

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 WA Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) vision is for all students to be prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement. The agency's mission is to transform PreK–12 education to a system centered on closing opportunity gaps and characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities. Our values include ensuring equity, modeling collaboration and service, achieving excellence through continuous improvement, and focusing on the whole child.

OSPI believes that each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools. Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.

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

Students with disabilities receiving special education services, their families, and their educators experience barriers to meaningful, inclusive access and opportunity. Students with disabilities in Washington state are more likely to be male, persons of color, and experiencing poverty. They experience barriers to core instruction in general education settings, along with higher rates of disciplinary removals and incidents of restraint and isolation than their non-disabled peers. Family members share examples of systemic barriers to language access, advocacy, and dispute resolution. And educators share barriers in resources, staffing, professional development, and co-planning supports to scale and sustain inclusionary practices and equitable outcomes for students with disabilities.

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?

Washington state continues to co-design efforts with invested partners, including families, focused on indicators leading to improved outcomes for students with disabilities in PreK to 12 and post-secondary education, employment, and independent living, incorporating activities that address the following strategic priority areas:

- Partnering for equity by co-designing improvement efforts with students, families, community organizations and statewide professional development providers. Supports focus on culturally responsive communications and interactions, language access and accommodations, and diversifying special education staff and advisory group participants.
- Shaping inclusionary outcomes by aligning practices across statewide initiatives, including social emotional learning, multi-tiered systems of supports, and positive behavioral interventions and supports. Supports include resources and training to disrupt disproportionality, increased access to core instruction in general education settings from PreK to 12, and equity in evaluation and provision of services.
- Leading with intention to model, across all levels of the educational system including the SEA, intentional connections among fiscal, data, program, and dispute resolution in support of improved special education outcomes.
- Fostering excellence by identifying positive exemplars across fiscal, program, and dispute resolution. Supports include on-site visits and community conversations, cross-agency collaborative efforts, and data collection, analysis, and reporting to move beyond admiring the problem and shine a light on promising practices.

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

Washington state focuses annually on State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators at the state level and with our local education agency (LEA) partners.

- A targeted area of focus continues to be least restrictive environment (LRE), particularly for our students with intellectual and development disabilities, along with students experiencing the impact of intersectional identities across race and disability. In 2018, Washington state ranked 44 out of 50 states for inclusive practices; over the past several years, OSPI has been collaborating with partners across education to impact these data, improving LRE 1 (80-100% in general education) nearly seven (7) percentage points as of 2022. Our goal is to continue to increase this level of access, and a targeted focus starting in 2023-24 will be on LRE 3 (0-39% in general education) to ensure that each and every student has opportunity to access core instruction alongside their non-disabled peers.
- Washington continues to focus on disrupting patterns of restraint and isolation, and professional development continues to target the elimination of isolation in Washington state over the next several years.
- Education partners across the state are collaborating with national experts and technical assistance providers to recruit, prepare, and retain inclusive educators and administrators. Milestones include the launch of a special educator residency program, along with expansion of educator and administrator mentoring supports, with the goal of reducing attrition rates in special education.

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 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.