

## **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.  
North Dakota policy regarding service provision ensures that families in all areas of North Dakota are provided services in their homes. Our policies state that an Early Intervention program must serve the entirety of a Human Service Region. North Dakota has always had at least one Early Intervention program serving each region, and currently half of the eight regions have more than one Early Intervention program. Our payment system is set up as a fee-for-service model, ensuring that all families are getting the services they need, and programs are receiving appropriate compensation for providing the services. North Dakota is a rural state, and all families are afforded the opportunity to receive either in-person or virtual early intervention coaching services.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?  
North Dakota views barriers as opportunities to seek improvement. One potential barrier we have identified is staff shortages in Early Intervention, particularly in the most rural areas of the state. Without sufficient staff in appropriate disciplines, families have the potential to see a delay in valuable and necessary services.
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?  
North Dakota is exploring several options to address staff shortages in Early Intervention, including retention incentives, and increased flexibility around virtual service provision.
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?  
North Dakota has offered a retention incentive, set to expire on June 30, 2023, to all Early Intervention providers. Currently, 3 of the 14 providers have accepted the incentive and paid it out to their staff. To continue to address this concern, North Dakota will consider options for incentivizing working for an Early Intervention provider, including online professional development opportunities that count toward licensure renewals, and participation in higher education with support from the state. North Dakota has already provided 36 individuals the opportunity to complete an Early Intervention Leadership Certificate at no cost to them through the Personnel Development Grant (325L grant). North Dakota is also exploring options for continuing the virtual service delivery options that were instituted during the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency. North Dakota anticipates that full guidance will be provided to Early

Intervention programs by the end of 2023. North Dakota recognizes that all eligible families need equitable access to services and continues to follow the intent of IDEA to assure equity is reached for all.

**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.