

## ABSTRACT

### *Equitas Academy Charter Schools Replication and Expansion Project*

**Equitas Academy Charter School, Inc., 1700 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015**  
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**Project Description and Goals:** Equitas Academy Charter School, Inc. (Equitas) is a small Los Angeles charter network that operates three high-quality charter schools. Equitas has consistently increased student achievement and closed achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students with academic outcomes that exceed neighborhood, district and statewide averages. Equitas' scholars are 97% Latino (the other 3% non-white) with 95% qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL); 11% have disabilities (SpEd). In 2015-16, 47% of Equitas scholars were English Learners (EL), including 80% of incoming Kindergarteners. Forty percent of Equitas scholars' parents did not graduate high school and only 14% have a college degree.

The Founder and CEO of Equitas, Malka Borrego, was raised in Pico-Union, one of the nation's most densely populated and impoverished communities adjacent to downtown Los Angeles, comprised largely of recent immigrants. By the state's definition, Pico-Union's public schools are failing. All five nearest elementary schools, three middle schools and three high schools are in "Program Improvement" (PI) status, having failed to meet federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria two consecutive years. One nearby middle school and one high school have been in PI status for 19 years. Today, all three Equitas Academies, with a fourth already authorized to open in 2017, provide families in Pico-Union with a high quality alternative. For 2016-17, Equitas received almost four times as many applications as it had space available in its existing TK-8 schools. Current scholars and their families are clamoring for an Equitas High School to continue their success.

Ms. Borrego's commitment to and success in improving educational options for this high-need community was recently recognized with the California Charter Schools Association's **2016 Hart Vision Leader of the Year Award**; Equitas' first two schools have been designated **Gold Ribbon Schools** by the California Department of Education, and the Education Equality Index recently gave Equitas national recognition as **one of the 10 schools in all of California having the lowest socio-economic achievement gaps in the State**. By almost every metric, Equitas' scholars are outperforming students of all races and economic levels, with particularly dramatic outcomes compared to schools in Pico-Union.

*Equitas*, a Latin word for justice, equity, and fairness, has a mission to provide a structured, achievement-based school community that prepares students to graduate from four-year colleges and universities. At Equitas, "College Prep Begins in Kindergarten," and infuse a college preparation mindset into every aspect of school life with a rigorous, structured program that includes intensive and extensive personalized supports to ensure mastery.

A total of \$3.45M in CSP funds is requested over five years to help Equitas expand two existing schools (one TK-4, one 5-8) to serve 500 additional scholars, open two new elementary schools (grades TK-4, 500 scholars each), one new middle school (grades 5-8, 400 scholars), and Equitas' first high school (9-12, 500 scholars), all in Pico-Union. This proposed activity will meet the purpose of the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools competition (CFDA 84.282M) and enable Equitas to plan, design, refine and implement our model to serve 2,400 more students each year with a rigorous, TK-12 college-preparatory program.