

**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.

As stated in Title 25 CFR Part 32.3, BIE's mission is to provide quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with a Tribe's needs for cultural and economic well-being, in keeping with the wide diversity of Indian Tribes and Alaska Native villages as distinct cultural and governmental entities. Further, the BIE is to manifest consideration of the whole person by taking into account the spiritual, mental, physical, and cultural aspects of the individual within his or her family and Tribal or village context. As described in BIE's Strategic Direction, the mission of the BIE is to provide students at BIE-funded schools with a culturally relevant, high-quality education that prepares students with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to flourish in the opportunities of tomorrow, become healthy and successful individuals, and lead their communities and sovereign nations to a thriving future that preserves their unique cultural identities.

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

BIE has 174 schools with academic programs distributed across 23 states. These schools are located across a spectrum of urban to very rural communities. Context from each of these 23 states, and the communities where BIE-funded schools are located matters in relationship to access and participation of students, educators, and other beneficiaries to BIE's educational programs. Internet and broadband access are also a barrier. Federal funding from 2015–2020 has increased broadband access for people living on tribal lands, but access continues to lag behind the rest of the country. Nationwide, conservative estimates show more than 18 percent of people living on tribal lands remain unserved by broadband as of 2020, compared to about 4 percent of people in non-tribal areas (GAO Report June 2022: Tribal Broadband: National Strategy and Coordination Framework Needed to Increase Access). These barriers impact teacher retention and recruitment differently in schools, based on where they are located and the type of broadband access they have. These barriers further impact on the availability of training and professional development of staff, student services, and parent engagement. COVID 19 magnified and continues to disproportionately impact schools located in remote areas where distance learning was not easily implemented (GAO April 2021: Indian Education: Schools Need More Assistance to Provide Distance Learning).

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?

BIE and Department of Interior (DOI) offices are continuing to invest on wireless network technologies to be made available to improve school and home internet access. BIE and other DOI offices continue the effort to invest in technology, related training to support its use, so as to reduce barriers imposed by broadband and geographical location of schools. BIE has provided guidance to schools on distance learning, including a comprehensive roadmap for schools and educators on effectively pivoting to remote instruction, which emphasizes careful planning, clear communication, and a focus on student engagement and well-being.

Furthermore, BIE is developing policy and procedures related to technology access and use based on schools' distance education IT needs. The BIE and DOI offices are also considering the BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children's advice to address special education teacher vacancies including providing technical assistance related to the recruitment, employment, and retention of highly qualified personnel, developing additional options for recruiting qualified personnel and leveraging work with Native American-serving special education preparation programs.

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

These steps identified above are ongoing. The BIE Strategic Direction is currently being revised and will guide the timelines and targeted milestones for addressing these barriers. The current plan is for the revised BIE Strategic Direction will be launched in 2024, to be in effect in SY 2024-25.

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.