Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAM) Program

2021 and 2023 Cohorts

August 2026

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Key Terms

- ***Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA):*** The *ESEA* is the national education law that seeks to provide all students opportunities to receive a fair and high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps.
- ***Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA):*** Signed into law in December 2015, this act reauthorizes the ESEA.
- ***The Government Performance Results Act of 1993 (GPRA):*** Under the *GPRA*, federal departments and agencies must clearly describe the goals and objectives of programs, identify resources and actions needed to accomplish goals and objectives, develop a means of measuring progress, and regularly report on achievement.
- **Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs):** IHEs are institutions of postsecondary education, colloquially known as universities or colleges.
- **Knowledge Management System (KMS):** In this context, KMS refers to an online financial and performance monitoring tool for the U.S Department of Education's (Department's) discretionary grants. By reporting in the KMS, grantees provide data to demonstrate that they are making substantial progress toward meeting approved goals, objectives, and performance measures to receive continuation funding.
- **Local Educational Agency (LEA):** As defined in the *ESEA*, an LEA is a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for administrative control or direction of or to perform a service function for public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.
- **Native American Languages:** These are the historical, traditional languages spoken by Native Americans, consistent with section 103 of the Native American Languages Act (25 U.S.C. 2902).
- **Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAM) Program:** The purpose of the NAM program is to award grants to eligible entities to develop and enhance their capacity to provide effective instruction and support to Native American and Native Alaskan students who are identified as English learners (ELs). The goal of this program is to support the teaching, learning, and studying of Native American and Native Alaskan languages while also increasing the English language proficiency (ELP) of the students served so they learn the same challenging state academic content and meet the achievement standards for all students.
- **State Educational Agency (SEA):** As defined in the *ESEA,* an SEA is a state-level government organization within each U.S. state or territory responsible for education, including providing information, resources, and technical assistance on educational matters to schools and residents.

Executive Summary

In the Native American Languages Act of 1990, Congress recognized the importance of preserving Native American languages by protecting and promoting the rights of Native Americans to develop their proficiency and use of Native American languages.[1] In addition, it is the policy of the United States to encourage and support the use of Native American languages in the classroom to ensure the survival of Native American languages and to increase educational opportunities and achievement for Native American and Alaska Native (NA/AN) students.[2] Native language preservation has been shown to confer cognitive, socio-emotional, and educational benefits to Native students.[3]

Thus, the Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAM) program awards discretionary grants to eligible entities to develop and enhance their capacity to provide effective instruction and support to Native American students who are identified as English learners (ELs). The goal of the NAM program is to support the teaching, learning, and studying of Native American languages.

This document highlights and presents information about the 2021 and 2023 grantee cohorts of the NAM program. It uses self-reported information from grantees in the 2024 fiscal year (FY). The data presented capture the grantees' performance results based on three *Government Performance Results Act (GRPA*) measures for the cohorts. In addition to the required focus on English language proficiency (ELP), the NAM program identified priority areas for funded projects that included NA/AN language instruction, remote instruction, parent engagement, and family literacy. The report also presents descriptions and graphs illustrating grantee school program types; project features; and reported program outcomes, progress, and challenges.

A summary of the 2021 and 2023 grantee performance on *GPRA* measures in FY 2024 includes the following:

- More than 1,000 PreK–12 students made progress in learning a Native language.
- The percentage of students who attained proficiency on the state-approved reading assessment was 75 percent for the 2021 cohort and 50 percent for the 2023 cohort.[4]
- The percentage of students who attained proficiency in English on the state-approved English proficiency exam was 38 percent for the 2021 cohort and 77 percent for the 2023 cohort.

In addition to reporting on *GPRA*-related activities, NAM grantees reported on a variety of project-specific measures. Grantees provided teacher/staff professional development and promoted parent and community involvement by hosting family literacy nights and creating home literacy packets. Grantees also provided mobile apps, technology tools, language tutors, and created instructional materials to promote the learning of Native languages.

[1] 25 U.S.C. 2903 (1)
[2] 25 U.S.C. 2903 (3)
[3] Jesse, D., Northup, J., & Withington, A. (2015). *Promising education interventions to improve the achievement of Native American students: An annotated bibliography* [A report from the West Comprehensive Center]. WestEd.
[4] When percentages exceed 100 percent, it indicates the grantees were able to recruit or enroll more students into the program than their original 5-year targets.

