

# General Overview of GEPA Section 427

**Purpose:** To ensure equitable access to, and participation in, Federally-assisted programs for all beneficiaries.

Section 427 highlights, but is not limited to, six barriers that can impede equitable access or participation:

Gender

National origin

Disability

Race

Color

Age

An applicant must determine and define:

- The participants and community to serve
- The local circumstances
- Barriers that may inhibit participation

# GEPA Section 427 Standard Form Changes

Original Form	Updated Form
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. One overall general requirement</li><li>2. Flexibility to determine and define the barriers to “equitable access” and “equitable participation”</li><li>3. Discretion in how to describe plans to address the identified barriers</li><li>4. Description may be provided in a separate narrative or in connection with related topics in the application</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Applicants respond to four questions with specificity</li><li>2. Flexibility to determine and define the barriers to “equitable access” and “equitable participation”</li><li>3. A timeline for meeting targeted milestones for removing identified barriers</li></ol>



# Updated GEPA Form Has Four Questions

**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.

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

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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?

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

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**Notes:**

Applicants must respond to each question on the standard form and submit the form with its grant application package or State plan.

For Grants.gov application submissions:

1. The updated form is integrated into Grants.gov and no longer needs to be uploaded as PDF.
2. The form is electronic and each text box response allows 4,000 characters.
3. An error message is received if a response is missing and the form can not be saved. (see next slide)



# Sample Error Message

SECTIONS:

- Notice to All Applicants
- Notes
- Burden Statement

**Errors!**  
Check for Errors revealed the following errors:

- Notice to All Applicants**
  - Ensure Equitable Access is required: Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
  - Barriers is required: Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries.
  - Steps is required: 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.
  - Timeline is required: What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers.

## NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS: EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES:

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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.

Ensure Equitable Access is required: Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

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



# Grant Program Example

- **Grant Program Goal:** To provide *grants to alternative high schools, non-profit organizations, and combinations of those institutions* to provide academics and other support services to prepare low-income, first-generation college students, and other underrepresented students for a college education.
- **ED Strong Interest In:** Ensuring *low-income students, first-generation college students, students who are English learners, students with disabilities, homeless students, students who are in foster care, and other disconnected students*, receive the necessary support to assist them in successfully pursuing a college education.
- The several slides that follow provide an example response to each question on the new Section 427 form from a fictitious organization applying for federal funds.



# Question One – Response Example

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Our organization has a contract with the city to operate a non-traditional high school in the local YMCA. As **non-traditional**, we will **open earlier and remain open longer** than a regular high and be **open seven days a week** to work with students living on their own, students that are homeless, and students expelled from a regular high school. One of the goals of our organization is **to ensure homeless and other non-traditional students** are able to **obtain high school diplomas**.



# Question 2 – Response Example

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

Based on the population that is currently served our organization has identified homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, and language as potential barriers.



# Question 3 – Response Example

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?

We intend to **offer core subjects of varying levels of math, reading, and science, several times throughout the day and evening** in small group settings so that registered students are able to attend classes needed to graduate. Daily attendance will be required although not at any set time. **Multi-lingual counselors will be on sight** at various times to regularly engage with each student. A **mobile health truck** will be onsite bi-weekly to address health and safety issues.



# Question 4 – Response Example

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?
- Extensive outreach through **posters and flyers posted at local community organizations and shops**, support from the YMCA patrons, mobile health van team, and our **counseling staff conducting daily foot patrols** within a specific perimeter and in the hangout areas of targeted youth in order to share information and recruit targeted population.
  - The **target population** assigned through the system such as juvenile courts will also **assist in the identification and recruitment** of the target population.
  - **Register five percent (50 students)** of the target population (as documented by local standard statistical references), for core classes **within 180 days** of the opening of the school year.



# GEPA Form Instructions

- 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.
- Applicants are *not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity* in order to submit an application.
- Applicants may have *already included some or all 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.



# GEPA Form Instructions continued

- Applicants must respond to each question using the associated text box. Each text box *allows approximately 4000 characters*; therefore, if copying and pasting into the text box from another document be sure to check that everything copied.
- Applicants should *use the “check for errors” button* before they save the form. Applicants will receive an error message if any response is missing and will not be able to submit the application due to the missing information.
- Applicants that have *already undertaken steps* to address barriers must *still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps* already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that *believe no barriers* exist must *still provide an explanation and/or description* to each question to *validate that perception*, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.



# GEPA Section 427 Resources

- PDF version of Section 427 form and instructions (add website link)
- Computer-based training, [Ensuring Equitable Opportunities Under the GEPA Section 427](#)
- GEPA Section 427 form Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- The Department of Education Equity Action Plan at [ED.gov/equity](#)
- Comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form may be addressed to the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section in the competition Notice Inviting Applications.