

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 (EI) 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. EI 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 comprehensive Child Find System needs to include activities/strategies to implement statewide child find efforts.

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?

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

An EI Child Find workgroup was established on May 10, 2023, to assist the Child Find Coordinator/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) – Family Engagement Specialist, who was hired on May 1, 2023, in enhancing the child find system to ensure equitable identification and access to EI services. The EI Child Find workgroup developed an Action Plan based on the completed Part C Child Find Self-Assessment developed by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center, on October 24, 2023. The EI Child Find Action Plan is reviewed on a quarterly basis and updates are provided to the Hawaii Interagency Coordinating Council (HEICC) at quarterly meetings. The following activities are being addressed by the Child Find Self-Assessment categories: 1) Statewide Assessment of EI Child Find Activities: a) identify key early childhood primary referral sources for outreach and training; b) EI program survey/assessment of child find activities; 2) Child Find is Rooted in being Diverse, Equitable, Accessible and Inclusive: a) Gather, review and analyze census data, birth data by geographic areas, demographic characteristics of the community; b) consult with leaders within each geographic area; c) collaborate and coordinate with DOE Homeless Outreach Specialist – completed and ongoing; 3) Public Awareness and Media Campaigns: a) Rebrand EI - completed; b) update EI brochure - completed; c) launch media campaign (radio spots, commercial, social media) – initiated and updating commercial; 4) Family Engagement in Improving EI Services: a) Consult with Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network (HCAN) regarding Family Engagement Survey data; b) explore establishing a Parent Advisory Council for EI services.

Hawai‘i was accepted into the Data and Systems Thinking Cohort to receive national technical assistance, through the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems, in May 2023. Hawai‘i identified “Child Find” as the focus area and the team includes representatives from Part C, Part B 619 and Home Visiting. The team developed an Early Childhood (EC) Action Plan to build an EC Child Find System, including collecting and analyzing data to inform the system and ensure it is based on equitable practices for identifying and accessing services for children birth to five with special needs. The team identified a pilot site to collect and analyze data regarding the different communities within the pilot site area, work with the pilot site to identify and

implement identification and access to service strategies and determine if those strategies had an impact on the system.

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 EIS contributed funding for an EC CSPD Coordinator to support the implementation of the Early Childhood CSPD Action Plan; however, it is not long-term sustained funding. Highlights of the Early Childhood CSPD can be found on the [Early Childhood Action Strategy](#) website and the [Hawai'i CSPD](#) website.

There is a State Division level Equity workgroup that is exploring staff training to ensure all staff are aware of DEI practices; however, this activity has stalled due to workgroup leadership changes.

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?

Lacking a comprehensive Child Find system that includes activities to implement statewide child find efforts despite vacancies: *The EI Child Find Coordinator/DEI – Family Engagement Specialist will complete the following activities: 1) establish regular EC Child Find Workgroup meetings by March 2024; 2) Review and update the EI Action Plan to determine the status of following activities: 1) Statewide Assessment of EI Child Find Activities: a) identify key early childhood primary referral sources for outreach and training by 12/31/2024; b) EI program survey/assessment of child find activities by 12/31/2024; 2) Child Find is Rooted in being Diverse, Equitable, Accessible and Inclusive: a) Gather, review and analyze census data, birth data by geographic areas, and demographic characteristics of the community by 06/30/2025; b) consult with leaders within each geographic area by 09/30/25; c) collaborate and coordinate with DOE Homeless Outreach Specialist - ongoing; 3) Public Awareness and Media Campaigns: a) Rebrand EI - completed; b) update EI brochure - completed; c) launch media campaign (radio spots, commercial, social media) initiated – update commercial by June 30, 2024; 4) Family Engagement in Improving EI Services: a) Consult with Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) regarding Family Engagement Survey data by June 30, 2024; b) explore establishing a Parent Advisory Council for EI services by September 30, 2024.*

2) Review and update the EC Child Find Action Plans on a quarterly basis to determine the status of the activities: a) Identify and obtain agreement of the EC Child Find Pilot Site programs and agencies by June 30, 2024; b) Gather, review and analyze census data, birth data by geographic areas, and demographic characteristics of the pilot site community by 08/31/2024; 4) Facilitate discussions with the pilot site in revising the Action Plan, implementing the activities/strategies, collecting and analyzing referral and access to service data to inform the system by June 30, 2025.

Staff Vacancies: 1). EIS will explore permanent funding options for the EC CSPD Coordinator by June 2025; 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 June 2025. 3) EI Child Find Coordinator will participate in the Division Equity Workgroup and implement applicable activities/strategies within EIS on an ongoing basis; and 4) EIS will partner with Hawaii Pacific University for the EI Physical Therapist program based on the Department of Education Personnel Preparation of Special Education, Early Intervention, and Related Services personnel at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, and Other Minority Serving Institutions grant – initiated in October 2023 through September 2028 .

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