1. Introduction

The NAM program is authorized under Title III of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),* as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA),* and is administered by the U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) Office of Indian Education (OIE). The NAM program seeks to improve academic outcomes in English for Native American and Alaska Native (NA/AN) students by providing funding for programs that support language instruction educational programs, including NA/AN language revitalization. Thus, recipients of this discretionary grant program have designed projects to support the teaching, learning, and studying of Native American languages while also increasing the English language proficiency (ELP) of students so they can meet challenging state academic content and achievement standards. In addition to the required focus on supporting the learning and studying of Native American languages while also increasing the ELP of the children served under such a project, the NAM program identifies priority areas that include early learning, family and community engagement, and the promotion of family-based literacy practices. In addition, 2021 grantees could also respond to a remote learning invitational priority, and 2023 grantees could respond to a strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement priority. The grantees were not required to address all these priority areas in the design of their projects but were encouraged to employ an array of activities and strategies in support of them.

Grantees could design 5-year projects that include teacher training, curriculum development, and evaluation and assessment to support the core priorities of student instruction and parent-community participation. Student instruction may comprise preschool, elementary, secondary, or postsecondary levels, or combinations of these levels.

NAM applicants must operate elementary, secondary, and/or postsecondary schools primarily for Native American children (including Alaska Native children). Eligible entities based on this criterion include the following:

- Indian tribes
- Tribally sanctioned educational authorities
- Native Hawaiian or Native American Pacific Islander Native language educational organizations
- Elementary schools or secondary schools operated or funded by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) or a consortium of such schools
- Elementary schools or secondary schools operated under a contract with or grant from the BIE in consortium with another such school or a Tribal or community organization

All NAM grantees are required to submit an annual performance report (APR) that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information. The APR must include information on performance outcomes related to the *Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)*, as well as project-specific performance measures. The Department considers this data in making annual continuation awards. At the end of the project period, grantees must submit a final performance report that includes financial information, goal attainment, and program evaluation.

Approximately $5 million is available for NAM grantees annually. The average award amounts for FY 2024 were $319,296 for the 2021 cohort and $317,460 for the 2023 cohort.

Table 1.1. Total Proposed Funding for NAM 2021 and 2023 Cohorts

Cohort	Years Completed	Total Funding for All 5 Years[5]	Number of Awards
2021 Cohort	4 of 5 years completed	$14,380,572	9
2023 Cohort	2 of 5 years completed	$9,574,099	6

Government Performance and Results Act

The *GPRA* of 1993 requires federal agencies to prepare a strategic plan covering a multiyear period and to submit an annual performance plan and an APR. The *Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010* updated some aspects of the *GPRA* of 1993 and placed emphasis on the use and analysis of goals and measures to improve outcomes of federally funded programs.

The Department developed three *GPRA* performance measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the 2021 and 2023 grantees. All institutions receiving federal funds under the NAM program must report on their progress toward meeting these performance measures.

***GPRA* Measures for 2021 and 2023 NAM Cohorts**

- **Measure 1:** The number and percentage of English learners (ELs) served by the program who score proficient or above on the state reading assessment
- **Measure 2:** The number and percentage of ELs served by the program who are attaining proficiency in English as measured by the state-approved ELP assessment
- **Measure 3: The** number and percentage of students making progress in learning a Native language as determined by each grantee, including through such measures as performance tasks, portfolios, and pre- and post-tests

2. Overview of the Grantee Cohorts

Data Sources and Methodology

This section of the report provides a profile of the NAM program based on information received through numerous data sources. It conveys a profile of important characteristics of these grantee entities through tabular and graphic presentations of key information related to the characteristics of institutions and grant activities. All available electronic data (from partial and completed surveys) residing in the sources outlined in the box below were used in the analysis.

