

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 Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) ensures equal access and opportunity to all stakeholders, most especially, students. Our commitment is to prepare every student to reach their potential to learn, live and lead. Our mission is: **Offering a holistic education to each and every child in our state.** Our vision is: **Educating Georgia's future by graduating students who are ready to learn, ready to live and ready to lead.** From the *Roadmap to Reimagining K-12 Education* developed by GaDOE, our State Superintendent, Richard Woods, stated, "We will work to ensure access to a well-rounded education for every child, create multiple diploma pathways, continue the reduction of high-stakes testing, develop an accountability system that lifts up -- rather than labels -- our schools, modernize the state's K-12 funding formula, and much more." Further the first two values in the reimagined design are: 1. Ensure access to a well-rounded education for every child in every part of our state. 2. Adopt a student-level, rather than grade-level, approach to teaching and learning.

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

Through the proposed activities of the Division for Special Education Services and Supports, we strive to remove barriers to reach each LEA in the state of Georgia. Bringing initiatives to scale are always our first charge. Through our regional network, Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS), each LEA in the state is provided services, professional learning and opportunities; even offering coaching supports at the classroom level for induction level special education teachers. Although economic barriers exist, we ensure financial barriers are removed for state initiatives. A statewide barrier we are addressing is a lack school psychologists, special education teachers and speech/language pathologists.

Additionally, through our collaboration with the Rural Education Initiative, additional support and funding are provided to remove barriers and model best practice. If barriers are identified, it will be of most importance to eliminate the barrier and allow equal opportunity and access.

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?

Barriers are identified and removed to provide equity across the state of Georgia to reach every LEA with services and supports provided by the SEA's IDEA funding. Data teams, legal officers, and results driven professionals collaborate to offer statewide data analysis and support in the area of discipline and disproportionality. We have added statewide school psychologist positions to strengthen our school psychology consortia and have a direct communication feedback loop to address specific needs that may rise in a timely manner. The Division for Special Education Services and Supports continues the Teacher Retention work to begin the fourth year for FY24 to retain and recruit special education teachers. The induction program provided in all regions of the state continues to be well received. A second-year curriculum for the induction program is in development. With the support of the CEEDAR Center, discussions are moving forward with the University System of Georgia (USG) to create a paraprofessional to teacher program in collaboration with LEAs. The agency would like to leverage funds in conjunction with Federal scholarship dollars available for critical fields removing any financial barriers and increase the special education workforce. A taskforce has been formed to address the speech/language pathologist shortage including possible credentialing for speech/language pathologist assistants. Removing barriers is a cultural expectation of GaDOE. Additionally, we offer services for families and communities through partnerships and the utilization of an outreach Ombudsman.

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

We include all LEAs and regions for supports and services provided. Our regional network, GLRS, allows this level of support. Additionally, we offer technical assistance throughout the year beginning with a fiscal and data deep dive in the summer. Other opportunities for technical assistance are based on need, data analysis, requests for assistance. These are implemented on an ongoing basis throughout the fiscal year in a variety of ways.

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.