

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Public School System * Early Intervention Program**

**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.

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 CNMI Part C Early Intervention (EI) program has in place the following mission, policies, and/ or commitments for ensuring equitable access and participation early intervention services and support of all eligible children birth through age 2 and their families –

- a. The mission of the Public School System (PSS) is to promote collaborative relationships among agencies and families in order to maximize our children's potential and build respect for cultural values and family choices. The goal of CNMI's Part C EI Program is to ensure all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families are identified and provided early intervention services, in their natural environment based on the family's needs. In supporting this effort, the Program conducts child find / public awareness activities in all 3 islands (Rota, Tinian, and Saipan) in efforts to locate, identify, and evaluate all children including historically underrepresented populations such as, infants and toddlers living in rural areas; or exposed to child abuse and/ or neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse; who are in foster care/ or wards of the state; who are experiencing homelessness; and have or at risk for developmental delays and /or disabilities.

The CNMI EI Program has in place policies that promotes collaboration among early childhood programs to ensure all families including families in rural areas and vulnerable populations such as low income and disadvantaged are informed of the early childhood programs that family may avail to. These policies include --

- i. Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation (CHCC) Maternal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Program and the CNMI Public School System – Early Intervention, Special Education, Early Head Start and Head Start Programs agreements sets for 1) collaboration in joint efforts in supporting Program's planning, implementation, and/or evaluation; 2) to assist efforts to build and implement CNMI's Early Childhood System to support families and communities in their development of children that are healthy and ready at school entry; 3) to refer to the programs or receive referrals from the programs; and 4) for eligible families to be enrolled and access services from the programs.
- ii. CNMI's Public School System Directives for the following:

Directive 1: The establishment of the Early Intervention and Early Head Start Programs and the collaboration between Programs.

Directive 2: In the establishment of the Transition Services between Early Intervention and Special Education Programs. This Directive serves as a method to ensure a smooth transition for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

1. Interagency Agreement (IA) between the Public School System and the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation. The purpose of the IA is to 1) facilitate the coordination of all available resources for early intervention services between the two systems; 2) delineate the financial responsibilities and obligations; 3) ensure early intervention services are provided in a timely manner; 4) ensure procedures to resolve intra and interagency disputes; and 5) ensures procedures to reimburse PSS, if needed to prevent a delay in the timely provision of services that should be paid by the CHCC.
- b. The EI Program has in place the following initiatives to ensure equitable participation of young children and their families –
 - i. Child Find activities occur in the different islands and communities. These activities include house to house dissemination of information and materials on early intervention services and support. In addition, families are provided with an invitation to 1) complete a developmental screenings questionnaire for their child (ren); and 2) for parents to attend a family learning session to promote their child’s development. These child find/ public awareness activities occur yearly in the island of Rota and Tinian. For families in Saipan, prior to the pandemic families attended activities sponsored by community partners. Prior to global pandemic parents on Saipan attended community outreach activities co-sponsored in collaboration with CHCC s in family engagement activities.
 - ii. The EI Program is at full implementation of the early childhood coaching model. Early Intervention services are provided in home settings to support the needs of all families that are enrolled in the program. Service Providers facilitate coaching sessions in settings preferred by the parents. Most often these coaching sessions occur in homes, parks, child care settings, or at the Early Head Start Centers. The focus of the coaching sessions is to support families in nurturing their child’s development within the daily routine of the family. Service Providers fly to Tinian and Rota to provide EI Services as indicated in the child’s IFSP.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries.
 - a. The EI Program identified two barriers that may impede the families to access and participate in EI and outreach activities --
 - i. When speaking families at community outreach events, families have indicated that they did not know or have heard about the early intervention services and support.
 - ii. Based on the attendance at family engagement events, 70% do not participate due to the lack of public transportation and someone available to baby sit for their child.
3. Refer to the Table below on the plan/steps to address the barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activities and timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Goal 1: To ensure equitable access to early intervention services and support, the CNMI Part C Program will collaborate with island Mayors and / or community champions to intentionally focus on the early identification of young children birth through age 2 who have a history of child abuse and/ or neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse; are in foster care/ or wards of the state; are experiencing homelessness; and have or at risk for developmental delays and /or disabilities.

Objective 1.1: To increase awareness and collaborative partnerships with island Mayors and / or Community champions to co-facilitate the promotion, dissemination, and participation of child find / public awareness activities in efforts to increase the identification of young children birth through age 2 with or at risk for developmental disabilities from vulnerable and underserved families.

Objective 1.2: To increase parents’ knowledge and awareness of the EI program and how to access these services.

Activities to Meet Outcomes	Steps to Implement Activities	<i>Targeted Milestones in efforts to measure and track</i>	<i>List required resources, partners to contact, and what types of technical assistance might be needed.</i>	Timelines
1.1 Expand collaboration and partnerships with island Mayors and community champions to co-facilitate the promotion, dissemination, and participation of child find/public awareness and outreach activities.	1. Conduct an assessment of where parents hear about programs and services. (E.g. radio, church, TV)	Listing of effective methods for sharing information to parents	CNMI EI Program Director, Family Advocate, Data Manager, & Guam CEDDERS	Apr to Jun
	2. Convene a community partnership meeting in each island to develop a plan for disseminating and distributing information and materials to parents from diverse cultures.	Three Community Partnership Plan for Engagement	Community champions from each island, EI Program Director, Family Advocate, Data Manager, & Guam CEDDERS	May to Jul
	3. Implement, monitor, and evaluate least 2 – 3 prioritized activities or strategies identified in the plan for engagement that are held within the community or village settings that families are readily and able to access.	Progress Reports and status of the 2-3 prioritized activities identified in the Plan for Engagement	Community champions from each island, EI Program Director, & Family Advocate, Data	Aug to May

			Manager, & Guam CEDDERS	
	4. Present the findings and recommendations for next steps to the community partnership members and the Interagency Coordinating Council.	Annual report on progress on the Community Plans for Engagement	Community champions from each island, EI Program Director, Family Advocate, Data Manager, & Guam CEDDERS	May - June
1.2 Participate in CHCC outreach activities that includes sharing information about the EI Program and audio files in different languages.	1. Develop and record a brief persuasive speech (E.g. Elevator Speech) on the EI Program in English and translated into Chamorro, Tagalog, Chinese, Bangladesh, and Carolinian that are audio files.	30 second brief persuasive speech on EI in English and translated into Chamorro, Tagalog, Chinese, Bangladesh, and Carolinian that are audio files.	EI Program Director, Family Advocate, Data Manager, & Guam CEDDERS	Apr - Jun
	2. Schedule a meeting with CHCC to discuss participation of EI Program at the outreach activities.	Meeting notes and schedule of outreach activities.	CHCC Program Coordinator, EI Program Director, Family Advocate, & Data Manager.	Jul - Aug
	3. Participate at outreach events and share information about the EI Program.	Listing outreach activities with the number of families that were provided information on the EI Program including audio files.	CHCC Program Coordinator, EI Program Director, Family Advocate, Data Manager.	Aug to Jun
	4. Present summary report of public awareness and outreach activities to the Interagency Coordinating Council.	The summary report shows the number of parents provided with information on EI program outreach events.	CHCC Program Coordinator, EI Program Director, Family Advocate, & Data Manager.	May - Jun