[5] Total proposed funding for the NAM cohorts can be found here: https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-special-populations/grants-native-americans-alaskan-natives-and-pacific-islanders/native-american-and-alaska-native-children-school-nam-program

Frequencies were generated for all data elements, and summative reports on key continuous variables for the program were developed. Key variables presented in this report include the following:

- Location of grantees
- School program types served by grantees
- Priorities addressed by grantees
- Grant-funded activities and outcomes reported by grantees
- Student-level data in partnering local or state educational agencies (LEAs or SEAs)
- Project-level and aggregated *GPRA* measures

Data Sources

Data for the development of this report were collected from two primary sources:

- **Knowledge Management System (KMS) Data:** The KMS provides program- and grant-specific information. On this online platform, grantees report on project measures for individual grant activities and outcomes for the entire grant. Grantees also report (a) the name of the applicant; (b) the partner LEAs or SEAs; (c) the title of the proposed project; (d) which, if any, of the competitive and invitational priorities a project is addressing; (e) a brief project description, including a description of major project activities; (f) the number of students served; (g) project goals, objectives, and performance outcomes; and (h) contact information, such as the project director's name, telephone, and e-mail.
- ***GPRA* Data:** The overall effectiveness of the NAM program is measured by three *GPRA* measures for the 2021 and 2023 cohorts, developed by the Department. All NAM grantees report their progress toward meeting these performance measures each year.

The data were closely examined to identify the occurrence and distribution of missing data and of data values that appeared inconsistent and out-of-range. In all cases, data were aggregated and analyzed at the level corresponding to the outcome in question.

Characteristics of Grantees

A complete list of the 15 entities awarded a NAM grant in 2021 and 2023 can be found in the Appendix.

In FY 2024, the 2021 cohort worked in partnership with 14 different organizations, including the Girls and Boys Club, IHEs, public school districts, and Tribes. Participants of the 2021 grantees are served in eight different Native languages: Choctaw, Cree, Crow/Apsaalooke, Diné (Navajo), Lakota, Ojibwe, Osage, and Yugtun (Yup'ik).

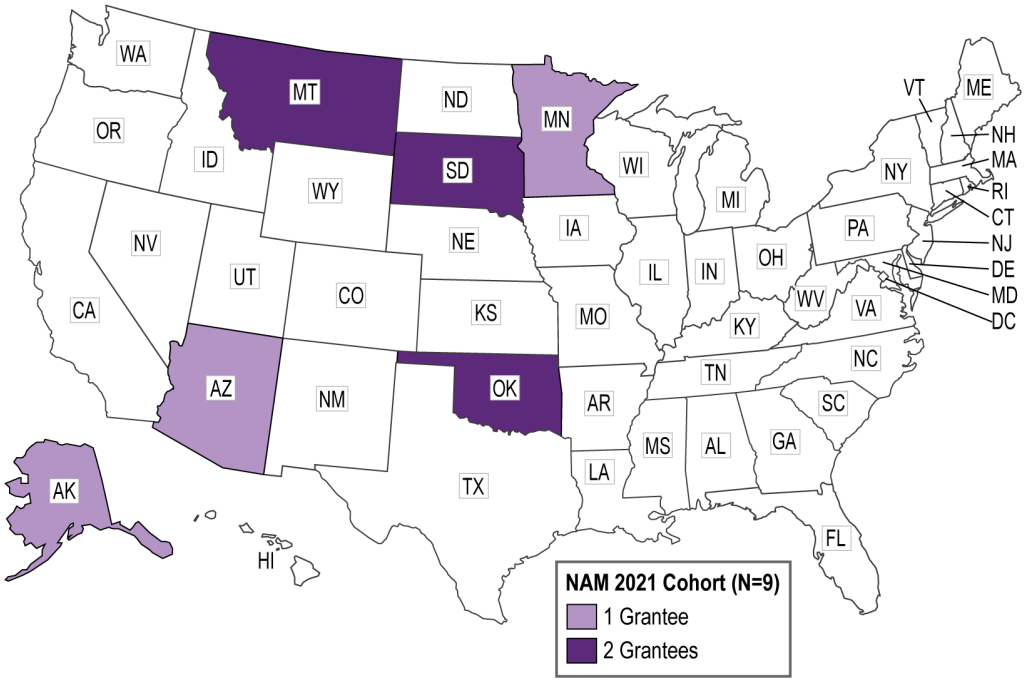
Grantees from the 2023 cohort formed partnerships with three organizations: a charter school, an immersion school, and a foundation. Grantees from the 2023 cohort reported seven languages of use: Cherokee, Cree, Inupiaq, Osage, Tsalagi, Ute, and Yugtun (Yup'ik).

For a complete list of the languages of the populations served by the 2021 and 2023 grantees see the Appendix.

