



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

OMB Control Number 1894-0005

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.

All students, including those with disabilities, are held to high expectations and have access to educational opportunities that enrich their lives and prepare them for future success. As a State Education Agency, we want to see better results for every student. A system that guarantees fairness and availability can help achieve this. The Department of Education, as a State Agency, works to improve every student's performance. This will be made easier with a system that guarantees fairness as well as access. Reasonable access is the provision of personalized supplemental aids and services, accommodations, or supports to allow each student to participate actively in the general education curriculum. A school-wide embrace or belief in shared accountability, shared responsibility, and high standards must align with balanced access. The Every Student Succeeds Act (December 2015) and the Dear Colleague Letter on the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (November 2015) both state that enhancing results calls for cooperation between administrators, general and special education staff, parents, and the community, as well as a robust core curriculum, excellent instruction, and objective assessment that directs instruction. Universal design and a multi-tiered support system offer the framework required to accomplish the ultimate objective.

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

Indiana has a large population of students from multiple backgrounds that do not align with the background of the educators and administrators in Indiana's special education network. During the 2023-2024 school year, Indiana experienced a severe shortage of special education teachers. Lack of resources was a concern for special education teachers who decided to stay in the field. This is particularly true for first- and second-year special education teachers. To help retain teachers, support resources had to be available. The expense of continuing education deters many teachers from pursuing additional education or adding a special education license to their existing license. As a result, fewer educators seek to become special education teachers.



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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?

In 2019, the Indiana Department of Education, Office of Special Education, in partnership with the Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education, developed the Aspiring Special Education Leadership Institute (ASELI). The Office of Special Education developed the Institute, a one-year leadership development program designed to improve outcomes for all students by preparing a group of educators for leadership roles in special education. The goals of the institute include:

- 1) To increase the capacity of and retain a network of aspiring special education leaders at the local education agency level to improve systems serving children with disabilities and their families.
- 2) To develop, improve, and expand system-level collaborative practices between SEA, LEA, Parent Center, IHE, and other children-serving agencies to ensure the delivery and maintenance of a special education leadership development program.
- 3) To increase the number of early intervention and special education leaders at the local education agency level with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve systems serving students with disabilities and their families.

In November 2021, Indiana announced a partnership with the University of Indianapolis' Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) to strengthen Indiana's special education teacher pipeline, with a focus on supporting special education teachers as they work to earn full licensure. The Indiana Special Education Assisted Licensure (I-SEAL) streamlines the required coursework for teachers to earn full special education licensure. I-SEAL provides financial assistance and scholarships to educators while they complete these requirements. To date, there are 1,188 participants in the program, and with 721, the number will increase with each higher education semester.

The Office of Special Education has prioritized increasing stakeholder input from community members, students, and parents. In collaboration with Indiana's PTI center, INSOURCE, the Office of Special Education has held monthly office hours on a variety of topics, including evaluation, case conference committee members, state assessments, and the least restrictive environment.

Indiana currently utilizes an online-based IEP system for every public school in Indiana. Indiana currently translates the IEP and NOPS into the following languages for families: Spanish, Burmese, Arabic, Punjabi, Mandarin (all varieties), Japanese, Vietnamese, Russian, French, Mandarin (Sichuanese), and German (Amish/Pennsylvania Dutch).

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

In fiscal year 2018-2019, Indiana launched the ASELI program to address the lack of applicants in administration, with a focus on special education leadership. The Institute is a one-year leadership development program designed to improve outcomes for all students by preparing a unique group of educators for leadership roles in special education.

Indiana started contracting with the Council for Exceptional Children in 2019 to provide support to first- and second-year special education teachers. The project's goal is to provide support to 750 first and second-year teachers. Three webinars, a CEC membership, High-



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Leverage Practices trifolds for teachers, the book "The Survival Guide," 24/7 peer support, and the Council for Exceptional Children newsletter are among the resources provided by the funding. Because of the continued shortage of special education teachers, the Office of Special Education continues to support this project. The I-SEAL project is a continued need in Indiana to support the shortage of special education teachers.

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 include 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.