OMB Control Number 1894-0005

Expiration 2/28/2026

# 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](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title20/html/USCODE-2020-title20-chap31-subchapII-part2-sec1228a.htm)) 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 Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE’s) vision is that Virginia will maximize the potential of all learners. The mission of the VDOE is to advance equitable and innovative learning. The VDOE continues to be committed to engaging in robust data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure equitable access. The Department of Special Populations oversees participation in federally funded programs for students with disabilities.

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

The VDOE continues to ensure equal opportunities to participate for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in federally funded programs for students with disabilities. While Virginia did not identify barriers to this access, it does continue to identify areas for improvement and the support of fidelity of implementation of its requirements, guidance, and evidence-based practices.

As part of this focus, Virginia develops plans for continuous improvement in serving students with disabilities and their families. Virginia’s development of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) conducted an in-depth data analysis that sought to identify improvement in promoting the ability of students with specific disability identifications to meet the high standards of graduating with a standard or advanced studies Virginia diploma. Virginia’s SSIP focuses on increasing the number students with disabilities identified with specific learning disabilities (SLD), other health impairment (OHI), emotional disability (ED), and/or intellectual disability (ID) who graduate with a regular diploma. Based on a review of available graduation data and stakeholder input, VDOE identified opportunities to improve equitable implementation of this goal. Specifically, a lack of understanding of the graduation requirements for a regular high school diploma for secondary students with children that have more involved educational needs.

1. 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?

Based on the focus areas identified above, the VDOE intends to use federal special education grant funds to increase outreach to families of secondary students with disabilities that have more involved educational needs to ensure clear understanding of Virginia’s Standards of Accreditation with a focus on graduation requirements. This will be accomplished by organizing dedicated opportunities for regional and statewide meetings and conferences with the purpose of engaging with families of secondary students with disabilities that have complex educational needs. During these meetings and conferences, information will be disseminated on graduation requirements and staff will be available to answer questions specific to student needs. VDOE staff have also developed additional resources and supports to increase family involvement and participation in completing the parent involvement survey that supports data collection for Indicator 8 for the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report.

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

Continuing from 2023 and into 2024, VDOE staff will attend several regional and statewide meetings and conferences where families of secondary students that have children with more involved educational needs will be in attendance including the *2024 Youth and Family Summit* at James Madison University in June with dedicated space and agendas geared specifically for engaging with families. The VDOE staff have also committed to providing staff from select local educational agencies to participate in collaborative work sessions focused on underrepresented populations and strategies for increasing participate and response rates for Indicator 8 for the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report.

**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.