Grantee Locations

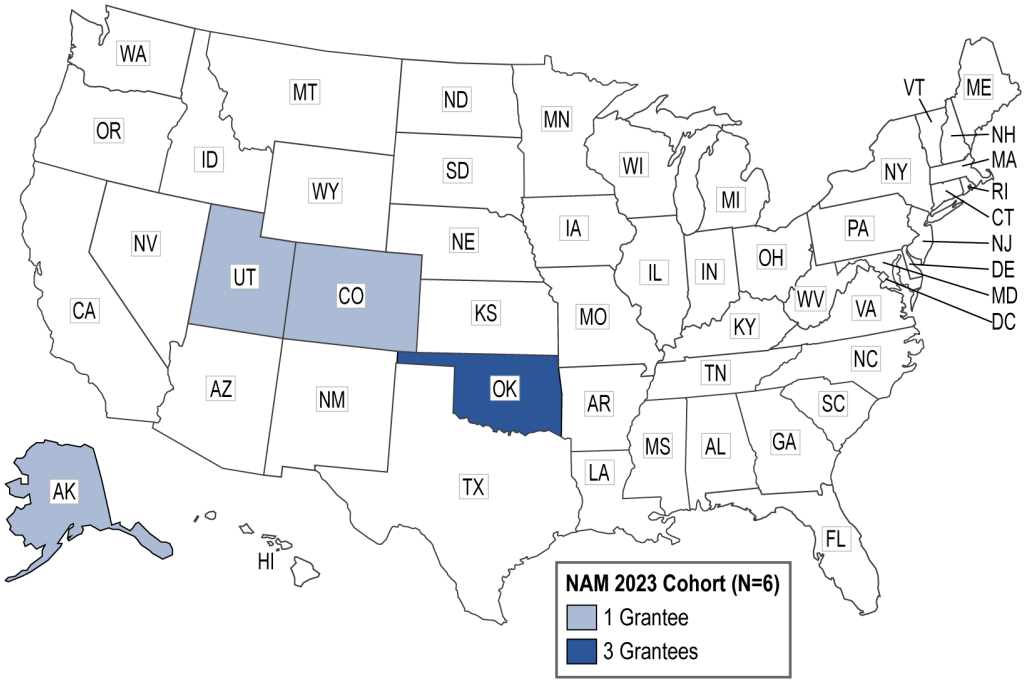
For the 2021 grantees, three states received two grants, and three states received one grant. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia did not receive a NAM grant.

Figure 2.1. NAM Grant Locations: 2021 Cohort



For the 2023 grantees, one state received three grants and two states received one. Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia did not receive a NAM grant.

Figure 2.2. NAM Grant Locations: 2023 Cohort



Grant Priorities

The NAM grant competition is structured using the following three types of priorities:

- Absolute priority: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), only applications that meet this priority are considered.
- Invitational priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1), applicants may address these priorities, but they are not given competitive preference points.
- Competitive priorities: These are priorities that applicants may address, and which add to their overall scores.

In 2021 and 2023, the NAM competition included the same absolute priority of supporting the learning and studying of Native American languages while also increasing the ELP of the children served. Competitive and invitational priorities differed across the two competitions and are summarized in the box below.

The NAM 2021 Grant Competition Priorities

- **Absolute Priority:** An applicant must support the teaching, learning, and studying of Native American languages while also increasing the ELP of the children served under such a project.
- **Invitational Priority 1:** An applicant must promote literacy by providing families with evidence-based (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) strategies for promoting literacy. This may include providing families with access to books or other physical or digital materials or content about how to support their child's reading development or providing family literacy activities (as defined in Section 203[9] of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act).
- **Invitational Priority 2: Remote Learning:** Under this invitational priority, an applicant must propose a project that is designed to address one or both of the following priority areas: (a) adopting and supporting models that leverage technology (e.g., universal design for learning, competency-based education, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality digital learning content, applications, and tools and/or (b) providing personalized and job-embedded professional learning to build the capacity of educators to effectively use technology to create remote learning experiences that advance student engagement and learning (e.g., synchronous and asynchronous professional learning, professional learning networks or communities, and coaching).

The NAM 2023 Grant Competition Priorities

- **Absolute Priority:** An applicant must support the teaching, learning, and studying of Native American languages while also increasing the ELP of the children served under such a project.
- **Competitive Priority:** An applicant must promote equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments.
- **Invitational Priority:** An applicant must strengthen cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance Native American languages while increasing ELP.

