

**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.

Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Equity Stance:

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is dedicated to the equitable implementation of policy, practices, procedures, and legislation that translates into resource allocation, education rigor, and opportunities for historically and currently marginalized youth, students, and families including civil rights protected classes. This means the restructuring and dismantling of systems and institutions that create the dichotomy of beneficiaries and the oppressed and marginalized.

ODE's Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Program's Mission & Vision

Mission: The EI/ECSE System exists to partner with families and caregivers providing free, equitable, timely, and individualized services that enhance learning and development through everyday opportunities for all infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities.

Vision: All of Oregon's families with infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities are healthy, learning, and thriving in communities that embrace disability as a natural part of the human experience and are welcoming, equitable, and accessible.

ODE's EI/ECSE program aims to uphold ODE's equity stance and the EI/ECSE mission and vision statements through policies and practices that focus on the equitable provision of early intervention services for infants, toddlers, and their families. This encompasses Child Find efforts (OAR 581-015-2080; OAR 581-015-2774) that include outreach to children and families who have been historically marginalized (e.g., migrant children, children experiencing homelessness; children in foster care). Additionally, Oregon has established service areas that serve all parts of the state, including rural areas (OAR 581-015-2705; OAR 581-015-2710) and are available to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families (OAR 581-015-2712). Oregon applies general supervision practices to monitor and support service areas and allocate resources based on data and priorities.

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

ODE's EI/ECSE program has identified the following barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in Oregon's early intervention services: awareness of early intervention services, understaffing, lack of a diverse workforce, and lack of comprehensive training in equitable practices.

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?

During 2023-2024 ODE's EI/ECSE program worked with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center to begin implementation of the EI/ECSE System Framework. Oregon is using the framework to take an in-depth look at the components of our current EI/ECSE system in order to identify areas that can be strengthened. This includes ongoing assessment of how Oregon can better address issues of equitable access and participation in early intervention.

The advertisement of early intervention services and outreach to historically marginalized populations is being addressed through increased Child Find efforts and collaboration with state and community partners. This includes heightened monitoring of data related to the populations referred to and accessing EI services in order to remain aware of disparities. Oregon's EI/ECSE program currently works with the Oregon Screening Project (OSP) to provide family access to online developmental screening. The EI/ECSE program is working with OSP to increase outreach to target areas and communities. Additionally, regional EI/ECSE programs must report on their Child Find efforts annually within their Service Area Plan (SAP). ODE's EI/ECSE program has also established a statewide Professional Learning Community (PLC) focused on referral and intake efforts and practices across the state. During the bimonthly PLC meetings, state agency staff and practitioners collaborate to provide training, monitor referral and intake practices, review current intake/referral data, and discuss barriers and possible solutions. Furthermore, in 2024 the EI/ECSE program began working with the newly established Oregon Home Visiting System Coordination Center (OHVSCC) to support coordinated efforts across early childhood home visiting programs in the state. Within our work with the center, we are focusing on ways to increase public awareness of and streamlined access to home visiting programs across the state, which includes early intervention.

Understaffing and lack of a diverse workforce are being addressed through alternative pathways to licensure, collaboration with higher education programs, and increased national recruitment efforts. Oregon has an established EI/ECSE Authorization process that provides an alternative pathway to licensure. This pathway removes barriers such as cost of obtaining licensure. Current data indicate that the Authorization process is being used more frequently to address staff shortages, with a 40% increase in portfolio submissions since 2020. ODE's EI/ECSE program revised the Authorization process in 2023 to ensure its alignment with national standards and moved it to an online submission process to make it easier for candidates to complete. The state agency also collaborates with EI/ECSE Higher education on the EI/ECSE system framework's recruitment and retention indicators. In partnership with Higher Education, ODE's EI/ECSE program is working to increase outreach and awareness of EI/ECSE Higher Education programs, scholarships, practicums and tuition support to typically underrepresented groups in Oregon. Additionally, ODE's EI/ECSE program created a national recruitment website and is currently developing a visual pathway with early childhood partners to highlight the various routes to EI/ECSE certification. The visual pathways will be shared with high schools, community

colleges, child care and early childhood partners. Furthermore, the ODE EI/ECSE program is currently summarizing survey data from EI/ECSE directors, specialists, and assistants on local efforts to increase recruitment and retention, as well as strategies and barriers to creating a diverse workforce. The results of these data will be shared with EI/ECSE Higher Education, as well as regional EI/ECSE programs.

