

**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.

It is the mission of the American Samoa Department of Education-Special Education Division to education students with disabilities so that they will be able to function independently in the mainstream of society. The ASDOE-SPED hires, trains teachers and staff, work cooperatively with all staff and administrators to provide a free, appropriate, public education for students with disabilities. The Division collaborates with other agencies to ensure that programs and services are available from birth through transition into adult community. We also cooperate with other related service agencies to inform the public about services and issues to support parents and to provide in-service and degree related education opportunities. It is our belief that people with disabilities in American Samoa should have an equal opportunity for education, the right to a quality life regardless of their disability and the right to share in shaping our community.

The ASDOE-Special Education Division ensures that there is equitable access to, and equitable participation to special education and related services through the engagement of its stakeholders and participation of other government agencies directly involved with the projects and activities under the IDEA Part B. ASDOE-Special Education Division have the following activities, but are not limited to the:

- Professional development and trainings;
- Child Find Process;
- Annual State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) and the State Systematic Improvement Plan (SSIP);
- ASDOE-Special Education Advisory Council;
- Consultation meetings with the private nonprofit school representatives and parents of children with disabilities who are parentally placed in private schools;
- Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to promote transition and employment services for youth with disabilities;
- Stakeholders meetings;
- Parents trainings

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

There is an island wide shortage of teachers and special education is no exception when it comes to teacher shortage; the lack of in person related services providers, in particular, Occupational Therapist (OT), Speech and Language Pathologist (SPL) and Assistive Technology.

The shortage of in person related services providers and shortage of special education teachers affects the equitable access of special education and related services to infants and toddlers and youth with disabilities and their families.

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?

ASDOE-Special Education Division is taking the following steps to address the barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project and activities:

- Contracted off island related services providers to deliver Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Pathologist and Assistive Technology through online teletherapy for its students with disabilities. The contractors have placed related services providers at the various schools to provide related services and address the IEP requirement for students needing services through teletherapy.
- To address the teacher shortage, the ASDOE-Special Education Division is partnering with the University of Hawaii & the American Samoa Community College to facilitate certification courses leading to certification in the Special Education content area with the possibility of continuing coursework to attain bachelors and master's degrees in special education.

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

The ASDOE-Special Education Division currently has ongoing contracts with off island vendors providing related services through teletherapy. The contract renewal with the vendors is on a two-year basis.

A teacher certification program is currently under review; also a bachelor's degree cohort program with the University of Hawaii is also under review and should begin this Fall 2023.

The ASDOE-Special Education Division leadership team continues to hold meetings with the DOE leadership and the Office of Human Resources to find ways to meet the needs. These meetings develop action plans moving forward.

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

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