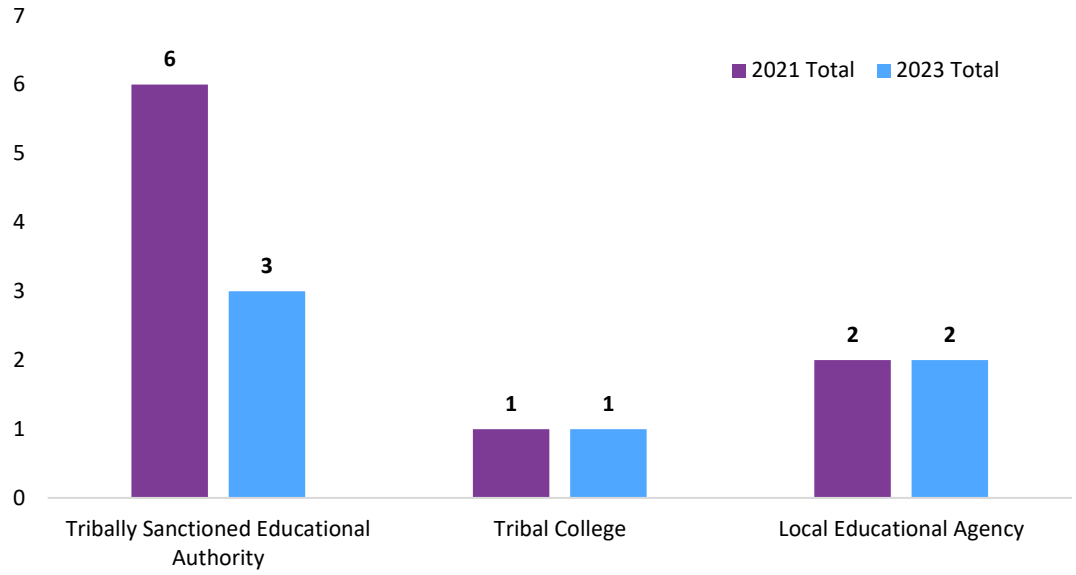
One of the 2021 grantees responded to Invitational Priority 1 to promote literacy by providing families with evidence-based strategies of promoting literacy, and two grantees responded to

Invitational Priority 2, which addresses remote learning. None of the grantees of the 2023 cohort responded to the competitive or invitational priorities.

Grant Entity Types

All 15 grantees from the 2021 and 2023 cohorts received funds and completed the third and first year of their projects in school year (SY) 2023–24, respectively. The entities receiving NAM grants in 2021 and 2023 were Native tribes, colleges, nonprofit organizations, and public school districts. Figure 2.3 describes the distribution of these entities receiving NAM grants. In the 2021 cohort, six grantees were affiliated with tribally sanctioned educational authorities, two grantees were from LEAs, and one grantee was from a Tribal college. Three grantees from 2023 were from tribally sanctioned educational authorities, two were from LEAs, and one grantee was from a Tribal college.

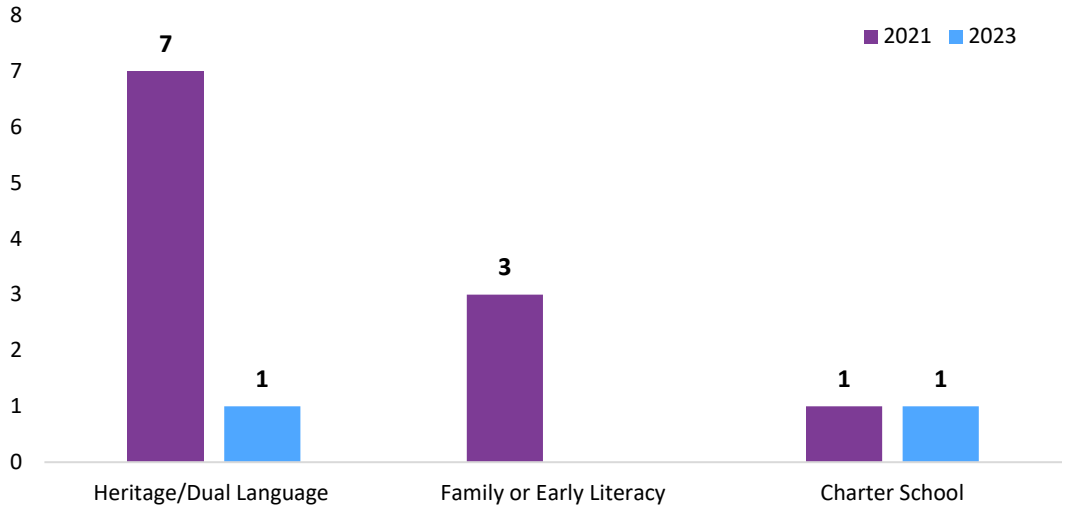
Figure 2.3. Entities Receiving NAM Grants



