reach their goals. To ensure access to and participation in Part C services, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) contracts with local agencies across the state. Contractor agencies primarily employ providers who live in communities they serve and are familiar with the population demographics. Public outreach is planned and conducted at the state and local levels to meet the unique needs of families statewide.

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

Potential barriers to accessing and participating in ECI services include challenges with accessing and providing services in rural areas; lack of public and family awareness about services, eligibility, and costs; the diversity of languages spoken; and retention of early intervention personnel statewide.

3. 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?

Steps to address these barriers include completing the child find self-assessment; hosting forums and a social media campaign to spread awareness about ECI eligibility, services, and costs; translation of all public-facing materials in English and Spanish; multiple grant-funded projects related to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified personnel. HHSC continues to encourage the use telehealth when appropriate to enhance access in rural areas.

HHSC ECI has implemented a process comparing referral data for each contractor with statewide demographic data, requiring those with significant variances to submit a plan detailing how they will target under-referred populations.

In addition, HHSC ECI is taking steps to improve demographic representation in the annual Family Outcomes Survey. HHSC ECI participated in a technical assistance project with Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and is working toward implementing multiple

activities to strengthen family engagement, provide training and technical assistance to contractors on how to analyze and use their Family Outcomes Survey results for continuous improvement, and create dashboards for each contractor showing their performance on key outcomes broken out into demographic groups. Additionally, we are planning to provide the survey in eight additional languages to promote representativeness and to increase the return rate.

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

The child find self-assessment was completed, and HHSC ECI will continue implementing recommendations. Other strategies to address these barriers that HHSC ECI will continue implementing include: two Child Find forums each year; a statewide social media campaign with monthly posts; and recruitment and retention projects, with additional technical assistance offered.

At least annually, HHSC will compare referral data to demographic data for each contracted service area, share data with the contractors, and require contractors to develop plans to address variances.

**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.