

## **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 Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)'s stated vision is that DC learners of all ages and backgrounds are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue and thrive on the life path of their choice. OSSE's mission is to set high standards, build educator and system capacity to meet those standards, expand educational opportunities for all learners with a focus on those underserved and hold everyone - including ourselves - accountable for results. One of the seven strategies described in OSSE's strategic plan is to achieve equitable outcomes for all students, with a focus on students with disabilities.
  
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 in the District of Columbia, their families, educators, and other community stakeholders experience challenges accessing and participating in educational opportunities, including special education and related services. For example, black students in the District of Columbia are identified at twice the rate of their white peers. In addition, based on data analysis completed in 2017, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be disciplined than their peers who do not have a disability after controlling for other demographic factors. We also know families experience language and communication barriers and have difficulty navigating the complex educational landscape of the District. These barriers have been compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency; as the District has stabilized through COVID-19 recovery, it turns its sights on restoring and reimagining the education of all students, including 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?  
OSSE's strategic plan was developed through intentional stakeholder engagement and a thorough analysis of our educational landscape. Over the next three years, OSSE will implement a variety of initiatives aimed at allocating resources to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education every day in order to remedy historical inequities in student experiences and outcomes:
  1. Prioritize School Improvement: OSSE will design and implement a comprehensive strategy for how it will leverage its authority to address, support, and hold accountable schools whose overall academic performance places them in the bottom 5% of all schools and where disparities in student outcomes exist across subgroup, so those students gain access to high-quality instruction and improved learning environments.
  2. Extend Learning Opportunities for Students with the Highest Needs: OSSE will build school and partner capacity to accelerate learning for our highest need students through

- extended learning opportunities such as high-impact tutoring and summer accelerator programs.
3. Set Clear Expectations for Serving Students with Disabilities: OSSE will reexamine special education policy, guidance, and trainings to set clear expectations and support effective implementation by schools and LEAs for identifying, transporting and educating students with disabilities.
  4. Hold LEAs Accountable for Serving Students with Disabilities: OSSE implements the Special Education Performance Report. This new results-based accountability system evaluates LEA's special education performance and identifies what interventions and technical assistance LEAs need to better serve their students with disabilities.
  5. Focus Grant Funding on Needs and Results: OSSE strengthens and simplifies its approach for distributing, administering, and monitoring grant funding to be more coherent and results-oriented so that schools apply for and gain funding for resources that will address their unique needs as they seek to continuously improve on behalf of their students.
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers? OSSE's strategic plan is based on a three year timeline, with initiatives spanning 1-3 years. OSSE will leverage the Special Education Performance Report to analyze and communicate about state and LEA performance on the State Performance Plan (SPP)/ Annual Performance Report (APR) indicators. The first Special Education Performance Reports was published in the summer of 2023 and will inform technical assistance and resource development for school years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. OSSE anticipates the development of a new strategic plan for school year 2025-26 with similar focus as described above to ensure the agency continues to set clear expectations and ensures accountability for serving students with disabilities.

**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.