School Program Types

Figure 2.4 illustrates the school program types served by the NAM grantees. All the 2021 grantees and one of the 2023 grantees served teachers and students in dual or heritage language programs. Early or family literacy education was also an area of focus for three of nine 2021 grantees. One grantee each in 2021 and 2023 indicated their project served charter schools.

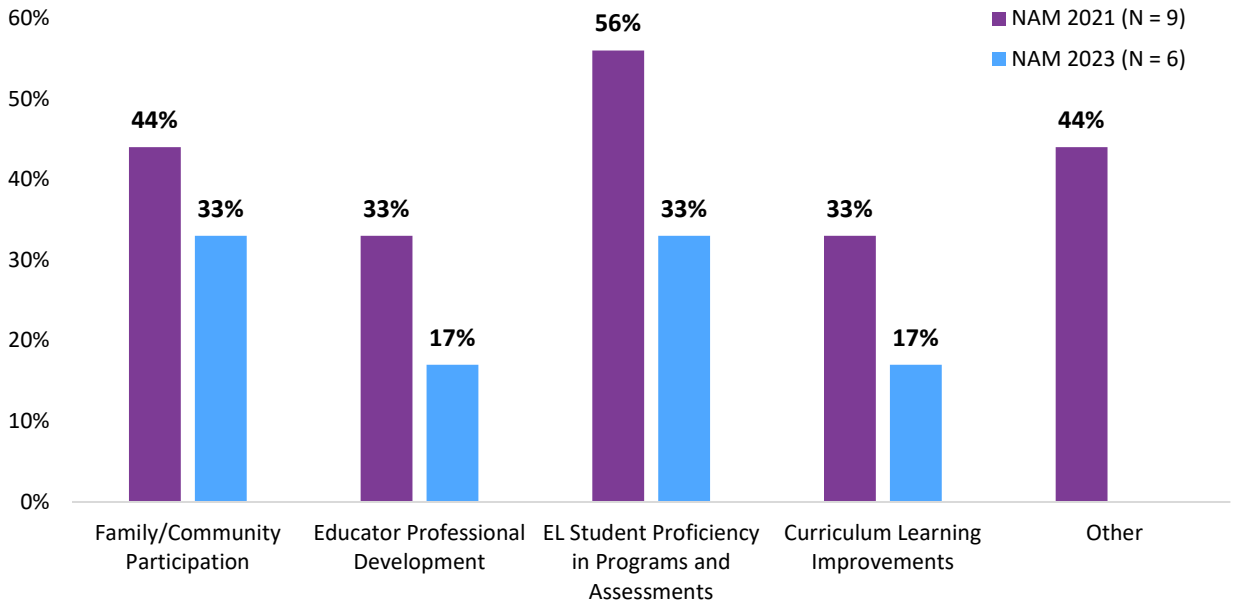
Figure 2.4. Number of School Program Types



Project Features

Some NAM projects implemented unique activities or features to support the project goals. Figure 2.5 illustrates the various project features reported by the 2021 and 2023 grantees. The most widely reported features include increasing English proficiency among learners for the 2021 cohort. For the 2023 cohort, there was a tie between increasing English proficiency and family communication/participation. Other project features include creating Native language assessments, mobile apps, and focusing on STEM instruction.

Figure 2.5. Project Features of the NAM Grantees: 2021 and 2023 Cohorts



3. Outcomes

This section presents the *GPRA* measures outcomes and project-specific measures outcomes for the grants awarded under the 2021 and 2023 competitions. Using the KMS online reporting

system, the grantees submitted quarterly reports in FY 2024. The data reported included *GPRA* targets and outcomes and other information (e.g., financial expenditures).

