



**Rural, Insular, Native Achievement Programs (RINAP)
Progress Update**

Grantee Name CNMI Public School System

Grant

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESF I – SEA | <input type="checkbox"/> IA – Consolidated Grant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESF II – SEA | <input type="checkbox"/> Republic of Palau |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARP-OA SEA | <input type="checkbox"/> ESF I – Gov |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> ESF II – Gov |

Topic¹

Grant Administration & Evaluation: In your responses, please describe the efforts made to ensure that grant program staff are aware of their individual responsibilities and are following the policies and procedures related to the current grant. Also describe any significant actions taken to ensure Federal funds are used for their intended purposes and that the projects and activities supported by Federal funds are meeting the established goals and objectives. Provide supporting documentation (e.g., training materials; communication of rules, regulations, and grant requirements; completed project/activity evaluation instruments; communication with beneficiaries/grantees regarding the assessment or progress of projects; project timelines; or quarterly budgets), as applicable. Supporting documentation should also include evidence that the grantee has established timelines for major grant funded projects and activities and are making noteworthy efforts to adhere to the timelines if implementation of major projects or activities has not occurred or is significantly off schedule, provide an explanation and an updated schedule for how the projects or activities will be implemented or completed before the end of the grant period of performance (2 CFR §200.301; 2 CFR §200.329).

Directions: *In preparation for the Progress Update, grantees will receive an electronic form four weeks in advance of the grantee interview to submit their responses and associated documentation. Grantees must submit their completed form (and upload any related supporting documentation) two weeks in advance of the grantee interview. Where applicable, grantees should upload documentation that supports the narrative response (e.g., public notice to stakeholders, guidance documents, sample monitoring report, media interviews, speeches, meeting agenda, etc.). Narrative responses should be brief and in bullet form, aligned with grantee goals and priorities.*

¹ The topic will change for each progress update and will be selected by the U.S. Department of Education. Grantees will be notified of the topic at least one quarter in advance of progress updates and the topic will be the same for all grantees completing a progress update. The topic will be closely related to a specific, or set of related, statutory or regulatory requirements. The specific, or set of related, statutory or regulatory requirements outlining Departmental oversight authority will be cited in the electronic questionnaire distributed in advance of progress updates (e.g., Internal Controls: 2 C.F.R. 200.61).

As it relates to the progress update topic:

Grant Administration and Evaluation

1. What were the grantee's key accomplishments this past quarter?

- Hiring of Director of Internal Control & Evaluation (new position under Federal Programs Office) and the Research & Evaluation Program Manager (under the Office of Accountability, Research & Evaluation).
 - Both positions are working together on designing internal project evaluation and reporting processes to be used to determine if grant-funded projects are progressing as intended, as well as to identify areas that need improvement throughout the life of the grant.
 - Ensure activities are tracked and evaluation data is utilized for learning and better decision making (e.g. produce a report on findings with suggestions on improvements to accountable bodies for transparency and information sharing).
- Attendance in grants training webinars hosted by PITI-VITI for grantees on managing their awards.
- Developed internal tracking system for ESF expenditures - school operations to support COVID-19 mitigation measures, including reconfiguring classroom spaces, procuring supplies to sanitize, clean, and disinfect all school facilities.
- Delivery of supplies, materials, iPads, laptops, Mifi per student needed for the reopening of the SY 2021-2022 school year.
- Smooth reopening of schools on August 18, 2021. Full face-to-face, 5 days a week delivery of instruction determination for middle and high schools are based on the school's ability to achieve the target 80% of students are fully vaccinated. TJSHS (81%), RHI and MHS (79%).
- Students and school staff undergo antigen testing. 64% students and 90% staff vaccinated. 0 positive cases.
- Continued safety measures in place: masks or face shields on all PSS campuses and buildings, temperature screening, 3-feet social distancing (for schools at 80% and above), regular sanitizing, cohorting for schools before 80%, required vaccinations for group activities, quarterly antigen screening for all staff and students, vaccination efforts in schools below 80%, hiring of school nurses and monitors.
- Decommissioned and replaced five sixty-six passenger buses due to age and safety issues; implemented COVID-19 mitigation measures on all school buses: procured electrostatic sprayers to sanitize buses, implemented social distancing - reduced seating capacity, installed of hand sanitizer dispensers, temperature screening, and mandatory face masks for all bus riders.
- Offered face-to-face summer school program for credit recovery and project based learning (PBL) activities during the summer program.
- Increase in the number of students grades 1-5 who are at or above proficiency benchmark in STAR Reading.

Artifacts

Federal Programs Office (FPO) Organizational Chart

Grant Training Certificates

ESF-Expenditures Tracking Sheet

Percent of Students/Staff Vaccinated

Newspaper Articles on PSS Re-opening

STAR Assessment Report

2. What were the grantee's key challenges this past quarter?
 - Managing operational challenges around the closure of physical campuses which limit the access to gathering students, and the evolving situation around the pandemic.
 - 80% vaccination target to fully reopen all schools to face-to-face, 5 days a week instruction by September 27, 2021. Need to increase vaccination and screening efforts
 - Comfort level of parents and staff with students returning to school, including participation in Athletics, school sports, after-school activities, clubs with unvaccinated students/teachers.
 - FPO staff often handles the same spreadsheets, Word documents, and other source materials numerous times, checking for inaccuracies, proofreading, and managing revisions. Staff rely on their methods to track project outcomes, progress and deadlines which could be a problem due to wasted time and duplicate data entry -- from errors to slip in, typos to outdated information someone forgot to delete.
 - Reliance on manual evaluation reporting system.

3. What methods, tools, and processes are you utilizing to address these challenges?
 - Work collaboratively with schools, families, Commonwealth Health Corp., the COVID-19 taskforce to plan and schedule vaccinations for eligible students. Hold regular PTSA meetings to alleviate concerns and plan next steps for the full reopening of schools.
 - FPO has set up an easily accessible recordkeeping system, containing important information about CNMI PSS grant-funded projects, all funding agreements, timelines, and ongoing evaluations. Project files also include copies of emails and notes about telephone conversations with USDoE. Recordkeeping, in addition to capacity building in the office, ensures that all project information is centralized and accurate, and staff are all on the same page.
 - Proactive steps like cross-training grants staff, holding regular staff and stakeholder meetings, and strengthening communications with stakeholders.
 - Working with the Office of Accountability, Research & Evaluation to prioritize quality data and evaluation processes.

4. How can the U.S. Department of Education help the grantee address these challenges?
 - See below

5. What are the grantee's technical assistance needs related to these challenges?
 - Recommendations for a grants management system or solution that is paperless and cloud-based, for all stakeholders to use simultaneously. Electric routing and tracking

monitoring systems can help connect teams, with work flowing from the Federal Programs Office to the next office, research staff, and other responsible stakeholders.

Public 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 1810- 0757. The expiration date is December 2, 2021. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour 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 benefit 2 CFR 200.327 and 2 CFR 200.328. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this individual collection, or if you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form, application or survey, please contact Joanne Osborne, Rural, Insular, and Native Achievement Programs, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Rm. 3E306, Washington, DC 20202 or email joanne.osborne@ed.gov directly.