

## Results in Brief:

# Implementation of the Title VI Indian Education Formula Grants Program

October 2019

Indian Education Formula Grants represent the U.S. Department of Education's largest investment in addressing the unique academic and cultural needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students. The program is aimed at supporting services that are responsive to the unique cultural, language, and educational needs of these students and help them meet academic standards. School districts, tribes, Indian community-based organizations, and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools receiving these grants are required to consult with parents and local tribes in the effort to shape grant-funded services that supplement and enrich regular school programs.

This study conducted grantee surveys and case studies to examine the operations of the Title VI grants program across the United States and inform the field about the services that Title VI funds support, how grantees work with stakeholders to identify program-eligible children, and how they measure progress toward their project objectives.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What services do Title VI grants support?
2. How do grantees work with stakeholders to identify program-eligible children and plan services to meet the needs of those children?
3. How do grantees measure progress toward their project objectives?

## STUDY DESIGN

The study included surveys of all 2017–18 Title VI grantees, case studies of nine purposively selected grantees, and analyses of extant documents and data. Data collection was conducted in the spring and summer of 2018.

The online survey was administered to the grant coordinators of all 1,304 Title VI grantees (92 percent responded).

The case studies were designed to capture variation across three dimensions: grant award size, grantee type, and geographic region. The site visits included semi-structured interviews with Title VI grant coordinators, grantee staff (e.g., school leaders, teachers), education leaders (e.g., superintendent, tribal education leader), and tribal leaders, as well as parent focus groups.

Extant documents and data included grant applications, grantees' annual performance reports, and budget reports.

## Highlights

- The most common Title VI-funded services were academic support, cultural enrichment, and parent involvement.
- Most grantees supported culturally responsive education by incorporating American Indian and Alaska Native history and culture into the curriculum and employing American Indian and Alaska Native teachers and support staff.
- Most grantees relied on three strategies to identify eligible students: (1) including questions about students' American Indian and Alaska Native status in the school registration process, (2) including Title VI student eligibility certification forms in enrollment packets, and (3) generating reports for students who identified as American Indian and Alaska Native on enrollment forms.
- Most grantees collected information about students' needs from the Title VI Parent Advisory Committee and other stakeholder groups, commonly through public hearings, convenings with the stakeholder groups, and surveys.
- Grantees reported using multiple data sources for project planning, including administrative data and information from parents, teachers, and administrators, and from public hearings.
- Most grantees used state standardized assessment scores, attendance data, and graduation or dropout data to measure progress toward their Title VI project objectives.

## PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

In the 2017–18 school year, the Title VI program provided grants to 1,304 grantees. These grantees included school districts (88 percent), schools funded or operated by the BIE (10 percent), and tribes and Indian community-based organizations (2 percent). Grant award sizes ranged from the statutory minimum of \$4,000 to a high of \$3.3 million. More than half the Title VI grants were under \$40,000, with a median size of \$36,608.

## SERVICES FOR ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

**The most common Title VI-funded services were academic support, cultural enrichment, and parent involvement.**

Grantees used Title VI funds to support an array of activities and services to support better educational outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native children. The most common were academic support such as assistance with homework and study skills (87 percent), cultural enrichment such as field trips and special events (74 percent), and parent involvement (62 percent). Other services supported through Title VI funds included college preparation (45 percent), mentoring (41 percent), student advocacy and leadership (40 percent), career preparation (37 percent), and counseling (35 percent); and family literacy and early childhood programs (both 26 percent). Funds also supported prevention programs focused on school dropout (42 percent), substance abuse (24 percent), suicide (23 percent), and violence (21 percent).

**Grantees most often supported culturally responsive services by incorporating American Indian and Alaska Native history and culture into the curriculum and using American Indian and Alaska Native teachers and staff.**

Most grantees supported culturally responsive education by incorporating American Indian and Alaska Native history and culture into the curriculum (70 percent) and using American Indian and Alaska Native teachers and support staff (68 percent). Less commonly used practices included connecting American Indian and Alaska Native students with mentors or counselors from the tribal community (48 percent), delivering instruction in American Indian and Alaska Native students' native language (32 percent), or administering assessments in students' native languages (15 percent).

## IDENTIFYING ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

**Most grantees relied on three strategies to identify eligible students: including questions about students' American Indian and Alaska Native status in the school registration process, including eligibility forms in enrollment packets, and generating reports for students who identified as American Indian and Alaska Native on enrollment forms.**

About three quarters (76 percent) of Title VI grantees included questions about students' American Indian and Alaska Native status in the school registration process, 75 percent included student eligibility certification forms in school enrollment packets, and 66 percent generated reports for students who identified their primary or secondary ethnicity as American Indian or Alaska Native on enrollment

forms. Just over half (53 percent) of grant coordinators reported conducting targeted outreach to notify American Indian and Alaska Native families about Title VI-funded services available for eligible children.

## ASSESSING NEEDS AND PLANNING SERVICES

**Most grantees collected information about students' needs from stakeholder groups, commonly through public hearings, convenings with stakeholder groups, and surveys.**

Grantees often collected information about American Indian and Alaska Native students' educational and culturally related academic needs from Title VI Parent Advisory Committees, educators (e.g., principals, teachers), students, school boards, district administrators, and school- or tribe-based parent committees. In conducting their needs assessments, grantees tended to rely on face-to-face communication such as public hearings (70 percent) and convenings (64 percent), although many also used surveys (62 percent).

**Grantees reported using multiple data sources for project planning, including administrative data and information from parents, teachers, and administrators and from public hearings.**

In planning services for American Indian and Alaska Native students, most grantees used the information gathered through their needs assessments, including administrative data such as course grades, test scores, and attendance data (94 percent); information from parents (86 percent) and teachers and administrators (82 percent); and information gathered through public hearings (73 percent).

## MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD PROJECT OBJECTIVES

**To measure progress toward service objectives, most grantees used state standardized assessment scores, attendance data, and graduation or dropout data.**

All grantees are required to identify the data sources they will use to measure progress toward meeting their Title VI project objectives. Most grantees used state standardized assessment scores (83 percent), attendance data (80 percent), and graduation or dropout data (66 percent). Less commonly used data sources included survey or focus group data collected from parents, guardians, or families of American Indian and Alaska Native students (46 percent), from the students themselves (43 percent), or from staff in schools serving American Indian and Alaska Native students (39 percent).