The following sections provide detailed information regarding how each *GPRA* outcome was calculated for the cohort. Grantees who reported no data (for targets or outcomes) often gave reasoning in the notes. Examples of reasons cited include that the *GPRA* measure does not apply to a particular year of the grant or that student scores have not yet been provided.

GPRA Outcomes

As required by the APR, grantees must submit both numerical responses for the *GPRA* measures and short narratives to describe (a) the strategies used to meet the *GPRA* targets and (b) the extent to which the program met the *GPRA* targets.

Table 3.1 summarizes aggregated *GPRA* outcomes reported by the nine grantees in the 2021 cohort. Most 2021 grantees met their *GPRA* targets, with many exceeding them. Those grantees who exceeded targets did not provide reasoning in the notes. The 2021 grantees made the most progress on the *GPRA* target measuring the number of students making progress in learning a Native language (144 percent). Measure 2, the percentage of ELs served by the program who are attaining ELP, had the lowest attainment among grantees at 38 percent in FY 2024.

Table 3.1. Summary of Aggregated *GPRA* Outcomes Reported by 2021 NAM Cohort[6]

	GPRA Measures	Percentage	Basis of Calculations
1	The number and percentage of ELs served by the program who score proficient or above on the state reading assessment	75%	Of the 9 grantees, 92 of the targeted 123 ELs scored proficient.
2	The number and percentage of ELs served by the program who are attaining proficiency in English as measured by the state-approved ELP assessment	38%	Of the 9 grantees, 49 of the targeted 128 ELs scored proficient.
3	The number and percentage of students making progress in learning a Native language as determined by each grantee, including such measures as performance tasks, portfolios, and pre- and post-tests	144%[7]	Of the 9 grantees, 390 of 270 students made progress in learning a Native language.

Table 3.2 summarizes aggregated *GPRA* outcomes reported by the six grantees in the 2023 cohort. Some grantees reported exceeding *GPRA* targets but did not provide reasoning in the notes. The 2023 grantees made the most progress on the *GPRA* target measuring the number of students making progress in learning a Native language (83 percent). Half of the 2023 grantees met their *GPRA* targets for Measure 1 in FY 2024.

[6] Source: Department's KMS for the Department's discretionary grants
[7] In instances where grantees reported more than 100%, this is due to such reasons as grantees having recruited more participants than expected or more participants having participated in that *GPRA* measure than initially targeted.

Table 3.2. Summary of Aggregated *GPRA* Outcomes Reported by 2023 NAM Cohort[8]

	GPRA Measures	Percentage	Basis of Calculations
1	The number and percentage of ELs served by the program who score proficient or above on the state reading assessment	50%	Of the 6 grantees, 109 of the targeted 220 ELs scored proficient.
2	The number and percentage of ELs served by the program who are attaining proficiency in English as measured by the state-approved ELP assessment	77%	Of the 6 grantees, 144 of the targeted 187 ELs scored proficient.
3	The number and percentage of students making progress in learning a Native language as determined by each grantee, including such measures as performance tasks, portfolios, and pre- and post-tests	83%	Of the 6 grantees, 680 of 819 students made progress in learning a Native language.

Progress on Program Goals

In addition to *GPRA* outcomes, grantees also establish and report on the progress they make toward goals specific to their projects.

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 showcase the NAM project-specific measures that the 2021 and 2023 grantees worked toward. As each grantee can specify their own project measures, data in these tables are derived from a qualitative analysis of the grantee-reported project-specific measures and accompanying grantee notes from the KMS Update 3 reporting periods. This qualitative analysis yielded seven broad themes that grantees are working toward: increasing enrollment and attendance in programs, increasing English language achievement and fostering school readiness, creating Native language materials and measuring Native language proficiency, promoting family and community connections, teacher professional development, developing curriculum and instructional materials, and promoting Native culture.

During the fourth year of their grant, the 2021 cohort reported enrolling students in their programs and providing teachers with professional development to teach English and the Native language. The 2021 grantees also provided many outreach opportunities to families through literacy trainings and through the provision of books and curricula in both English and the Native language (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. 2021 NAM Cohort-Reported Progress on Grantee Program Goals (N = 9)

Program Goals	Number of Grantees	Sample & Summary of Activities
Enrollment/ Attendance	2	One hundred and fifty preschool-aged children enrolled in Imagination Library online learning.
Academic Achievement/School Readiness	3	Grantees reported exceeding their targets for students meeting proficiency targets on state reading assessments.

