

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.

Mission:

The State of Hawai'i, Department of Health, Early Intervention Section is committed to providing early intervention services to all infants and toddlers with special needs and their families in accordance with Part C of the Individual's with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Vision:

The provision of early intervention is guided by the following principles:

- *A spirit of our island community embraces and values every child, woman, and man and is continually enriched by the diversity of its members.*
- *The community recognizes that families are the most important influence in their child's life.*
- *The development of infants and toddlers are best applied within the context of the family environment. Infants and toddlers with special needs and their families have inherent strengths and challenges and will be treated with respect and kindness.*
- *Families are viewed holistically and therefore, must be empowered to use their strengths in gaining access to resources for their child across agencies and disciplines. These resources must be nurturing, value cultural diversity, and aimed at improvement outcomes that involve developmental growth, safety, health, education, and economic security.*
- *All early intervention efforts are collaborative and work towards outcomes that are based on the changing priorities and needs of children with special needs and their families.*

The combined early intervention efforts and individual accountability across public and private agencies and providers help make this vision a reality.

Hawai'i's IDEA Part C Early Intervention Policies and Procedures also stipulates that all infants and toddlers with special needs in Hawai'i who may be eligible for early intervention services under Part C are identified, located and evaluated, including infants and toddlers with special needs who are homeless, in foster care, and wards of the State. Early intervention services identified on the Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) are available for all eligible children and their families.

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

Historically, there have been challenges in identifying children and/or families accessing services for those who may be houseless, live in rural areas or geographic areas that are hard to get to, living on military installations, involved with the Child Welfare system, and of cultural groups that may be hesitant accessing public support. The vacant Child Find position has compounded the issue with no clear plan to build a comprehensive child find system.

Staff vacancies at the state and local program level may impact the identification and location of infants and toddlers who may be eligible for Part C as well as timely evaluation and timely development and implementation of the IFSP.

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?

Vacant Child Find Position

The Hawai'i Department of Health (HDOH), Early Intervention Section (EIS) has modified an open Child Find position to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), including family engagement, in addition to child find.

Lacking a comprehensive Child Find system that includes activities to implement statewide child find efforts despite vacancies:

A Child Find workgroup has been created to assist the Child Find Coordinator/DEI – Family Engagement Specialist in enhancing the child find system to ensure equitable identification and access to early intervention services. This includes collecting and analyzing data to support the development and evaluation of the Child Find Action Plan to ensure that all children and families who may be eligible for Part C are found and served.

Staff Vacancies:

As part of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), the EIS has a Staffing Workgroup focused on ensuring the Part C system has the staffing infrastructure needed to provide evidence-based services to eligible children and their families.

The EIS Lead for the SSIP Staffing Workgroup is a co-lead for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Recruitment and Retention Workgroup that focuses on recruitment and retention in the early childhood arena for children with special needs. Collaboration will continue to address recruitment and retention efforts within EIS.

The EIS Lead will work with the Child Find Coordinator/DEI-Family Engagement Specialist to ensure DEI is woven into the SSIP Staffing and CSPD Recruitment and Retention action plans.

The Early Childhood CSPD Workgroup has an outcome to hire a CSPD Coordinator using braided government/non-government funding to support the implementation of the Early Childhood CSPD Action Plan.

The combination of these efforts is designed to help ensure that children and families regardless of where they live and their family culture or situation can access early intervention and receive equitable services based on their needs.

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

Vacant Child Find Position: The Child Find position mentioned above is currently in active recruitment with a timeline to fill the position by May 30, 2023. During the recruitment phase, HDOH, EIS has a temporary hire who will begin to explore data collection needs to identify specific barriers and appropriate strategies to address DEI as part of the child find system and delivery of services. The person in the position will facilitate and coordinate the Child Find workgroup to develop an action plan that will include outcomes, timelines and evaluation measures.

Lacking a comprehensive Child Find system that includes activities to implement statewide child find efforts despite vacancies: The Child Find Coordinator/DEI – Family Engagement Specialist will complete the following activities: 1) establish regular Child Find Workgroup meetings by May 30, 2023; 2) Complete the Child Find Self-Assessment with stakeholders by July 31, 2023; 3) Develop a Child Find Action Plan based on the Child Find Self-Assessment by September 30, 2023; 4) Develop, implement and evaluate the Child Find Action Plan by October 1, 2023 and ongoing.

Staff Vacancies: 1). EIS will contribute to braided funding for an Early Childhood CSPD Coordinator by December 31, 2023. The Early Childhood CSPD Coordinator will support the CSPD workgroups, including Recruitment and Retention workgroup to ensure Action Plans are implemented. 2) Recruitment and Retention Workgroup will work with the Child Find Coordinator/DEI – Family Engagement Specialist to ensure DEI is addressed in their recruitment and retention efforts by October 1, 2023.

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