

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 Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) serves as the State Lead Agency for Part C of IDEA and is the state of Washington's newest agency, overseeing an array of services previously offered through the Department of Social and Health Services and the Department of Early Learning.

The vision of this new agency is to ensure that *all Washington's children and youth grow up safe and healthy—thriving physically, emotionally, and educationally, nurtured by family and community.* The vision becomes actionable through a commitment to practicing the [agency's core values](#):

- Inclusion
- Respect
- Integrity
- Compassion, and
- Transparency

The Early Support for Infants & Toddlers (ESIT) program, as Washington's Part C program is committed to identifying and serving all eligible children across the state and currently serves approximately 20,000 infants and toddlers in any given year. [ESIT policy 1.B.2](#) reflects a commitment to ensuring equitable access to services as required by section 427(b) of GEPA to include:

a) State statute, chapter 43.216.576 early intervention services – Interagency Agreements. This statute requires state agencies providing or paying for EIS shall enter into formal interagency agreements with each other to define their relationships and financial and service responsibilities. Local agencies or entities and service providers receiving public funding for providing or paying for EIS shall enter into written interagency agreements with each other that define their relationships and financial responsibilities to provide services within each county;

b) Establishment of contracts with EIPAs through a competitive bid process to ensure all geographic areas in the state, except the four (4) counties where CLAs have been established, are served.

c) Establishment of contracts with four (4) CLAs to ensure through subcontracts with EIPAs (their EIS providers) that services are provided county wide in accordance with the CLA's contract with EIST, Part C of IDEA, and Washington's Federally Approved State Plan.

d) Implementation of a statewide toll-free number that connects to the CLA or EIPA, that serves as a system point of entry (SPOE) for referrals to the SLA's ESIT program, including access to a language line service to provide interpreter services when needed;

e) Family resources coordination services are provided to each eligible infant and toddler and their family on an on-going basis to help facilitate the provision of EIS; and

f) Upon approval by the SLA, CLAs and EIPAs may subcontract with EIS providers to ensure comprehensive EIS are available to all eligible infants and toddlers and their families in each geographic area.

The purpose of the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program is to build upon family strengths by providing coordination, supports, resources, and services to enhance the development of children with developmental delays and disabilities through everyday learning opportunities.

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Provider Agencies (EIPAs) receive training on, and agree to engage with all families through a commitment to the following core principles:

1. Families are equal partners who bring to the team skills, experience, and knowledge about their child, and are the final decision makers as to what will work best for their family.
2. Early intervention recognizes that family relationships are the central focus in the life of an infant or toddler.
3. Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar settings.
4. The early intervention process, from initial contact to transition, must be responsive, flexible, and individualized to reflect the child's and family's priorities, learning styles, and cultural beliefs.
5. All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.
6. The role of the service provider is to work in a team to support Individualized Family Service Plan functional outcomes, based on child and family needs and priorities.
7. Early intervention practices must be based on the best available current evidence and research.

Adapted for Washington from the [Seven Key Principles and Practices for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments](#)

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

The Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) is committed to promoting racial equity, diversity and inclusion. Each of the originating agencies have been engaged in the foundational efforts necessary to make progress on our long term goals of impacting child and family outcomes. This has included building the will, skill and capacity of leaders and staff to lead for equity, diversity, and promote inclusion. Representatives from Children's Administration, Department of Early Learning, the Office of Juvenile Justice and the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration formed an Equity Workgroup, whose mission is to define how we bring our work together into an integrated strategy for DCYF.

Currently children of color are underrepresented in the percentage of children entering kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful. Children and youth of color enter and remain in the child welfare system at greater rates. Youth of color are also disproportionately represented as they enter and progress through the juvenile justice system.

Underlying systems, policies and practices are driving these disparate outcomes and experiences. DCYF will transform the way we operate to promote racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice, so each and every child, youth and family can thrive.

2. 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?

DCYF can only be successful when we collaborate with children, youth, families, communities and tribes who are most impacted and often marginalized in defining our action plan. As we embark on that process, the following represent several initial priority strategies.

- a. **Pay attention to data about outcomes for children, youth, and families consistently.** Disaggregate data by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and geographic areas. Use both quantifiable data and individuals' stories and experience to inform our actions and provide accountability.
- b. **Staffing and leadership that reflect and are responsive to the communities we serve.** Recruit, retain, promote and provide supports for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and ideas. Create a positive workplace climate to increase job satisfaction and effectiveness.
- c. **Lead for racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.** Provide training and resources for DCYF staff on taking an intersectional approach, which recognizes that people sit at the intersection of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender, and gender expression, class, and other ways of experiencing barriers and oppression. Training, coaching and support will also be provided on understanding how racism and other biases show up in our organizations and systems; applying a racial equity lens in our work; recognizing and mitigating implicit biases; and practicing cultural humility and responsiveness.

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

As part of our work to integrate and streamline practices as a newly formed agency, DCYF has developed a [Strategic and Racial Equity Plan](#) that covers the years 2021 through 2026 and provides the framework for our priorities.

The initial 2020 draft plan focused on five strategic priorities. With the integration of the racial equity plan, DCYF is now focusing on six agency priorities. Over the next five years, DCYF will focus on these six strategic priorities:

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- Safely reduce the number/rate of children in out-of-home care
- Create successful transitions to adulthood for youth and young adults in our care
- Create a high-quality integrated B-8 system
- Improve quality and intention of our practice
- Improve quality and availability of provider services

These strategic priorities are grounded in the agency's [mission, vision, values](#), and legislative purpose.

The Strategic and Racial Equity Plan helps our agency focus on how we serve children, youth, families and our communities as one entity. This framework helps to build on existing funding and services to strengthen our ability to serve families as well as to disrupt racial inequity and disproportionality in our systems.

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.