[8] Source: Department's KMS for the Department's discretionary grants

Program Goals	Number of Grantees	Sample & Summary of Activities
Native Language Assessment and Achievement	2	Forty-seven students enrolled in Lakota language classes.
Family/Community Connections	7	Held four monthly Community Family Literacy Nights attended by 120 adults/parents and 152 students in total.
Teacher Professional Development	6	Instructional coaches provided instructional, technology, and behavior management support to project teachers for reading instruction.
Curriculum/Materials Development	5	Materials in Cherokee for Grades 1–6 were uploaded into the Virtual Classroom Platform.
Culture	2	At Lakota Nation Language Bowl competition, student team received Best Dressed award.

During the second year of their grant, the 2023 cohort reported enrolling students in afterschool academic and language programs. Grantees also offered tutoring and literacy events for both families and the larger community and facilitated professional learning in the teaching of the Native language (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. 2023 NAM Cohort-Reported Progress on Grantee Program Goals (N = 6)

Program Goals	Number of Grantees	Sample & Summary of Activities
Enrollment/ Attendance	0	
Academic Achievement/School Readiness	1	Grantees provided afterschool English tutors to increase student academic progress and increase engagement in STEM activities.
Native Language Assessment and Achievement	2	Thirty-nine students regularly attended the afterschool language program, exceeding their project's targets.
Family/Community Connections	3	Literacy sheets were sent home for students to read, speak, and discuss Cherokee words and phrases with their families.
Teacher Professional Development	2	Grantees provided monthly professional development for staff.
Curriculum/Materials Development	1	Grantees worked with colleges to create curriculum and other materials in the Native language.
Culture	1	Sixty-three students participated in afterschool Ute language and cultural classes.

Challenges Meeting Program Goals

One challenge the 2021 grantees reported included student attrition due to family migration patterns. The challenges experienced by 2023 grantees included working with partners to develop suitable curricula.

Summary

Both NAM 2021 and 2023 grantees made substantial progress toward *GPRA* measures and project-specific measures. Specifically, both NAM 2021 and 2023 grantees made the most progress on the *GPRA* measure regarding student attainment of Native language proficiency. The 2021 grantees made the least progress in the number of students who attained proficiency in English and the 2023 grantees made the least progress in the number of students who scored proficient on a state reading assessment during FY 2024.

Appendix

Table A.1. 2021 Cohort NAM Grantees

Grantee Number	Institution	Project Title	Language of Population
T365C210012	Big Horn County School District 17H & 1 (Hardin)	Ammaaléehkuua (Place We Go for Knowledge)	Crow/Apsaalooke
T365C210015	Independent School District #625, Saint Paul Public Schools	Ojibwe E-Learning Platform	Ojibwe
T365C210008	Learning Point Alaska, Inc.	Innovative Technology in Science Inquiry (ITSI) for Yup'ik Students	Yugtun (Yup'ik)
T365C210029	Osage County Interlocal Cooperative	PISTONS (Providing Instructional Supports to Osage Nation and Schools)	Osage
T365C210017	Painted Desert Demonstration Projects DBA The STAR School	Naasnęę'nįjįį' Niha'á łchiní bá (From Here On Forward for Our Children)	Diné (Navajo)
T365C210021	Red Cloud Indian School	Stepping Back to Step Forward	Lakota
T365C210019	Rocky Boy Schools	Cree Preschool Enhancement	Cree
T365C210014	Sičaŋǧu Community Development Corporation	Uŋglóayapi Kte! We Will Carry It On! – Lakota Language Revitalization	Lakota
T365C210028	The Cherokee Nation	Immersion Charter School	Cherokee

Table A.2. 2023 Cohort NAM Grantees

Grantee Number	Institution	Project Title	Language of Population
T365C230003	Osage County Interlocal Cooperative	Project KANZA (The Kaw People)	Osage
T365C230011	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Nuchiu Rising 2023	Ute
T365C230007	Box Elder School District 13	Box Elder School Culture and Language Literacy Program	Cree
T365C230005	Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc	Cultural Connections Continuation	Yugtun (Yup'ik) and Inupiaq
T365C230002	Stilwell Public School District	Cherokee Pride II	Tsalagi
T365C230001	Cherokee Nation Education Corporation	Increasing English Proficiency of Sequoyah Students Project	Cherokee