Thorough training in equitable practices is being addressed through the Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD). As part of the CSPD, Oregon's EI/ECSE Personnel Standards were updated in 2023. Revision of the EI/ECSE standards included a focus on ensuring the revised standards comprehensively address equity. According to Oregon Administrative Rule 581-015-2900 EI/ECSE supervisors, specialists, related service providers and EI/ECSE assistants must have a professional development plan based on the EI/ECSE Personnel Standards. The standards also guide the EI/ECSE Authorization process (an alternative to licensure). Therefore, the focus on equity in the personnel standards impacts the professional development system as a whole.

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

The overall goal for ODE's EI/ECSE program is to create a statewide system that supports and sustains the equitable provision of services for young children with disabilities and their families. The program began a review of Oregon's current EI/ECSE system in March 2023 and has been working on implementation of a new EI/ECSE system framework since September 2023.

Awareness of early intervention services: Oregon's goal is to ensure all families are aware of early intervention services and that qualifying children and families have a clear and easy pathway into services. ODE's EI/ECSE program aims to increase referral numbers annually, with special attention to increasing referrals of children from traditionally marginalized populations. Additionally, the program wants to reduce the number of children and families who are lost between the intake and evaluation process. The ODE EI/ECSE program is addressing these goals through the Oregon Screening Project (OSP), bimonthly Intake/Referral Community of Practice (COP) meetings, program Services Area Plans, and partnership with the Home Visiting System Coordination Center (HVSCC). All of these strategies are currently in place, with the following ongoing timelines for reviewing the impact of our efforts:

- EI/ECSE program referral and intake numbers are calculated and analyzed bimonthly from the state data system (ecWeb) and reviewed during the bimonthly Intake/Referral COP.
- The OSP provides quarterly reports on screening and referral numbers and state staff meet with OSP quarterly to discuss progress.
- EI/ECSE programs report on their Child Find efforts within their Service Area Plan each Spring as part of general supervision.

Staff shortages and lack of diverse personnel: Oregon's overall goals are to increase the number of EI personnel and the racial and ethnic diversity of EI personnel in the state. ODE's EI/ECSE program is addressing these goals through the EI/ECSE Authorization process, a national recruitment website, collaboration with Higher Education programs, development of a visual pathway to highlight routes to a career in EI/ECSE, and ongoing collection and analysis of data

related to staff demographics and shortages. All of these strategies are currently in place or in development, with the following ongoing timelines for reviewing the impact of our efforts:

- EI/ECSE Authorization numbers are collected each year and analyzed to assess the impact on staff shortages within EI/ECSE service areas.
- A needs assessment survey was developed and distributed to EI/ECSE programs in February 2024 to gather more in-depth data on program needs, including staff shortages. Results will be summarized and reviewed by April 2024. A needs assessment will be conducted with EI/ECSE programs every two years.
- Triannual meetings with Higher Education faculty began in 2023 and will continue to be ongoing, along with advertisement of their programs and scholarships to Oregon's EI/ECSE programs.
- Analysis of the number and type of job openings for Oregon's nine EI/ECSE programs is completed in the fall and spring of each year to monitor the impacts of recruitment and retention efforts.

Comprehensive and ongoing training in equitable practices: Oregon's goal is to have an early intervention workforce that is highly trained in implementing equitable practices. ODE's EI/ECSE program has begun to address this goal through our Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD). As part of the CSPD, Oregon updated the EI/ECSE Personnel Standards used for professional development plans and the EI/ECSE Authorization process to ensure they thoroughly address equity. The revised standards were completed and adopted in October 2023 and are now being used for professional development plans and Authorization.

- EI/ECSE programs submit information on their professional development plans annually within their Service Area Plans. They are reviewed to assess alignment with the EI/ECSE Personnel Standards (including a focus on equitable practices).
- EI/ECSE specialists participating in the Authorization process submit portfolios in the fall and spring of each year. The updated EI/ECSE personnel standards began being used for spring 2024 portfolio submissions. Portfolios are assessed on their alignment with the EI/ECSE Personnel Standards (including a focus on equitable practices) during the fall and spring submission process each year.
- A needs assessment survey was developed and distributed to EI/ECSE programs and EI/ECSE personnel in February 2024, which included questions about training needs. Results will be analyzed and reviewed by April 2024 to help inform the state's CSPD. A needs assessment will be conducted with EI/ECSE programs every two years.

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.